

Congo today 8

This June marks the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo from Belgian colonial rule. While the FotoMuseum in Antwerp hosts a fascinating exhibition, KVS brings Kinshasa artists to Brussels



**It's, you know,
symbolic 10**

Belgium has never been short on Symbolism, art that presents one thing to mean another. From Khnopff to Rops, Brussels Museums of Fine Arts presents the best of Belgian Symbolism



**Noises in
the woods 11**

Way up in northern Limburg lies a forest of sound: Klankenbos is home to installations of sound art; some you walk around, some you walk through and some you encourage to talk to each other



#124

The old man by the sea

It's the 150th birthday of Ostend's beloved son

IAN MUNDELL

A strange old man with a big white beard, smelling slightly of the sea, will follow you around Flanders this year. It is 150 years since the painter James Ensor was born, and he is everywhere.

His birthplace, Ostend, has made him the figurehead of its year as Flemish City of Culture, with a massive exhibition at MuZee examining his life, work and links with the town. In the autumn, Bozar brings the extensive collection of Ensor's work from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp to the ING Cultural Centre in Brussels.

At the same time, Ghent's museums of fine arts (MSK) and contemporary arts (SMAK) will look at his impact on artists in the 20th century.

For its part, Ostend is fully justified in making such a strong claim on Ensor. Apart from three years at art academy in Brussels, the painter spent the whole of his long life in the coastal town. He was born there on 13 April, 1860. His father was also James, a Briton born

in Brussels, who met his future wife in Ostend while on holiday with his parents.

She was Marie Haegeman, whose family was in the souvenir trade, so James the future painter grew up among model sailing ships, sea shells and other oddities and trinkets. Writing decades later, Ensor said that being near these marvels, with their luminous opulence, helped turn him into a painter in love with colour and the dazzling effects of light. It would be fresh in his mind, since he was still living above the family shell shop at the time.

That shop was part of a large building on the corner of Vlaanderenstraat and Van Iseghemlaan. The young Ensor had a studio under the attic with a magnificent view over the town and the countryside to the south. It was here that he retreated after returning from Brussels, to paint seascapes, still lifes and portraits, either of local working people or his family in their natural drawing-room habitat.

► *continued on page 5*



Patrick Florizone, James Ensor Archief, Gent/Photo: Fernand Nayaert

"Ensor in His Salon, 1948" by photographer Fernand Nayaert, the only colour photograph ever taken of James Ensor

Muslims protest at literary event in Antwerp

Muslim protestors behind the disruption of a reading at Antwerp University, and thought to be behind the website Sharia4Belgium, have been placed under the surveillance of the security services on the orders of interior minister Annemie Turtelboom.

The reading took place last week in Antwerp and was given by Benno Barnard, a Dutch writer and essayist who now lives in Belgium. His reading was titled "Long live God, Down with Allah".

"After my first three sentences, 20 of the people present stood up," said Barnard. "One of them said that Allah will not be mocked, and then they started to chant 'allahu akbar'. You know these extremist preachers and their followers exist, but when they're

actually standing in front of you, it's terrifying. Clearly a line has been crossed. In the Netherlands it's exactly situations like these that led to the murder of [filmmaker] Theo Van Gogh."

The reaction was not, however, a surprise. Antwerp police had earlier warned Barnard that a call had gone out on the website Sharia4Belgium for his reading to be disrupted. Barnard was accompanied by two bodyguards, and two plain-clothes policemen were also present. Barnard intends to make a formal legal complaint, and he will be joined by Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens, who has instructed the city's legal advisers to explore the options for a complaint.

► *continued on page 3*

The Lange Wapper is no more...maybe

Flemish government compromises on road scheme

ALAN HOPE

The Flemish government last week scraped in under the deadline for a decision on the prickly matter of the future of road transport in Antwerp – by deciding not to take a decision. Hobbling on crutches literally but no longer figuratively, minister-president Kris Peeters proudly announced an agreement within his government: the controversial Lange Wapper viaduct plan has been scrapped and replaced with a tunnel. Unless, that is, a tunnel proves unfeasible, in which case the Lange Wapper will be back on the table.

The Lange Wapper is the unofficial nickname given to the viaduct section of what is properly called the Oosterweel link – a plan to close the Antwerp Ring in the southwest, making it easier for freight traffic from the left bank and the port facilities to join up with major traffic arteries leading to Germany, the Netherlands and the south.

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FLANDERS TODAY

Independent Newsweekly



Editor: Derek Blyth

Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Leo Cendrowicz, Courtney Davis, Stéphanie Duval, Anna Jenkinson, Sharon Light, Katrien Lindemans, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Melissa Maki, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Emma Portier Davis, Saffina Rana, Christophe Verbiest

Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert

Publisher: VUM

NV Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij

Gossetlaan 30, 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Editorial address: Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

E-mail: editorial@flanderstoday.eu

Subscriptions: France Lycops

Tel: 02.373.83.59

E-mail: subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese

Tel: 02.373.83.57

E-mail: advertising@flanderstoday.eu

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Derek Blyth

News in brief

The Carrefour supermarket in Groene Vallei in Ghent, object of a **rescue effort by local people** to prevent the store's closure, will stay open after all, the company announced last week. Groene Vallei is one of seven supermarkets given a stay of execution by Carrefour following a second round of assessments of the viability of stores. Still, 14 of the original 21 closures will go ahead. Groene Vallei will have to find someone to take over the franchise, and the store will be reduced in size. Carrefour staff in all stores that remain open will probably face pay cuts.

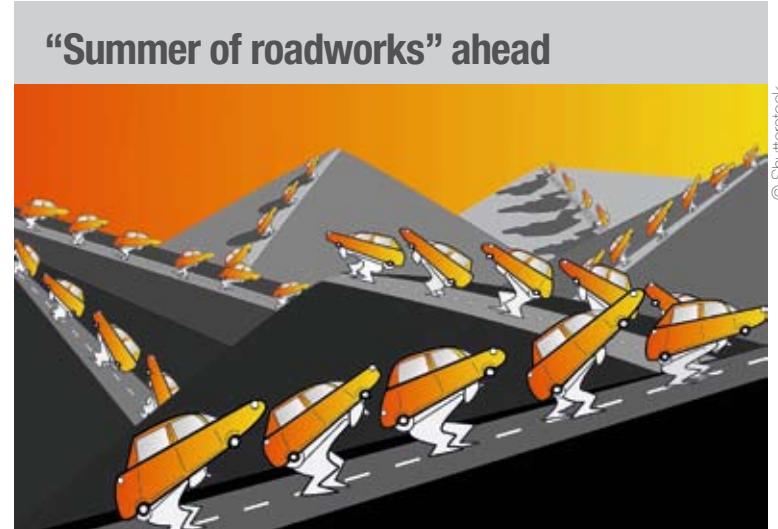
The city council of Aalst has voted to scrap a demand for €250 issued after the fire brigade was called out to **clean up a bloodstain** on the roadway. The bill was received by 79-year-old Georgette Van Den Bossche following a cycling accident in the summer. The council said that the rule for the cleaning services of the fire brigade to be paid by the person who created the situation was too narrowly interpreted in this case.

The **Sea Life marine theme park** in Blankenberge last week welcomed a new resident. Nicknamed Crabzilla, the Japanese giant spider crab has a total width from claw to claw of over 3.5 metres and was discovered last year in the Pacific Ocean. He had been living in Birmingham, England, but moved to Blankenberge to take advantage of their extra-large aquaria, which currently house some of Crabzilla's smaller relatives.

The Flemish **coast will get its own weather reports** following years of lobbying. Coastal authorities will post weather bulletins online four times a day for the two sections of the coastline – west (De Panne to Ostend) and east (Ostend to Knokke-Heist). "The coast is under the influence of a micro-climate, and it needs its own weather report," a spokesman for the Coastal department of the Agency for Maritime and Coastal Services said. The tourist industry welcomed the decision.

The **National Lottery is now online**. As of last week, it is possible to play Lotto and Euro Millions via website. In the first five hours of operation, 2,500 players had logged on. The aim

"Summer of roadworks" ahead



© Shutterstock

The Flemish region's mobility ministry last week announced no fewer than 19 roadworks in the region, which are expected to cause "moderate to serious" delays from now until the end of July.

They are:

Antwerp • E19 north of Antwerp direction Breda (E19-A12 interchange to Kleine Bareel) • A12 IKEA Bypass • A12 structural maintenance • E19 Ecoduct at Wuustwezel

Limburg • E314 from exit 27 Zolder-Terlaemen to exit 29 Houthalen-Helchteren direction Netherlands • E313 at Molenstraat

East Flanders • R4 in Ghent and Evergem • E40 Drogen • E40 Merelbeke exit, direction Ostend • E40 Erpe-Mere • E17 Deinze-Kruishoutem • E14 Moerbeke

Flemish Brabant • Kerkhofstraat - A12 junction at Meise-Londerzeel • E40 Sterrebeek to Bertem

• E314 Bekkevoort to Aarschot • Viaduct over the Ring in Sint-Stevens-Woluwe

West Flanders • Viaduct A10 Oudenburg • N49 Damme • Central reservation E403 (A17) Kortrijk to Hainaut border

The works are necessary to do something about the poor state of Flanders' roads, something most motorists will have noticed this past winter. The total cost for schedule works this year is €91 million. Mobility and public works minister Hilde Crevits described the heavy schedule as a "catching up measure" and estimated that the total backlog of repairs would not be completed until 2015.

Damage caused to roads by this winter's unusually harsh conditions has not even been assessed yet. "It's going to be a summer of roadworks," the minister said. "But better tailbacks than potholes."

Another 15 roadworks were announced for the period 1 August to 31 December:

Antwerp • E313 Wommelgem – Ranst and Ranst – Geel-Oost • A12 Noord • E19 Schoten

• E313 on and off ramps exit 28 • E314 Halen • E314 Lummen interchange

Vlaams-Brabant • E19 Diabolo

West-Vlaanderen • E40 Oostkamp • E40 Jabbeke • E40 direction France • E17 Waregem • E403 Ardooie – Lichtervelde • E403 Roeselare – Lichtervelde • A19 central reservation Kortrijk – Ieper

is to reach 50,000 a year. At present, only the "draw" games like Joker, Keno and Lotto are available, but virtual scratch-cards will be added in a second phase. The National Lottery plans to later add sports betting, but that will require a change to the law. www.e-lotto.be

identities last week in order not to sabotage the later stages of the competition. Broadcaster VTM and production house Kanakna are planning a complaint to the Council for Journalism, as well as possible legal action.

Uit in Vlaanderen, the **online cultural and leisure agenda**, is now available for smart phones and is GPS function as well as offering suggestions for other cultural activities in the neighbourhood. <http://m.uitinvlaanderen.be>

The sale of 17 exquisite topaz stones (and one beryl) took one minute to complete in Antwerp last week. The stones, dating from the Soviet era and the property of a bankrupt export company, went for €1 million



Muslims protest

→ continued from page 1

The website has been active only since March and is under surveillance by both state security and anti-terrorism police. "If a concrete threat is pronounced, we will inform the prosecutor's office," said federal police spokesperson Tine Hollevoet. A British version of the site was recently taken down by security services in the UK after it announced a demonstration in the town of Wootton Bassett, where soldiers killed in Afghanistan were due to be buried.

The group behind the disruption also included members of Jongeren voor Islam (Youth for Islam), which now calls itself De Middenweg (The Middle Way). The group's leader, Farid Zahnoun, has posted videos to YouTube calling for "holy war" in Belgium.♦

Belgium bans burqa

The Home Affairs committee of federal parliament has approved a ban on clothing worn in public that does not allow the face to be clearly seen – an effective ban on Muslim garments such as the niqab and the burqa. It is the first such ban to be introduced in Europe.

The Chamber will vote on the measure next week. The Council of State in France, where such a measure is being contemplated, advised their government that a ban would be in conflict with the European Treaty on Human Rights. The Belgian Council of State, however, has not yet been consulted.

Muslim community leaders protested the ban, as did Catholic representatives, who see it as an attack on religion and a dangerous precedent. The news reached the pages of most of Europe's newspapers, considering a number of countries have been considering similar measures.

The Wall Street Journal attributed the lack of major protest to the fact that Belgium's 400,000 Muslims come from Turkey and Morocco, where full-face coverage is not common. The paper quoted the president of the Muslim Executive, Semsettin Ugurlu: "I really don't have a problem with the ban itself. We don't have burqas in Turkey. I just worry it could be a slippery slope to taking away other freedoms."

Het Laatste Nieuws, meanwhile, asked if the ban on face covering would also extend to motorcyclists and even, in a leap of imagination, to men disguised as Sinterklaas.♦



© Reporters

The new law does not specify Muslim headwear, although that is its main target

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



13

the row of new check-in desks that will not be coming to the departures hall of Brussels Airport, in consideration of the feelings of superstitious passengers. Rows 11 and 12 came into operation last week. Row 14 will open in July

110,000

payments made by SMS on De Lijn buses since introduction of the new system two months ago. Antwerp accounted for 53% of sales

98

pedestrians killed in road accidents last year in Belgium. The total number of accidents on the roads involving pedestrians was 4,559. Most (1,107) took place on crossings without lights

1400%

increase in the number of cases of the STD gonorrhoea in Flanders over the last 10 years, from 70 in 2000 to 621 in 2009, according to figures from the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp. The increase is part of an upward trend in all STDs

€7.3 million

in economic benefit for the city of Leuven generated by the opening exhibition of the new M museum. The figure includes direct income (€1.3m), meals and drinks consumed by visitors to the city (€3.5m) and accommodation (€1.2m). The exhibition cost €3.7m to stage

Children too inactive, study shows

Only about 7% cent of pre-school children in Belgium move as much as they should, according to research carried out by the University of Ghent and Brussels University College (HUB). A child under six should be physically active for at least two hours a day, but instead they only play outside for an average of 16 minutes. Even during gym lessons at pre-school, children spend 58% of their time standing still.

A lack of space and excessively large classes are partly to blame, according to Dirk Smits of HUB, who led the research. "However, teachers could easily adapt their lessons to let children be more active."

The study looked at 573 children aged four to six in 35 schools. Their movements were measured using a motion meter, and they were observed by researchers using the SOFIT protocol, which allows physical movement to be evaluated objectively.

The results showed that children spent more than half the duration of the lesson lying down, sitting or standing still. That confirms research done by the same team two years ago, when they found that pre-school children

spent 85% of their waking hours inactive. Part of the problem is watching TV, but also in the classroom children were too often made to sit still. And even during play time, they were inactive for 61% of the time.

"It wouldn't take much more than a greater awareness and a few simple interventions to make lessons more active," Smits said. Suggestions include regular brief movement breaks and, perhaps less easily arranged, allowing more average space per child, something the research showed leads directly to increased activity.

• Meanwhile, research by the EU Commission revealed that half of all Belgians are indifferent to sport, 28% never take part in any sporting activity and 19% get no physical exercise whatever. The poll was carried out among 26,000 people in 27 member states, among them 1,001 Belgians. At the same time, however, 43% devote at least six hours a month to organising sporting events. The most active Europeans come from the north: 72% of Swedes and Finns indulge in regular physical exercise.♦

Race for Museum Prize is on

This year's Museum Prize was launched last week with an invitation to members of the public to vote for their favourite museum for the Public Prize, won last year by the Erasmus House in Brussels and the Gasthuis Sint-Dimpna in Geel.

The shortlist for the main Museum Prize will be announced in May. Each region – Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia – nominates a maximum of five museums, which are then judged by a panel of experts on the criteria of maintenance, management, presentation of collection and its cooperation with the public. Each region presents one prize worth €10,000 to the winning museum. The prize money is intended to be used for projects aimed at attracting marginalised audiences, such as children, the disabled or the disadvantaged.

At the same time, members of the public can vote on the Museum Prize website for their own favour-

ite from the long list of museums in each province. The Public Prize, worth €2,500, is given to one museum in each region. Voting is open until 28 May.

Also this year for the second time is a Children's Prize worth €2,500, awarded to the most child-friendly museum of the year. Five classes of

eight- to 10-year-olds in each region visit two of the nominated museums and award them points. The winner last year of the inaugural Children's Prize was the Fashion Museum in Antwerp for Flanders and the Comic Strip Museum for Brussels.♦

→ www.museumprijs.be



© Lisa Bradshaw

The Gasthuis Sint-Dimpna Museum in Geel, last year's Public Prize winner in Flanders

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • Exane BNP Paribas

Exane BNP Paribas, the research and stock brokerage affiliate of the French BNP Paribas bank, has opened its Brussels subsidiary four months ahead of schedule. Meanwhile, BNP Fortis has confirmed its plans to hire some 1,200 employees for its local operations this year.

Biotechnology • Devgen

Devgen, the Ghent-based biotechnology and molecules breeding company, has signed a cooperation agreement with the International Rice Institute to develop a drought-resistant strain of rice.

Electronics • Siemens

Siemens, the German electronics and computers group, has inaugurated a new €4 million production unit and data centre in Huizingen, near Brussels.

Energy • Electrabel

Electrabel, the country's largest energy group, has sold 12% of its Elia electricity transport affiliate to Publi-T, a public holding company, for €160 million. An additional 11.8% stake will be floated on the Brussels stock market shortly. The move marks the end of Electrabel's involvement in energy transport activities. The gas transport network company Fluxys was also taken over by Publigas recently.

Offices • Regus

Regus, the UK-based temporary offices and business centres group, plans to open new facilities in Mechelen, Aalst, Leuven and Bruges.

Port • Antwerp

The Port of Antwerp has become Europe's second largest port. It is even leader in general and container traffic, ahead of Hamburg, Amsterdam and Marseille.

Supermarkets • Colruyt

Colruyt, the Halle-based discount supermarket, plans to open up to 70 new stores in Belgium over the next five years and seven this year in France. The company also plans to develop its franchised Spar and Okay networks and expects to hire 3,000 more staff this year alone.

Transport • Brussels Airport

Brussels Airport last week opened its new low-cost and charter airlines check-in area in the extensively renovated old terminal, first built in 1958. Holiday-goers of charter carriers Jetairfly and Thomas Cook, as well as passengers from Corendon, Tailwind and TNT Airways will be handled on the premises.

Old man by the sea

Wherever you are in Flanders this year, James Ensor is not far behind

► *continued from page 1*

From sea light to inner darkness

Ensor's big idea was to explore light and its effects, which led critics then and ever after to connect his work with the emerging French Impressionists. This only angered Ensor, who thought he was doing something more profound and more subtle than these "plein air hacks who are so fond of pale colours".

Works now considered high-points in his development, such as "The Oyster Eater" (1882), were rejected by Belgian salons. Ensor responded in 1883 by co-founding Les XX, or The Twenty, an avant-garde art society whose annual exhibitions provided a showcase for his work as well as that of Flemish contemporaries such as Théo van Rysselberghe and Fernand Khnopff. More importantly, it invited international avant-gardists to Brussels, such as Claude Monet, Georges Seurat and Paul Gauguin.

Ensor's interest in naturalism took a mystical turn in the mid-1880s, notably with the series "The Haloes of Christ or the Sensitivities of Light". These enormous drawings, presented as completed works rather than preliminary sketches, did not receive the acclaim that Ensor had hoped for when they were shown at the Salon des XX in 1887. Instead, everyone was talking about Seurat's pointillist masterpiece "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of the Grande Jatte", which hung nearby.

At the same time, Ensor's father died, and death took on a more prominent role in his work. Skulls and complete skeletons start to take centre stage, and, together with the carnival and other masks that had appeared in his work some years before, they became his trademark. These grotesque images developed into a private mythology with strong elements of caricature and farce. It is now that the iconic works start to appear, such as the monumental "Christ's Entry into Brussels" (1888) and "Doctrinaire Nourishment" (1889), with the Belgian king and other authority figures emptying their bowels onto the people. ♦

Other themes recur in Ensor's work, particularly Ensor himself. There are more than 100 self-portraits, from romantic early versions – young, dashing and playful – to darker visions later on that were either grim or mocking. One of the most famous, "Self-portrait with Flowered Hat" (1883-1888), is currently on show at the Ensor House in Ostend (see opposite).

Influential maverick

Rejected by (and rejecting) the art establishment, Ensor continued to plough his own furrow in Ostend, still living above the family shop. But his work was seen and slowly began to gain a reputation. By the turn of the century, museums were starting to acquire his paintings and young artists, particularly the German expressionists, began to beat a path to his door. Official recognition at home and abroad came in the inter-war years, and in 1929 he was made a baron by the Belgian king. By this time Ensor had moved house, just a few doors down the street to Vlaanderenstraat 27 and another shell shop which would be his home until his death in 1949. He continued to work, painting and drawing, but concentrating increasingly on music. His influence on Belgian artists was considerable, from expressionists such as Constant Permeke, Frits van den Berghe and Léon Spilliaert, to Cobra artists such as Pierre Alechinsky and other individualists like Paul Delvaux and Roger Raveel. Ensor's reputation now has many facets, depending in where you stand. Staging a major exhibition of his work earlier this year, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris observed that in Brussels or Antwerp he is seen as an innovative and tortured Belgian painter, while in Paris he is a 19th-century artist poised between naturalism and modernity. Yet on the other side of the Atlantic, at New York's Museum of Modern Art, he fits naturally into the great avant-garde movements. This year is a unique chance to see all of these aspects of Ensor in his home country. ♦



Ensor's iconic "Self Portrait with Flowered Hat" is currently hanging in the Ensor House on Vlaanderenstraat

Who is Ensor?

That depends on where you stand

Antwerp: innovative and tortured

Paris: poised between naturalism and modernity

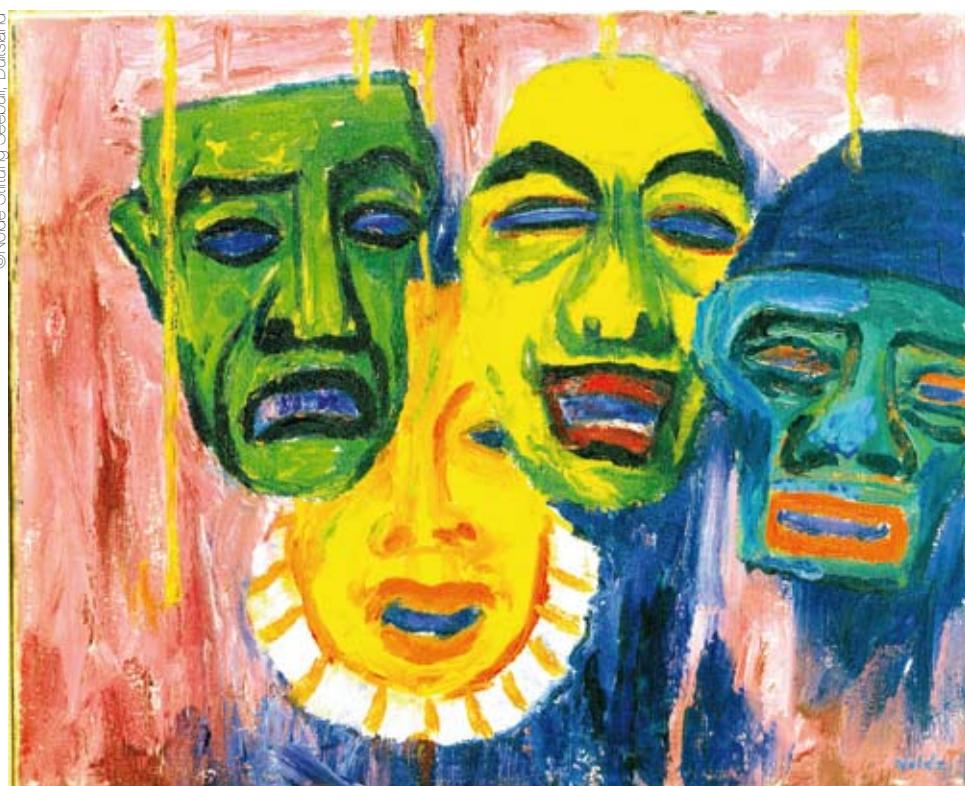
New York: purely avant-garde

Happy Birthday, James

James Ensor's birthday is on Tuesday, 13 April, and everyone is invited for cake and coffee on Romestraat near the MuZee at 15.00. The cake is inspired by the work of Ensor, with masks of chocolate and marzipan. For more Ensor commemorations this month, visit www.oostende2010.be



"Mona Lisa Between the Masks", painted by Ensor in 1934



"Maskenstilleben II" (Masks Still Life) by German Expressionist Emil Nolde, one of Ensor's many visitors



From left: Albert Einstein, French writer Marcel Abraham, French politician Anatole de Monzie and James Ensor in the garden of the restaurant Au Cœur Volant in De Haan, 1933. Ensor made a great impression on both the French and the Germans and was often visited by young German expressionists

Is Mr Ensor at home?

A show at Ostend's MuZee visits the visitors of the Flemish painter

There are two easy ways to visit Ensor in Ostend. One is to drop by his house at Vlaanderenstraat 27, now turned into the Ensor House museum. The other is to go to MuZee on Romestraat, where the concept of visiting Ensor has been shaped into an exhibition exploring his life, work and links with the town. Central to both is the Blue Room, the upstairs sitting room in Vlaanderenstraat where Ensor used to receive visitors, paint and play the harmonium. The instrument is still there, the fabric of its pedals worn away and the scallop-shell stool highly polished with use. (The irreverent Ensor would probably appreciate the idea that the most tangible reminder of his presence in the room was produced by his backside.)

Ensor would probably appreciate that the most tangible reminder of his presence was produced by his backside

The rest of the furniture is also said to be authentic, along with the masks and other relics scattered around the room. The paintings, however, are all reproductions, including the huge "Christ's Entry into Brussels" which hangs behind the harmonium (the original long spirited away to The Getty Center in Los Angeles). The exception is in a small sitting room next door, where the "Self-Portrait with Flowered Hat" is making a rare visit from its usual home

in the MuZee. A visitor in his own house, Ensor's eyes follow you around the room in traditional fashion, wondering what has become of the old place.

On the ground floor the theme of the marine souvenir shop has been preserved, with dried puffer fish hanging from the ceiling and seaweed and coral nestling among the post cards. Ensor is now part of the merchandise, but then, even during his lifetime he had become a sort of relic to attract artistically minded tourists. Some visitors would even be given a personal introduction to a bust of the artist in the town's Leopoldpark.

As is the way with such modest museums, when all but the bric-a-brac has been spirited away to more prestigious locations, the Ensor House has a slightly sad air. But then it also suggests something about the way he lived outside the artistic mainstream for most of his life, brooding behind the curtains, convinced of his own genius.

Ensor and friends

At MuZee, a city and provincial museum, a whole floor has been converted into a vast blue sitting room, complete with sofas, bookcases and tables. Central is a towering funeral arrangement of black paper flowers, surrounded by photographs of Ensor, overlooked by a tapestry version of "Christ's Entry into Brussels".

In sections on either side are projections of films shot in Ostend during the 1930s by local director Henri Storck, each with a glimpse of Ensor and lots of atmosphere from the town when it was still an important resort. The beach theme is picked up in Ensor's "The Ostend Baths" (1890), which is among the large number of paintings, sketches and etchings on the walls. While many of the iconic works are missing, the broad selection is

Bij Ensor op bezoek (Visiting Ensor)

MuZee, Romestraat 11, Ostend
until 29 August

→ www.muzee.be

Ensor Revealed

ING Cultural Centre, Koningsplein 6, Brussels
7 October to 13 February

→ www.bozar.be

Ensor and Contemporary Art

MSK and SMAK, Citadel Park, Ghent
16 October to 13 February

→ www.mskgent.be

→ www.smak.be

still a good introduction to Ensor's obsessions and his range as an artist. Highlights include the large, atmospheric seascape "Grand Marine – Sunset" (1885), "The Vengeance of Hop-Frog" (1898) from a tale by Edgar Allan Poe, and the spooky "Masks Watching a Tortoise" (1894).

Among the relics, there's a copy of Mallarmé's poems illustrated by Félicien Rops, to which Ensor has added his own sketches. Further on, the museum has cheekily combined Ensor's tiny etching "My Portrait in 1960" (1888), in which the artist is evidently just a pile of bones, with Rops' large canvas "Death at the Ball" (c1865-75), with its capering, costumed skeleton. Ensor's detailed etchings are always a surprise when seen alongside the cruder paintings, and there is a particularly fine "View of Mariakerk" (1887) on show. The church, Our Lady of the Dunes, is also where the artist is buried, and, although now hemmed in with buildings, it is still a charming place. To visit, walk along the front or take the coastal tram to Ravelingen.

Continuing the theme of visiting Ensor, the exhibition also includes a waiting room full of work by the various artists who came to pay homage in the artist's later years. On the face of it, this is a rather random selection, including drawing room scenes, still lifes, views of Ostend, self-portraits and images of Ensor. Yet the more you look, the more it builds into the feeling of a visit, from the heavy bourgeois interior to the distractions of gazing at the sea or sketching the artist's sister, before you are admitted to the presence in the blue sitting room.

And looking at it from Ensor's point of view, what would you make of opening the door to find Leon Spilliaert, Jean Brusselmans or Maurice de Vlaminck on your sofa, as they saw themselves? Scary stuff. ♦



James Ensor's "Masques chantant", 1928-29



"Blaauw" (Blue) by Carl Cneut, a new work for *Visiting Ensor* from the award-winning Flemish illustrator

BAUNAT

&



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Viaduct scrapped in favour of tunnel

Kris Peeters: "There are no losers here, only winners"

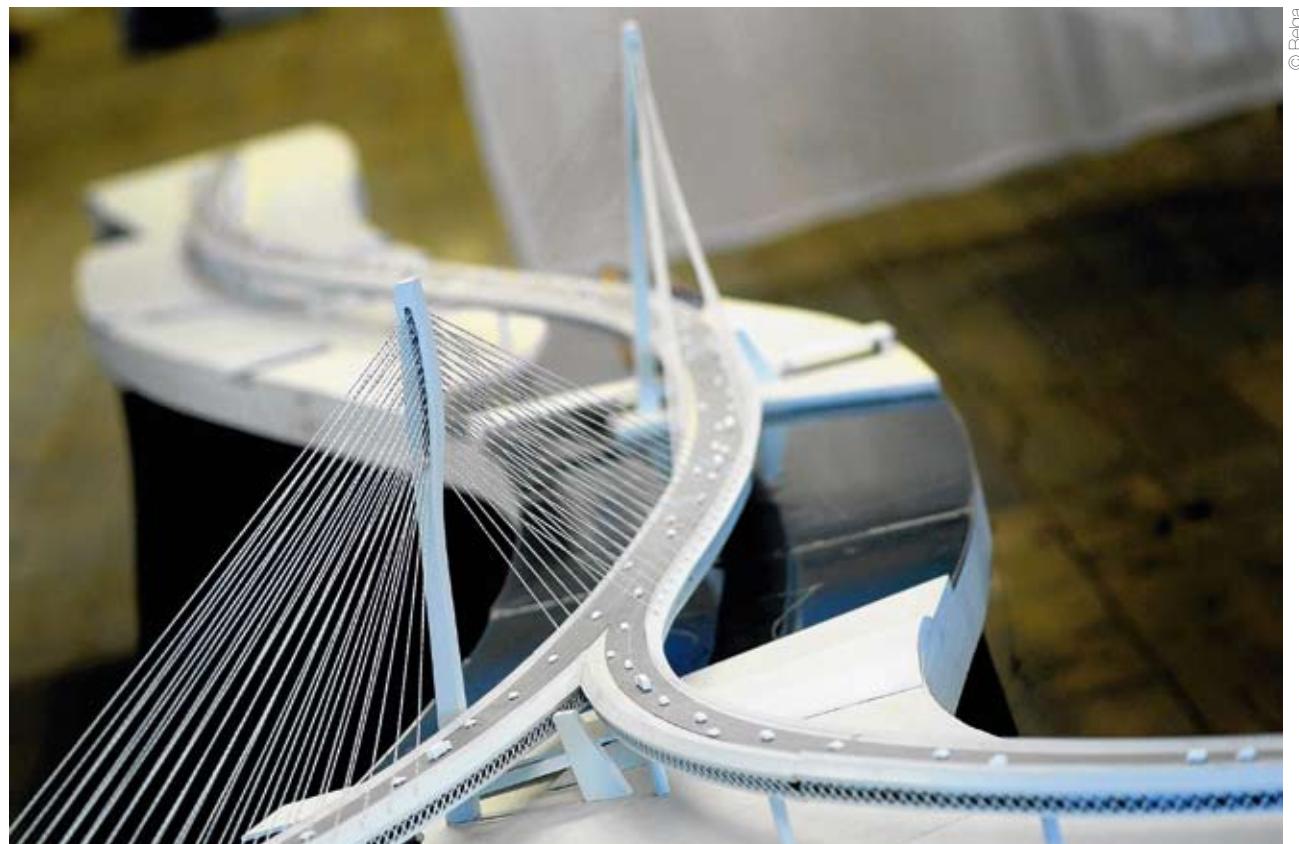
→ *continued from page 1*

The original idea had been to close the Kennedy tunnel to freight traffic, and bring traffic from the E17 and E34 north through a tunnel under the Scheldt, then along a brand-new viaduct above the city, to rejoin the Ring at Merksem, about where the existing viaduct passes over the Sportpaleis.

Opposition to the viaduct part of the plan came not least from the activist organisation Ademloos (Breathless), who pointed out that the viaduct passed over residential areas that would be polluted from above with fine particles. Their main publicity coup was a school for handicapped children located directly under the planned viaduct. Opposition also came from the group Straten-Generaal, which called for the new link to bring traffic to the north of the city rather than through the middle. The varying degrees of opposition to the plan created cracks within the Flemish government itself, and at one point the differences seemed impossible to reconcile. Last week's agreement allows all parties to exit without losing face.

The new plan, which the government has now sent off to be studied, includes a bit of something for everyone. Opponents of the viaduct, among them Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens, will get a tunnel, so long as that turns out to be feasible. Those who opposed a long northerly detour get to keep the route of the Lange Wapper. The new plan also involves the demolition of the Merksem viaduct by the Sportpaleis, which will be replaced by a motorway cutting.

N-VA party leader Bart De Wever, who supported the viaduct, made it clear what conditions would be attached to his party's support for a tunnel – conditions the Flemish government also accepts. "If it can be shown that the tunnel can be constructed within a reasonable time, is technically adequate, is affordable and can create sufficient new capacity, then I see



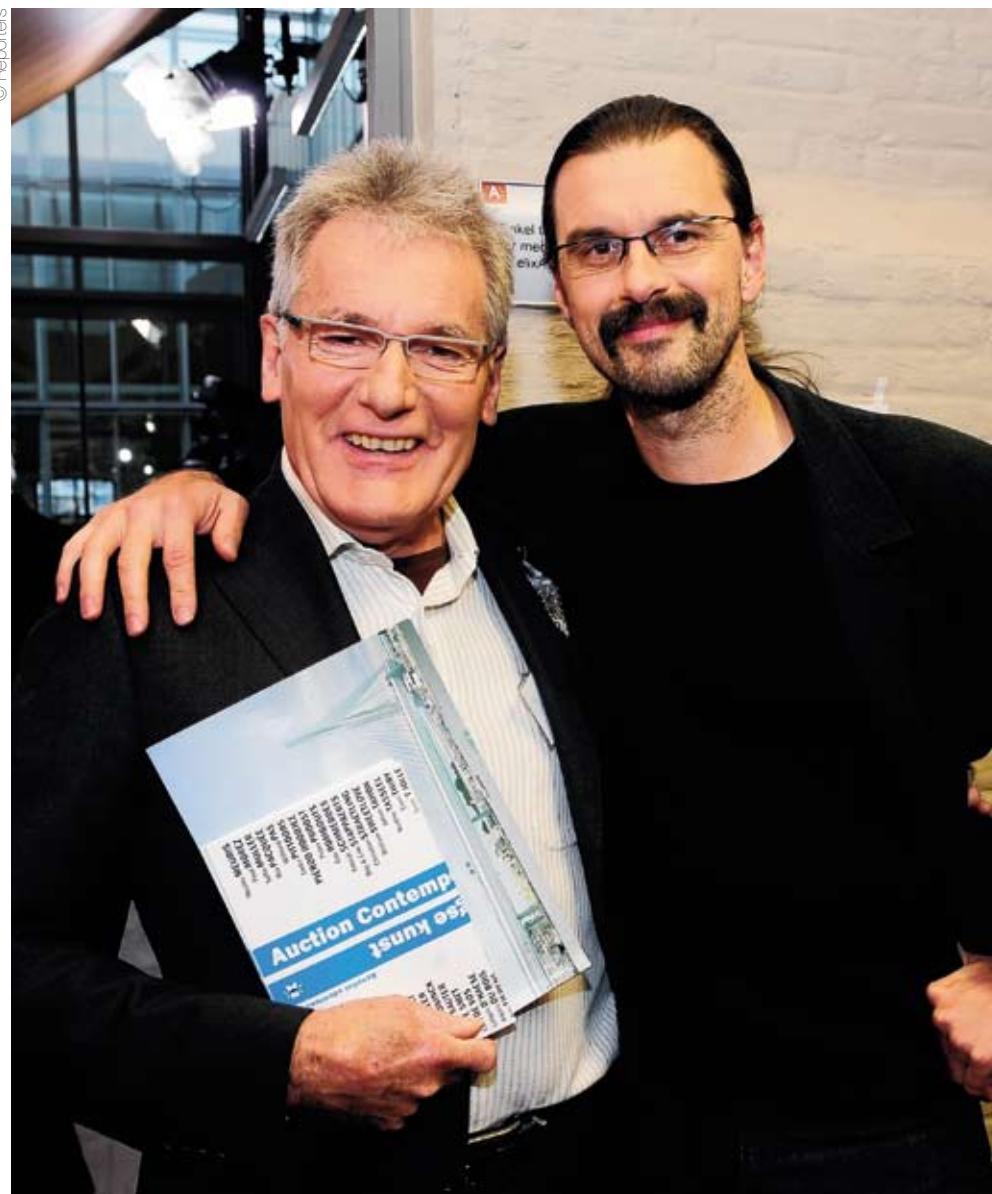
A model of the main part of the viaduct as it sweeps across the Scheldt

no reason to cause problems over it," he said. "If that can't be done, I hope the others will be objective about it and not look for trouble over the Lange Wapper."

The technical viability of the tunnel plan will be decided by July. The tunnel is in fact four tunnels carrying traffic in both directions along a stretch of about 6.5 kilometres under the city – more than twice as long as the tunnel under the Basi-

lica of Koekelberg in Brussels.

The whole plan is integrated into the Master plan 2020 covering the whole question of mobility in Antwerp, and which includes provisions for approach traffic east and west of the city, for trams and light rail, for public transport and for cycle paths. ♦



Wim Van Hees (left) and Manu Claeys, opponents of the Lange Wapper, celebrate their victory in last October's referendum

Reactions to the Oosterweel compromise

"The Flemish government has politically cut the Gordian knot of Antwerp's traffic problem," said **Unizo**, which represents small businesses. The political consensus was the first crucial step on the road to a sustainable solution to the mobility situation in the city.

"The Flemish government has decided not to decide, in order to buy time that isn't there," said the **opposition OpenVLD** representatives Dirk Van Mechelen and Annick De Ridder. "Kris Peeters has passed the hot potato off on to someone else."

"This is a collegial decision by the government," said **Kris Peeters** in a press conference. "There are no losers here, only winners."

The **green party Groen!** said the agreement was "a sign of encouragement for democracy and for all the activist groups" who had forced a referendum of the people of Antwerp, in which their opposition to the Lange Wapper was made clear.

Socialist party chair Caroline Gennez said the decision was "good news for anyone who lives in, works in or drives by Antwerp".

Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens said he was delighted "because the Lange Wapper will not be coming and because the Merksem viaduct will be going, something nobody dared even think about a few months ago". The plan was technically feasible, he said: "It is a good plan. Above all else, the fighting can now stop, and we can get back to all pulling all in the same direction, which has been a little difficult this past year".

"We're very pleased the politicians have realised that the Lange Wapper can be replaced by a tunnel," commented **Manu Claeys** of the Straten-Generaal group. "But I wonder why a northern bypass, which we think would have been a cheaper solution, is not part of the plan."

Wim Hees of Ademloos, meanwhile, called the agreement "a political compromise showing a complete lack of vision. It could still go the wrong way, towards the Lange Wapper. But even the 'Deep Wapper' is not the best solution, since it only diverts part of the traffic out of the city".

Looking Congo in the eye

As Belgium prepares for the 50th anniversary of the independence of its former colony, the art world brings contemporary Congo into view

LISA BRADSHAW

This June is the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from Belgium, which controlled the vast African region for 75 years, first as King Leopold II's personal property and later as an official colony of Belgium, known as the Belgian Congo.

There will be official state dinners, parades and debates over the past and current situation in the DRC, but the artists are having their say now. While exhibitions on remnants of colonisation today are ongoing at the FotoMuseum in Antwerp, KVS theatre in Brussels has just launched its two-and-a-half month Congo Festival.

In fact, KVS has been working with artists in the DRC for quite awhile now. Jan Goossens, the theatre's artistic director, went to Kinshasa for the first time exactly five years ago "with a blank page," he says. "I had a few names of people I wanted to meet. I very quickly came to the conclusion that there was an enormous amount of talent there. There are so many young artists who, despite the misery they experience on a daily basis, are making art."

But KVS began working with the Congo in mind even before that, with the production of Brussels playwright Raven Ruell's *Het leven en de werken van Leopold II* (*The Life and Work of Leopold II*), a 1970 play by Hugo Claus, and a series of works by Congolese artists based in Brussels.

After Goossens' visit, KVS set up workshops and brought together Brussels-based and Kinshasa-based dancers and theatremakers. Brussels productions travelled to the DRC, including *Leopold II* and *Spiegel* (*Mirror*) by Ultima Vez dance troupe. "They are immensely isolated, and for young artists to see what artists in different parts of the world are doing is essential," says Goossens.

And now, dozens of Congolese artists are coming to Brussels for KVS' Congo Festival – some of whom KVS has been collaborating with for five years. "Kinshasa has been the throbbing artistic heart of sub-Saharan Africa, and it still is today," says Goossens. "Especially in dance and visual arts."

Which is why one of the most exciting performances on the programme is *Mist*, a collaboration between Belgian dancer and choreographer Thomas Steyaert, formerly of Ultima Vez, and four dancers from Kinshasa. They performed the piece already



Top Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula brings *More More More...Future* to KVS' Congo Festival

in the DRC's first-ever dance platform and now premiere it in Brussels. It is a performance that moves between despair and hope and ultimately conveys a search for beauty in a moment or a day, or a life.

Also watch out for *A l'attente du Livre d'Or* (*In Anticipation of the Book of Gold*), a look into the fascinating Congolese legend of the Golden Book, said to contain the secret for the preservation of Congo after independence. A local dramaturge and actor worked together with Flemish director Johan Dehollander and four actors from Kinshasa to produce the play.

Also on the programme of dance, theatre, visual arts and readings is the multi-media *More More More...Future*, in which Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula uses the popular dance form ndombolo to encourage citizens to consider a future for the DRC. With dancers, live musicians and song, they bring a furious, colourful energy to the stage. *The Dialogue Series* is an equally intriguing Linyekula piece about the artist returning to the city of his youth, assisted by young Congolese countertenor Serge Kakudji and music from Mozart's *Requiem*.

The free exhibition at KVS throughout the festival features photography, video art and political cartoonists from the DRC. For Goossens, the Congo journey has told him as much about

the Belgian people as the Congolese. "Quite a few Belgians looked at me not understanding what the point was of collaborating with the Congo, but also with outright contempt," he admits. "Why invest in culture in a place where there is only war, disease and famine? That is a patronising point of view. We are not telling people in the Congo that they need to invest in theatre or make art. They have been doing that for decades. Denying them that possibility and not helping them to strengthen then what they themselves are doing – that would very much be a missed opportunity." ♦

Until 15 June

KVS Box and Bol, Brussels

Performances with dialogue are in French with Dutch surtitles

→ www.kvs.be

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

Zombie city

If you won't go to the horror fest, it will come to you



Nowadays, a lot of European countries have a festival specialising in fantasy and horror, but at the beginning of the 1980s, a group of young enthusiasts of the genre became pioneers, setting up one of the very first such festivals. The Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFFF) is one of the oldest and one of the most popular of its kind in the world.

A good touchstone to measure a festival's international prestige is to look at the list of guests. As ever, that list for the 28th edition is suitably impressive. From Japanese horror meister Takashi Shimizu and the American godfather of the slasher movie, Tobe Hooper, via French director-producer Luc Besson to the (relatively) new Danish kid on the block Nicolas Winding Refn. Of course, real movie buffs in the end care only about one thing: the films. The two latter directors above

have new films: the comic adaptation *Les Aventures Extraordinaires d'Adèle Blanc-Sec* (Besson) and the already much-lauded Viking film *Valhalla Rising* (Refn). Watch out also for the ruthless, extremely confrontational new Michael Winterbottom *The Killer Inside Me*; the gruesome but funny vampire film *Thirst* by Korean master Park Chan-wook; and George Romero's new zombie flick *Survival of the Dead*.

Or just go with the flow and let yourself be surprised. But keep in mind that the BIFFF has a peculiar atmosphere. The true festival aficionados express themselves very loudly, shouting advice at the characters on the screen or flat out mocking them. Not everyone, to say the least, is fond of this behaviour. And it will be very much present during the "X-treme and funny midnight screenings", which include

ZMD: *Zombie of Mass Destruction*, *Life and Death of a Porno Gang* and *The Human Centipede*.

But BIFFF is more than films: there's the traditional Vampire's Ball for which you'd better dress up as a monster, the body painting competition or, on 10 April, the big Zombie Day Parade. Hundreds of horror fans with heavy make-up (they do you for free at festival headquarters) swarm out into the centre of Brussels. So be prepared, if you plan to do some shopping that day: the guy losing his arm next to you at the bus stop, isn't really.

Although, in the end, you never can be sure, of course. ♦

8-20 April

**Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86c
Brussels**

→ www.bifff.org

Picturing a colony

Tens of thousands of Belgians are visiting Carl De Keyzer's new shows on the Congo

MONIQUE PHILIPS

Carl De Keyzer is a people's photographer, meaning it's incredibly easy to become involved in a matter of seconds with the subjects of his expressive work. Inspired by a quaint 1958 tourist guide, the Flemish photographer – a member of the Magnum agency – spent 10 months in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2008 to photograph its Belgian colonial remnants.

The result is *Congo (belge)*, a success at the Photo Museum in Antwerp, with more than 33,000 visitors so far.

Although it's easy to enjoy coming face-to-face with De Keyzer's work, deciphering layers of meaning in each photo, it wasn't an easy trip for the photographer. The DRC appears to have inherited the Belgian art of bureaucracy, and De Keyzer had to spend many Congolese francs and many hours in waiting rooms to get the right permits.

Not to mention the prevalence of guns, which show up repeatedly in the photos: one pointed straight at the photographer. "I thought I was a goner," De Keyzer admitted later.

But some reception was decidedly friendlier – if somewhat melancholic. After spending three days with the Jesuits in Kikwit, De Keyzer exclaimed: "It's just like I was back at the Sint-Amants boarding school in Kortrijk."

That 1950s feeling is exactly what can make the DRC such a hauntingly familiar place to Belgian visitors today. For former Belgian administrators in the DRC, who are attending the exhibition in droves, the photos are reminiscent of their golden days. They felt adventurous, free of the restrictive post-war gloom. They had all the modern commodities, took holidays, went on safari, had personnel.

A Belgian visitor to the exhibition who recently lived in Kinshasa explains: "You're in such an unfamiliar place, and then suddenly you see something straight from your own youth. I'll never forget that typical blue-and-white Belgian signpost, caught in the headlights of our car, and how the old lettering 'Elisabethville' magically popped up from under 'Lubumbashi' like a palimpsest".

But interestingly enough, what De Keyzer and other Belgian visitors to the DRC have found is an equally glossed-over collective memory of the Congolese. Many feel homesick for the days when their Belgian "uncles" took care of them. A number of commentaries, gathered by Flemish writer David van Reybrouck, vent dismay about the state of affairs today and question why the Belgians aren't taking care of things.

Two visitors to the exhibition, members of Doctors Without Borders who worked extensively in the DRC, are looking at a 2008 photo of a bar in Kinshasa, adorned with a single bottle of Coke and posters of Elvis and the Twin Towers. "It's touching how connected the Congolese feel with the world," comments one of them. "It's all the more heart-wrenching when they realise that the world has abandoned them."

De Keyzer's photos are specific to Belgian colonialism, so abandonment and ruins figure heavily. In one of my favourites, called "Zoo, Kinshasa", a man stands amongst such a



A crevice in the main valley of the River Diwundi in 1899, part of *Congo belge en images*, curated by Carl De Keyzer

scene. Suddenly your eyes are drawn to a certain point. Are those little black hands on his white-shirted shoulders? Yes, a small monkey is peeping from behind his back.

There is also an impressive series of workers in a melting foundry, the mark of Charleroi machinery quite clear. Another shows a typical Belgian red-brick house – or half of one – the rest having been demolished or bombed away. The roofless building sits full of schoolchildren having lessons.

But nothing says colonial like De Keyzer's photo of the little church of Goma. You see a church made of iron, imported in pieces and assembled here, where it's completely unsuitable for the climate. A man sitting out front appears resigned to the fact.

Photos I wish were mine

In the second part of the exhibition, De Keyzer has made selections from the extensive archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren. The museum is in the process of digitising its 900,000 images from the DRC.

For *Congo belge en images*, De Keyzer made choices based on photos he himself would like to have taken, and he spent hours touching up each glass negative – used before the development of film – for the exhibition.

Flemish urban planning professor Johan Lagae co-curated, with the aim of broadening Belgians' one-sided memory of the Congo. The story of the Leopold II years when expeditions famously hacked their way through the tropical forests, and enslaved labourers lost hands to the oppressor, is a complicated one. There's fear, failure, fever.

Belgians had no qualms about registering oppressive activities, so plenty of pictures were taken, with the sole purpose of legitimising colonial ambitions. Photography with glass negatives was a slow process, and subjects were directed into poses.

This results in a less authentic view of everyday life, but provides stunning detail. You can read the addresses on the packages in the Banana post office, count the hairs on the fox terriers (which seem to be omnipresent). Majestic landscapes unfold before your eyes, Congolese workers nearly hidden among the trees. There are also photographs of large-scale infrastructural works. The colonial views are complemented by *Bamako Encounters 2009*, the biennale of African photography on the museum's fourth floor.

And yet the full story may always remain incomplete. The parting quote on the wall is from a modern-day Congolese businessman: "But why don't you return? The Belgians are stronger than China, aren't they? Belgium is still a big league player, isn't it?" ♦

Congo (belge) *Congo belge en images*

Until 16 May
FotoMuseum
Waalse Kaai 47, Antwerp

→ www.fotomuseum.be



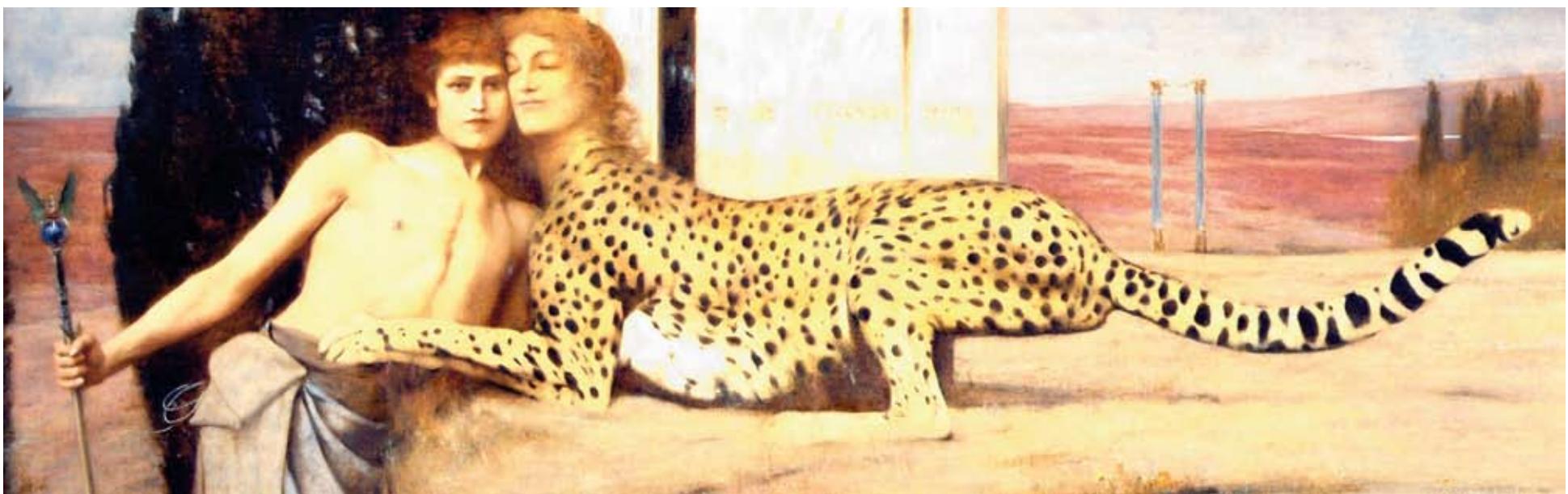
A makeshift schoolhouse in a former Belgian Catholic mission in the DRC, part of Carl De Keyzer's *Congo (belge)*



In front of the Hôtel Palace in Albertville

© Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren; photo François Michel, expedition Lemare

© Carl De Keyzer



Fernand Khnopff's iconic "Caresses", 1896

Soft focus

New exhibition links Belgian symbolists with the painters of their future

IAN MUNDELL

Symbolism is a familiar story in Belgian art, which is perhaps why the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels are trying so hard to make you look at it in another way. This latest exhibition has connections to make between the Symbolists and the Belgian artists who came after them, and theories to test about how events in the second half of the 19th century might have driven them to choose particular subjects and ways of painting.

All this is suggested in the thematic grouping of paintings, without much in the way of explanatory text or historical background. So unless you already know the story of Symbolism (or have deep enough pockets to buy the catalogue), this can be a baffling exhibition.

Symbolism wasn't so much an artistic movement, complete with manifesto, as a tendency among late 19th-century artists to turn away from faithful representations of the world and towards depictions of ideas and states of mind. Even then the break was not that great, and they didn't stray too far from figurative norms: people still look like people and landscapes like landscapes. The roots of Symbolism can be found in German romanticism, and there are close parallels in other contemporary movements such as the English Pre-Raphaelites.

The simplest approach to Symbolism is the allegorical figure, where the key is usually in the title – count the female figures standing in here for "Perversity", "Tenderness", "The Elements in Motion" and so on. But the Symbolists also liked mythological and religious themes, and fed well on contemporary symbolist literature such as the poems of Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Verlaine. Above all, the Symbolist painters were into sex, death and religion. At the same time, if at all possible.

Although the towering figures of Symbolism were both French – Gustave Moreau and Odilon Redon – Belgium had its fair share of famous names, most notably Félicien Rops, Fernand Khnopff, Jean Delville and Xavier Mellery. All four are well represented here, with work that gives the exhibition something of a greatest hits feel.

Delville's "Dead Orpheus" (1893) is on the poster, while Khnopff's "Caresses" (1896), featuring a young man nuzzling up to a leopard with an androgynous human head, is perhaps the best-known image in the show. There are heaps of grotesque drawings and etchings from Rops, including the iconic "Pornokrates" (1879), in which a pig on a leash guides a blindfold nude in stockings. Meanwhile from Mellery there is "Fall of the Last Autumn Leaves" (c1890), with women dressed in brown tumbling out of the branches of a tree and into a massive spider's web.

The works you haven't seen

But there are other things to see by these artists that give a deeper appreciation of their work – for instance the moody interiors drawn by Mellery that have been brought in from private collections. It is also good to see more by Léon Frédéric, whose large triptych "The Stream" (1890-99), with its torrent of pink children, hung for a time in the museum's main hall. There's a similar hyper-real intensity in "The Fragrance" (1894) from a private collection and "The Holy Trinity" (1892), borrowed from the Church of St Anne in Nafraire.

Symbolism in Belgium also has a good selection of George Minne's sculptures, wasted figures in tortured poses that are impossible to look at now with out thinking of the Holocaust. Instead they are of more traditional subjects, from "Mother Crying over Her Dead Child" (1886) to "The Prodigal Son" (1896) and "Man With Wineskin" (1897).

Among the exhibition's revelations are the atmospheric night landscapes of William Degouve de Nuncques, gathered together from various collections. Haunting and surpris-



A revelation: William Degouve de Nuncques' "The Peacocks", 1896

ing, the shapes in the blue shadows sometimes turn out to be houses, sometimes peacocks, sometimes angels swooping through the shrubbery. Also impressive is his "Pink House" (1892), which produces a frisson of recognition that leads you to think of René Magritte's "Empire of Light", with its house in darkness under a daylight sky.

Landscape is one of the areas where the museum's new ideas about Symbolism really pay off. As well as the more fantastic scenes that might be expected from these mythologically inclined artists, there are more traditional representations that are no less soaked in psychological unease. As well as those by Degouve de Nuncques, there are scenes from the Ardennes countryside by Khnopff and a gorgeously detailed "Moonlight" (1898) by Frédéric.

Another pleasing group brings together different views of "The Temptation of St Anthony". Rops' version from 1878 has a typically voluptuous temptress elbowing Christ off the cross in order to get the saint's attention, while for Khnopff in 1883 the saint and his temptation are two faces in the dark, simply a man confronting the infinite. Alongside are dark lithographs by Redon from 1888, which bring detail to the more gruesome aspects of the story.

For a stronger Flemish connection there is a collection of paintings and illustrations linked to Georges Rodenbach's 1892 novel *Bruges-la-Morte*, about a widower who moves to the gloomy city because it perfectly matches his feelings of melancholy and mourning. Mellery brings us dark church interiors and images of the beguine, while Khnopff focuses on the water, spreading a sheen of pale light in front of the ancient stones.

Finally, in "Abandoned Town" (1904), Khnopff appears to preempt Paul Delvaux with a dream landscape in which a Flemish square blends with a distant sea, as if the waves have returned to claim Bruges.

A more realist take by Gustave De Smet gives us "Bruges Dead, Bruges Alive" (1904), which presents a transition between the dreaming Symbolist view of the town and a more grounded social realism. These 20th-century developments are taken up further towards the end of the exhibition, with Symbolist allegories involving labourers placed alongside images documenting the workers or celebrating their struggle.

Links are also made to Art Nouveau design, rural landscapists, such as Valerius de Saedeleer, Expressionists Léon Spilliaert and later artists inspired by the Flemish primitives, such as Jakob Smits and Gustave van de Woestijne. ♦



Félicien Rops' trademark go at the temptation of St Anthony, 1878

Symbolism in Belgium

Until 27 June
Fine Arts Museum
Museumstraat 9, Brussels

→ www.fine-arts-museum.be

Sounding it out

The Klankenbos forest in northern Limburg puts art under the trees

MELISSA MAKI

Some exceptional things are going on in the forests of Limburg. A few weeks ago, we brought you a story about a forest near Tessenderlo recently dubbed the quietest place in Flanders. This week, we take you to a setting close to Neerpelt where nature, art and sound coalesce to provide visitors with an experience that is unparalleled.

When you enter a wooded area, you can generally count on hearing a limited catalogue of noises: wind rustling through the leaves, cheerful bird calls, droning insects. But at the Klankenbos (Sound Forest), within the Provincial Domain Dommelhof in northern Limburg, this typical soundscape is punctuated by some other, more unusual, forest sounds.

The Klankenbos is an open-air, permanent collection of sound art – a medium that emphasizes the experience of listening and hearing. Klankenbos is a project of Musica, an organization that has been promoting innovative music education for the last several decades. "Sound artists use sound as substance," explains Musica artistic coordinator Eveline Heylen. "Painters have their paint, and poets have their text. For sound artists, the medium

is sound."

Klankenbos has 10 permanent sound art installations and three that are mobile. Each of the pieces was commissioned from a different artist. The works are visually and sonically unique, with sounds ranging from familiar or natural to electronic and otherworldly.

Some of the installations subtly stand out from the surrounding wood, but German artist Erwin Stache's "Konversation" demands attention with its group of bold, red objects that look as if they are sprouting out of the ground. Walk close enough and you'll trigger the beginning of an interesting electronic conversation between them: some emit orchestral music, and some play back recordings of ambient sounds. It's an ever-evolving composition that increases in complexity each time the installation is activated.

Dutch artist and composer Hans Van Koolwijk's "Oorsprong" (Origin), meanwhile, is striking due to its size. It's a steel tube 17 metres long and nearly two metres high. It is essentially a giant flute that you can walk right into. Once inside, a blower is activated. As you close the door and continue to the opposite end, you can



German sound artist Erwin Stache's red stanchions require you to get the conversation going

see the daylight shining in through an opening at the top. This is the labium – the origin of the sound. You not only hear the resulting low, resonant whirr, you can feel it as it vibrates through you.

Another Dutch artist, Paul Panhuysen, features avian performers in his piece "Kanariestudio". A birdhouse, the activities and sounds of the resident canaries are processed and played back in real time (along with other ambient sounds and noises) through speakers in each wall. As listeners walk around the building, they are exposed to a soundscape that is constantly shifting.

The Klankenbos' mobile sound installations can be viewed as part of a tour or by appointment. One such installation, Flemish artist Moniek Darge's "Muziekdozen" (Music Boxes) is being incorporated into a children's musical treasure hunt over Easter break (6-13 April, by reservation).

What is particularly impressive about Klankenbos is its accessibility. Musica's goal is to bring a somewhat obscure contemporary art form into the public domain. You don't have to visit a museum, nor be an artist or musician. All you need to do is open your mind. And, of course, your ears. ♦

Photos: Kristof Vlaanderen



A walk-through flue, courtesy of Dutch artist and composer Hans Van Koolwijk

Going to Klankenbos

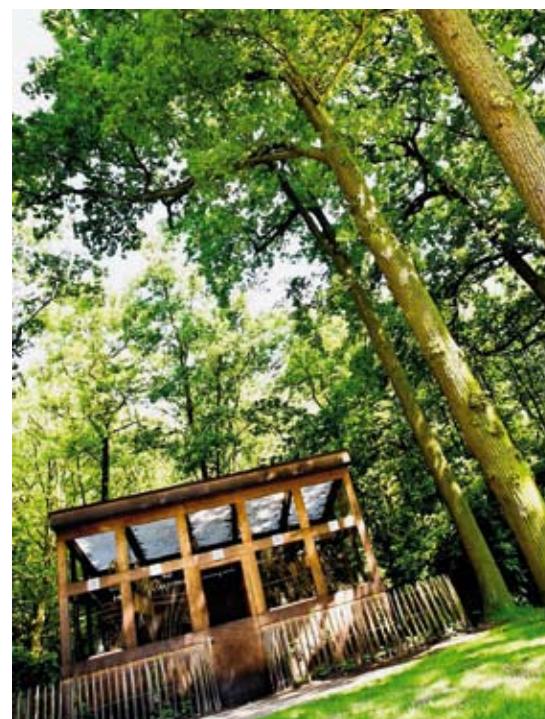
Klankenbos is always open and is freely accessible. Maps are available on site that guide visitors through the collection and provide descriptions of the works, in Dutch and English. A catalogue with information about the artists and the works is available for purchase at the Musica office.

Free guided tours of Klankenbos are offered in Dutch on every second Sunday of the month. Group tours are available on request. Klankenbos also hosts special events and even birthday parties for children. From 25 June to 5 September 2010, Musica is partnering with the village of Neerpelt for "Good Vibrations", a series of temporary installations that will lead from the Neerpelt train station all the way to Klankenbos, which is about a 25-minute walk.

**Klankenbos
Provinciaal Domein Dommelhof**

Toekomstlaan 5, Neerpelt

→ www.musica.be



Avian performers: Paul Panhuysen's "Kanariestudio"





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Finding Cheri Samba

This art parcours across Dutch-speaking Elsene is worth walking if only to find out what the title means. It's on until 17 April
→ <http://elzenhof.vgc.be>



FLANDERS TODAY
APRIL 7, 2010



Domino 10

PM DOUTRELIGNE

Granted, you know by now that Domino is an annual celebration of music that is resolutely, defiantly off-kilter. The sort that will never be covered on *Pop Idol*, the sort that doesn't feature on the latest version of *Guitar Hero*.

Yet, over the last few years a certain pattern has begun to appear over the line-up of the festival. Like the guaranteed presence of a "one man and his laptop" electro project. The noise dandies who add effect-laden basslines and new-wave guitars to pre-recorded soundscapes. The international collective seeking to blend as many genres as is humanly possible. The freshly reformed underground legends.

In this respect, Domino 2010 is hardly groundbreaking. In fact one could go as far as to suggest that maybe the formula has become just a tad... boring? Is there such a thing as predictable unpredictability? Still, there will be some great acts, this much is evident. And, in fact, there's a twist...

The opening night features Ghent siblings **Tape Tum**, purveyors of

fine minimalist electronica who were championed early on by the edgy (read: difficult to please) magazine *The Wire*. Two days later, Kyp Malone, the main man behind the impossibly trendy outfit TV On The Radio, introduces his new solo project, **Rain Machine** (pictured). Pushing the boundaries of experimentation that *little* bit further, he has now taken to fiddling with frequencies as well as instruments, to unanimous acclaim.

13 April is devoted to one of America's most famous oddballs: **Daniel Johnston**. With his plaintive voice, rudimentary fretwork and child-like lullabies about unrequited love, failure and, err, Casper the Friendly Ghost, he had long been an obscure cult figure who didn't sell many records. That was before Kurt Cobain publicly praised him; Johnson became, overnight, a slightly less obscure cult figure who didn't sell many records.

But it's closing night that makes Domino 2010 different from any previous edition. The organisers have managed to pull off the major

coup of securing the services of **Lou Reed**. But before you start humming "Perfect Day" or "Sweet Jane", bear in mind that the great one will only be performing his infamous 1975 commercial suicide, *Metal Machine Music*. Layers of noise, drone, more noise, feedback and free-jazz sax. Oh, and noise.

Kindly refrain from shouting out requests, as being castigated in public often hurts. Funny how Lou Reed, possibly under the influence of his wife (fellow avant-gardist Laurie Anderson), now tends to shun the limelight in favour of art-house intimacy. Karaoke night at Lou & Laurie's must be a right barrel of laughs. ♦

8-22 April
Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110
Brussels
→ www.dominofestival.be

MORE EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC THIS WEEK

Mt Eerie → *De Kreun, Kortrijk*

Worriedaboutsatan → *STUK, Leuven*

Jazzlab Series #7 → *Beursschouwburg, Brussels*



Antwerp

Kelly's Irish Pub
Keyserlei 27; www.kellys.be
APR 10 21.30 The Lowland Paddies

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
APR 15 20.00 Grace Jones

Petrol

Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63
www.petrolclub.be
APR 9 23.00 Elektropedia presents: Techno Nr3 with Pantha Du Prince
APR 15 20.00 My Little Cheap Dictaphone + Yacht

't Kwartier

Keistraat 11; 0475.28.66.10
www.tkwartier.be
APR 15 20.00 Hotel Imun + Vitalski & special guest

Trix

Noorderingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
APR 12 19.30 Lostprophets + The Blackout. 20.00 The Inciters
APR 15 20.00 Het Verdikt + Wahwahsda + Molten with Chasm the Rift

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
APR 9 20.30 Mono Sapiens (free)

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
APR 8-13 Domino Festival: International experimental pop festival, including Tape Tum, Rain Machine, Mièle, 65dayssofstatic, Daniel Johnston, Loud Reed's Metal Machine Trio, more
APR 15 20.00 Funeral Dress + The Kids + Belgian Associality

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210;
02.732.25.98 www.atelier210.be

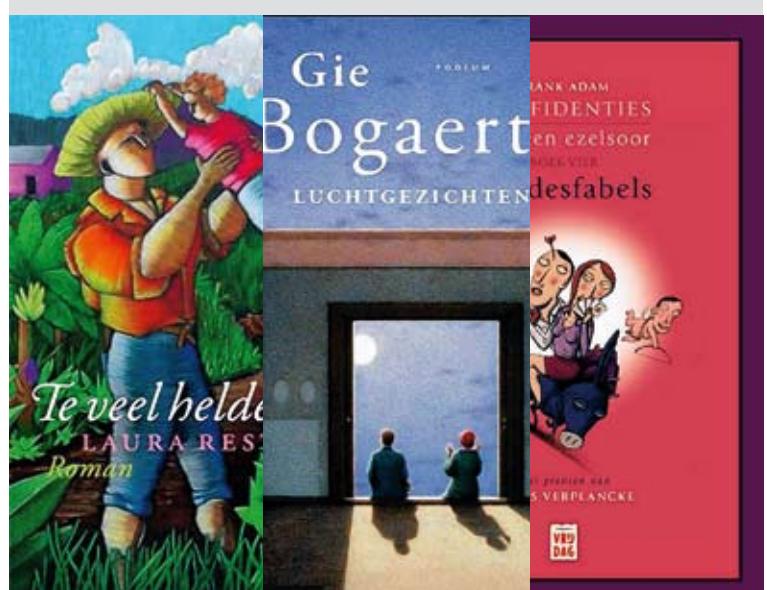
DON'T MISS

Literary Spring

Until 30 April
Across Flanders

Unfortunately, the annual kick-off to Literaire Lente (Literary Spring), the quirky, intriguing Zo gezegd in Gent, has lost its sponsorship and will not be staged this year. But the month-long celebration of Dutch-language literature (original or in translation) goes on nonetheless, with readings, public interviews, musical storytelling and the not-to-be-missed Literaire Lente Soirée on 28 April. Twenty-four new books or new translations have been selected as a centrepiece to the event, and you'll find special displays of them at local bookshops.

→ www.boek.be



Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
APRIL 7, 2010

www.charlatan.be
APR 8 21.00 Look & Trees + Sir Yes Sir
APR 13 22.00 Nick Franssen Trio
APR 15 22.00 The Mutants

Kinky Star
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45,
www.kinkystar.com
APR 9 20.00 Rinus van Alebeek
APR 10 21.00 Bronnt Industries
Kapital
APR 11 21.00 Ian Clement

Minus One
Opgeëistelaan 445; 0486.47.82.10
www.minus-one.be
APR 11 19.00 Eyehategod

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060,
www.vooruit.be
APR 11 20.00 Frank Boeijen
APR 15 19.30 Admiral Freebee

Kortrijk
De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
Concerts at 20.00:
APR 7 Soil & Pimp Sessions **APR 8**
Mt Eerie + No Kids **APR 10** Fuck
Buttons + Three Trapped Tigers +
B-Kant Party with Joe Berluk (the
erotic voice of Europe) and Mauro
Pawlowski, among others

Leuven
Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
APR 10 19.00 Karma To Burn
APR 15 20.00 Nona Mez with Milow
and Tom Helsen, among others



Alsemberg
CC De Meent
Gemeenveldstraat 34; 02.359.16.00
www.demeent.be
APR 15 20.15 Jacques Pirotton
Quartet

Antwerp
Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
Free concerts at 21.00:
APR 7 Playtime Session **APR 8** Buster
Jam **APR 9** 22.00 Back to Basic **APR 10**
22.00 Moz-art **APR 13** Wartaal
APR 14 Playtime Session **APR 15**
Buster Jurassic Jam

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
APR 8 20.00 A Clean Kitchen is a
Happy Kitchen with Craig Ward +
Bootsie Butsenneller + Zahoun Ben
Younes + Afterjam **APR 10** 20.00
Mulatu Astatke & The Heliocentrics

Ardooie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
APR 7 20.30 The Valerie Solanas
(free)

Brussels

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
Concerts at 20.30:
APR 7 Anne Wolf Trio & Christa
Jerome **APR 8** Karzapp' Quartet **APR 10**
18.00 Lingo + Harmen **APR 14**
The Wrong Project

Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78
www.sazznjazz.be
Concerts at 20.30:
APR 8 Another Belgian Band **APR 9**
21.00 Alle Turca **APR 10** 2.00 Fasil
Quintet **APR 11** 18.00 Semtazone
APR 15 2.00 Stéphane Salkin Trio

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
APR 7 22.00 Los Soneros del Barrio
APR 8 21.00 The Singers Night **APR 9**
22.00 European Union Quartet **APR 10**
22.00 Chrystel Wautier Trio **APR 12**
22.00 Master Session **APR 13** 22.00
Laurent Doumont Soul Tuesdays **APR 14**
22.00 Chamaquindo, salsa **APR 15**
22.00 Julien Tassin Quartet

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
APR 8 Rey Cabrera **APR 9** MMM
APR 10 The Swing Dealers **APR 13**
Pat Baileys invites Swingin' Dry **APR 14**
JazzBXL Music School **APR 15**
Johnny and the MG's

Ghent

De Centrale
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28,
www.decentrale.be
APR 11 20.00 Giovanni Di Domenico
Duo

El Negocio
Brabantdam 121; 0479 567395,
www.mi-negocio.net
APR 8 22.00 Cabras/Thys/Roca **APR 12-16**
22.00 the El Negocio Dajo De
Cauter Sessions

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
APR 8 20.30 Charlie Musselwhite
APR 9 22.00 Conform Drum'n'bass
with Black Sun Empire + Simon
Bassline Smith + Stykz & Speedwagon
+ Iridium

Leffinge

De Zwerver
Dorpstraat 95; 059.70.08.22
www.leffingeuren.be
APR 9 20.00 Charlie Musselwhite



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
APR 9 20.30 Dastan Ensemble met
Salar Aghili (Iran)
APR 10 20.30 Balkan Lokal: Trio
Ocarina, Hudaki Village Band and
Tsiganisation Project
APR 14 20.30 Liu Fang, Chinese pipa
lute

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
APR 11 20.00 Débora Rodrigues and
João Escada, fado

Atelier 210

Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210;
02.732.25.98 www.atelier210.be
APR 7 21.00 What the Folk! Lena
Deluxe

Antwerp

Piola Libri
Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91
www.piolalibri.be
APR 8 19.00 My Bubba & Mi,
acoustic folk

Théâtre Molière

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpublique.be
APR 7 20.00 Pancho Amat y Su
Cabildo del Son (Cuba)

Ghent

Hot Club Reserva
Jan Breydelstraat 32; 0489.11.63.95
www.clubreserva.be
APR 8 21.00 Débora Rodrigues and
João Escada, traditional fado (free)

Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
APR 11-25 15.00/20.00 Eugene
Onegin by Tchaikovsky, based on
Pushkin's work. Conducted by Dmitri
Jurowski, staged by Tatjana Gürbaca,
with Tommi Hakala (Onegin), Anna
Leese (Tatiana) (in Dutch)

Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39
www.demunt.be
APR 11-13 15.00/20.00 Medea by
Pascal Dusapin, a danced opera
based on the text by Heiner Müller,
choreographed by Sasha Waltz,
with Caroline Stein, soprano, and
De Munt Symphony Orchestra and
Vocalconsort Berlin conducted by
Marcus Cree

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
APR 7 20.30 Bad van Marie in Vasio-
Levsky, directed by Peter Boelens (in
Dutch)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
Until APR 11 times vary The Sound
of Music (musical, in Dutch)

Dance

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
APR 8 20.30 Go-Zarashi (a karma
exposer), choreographed by Taketeru
Kudo
APR 15 20.30 Malavika Sarukkai
performing bharata natyam, an
ancient sacral dance from southern
India

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00 www.capitolegent.be
APR 12 14.30/19.30 Donetsk Ballet
in Het Zwanenmeer (Swan Lake),
accompanied by the Orchestra of
the State Russian Opera and Ballet
Theatre

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
Until SEP 19 Art kept me out of jail,
performance installations by Jan
Fabre 2001 – 2004 – 2008

Visual Arts

Antwerp

DON'T MISS



Groot-Bijgaarden Floralia

Until 6 May

Groot-Bijgaarden Castle

There's no better time to visit the pretty little village of Groot-Bijgaarden, just west of the Brussels ring road, than in April during the annual flower show. Staged at the town's castle and 14-hectare park, it is especially endearing to tulip lovers, with 300 of the Netherlands' best varieties on show. You'll also find seas of hyacinth, violets and azaleas under towering trees. And don't miss the flower labyrinth.

→ www.kasteelgrootbijgaarden.be



Antwerp

Fakkelteater
Hoogstraat 12; 03.232.14.69
www.fakkelteater.be
APR 15-JUNE 6 15.00/20.30 Ann Van
den Broeck in The Musical Songbook,
directed by Stany Crets (music
theatre, in Dutch)

Brussels

La Maison Blanche
Sint-Jobsteenweg 606;
www.theatrainbrussels.com
APR 15-17 20.00 American
Theatre Company in Café Theatre,
improvisational comedy (in English;
dinner available)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
APR 7 20.30 Bad van Marie in Vasio-
Levsky, directed by Peter Boelens (in
Dutch)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5;
0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
Until APR 11 times vary The Sound
of Music (musical, in Dutch)

Dance

Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00

www.zuiderpershuis.be

APR 7

20.30

Bad van Marie in Vasio-

Levsky, directed by Peter Boelens (in Dutch)

Antwerp

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Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY
APRIL 7, 2010

Extra City
Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extraicity.org

Until MAY 2 Animism, Part Two (see above)

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be

Until AUG 8 BLACK: Masters of Black in Fashion & Costume

FotoMuseum
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00,
www.fotomuseum.be

Until MAY 16 Congo (belge),
photographs of contemporary
Democratic Republic of Congo by
Flemish photographer Carl De Keyzer
Until MAY 16 Congo belge en
images, historical photographs of the
Belgian Congo, curated by Magnum
photographer Carl De Keyzer
Until MAY 16 Bamako Encounters
2009, works by young African
photographers

Zilvermuseum Sterckshof
Hooftvunderlei 160; 03.360.52.51
www.zilvermuseum.be

Until JUNE 13 Delheid 1828-1980:
From Michel to Climax, works from
the Delheid Frères company, one of
the 19th and 20th centuries' most
important silver producers

Bruges

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse

Dijver 17;
www.uitzindingvanbrugge.be

Until APR 25 De uitzinding van
Brugge: De stad van Delacenserie
(The Discovery of Bruges: The City
of Delacenserie), the 19th-century
architectural facelift of Bruges by
local architect Louis Delacenserie

Brussels

art)&(marges

Hoogstraat 312-314; 02.511.34.20
www.artthis.org

Until JUNE 27 Musik Oblik, music
and visual art project exploring
sound and vision (in collaboration
with Recyclart; includes concerts and
documentaries)

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be

Until AUG 29 Moomin: Tove
Jansson's Dreamworld, works by the
Finnish illustrator and author

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33
www.wittockiana.org

Until APR 24 Pierre Mertens: Andere
vormen van process, 45 years of
literature by Mertens, a project by
Bernard Maingain

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 des
Mexicano, portraiture and the history
of Mexico

Until APR 25 El Horizonte del topo
(The Mole's Horizon), video art

Until MAY 9 El Greco: Domenikos
Theotokopoulos 1900, more than 40
paintings by El Greco

Cellars of Cureghem

Ropsy Chaudronstraat 24;
02.528.19.00 www.cureghemcellars.be

Until APR 18 Play Belgium,
interactive and informational
exhibition on the history, present and
future of video games

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.35
www.deelektriciteitscentrale.be

Until MAY 16 Bamako 09:

Design Flanders
Kanselarijstraat 19; 02.227.60.60
www.designflanders.be

Until MAY 22 Ceramic Unica,
ceramic art by The Fuping Eleven;
photographs by Lydia De Bock

**Het Huis der Kunsten van
Schaarbeek**
Haachtsesteenweg 147; 02.240.34.99
www.culture1030ecoles.be

Until APR 11 Design: Een verhaal
van context (A Story of Context),
industrial design and objects by
Loudor design studio and D&A Lab

Jewish Museum of Belgium
Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63
www.new.mjb-jmb.org

Until MAY 30 Charles Szymkowicz:
Schilder in het bloed (Painter
in Blood), paintings by the
contemporary Belgian artist

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be

Until MAY 2 Alechinsky, prints by
the Belgian artist Pierre Alechinsky,
with guest artist Kiki Crêvecoeur,
engravings

Museum van Elsene
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71;
02.515.64.21, www.museumvanelsene.be

Until APR 25 El Cubismo: Cubism in
Context, paintings by European and
Latin American artists from Madrid's
Fundación Telefónica collective

Natural Science Museum
Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38,
www.naturalsciences.be

Until AUG 29 Whales and Dolphins,
discover how mammals gradually
adapted to living in water and
why whales and dolphins are now
endangered species

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33,
www.legermuseum.be

Until APR 11 Doggone War! Animals
in the First World War 1914-18,
some 300 objects from international
museum collections, photos and
archive films showing the presence of
animals on the military front

Royal Museums of Art and History
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11,
www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until APR 25 Home & Away, a
socio-artistic project on the theme
of housing, home and private life.

Newly-arrived immigrants and
homeless refugees tell their stories by
exhibiting their most precious items
and objects

Until AUG 29 Isabelle de
Borchgrave's I Medici: a Renaissance
in Paper, life-size paper replicas of
historic garments

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

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

Museum of Modern Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03
www.smak.be

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, paintings by the
Flemish artist

Until MAY 16 Collection FAKE?,
interpretations of reality

Until JUNE 16 Ed Templeton : the
Cemetery of Reason, photographs,
paintings and sketches

Until JUNE 16 Electrified 02 –
Hacking Public Space, actions in
public space

Museum Dr Guislain

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95
www.museumdrguislain.be

Until MAY 2 From Memory: About
Knowing and Forgetting, multi-
disciplinary exhibition on memory
and dementia in science and art

Hasselt

Cultuurcentrum

Kunstlaan 5; 011.22.99.31
www.ccha.be

Until APR 11 Yvan Theys: Verborgen
schatten (Hidden Treasures),
paintings by the late Flemish artist

Until APR 11 Marnik Neven:
Moment, multi-media show of work
by the Flemish artist

Until APR 11 Kumi Oguro,
photographs by the Antwerp-based
artist

Literary Museum

Bampsalaan 35; 011.22.26.24
www.literairmuseum.be

Until MAY 15 Een vreemd land (A
Strange Country): Shaun Tan, prints
and books by the famous Australian
author and illustrator

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302

Houtmarkt-Begijnpark; 056.27.78.50
www.kortrijk1302.be

Until MAY 16 Miniaturen: Gras dat
verder groeit (Thumbnails: Grass That
Continues to Grow), group show with
works based on poems and other texts
by Flemish writer Jozef Deleu

Ostend

Kunstmuseum Aan Zee

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,
www.pmmk.be

Until AUG 29 Bij Ensor op Bezoek
(Visiting Ensor), the world of master
Flemish artist James Ensor, seen
through the eyes of various artists,
writers, museum directors and
filmmakers, on the occasion of his
150th birthday. Work by Ensor, Carl
Cneut, Emil Nolde and many more

Turnhout

TRAM 41

Grote Markt 1; 014.44.33.98
www.tram41.be

Until APR 30 China en het kaartspel
(China and the Card Game), Chinese
printing techniques and card games

Until MAY 2 De eerste onder zijn
gelijken (The First Among Equals),
cards, letters, books and prints from
medieval Latin schools in the Kempen
region



Literaire Lente (Literary Spring):

Literature festival with libraries,
shops, concert venues and cafes
opening their doors for readings,
interviews, parties, concerts and more

Until APR 30 across Flanders
www.boek.be/literairelente

Antwerp

4-EverY0ung & Midlifeparty: Party
for ages 35 and up, with music from
the '80s and '90s

APR 8 20.00 at La Riva, Londenstraat 52
03.225.01.02, www.midlifeparty.be

Brussels

A Writer's Europe: Romanian-born
German writer Herta Müller, winner
of the 2009 Nobel Prize for Literature,
talks about her novel *Atemschaule*
(Everything I Possess I Carry With
Me) (in German; simultaneous
translation in French and Dutch)

APR 14 20.15 at Flagey, Heilig
Kruisplein 02.641.10.20, www.flagey.be

Balkan Trafik Festival: Multicultural
arts festival from the Balkan countries
including music and dance from
Macedonia, cinema from Romania,
Sufi song from Bosnia and music
from Albania

APR 8-11 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat
23 02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

BRIDFAS: British Decorative and
Fine Arts Society of Brussels hosts the
lecture "The History of the Long Case
Clock" by master clockmaker Colin
Lattimore, followed by a reception

APR 14 20.00 at Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe
Town Hall, Paul Hymanslaan 2
www.bridfas.org

Congo Festival: Festival marking five
years of activity in the Democratic
Republic of Congo by Flemish
performance house KVS and the

SHARON LIGHT

bite



Hempmade

Hemp has a long and complicated history. Once widely used as a versatile crop for food and to make paper and building supplies, in the past century it has acquired a bad reputation by association.

So let's get the facts straight: hemp comes from the *cannabis sativa* plant, as does marijuana. Despite being from a different subspecies of the *sativa*, being harvested differently and containing only trace amounts of Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the psychoactive chemical found in marijuana, hemp has been outlawed by many countries under regulations meant to control marijuana cultivation and use.

Which is a shame, because hemp has a variety of environmental benefits, makes strong and supple fabrics and – as far as Bite is concerned – is yummy.

But fear not: with a bit of legwork, there are hemp foods to be found in Belgium. Production remains outlawed here, so the products must be imported. You may find hemp oil at your local supermarket (Delhaize stocks it), but you'll find little else in the hemp arena.

Germany permits hemp cultivation; as a result, German company hanf & natur is Europe's largest hemp food producer. The widest selection of their

products can be found at Leuven's Hempmade, although it remains a small selection amongst the store's much more extensive clothing lines.

Nonetheless, you'll find a range of products here to complement your pantry. Hemp has a nutty flavour that reminds me a bit of pumpkin seed; it's very light and pleasant. Hemp oil can be used in place of any other cooking or salad oil. Their Canyu sauce stands in for soy sauce. The hanf & natur product line includes hemp pastas, flour, muesli, chocolates and teas with a variety of flavours.

Hempmade, located on Diestsestraat, not far from the city's train station, also carries plain shelled and unshelled hemp seeds; these can be tossed into any dish where you would otherwise use pumpkin or sunflower seeds, or eaten alone as a snack. Hanf & natur helps you along in that regard, offering several (slightly addictive) salty, sweet and spicy flavours.

If the promise of trying a new flavour isn't enough to intrigue you, let's try the health route: hemp is a frequent recipient of "super food" claims. Hemp is high in protein and has those omega fatty acids that are the hot buzz-word in food marketing these days. Moreover, hanf & natur is certified by Bioland, Germany's largest organic farmers' association.

Which means that the only *real* problem with hemp is how hard it is to find.

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

→ www.hempmade.be

COMING UP NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY

Gentse Floraliën

One of the most prestigious – not to mention huge – flower shows in Europe, the Floraliën comes only once every five years

Erfgoeddag

The annual Heritage Day takes a look at the fakes of Flanders – just what is authentic out there and what is a big lie? Who knew a heritage day could be this honest

Hennelore Knuts

You've been shocked by the poster, now hear what our critic has to say about the exhibition curated by the Flemish model

Heuvelland

This gorgeous area seems remote to most city-dwellers, though it's never more than two hours' drive for any of us. The fertile region in West Flanders has given birth to many great chefs; we meet one who's come to the attention of Michelin

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



jongeren →

It's about time he settled down. What, 26 and not married? What's wrong with him? Many of us not in the first flush of youth will remember the pressure to put down roots. The wanderlust of youth, the desire to try new things and new places, the urge to break with your parents and go off and do your own thing: such are the imperatives of being young.

Yet, a recent study seems to show all this up as a hippie dream. In short, it concludes that *Vlaamse jongeren willen een partner, een huis en een kind tegen dat ze 26 zijn* – young Flemish people want a partner, a house and a child by the time they are 26.

In the past, *jongeren* – young people thought first *een carrière maken* – have a career; *en dan op het gemak uitkijken naar een partner* – and then take your time to find a partner, *om een gezin mee te stichten* – to start a family. It appears that few young'uns have this perspective today.

Of course, there is a difference between what you want and what you get. Whether all the teenagers questioned will be tucked up with partner and babe in arms in their dream villa in 10 years' time is another matter. But it's a fact that *Vlaamse jongeren* today, whatever their background, are

nearly all running around with almost the same life scenario in their heads: *samenvonen met een partner* – living together with a partner, *de aankoop van een huis of appartement* – purchase of a house or flat, *het eerste kind* – the first child and *een trouwpartij* – and a wedding, and all by the time they are 26.

So much for the idea that we have all become individualists; clearly, the power of the group is still great. As one of the authors of the report put it: "*Het ideaalbeeld blijft robust en stabiel*" – The ideal image is robust and stable", and she admits, "*en beetje saai zelfs* – and even a bit boring". Perhaps a tad, especially if you move into a new house where you are still likely to be when you retire, since moving house is not so common in Flanders.

A big change is *samenvonen* (or at least openly) and saving the wedding to last. Though the biggest seems to be that teenagers now even contemplate what their lives will look like in 10 years' time. It's almost as if the youth revolution never happened. Forty years ago, life was for now, and as far from home – and mortgages – as possible. And 26-year-olds were aliens, like parents or teachers.

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THE LAST WORD . . .

Only the best

"We don't just come to Flanders for the cycling. Look under the caravan, there's a crate of Jupiler. Nowhere is the beer better than here."

Cycling fan Inneke Sturm from the Netherlands makes ready for the Ronde van Vlaanderen

Better not to win

"It may be best that I didn't win. That prize is a prize for a life's work. What would I have done next?"

Children's book illustrator Carl Cneut narrowly missed this year's Hans Christian Andersen award

Difference of opinion

"Kim De Gelder is a psychotic and must be committed."

Lawyer Jaak Haentjens disagrees with five prosecution psychiatrists who found the accused triple-killer sane to stand trial

In it to win it

"What a match. Unbelievable." Tennis star Kim Clijsters, who took three sets and 154 minutes to beat fellow Belgian Justine Henin and reach the finals of the WTA Sony Ericsson Open in Miami