

Money matters 7

Finance federation Febelfin insists that school students should learn something about finances, using a recent study that tested financial knowledge of average adults as proof



Trachea transplant 8

A Leuven doctor has pioneered surgery of the windpipe by performing the first ever transplant in which the patient supplied blood to the new trachea first – by carrying it in her arm for several months



Revelling in Raveel. 11

A little town in East Flanders is home to Flemish artist Roger Raveel, and they don't want you to forget it. Take the Raveel walk, read about his life in a restaurant menu, but, most of all, visit his exquisite museum



K is for Kortrijk

© Foruminvest



This week, the once-ailing city is opening Flanders' largest fully integrated shopping mall in the heart of its centre

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

In 2006, the new version of the Belgian edition of the board game Monopoly downgraded the price of the shopping street Lange Steenstraat in Kortrijk. Although it wasn't the impetus for the re-vamping of the city's centre, it was a sure sign of its decline.

But Kortrijk was already busy with plans for a new mall to give the shopping district a much-needed boost. In 2007, construction started on a project that would change the city's commercial heart completely. Expected to make the area vibrant once again and bring people back to the centre of Kortrijk, it opens on Thursday, 11 March, with the name K in Kortrijk.

At 34,000 square meters, K in Kortrijk is bigger than the floor space of all the existing shops in the commercial centre put together. The planning and construction of this shopping giant took seven years. Back in the 1960s and '70s, Kortrijk was the most popular shopping city in western Flanders. In the 1980s, people became more mobile and were attracted by other shopping paradises, such as Lille and

Brussels. By the year 2000, Kortrijk suffered from as much as one in three empty commercial spaces in its shopping district.

Something had to be done, and that's why Stadsontwikkelingsbedrijf Kortrijk, or City Development Kortrijk (SOK) was founded. With the aid of a master plan, Kortrijk bought a few empty houses in the centre and started renovating the neighbourhood. Through a project promoting living above shops, SOK hoped to avoid the further deterioration of the shopping streets.

The city also purchased the empty primary school Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Bijstand in the Wijngaardstraat and had its eye on the secondary OLV Bijstand school across the street. The school was no longer used but owned and inhabited by the nuns of Heilig Hart. In 2003, SOK and the nuns agreed on a plan to launch a study to redefine the purpose of the property. The site got a lot of attention from possible project developers, and SOK started a competition to gather the best ideas.

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Diamond dealer and family attacked by robbers Kidnapping raises new security fears in the Antwerp industry

ALAN HOPE

A diamond dealer and his family were held hostage for 18 hours last weekend in their home in Wilrijk, outside Antwerp, by three men who made off with a suspected €4.5 million in stones.

The two men, who were reported as speaking Italian, posed as policemen to gain entry to the home of Pankaj Maldar, an Indian who heads the Antwerp diamond traders Karp Impex. After resisting for hours, he was forced to go to his office while the gang stood guard over his family – a so-called "tiger kidnapping". The robbery took place on Friday, 5 March, but only became known after news leaked out on the website of *The Times of India*. The possible Italian identity of the thieves recalls the biggest diamond robbery ever to take place in Antwerp, in 2003, when the strong boxes of the Antwerp Diamond Centre were cleaned out by thieves working undisturbed over the Valentine's weekend. Members of the gang, headed by Leonardo Notarbartolo, were later arrested, but the diamonds have never been recovered. Since then, security in the Antwerp diamond quarter

has been stepped up, but that has only led to robbers looking for weak spots, such as dealers' homes, according to Antwerp alderman Ludo Van Campenhout. He promised that traders' homes would be protected by increased patrols. But personal security, he said, "is not a matter for the police". Interior minister Annemie Turtelboom, meanwhile, was due this week to meet with city representatives to review security.

The fear is that such incidents could strengthen calls among some traders to move out of Antwerp, taking a large part of the €45 billion industry with them. Jewish dealers favour a move to Tel Aviv, while Indians, the other major ethnic group involved in the business, to Mumbai. "Leaving Antwerp is an option if nothing is done to improve our security," said Vasant Metha, chairman of the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council, and a friend of the victim.

➡ continued on page 3

Kurdish protestors clash with police



Kurdish demonstrators clashed with police last week in Denderleeuw in protest at police carrying out search warrants on the premises of ROJ TV, the pro-Kurdish broadcaster based in Denmark, whose Denderleeuw facility broadcasts to Western Europe. The Turkish government has banned ROJ TV.

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FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly

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Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij

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News in brief

Unions representing the Flemish **public transport authority De Lijn** have proposed a savings plan aimed at cutting €30 million in costs, in an effort to avoid redundancies. The plan includes cutting services early in the morning and late at night on lines where few people travel. They also propose adapting weekend timetables and cutting the distances empty buses have to travel at the start and end of service. In addition, longer-term projects like marketing campaigns will be reduced or postponed.

A Senegalese prostitute who is thought to have been with **Belgian cyclist Frank Vandenbroucke** last year on the night he died has been cleared of any involvement in his death. The woman, who has already spent five months in custody in Senegal, will be prosecuted for the theft of his mobile phone. Vandenbroucke died of a double pulmonary embolism, a local coroner ruled. However, at the family's request, no toxicological analysis was ever done and no explanation offered for needle marks on his left arm.

Users of the **public transport system in Brussels** can now check bus and tram routes, as well as timetables, on Google Maps, according to a new agreement between the transport authority MIVB and Google. Simply zoom in on Map or Satellite mode, and bus, metro and tram stops appear. Click on the icon to find out when the next two services are due to arrive or for more information on routes and itineraries. The new service, called Google Transit, is only available for Brussels but talks with the Flemish authority De Lijn are expected to follow.

A British philosopher who taught at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) has left his post after a university commission found "an extremely serious problem" surrounding some 30 published journal articles. Professor Martin Stone, an authority on the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, is alleged to have **committed plagiarism**. The KUL has written to the editors of the journals concerned alerting them to the investigation. One of the complaints against Stone came from a member of the Finnish parliament, who recognised entire passages in one of Stone's article from his own doctoral thesis.

Four people were injured last week when a **digger breached**

Land of potholes



Even New York has potholes in the road, Flemish minister Hilde Crevits announced somewhat triumphantly last week on her Facebook page, referring to an article on the blog of *De Standaard* and a series of photos by Jonathan Alpeyrie which would not impress many familiar with the state of Flanders' roads.

Minister Crevits has every reason to wish to divert attention away from the problem. Last week it was announced that Brussels, which is not her responsibility, has a shortfall of at least €10 million in its budget for the repair of potholes, while Antwerp and Ghent, which are, are facing a bill of about €2.5m each.

In Bruges, meanwhile, Jean-Pierre Vanden Berghe, alderman for public works, bemoaned the fact that the only durable solution to his city's pothole problem is to pour concrete – something it's impossible for Bruges to do because their heritage policy requires the use of only traditional materials. In this case, that would be cobblestones, which are unfit for the stress of modern-day traffic. The damage is blamed on the freezing winter weather on top of normal wear and tear, which has caused damage so bad that some sections of road have had to be closed. That does, however, ignore the fact that in places like New York temperatures regularly drop far below what we're used to in Flanders.

More likely, the problem is a result of long-standing neglect or short-term solutions like the pouring of asphalt on the worst spots instead of full resurfacing. Motoring organisation Touring, whose members have to suffer the bone-shaking effects of the problem, have carried out a study in the Netherlands and Germany to see how our neighbours cope. The results are due to be released in about a month.

a **gas pipeline** in the industrial zone next to the village of Spiere-Halkijn in West Flanders. Flames reached 20 metres high, but the fire service had the blaze rapidly under control. One man was seriously injured and transported to the military hospital at Neder-Over-Heembeek.

The **national rain authority NMBS** last year paid €69 million to external consultants, an increase of almost €27m on 2008. The costs of infrastructure agency Infrabel went up from nearly €14m to more than €23m. The majority of consultancy spending goes on strategic projects and information infrastructure. According to Infrabel spokesman Frédéric Petit, a large part of the agency's spending last year went towards the project to implement the auto-

matic braking system ECTS. It was exactly the failure to implement this system which led to the Buizingen rail crash that killed 18 people last month.



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Heightened security turns diamond thieves' attention to private homes

continued from page 1

ALAN HOPE

"Robberies of diamond dealers are as good as non-existent in Antwerp," said a spokesman for Van Campenhout. Just last week, the city agreed to stop all postal and courier services into the diamond quarter from 22 March, following a suspect envelope which showed signs of contact with explosives. Meanwhile, two men who tried to carry out a tiger kidnapping in Ghent last summer, which led to the murder of a 32-year-old Turkish diamond trader, were arrested and charged. The dealer was shot in the back while grappling with the two robbers, while his wife was wounded in the arm. The robbers, both from Brussels,

escaped with about €2,000.

• Two men shot a Brussels woman dead last Friday, 5 March, as they tried to hijack her car following a failed robbery. The men tried to hold up a jeweller's shop in the Brussels commune of Ukkel with a fake gun. When the jeweller produced a real gun in self defence, they took it from him and ran off. The gun was later used to kill Frédérique Lévêque, who took too long to give up her car keys. Both men have been arrested; neither has a prior criminal record. One of them was reported to work as a security agent for the Brussels public transport authority MIVB. ♦



© Mark Dankers

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



32%

of Belgian adults smoke every day, up from 27% in 2007. The main increase is among adult men (up to 37%), while the rate of women and young people who smoke remains at a steady 27%

531

Belgians are serving jail sentences in 40 foreign countries, mainly for drug offences. The majority are in France and Spain, followed by Morocco, Germany and the United Kingdom

1,290

cases of physical aggression or verbal threats against staff of the rail authority NMBS in 2009, an increase of 24% on the year before. Cases of actual assault went up from 159 to 206

400,000

vacation days owed to the country's prison officers, whose work conditions have made it impossible to take holidays or compensation days for public holidays worked. Some officers have built up a backlog of up to 800 days – equivalent to more than three years of holiday

1.8°C

average daily temperature during the Belgian winter of 2009-2010, which officially ended at midnight on 28 February. The norm for the season, according to the Royal Meteorological Institute, is 3.3°. The winter also brought 31 snow days, compared to a normal average of 14

Police seize cash from PKK

The listed terrorist organisation is alleged to have "extorted money from businesses"

Police searched 28 addresses across the country last week, including in Brussels and Antwerp, in a raid on suspected activities of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Eighteen people were detained, 10 of whom were later released. The others were accused of links to the PKK, which figures on lists of banned terror organisations compiled by the UN, the EU, Nato and the US.

The PKK hit the headlines in 1998, when founder Abdullah Öcalan was snatched by Turkish agents in Kenya and taken to Tur-

key for trial. He was sentenced to death, but the sentence was later commuted to life in prison.

Claims by Kurdish demonstrators that the Belgian police were acting on instructions from Ankara were categorically denied, as was a claim that Turkish state security agents were present at the raids. However, a spokesman for the federal police said there may have been Belgian officers of Turkish origin present.

Police now allege that the PKK, or its successor Kongra-Gel, is using intimidation to extort funds

from Kurdish businesses based in Belgium. Another allegation, first heard in 2004, that they are training Kurdish youths as young as 15 in terrorist camps in Germany, has also resurfaced. Police seized documents claimed to be forged papers, as well as about €250,000 in cash.

Later in Brussels, at the weekend, a Turkish kebab shop on Anspachlaan close to the stock exchange was smashed up and patrons attacked while Kurdish demonstrators marched past. ♦

Teachers made aware of effects of poverty

More than 200,000 teachers in Flanders will receive a guide to help them spot and tackle the problems of poverty in the classroom in a new campaign launched by *Klasse*, the magazine for teachers, parents and pupils. One in five Flemish children lives below the poverty line. The campaign's goal is not to tackle poverty itself, but to raise teachers' awareness of the problems it can cause in schools.

Poverty has an effect on most aspects of a child's life, from clothing to diet. Schools are often ready to step in to help – for example, by contributing to the cost of extramural activities so that all children can take part. But schools report that parents are often reluctant to admit to having problems. Teachers are advised to look out for warning signs such as increased absenteeism.

"The school doesn't know, and they don't need to know," says mother-of-three Sandra Carlier of her difficult financial situation. "I pay the rent as regular as clockwork, but other bills have to wait until the money is there. Sometimes the children come home and tell me, 'Mama you haven't paid the school bill'. They ought to leave my children out of it. Sometimes I get the feeling the school doesn't trust me."

Families living in poverty are more likely to be single-parent families or of immigrant origin. Parents are likely to be poorly-educated themselves – educational level is one of the most important predictors of poverty, which makes tackling the problem, according to *Klasse*, even more important: education is often the child's only chance of escaping a poor background.

Language problems can also cause problems for children – for example by making it difficult or impossible for parents to help their children with homework or other assignments. Children fall behind their classmates, leave school without qualifications, enter low-paid jobs and the whole cycle begins again.

The *Klasse* campaign aims to encourage schools to strengthen the connections with parents, so that existing or potential problems can be identified as early as possible. Parents from higher income families are also targeted. "There is still a great deal of prejudice surrounding poor families," explains Michel Van Laere of *Klasse*. "The impact of that should not be underestimated since it makes poor parents feel as if they ought to cover up their problems even more than they already do." ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Typical Freya

"I would like to make a first name for myself." With that quote young Freya Van den Bossche, daughter of socialist heavyweight Luc Van den Bossche, entered the political stage in 2000. Ten years later, she known by her first name only, and Luc Van den Bossche is, to most people, "Freya's father".

"Freya" is one of those people about whom everyone has an opinion. Her political career got a kick-start after her obvious talent (and model looks) were spotted in a political TV show. She became a federal minister in 2003, only three years after her first steps into the political arena. By 2005, she was the socialist vice-prime minister and federal budget minister. Even her own father said that was too much, too soon.

Maybe that is the reason why many people do not take her seriously. Throughout her career, Van den Bossche always had to face up to rumours about her intellectual capacities. These became even more hostile after she did not answer when quizzed about the square root of 25.

After the socialist party sp.a lost the federal elections, she refused to become opposition speaker. She was not sure she could handle this, she wrote in an embarrassing note, which a journalist found and made public. In 2009, however, she was appointed Flemish minister for energy and housing.

In the past decade, Van den Bossche has made headlines time and again, not just because of her high-speed career, but also because of her ditto chaotic personal life, which included a glamorous but short-lived Thai wedding. After her former partner became the godfather of her youngest child, a news site posted a poll asking the public whether this was "a good idea", "a bad idea" or "typical Freya".

Recently she was (anonymously) criticised for her absence from the Flemish government following the birth of her youngest child. She had been criticised before for returning to work too soon after a previous birth. Somehow, whatever she does, Van den Bossche can't get it right. Last week, Van den Bossche had to defuse a potentially explosive issue about language demands attached to the sale of social apartments in Vilvoorde. She came up with a solution in the nick of time, but, according to government sources, she very nearly bungled it. Whether there is any truth to this is hard to tell, but it fits neatly into the image she has created. Typical Freya.



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A safer fry

Ghent scientists are trying to limit a dangerous by-product of Belgium's beloved *friet*

ALAN HOPE

When you eat a pack of *frietten* (fries), you might not think of acrylamide as being at the top of the list of the sins you're committing. But it ought to be. Acrylamide is a synthetic compound used in the manufacture of polyacrylamide, a kind of plastic used as a thickener in waste-water treatment.

Recent research has shown that it also exists in a natural form as a by-product of the preparation of certain foodstuffs, like coffee, grains and potatoes. The compound is a product of the reaction of sugars with the amino acid asparagine in conditions of heat, such as cooking, explains Professor Bruno De Meulenaer of Ghent University.

Acrylamide is known to be carcinogenic to lab animals, so food researchers aim to remove it from foodstuffs. The Ghent University research took two approaches:

- Looking into whether one batch of potatoes produced more acrylamide than another, so the variety could be avoided in the preparation of *frietten*

- Testing a variety of additives to reduce the production of the compound

In the first case, Professor De Meulenaer explained, the degree of cooking seemed to have more influence on the production of acrylamide than the sort of potato. The browner the *frietten*, the more of the compound they contained. In the second case, no discernible effect could be determined in normal cooking conditions on frozen *frietten*, despite initially positive effects in the lab. However, fresh potatoes could be treated with additives, and all traces of acrylamide were gone after several days. Freshly cut *frietten* can be kept for up to 15 days without any ultimate negative effect on the taste of the end product.

The technique has been welcomed by the industry. "We're ready to cooperate in applying these systems if we're asked to," commented Bernard Lefèvre of Navefri, the national union of *friet*-makers. ♦

If the fat doesn't kill you, the acrylamide will ▶



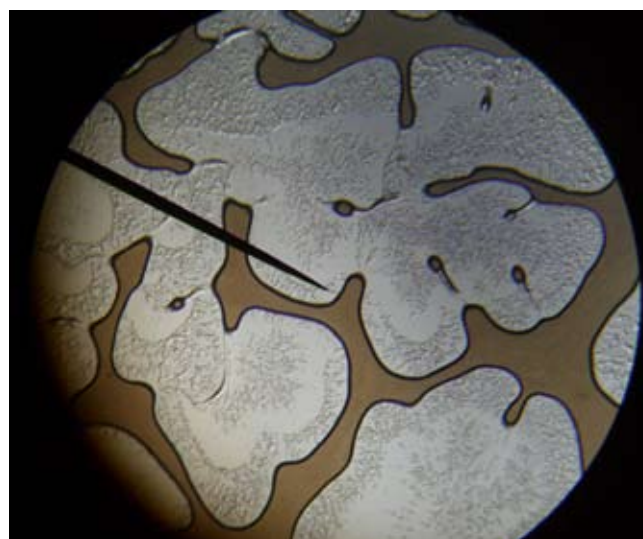
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SCIENCE IN FIGURES

576,600,000,000

letters of genetic code gathered from stool samples taken from 124 men and women. The samples were gathered by researchers led by Jeroen Raes of the Free University of Brussels (VUB) to examine the population of intestinal bacteria present in the human body. They found that the normal intestine contains about 100 million million (or one tril-

lion) bacteria – 10 times as many as we have cells in the rest of the body. There are 1,150 varieties, mainly from the phyla *Bacteroidetes* and *Firmicutes*, which help digest food. Even the notorious *E. coli*, which is deadly if consumed in tainted food, serves a useful purpose in fighting bacteria that harm the gut, while helping to synthesise vitamins B and K.



Under the microscope: E-coli and Firmicutes



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Moving robots by thought alone

Following recent research at Leuven University that allowed patients to communicate their wishes by thinking about letters (see *Flanders Today*, 3 March), two engineers from Ghent University have succeeded in directing a robot arm using thoughts alone.

"It seems like an old dream come true with this development," announced Dieter Devlaminck of the internal medicine department, and

Bart Wyns of the automation department. "Since the invention of the microchip, man has fantasised about the so-called 'cyborg', an amalgam of man and machine. What used to look like science fiction is coming more and more to resemble reality." Like the Mind Speller at the Catholic University of Leuven, the Ghent apparatus involves a swim cap-looking device equipped with electrodes that pick up and analyse brain waves,

which are then translated into a set of commands for the robot arm.

The technique can also be used on any other mechanical apparatus, such as a wheelchair. One of the most obvious applications is prosthetic limbs that wearers can operate using brain power, in much the same way that we operate our organic limbs. ♦

Leuven lab finds way to slow decline in Parkinson's

Researchers at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) have discovered an enzyme that slows deterioration in sufferers of Parkinson's disease, a degenerative condition characterised by tremors and loss of muscle control, leading to cognitive problems and eventually dementia. The disease, named after a 19th-century English surgeon, geologist and palaeontologist, affects between 120 and 180 people in every 10,000. Symptoms of the "shaking palsy" had been described as far back as the 12th century by the Arab polymath Ahmad Ibn Rushd, better known as Averroes.

Parkinson's patients show an accumulation in the brain

cells of the proteins alpha-synuclein and ubiquitin, whose main function is to signal to the body that cells are ready to be discarded. The enzyme FKBP12, however, can be used in transplant patients to suppress immune reactions to new tissue and, in cases of Parkinson's disease, can stop the destruction of brain cells by the build-up of alpha-synuclein.

Initial tests in vitro and on mice have shown promising results, but the process is a long way from being applied to humans. The KUL research was published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*. ♦

K is for Kortrijk

Between the shopping mall and the Sint-Jans Tower, the old downtown Kortrijk has virtually disappeared

→ continued from page 1

Out of the four presented options, Kortrijk fell for the most radical. Competitor Foruminvest claimed that Kortrijk was the perfect region for commercial purposes; the city has enough visitors, they argued, just not enough shops to keep them interested.

Foruminvest suggested a complete *tabula rasa* – to knock down existing structures and start from scratch, building Flanders' largest fully integrated shopping mall in the heart of the city, including trendy apartments and plenty of parking.

To measure the interest of chain stores, the city contacted umbrella organisation Retail Forum Belgium. Chains "were definitely attracted to the mall since they were not yet present in Kortrijk, as the available shopping surfaces were just not big enough," says Trui Tydgat, director of SOK. "It's almost unbelievable, but Kortrijk has, for instance, no H&M or Zara; instead you'll find a lot of small boutiques. A new shopping mall in the city with all the popular chains would make the offer to shoppers complete and attract a new public."

Pretty complex

Before K in Kortrijk was even built, the city had to adapt to it. Roads were redefined and tunnels dug to ensure smoothly organised in and outgoing traffic. One of the entrances of K in Kortrijk is set on Veemarkt, so the square had to undergo a full make-over, as well. The five existing houses on Veemarkt were brought down and replaced by a 10-storey tower with a commercial ground floor and nine floors of apartments. The city sees Sint-

Jans Tower as a new icon, with a design referencing a similar construction in Siena and trees on the roof as an eye catcher.

Both the Sint-Jans Tower and K in Kortrijk are designed by Ghent architects Robbrecht & Daem, responsible for many high-profile projects in Flanders, including the Concertgebouw in Bruges and the redesign of the Antwerp Zoo. "One of the main conditions was that the mall had to look good and make a statement for Kortrijk as a design district as well," explains Tydgat.

K in Kortrijk was built with natural stones and wood and has a gigantic glass dome, allowing daylight in. A special design fund should ensure new design investments in the future.

"Convincing the existing shop owners of the advantages of the new mall wasn't too difficult, as they also felt that something had to be done," says Tydgat. "But when the works took a lot longer than planned, they got less enthusiastic." For more than three years the centre of Kortrijk was an unfinished mess, with dug up roads and mud everywhere, a disaster for the shop owners and inhabitants.

The coldest winter Flanders has seen in 25 years also caused a few unseen delays, but K in Kortrijk is finally ready to open. Some aspects of the mall and apartments aren't completely ready, but works will continue after opening hours and in weekends.

As a lot of attention will go to K in Kortrijk, the city wants to avoid the other shops being neglected. They insist that the mall won't compete with existing businesses, but will complete the offer.



K in Kortrijk is bigger than all the existing shops in the commercial centre put together; across from its entrance on the right is the new 10-storey Sint-Jans Tower

All shops in Kortrijk are part of the new Business Improvement District. Every year, they will pay a certain amount of tax money to improve the neighbourhood or organise joint events, such as the coming of Sinterklaas.

The official opening event of the mall on Thursday will include the existing shops as well. In the weeks leading to the opening, shopping bags with discount vouchers were distributed, valid in most shops in Kortrijk.

In the meantime, works continue in other areas of Kortrijk, most notably along the River Leie, with the building of seven new bridges. The city plans on incorporating more design in public spaces, starting with designed benches along the river. ♦

→ www.kortrijk.be

The new Kortrijk

Five years ago, Kortrijk was a sleepy, grey city. But now it's hard to ignore. From the redesign of its signature museum to the luxurious setting of VTM series *Mijn Restaurant!* and *De Rodenburgs*, Kortrijk seems to have recaptured people's imaginations. To get this attention, the city did not have to invent anything. All it did was seriously brush-up its three main assets: design, history and commercial interests.

DESIGN Kortrijk has a tradition of innovation and design. Did you know that most of the interiors of the pavilions at Expo '58 were designed by furniture manufacturer De Coene from Kortrijk? Every two years, the city features Europe's second-biggest design fair, Interieur. Study option "industrial design" at the Provincial Industrial College in Kortrijk attracts students from all over Belgium. And (in)famous installation architect Arne Quinze chose Kortrijk as his company headquarters.

→ www.designregio-kortrijk.be

HISTORY 1302 is a hugely important year in Flemish history, the date of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, which took place near Kortrijk. This victorious Flemish resistance against the French got its own museum in 2006, partially located inside the 13th-century abbey. Now the beautifully designed, interactive Kortrijk 1302 Museum describes seven centuries of Flanders' history, attracting 23,000 visitors a year.

→ www.kortrijk1302.be

COMMERCIAL

Shopping mall giant K in Kortrijk will give the commercial district a boost and should put Kortrijk on the shortlist of best shopping cities in Belgium.

Project Developer: Foruminvest

Contractor: THV Wijngaard

Architect: Robbrecht & Daem

Stats: 34,000m² · 1100 parking spots · 4 storeys · 85 shops · 40 flats

→ www.k-in-kortrijk.be

Fast facts

- The new mall's original name was "Shopping Sint-Jan", after its location in the city. After the competition, everybody agreed that "K in Kortrijk", referencing as it does the city itself, was a better idea
- For more than 40 years, shopping streets in Kortrijk have been car free. The city even claims to be the first in Belgium to have a pedestrian only commercial district
- Neighbour Tim Vandendriessche followed the construction of K from day one and regularly posted information and pictures on his blog: → www.kinkortrijk.blogspot.com



Kortrijk had the excellent good luck last year to be the site of the winning restaurant in the phenomenally popular *Mijn Restaurant!* TV series, which included spectacular views of the town. The Wednesday-night VTM series *De Rodenburgs* is set in Kortrijk, but you wouldn't know it from looking (Rodenburg is the name of one of the city's upscale quarters).

The series is a family epic, set among three generations of a rich business family and their rivalries with another family, to whom they're linked by marriage and money. It sounds just like *Dallas*, and Kortrijk is known as the Texas of Flanders (but wasn't that an image they wanted to shake off?) The city of Kortrijk reportedly paid €200,000 to have the thing set there. The series has been extended, but from what you see on the screen, they're not getting much for their money. **Alan Hope**

→ www.vtm.be/de-rodenburgs



Museum 1302

VRT faces cuts

The Flemish public broadcaster could cut more than 10% of its workforce

ALAN HOPE

As many as 300 people employed by the Flemish public broadcaster VRT – about 11% of its entire workforce – could lose their jobs in a coming round of spending cuts, according to unions in a memo released last week. The management of the VRT is due to present its spending plans to the board of directors on 15 March.

As many as 300 people employed by the Flemish public broadcaster VRT – about 11% of its entire workforce – could lose their jobs in a coming round of spending cuts, according to unions in a memo released last week. The management of the VRT is due to present its spending plans to the board of directors on 15 March.

The drive to save money has already shown itself; most programmes have seen resources cut and staff numbers reduced. Just last week, radio station Klara announced it was scrapping the regular Friday evening show *Neve*, in which Flemish jazz musician Jef Neve presents a live music broadcast, because the format is too expensive.

The VRT receives €302 million from the public purse. The broadcaster's total costs amounted to over €466m in 2008, with TV the largest expense at €274m. Deducting income from



the total leaves a deficit of about €44.5m, on top of deficits carried over from previous years.

Piet Van Roe (pictured), VRT's caretaker managing director, has promised €16.7m in savings for 2010, but he is expected to go even further in 2011. It is estimated that he will call

for savings of at least €65m.

In addition, in order to bring spending sustainably under control, changes are likely to follow to reduce the vast bureaucracy that the VRT, as a state institution, still carries, and to radically alter the outdated working conditions. ♦

Students should learn finance, says Febelfin

School students need training in financial and economic matters because most people's knowledge is sadly lacking, according to a survey by the financial industry federation Febelfin. The federation set a series of test questions for a sample of the population last September, and the results just released show that young people between the ages of 18 and 24 scored only 44.5% overall. Unlike other age categories, this group earned a failing grade.

The matter is a serious one, Febelfin said, because the habits instilled in young people are carried through into adult life, and mistakes made early on can have long-lasting effects. "If you ask me, children from the age of 12 ought to know what a savings account is, and from the age of 15 they should know

the difference between shares and bonds," said Febelfin chairman Stefaan Decraene. The federation would prefer to leave it to the government to determine the exact means of achieving the goal.

The terms of the leaving certificate of secondary education in the Dutch-speaking system are to be adjusted from next year to include a measure of "financial literacy," the office of education minister Pascal Smet said.

But the problem is not restricted to school students. Although adults achieved passing grades, the numbers were not spectacular. The average person knows more about bank affairs than insurance matters and more about general questions than those linked to specific products. ♦

A selection of the questions put by Febelfin:

You put €100 in a savings account with an interest rate of 2% a year. What is the balance after five years, if nothing is deposited or withdrawn?

- a. More than €102
- b. Less than €102
- c. Exactly €102

Family insurance:

- a. is only useful if I have children or pets
- b. is only useful if something happens at home
- c. is also useful in other situations

A variable rate of interest is:

- a. the interest I pay on a loan, which can be adjusted
- b. the interest I pay on a loan, which is linked to the health index
- c. the interest I earn on my account, adjusted annually

Answers: a, c and a

Bankruptcies kept on growing in February

February saw a record number of bankruptcies in Belgium, according to research bureau Graydon. Some 807 companies went bust, bringing the total for the first two months of the year to 1,617, a 3% increase on the same period a year ago.

However, the number of jobs lost went down from 4,053 in 2009 to 3,691 – though the bare figures do not show whether that's a result of companies on the brink of failure shedding staff before finally going under.

Not all parts of the country are the same: in Antwerp the number of failures went up by 21%, whereas

the total in Leuven fell by 14.6%. Within Flanders, the worst rate was recorded in Dendermonde (up 43% to 30 cases) and the best in Mechelen (down 56% to 18 cases) and Leper (down 50% to eight cases).

The sectors mainly affected were business-to-business services, the car trade and garages. The road haulage industry, with an increase of 5.5%, showed a major increase. On the plus side, some sectors that are traditionally sensitive to fluctuations in the economy, like construction and catering, saw better results than expected. ♦

→ www.graydon.be

Dredgers are the best employers

Dredging company Jan De Nul, based in Aalst but active across the world from Iraq to the Panama Canal, is the best employer in Belgium for the second year running, according to a survey carried out by employment agency Randstad among 12,000 people aged 18 to 65.

The survey asks respondents to rate a number of characteristics of an employer and to score 172 specific companies according to how they respond to the criteria. Top of the wish-list of the survey's participants was job security.

Jan De Nul repeated its victory of

last year, but perhaps more remarkable was the company that came in second place to the dredging giant – another dredging company, Deme from Zwijndrecht on the left bank of the Scheldt outside of Antwerp. The last spot was taken by chemical company Evonik Degussa, also based in Antwerp. The two companies have never before featured in the ratings.

For the first time since the survey has been carried out, there were no pharmaceutical companies in the top three; since 2006, Janssen Pharmaceutica has featured three times and GlaxoSmithKline twice. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Autos • BYD

Build Your Dreams, the Chinese electric car producer, will sell its vehicles in Belgium from 2012. The cars will be imported and sold by the Moorkens dealership. BYD turned down a proposal by General Motors to take over the Opel plant in Antwerp to produce its cars for the European market.

Energy • Octa+

Octa+ is to enter the gas and energy distribution market for private customers. The company currently operates 185 discount petrol stations across Belgium.

Pharmaceuticals • UCB

UCB, the Brussels-based pharmaceuticals company, is banking its future on three new medicines – Cimzia to treat Crohn's disease, Neupro for Parkinson's and Vimpat for epilepsy. The new drugs are expected to deliver revenues of €3 billion over the next 10 years.

Power • Electrabel

The government must repay €16 million paid by power generator Electrabel in taxes on six disused plots of land. Electrabel argued that technical limitations made the land unsuitable to build generating capacity.

Research • Myrrha

The Mol-based Myrrha project to build a new nuclear research reactor is on track following the federal government's decision to invest €384 million over 10 years. The new reactor, worth €960 million in total, is designed to develop new technologies in the treatment of nuclear waste and will produce radio-isotopes for medical use.

Telecom • Telenet

Telenet, the Mechelen-based cable and telecommunications company, will launch the country's first super-fast, fourth-generation, mobile broadband network. Tests will start in May. The firm also plans to invest €150 million over the next five years to renew its cable network and has signed an agreement with Norway's Norkring to launch a digital Hertzian network. Finally, the company is believed to be interested in pitching for the licence to launch the country's fourth mobile telecommunications network.

Travel • Thomas Cook

Thomas Cook, the country's largest holiday charter airline, is adding a seventh aircraft to meet demand from Brussels Airport. The company will also hire up to 50 new staff.

When science meets fiction

Flemish patient is the first ever to live with a donated trachea in her throat – that she first had to carry in her forearm

TANIA RABESANDRATANA

Modern medicine sometimes sounds like science fiction. Linda De Croock probably did not imagine she would be a case for futuristic surgery when she had a car accident 33 years ago.

Modern medicine sometimes sounds like science fiction. Linda De Croock probably did not imagine she would be a case for futuristic surgery when she had a car accident 33 years ago.

She spent months in an intensive care unit, with a tube down her throat to help her breathe. This damaged her windpipe, or trachea, to such an extent that doctors placed a mesh tube inside it to keep it open and allow her to breathe properly.

"I had fever and felt out of breath all the time," recalls De Croock, now a 54-year-old mother of two. "I was so tired I had to lay down half of the day." The mesh tube, or stents, caused permanent infection, so De Croock had to take high doses of antibiotics. Also, she coughed profusely because mucus accumulated in her throat.

In 2006, she desperately searched the internet for solutions and found Professor Pierre Delaere, a specialist of head and neck surgery at the Gasthuisberg Hospital of the Catholic University of Leuven. For more than 20 years, Delaere has been investigating efficient ways to reconstruct the trachea and larynx – the cartilaginous structure at the top of the trachea that contains the vocal cords.

"Originally, I suggested to Linda a straight reconstruction, using her own tissue," the surgeon explains. But doctors feared her trachea was too damaged, and she would not have enough healthy tissue available. "The danger was that if we took out the stents, everything collapsed. We couldn't afford to make her worse." Delaere needed a plan B: a trachea transplant.

The genius idea

Organ transplantations are nothing new. But unlike organs such as the liver or the heart, the trachea does not come with a large blood vessel, so reconstructing the

vital blood supply is a tricky affair.

That is where the unusual idea came in: transplanting the donated trachea into the patient's forearm first. There, large blood vessels and a thin, well-vascularised tissue under the skin would help the trachea restore its own blood supply. It would then be ready to be implanted in place of the damaged bit.

Professor Delaere's team had tested this new procedure in rabbits. When he suggested to try it out, De Croock was not put off. "This was my only solution," she explains. "I trusted the professor." So the Flemish woman Aalst became the world's first patient to undergo this pioneering kind of tracheal transplantation.

A peculiar procedure

De Croock carried the donor's trachea in her left forearm for eight months; it was a bit painful, but she had no problem in her day-to-day activities, such as eating or getting dressed. When the trachea had grown a good blood supply and enough of her own mucosal lining, Professor Delaere traded her damaged windpipe for this new, healthy one.

Like with any transplantation from a donor, De Croock had to take immunosuppressant drugs to prevent her body from rejecting the graft. She has now been off the medication for more than a year, so it is safe to say that the operation was a success. Her voice is normal, and she can travel and play light sports. "I feel good," she says. "Every day I am happy when I realise that I can breathe normally."

Delaere, meanwhile, has already repeated the operation. An 18-year-old Flemish man only had to keep the donated trachea in his forearm for six weeks, so the whole process was shorter (and, hence, cheaper) this time around. The surgeon hopes to refine the procedure with more operations and study the long-term outlook. Hopefully, other patients the world over will be able to benefit from the technique, too. ♦

→ www.kuleuven.be/citr/en/allo/index.htm



"We couldn't afford to make her worse": Dr Pierre Delaere

Organ donations in Belgium

Linda De Croock was put on a waiting list for several months until a compatible donor was found because the demand for organs is higher than their supply.

If you are a Belgian national or have lived in Belgium for more than six months, the law allows the removal of your organs after your death unless you have previously stated your refusal or if your immediate family objects to it.

You can find out more and download the organ donation form at

→ www.belgium.be/en/health/organ_donations

Any other options?

Scientific research has other tricks up its sleeve, but not all are fit for the tracheal case – yet!

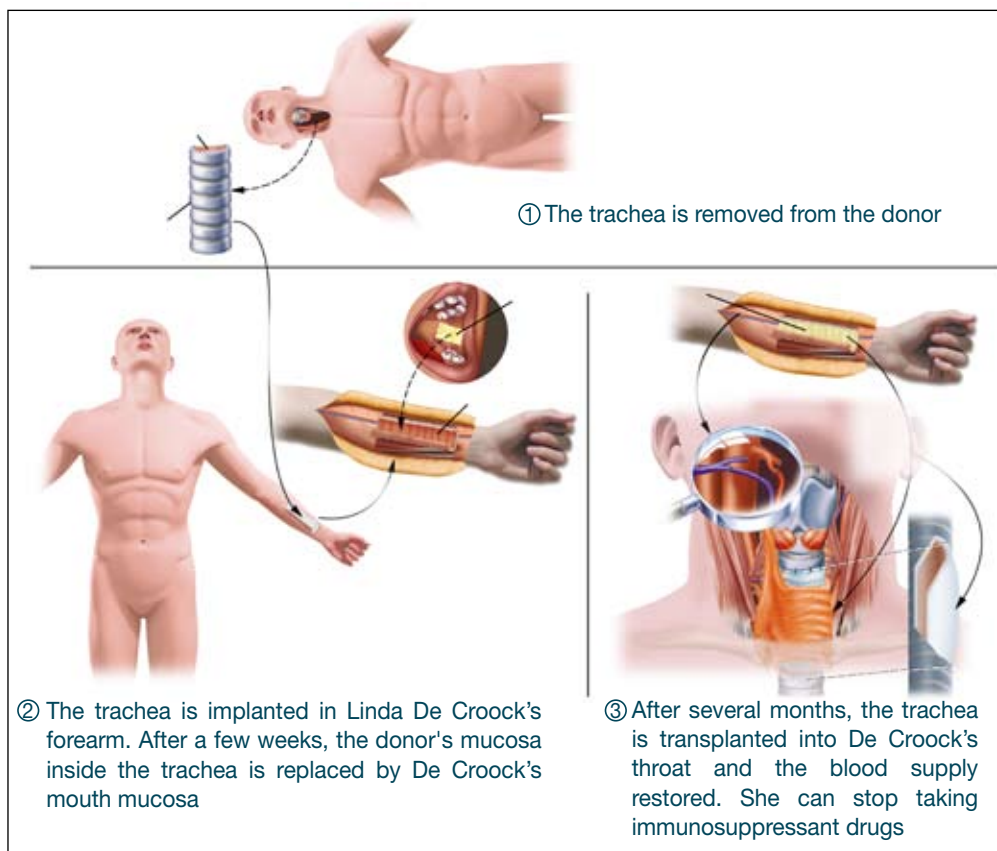
Why not make some artificial tissue?

Of course, it would be fantastic to create a man-made trachea so we could have a brand new organ without relying on organ donations. However, the tracheal cartilage has a very specific structure. According to Professor Pierre Delaere, who performed the groundbreaking surgery, it is difficult to reproduce the material and its elasticity, as well as the protective layer with its blood supply. More work to come for tissue engineers.

How about stem cells?

Could we not grow a new trachea from them?

In 2006, a team from Barcelona performed a tracheal transplant on a young woman who had suffered from tuberculosis. They kept only the donor's cartilage and removed the donor's cells on the surface. Then, they grew a mucosal lining in the lab, using stem cells from the receiving patient. Because these were the patient's own cells, she did not take any immunosuppressant therapy. This procedure was spectacular, but the long-term outlook remains to be confirmed. Professor Delaere notes that no blood supply was restored. Also, the area transplanted was further down the windpipe, in the bronchus area.



Turkish delights

Bruges' international film fest looks at the reflective side of new cinema from Turkey

IAN MUNDELL

Pieter Keereman has a simple answer when asked why Turkey is the focus of this year's Cinema Novo film festival, which starts this week in Bruges. "Turkish cinema is hot," the programmer says. "Turkish film directors receive a lot of prizes. In the last edition of the Berlin Film Festival, the Golden Bear went to a Turkish movie."

It will be a while before that film, *Honey* by Semih Kaplanoglu, arrives on Belgian screens, but thanks to Cinema Novo we can see the director's previous film, *Milk*. This tells the story of a young man with ambitions to write poetry whose tenuous grip on reality is threatened by his imminent military service and the suggestion that his widowed mother may remarry.

Other prize winners in the festival's Turkish selection include *The Wrong Rosary* by Mahmut Fazil Coskun, which picked up a Tiger award at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 2009, and *Pandora's Box*, which won awards in San Sebastian in 2008 for director Yesim Ustaoglu and actress Tsilla Chelton. The first is a gentle tale about an unassuming muezzin, recently moved to Istanbul, who falls for his equally shy neighbour Clara, a Christian. The second recounts the disruption caused when an old woman with failing faculties is brought from a mountain village to Istanbul so that her children can look after her.

Cinema Novo has gone for the more artistic side of the Turkish film industry, which also produces a good many popular comedies and thrillers. "The art-house movies are not as flashy as the commercial movies," Keereman explains. "More and more Turkish directors choose personal themes, such as the experiences of their youth."

There also appears to be a greater degree of freedom, with films able to tackle subjects that would previously have attracted government disapproval or even censorship. "You have movies about Kurdish themes, which was a bit difficult a few years ago, and also more and more movies about women."

Other highlights from the 11-film focus on Turkish cinema include *Istanbul Tales*, five contemporary fairy tales written by Ümit Ünal and directed by himself and four other filmmakers, and Nuri Bilge Ceylan's story of a ruptured relationship, *Climates*.

There is also one old film, *Dry Summer* by Metin Erksan, about a man who claims one summer that all the water in the village belongs to him, bringing him into conflict with his brother. The film dropped from view after winning



Tsilla Chelton has won awards for her deft portrayal of an old woman passed between family members in *Pandora's Box*

the Golden Bear in Berlin in 1964, but has recently been restored and released by the World Cinema Foundation. "The style is a bit strange, but the photography is very beautiful," says Keereman. "You could compare it to an old Hollywood movie, from the 1930s, perhaps." There is a chance for one of two recent Turkish films to take home a prize in Cinema Novo's own international competition. *10 to 11* by Pelin Esmer is about a compulsive collector who finds himself in conflict with his neighbours, while *Men on the Bridge* by Asli Özge concerns the lives and longings of three men who work on the Bosphorus Bridge.

The world in Bruges

Cinema Novo is a wide-ranging festival, with the ambitious goal of introducing the public to new films from Africa, Asia and Latin America. So as well as films from Turkey, its prize competition includes work from Armenia, Mexico, Chile, South Korea and Iran. None have plans to be shown in cinemas in Belgium, and the Camera Novo prize comes with an €8,000 incentive for the distributor who picks up the winner.

African films are thin on the ground this year, but one must-see double bill brings together two unexpected perspectives on the continent. *Nora*, by Alla Kovgan and David Hinton, presents an autobiographical performance about growing up in Zimbabwe from dancer and choreographer Nora Chipaumire. Each set piece is in contemporary dance style but plays out in an African landscape, from the open country to village squares and school buildings. But it was shot in Mozambique rather than Zimbabwe, since Chipau-

mire's home country has not been so welcoming in recent years.

The second part of the bill is *Saint Louis Blues* by Dyana Gaye, which turns a journey by seven characters sharing a "bush taxi" in Senegal into an all-singing, all-dancing musical that draws strongly on the style of Jacques Demy. The result is unexpected, yet extremely pleasing. Both films have English subtitles.

Other highlights in a packed festival include a collection of films critical of contemporary life in Iran. *No One Knows About Persian Cats* has already come out in Brussels and deserves to be seen for its energetic portrait of the underground music scene, filmed on the run by Bahman Ghobadi. Also shot guerrilla-style was *My Tehran for Sale* by Granaz Moussavi, about an aspiring actress who longs to escape the city for Australia.

The selection is completed by life-on-the-streets drama *Tehrour* by Nader Takmil Homayoun and *About Elly* by Asghar Farhadi, which concerns a man in search of an Iranian wife after his marriage to a German woman fails. The festival's closing film is also from Iran: *Women Without Men* by Shirin Neshat and Shoja Azari goes back to 1953, when the Shah seized power, to tell the story of four women trying to break out of unhappy lives. ♦

Cinema Novo

11-21 March
Lumière and Ciné Liberty
Bruges

www.cinemanovo.be

CULTURE NEWS

The boycott of *Alice in Wonderland* by both Kinepolis and the Federation of Belgian Cinemas ended nearly as quickly as it began. As a result, the new Tim Burton film, which releases this week, can be found in all the country's biggest cinemas. The boycott was called in protest at Disney's plans to release the DVD of the live-action blockbuster only three months after its release in cinemas, rather than the usual four months. Disney has now managed to convince Belgium, as well as Italy, the Netherlands and the UK, which were also boycotting, that this is a special circumstance and not a change in policy for all films.

Literature organisation Het Beschrijf has announced that it will be able to send five Flemish authors abroad this year on **writing residency exchanges**. Bart Koubaa will spend this month in the heart of Amsterdam; Saskia De Coster will leave for New York in April; Jeroen Theunissen will spend May in Slovenia and October in Poland; Frank Adam is off to Latvia in May; and novelist and critic Marc Reugebrink will spend his June in Estonia. Authors from those countries will come here to work, often doing public readings and interviews.

Two Flemish and one Brussels gallery took part in **The Armory Show in New York** last week, one of the most important fairs for contemporary art in the world. Zeno X from Antwerp had already sold half of its shipped works on the first day of the four-day event; Baronian_Francey from Brussels fared just as well. It was the first year at the event for Ghent's Hoet Bekaert: "If we sell all our works, we'll just cover our costs," said Delphine Bekaert (who paid \$9,000 for a 3.7 x 3.7 metre space). "But we really want to take part in international fairs. We are ambitious, and Ghent is too small."

The VRT tragicomedy *Van vlees en bloed* (*Of Flesh and Blood*), about a family of butchers, dominated the **Night of the Flemish Television Stars**, the annual TV awards ceremony, which took place last weekend in Hasselt. The seven-programme series was awarded Best Fiction Programme and the public prize for Most Popular Programme. The show's Koen De Graeve and Sien Eggers won Best Actor and Actress.

→ www.vlaamsetelevisieacademie.be

The sound of silence

A lesson from Gerhagen, the quietest place in Flanders

MELISSA MAKI

Do you know what silence is? The question was posed to me as I was about embark on a walk through Gerhagen – a natural area that was just recognised as “the quietest place in Flanders”.

It's an interesting question to contemplate.

When you really pay attention, you'll notice how adept we've become at tuning out every-day noises: the bell that rings every time a tram passes on a nearby street, the rumbling of cars as they drive by, the whooshing sounds of jet engines from above.

Noise is one of the most pervasive and yet under-acknowledged forms of environmental pollution that we encounter. According to the World Health Organization, more than half of all Europeans face daily exposure to potentially damaging noise levels. Noise pollution increases stress levels and has been linked to a variety of health problems, from insomnia to hypertension. There's also evidence to suggest that it may impair children's learning.

In the last decade, the EU has started to take heed of the health hazards of noise and to regulate noise pollution. Back in the 1990s, the Flemish government began to recognize the value that quiet spaces have for the health and well being of its citizens and started working to protect them.

A small municipality in Limburg was even further ahead of the curve. For more than 40 years, volunteers with Werkgroep Ecologie Tessenderlo (WET) have been diligently working to protect and promote the Gerhagen nature reserve.

Gerhagen is a 1000-acre protected area and the so-called *groene long* (green lung) of Tessenderlo, a municipality located at the tip of the “nose” of Limburg, where Limburg, Antwerp and Flemish Brabant provinces all come together. A 200-hectare section of the reserve was just designated by the Flemish government as the first official *stiltegebied*, or quiet domain, in Flanders.

How does a place earn such a title? Only after a number of careful measurements. Experts conducted listening tests, measured sound levels and surveyed Gerhagen-area residents and visitors. By all counts, the area was deemed exceptionally quiet and was granted a two-star rating (out of a possible three).

The Flemish government, the Flemish Land Agency, Regional Landscape Lower Kempen, the province of Limburg, the municipality of Tessenderlo and WET have been collaborating to bring public awareness to this designation. Gerhagen now has two special walking paths and an exhibit to get people thinking more critically about sound.

The paths of silence

There are two marked *stiltepaden* (quiet paths) through Gerhagen, both beginning at the Bosmuseum (Forest Museum). The green route is 3.5 kilometres, and the blue one is six. You can pick up a *stilterugsakje* (quiet backpack) at the Bosmuseum to help enhance your experience. Included are items like an hourglass, a mat to sit or lay on, cards to help you identify clouds and birds and a book to record your thoughts and feelings.

In April and May, you even can borrow a stethoscope from the museum in order to hear the gushing noises of sap flowing



A mask in your special Gerhagen backpack is necessary to properly navigate the blind trail

through the birch trees.

A map and pamphlet guide you through the walks. The pretty pine forest is peppered with oak and birch trees, and I was struck by the stillness of the woods and the soft, sandy soil, which made for pleasant walking (and no doubt helps to dampen noise).

If you take the longer route, you can stop and reflect at each of eight designated *stilte- en rustplekjes* (silence and rest places). My favourites were 3 and 8: the former is an area where you walk along the path blindfolded (guided by a roped railing), and the latter is a wonderfully comfy hammock that is strategically placed near the end of the trail.

As you walk along, what becomes immediately clear is that even the quietest forest is by no means “silent”. I heard the usual forest sounds, like birds chirping and wind rustling through the trees, but also – unavoidable in a small, industrialised country like Belgium – is the faint din of planes and cars. Still, considering the sometimes extreme noise levels in green spaces within cities, it is a particularly peaceful place. For me, getting away to Gerhagen certainly had a calming effect.

The Bosmuseum

WET runs the Bosmuseum at Gerhagen, which features a number of impressive exhibits on the flora and fauna of the area. Most intriguing is the “Van ei tot ei” (From Egg to Egg) collection of birds' eggs – from the hummingbird to the ostrich – and stuffed birds and mammals. (Don't worry; they all died of natural causes.) You can also learn about birds' habitat, migration patterns and the threats they face. Most of the birds featured are native to the area.

The mission of WET is to teach people about nature and to preserve nature for future generations. Volunteers guide monthly walks from the Bosmuseum through Gerhagen based around different topics such as flowers, mushrooms and birds.

The Bosmuseum receives between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors each year.

The Bosmuseum hosts a sound booth, a dimly lit room where you can listen to a wide range of sounds: from dogs barking to sirens to conversations and breathing. A chart outside shows you the decibel levels of different sounds.

A WET volunteer told me that the public's sense of environmental consciousness seems to be growing but that most of the organisation's membership is over the age of 40. Therefore, the Bosmuseum's exhibits and activities are often geared towards younger generations and school outreach is one of their big activities. They welcome about 80 school groups per year and have a classroom to facilitate learning. ♦

→ <http://wet.gerhagen.be>



© Melissa Maki

How quiet is quiet?

Just how quiet is “the quietest place in Flanders”? Call us sceptical, but we wanted to measure for ourselves. When we visited Gerhagen, we took a sound pressure level (SPL) metre. The results? They're not lying – it's quiet. The loudest area we sampled (on a platform at Gent-Sint-Pieters while a train was approaching and a voice was booming from the public address system) was a whopping 32 times louder than the quietest place in Gerhagen.

A note on decibels:

decibel (dB) = perceptible difference in loudness

dBA = A-weighted decibels, the standard scaling of dB measurements to approximate the frequency response of human hearing

10 dB difference = a doubling or halving of the perceived loudness (so, this being a logarithmic scale, the difference between our lowest measurement in Gerhagen (25 dBA) and the highest measurement in Ghent (75 dBA) is not 3x, as it would be with a linear scale; rather, it's an increase of 50 dB, or five doublings, or 32x as loud.

Urban sound levels:

60-65 dBA...riding on a tram in Ghent

75 dBA.....train platform in Ghent

58 dBA.....on stopped IC train

54-55 dBA...on a moving IC train

Stiltepad sound levels:

30-36 dBA...starting the stiltepad

34 dBA.....rope walk (sounds: plane landing nearby, highway, tractor)

35 dBA.....sitting log (sounds: jets overhead, dogs barking in distance, wind through leaves, peeping bird)

32 dBA.....boomwortels (sounds: distant road, doves and other birds. Still tranquil.

25 dBA.....near the end of the walk, lowest reading. Very still. Then, a plane takes off...32 dBA

→ www.portaalvandestilte.be



© Melissa Maki

Never-ending illusions

Travel to Machelen-aan-de Leie to visit the Roger Raveel Museum, the second in our series on out-of-the-way art museums

ANNA JENKINSON

The Flemish village of Machelen-aan-de Leie in East Flanders is very proud of its best-known inhabitant: 88-year-old artist Roger Raveel. As well as the Roger Raveel Museum, specially designed to house his work, the village also boasts a walking path named after him (the Roger Raveelwandelroute) and a restaurant that makes the most of the Raveel connection by having a book about him take pride-of-place on the fireplace and a menu that highlights the life of the famous local.

And why not. Raveel is arguably one of the most important Belgian artists since World War II. From about 1960, he was the central artist in a new figurative movement that emerged in Belgium, leading a group of artists that included Etienne Elias, Raul de Keyser and Reinier Lucassen (and whose joint creations included a three-dimensional work of art in the underground vaults at Beervelde estate near Ghent).

Not that Raveel has stopped working today. Just last year he assisted with a project for Muziektheater Transparant's *A New Requiem*. Having read the text, Raveel was inspired to start drawing, and the resulting set of sketches form part of the music-theatre production and illustrate an accompanying book.

For an overview of how Raveel's work has evolved throughout his career, a trip to the museum in Machelen-Zulte is ideal. The works on display fill 10 rooms and are arranged chronologically, showing the development from the early, deceptively simple paintings of people in bold primary colours, such as "Gele man met karretje" ("Yellow Man with Cart") through a more abstract period, such as "Witte aanwezigheid en verticale afwezigheid" ("White Presence and

Vertical Absence") and on to his figurative phase that combined both of these elements.

One of the stand-outs is among the early works: "Voetbalveld" ("Football Field") from 1952. My eye was immediately drawn to the deep, bright blue sky at the top, and then the houses and fields in reds, yellows and blues that feature along the skyline. It took a while before I noticed the football pitch in the middle of the painting. With the pitch painted a pale shade of green and the goalposts pushed off to the right by a black-and-white vertical stripe, the subject of the painting's title only slowly comes into focus – a curious effect given the pitch actually takes up a third of the canvas.

The use of vertical stripes that run to the edge of a painting – and sometimes even beyond – is a feature that recurs in Raveel's work. The eye is led beyond the edge of the canvas in a way that suggests the picture keeps on going. The artist calls this "making the painting flow out into the surroundings".

Raveel has also painted objects, and "Illusiegroep" ("Illusion Group") is particularly fun. It's made out of three pieces, each a few metres from the next in a line. In the middle is a wooden frame and at each edge a life-size, cut-out figure. The illusion part comes in with the use of mirrors and square frames cut out of the figures. If you stand at one end, you are facing a black cardboard figure of a man with a mirror on his lower half and a square cut out of his top half. You see the figure, with your own feet and lower legs reflected in the mirror, while simultaneously looking through the square gap to the second and third parts of the set, on which there are more mirrors and illusion tricks.

If you are feeling a little dizzy trying to conjure up this image, rest assured it's just as disorienting to look at the actual work. Raveel certainly achieves his aim of making viewers question how they see things and making them aware of their position within and outside of an artwork.

Mirrors are a feature incorporated into several of the pieces on display in the last two rooms of the collection highlighting his work from the 1980s and '90s. Sometimes the effect is playful, such as in "Zie hier een mens" ("Look, Here is a Person"), where viewers stand in front of the painting and see reflections of parts of their body become part of the picture. Sometimes the result is more disturbing, as in "Het graf van Pernath" ("Pernath's Grave"), where the mirror is in the buried grave at the bottom of the work. ("Het graf van Pernath" is also a poem by the late Flemish writer Hugo Claus, in reference to Hugues C Pernath, the Flemish poet who died an untimely death in 1975.)

On the one hand these pieces seem quite a departure from Raveel's earliest works, and yet the bright colours are there, as are the vertical lines and the typical thick borders outlining objects in the paintings.

Once you leave the museum, be sure to wander past the church and down to the lake where you can see a wall installation created by Raveel in the 1990s. Again, there's no mistaking it's his work, as the wall, almost 40 metres long, is decorated with mirrors, figures and white squares and rectangles with thick black borders.

Once you're there, it would be a shame not to go on the walk and end up at the De Afspanning restaurant for a true Raveel experience. ♦



"Yellow Man with Cart", 1952

The country life

The Roger Raveel Museum, which opened in 1999, was designed by Ghent architect Stéphane Beel. It is a two-storey building set out like a string of differently sized cuboids, following "the rules which Beel discovered in the disordered faltering rhythm of gardens, plots and terraced houses," according to the museum's former curator Roland Jooris.

Inside, the museum feels spacious with its white walls, high ceilings and many windows looking out onto the surrounding village and countryside. While the main area is home to the permanent Raveel collection, an upstairs section is always dedicated to a temporary exhibition.

From March 14 until June 20, this will be the exhibition *Pictografie*, a term that embraces the ideas of the pictorial and the graphic and chosen here to describe artworks that combine the skills of painting and drawing. The exhibition, whose subtitle is "paintings that are also drawings and vice versa", will include works by Raveel as well as Dutch artist René Daniëls, Brussels-based artist Elly Strik and Flemish artist Benoît van Innis, to name but a few.

→ www.rogerraveelmuseum.be



Roger Raveel also draws; an exhibition of his ink and pencil drawings was recently on show in Hasselt. "I remember well when I consciously said, look, now you know nothing, you now know nothing, so you start all over again," he said in a recent interview. "At that moment, drawing took on a new, important function; I wanted to begin again with the most simple means – pencil and paper."

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Tariq Malik Del Campo successfully completed the International Management Programme in October 2009.

Tariq Malik Del Campo: "Shortly after I moved from Spain to Belgium in 1991 I started working for Ericsson Belgium. As manager of the Ericsson training department I was responsible for organising training sessions for both employees who needed technical training as well as customers who were offered end-user training. Since 1997 I have been working for Ericsson Sweden.

Because of my career origins as training manager education has always been close to my heart. Keeping oneself updated academically and developing adequate skills is the only way to remain competitive and self-confident in a rapidly changing and ever more international business environment. This globalisation is what kept me on my toes and drew me in my mid-life back to the books. I realised that what got me to the point I was in my career was not enough to successfully keep me there.

The high recommendations of a friend who was following a management programme at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School and the excellent Financial Times rankings were what attracted me to the School. Because of my international working environment I chose to follow the International Management Programme. Not only did it offer me the possibility to refresh some of the principles I had learned previously in an MBA course, but also to view disciplines such as strategy, HR Management and leadership from a completely different angle. The hands-on experience and real case studies combined with simulations and role modelling, proved to be an extremely effective and rich way to learn and develop. Vlerick really gives you added value; it is a true learning experience.

As for the future, time will tell how I can experiment with this newly gathered knowledge and where it will take me on a career level. However, the programme has certainly made me feel more comfortable in handling the international relationships and differences in doing business. Finally, by taking this course at a later stage in my career I was able to blend together my collected experience in the business world with this fresh knowledge in a way that I feel has leveraged my performance."



FLANDERS TODAY

We want to hear from you!

Since its launch in October 2007, *Flanders Today* has seen a spectacular increase in the number of readers and subscribers and now has a **weekly circulation of 24,000 copies**.

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Thank you and good luck!

Lisa Bradshaw
Deputy Editor

Derek Blyth
Editor-in-chief

www.flanderstoday.eu/survey





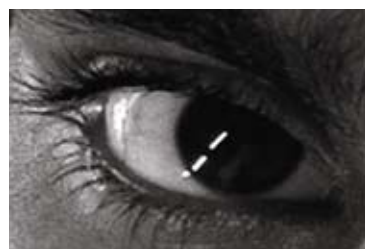
Courtisane

LISA BRADSHAW

What we see is inseparable from how we see, according to Brad Butler, one of the guest artists at the Courtisane festival in Ghent. Fans of experimental film and media art will enjoy the Vooruit's most ambitious Courtisane yet, with a bulging programme that belies the mere five days of festival. The art centre in Ghent stages this annual event, which takes place inside its walls and at the city's Sphinx cinema and Film Plateau. Courtisane uses Butler's approach in its programming: how can we escape the deeply embedded social and cultural narratives we replay in our heads every day to allow ourselves to see and interpret information in different ways? With this sentiment as a guide, the films – most of them shorter than 60 minutes – are screened together according to themes. The seven films of "Reveal the Hidden", for instance, includes a Danish movie that tries to visualise blindness ("to be watched with eyes open or shut"), a Belgian film featuring a woman explaining the mysterious spots she sees every day, and a film about glass jars found buried in the American desert that contained notes written by children detailing the abuse they were suffering at the hands of family members.

"That Dimension", meanwhile, is a series of films on actions that are unclear and ceremonies that blend reality and spirituality. *A Letter to Uncle Boonmee* is a Thai/British film that shows a group of young soldiers digging up the ground – but are they exhuming or burying? Another demonstrates the way American Peter Rose experiments with lightness and darkness as he seeks out deserted places in large cities and performs bizarre light ceremonies. "Time and Time Again" features two films, the 15-minute *Atlantiques* from France and the 53-minute *Not Waving, But Drowning* by Elias Grootaers. The young Flemish filmmaker has already made an impression with the award-winning *Lines*, which followed three aging railways workers in the Belgian countryside, and is back with this film, which follows the experiences of Indian refugees as they are pulled from containers aboard a ship in Zeebrugge. More poetry than documentary, the film follows them as they wander about the harbour terminals, losing all sense of time and place. The title is taken from the poem by Stevie Smith: "I was much further out than you thought / And not waving but drowning".

Courtisane also includes an exhibition of video art and several special guests, including American David Gatten, who brings along the first four parts of his nine-part series *Secret History of the Dividing Line*; American Morgan Fisher, who introduces his own work plus the programme he has curated; and Irish-born David O'Reilly, a master of animation.



17-21 March
Across Ghent

→ www.courtisane.be

WEEK



MORE EXPERIMENTAL FILM THIS

Doc'z: Signé Chanel → **Z33, Hasselt** →

Les Films Rêvés by Eric Pauwels → **Flagey, Brussels**

Dochose: Les Arrivants → **Beursschouwburg, Brussels**



Antwerp

Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27; www.kellys.be
MAR 13 21.30 The Lowland Paddies

Petrol

Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63
www.petrolclub.be
MAR 12 23.00 Techno Nr2 + Robert Hood + Will O'Brien + Dave Copp + Pierre
MAR 13 21.00 Sweet Coffee + Buscemi + Lize Accoe + Merdan Taplak + Louis Katorz

Queen Elisabeth Hall

Koningin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060
www.fccc.be
MAR 11 20.00 The Four Tops & The Temptations
MAR 17 20.00 Mariza

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
MAR 12 20.00 Anti-pop Consortium
MAR 14 14.00 Paganfest 2010 feat Finntroll + Eluveitie + Dornenreich + Varg + Arkona + more
MAR 16 20.00 The Album Leaf + Retribution Gospel Choir
MAR 17 20.00 Marble Sounds

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
MAR 10 20.00 Freaky Age
MAR 11 20.00 Musée Mécanique
MAR 15 Robert Francis

Belle Vue Café

Henegouwenkaai 43; 02.414.29.07
www.vkconcerts.be
MAR 17 21.00 Limited Addiction + Lucky Dragons

Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50
www.beursschouwburg.be
MAR 13 21.40 Cecilia::Eyes + Alkalys

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89
www.fuse.be
MAR 12 23.00 Deadfish party with Mowgli

Jacques Franck Cultural Centre

Waterloosesteenweg 94; 02.538.90.20
www.ccjacquesfranck.be
MAR 13 20.30 Bai Kamara Jr

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org
MAR 10 20.00 The Ultimate Phil Collins Show
MAR 11 20.30 Michaël Grégorio
MAR 17 20.00 Maurane sings Nougaro

Le Bar du Matin

Alsebergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>
MAR 11 21.00 Nomo
MAR 15 21.00 Tiny Legs

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
Concerts at 20.00:
MAR 12 Le Double + Casse Brique + InnerMountain + iCu
MAR 14 I Might Be Wrong + Josiah Wolf Why?
MAR 16 Hadouken!
MAR 17 Cocoroyal + JP Nataf. Rickie Lee Jones

LOs à Moelle

Emile Maxlaan 153; 02.267.10.90
www.osamoelle.be
MAR 13 21.00 Soirée Rock à Gogo by Ponpon

Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74
www.magasin4.be
MAR 11 19.00 Senser + Shargath
MAR 12 20.00 SAT (Fonky Family) + Manza + Baeyens

Maison des Musiques

Lebeauststraat 39; 02.550.13.20
www.vkconcerts.be

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Lady Gaga

18 May, 20.00

Sportpaleis, Antwerp

The tickets to Lady Gaga's Monster Ball tour on 17 May in Antwerp sold out within hours, so the queen of...um, sex pop? Rowdy rock? Sparkly spandex?...has graciously scheduled another. Tickets go on sale on Friday, 12 March, at 9.00, so have that website loaded and then Just Dance to the Paprazzi with your Pokerface.



→ www.proximusgoformusic.be

MAR 10 20.15 Moon on Earth + Bosque Brown

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recyclart.be
MAR 12 21.00 Dizzy Ventilators

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
MAR 11 12.30 Ingrid Mank

Ukkel Cultural Centre

Rodestraat 47; 02.374.04.95 www.ccu.be
MAR 15 20.30 Axelle Red

VK Club

Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07
www.vkconcerts.be
Doors open at 19.30:
MAR 16 21.15 Infectious Grooves

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be
MAR 10 20.00 Spandau Ballet
MAR 12 20.00 Jacques Dutronc
MAR 13 20.00 Gérard De Palmas

Eeklo

CC De Herbakker
Pastoor De Nevestraat 10; 09.218.27.27,
www.ccdeherbakker.be
MAR 12 20.30 Ballroom Quartet

N9 Villa

Molenstraat 165; 09.377.93.94 www.n9.be
MAR 12 21.00 Those Metal Boys With Their Metal Toys

Ghent

Kinky Star
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45
www.kinkystar.com
Concerts at 21.00:
MAR 12 Boston Tea Party
MAR 13 Leafpeople
MAR 14 Norsemen
MAR 16 Mrs Okkido

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
MAR 11 20.30 Hokie Joint
MAR 12 22.00 MODklub: B-kant (Mauro Pawlowski, Sven Mes) + Joe Berluck

Leuven

Het Depot

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
MAR 12 21.30 Hindu Nights: Shine a Light + Team William

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00,
www.kursaalooostende.be
MAR 12 20.00 The Four Tops and The Temptations



Antwerp

Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53,
www.busterpodium.be
MAR 11 22.00 Buster jam with Jo Cassiers
MAR 12 22.00 The Gerdband
MAR 13 22.00 Van Binnen

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
MAR 14 16.00 Phil & Quill Project
MAR 15 21.00 Thelonious 4
MAR 16 21.00 Pierre Anckaert Quintet

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
MAR 13-14 20.00 Brad Mehldau and Joshua Redman

Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40
www.senghor.be
MAR 12 20.30 Ernst Reijseger & Molla Sylla

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
Concerts at 20.30:
MAR 10 Wolke **MAR 11** Marc Lelanguue
MAR 13 Eve Beuvs & Mikael Godée
MAR 17 Radoni's Tribe

Le Caveau du Max

Emile Maxlaan 87; 02.733.17.88
www.lemax.be
MAR 11 19.30 Trio Hora Cero

Sint-Pieters-Woluwe Cultural Centre

Charles Thielemanslaan 93; 02.773.05.88
www.art-culture.be
MAR 12 20.30 Beverly Jo Scott

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:

MAR 10 A musical support to Tibet
MAR 11 Adam Rafferty **MAR 12** Alain Cupper Quartet **MAR 13** Ali Ryerson
MAR 15 Cocotrio **MAR 16** Teodora Enache

Ghent

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.92.01
www.handelsbeurs.be
MAR 13 20.15 Carmen Souza



Antwerp

Borgerhout Luchtbal Cultuurcentrum

Columbiastraat 110; 03.543.90.30
www.ccluchtbal.org
MAR 13-14 Baobab: Choir Caljenti and youth choir Carmina

CC Berchem

Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20
www.ccberchem.be
MAR 10 20.30 Homage to Wannes Van de Velde

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
MAR 10 20.30 Boubacar Traoré

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
MAR 12 20.30 Encuentro de Juglares y Acordeones (Colombia/Spain)

Brussels

Le Montmartre

Boondaalsesteenweg 344;
www.lemontmartre.be
MAR 13 20.30 Jessica Kilroy

Maison du Peuple

Sint-Gillisvoorplein 37-39; 02.217.26.00
www.maison-du-peuple.be
MAR 11 20.00 Boubacar Traore (Mali)
MAR 12 20.00 Night of the Lute: Mentés Másként Trio (Hungary), Elias Nardi Ensemble (Belgium/Italy)

Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
MAR 12 19.00 Luci della Centrale Elettrica

Sint-Pieters-Woluwe Cultural Centre

Charles Thielemanslaan 93; 02.773.05.88,
www.art-culture.be
MAR 17 20.30 Caracol



Antwerp

Amuz

Kammenstraat 81; 03.248.28.28
www.amuz.be
MAR 11 21.00 Benjamin Alard, harpsichord: Bach's Clavier-Übung
MAR 13 21.00 Lorenzo Ghielmi, fortepiano; Vittorio Ghielmi, viola da gamba: Bach
MAR 14 15.00 Octophorus, conducted by Paul Dombrecht: music for wind ensembles by François-Joseph Gossec and Ignaz Vitzthumb

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
MAR 10 18.00 E-XXI, conducted by Filip Rathé: Jérôme Combier, Luc Brewaeys, Gyorgy Kurtag. 20.00 Ensemble Cairn, conducted by Guillaume Bourgogne, with Donatienne Michel-Dansac, soprano: Fabien Levy, Pierre Jodkowski, Oliver Schneller, more
MAR 11-13 20.00 Ars Musica in Antwerp: series of new music concerts, films and projects

Brussels

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
MAR 11 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Teodor Currentzis, with Elisabeth Leonskaya, piano: Grieg, Tchaikovsky
MAR 13 11.00 & 14.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pablo Rus Broseta, with Bruno Coppens, narrator: Benjamin Britten's Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra. 20.00 Symphony Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Etienne Siebens, with Alexei Ogrintchouk, oboe: Haydn, Richard, more
MAR 14 20.00 Orchestre des Champs Elysées conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, with Rosemary Joshua, soprano: Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler
MAR 16 20.00 Krystian Zimerman, piano: Chopin
MAR 17 20.00 Aka Moon and Indian master musicians: The Light Ship Tantra

De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 www.demunt.be
MAR 17 20.00 Christoph Prégardien, tenor; Michael Gees, piano: Bach, Brahms, Mahler, more

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20 www.

DON'T MISS



Trinny & Susannah

12 March

Mechelen

British style gurus Trinny & Susannah are back in Flanders this week for a special event in the run-up to the Vitaya programme *Trinny & Susannah: Missie Vlaanderen (Mission Flanders)*, which begins airing at the end of this month. During Mechelen's special shopping event, Warm Welcome Weekend, the pair will cast 20 women for a fashion show. Any woman interested in spending the day being re-styled by T&S and strutting her stuff on the catwalk should be in Mechelen's Grote Markt by 9.00 Friday morning. The fashion show begins at 17.00 in the Oude Mechelse Vleeshalle, and stores in the city are open until 20.00, plus colour and styling advice in shops throughout the weekend.

→ www.mechelen.be

flagey.be

MAR 13 20.15 Anima Eterna conducted by Jos van Immerseel, with Thomas Bauer, baritone; Sergei Istomin, cello: Dukas, Ravel, more
MAR 14 20.15 Arditti Quartet: Georges Aperghis, Hilda Paredes, more
MAR 17 20.00 Royal Wallonia Chamber Orchestra conducted by Augustin Dumay, with Yury Haradzetski, tenor; Stéphanie Proot, Chrstia Hudziy, piano: Mozart

Kaaithheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaithheater.be
MAR 16 20.30 HERMESensemble conducted by Marco Angius: Andrew Claes, Peter Ablinger, more

Royal Museums of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11
www.concertsdemidi.be
MAR 10 12.40 André De Groote, piano: Beethoven
MAR 17 12.40 Tatiana Samouil, violin; Justus Grimm, cello; Daniel Blumenthal, piano: Schumann, Mendelssohn

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
Concerts at 20.00:
MAR 10 Julia Fischer, violin: Bach's Sonatas and Partitas **MAR 11** Andreas Staier, harpsichord: Bach's Goldberg Variations **MAR 12** Kölner Akademie conducted by Michael Alexander Wilens: Buxtehude, Rosenmüller, Nicolaus Bruhns, Bach **MAR 13** Bruocsella Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jan Steenbrugge, with Stephanie Proot, piano: Chopin, De Boeck, Shostakovich **MAR 17** Jerusalem String Quartet, with Lawrence Power, viola: Mozart, Debussy

Ghent

De Bijloke

Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2, 09.233.68.78
www.debijloke.be
MAR 13 20.00 Atos Trio: piano trios by Rachmaninov, Schumann, Shostakovich
MAR 14 11.00 Nicolas Achten Ex Tempore Ensemble conducted by Florian Heyerick and Operastudio Vlaanderen: Christoph Graupner. 15.00 Symphony Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Etienne Siebens with Alexei Ogrintchouk, oboe: Haydn, Richard Strauss, Brahms. 17.00 Evelyne Bohen,

soprano; Mariano Ferrandez, piano: Poulenc's La voix humaine

MAR 17 20.00 Ronald Brautigam, piano: Beethoven, Frank Agsterribbe

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65,
www.handelsbeurs.be
MAR 12 20.15 Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, piano: Haydn, Ravel, Prokofiev
MAR 17 20.15 Elizabeth Watts, soprano; Roger Vignoles, piano: Schubert, Wolf



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until MAR 13 15.00/18.30 Don Carlos by Giuseppe Verdi, conducted by Alexander Joel, staged by Peter Konwitschny (in the original French with Dutch surtitles)

Brussels

Théâtre de la Balsamine

Félix Marchallaan 1; 02.735.64.68
www.balsamine.be
MAR 15-20 21.00 Compagnie Khroma performs Ismène, opera for solo voice by Georges Aperghis, staged by Enrico Bagnoli and Guy Cassiers, with singer Marianne Pousseur



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
MAR 10 20.30 Babemba, choreographed by Serge Aimé Coulibaly

Brussels

Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50



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www.beursschouwburg.be

MAR 17-18 20.30 Laurent Chetouane in Tanzstück #3 Doppel/Solo/Ein Abend
Théâtre les Tanneurs
Huidevettersstraat 75; 02.512.17.84
www.lesanneurs.be
MAR 16-20 20.30 Les Ballets C de la B in Primero, choreographed by Lisi Estaras

Théâtre Marni

Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.81
www.theatremarni.com
MAR 11 20.30 Cie Dessources in Sources, hip-hop, contemporary dance and live music by Didier Laloy, choreographed by Nono Battesti, staged by Olivier Battesti

Théâtre Varia

Scepterstraat 78; 02.640.82.58
www.varia.be
MAR 16-APR 3 19.30/20.30 To the Ones I love, choreographed by Thierry Smits

Wolubilis

Paul Hymanslaan 251; 02.761.60.30
www.wolubilis.be
MAR 16-17 20.30 Cie Tarab in Dromen in de Egyptische nacht (Dreams in the Egyptian Night), choreographed by Béatrice Grogard



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg

Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
MAR 10-13 20.15 Kommil Foo in Wolf (in Dutch)
MAR 13 20.30 Salomee Speelt in Date Me! in Hollywood, staged by Noémi Schlosser

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.50,
www.deroma.be
MAR 17 20.30 Veldhuis & Kemper in We Moeten Praten (We Need to Talk), cabaret (in Dutch)

Bourla

Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
MAR 11-27 20.00 De Filmfabriek in De Indringer (The Intruder), directed by Peter Missotten (in Dutch)

CC Berchem

Driekoningenstraat 126; 03.286.88.20,
www.ccberchem.be
MAR 17 20.30 't Arsenaal and Compagnie Lodewijk in Thuis (Home) by Hugo Claus, directed by Yves De Pauw (in Dutch)

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
MAR 11-13 20.00 Troubleyn in De Keizer van het Verlies (The Emperor of Loss), directed by Jan Fabre (in Dutch)

Fakkelteater

Reyndersstraat 7; 03.232.14.69
www.fakkelteater.be
MAR 11 & 21 20.30 Janine Bischops and Saartje Vandendriessche in Den Oorlog (The War), written and staged by Peter Perceval (in Dutch)
Until MAR 14 20.30 Yves Caspar and Gunter Reniers in Placa de Catalunya by Caspar (in Dutch)

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900,
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
MAR 17-28 The Sound of Music (musical, in Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00,
www.zuiderpershuis.be
MAR 11 20.30 Eendhoorn in Groeten uit Aracataca - Briefkaartje uit een absurde, wrede maar schone wereld (Greetings from Aracataca – postcard from an absurd, cruel but beautiful world), directed by Sus Slaets (in Dutch)

Ardooe

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw

Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
Until MAR 13 20.30 tg BIT in TIK, written and staged by Steven Duyck (in Dutch)

Bruges

De Werf

Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29,
www.dewerf.be
MAR 13 20.30 De Werf/Frank Adam in Erotische Fabels (Erotic Fables), directed by Fabrice Commeyne (in Dutch)

English Theatre of Bruges

Walplein 23; 050.68.79.45
www.tematema.com
Until MAR 13 20.00 Gambolling Arena Theatre Company in I Wish You Love (In English)

Brussels

KVS Box

Arduinkaai 9; 02.210.11.12
www.kvs.be
Until MAR 13 20.30 Bezette stad (Occupied City), (poetry/theatre/beatbox and rap, in Dutch and French with Dutch and French surtitles)
MAR 16-27 20.30 Global Anatomy by Benjamin Verdonck and Wily Thomas (without dialogue)

The Warehouse Studio

Waelhemstraat 69a; 0477.408.704
www.theatreinbrussels.com
Until MAR 13 20.00 English Comedy Club in Three Tall Women by Edward Albee, directed by Janet Middleton (in English)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until MAY 2 Animism, Part 1, installations, photos and film exploring the collective practices of humans and non-humans and the ensuing relationships

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extracity.org
Until MAY 2 Animism, Part Two (see above)

Foto Museum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until MAR 14 (Kunstenaars)portretten (Artists Portraits), photographs by Jean-Pierre Stoop
Until MAY 16 Congo (belge), photographs by Flemish Magnum photographer Carl De Keyzer
Until MAY 16 Bamako Encounters 2009: Borders, contemporary African photography biennial

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media

Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03
www.argosarts.org
Until MAR 27 Rinko Kawauchi: Transient Wonders, Everyday Bliss, photography, video and slides
Until MAR 27 Ralo Mayer: Travelling Through Biosphere 2, or Anastylis of Follies, multi-media installation
Until MAR 27 James Lee Byars: From Life to Art and Back Again, video and interviews with the American artist

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until APR 11 Mexican Modernisms, overview of post-war Mexican architecture, plus documentary films and contemporary documents
Until APR 11 Mundos Mexicanos, 25 contemporary Mexican photographers
Until APR 18 Frida Kahlo y su mundo, works by the famous Mexican artist on loan from the Dolores Olmedo Museum

Until APR 25 Imágenes del Mexicano, history of Mexico seen through 150 portraits, including paintings, photos and sculpture
Until APR 25 El Horizonte del topo (The Mole's Horizon), video artists
Until MAY 9 El Greco: Domenikos Theotokopoulos 1900, more than 40 works by the Spanish Renaissance painter

Royal Museums of Art and History

Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
www.kmkg-mrah.be
Until MAR 14 Vier Doornikse wandtapijten uit Pastrana (Four Tournai Tapestries from Pastrana), historically important tapestries originating from the Belgian city of Tournai and restored in Spain (marking the EU Spanish presidency)
Until APR 18 Isabelle de Borchgrave's I Medici: a Renaissance in Paper, life-size paper replicas of historic costumes

Tour & Taxis

Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
Until MAR 28 John Fitzgerald Kennedy: The American Dream, photographs, audio-visual documents and objects relating to the assassinated US president (www.jfk-expo.be)

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
www.wiels.org
Until APR 25 Felix Gonzales-Torres: Specific Objects without Specific Form, retrospective of the late Cuban-born American artist
Until APR 25 Melvin Moti: From Dust to Dust, the contemporary Dutch artist's first solo show in Belgium

Ghent

Contemporary Art Museum (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be
Until MAR 14 GAGARIN: The Artists in their Own Words, a collection of texts by participating artists
MAR 13 11.00-18.30 S.M.A.K. going GAGA, presentation of the GAGARIN exhibition followed by a panel discussion, reading marathon and musical performance of his Voodoo-Faust (Crash Opera) by ManfreDu Schu & friends
Until APR 18 The Wandering Tuba Method, sculptures by Tamara Van San
Until MAY 16 Loek Grootjans: Leaving Traces, installations
Until MAY 16 Koen van den Broek: Curbs & Cracks, photographs and paintings by the Flemish artist
Until MAY 16 Collection FAKE?, interpretations of reality

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
www.designmuseumgent.be
Until JUNE 6 Richard Hutten, furniture, interiors and objects by the Dutch designer
Until JUNE 6 The Scandinavian Touch in Belgian Furniture 1951-1966

Hasselt

Cultuurcentrum

Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.31 www.ccha.be
Until APR 11 Yvan Theys: Verborgene schatten (Hidden Treasures), paintings
Until APR 11 Marnik Neven: Moment, drawings, paintings, sculpture, digital animations
Until APR 11 Kumi Oguro, photographs

Leuven

STUK

Naamsestraat 96; 016.32.03.20
www.stuk.be
Until MAR 21 Alfredo Jaar: The Sound of Silence, installations by the New York-based Chilean artist



Antwerp

4-Ever Young: dance party for 40-plussers with music from the '80s and '90s

MAR 11 from 20.00 at La Riva, Londenstraat 52
03.225.01.02, www.midlifeparty.be
Brussels

Babyboom: Fair for future and new parents in Belgium
MAR 12-14 at Brussels Expo, Heysel
02.474.89.81, www.babyboom.be

Creativa: Decoration, interior & fashion fair

MAR 11-14 at Brussels Expo, Heysel
02.474.89.81, www.creavenue.com

Festival of Hope: Rwandan music festival with guest artists from Burundi and DRC. Soukous, Burundian drums, Rwandan dance, hip-hop and R&B
MAR 12, 19.00 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Made in Asia: Fair on Asian culture and leisure activities

MAR 13-14 at Brussels Expo, Heysel
02.474.89.81, www.madeinasia.be

Mars en Mediterraanée: Middle Eastern and Mediterranean festival featuring dance, circus and literary performances
Until MAR 28 at Les Halles de Schaerbeek, Koninklijke Sinte-Mariastraat 22
02.218.21.07, www.halles.be

Pistes de Lancement - International

Circus Festival: Performances from 30 Belgian and international companies
Until MAR 31 in and around Victoria Park, Koekelberg
070.660.601, www.pistesdelancement.be

Romanian poetry and jazz:

Poets Nora Iuga, Valeriu Mircea Popa, Octavian Soviany, Andra Rotaru, Cosmin Perta and miruna Vlada join saxophonist Liviu Butoi and a few glasses of wine in this event in Romanian, French and English
MAR 17 17.00 at Passa Porta, Dansaertstraat 46
02.226.04.54; www.passaporta.be

Saint Patrick's Day:

MAR 12-13 18.00 Guinness Irish Festival of Brussels with traditional Irish food, music, dance and film at Renaissance Brussels Hotel, Parnassusstraat 19
guinness.irish.festival.brussels@gmail.com
MAR 14 11.00 Saint Patrick's Day Parade of the Nations & Regions at Jubelpark
www.brussels-st-patricks-day-parade.be

Salon B&B Expo: International bed & breakfast fair with accommodation ideas and advice for setting up a B&B or small hotel

MAR 13-14 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C
02.290.44.31, www.bbexpo.be

Ghent

Courtisane Festival: Experimental and documentary film, audiovisual performances and media art
MAR 17-21 across the city
www.courtisane.be

Sfeer: Fair for interior decoration, garden and pool

MAR 13-21 at Flanders Expo, Maaltekoeter 1
www.sfeer.be

Mechelen

Warm Welkom Weekend: Special shopping weekend, with stores offering individual styling and colour advice. On Friday, the UK's famous fashion divas Trinny & Susannah choose 20 women to make-over and put on the catwalk
MAR 12-14 on the Grote Markt, shops stay open until 20.00
www.mechelen.be

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA



Night games

People-watching at bars in Brussels is great fun. But sometimes you want to do a little more than that. Sometimes you just want to thrash the living daylight out of them. Whether you're with friends or not, several Brussels bars offer you the opportunity to do that with bar games.

Walk into the Greenwich in the centre any weekend night, and you'll not only find a rustic bar with its original 1914 wood-panelled interior intact, but an eclectic mix of young and old hunched over chess boards, playing against the clock. Hustlers mingle with the earnest here, so, despite the friendly atmosphere, you could find yourself in check mate with a one time champion from a small ex-Soviet state.

Ask the bar staff for the boules nicely, and you can play pétanque a stone's throw away, at Sint Goriks Hallen. This lovely red brick building in the middle of the square was the local indoor market until the 1970s. Luckily, the large, airy bar with two alcoves of leather sofas amongst the more conventional tables hasn't turned into the local meat-market on Friday and Saturday nights since it's reincarnation – despite the fresh fruit juices, well-mixed cocktails and buzzing crowd. Whether you win or lose at Petanque, the uplifting beats spun by local DJs will keep you smiling until 3.00 at the weekends.

Over in Elsene, play Go, Draughts or Backgammon all night with the resident cat curled up on your lap at Le Pantin. This little gem sports dark wooden benches, old cinema seats and walls plastered with posters for the city's more underground happenings. Expect to match your wits against a local clientele of musicians, filmmakers and art students, nursing their beers and rolling their cigarettes until daybreak.

Le Greenwich

7 Karthuizersstraat

Sint Goriks Hallen

1 Sint Goriksplein

Le Pantin

355 Elsensesteenweg

FACE OF FLANDERS

LEO CENDROWICZ

Sugar Jackson

Flemish athletes have soared to the top in tennis, cycling and even the high jump, but who knew there was boxing champion in there? Ghana-born, Antwerp-based boxer Osei Bonsu "Sugar" Jackson, 29, won the International Boxing Council (IBC) world welterweight title in 2005 and followed it up two years later with the European Boxing Union (EBU) crown. But he made his biggest headlines recently when he was embroiled in a doping row. It was only last month that the Flemish Doping Tribunal finally cleared Jackson's name over his failure to provide details of his whereabouts last year for random, out-of-competition drug testing. These are the same new reporting requirements that threatened to ensnare tennis players Yanina Wickmayer and Xavier Malisse last year.

Jackson said he never received the letter telling him he was one of Flanders' 713 top athletes, and therefore subject to the system. But (like Wickmayer and Malisse) he has now been given the green light after four months of uncertainty, which means he can go ahead with his planned 19 March bout against American Randall Bailey in Antwerp's Lotto Arena.

Jackson first came to Belgium with his father in 1997 when he was just 16. He joined the Antwerpse Boksschool, where his fearsome punch and dogged stamina added up to an awesome fighting talent. He also took up the "Sugar" moniker in honour of his hero, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Jackson has scored 31 wins in 34 bouts since he turned professional in 2001, including knocking out France's Nordin Mouchi in 2007 to claim



© Luc Claessen/Belga

the EBU welterweight title. After an undefeated run of 21 fights since 2003, he lost on points in September 2008 to Poland's Rafal "Braveheart" Jackiewicz – in the process, losing the EBU belt he had held four times. He lost again last July to Turkey's Selcuk Aydin.

The boxing world is famously split between fight and title organisations, and Jackson's EBU and IBC belts are not considered majors. In 2006, when he was five years into his pro career, he was still making a living as a computer design specialist.

But Jackson still believes he can make it. His website opens with the sounds of the song "The World's Greatest" from the biopic Ali. It also offers fans the chance to buy a life-size bronze bust of Jackson. "I'm prepared to go anywhere to make it happen," he said in 2006. "I'm a professional boxer and ready for anyone."

→ www.sugartime1.com

Night of the Fight V: Sugar Jackson vs Randall Bailey, 19 March, Lotto Arena, Antwerp

→ www.lotto-arena.be

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



kapsalon →

I have been sorting through boxes of slides I took years ago and came across myself looking eerily like one of my sons. Time has left not too much of a mark, I like to kid myself, but it has cruelly thinned me out on top. A side effect of this is that I don't spend much time or money at the kapsalon – hairdresser. And people talking about bad hair days leave me cold; if only!

So when my eyes fell on a piece of mundane local news about the opening of a new kapsalon, I was surprised to find myself reading on. The proud owner is a young man called Nassim, who made his way to Belgium from Iraq to escape the miseries of the war there. The article begins tantalisingly: *Achter de twee blauwe ogen die schuchter naar me kijken, schuilt een woelig verleden* – Behind the two blue eyes that look at me shyly hides a turbulent past.

Are blue eyes common in Iraq? Nassim knows about styling: *Ik heb een kappersopleiding gevolgd in Dubai* – I did a hairdressing course in Dubai. By now I was intrigued: why train as a kapper – hairdresser so far away in Dubai?

For the four years Nassim has been here, he has always had a job. For the past three years, he worked in a hairdresser's in a dodgy part of town: *"Ik was niet op mijn gemak* – I wasn't at

ease". Too many louche things going on round about. Now he has his own shop in *een drukke straat met veel voetgangers* – in a busy street with lots of pedestrians.

Nassim and his friend Siad from Palestine have put a lot of work into turning a former clothes shop into a kapsalon. Siad has trained as a *loodgieter* – plumber ("lead pourer") and took care of the *loodgieterij* – plumbing. Both are studying business management. And the future? *Nog één jaar en dan zijn ze officieel Belg* – In another year they will be officially Belgian.

The short article says so much and yet so little. Clearly, the two have made great efforts to better themselves and are not work-shy. They took risks to reach Belgium, and they would probably have suffered if they had stayed. And between the lines you can try to piece together what sort of persecution they had gone through.

Nassim still has family in Iraq: *"Ik mis hen heel erg* – I miss them very much. *Maar het is niet veilig* – But it is not safe. *Vorig jaar zijn er zes familieleden gedood* – Last year six family members were killed."

If you need a short back and sides, look out for Nassim's kapsalon in Sint-Gummarusstraat in Antwerp.

→ www.gva.be

bite

SHARON LIGHT

Exotic World

Growing up in Ohio, one of my favourite outings was to an unbelievably large warehouse called Jungle Jim's, an international market often called a "theme park for foodies". At more than 2.5 hectares, it was easily the most amazing and diverse international collection of food that I have ever seen.

Imagine the change in mindset needed to adapt to Brussels: a typical shopping outing can take me to as many as five stores to pick up everything I need. And for anything remotely exotic, good luck.

It was a pleasure, therefore, to discover Exotic World in Leuven. Although only the size of a typical supermarket, I had yet to see so many countries represented in one place since moving to Belgium.

The store, located on Brusselsestraat in the centre of town, is certainly not concerned with aesthetics – products are neatly arranged on the shelves, but the shelves themselves, along with the lighting and flooring, clearly prize function over form.

It can also be a bit confusing to navigate. Indian spices showed up next to the local Ducros brand herbs; Indian dried goods (beans, chickpeas) were nearer the rice section; and Indian foods that didn't fall in either of those categories appeared elsewhere in what I could only assume was the "Indian" section. Moreover, you'll need to bone up on your languages, as the names and alphabets are diverse and not always translated.

But what fun! Exotic World is full of products I had never heard of and that required subsequent internet research: from durian (a Southeast Asian fruit), to pomtajer (a tropical tuber), to pickled mudfish. I

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© Todd Gistien

can only hope that someone out there is reading this article, exclaiming: "Pickled mudfish! I've been looking everywhere for that!"

You'll also gain a new appreciation for both the diversity and the similarities of world food. I have often discussed with friends how a ravioli in Italy is a pierogi in Poland and a wonton in China. But at Exotic World, you actually see parallel products side-by-side.

A refrigerator holds Italian pizza crusts and Middle Eastern lavash bread. An aisle with jars of pickles nicely demonstrates that, while Poles pickle beets and cabbage, Iranians pickle garlic, shallots and aubergines, and Mexicans are busy pickling jalapeno peppers and cactus.

Exotic World features goods from far and near – even very near. A small Belgian section contains a few beers and liqueurs, Wildiers jams from Haacht and Delaan homemade mayonnaise from Overijse.

→ www.exoticworld.be

THE LAST WORD...

On the occasion this week of International Women's Day, a number of famous Flemish women were asked to complete the sentence: *I'm a woman, and I'm happy because...*

"Women are a successful mix of beauty, wisdom, strength and love." Senator and professor Marleen Temmerman

"I could become the poster-girl for good causes for women and children." Miss Belgium Cilou Annys

"I can get pregnant, and that's something a man can never experience." Former top athlete Kim Gevaert

"The way to a man's heart is through his stomach, and I've got that under control." Claudia Engelen, winner of the TV contest Best Amateur Cook in Flanders

"Unlike many women in the world, I have the chance to work towards my dreams." Women's football star Femke Maes