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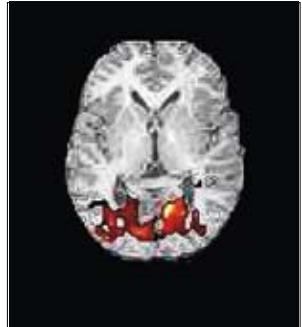
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Free
weekly!

NEWS ♦ BUSINESS ♦ ARTS ♦ ACTIVE ♦ LIVING ♦ AGENDA ♦ INTERVIEW

**Build a better
brain.....6**

Researchers at the Free University of Brussels have data to prove that bilingual children solve complex calculations more easily than monolinguals. So schools should start language learning as early as possible.



**Formerly
MuHKA.....11**

Antwerp's landmark museum of contemporary art is now worthy of the praise, both inside and out. A fantastic new façade beckons you inside to the launch of its heavily political autumn shows



**Back to
Natur.....12**

Do a photo rally, unmask the bad guy in Citygame, walk treetop cables and ride a raft down the Dijle River (that you have to build yourself) at Natur-Natur, where average folk can feel like heroic adventures



© Pal De Wilde/Het Nieuwsblad

The clash of the headscarves

ANJA OTTE

Should Muslim girls be allowed to wear headscarves in secondary schools? The issue has become one of the most polarising in years

When France banned Muslim headscarves from its classrooms in 2003, the idea did not travel north to Belgium. In fact, when liberal Patrick Dewael suggested to follow suit, most policymakers reacted negatively. "Who cares what a girl wears on her head? What matters is what's inside," the socialist Steve Stevaert retorted.

Belgium usually walks a middle ground between the strict French neutrality and the open pluralism of Britain, where public servants with headscarves or turbans are not uncommon.

But Flanders did not remain immune to the issue. In 2007, Antwerp banned not just headscarves but all openly religious or philosophical symbols for

city employees working with the public. They make some people uncomfortable, said Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens. "Suppose a public servant wears a huge cross. People who have come to report a divorce may wonder how this person's reaction or moral judgment will be. This we should avoid."

► *continued on page 5*

Regularisation wave fails to materialise

Fears of flood of immigrants unfounded

ALAN HOPE

Last week saw the start of a period of "regularisation" in which illegal immigrants would be able to put their affairs in order, subject to strict conditions. But the anticipated flood of applicants failed to materialise. In Ghent, a tent to provide shelter for waiting applicants and barriers to hold them in line were eerily deserted. In Antwerp, 20 specially detailed municipal workers were idle.

"People are coming in the first instance for information before they submit a dossier," said Antwerp's alderwoman for social policy, Monica De Coninck. "In any case they have three months to do so." In Antwerp, only six applications had been handed by noon on the first day, but 300 or so people had come by to pick up a form to be filled in later, and others had called in with questions. In Ghent, 40 applications

were submitted, and 100 people came in for information.

The new measures concern migrants who have lived in Belgium continuously for five years, or who lived here legally before 18 March 2008, or who have been here continuously since March 2007 and have a work contract. The regularisation also covers asylum seekers whose procedure has already lasted longer than "a reasonable time" – a term which is not strictly defined.

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Derek Blyth

Pupils at a school in Hoogstraten in Antwerp province will this term have to get their heads around a new subject on the curriculum: happiness. Each week the hour-long class will sit down to discuss themes such as handling stress, self-image and self-esteem, and how to give and accept compliments. "Because of changing circumstances, children these days have a harder time being happy," the school's coordinator said. "We hope to be able to help them feel better about themselves."

The Flemish members of the national Order of Architects have voted to split off and form a Flemish order. According to a statement issued by members of the group, the two parts of the country can no longer work

Former Flemish education minister Frank Vandenbroucke is to go back to school – lecturing on social sciences at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), and on social economy at the University of Antwerp. Vandenbroucke graduated from KUL, studied economics at Cambridge and then gained a doctorate at Oxford before going back into politics full-time. He was removed as minister by his own party after the June elections.

Antwerp baths win Monument Prize



This year's Monument Prize for Flanders has been won by the Veldstraat swimming pool and public baths in Antwerp. The announcement was made on Sunday in Grimbergen by heritage minister Geert Bourgeois, at the closing ceremony of this year's Open Monument Day, which took place a week previously.

The baths complex was one of the watering-places featured in a special water issue of *Flanders Today* in August. The baths are Antwerp's oldest, dating from 1933, when the complex consisted of a swimming pool with changing cubicles and 24 bathrooms for the use of those who, as was common at the time, did not have indoor sanitary facilities at home. In 1998 the building was designated as a monument, but in 2005 the pool was declared to be below the standard required by law. The baths were closed and the changing rooms, pool and parts of the bathrooms renovated to their original state. In place of public baths, however, come a hammam, herbal baths, a dance studio and gymnasium, and a brasserie.

The Veldstraat complex takes away €15,000. The other nominees for this year's prize, one from each province, were the site of a thousand-year-old oak in Lummen (Limburg); the Hoge Wal defensive structure in Evergem (East Flanders); the Sint-Servatius basilica in Grimbergen (Flemish Brabant) and aerial photographs of an archaeological site in Zedelgem (West Flanders). Each receives €2,500.

together because of differences in vision regarding policy, operation and structure of the representative group. "The demand for a separate order has been there for years, but the reform became bogged down in endless discussions," the statement said.

Unions representing post office workers were due this week to issue a strike notice in protest at the introduction of so-called neighbourhood mail-carriers. Unions object to the rate of pay for the new job – just €8.43 an hour, from which they have to buy their own bicycles. Existing mail-carriers are afraid that they will be replaced by the new staff.

Tests being carried out on live apes at the University of Leuven's department of neurophysiology are in breach of animal welfare laws, according to the animal rights organisation Anti Animal Experiments Coalition (ADC). The group has filed a complaint against the university and its rector, Mark Waer. The apes are deprived of water and food, the activists said, before being strapped in a chair to have electrodes implanted in their brains. The group claims that alternatives to the experiments exist, but researchers say the tests are necessary.

The landmark Art Nouveau brasserie De Ultieme Hallucinatie in Sint-Joost is to close on 18 December. The bar-restaurant has

been on sale for the past three years, but owner Fred Dericks has finally decided to close, exactly 28 years after he opened. The 1,600 square-metre bar and restaurant was designed by Paul Hamesse and Henri Vandervelde. It remains on the market for €3 million.

At least 5,000 young people aged between 16 and 18 are expected to take part in this year's Zuiddag (South Day) on 16 October. The operation, which started out in Halle and has since spread across the region, asks young people to work for one day for a company or individual (suggestions are available) for a minimum salary of €30, which they then donate to the charity. This year's efforts will support a project in Uganda.

→ www.zuiddag.be

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Anti-immigration protests on first day of regularisation

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In the event, there turned out to be fewer applicants for regularisation in Antwerp than the number of Vlaams Belang (VB) supporters there to protest against the "floods" of new immigrants the measure would encourage.

According to critics of the measure, it will indirectly attract others to come and live here illegally, in expectation of the next wave of regularisation. "Instead of bringing more people here, prime minister Herman Van Rompuy would do better to work on the enormous waiting lists of our own people needing help," commented VB parliamentary leader Filip De Winter.

The VB estimates there were 150,000 regularisations between 2001 and 2008. "The tomtoms are rumbling today in Africa and elsewhere, and bags are being packed for Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels," De Winter said.

The government expects the meas-



ure to affect between 50,000 and 80,000 people. An alleged top civil servant in the Foreigners' Office, speaking anonymously in *Het Laatste Nieuws*, called the government's estimate "laughably low,"

and placed the true figure closer to 350,000. "What nobody seems to realise is that there is more than one person behind each dossier," the man said. "And that after regularisation there will be follow-up

immigration of family members". The true figure is likely to be a multiple of the number estimated by the government, he said. ♦

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

68,000

civil servants too many across all levels of government, according to employer federation VBO



€5,000,000,000

savings could be made by getting rid of unnecessary bureaucrats, the organisation said

1,436

children went temporarily missing this summer at the Belgian coast, 538 more than in 2008. Blankenberge and De Panne saw the most missing children

€1.5 million

spent by King Albert II on two luxury apartments in Ostend, together with three underground garages. The king is said to have taken out a mortgage to purchase the properties

€4.6 million

spent by King Albert II this summer on the yacht Alpa, which is moored in Antibes in the French Riviera

€1.4 million

estimated worth of King Albert II's villa in Chateauneuf de Grasse, in the South of France. Rumours that the king had bought another villa in the area were denied by the palace. The king's other residences are not his private property

€1.2 billion

the cost of stress every year to the Belgian health insurance industry, according to an estimate by the Christian Mutualty (CM)

148 g/km

of CO2 produced by cars in Belgium, on average in 2008, 3.2% less than in 2007. Belgium is in sixth place in the list of 25 European countries

153.5 g/km

European average of CO2 produced by cars, half a gram over Belgium's 2007 average

130g/km

is the CO2 target emission for EU countries for 2015

24/7

the available hours from now on for roadworks in Flanders, in an effort to reduce traffic disruption to a minimum, public works minister Hilde Crevits announced

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Last man standing

There are hundreds of jokes about Geert Lambert. The president of the small SLP usually enjoys a bit of hilarity himself, but these days the good-humored Lambert has stopped laughing.

Ask anyone in Flanders about Lambert, and they will tell you about his size. Until last year, Lambert was hugely overweight – hence the jokes. Add the trademark trendy green spectacles and the picture is complete. Last year, on his doctor's advice, Lambert opted for a gastric ring. He lost weight spectacularly. Sadly, his weight loss has become a metaphor for his political career. There is not much left of Geert Lambert.

Last week, the promising Leuven city alderman Mohamed Ridouani quit the SLP for the socialists. And now, the SLP mainly consists of... Geert Lambert.

While most people know about Lambert, few can tell his party allegiance. He started out in the small nationalist Volksunie. After that fell apart, he followed former Flemish minister Bert Anciaux to Spirit, smaller still. Spirit hooked up with the socialist SPA, which would eventually absorb it. Along the way, it changed names twice: first into Vlaamse Progressiven (which, abbreviated, made for the unpronounceable VlPro), later into Sociaal Liberale Partij or SLP (often pronounced "slip" – Dutch for knickers).

Like Spirit before, SLP is a party that disturbs no-one. It is leftist, but not too much. It is greenish, but not excessively. Economically, it is liberal – in moderation. That makes for a party that appeals to many people – but not enough for them to vote for it.

SLP is often people's second choice, which sums up its problem exactly. To make it in Flanders' highly competitive party landscape, you have to become people's first choice at some point. SLP never got there, scoring a measly one percent in the recent Flemish elections.

The Volksunie gave birth not just to Spirit, but to another minuscule party, with another chubby young man at the background. From the start, N-VA was openly nationalist and quite rigid. Compared to the trendy, sympathetic Spirit, it seemed hopelessly outdated at the time. Gradually, though, part of the electorate started to like this principled party and its outspoken president, Bart De Wever. It became their first choice. De Wever meanwhile grew into a leader of formidable stature. Luckily, he has a remarkable sense of humour, because his size, too, makes him the subject of plenty of jokes.



© Belga

Princess Mathilde of Belgium and Princess Maxima of the Netherlands last weekend officially opened the new Museum M in Leuven. The princesses, invited specially because they share the initial M, took time to meet members of the public before cutting the ribbon and opening the new museum (described in *Flanders Today* last week). The princesses, who are married to the respective heirs to the thrones of Belgium and the Netherlands, are also friends.

Medical team walk out on Red Devils

The entire medical staff of the national football team last week resigned in protest at their increasing workload, the behaviour of some players and the lack of support from the board. The team, made up of Dr Marc Goossens and physiotherapists Harry Heyndrickx and Stanny Rogiers, made it clear their decision was not a consequence of the departure of team coach Frank Vercauteren. "To be quite clear, our decision was taken before the match in Armenia," Rogiers said. "The time was just up."

Vercauteren resigned after embarrassing defeats by Spain (5-0) and Armenia (2-1), having been in the post only since April this year. The three doctors, meanwhile, laid out three reasons for their decision:

- The behaviour of members of the team. "Things took place which are just out of order," Rogiers told *De Morgen*.
- Pressure of work. Sometimes the pool of players would go up to 28, each

with his own particular requirements. "Sometimes we were forced to work until after midnight".

- Insufficient support from football authorities. The medical team did not clear Jelle Van Damme to play for Anderlecht against Sint-Truiden, but the decision was taken by association secretary-general Jean-Marie Philips.

The national football association declined to react to the medical staff's letter but promised to find replacements as soon as possible. Critics attacked the association's refusal to engage with the criticisms, and their apparent lack of concern at the loss of what one editor called "three people of extraordinary integrity". Above all, the national team is losing a vast amount of experience: Dr Goossens has been a team doctor for 26 years; Harry Heyndrickx has worked for the association for 32 years, while Stanny Rogiers has nine years' experience.

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a student,
sign me up
now!"*

Clash of the headscarves

“The lack of balance poses a threat to mutual respect”

→ *continued from page 1*

Janssens met with protests from BOEH!, a local organisation of women devoted to the right to wear or not to wear a headscarf. BOEH! stands for Baas Over Eigen Hoofd (Boss over one's own head), inspired by the 1970s pro-choice slogan “Baas in eigen buik” (Boss over one's own belly). The Antwerp ban also annoyed fellow mayors, such as Leuven's Louis Tobback, who then faced votes on similar bans in their city councils. Still, there was a lot of silent approval, and the issue seemed to lie low.

This all changed this summer, when two secondary schools, the Antwerp Royal Atheneum and the Hoboken Royal Atheneum, decided to ban headscarves. They were not the first to do so: over the years, a majority of Antwerp schools had implemented the same rule, while other schools already had a long-standing ban on any headwear. All of this had passed largely unnoticed, but that changed when the two atheneums adopted their new rules.

“I have nothing against headscarves,” says Karin Heremans, director of the Antwerp Atheneum. “But over the last five years, the number of Muslim pupils in this school has risen from 50% to 80%. Muslim girls choose this school because of their head-

scarves. I do not want this to be a concentration school; this causes problems for our equal opportunity policies. Moreover, the lack of balance in the school population poses a threat to mutual respect.” Heremans also reported “social pressure” from within the school itself on girls not wearing a headscarf.

The Muslim community reacted very emotionally to the ban, on which they had not been consulted. “If there is social pressure, then surely there are other ways to tackle that”, says Samira Azabar of BOEH!. At the opening of the school year at Antwerp Atheneum on 1 September, there were street protests at the gates – until those were banned too. Inside the school, Heremans said that there were emotional scenes when some girls took off their scarves, while other girls felt relieved.

Although one imam had asked the girls not to attend school (he later claimed to have been misunderstood in this), the majority of them returned to their classes. About a dozen have decided to study from home to prepare for exams with the Central Examination Council, an alternative to attending secondary school.

Divisions abound

Meanwhile, almost everyone has an opinion on what happened

in Antwerp. The opinion pages in newspapers are bulging with essays and statements. The issue divides not only Muslims and non-Muslims, but also Muslims who support and oppose the ban, as well as political parties, especially Mayor Janssens' SPA, the same party to which Karin Heremans belongs.

SPA has a history of fighting off the stifling influence of Catholi-

turn, angered other school directors, as well as the Sikh community in Limburg.) Also, all secondary schools in Antwerp have now decided to impose the ban.

On the other hand, people who support the ban often do so because they want to emancipate young girls from the oppressive influence of their families and communities. The result, however, is that the girls who might most

Nordin Talouil has openly been called an extremist by State Security, because of which his wife lost her job as a childcare provider.

A continuation of the home

At a debate organised last week by Groen!, who are calling for a “pragmatic and nuanced policy”, there was a lot of concern about this polarisation. Heremans, who was invited by the political party as a speaker, was asked by the Antwerp Education Council not to participate, in order to shift the focus away from her school.

The representative of the Education Council stated that school choice should not be inspired by headscarves, but rather by the talents and interests of the pupils. “Girls do not wear scarves in their homes, and school is a continuation of the home. It's a safe haven, temporarily taking over parents' authority”, Fried Van Doren said.

“How can our children feel safe when they cannot speak their home language in the playground and cannot wear a scarf?” retorted Samira Azabar of BOEH!.

Still, both spoke of conciliation. The education representatives promised a consultation round with the Muslim community, not just on the ban but also on the staggering inequality between the highest and the lowest achieving pupils. ♦

“This decision hit us hard because these schools have always presented themselves as very tolerant”

cism on Flemish society, which it hardly wants to see replaced with a Muslim variety. At the same time it does not want to lose the migrant vote.

Paradoxically, everyone involved seems to have achieved the exact opposite of what they had hoped. One pupil who took the issue to the Council of State, saw her claim refuted. In a preliminary advice, however, the auditor said that this was not a matter individual schools could decide – something which had always been assumed before.

As a result, the network of state schools decided to ban religious symbols in all its schools. (This, in

benefit from that will now be kept away from school.

Especially in Antwerp, the debate gets very heated. Rik Pinxten, a cultural anthropology professor, warns of “Dutch situations”. In the Netherlands, Islam has been a very polarising issue over the last decade, with sharp polemics and extremely outspoken politicians such as Pim Fortuin, Geert Wilders and Ayan Hirshi Ali. All have received death threats, which came true in the case of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh four years ago.

A clash of civilizations – is that what Flanders is heading for? Already, Heremans is under police protection, while imam

IDENTITY CRISIS BOEH! speaks out on headscarf ban

BOEH! was founded two years ago when Antwerp banned religious symbols for city staff working with the public. “We haven't given up since”, says Saida El Fekri, who represents the Federation of Moroccan Organizations in BOEH!. “We have made sure none of these women got fired. They now have back office functions.”

Don't religious symbols stand in the way of neutrality?

Saida El Fekri: “There are different ways to define neutrality. In England, it is quite common to see policemen and women wearing turbans or headscarves, resulting in more harmony between different cultures. Here, one group is oppressed. A scarf says nothing about how well you do your job. Besides, I have no guarantees that the person at the counter is not a racist or an atheist, either.”

What do headscarves mean to Muslim girls and women?

“They wear them for different reasons. Some are simply pious and want to be good Muslims, while this says nothing about women who do not wear a scarf. Other girls wear them because of tradition. For others still, it is part of their identity.”

Why are the two Atheneum schools so important?

“This decision hit us hard because these schools have always presented themselves as very tolerant.”

The Antwerp Atheneum even employed migrant staff to attract these girls. A lot of girls chose this school specifically because they could wear their scarves there.”

What about the social pressure on the girls?

“That is nonsense. It is the responsibility of the school to deal with bullies. This issue has nothing to do with this so-called pressure. This has everything to do with the director seeking the spotlight.”

You suspect Karin Heremans of a hidden agenda?

“Absolutely. As a militant of SPA, she wants to make a name for herself. Well, she has succeeded.”

How will you react to the new general ban in state schools?

“We plan legal actions.”

How do you feel about girls who stay away from school or separate Muslim schools?

“I do not support separate schools, but for a small minority there is no other choice. We do worry about these girls, though, about the quality of their education and their isolation. They are the victims of this discriminating ban.”

→ www.baasovereigenhoofd.be



Karin Heremans, director of the Antwerp Royal Atheneum, talks to the press on the first day of school

Educating the better brain

Bilingualism makes children smarter, says VUB researcher

KATY DESMOND

Bilingual children and children enrolled in bilingual education exert less effort than their monolingual peers when completing calculation and reasoning tasks, research carried out by the Free University of Brussels (VUB) found.

For the first time, scientists have visual evidence demonstrating differences between monolingual and bilingual brains. Brain scans of 13 children between the ages of eight and nine taken while they solved simple math problems showed bilingual brains were significantly less active than monolingual brains while executing reasoning tasks. This implies that the addition of a language trains the brain to solve cognitive tasks more easily.

The study looked at bilinguals, children who speak two native languages at home and "school bilinguals," monolinguals who are taught in two languages. Both groups showed a big advantage over monolinguals, with the true bilinguals performing the best overall.

Piet Van de Craen, a neuro-linguist at VUB who lead the study, says the brain scans indi-

cate that bilinguals and school bilinguals use less energy to complete cognitive tasks. In the same way an experienced driver no longer has to "think" about how to drive a car, bilinguals can automatise new tasks, to the point where they must make little conscious mental effort. Thus, says Dr Van de Craen, bilingual education helps to "build a better brain."

The debate in Flanders

For 15 years, Dr Van de Craen has investigated the effects of bilingual education – specifically a method called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) – on school-aged children. CLIL is a language teaching technique that integrates a second "target language" into its curriculum, so subjects like history, math or physics might be taught in the target language. The ratio of course time spent in a child's native versus target language depends on the age of the child, with target language time increasing with the age of the student.

CLIL has been endorsed by the European Union, which incorporates it into its 1995 initiative calling for every European citizen to have mastered three



Kids who speak more than one language are better equipped to solve math problems, too

© Kuchankova/Maya/Shutterstock

languages when he or she leaves secondary school.

His research has put Dr Van de Craen in the middle of an ongoing debate over bilingual education in Dutch-speaking primary and secondary schools. While in 1998, Wallonia began introducing CLIL widely and now has over 200 bilingual schools, Flanders has very few similar programs.

Further, despite being regularly rated among the best school systems in the world, Dr Van de Craen expresses concern that, when it comes to language education, Flanders lags behind other regions. Laws forbid children in both Wallonia and Flanders to study foreign languages before the fifth year, around age 10, while studies indicate that language learning yields best results when started before age 10.

"This is very strange," says Dr Van de Craen. "If you want to learn the piano, you start early; if you want to become a grand master at chess, don't wait until you're 13...and the same with language. So these laws actually run counter to what one would expect from a society."

Nothing to lose

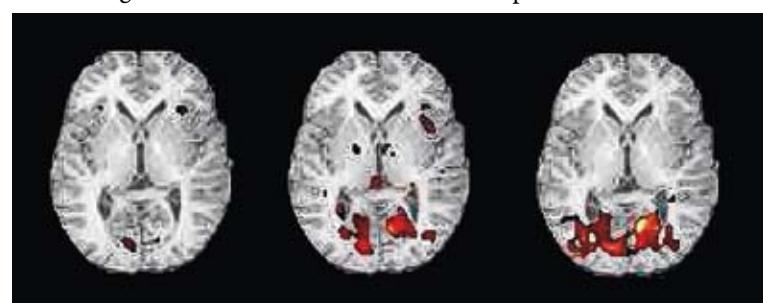
If you ask Dr Van de Craen what negative results might come from multilingual education, he responds emphatically. "I don't have any cons at all. It's like you asking what would be negative about me teaching my boy the piano. Well, maybe he'll spend less time training to be

an athlete, but that is just your decision to make."

One concern regarding attempts to integrate second languages into schools is the fear that a child's native language will be less developed. Dr Van de Craen refutes this, saying that a child fluent in Dutch who begins an education taught 20% in French will not develop only 80% of his Dutch. "It is 100% plus 20%," he says. "It has nothing to do with losing something; you gain something."

in biology or history would have some reservations about suddenly speaking French." She admits that this could negatively impact the teacher's ability to communicate their material.

The EU's assessment of the effectiveness of CLIL is generally very positive. The European Commission states that the success of CLIL has continually increased over the 10 years since it was introduced into European schools.



A study at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) found that the brains of bilingual children (left) take less effort to complete mental tasks than both school bilinguals (middle) and monolinguals (right)

© Dr Katrien Vondt

This "additive bilingualism" is tied to evidence that multilingualism trains children to learn how to learn, enhancing a child's competency across many subjects.

Griet Vercruyse, a Dutch and English teacher at the Sancta Maria Institute in Aarschot, likes the idea of introducing CLIL into Flemish schools. "I do believe there are very strong learning advantages for these students," she says. However, Vercruyse points out a possible negative aspect of CLIL for teachers. "I teach languages, so I am used to standing in front of a class speaking a foreign language, but perhaps a teacher

After years of research, these brain scans provide VUB's team with their strongest evidence to date advocating the positive effects of bilingual education. In light of these new discoveries, now might be the time for Flemish schools to follow Dr Van de Craen's cry that "schools should not hesitate".

The new Flemish minister of education, Pascal Smet, has been publicly supportive of multilingual education and has indicated that the positive findings of studies like this help persuade him that widespread bilingual education might be a positive step for Flanders. ♦



Brain building: Dr Piet Van de Craen advocates teaching schoolchildren a second language earlier

Class-action law “a time bomb” for businesses, bosses claim

A new law introducing the concept of class action lawsuits to Belgium would be a “serious threat” to businesses and to the economy as a whole, the employers’ organisation VBO said last week.

The law is the brainchild of justice minister Stefaan De Clerck and consumer affairs minister Paul Magnette, and aims to tackle what is a major problem for the overworked Belgian justice system. At present, every plaintiff who brings a damages claim in a court case does so individually, and is represented by his or her own lawyer. In some cases, such as the trial of the directors of software company Lernout and Hauspie, the number of plaintiffs runs into the hundreds. The multiplication of legal representation leads to trials that are virtually choked to death by procedure. The L&H trial had to be held in a conference centre in Ghent in order to accommodate the huge numbers involved.

Class-action suits, on the other hand, allow one lawyer to gather together a number of plaintiffs, all of whom have essentially the same case, and represent them as if they were a single



The proliferation of lawyers leads to congestion and delays, as here in the Lernout and Hauspie case in 2007

plaintiff. Thirteen other EU countries already have class-action suits as part of their systems. The new law would have one particular provision: if a case were brought by a group of shareholders, say, against the board of a company, and the shareholders won, the damages awarded to them would also apply to all other shareholders, whether they had taken part in the lawsuit or not.

Both ministers note that the new law would strengthen the hand of plain-

tiffs in damages suits with regard to the corporate defendants. The VBO, speaking on behalf of the corporations, claimed the American experience showed that class-action suits lead to a “derailment of justice” and create a situation where only a few specialised lawyers benefit. The VBO argues that the law would be a “time bomb” for businesses, who would no longer be able to forecast and estimate risk, and who might face an explosion of cases and the dramatic escalation of damages awards.

for a yacht designed by Stefan Vennekens, based in Boom, on the commission of an anonymous billionaire. The yacht includes a library, beach club, sauna and disco-
theque

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • Dexia

The Belgo-French financial institution specialised in the financing of local authorities is close to selling its French Dexia Epargne Pension affiliate for up to €120 million. Potential buyers are said to include Swisslife, an affiliate of France’s Credit Mutuel and the insurance company La Mondiale.

Brewing • AB Inbev

AB Inbev, the world’s largest beer group, is expecting an offer for its central European breweries from the UK-based CVC Capital group. Based in Leuven, the company has earmarked the sale of its interests in Romania, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Croatia and Montenegro to reduce the \$52 billion debt it incurred in buying US brewer Anheuser-Busch last year.

Development • CODIC

Brussels-based property developer CODIC International has won the coveted Building Research Establishment Environmental Method (Breeam) certification for its Atlantis building project in Sint-Agatha-Berchem. The certificate calls for the respect of strict environmental rules.

Energy • Tractebel Engineering

Tractebel, the Brussels-based affiliate of France’s GDF Suez, has won a €12 million contract to carry out research into the environmental and safety aspects of a future 1,000 megawatt nuclear power plant to be built near Akaba in Jordan.

Insurance • Fortis Holding

Fortis insurance company has signed a partnership agreement with the UK-based Tesco retailing group to develop and distribute auto and home insurance products. The €115 million deal will make Fortis the UK’s second largest automobile insurer.

Metals • Nyrstar

Zinc smelter and mining group Nyrstar has acquired the East-Tennessee Zinc Company in the US for some €86 million. The company, based in Balen, Antwerp province, acquired another US mine earlier this year.

Vinyl • IVC Group

Flooring and vinyl producer IVC will invest \$70 million to build a production unit in Dalton, Georgia. The move is part of the company’s drive for world leadership in vinyl for the residential market. IVC, based in Avelgem, West Flanders, already operates two distribution centres in California.

Inward investment down 45%

Belgium has dropped from fourth to eighth place in the list of countries attracting inward investment, according to figures released last week by the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (Unctad). Compared to 2007, inward investment in Belgium fell by 45% in 2008: from \$110 billion to \$59 billion. Foreign investment accounted for 52% of all industrial investment.

At the same time, Belgian investment abroad also fell, from \$93bn to \$68bn, leaving an investment deficit of \$9bn. And while the level of cross-border mergers and acquisitions between industrialised nations fell by 29%, Belgium accounted for the single largest international transaction: the takeover by InBev of Anheuser-Busch, a deal with a total value of \$52bn.

The developing and transition economies are the major beneficiaries. West Africa saw investments rise by 69%, while South-East Asia went up by 17% to a new high, and Latin America-Caribbean by 13%. But those were larger shares of a whole cake that was getting smaller: total investment flows fell from \$1.7 trillion in 2008 to \$1.2 trillion in 2009. Unctad predicts “a slow recovery in 2010” to \$1.4 trillion, gaining momentum in 2001 to \$1.8 trillion.

Belgian inward and outward investment 2007-2008:

	2007	2008
Inward	110 773	59 680
Outward	93 901	68 278

EU bribes claim investigation

The federal prosecutor’s office is investigating claims that Belgian consultancies helped companies pay bribes to win contracts worth millions of euro from the European Union. The consultancies are thought to have used French-based lobbyists to pay bribes to gain important inside information on forthcoming contract offers in order to give their clients an unfair advantage. The



investigation is thought to have started last year, and involve the federal prosecutor, the Central Anti-Corruption Service, the EU’s own anti-fraud office Olaf, and French magistrates.

A major part of the contracts concerned reconstruction aid to former East bloc countries including Ukraine. Competing bidders are thought to have raised the alarm when the same consortium of Belgian consultants repeatedly succeeded in engaging the best local contractors before the contract terms were even officially known, as well as preparing the best bid documents. All public contracts in the EU above a certain value have to be opened up to public tender, with the procedures strictly laid out to make competition as fair as possible.

of hand again at the beginning of the 1990s. Since 2004, Belgium has had a net trade deficit, which according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) accounts for half of the country’s current negative economic growth.

Elsewhere, a study carried out by the think-tank VKW Metena and the University of Hasselt claims

that Belgium’s wage-cost handicap is too great to be compensated for by positive factors such as government policy, an entrepreneurial climate or flexible labour laws. In a list drawn up of competitive position, Belgium slipped from ninth to 12th place in the rankings of 32 industrial countries. Sweden and Finland led the table.

Wage costs crippling competition

Belgium has lost 20% of its international market share over the years since 1990, as a result of its high wage costs, according to VKW, the entrepreneurs’ organisation. Belgian wage costs were a major disadvantage to trade in the 1970s, the organisation explains in its latest “September note” to

the government, reaching a point where Belgium was 15% more costly than its closest competitors.

In 1982 the government of Wilfried Martens brought in measures to reduce wage costs, but the effect was short-lived, VKW says, and things began to get out

Maeterlinck meets Potter

Gaasbeek takes the notion of “castle” to surreal heights in new exhibition

ANNA JENKINSON

By the time I came out of the *Castles in the Air*, my head was spinning. I'd been swept through two-and-a-half centuries of European history, taking in architecture, art, literature, film and music based on a theme of castles and the imagination.

Never before have I been witness to one show that featured works by MC Escher, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Maurice Maeterlinck, a Harry Potter film, a photo of Michael Jackson and a video by pop star Lily Allen.

As that suggests, the *Castles in the Air* is both serious and playful. “This exhibition is very much about fiction and reality and the fusion of both,” says Luc Vanackere, the director of Gaasbeek Castle, as he leads me around the cavernous venue.

The first room we enter has three objects that capture the scope of the exhibition: a clock in the form of a castle-like structure representing the Gothic Revival, a dreamy and atmospheric pre-Raphaelite painting of a couple taking a stroll as moonlight shines down on a castle and a modern, castle-inspired tea service by Aldo Rossi.

During the Gothic Revival, a period lasting from around 1750 through the Victorian age, “history was conceived as theatre,” Vanackere says. “Everyone has their own kind of Middle Ages. You can fill it in very freely, and that’s what they did over the centuries.”

Imaginations and dreams ran wild. Just think of King Ludwig II of Bavaria’s Neuschwanstein castle, which in turn inspired Walt Disney for his castle in *Sleeping Beauty*.

No less fantastical is a wedding cake model from 1800 by the architect-pâtissier Antonin Carême. The piece, on show in Gaasbeek’s kitchen, is inspired by mediaeval themes and is an astonishingly intricate structure with its turrets and crenellations. Carême considered architecture to be the most important of all the arts, and patisserie the most important branch of architecture.

Down in the cellar, meanwhile, is a sandcastle several metres long, sculpted by Flemish artist Kim De Ruysscher, the song “Les châteaux de sable” (“Sandcastles”) by Georges Brassens playing in the background. By conjuring up an image of children building sandcastles at the seaside only to see them swept away by the tide, the work acts as a metaphor for the futility of our actions. Once again the serious and the light-hearted rub up against each other.

Up in the castle’s tower is a steel tower structure, made last year by Flemish artist Wim Delvoye and part of the artist’s *Gothic Works* collection (another of which graces the Venice skyline this year for the biennale). Every storey of



Flemish artist Charles Doudelet's illustration for Maurice Maeterlinck's *Twelve Songs*

this 5.4-metre tower is covered in intricate detail. Vanackere describes the work as “exaggerated gothic”, pointing out that it would never be able to actually exist because the base is far too small for its height.

The exhibition weaves its way through the impressive rooms of Gaasbeek castle, indeed piled with art on any regular day. To make it clear which items belong to the temporary exhibition, curator Koen Van Syngel designed *studiolos*, desk-like structures upon which objects, books and pictures are mounted.

Items include a first edition of the poetry collection *Douze Chansons (Twelve Songs)* by Maeterlinck, Belgium’s only winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, with beautiful illustrations by Charles Doudelet; a clip from the Alfred Hitchcock film *Rebecca*, with its infamous mansion; and a chilling monochrome by Toulouse-Lautrec entitled “La chatelaine” or “The Lady of the Manor”.

In one of the bedrooms, there’s a photograph above a bed of Michael Jackson holding a crown and dressed in a red and black Renaissance outfit. Gaasbeek Castle acquired the photograph at a New York auction earlier this year before the pop star’s death. The castle’s winding stairwells are used to maximum effect, with one uneven staircase being used to show a Harry Potter film clip of the moving staircase at Hogwarts, and another turned into a mirror gallery evoking Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass*.

New York-based artist Aleksandar Duravcevic uses a mirror, too, to reflect a pony-sized model of a white unicorn. The unicorn is “one of the most magical images of the Middle Ages,” says Vanackere. “It’s utopia, the embodiment of a very extreme fantasy.”

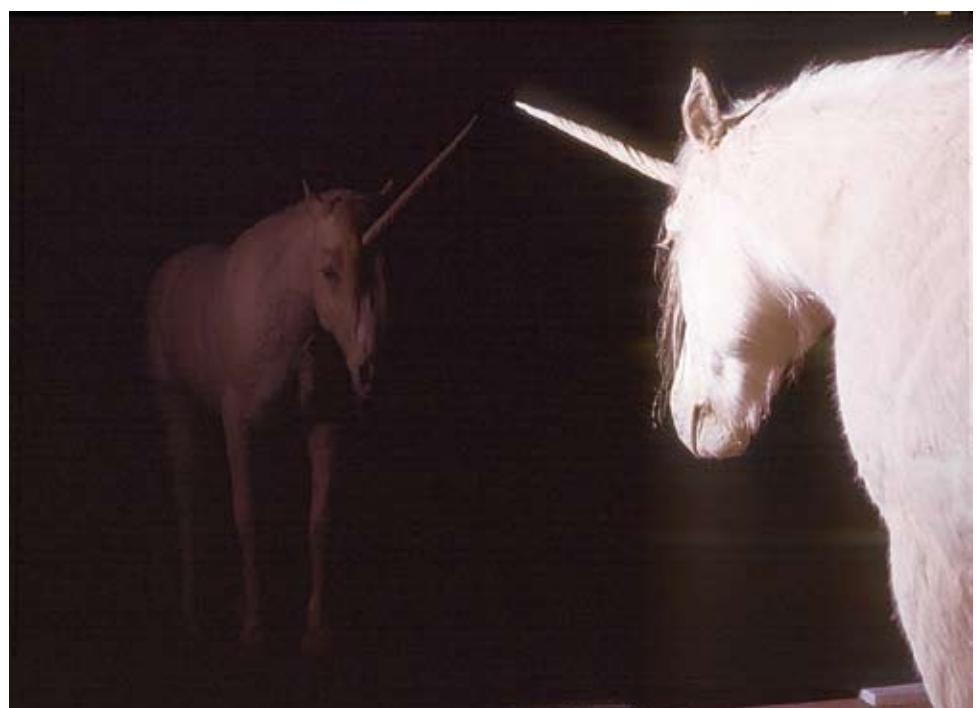
Escher’s work makes an appearance with “Luchtkasteel”, or “Castle in the Air”, from which the show borrows its name. In his typical black-and-white style, a castle floats in the air and a girl sits below on the back of a turtle as it swims through the castle’s reflection. She holds her arms up towards the sky.

The exhibition sweeps through centuries of castles, from the

late 18th-century Strawberry Hill, to European icons like Pierrefonds, De Haar and Neuschwanstein, and contemporary representations, such as Jan Fabre’s Tivoli Castle in Mechelen, which he covered entirely with thin paper coloured in ballpoint pen in 1990, making the castle glow in a brilliant purple-blue sheen.

Gaasbeek Castle itself, just a few kilometres southwest of Brussels, also features in *Castles in the Air*. At the end of the 19th century, Marquise Marie Arconati Visconti employed the architect Charle Albert to restore the castle, and his designs for the renovation are on display.

“Architecture is all about storytelling, and so is this exhibition,” asserts Vanackere. “It confronts us with things from both a distant and a more recent past – and thus with



Aleksandar Duravcevic reflects utopia with “Another Winter”

who we are and what our passions deal with. In fact, it’s an exploration of the numerous cultural layers that led to the ‘dream castle’ as a powerful genre, playfully mixing styles, meanings and even identities.”

Cultural layers, indeed. Paintings and photographs, opera and theatre, royal courts and cake-makers, actors and pop stars – it’s an endless list of connections from one exhibit to the next. Your starting point is a castle, but you end up tangled in a wonderful whirlwind of ideas. ♦



Bic art: Jan Fabre's ballpoint pen-covered Tivoli Castle

» www.kasteelvangaasbeek.be

Drink it in

Milk Inc launches Blackout at Sportpaleis

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Very rarely has an act at Belgium's biggest music festival, Rock Werchter, been as controversial as was that of Milk Inc last summer. "A scandalous concession to commercialism", the adversaries exclaimed. "A sign of open-mindedness", advocated others.

Matter of fact: Milk Inc. was very successful as the final act on the last day of the festival and got a lot of rave reviews.

Nonetheless, Milk Inc was *out of place* at Rock Werchter, an event that champions the left-of-centre mainstream. Whenever it selects electronic acts, it's the likes of Faithless or The Chemical Brothers, not a vocal trance band like Milk Inc.

Milk Inc. is the brainchild of Flemish producers Filip Van Dueren and Regi Penxten, who released their first single, "Cream", 13 years ago. After three different female singers during the first four years, Linda Mertens has been the voice of Milk Inc. since 2000.

Penxten is as present on the record sleeves and promo pics as Mertens and, since he's starring in his own real-life soap *Regi's World* on music channel Jim (the fifth season has just

started), he probably beats her in popularity. Moreover, his private life and relationships have become a favourite subject of the Flemish gossip magazines.

Van Dueren, on the contrary, is a big mystery. Pictures of him are scarce, and he's seldom seen without his hat. He does play with the band, but only during the so-called "full live shows". So you won't see him when they play on TV, for instance, but you might get a glimpse of him behind his keyboards if you head to the Sportpaleis in Antwerp next month, where Milk Inc performs six concerts dubbed Blackout.

They first played a show at the Sportpaleis in 2006 to celebrate their 10th anniversary. It sold out almost immediately, and the band has returned yearly to Flanders' biggest indoor venue. Since pop duo Clouseau started to play a string of shows at the Sportpaleis every year, it has become an almost religious belief among Flanders' popular acts that you have to fill the former sports temple to have the right to say that you've "made it" here.

Apart from Clouseau and soul singer Natalia, who loaded (together with the Pointer Sisters) the venue with



Trancetastic: Regi and Linda do their thing

her fans 10 times in 2006, Milk Inc has the best track record. Their coming shows will be visited by almost 100,000 people, who will experience a tightly organised performance driven by a stream of restless and relentless beats, decorated with fancy melodies, be it sung or spiralling from the keyboards. It's a big party with a joyful tone when Milk Inc is around.

But five years ago, dark shadows clouded over when Mertens caused a lethal accident in which the 87-year

old driver of the other vehicle died. She was given a suspended sentence for reckless driving, fined and had her driver's licence temporarily suspended.

Tragic as this incident might have been (Mertens' brother died before in a car crash), it didn't affect the career of Milk Inc., who have been stronger than ever in Belgium and the Netherlands. Although they've had hits in the UK, France, Spain and Germany, a consistent international career with a

level of success that's comparable to their success on their home turf, has so far eluded them. It's a goal to aim for, surely, during the next decade. ♦

**25-26 September
1-3 & 9 October**

**Sportpaleis
Schijnpoortweg 119, Antwerp**
→ milkinc.be

fashionista

STÉPHANIE DUVAL



Happy birthday, Bellerose

Bellerose has an inherently ambiguous nature. On the one hand, it is a label that is desired everywhere from Tokyo to New York for its typically Belgian, down-to-earth and classic look. On the other hand, that look originated in the all-American style of sweaters, T-shirts and a casual, laid-back wardrobe.

Checks and flannel may be highly covetable in fashion now, but Bellerose has been making them for 20 years. When the brand celebrated that anniversary with its very first fashion show on 10 September, it chose a "streets of New York" theme, including pretzels and popcorn, for the show and after party.

In recent years, Bellerose has evolved a lot. "Five years ago we took a turn," explains creative director Philippe Van Heurck. "We've become less classic, been using less logos. We're less American-minded, in favour of a more

pure look."

Although it may have less to do with American style, it has everything to do with New York style. "Today, our collection looks like what people are wearing in New York," says Van Heurck. Fashion influences and human cultures are mixed together, creating a basic look with a special twist.

In a tour of the company's headquarters in Groot-Bijgaarden, just outside Brussels, Van Heurck stops by a "mood board" filled with pictures taken by famous blogger Scott Schuman (better known as his website alter ego The Sartorialist). "Those are a huge source of inspiration to us," says Van Heurck, as he points out the cleverly inspired outfits worn by the random people on New York streets who Schuman photographs.

"We're still very proud of our Belgian roots, but we've become an international brand," explains Hilde De Bruycker from her perspective as sales coordinator. Much time and energy is spent building an international

network and expanding beyond the borders of Belgium.

Along with its slew of Belgian stores, Bellerose has retail outlets in Paris, Amsterdam and San Sebastian, Spain; the goal is to conquer more key European cities. "We feel Bellerose is a city brand, but we also want to find the exact right cities to introduce our shops," she says.

As for Belgium, Bellerose approaches every city and neighbourhood in a different way. The delicate boutique in Brussels' Dansaert cannot be compared to the comprehensive flagship store on Stefaanplein. "The way you present your brand can attract an entirely different clientele," explains De Bruycker.

That's why the new shop in the Drukkerijstraat in Antwerp is their most modern and innovative to date – to appeal to the fashion crowd. Judging from the enthusiastic group of press and friends at the opening party, they succeeded brilliantly.

→ www.bellerose.be

Revenge of the extras

Exhibition puts the film extra centre stage

IAN MUNDELL



Bulgarians fly to Mexico to fight in the Trojan War in Krassimir Terziev's "Background Action"

Sometimes you need to be an insider to get the most out of contemporary art shows. Not so in the case of *Actors & Extras* at the Argos Centre for Art and Media in Brussels, which explores one of the most familiar concepts in film and TV culture: There are people in front of the camera who are meant to grab your attention, and there are others who are only part of the background.

Actors speak, extras don't. Actors can look at the camera, extras can't. Actors have depth, extras are all surface. Actors matter, extras don't.

The 12 works in *Actors & Extras* all question these assumptions, either pushing at the boundary between the two roles or inverting them, bringing the extra into the spotlight. Most are video installations, and, while you can just dip into them, it's easy to spend hours exploring everything they have to say.

Some of the pieces are beautifully simple, such as Krassimir Terziev's "Remote Resemblances", a collection of photographs from the files of a Bulgarian talent agency. Each potential extra holds a card with his or her name, height and telephone number, looking into the camera in a way that would not be allowed if they were cast. Children are accompanied by adults who do not have cards, ap-

pearing as extras themselves.

Similarly, Portuguese artist João Onofre's "Casting" shows a group of young models waiting to step up to a camera and say a phrase, crossing the line between silent extra and performing actor as they do so.

Two of the most interesting pieces relate directly to the experience of the Hollywood production process. Terziev's "Background Action" explores the bizarre role of extras in Wolfgang Petersen's 2004 epic *Troy*. Filming was meant to take place in Morocco, but then the war in Iraq kicked off, and everything relocated to Mexico. The director still needed lots of fit, Mediterranean-looking guys to front the vast Greek and Trojan armies, and so 300 Bulgarian athletes were recruited and flown to Mexico for the three-month shoot.

Terziev uses interviews with the extras to explore the cultural and geographical dislocation involved, from the impact they had on the local population to the difficulty they sometimes experienced remembering that it was all just a film. The similarities with a real army, sent to a distant country to fight, are all too apparent. In addition to the interviews, there are photographs and home videos made by the extras. One video of an extra advancing towards the camera across a field has been

installed in a mirrored cabin, so that the single figure is infinitely multiplied on either side.

Israeli artist Omer Fast's "Spielberg's List" explores the massive set built by Steven Spielberg to make *Schindler's List*, recreations close to the original sites of the Krakow ghetto and Plaszow concentration camp. Nearly 20 years on, both are still standing and have become a tourist attraction. Part of this video installation follows a party of visitors on a guided tour, alongside interviews with locals who were extras in the film.

There is a sinister echo of films memorialising the Holocaust, with witnesses to Spielberg's production replacing those of real survivors, and fragments of the original movie intruding in the same way as newsreel footage. The effect of Hollywood recreating this devastating event on the spot, with people whose parents and grandparents would have been involved in one way or another, is never far from the surface.

The effect is multiplied by another exhibit, a propaganda film made by the Nazis in 1944 to show the world what a model community they had created for the Jews in the Czech ghetto town Terezin. Here the "extras" were all inmates of the ghetto and, like the director Kurt Gerron, most ended up

in Auschwitz. While not an "art work" in the same way, it makes a powerful companion piece: a real ghetto made to look false alongside a false ghetto made to look real.

Another theme is the way in which people are actors and extras in political events. Romanian artist Irina Botea matches TV footage of her country's 1989 revolution with recreations staged with students at the Art Institute of Chicago. There is a telling sense of confusion and unreality in both sets of "performances".

Better still is *The Battle of Orgreave*, a film by Mike Figgis documenting the recreation by British artist Jeremy Deller of a notorious 1984 clash between police and striking miners in South Yorkshire. Some of the participants in the recreation participated in the original event, and feelings run high as they reprise their roles in the same location. Jokes about winning this time around are clearly heartfelt. ♦

Until 19 December

Argos Centre
for Art and Media
Werfstraat 13, Brussels

► www.argosarts.org

CULTURE NEWS

Three prominent West Flemish families are investing in a new museum in Bruges. The Museum of History on the city's Markt square will cost €10 million, with the main investors the De Nolf and Claeys families, who control the media group Roularta, and the Vandamme family. The museum is due to open in 2012.

Music for Life, Studio Brusel's annual fundraiser, will return to Ghent this December. The popular event, where DJs broadcast from a glass room for several days while revellers dance outside to song requests they pay for, raises money for malaria, in cooperation with the Red Cross. Last year's action raised €3.5 million for refugee mothers.

The annual **Prize for Literature** of the Flemish Provinces has been awarded to Joris Van Parys and Jürgen Pieters. The award is given to two literary genres a year, this year's being monographs and essays. Van Parys won for his biography of 19th and 20th-century author and playwright Cyriel Buysse, *Het leven, niets van het leven* (*Life and Nothing But Life*). Pieters, meanwhile, won for his collection of essays on the meeting of literature and history, *De tranen van de herinnering* (*The Tears of Memory*).

Anne and Tom, the runners-up in this year's popular **Mijn Restaurant!** series, are re-opening their restaurant, Bigarreaux, in another location in Sint-Truiden. Located in a historic cellar under the Heilig Hartplein, the restaurant will be "homely, pleasant and young," the friends said, serving classic dishes using local Haspengouw ingredients.

Flemish public broadcaster VRT will meet with representatives of the music industry to discuss an alternative to the **bi-annual Eurosong**, the show that selects a candidate to represent Belgium at the European Song Festival (the entrant is chosen by the French-language RTBF in alternate years). While the format is popular with viewers, VRT said, it has failed to produce a strong Belgian entry in recent years. One name suggested to represent Belgium next year is Natalia, below, who came to fame after winning second in TV talent contest Idol in 2003.



Museum make-over

REBECCA BENOOT

Antwerp's contemporary art museum adds to its collection but drops a vowel

The Museum van Heden-daagse Kunst Antwerpen, or Antwerp Museum of Contemporary Art, might find itself forever being referred to as "the museum formerly known as MuHKA".

The huge centre in Antwerp's 't Zuid neighbourhood closed its doors last April for some serious spring renewal, and this month opened its doors with a new look, new exhibitions and a (sort of) new name: M HKA.

Because the "u" was never anything more than an aid to make the museum's abbreviation pronounceable, Flemish artist and designer Christophe Terlinden, hired to re-create the logo, decided to get rid of it and bring the name back to its essence. Although everyone will keep on pronouncing it the same way, visually, the "u" is a thing of the past, as is the case for a lot of things in the new M HKA.

The original plan was to redo the infrastructure and add a coat of paint here and there, but in the end M HKA's make-over has been more radical, particularly externally. Formerly a largely unremarkable beige building (part grain silo), it has now become a landmark worthy of its reputation: light and breezy colours and giant, black letters clearly marking its territory.

It also houses art on the outside now: London-based Italian artist

Enrico David, nominee for this year's prestigious Turner Prize, decorated the facade with simple line drawings punctuated by bright, yellow dots. Even the museum's little brother, MuHKA Media, got a make-over, and this voyeuristic venue a few houses down, home to art-house and classic films, is now called Cinema Zuid.

The social fabric

During M HKA's renovation project, its entire collection was divided between several cultural centres in Belgium rather than tucked away in storage. They also lent art to the *All That is Solid Melts into Air* exhibition in Mechelen, as well as to the *Story of the Image* exhibition of Antwerp art in Singapore. Next, they will collaborate on exhibitions in Havana and Charleroi.

This means that a majority of the museum's permanent collection is on tour, which has cleared up its wide, open internal spaces for a couple of excellent temporary shows. On the ground level, we find *Textiles: Art and the Social Fabric*, which focuses on how the use of textiles reveal complex socio-political undercurrent in modern societies – in clothing, certainly, but also more overtly, in flags and banners.

Textiles is big and bold, to say the least, filled with vibrant colours and huge, occasionally bombas-

tic, pieces ranging from 20th-century flags from various progressive Flemish political parties, to American artist John Dugger's "Chile Vencera" banner to Sheela Gowda's sculpture made from exquisite Indian fabric.

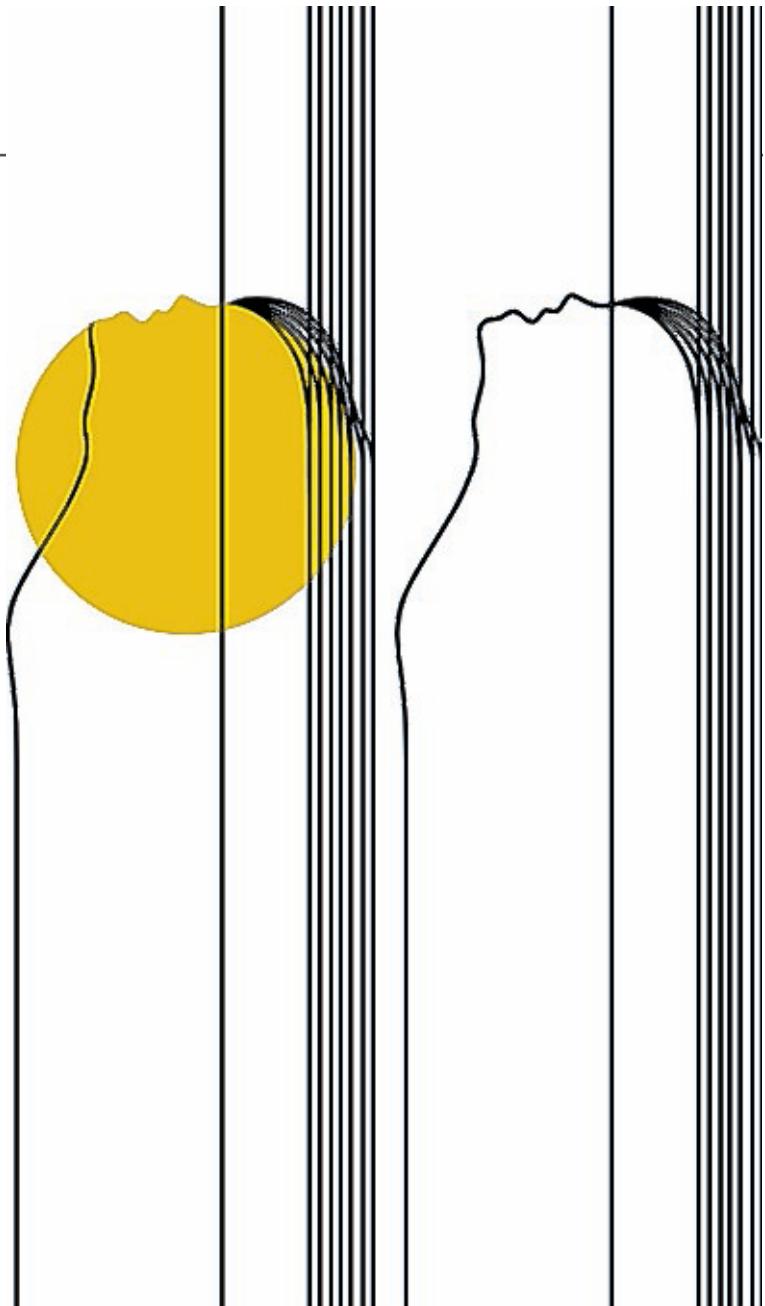
One of the highlights is "On the Nature of the Beast" by Polish artist Goshka Macuga. Her large-scale carpet (which she made here) combines a press photo taken in the Whitechapel Gallery in London showing Prince William with Picasso's "Guernica" in the background. Not only does she emphasise that political intentions often fade into the background in deference to the razzle dazzle, she also links in the royal history of the textile industry in Flanders, which flourished during the Middle Ages. (Flanders is still a renowned expert when it comes to handling fabric.)

Until February, you will also find M HKA's contribution to the country-wide Europa China festival, but the museum has wisely purchased the works by Yang Fudong, Xu Zhen and Yang Zhenzhong to add to its permanent collection. *Useful Life* is a reconstruction of the exhibit that in the year 2000 played a key role in the development of contemporary Chinese art. Shown during the first year international artists were allowed to take part in the Shanghai Biennale, M HKA's intention is to spotlight this crucial moment in China when a shaft of light entered the darkness of censorship and government-controlled art events.

With video art, photography and installations, *Useful Life* is filled with subtle aesthetics and tranquillity and yet is often confrontational. Yang Zhenzhong's film "I will die", for example, is poignant even when political. The artist asked random people to utter the phrase: "I will die". Hearing these three simple words over and over becomes utterly unnerving, particularly when being said by the elderly or the military.

Bigger is better

Collection XXIV, meanwhile, incorporates M HKA's latest additions. They have widened their take on art from a historic point



Enrico David's elegant illustrations decorate M HKA's new façade

of view to a more global one with an expansion into contemporary Eastern art, such as sculptures by India's Boran Handsa and the politically charged collages of CK Rajan.

European art has not been ignored, however: Dutch artist Hans Eijkelboom's "Fotonotities 1992-2007" consists of groups of photographs of people wearing similar types of clothing – the ways in which the famous image of Che Guevara have infiltrated fashion is a wry visual commentary on the consumerism of politics. Dutch artist Job Koelewijn's "Boys and Girls" also takes on fashion and the artificiality of everyday life: life-size, Barbie-shaped doll packages will be inhabited by real people during several upcoming performances.

Although the collection boasts the biggest changes at M HKA, there are other alterations to be

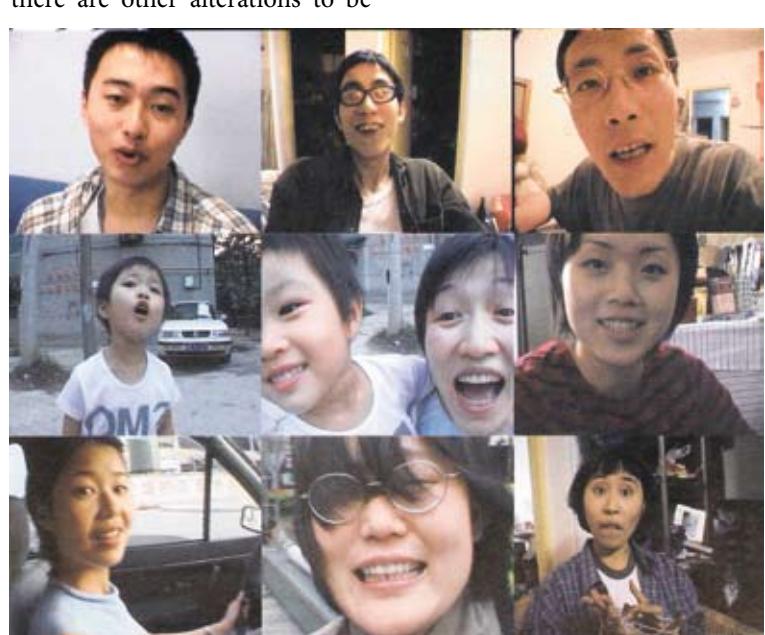
noted. The roof-top terrace and M HKA's, which houses a mural by iconic American artist Keith Haring, are also now accessible to the non-museum-going crowd. On your way up to the fourth floor lies a small retrospective exhibition that shows the past 20 years of M HKA (and it has been quite a journey).

The fifth and sixth floors, finally, are used for the ongoing *Lonely at the Top* series, which this season is subtitled "A Larger Europe", focussing on art and culture from regions little known to western Europe. Russia and former USSR republics are on until 8 November: the late Moscow conceptual artist Dmitry Prigov's remarkable installation "The Transcendental Descent of the Bear" make it well worth the climb. ♦

► www.muhka.be



Boy and Girls: appropriate gender presentations, courtesy of Job Koelewijn



Everybody dies: Yang Zhenzhong's film is simple and terrifying

Nature! Nature!

Our intrepid reporter watches others conquer field and stream

ALAN HOPE

There are few places you'd want to be outdoors more than in Flemish Brabant, with its lush landscapes and that very particular light that inspired the Netherlandish primitives of the northern Renaissance. It's incomparable when the weather is fine, but a fine drizzle never did anybody any harm – and it adds to the atmosphere.

That's how it struck us when my family visited Natur-Natur recently, and it's how it must have struck Bart Smulders eight years ago. Smulders was then running an events organisation business, explains his wife, Evi De Pré, when they moved to Korbeek-Dijle, which sits in the Dijle valley near Leuven. The landscape convinced him there was gold in them there rolling hills, and Natur-Natur was born.

"We get all sorts here, all year round," says De Pré. "Business groups, schools and also individuals, alone or in groups." Natur-Natur offers a variety of outdoor activities, grouped into four categories which sound like Ikebana versions of the four elements: Akva, Tero, Fajro and Airo.

Akva (Water)

The most straightforward activity in the water group is a trip by canoe or kayak from Korbeek to Heverlee. Unlike popular recreational rivers, like the Lesse in Wallonia, the Dijle is slow moving and the level doesn't, in normal circumstances, vary so very wildly. Heverlee is where most of the

water trips end, about 90 minutes down river. That's long enough for most people, but if you are a diehard, you can also go on into the heart of Leuven, just as the Vikings tried to do in 891, only to be repelled by Arnulf of Carinthia.

Just like the Vikings, you'll have to make your own way back on foot from Heverlee (leaving your kayak behind for a later pick-up). For the Leuven run, though, a guide comes along to provide some instruction. Along with a ride back to Korbeek, there's a glass of jenever thrown in, which is something the Vikings might have benefited from.

You can also ride a raft trip to Heverlee, which takes about two hours, but you'll have to make it yourself. All materials are provided, as well as expert guidance. We took a bunch of 11-year-olds to celebrate my son's birthday, and they managed to make two perfectly seaworthy vessels.

Tero (Earth)

Natur-Natur offers mountain bike rental, with or without guides. Bikes can be delivered to you wherever you are, and you can combine bike rental with another group activity, like wine tasting or a photo rally.

If you should happen to see groups of people rushing frantically about in a state of high anxiety while consulting a Blackberry, they're probably not KBC bond traders. More likely they're playing Citygame: teams of six to 10



Kids take to the Dijle River in a raft they made themselves at Natur-Natur

people each have a PDA and receive clues in the form of text, images and sounds, which take them through the centre of Leuven, while trying to unmask the "smuggler" in their midst.

Citygame is the old sport of orienteering for people who have forgotten what maps are for. You can also take part in an orienteering walk in the Dijle Valley, again following a set of clues, but this time in a more old-fashioned way, with pen and paper. There's also a photo orienteering exercise with digital camera provided. The photos are proof that you reached all of the checkpoints; at the

end of the day, you get to take away a photo album.

Fajro + Airo (Fire, Air)

The element of fire is represented by outdoor cooking on the grill or BBQ, under the supervision of a professional chef. Airo, meanwhile, is a *hoogteparcours* where you walk along cables strung among the tree-tops. This reporter succumbed to an attack of vertigo just looking up at it and had to be revived on the terrace with some Beero – something else for which Brabant is justly famous.

Whatever the activity, you're advised to wear comfortable clothing and solid shoes, bring reserve clothes and a towel (this turned out to be no idle precaution for the rafters), plus sun cream and rainwear, because this is, after all, Flanders

Natur-Natur also organises more sedate workshops under the name of Crea: jewellery, watercolours, face- and body-painting, weaving and other similar New Age pursuits. ♦

► www.natur-natur.be

Tyre tracks

DAVE MEYER



Nieuwpoort to De Panne

This is the quintessential Belgian coast ride, beginning in Nieuwpoort and running inland parallel to the coast through towering sand dunes and a series of picturesque villages.

From the parking area at the Sint-Bernardusplein in Nieuwpoort-aan-Zee head inland along the well-shaded Georges Rodenbachlaan and then Floribert Gheeraertlaan. At the T-intersection, turn right

and follow signs for bike path 66. More towering trees shade the way, and the only noise comes from farmers out in their fields.

The road soon comes out of the wood into a residential area, passing the immaculate gardens of Ter Duinen on the left. At the busy intersection, make a quick left and then right, still following route 66.

Here you'll find clusters of the red-stucco houses that are so typical of the Flemish coast. Stick with path 66 as the sand dunes make their first appearance on the right. The path continues to wind and then switches to 65, crossing the dunes at a low-point.

Fortunately there is a paved path that lets bikers explore this unique stretch of nature – turn left here, and follow the trail through the dunes. Donkeys, of all things,

mill about on the sand, nibbling on the sprouting grasses. The path begins rising and falling through an area of more typical red-roofed Flemish houses, though these, on a hilltop, must offer great views of the sea.

Stick with path 65; when entering into the town of Koksijde, follow signs for route 1 to De Panne. On the way out of town, the road is a little busy, but soon enough the path breaks off to the right onto a small, quiet lane.

At the next major road, at the intersection with the windmill to the left, make another quick right and left, sticking with path 1 all the while.

The next residential stretch boasts a remarkable diversity of flowers, both along the houses and in the public spaces. Eventually the path curves out towards

the coast, and when you reach the road with the tram tracks, the sea rumbling on the far side, follow the road along the raised dirt path to the left for the rest of the way into De Panne.

Here you can either head right to the sea or continue along path number 1 into downtown De Panne and its central square, or even on farther to the last stop on the coast tram – and the train station for a ride home.

Distance:
15 kilometres
Difficulty:
Easy
Time:
One hour

• Agenda •

Recht in de Ogen

Releasing across Flanders this week, *Recht in de Ogen* (Right in the Eye) is documentary played like drama by eight Flemish youth in vocational education

→ www.rechtindeogen.be



English Theatre of Bruges

LISA BRADSHAW

English speakers across the country can say "welcome back" to the English Theatre of Bruges, which is staging productions again after an 18-month silence. With a new home in the busiest tourist block of the city, the theatre opens its autumn season with *Eighteen Stupid Reasons Why I Love You Lots and Lots* (pictured).

The company realised soon after starting up in 2007 that the kind of theatre they were booking – intimate fringe productions – was all wrong on the stage of the 350-seat cinema they called home. They also had a very hard time marketing themselves to both tourists and residents in the historic city.

Since reopening two months ago in a little space in the Walplein with 30 seats, the English Theatre is having better luck. Not only is the Walplein just next to the city's landmark Minnewater lake and park in the heart of the tourist district, it is connected to the popular Halve Maan Brewery, which sends theatre-goers their

way.

They have also found that offering something during the day is bringing in the customers. "Tourists want to eat and drink in the evening; they don't always want to go to the theatre," explains Clare Allen, who runs the theatre together with her partner, Nick. So they launched *Bruges Abridged*, a short, one-man comedy tour of the history and landmarks of Bruges (Nick is the one man). They stage the show five times a day.

Eighteen Stupid Reasons, meanwhile, is an evening production by Cheap Seats Theatre out of Manchester. The winner of the Best New Writing award at this year's Buxton Festival Fringe, it's a surreal *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* sort of set-up, with a young man trying to relive the memories of times spent with the girl who just left him. With a bit of sex and strong language, it paves the way for the theatre's November show *Lady in Bed*, a one-

woman show by Londoner Alison Goldie in which she plays herself, her past self and her past lovers. It doesn't hurt to show up a bit early for shows in order to browse through the bookshop the couple runs next to the theatre. The only dedicated English bookshop in Bruges, it sells both new and second-hand books. ♦

Eighteen Stupid Reasons Why I Love You Lots and Lots
2-4 October, 20.00
English Theatre of Bruges
Walplein 23

→ www.tematema.com

MORE ENGLISH THEATRE THIS WEEK

nieuwZwart → **KVS, Brussels**

Fin de Siècle → **Warehouse Studio, Brussels**

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me → **Warehouse Studio, Brussels**

Recht in de Ogen

Releasing across Flanders this week, *Recht in de Ogen* (Right in the Eye) is documentary played like drama by eight Flemish youth in vocational education

→ www.rechtindeogen.be



FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

SEP 28 19.00 This Is Hell + Grave Maker + The Fifth Alliance + One Ethic

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
SEP 23-25 20.00 Young@Heart
SEP 29 20.00 Ben Allison & Man Size Safe

Hasselt
Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; www.muziekodroom.be
SEP 25-26 22.00 Play Festival: Fagget Fairys, Sound of Stereo, Friction, Partyharders, Krause and Icicle

Mechelen
Cultuurcentrum
Minderbroedersgang 5; 015.29.40.00,
www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
SEP 25 20.15 Ansatz der Maschine

Ostend
Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00, www.kursaalostende.be
SEP 26 Clouseau

Vilvoorde
CC Het Bolwerk
Bolwerkstraat 17; 02.255.46.90, www.hetbolwerk.be
SEP 25 20.30 Urban Trad
SEP 26 20.30 Kocani Orkestar



Antwerp
deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
SEP 26 20.00 Brussels Jazz Orchestra & Brass Band Willebroek

Bruges
De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29, www.ccdewerf.be
SEP 25 20.30 Herb Robertson Macroquartet

Brussels
Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24, www.abconcerts.be
SEP 25 Klaus Schulze with Lisa Gerrard

De Markten
Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25, www.demarkten.be
SEP 24 12.30 Attic Sweat

Fuse
Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89, www.fuse.be

SEP 26 23.00 Tiefschwarz

SEP 30 23.00 VW Campus on tour:

M&M Soundsystem, Red D with Lady Linn, Laston & Geo, Cole

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15, www.cirque-royal.org

SEP 26-27 20.30 Roger Hodgson (ex-Supertramp)

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.226.12.57
Concerts at 20.00:

SEP 24 Les Nuits du Soir: Dan San, Hong Kong Dong, Lucy Lucy, more

SEP 27 Reverend and the Makers

SEP 28 Future of the Left SEP 29 Père Ubu

SEP 30 We Have Band

Sazz'n Jazz
Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78, www.sazznjazz.be

SEP 24 21.00 Patty & The Presidents

Vorst-Nationaal
Victor Rousseaalaan 208; 0900.00.991

SEP 25 20.30 Lara Fabian

SEP 26 20.00 Natalia

Woluwe-Saint-Pierre Cultural Centre
Charles Thielemanslaan 93; 02.773.05.81, www.art-culture.be

SEP 26 20.30 Jr Walker's All Star Band

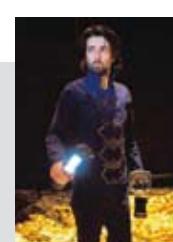
Ghent
Frontline
Overpoortstraat 37; 09.223.22.27 www.thefrontline.be

SEP 25 20.30 Stéphane Mercier-Charles Loos Quartet

SEP 26 20.30 Roby Lakatos/Michael

Blass Quartet, gypsy violin

SEP 30 20.30 European Free Trio



♦ Agenda ♦

FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01, www.handelsbeurs.be
SEP 24 20.00 Guy Forsyth

Jezus-Eik (Overijse)

De Bosuil
Wetherendreef 1; 02.657.31.79, www.debosuil.be
SEP 24-26 Jazz Hoeilaart, festival of young international musicians



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00, www.zuiderpershuis.be
SEP 25 20.30 Azmaris van Addis Abeba
SEP 26 20.30 Le Tigre des Platanes & Eténesh Wassié (Ethiopia)

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20, www.art-base.be
SEP 26 20.00 Stephanie Bosch & Arup Sen Gupta, Indian classical music

Beursschouwburg
Auguste Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be
SEP 30 22.00 William Street

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
SEP 26 20.00 Abderrahim Souiri & Ensemble, Arab/Andalusian song (Moussem Festival)

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45, www.themusicvillage.com
SEP 24 20.30 Urbango, Latin tango

Théâtre Molière

Naamse Poortgalerij - Bolwerksquare 3; 02.217.26.00, www.muziekpubliek.be
SEP 26 20.00 Ibrhima Sarr & Porte 386
SEP 30 12.30 Broodje Brussel: Shahram Mirjalali & Fallah Safa Arash (Iran)

Heist-Op-Den-Berg (Antwerp)

CC Zwaneberg
Berkenstraat 1; 015.25.07.70, www.zwaneberg.be
SEP 27 20.30 Kocani Orkestar, Balkan fanfare



Aalst

De Werf
Molenstraat 51; 053.73.28.12, www.ccdewerf.be
SEP 25 20.00 Bl!ndman plays Buxtehude

Antwerp

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28, www.desingel.be
SEP 24 20.00 Jörg Widmann, clarinet; Guido de Neve, violin; Didier Poskin, cello; Bojan Vodenitsjarov, piano: Widmann, Messiaen
SEP 25 20.00 The English Choir Stile Antico performs Song of Songs, Renaissance polyphony

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02, www.concertgebouw.be
SEP 24 20.00 Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin: Strauss, Mahler
SEP 25-27 20.00 Gustav Leonhardt weekend: the Dutch conductor and keyboardist will perform and participate in discussions

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be
SEP 24 20.00 Liège Philharmonic conducted by François-Xavier Roth: Handel, Haydn and Holst
SEP 25 20.00 Gothenburg Symphony conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, with Anna Larsson, alto: Beethoven, Mahler, Nielsen
SEP 27 11.00 Jonathan De Ceuster, countertenor; Wim Maeselle, lute: Dowland, Johnson, Bachelet
SEP 29 20.00 Les Musiciens du Louvre-Grenoble conducted by Marc Minkowski: three of Haydn's Paris symphonies

Miniemenkerk

Miniemenstraat 62; 02.511.93.84, www.minimes.net
SEP 27 10.30 Miniemenkerk Orchestra and Choir: Bach cantatas BWV 46, 102

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30, www.mim.fgov.be

SEP 27 11.00 Jan Michiels, piano: Beethoven

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37, www.kcb.be

SEP 24 20.00 Piet Kuijken, piano: Schumann's repertoire (1838-39) (free)

SEP 28 20.00 Ray Chen (1st prize winner Queen Elisabeth Competition 2009), violin; Andrew Tyson, piano: Tartini, Franck, Bach

DON'T MISS

Climbing Spielberg

Opens 23 September

Cinemas across Flanders

Once upon a time, three Flemish film students flew to Hollywood to seek a meeting with Steven Spielberg. With no contacts, no money and very few credits to their names, they stalked red carpet events and handed out cards to celebrities asking to be put in touch with America's most famous director. Naïve, right? Watch the trio's documentary to find out the amazing conclusion to this charming story of good old-fashioned determination.

→ www.climbingspielberg.com



Ghent

De Bijloke Muziekcentrum
J Kluykensstraat 2; 09.233.68.78, www.debijloke.be

SEP 24 20.00 deFilharmonie, conducted by Philippe Herreweghe with Yossif Ivanov, violin: Mozart, Beethoven

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01, www.handelsbeurs.be

SEP 28 20.15 Werner Van Mechelen, bass-baritone; Liesbeth Devos, soprano; Lucas Blondeel, piano: Wolf's Italian songs

Hasselt

Cultuurcentrum
Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.33, www.ccha.be

SEP 26 20.00 Yossif Ivanov, violin: Mozart, Beethoven



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02, www.vlaamseopera.be

Until OCT 3 15.00/20.00 Wozzeck by Alban Berg, directed by Guy Joosten, with the Flanders Opera Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbin, and Choir conducted by Yannis Poussourikas

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39, www.demunt.be

Until SEP 29 15.00/19.30 Handel's Semele, directed by Zhang Huan, with Les Talens Lyriques and De Munt chorus conducted by Christophe Rousset



Antwerp

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.48.48, www.

desingel.be

SEP 30-OCT 3 20.00 Apocrifu, choreographed by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui

Brussels

Halles de Schaerbeek

Koninklijke Sint-Mariastraat 22b; 0900.26.060, www.halles.be

SEP 23 19.00 Fly Girl, choreographed by Marie Caroline Hominal + Cie Daniel Lineham in Not About Everything

SEP 24 20.30 La Ribot presents Llámame Mariachi

SEP 25 20.30 Cie Olga Mesa presents Solo a ciegas (con lágrimas azules) + Páquerette, choreographed by François Chaignaud and Cécilia Bengolea

SEP 26 19.30 Retrospective Exhibitionist, choreographed by Miguel Gutierrez + Self & Others, choreographed by Alain Buffard

Kaaitheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59

Until SEP 27 15.00/20.30 De Munt and Rosas in The Song, choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François (Belgian première)

KVS Bol

Lakensestraat 146; 02.210.11.00, www.kvs.be

Until OCT 2 20.00 nieuwZwart, choreographed by Wim Vandekeybus (with texts in English)

Heist-Op-Den-Berg (Antwerp)

CC Zwaneberg

Berkenstraat 1; 015.25.07.70, www.zwaneberg.be

SEP 26 19.00 Cirq'ulation Locale - Rapid I Movement



Antwerp

Fakkeltreter

Reyndersstraat 7; 03.232.14.69, www.fakkeltreter.be

Until SEP 27 20.00 Den Derby, directed by Jos Dom (in Dutch)

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900, www.musichall.be

Until OCT 25 The Sound of Music, musical (in Dutch)

Theater aan de Stroom

Ijzerenwaag 6; 03.290.60.63, www.theateraandestroom.be

Until SEP 27 20.30 de

Fluistercompagnie presents Blankenberge by Tom Lanoye (in Dutch)

Bruges

Magdalena (MaZ)

Magdalenastraat 27; 050.44.30.60, www.ccbrugge.be

SEP 29-30 20.00 Compagnie Gisèle Vienne presents I Apologize (in Dutch)

Brussels

Bronkstheater

Varkensmarkt 15-17; 02.218.20.15, www.bronks.be

SEP 26-OCT 4 (times vary) Sleutelveld, staged by Klaas Tindemans (ages 10 and up; in Dutch)

The Warehouse Studio

Waelhemstraat 69a; 0492.64.16.60,

Until SEP 26 20.00 English Comedy Club presents Someone Who'll Watch Over Me by Frank McGuinness

SEP 29-OCT 3 20.00 Fin de Siècle: ETCetera presents three one-act comedies from around 1900: The Bear by Chekhov (in English with French and Spanish surtitles); L'Anglais tel qu'on le parle by Tristan Bernard (English, as Spoken) (in French with English and Spanish surtitles); Manana

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de sol (Sunny Morning) by Hermanos Alvarez Quintero (in Spanish with English and French surtitles) www.europeantheatreclub.eu

Koksijde

CC Casino

Casinoplein 11; 058.53.29.86 www.casinokoksijde.be

SEP 27 20.00 Compagnie Cecilia presents The Broken Circle Breakdown Featuring The Cover-Ups of Alabama, starring Johan Heldenbergh (in Dutch)

Oogem (Wielsbeke)

OC Leieland

Guido Gezellesstraat 55B; 056.67.32.70, cultuur@wielsbeke.be

SEP 27 20.00 West end legend Rosie Ashe performs Broadway hits with special guest Anne Mie Gils (musical theatre)



Visual Arts

Aalst

Netwerk: Centre for Contemporary Art

Houtkraai; 053.70.97.73, www.netwerk-art.be

Until NOV 7 Time as Activity: video art and installations by international artists on the theme of time

Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60, www.muhka.be

Until NOV 8 Lonely at the Top: A Larger Europe #1, art from republics of the former Soviet Union

Until JAN 3 Textiles: Art and the Social Fabric, installations, sculptures, film, flags and banner and special performances

Until FEB 26 Collectie XXIV: presentation of the museum's permanent collection, following the museum's renovation

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55, www.extracity.org

Until OCT 25 Guy Tillim: Avenue Patrice Lumumba, examination of modern history in Africa against the backdrop of its colonial and post-colonial architecture by South African photographer Guy Tillim

Until OCT 25 Lieven de Boeck: Dictionary of Space, Part II, letters and drawings from the 19th century to the present day

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.827.15.34, www.middelheimmuseum.be

Until SEP 27 Chris Burden, videos, sculpture and installations by the contemporary American artist

Mode Museum

28 Nationalestraat (03.470.27.70)

Until FEB 21 Delvaux: 180 Years of Belgian Luxury, history of the Belgian luxury leather goods house

Rockox House

Keizerstraat 12; 03.201.92.50, www.rockoxhuis.be

Until NOV 15 A Gift to God, private patronage of religious art during Antwerp's Golden Age

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams

Leven te Brussel

Arduinkaai 28; 02.209.06.01, www.amvb.be

Until OCT 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory and Migration: Heritage of New Brusselaars): film, documents,

texts and poems record the experience of Brussels' immigrants

Argos: Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03, www.argosarts.org

Until DEC 19 Actors & Extras, contemporary artists explore the contrast between the work of actors and extras in cinema

Danish Cultural Institute

Koningstraat 35; 02.5230.73.26, www.dkibenelux.org

Until OCT 22 Urban DK, graffiti art

Hallepoort

Zuidlaan; 02.534.15.18

Until OCT 25 Archeologie om de hoek (Archaeology around the corner), archaeological finds in Brussels over the past 20 years

DON'T MISS



Flanders Today and Erfgoed Vlaanderen

invite you to a

Tour in English

of Antwerp's Hofkamer building and the restoration of "The Gods on Mount Olympus", the largest painting in Belgium

Join the staff of *Flanders Today* as the expert guides of Erfgoed Vlaanderen (Heritage Flanders) tell you about the rich history of the Hofkamer, an 18th-century monument in Antwerp's oldest neighbourhood. You'll hear the incredibly story of how Belgium's largest painting was removed from its ceiling and transported to the nearby ING Bank, before walking to the bank itself for a demonstration of the painting's complex renovation, plus food and drink!

To join the 90-minute tour, send an email to editorial@flanderstoday.eu with "English tour" in the subject line. Let us know if there is one or two of you. A €5 fee is asked to cover costs.

Het Rijksarchief in België

Ruysbroeckstraat 2; 02.513.76.80

Until SEP 27 Border Case: Foreigners' Administration in Belgium 1832-1952, the evolution of administration for foreigners arriving in Belgium, including the file of French writer Victor Hugo

Horta Museum (Winter Garden)

Amerikastraat 25; 02.543.04.90, www.hortamuseum.be

Until OCT 31 Jean-Charles Delallante, sculpture

ISELP

Waterloosesteenweg 31; 02.504.80.70

Until OCT 17 Véronique Poppe: Human Capital, paintings; Françoise Joris, ceramics; Bénédicte Monaville, jewellery

Until NOV 14 Flesh, drawings by Dany Danino, sculpture by Hughes Dubuisson and ceramics by Sofi Van Saltbommel

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20, www.ccjacquesfranck.be

Until OCT 31 Marc Rossignol: Cacher/ Montrer, paintings and installation

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63, www.new.mjb-jmb.org

Until OCT 15 Een geheugen op papier (A memory on paper), Jewish life in Belgium recorded in historic postcards

MIVB Headquarters

Koloniënstraat 62; 02.515.20.52

Until SEP 26 Metro Art Memory, retrospective and genesis of 80 works in the Brussels' metro, with models, drawings and sketches by Pierre Alechinsky, Paul Delvaux and Hergé, among others

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30, www.mim.fgov.be

Until OCT 11 Alan Lomax in Italy '54-'55, photo exhibition honouring the late American ethno-musicologist

Nova Cinema foyer
Arenbergstraat 3; www.nova-cinema.org

Until OCT 10 Stephen Tunney (aka Dogbowl), drawings

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be

Until SEP 26 Compared to What?, an group photo exhibition about subculture

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11, www.fine-arts-museum.be

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakkers; 03.789.22.07, www.verbekefoundation.com

Until NOV 15 Artificial Nature, outdoor sculpture and installations by contemporary Belgian and European artists

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.20.09.09, www.mleuven.be

Until DEC 6 Rogier van der Weyden 1400 | 1464 Master of Passions, work by the 15th-century Brussels city painter, the first exhibition in Leuven's new museum

Ypres

CC Ieper - Lakenhalle

Grote Markt 34; 057.23.94.80, www.acci.be

Until OCT 4 Wat overblijft (What remains), recycled assemblages by Flemish artist Camiel Van Breedam



Beaufort 03 - Art by the Sea

Third edition of the contemporary art triennial, with works by 29 Belgian and international artists

Until OCT 4 at outdoor locations up and down the Belgian coast as well as in Ostend's Kunstmuseum aan zee 070.22.50.05, www.beaufort03.be

Europalia China

Festival celebrating Chinese art and culture – ancient to contemporary – with more than 450 events

Until JAN 30 across the country www.europalia.eu

Festival of Flanders

Major annual event encompassing seven festivals across Flanders, with dozens of cities staging hundreds of classical and contemporary performances and related events

Until OCT 30 across Brussels and Flanders www.festivalvanvlaanderen.be

Antwerp

Ethiopian Blend

A Zuiderpershuis project showcasing Ethiopian culture with concerts, exhibition, film and debate

Until SEP 27 at Zuiderpershuis, Waalse Kaai 14 03.242.81.11, www.zuiderpershuis.be

Brussels

Bruxellons 2009

Annual theatre festival featuring popular theatre, music, cabaret and a children's programme

Until SEP 26 at Château du Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3 02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Design September

Annual festival of contemporary architecture and multidisciplinary design, with more than 80 events: exhibitions, talks, screenings, an urban design trail, design market and a weekend of Open Doors in designers' studios

Until OCT 2 in venues across the city 02.349.35.95, www.designseptember.be

Keep Belgium Working

Job fair organised by Monster.be, including advice and seminars

SEP 30 11.00-19.00 at Arsenal, Waversesteenweg 950 0800.77.421, www.keepbelgiumworking.be

Brussels Museums Nights

Late-night opening of city museums every Thursday, plus guided visits and workshops, among other activities

SAFINA RANA

DUSK 'TIL DAWN



Freaky Friday

On the look out for a hot party to spice up your September nights? Forget techno when Leroy Thornhill from The Prodigy takes to the decks in Brussels at Fuse on Friday, 25 September. His pumping blend of dance floor favourites includes everything from house and hip-hop to the Ibiza anthems of the summer and invariably a mash of Prodigy hits that drive the crowd wild.

Joining him on the line up will be Belgian duo Ed & Kim, (Edwin Korver & Kim Mathijs) with their uplifting mix of electro and house with raw baselines. You can also catch them on their radio show Switch on Studio Brussels from 22.00 every Saturday night or listen online at www.stubru.be. However, if you fancy some really heavy bass, head to the Fulmar barge on the Brussels canal that same night for Stereo Bastards. DJ's Ganja White Night Live, Zitoun, R

FACE OF FLANDERS

Jan Vereecke

Jan Van Esbroeck

Next month will see the 25th anniversary edition of the Night of the Proms, a fantastically successful classical-meets-pop series, the brainchild of two Flemish guys who simply love music.

"The initial idea was not to make big bucks," says Jan Vereecke. "We wanted to do it just for the love of the music."

Vereecke had just completed his Applied Economics degree; his fellow student Jan Van Esbroeck was in his final year. They dreamed up the Night of the Proms model, and Van Esbroeck's used it as a case study for his thesis.

The students took on the organisation of their first Night of the Proms in 1985, convincing Belgium's own Toots Thielemans and English vocalist John Miles to perform before an audience of 13,500. Since then, the event has continually attracted big names in pop, combining classical music with artists as varied as Christopher Cross, Roger Daltrey, Meat Loaf and Sinead O'Connor.

The entrepreneurs implemented a central ticketing system



The two Jans: Mr Vereecke (left) and Mr Van Esbroeck were students when they launched Night of the Proms 25 years ago

whereby tickets were sent by mail after bank payment – revolutionary for Belgium at the time. This system resulted in a database of potential clients for the next edition. "The re-purchase rate was overwhelming," says Vereecke. Today, the Proms' spin-off, Tele Ticket Service, is considered both an innovative pioneer and reliable partner for all kinds of events.

John Miles and a dedicated crew have been the omnipresent elements throughout the 25 editions of the Night of the Proms in Antwerp – and now in the Netherlands (20 editions), Germany (16), France, Switzerland and Spain. "Our 200-strong

team make the artists feel comfortable in their core business: performing their greatest hits," says Jan Vereecke. "And the audience embraces the atmosphere: the Night of the Proms is a unique opportunity to listen to music like you've never heard it."

Night of the Proms is from 23 October to 10 November; tickets to shows featuring Roxette, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark and Sharon den Adel will sell fast. See the 14 October issue of Flanders Today for a full programme preview

→ www.notp.com

MARC MAES

FLANDERS TODAY
SEPTEMBER 23, 2009

ALISTAIR MACLEAN

TALKING DUTCH



gsm →

I can't imagine you're reading this while driving. If you are, do let me know. There's probably a law against it and quite right, too. Certainly you can get into trouble if you use your mobile phone while driving. Perhaps you think that since so many do it you'll never get caught. Well, if you live in or near Mechelen, you should watch out.

Recently in Mechelen 70 bellende bestuurders veschenen voor de rechter – 70 phoning drivers were forced to appear before the judge. A special gsm-zitting – mobile phone sitting of the court had been arranged for these drivers who had ignored the law on phone-driving. They had rejected een minnelijke schikking – an out-of-court settlement of €100.

piece of string. *Ik heb niet met mijn gsm gebeld, kijk naar de factuur* – I didn't phone with my mobile, look at the bill; I suppose he was photographed by the police. If not, he may have got off. *Ik heb hooguit vijftig meter gereden* – I drove 50 metres at most; that driver should be fined for laziness. *Ik had helemaal geen gsm vast, ik zat gewoon met mijn hand tegen mijn oor* – I wasn't holding a mobile at all, I was just sitting with my hand against my ear; if true, it seems that Mechelen's finest were keen to make up their numbers.

Those that got off were in the minority: most ended up having to pay a €150 fine.

Of course it's no joke. You can often recognise the phone-driver by their driving style. *Vier op tien gsmers ziet de verkeersborden niet* – four in 10 phone-drivers don't see the traffic signs. And one in 10 vergeet voorrang te verlenen – forgets to give way, which, if you have spent any time behind a wheel here, you'll know is asking for trouble.

Not that things are going to change much. I see the joys of the BlackBerry are being incorporated into cheaper gsm's: *BlackBerry voor het volk* – BlackBerry for the people. Lucky people.

This creates images of mass show trials in the good old USSR. Was there a cage set up to hold the 70? Had they all been shorn? Probably not. In any case, they each had their day in court to explain why they didn't deserve to be fined. The excuses bear testimony to our inventiveness when we're caught out. The judge must have had a hard time keeping a straight face.

Ik had de gsm maar twee seconden vast – I only had the mobile in my hand for two seconds; the trouble with two seconds is that it's as long as a

SHARON LIGHT

bite

't Goed ter Heule

It's the official beginning of autumn, which inevitably means I am about to be taunted by pumpkins. You might wonder how an innocent, inanimate squash can send me into a culinary depression. It's the monotony.

In America, this is the season when pumpkins of every shape and colour start filling grocers' produce sections. The standard round orange varieties are baked into pumpkin pie or pureed for pumpkin soup, when they aren't busy being carved into Jack-o-Lanterns; either way, the seeds are scooped out and roasted.

But there's so much more! Acorn squash is a requirement in November, baked with garlic and oil for a savoury side dish or with butter and brown sugar for a sweeter treat. Butternut squash becomes a creamy, comforting soup. And spaghetti squash...oh, the spaghetti squash.

So it was with absolute glee that I discovered 't Goed ter Heule. This organic, family-run farm in Lauwe, outside Kortrijk, features over 100 different types of pumpkins throughout September and October. The old stables of this charming 18th-century farmhouse are now the farm shop, where they lay out a stunning selection of squash each autumn.

Farmer Joline Dewitte explains that many people buy their pumpkins as decoration and might at a later date cook them up. To help you along, you are provided with a packet of pumpkin recipes with your purchase.



But 't Goed ter Heule goes even one better with a *zelfpluktuin*, a pick-your-own garden. Although the pumpkins are not included in you-pick-garden, they have a beautiful selection of other produce, including cabbages, beans, kale, strawberries, and gorgeous flowers. It's all organic, and prices are

very reasonable. We picked with reckless abandon and left with a box full of vegetables. (And bought, naturally, a box of pumpkins.)

The pumpkin shop and pick-your-own garden are open until 31 October. It's a real taste of autumn and makes for a great family outing.

How to make spaghetti squash: Pierce the squash several times with a sharp knife. Microwave for about 15 minutes or bake for an hour at about 200 degrees. Cut it open lengthwise, being careful of escaping steam; scoop out the seeds and set them aside. Run a fork across the flesh; it will separate into spaghetti-like strands. (ta da!) You can then add sauce and topping as you would with any other spaghetti, but my favourite addition is simply warm tomato sauce and crumbled feta cheese.

Now the seeds (of any squash): Rinse off the pulp and dry the seeds. Toss with a small amount of olive oil and salt and heat in a frying pan over a medium flame until the seeds brown lightly and start to pop – watch them carefully or they will burn. Cool, then start snacking!

→ www.tgoedterheule.be

The last word → → →

Gangs blamed

"We work so well that the drug gangs in our municipality are getting nervous. The riots are their response."

Molenbeek police chief Johan De Becker, following several nights of clashes between police and youths

Looking good

"I like to look good, so my make-up has to match my headscarf. I like to bring the same colours together."
Zehra, 22, interviewed in *De Standard* on the wearing of the hijab

Dirty justice

"We need a justice minister with a bad attitude. We need a minister who goes through the place with dirty feet, and who puts his back 200% into reform."

Investigating magistrate Freddy Evers on the urgent need for change in the justice system

Looking good

"Long live the farmers!"
A Ghent woman, after local farmers gave away 10,000 litres of milk, 2,000 eggs, 300 kilos of meat and five tonnes of vegetables