



ANJA OTTE

He is the “king of Flanders”, “the Flemish lion”, “the Cannibal”. The Flemish newspapers used metaphors normally reserved for their cycling heroes to describe Bart De Wever, whose N-VA convincingly won the federal elections

→ continued on page 5

## Good to be gay

**On the eve of Antwerp Pride, we look back at the coalition government that made Belgium the most progressive country in the world for gays and lesbians**

LISA BRADSHAW

Last month, 35,000 revellers swarmed around Anspachlaan in downtown Brussels for the gay pride parade and village, a record number and a nearly 30% increase on last year. Although the sunny skies didn't hurt, the crowds were also a testament to an increasing collaboration between the country's three gay rights organisations in the three regions.

A new coordinator and better publicity boosted turnout and so did the strategic actions before pride, which drew media attention. And this year for the first time there was a unified political message – or three, in fact: a strengthened focus on gender issues, problems with the adoption law and the European directive.

Now that organisations for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights in Belgium have attained access to marriage and adoption, they are casting their nets wider. “The laws in most European countries only deal with discrimination based on

sexual orientation in employment, which is required by EU law, but we want to see protection in all areas of life,” says Juris Lavrikovs of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA), based in Brussels. “And this is where Europe is very divided.”

The European directive currently stuck in parliament would ban discrimination in housing, health care and access to goods and services with regards to sexual orientation and also a number of other identities, such as age, disability and religion – a protection that right now only applies to race.

Hence, this year at the big pride parade and street party, amid truck after truck of disco dancing youth, was an actual political float. It was simple – the giant head of Flemish politician Herman von Rompuy, president of the European Council, with the

rainbow flag (the traditional symbol of the LGBT movement) as a scarf, riding on a flatbed truck atop the European flag.

Organisations in Belgium, unlike most European countries, have the luxury to help ILGA fight for LGBT rights across the continent because so many of its own battles have already been won. In 2003, Belgium became only the second country in the world to legalise gay marriage and, in 2006, full adoption rights were granted to same-sex couples.

But don't use the phrase “gay marriage” when talking to Yves Aerts, director of Çavaria, the Flemish organisation for LGBT rights. “Not ‘gay marriage’,” he tells me patiently from his office in Casa Rosa (Pink House) near the picturesque Vrijdagmarkt in downtown Ghent. “It's not a ‘gay marriage’ apart from other marriages; it's just marriage.”

→ continued on page 6



© Shutterstock



## OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE



© shutterstock

### Here's looking at you, kid

Now that the campaign is over, the secret can be told: Alexander De Croo, chairman of Open VLD, betrays his vulnerability by holding his head at an angle. Furthermore, he shows sensitivity by turning the left side of his face to the camera. By now, readers will be aware of what a major effect both of those things had on the election.

The information comes from the Centre for Body Language Training, the brainchild of Patryk Wezowski, self-declared body language expert of Flanders. Together with a team of five, Wezowski studied videos of the leaders of the main parties and came to some surprising conclusions:

- Marianne Thyssen (CD&V) doesn't come across as a real leader, as her body language reveals her reluctance to be in the position she's in
- Jean-Marie Dedecker (LDD) seems angry and aggressive
- Bart De Wever (N-VA) uses very little body language, suggesting he is keeping himself tightly under control
- Caroline Gennez (SPA) rather cryptically likes to take advantage of her "womanly attributes" (which are presumably the only ones she has)
- Filip De Winter (VB) invades the personal space of others and is an authority figure
- Finally, Yves Leterme is constantly tense and tries to cover it up. He is, Wezowski says, "The champion of the fake laugh"

The science of body language has been around for some time – according to its proponents, we all use it to "read" our fellow humans. Popular notion has it that anything up to 93% of communication is non-verbal, with body language and tone of voice more important than the actual words spoken.

However, the conclusions drawn by the experts often leave a lot to be desired. When Wezowski describes De Croo as "a mix of strong leadership and caution" it may be that his position as "leader" of his party is at least as revealing of his "leadership" as the fact that he tends to put his fingertips together and lean backwards.

The Centre for Body Language Training, based in Edegem, offered *Flanders Today* a full forecast of the election results based on body language analysis of politicians. But we declined. Since not even an election can produce a convincing result, why spend the money?

→ [www.lichaamstaaltraining.be](http://www.lichaamstaaltraining.be)

## News in brief

A group of amateur detectives last week lifted the roof from one of the 14 roadside chapels along the Calvarieberg in Overmere-Donk, East Flanders, convinced they would find the long-missing **Righteous Judges panel** from the brothers Van Eyck masterpiece "The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb". The chapels were being built in 1934 when the panel went missing, and the suspected thief was at that time a sacristan in Overmere and a friend of the chapels' builder. The panel was not found.

Internet search giant Google last week launched a GPS version of its **Google Maps service** for Belgium. Google Maps Navigation is free but requires an internet connection and is intended to turn a smartphone into a navigation system. However it only works on phones using the Android operating system – owned by Google.

Christie Hefner, former CEO of Playboy Enterprises, will be the keynote speaker at the **Flanders DC Creativity Forum** to be held in October in Antwerp. The list of speakers at the Forum is women-only and includes writer Susan Blackmore, trendwatcher

Jane McGonigal, scientist Susan Greenfield, marketing guru Carole Lamarque and gynaecologist and Belgian senator Marleen Temmerman.

The Flemish government has earmarked €120,000 to help **support the Belgian Homeless Cup**, which provides weekly football training and match competition for homeless people as a means of helping them integrate into society. The money was agreed last week by sports minister Philippe Muyters and welfare minister Jo Vandeurzen. The winner of the championship will represent Belgium at the Homeless World Cup in Brazil in September.

The man accused in the **shooting death of a justice of the peace** and her court clerk two weeks ago in Brussels has been ordered to undergo examination by a panel of three psychiatrists. The 47-year-old man was later arrested after letting off shots in the Warandepark and pointing his gun at police. He is currently being detained in the psychiatric wing of Vorst prison. Last week it was revealed that the bullet from one of the shots had penetrated a window of the

parliament's library overlooking the park.

The Belgian defence ministry and the German government last week joined forces to deny rumours that **Nato was considering moving** its headquarters from Brussels to Bonn. According to the rumour, the German government was exerting pressure for the move, following the departure of the federal capital from Bonn to Berlin. Nato is scheduled to move its HQ in the next few years to new premises directly across the road from the current building, near Brussels Airport.

The **University of Maastricht** in the Netherlands has opened a campus in Etterbeek in Brussels. The new university will offer post-graduate courses in European affairs aimed mainly at professionals working in and around the EU institutions.

→ [www.maastrichtuniversity.nl](http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl)

### Correction

In our front-page article last week on In Flanders Fields Museum, we stated that Major John McCrae died near Ypres. In fact McCrae died in Number 14 British General Hospital for Officers in Boulogne.

## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

### Duco Sickinghe

The winner of this year's CEO Report in *De Standaard* may not be Flemish, but the company he leads couldn't be more so.

Duco Sickinghe scored 82% in the CEO Report, just ahead of Bert Degraeve of steel-wire maker Bekaert on 81%. The scores are calculated according to share-price evolution, profit history, investment durability, financial transparency and management style, with an independent jury awarding up to 50 points for leadership, strategy and social participation. The report is limited to companies in the Bel20 stock exchange index, which Telenet only joined last year.

"I'm surprised, of course, and obviously extremely proud," Sickinghe told *De Standaard*. "Winning first place is a recognition for the company."

Duco Sickinghe, aged 52, was born in Utrecht, and studied law before getting an MBA at Columbia University in the US. He joined Hewlett Packard, working for the company in Geneva; and NeXT Computers, the company started by Steve Jobs between his two stints at Apple.

When NeXT stopped trading, Sickinghe set up SoftwareDirect, which published CD-ROMs, then returned to the Netherlands to Wolters Kluwer, a publisher of specialised legal and corporate texts. He became a partner at Callahan Associates and, when they took over a majority share of Telenet in 2001, Sickinghe became CEO.

The Telenet Vlaanderen project was set up by the Flemish government in 1995 to stimulate technological development. Its first job was to integrate the different cable networks in Flanders, then run by intercommunal agencies, into a single entity.

Telenet later became a telephone operator, and started to provide internet services, introducing broadband in Mechelen and Hoboken as early as 1997. The company now provides telephony,



internet and digital TV services in direct competition with former state-owned monopoly Belgacom. The company had sales of €1.2 billion in 2009, and profits after tax of €233 million. Sickinghe revealed his secret. "You have to be the best ideas-thief in the company. You have to surround yourself with people who generate good ideas. And it's your role to pick out the best ideas and bring them into the light, and maybe also to put other good ideas on the back-burner for a while. And you have to motivate people. Or rather, you *can* motivate them, but you *must* stretch them, just like the coach of a football team, who gets just that little bit extra out of them for an important match."

## FLANDERS TODAY

Flanders Today, a free weekly English-language newspaper, is an initiative of the Flemish Region and is financially supported by the Flemish authorities.



The logo and the name Flanders Today belong to the Flemish Region (Benelux Beeldmerk nr 815.088). The editorial team of Flanders Today has full editorial autonomy regarding the content of the newspaper and is responsible for all content, as stipulated in the agreement between Corelio Publishing and the Flemish authorities.

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, Denzil Walton

Project manager: Pascale Zoetaert

Publisher: Corelio Publishing NV

Editorial address:

Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

[editorial@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:editorial@flanderstoday.eu)

Subscriptions:

[subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu)

or sign up online at [www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)

Advertising: Evelynne Gregonese

02.373.83.57

[advertising@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:advertising@flanderstoday.eu)

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Derek Blyth





## The election in brief

"The Netherlands has become **impossible to govern**" was the title of an op-ed piece in *De Morgen* by Dutch journalist Aukje Van Roessel, following elections across the border last week. The same feeling would soon spread to Belgium. The Dutch liberal Mark Rutte followed his victory in the Netherlands with a visit to Belgium to support the Flemish liberals Open VLD. They went on to lose five seats.

Politicians have learned to be **less demanding of the media**, according to newsdesks at the VRT and vtm, the two main TV news sources. Gone are the days when senior figures like Guy Verhofstadt would call up demanding attention. However the parties' new politeness depends, they explain, on how the polls are running.

**Saboteurs in Lennik** threatened to use their position as tellers to substitute one vote for N-VA for every vote cast for a French-speaking party.

The town lies in Flemish Brabant, in the BHV constituency, where voters can choose between Flemish and French-speaking parties. In the end, the threat was not carried out.

The owners of the Harlekin bakery in the Mechelen district of Heffen noticed their customers were very politically interested in the run-up to the election, and grasped the business opportunity, producing **coalition cakes** featuring the various party logos. "We call them coalition cakes because all of the Flemish parties are there," said Els De Smet.

The final of the Miss BHV contest, a **spoof beauty contest** due to be screened during Saturday's edition of the late-night talk show *Villa Vanhilt*, was cancelled at the last minute on orders from the VRT's board. "Less than 12 hours before the polls open, this event could be interpreted as a political signal," a spokesperson for the public broadcasting authority said.

### Division of the seats

(2010 compared to 2007)

N-VA	27 (8)
CD&V	17 (23)
SP.A	13 (14)
Open VLD	13 (18)
Vlaams Belang	12 (16)
Groen!	5 (4)
Lijst Dedecker	1 (5)

### The foreign press

"This is an unprecedented result that will make the political crisis in Belgium worse."

Le Figaro, France

"These elections in Belgium have made the gulf between Flemish and Walloons deeper."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

### Overheard

"Don't wet the pencil."

Sign in a voting booth

"Read *De Standaard* for as long as it takes to form a government for only €45."

De Standaard offers a new subscription deal

"I'm afraid we're in for weeks and months of negotiations."

Political scientist Carl De Vos

### The winners

"N-VA now stands for *Nil Volentibus Arduum*: for those who desire, nothing is impossible."

Bart De Wever, president of the Nieuw-Vlaams Alliantie (N-VA)

"A large part of Flanders wants our country to evolve on an institutional level. That signal has to be heard."

Elio Di Rupo, president of the largest party in Wallonia and possible next prime minister

"I'm unbelievably proud."

Bart De Wever's mother, Irene Torfs

### The losers

"At a certain point, I was beginning to get really worried."

Vlaams Belang's Filip De Winter, whose party fell to under 13%

"It's like a tsunami: some houses suffer some damage, and some get swept away."

SP.A party president Johan Vande Lanotte

"This tsunami hasn't only swept away the furniture, it's taken the whole house."

Jean-Marie Dedecker, whose LDD party lost four of its five seats

"We won four elections in a row. Today was a little different."

Marianne Thyssen, president of CD&V, whose share of the vote dropped below 20% for the first time

"The voter has spoken and was very clear: this federal government is being punished."

Socialist party president Caroline Gennez

"I'd rather have seen something else happen."

Open-VLD president Alexander De Croo, whose party lost five seats

### Top 10 votes

The two Senate lists are national, with large vote totals as a result. Most of the leaders of the main Flemish parties stood on their parties' Senate lists. Aside from them, notable high scorers were Flemish socialist Frank Vandenbroucke, Senate speaker Armand De Decker and university professor Rik Torfs. The Chamber top scorers, meanwhile, include a couple of party leaders and "white rabbit" Siegfried Bracke, a former TV journalist parachuted in to snatch East Flanders from the grasp of the Open VLD.

#### Senate

Bart De Wever (N-VA)	724,791
Marianne Thyssen (CD&V)	297,183
Alexander De Croo (Open VLD)	272,955
Paul Magnette (PS)	219,537
Filip Dewinter (VB)	186,786
Johan Vande Lanotte (SP.A)	172,757
Frank Vandenbroucke (SP.A)	160,137
Armand De Decker (MR)	134,260
Rik Torfs (CD&V)	132,921
Louis Michel (MR)	116,277

#### Chamber

Yves Leterme (CD&V)	101,799
Elio Di Rupo (PS)	98,158
Siegfried Bracke (N-VA)	89,475
Inge Vervotte (CD&V)	78,915
Michel Daerden (PS)	72,194
Didier Reynders (MR)	61,848
Jan Jambon (N-VA)	61,065
Olivier Maingain (MR)	56,983
Gerolf Annemans (VB)	56,199
Hilde Crevits (CD&V)	50,611

### Elections at a glance

Sunday saw the election of 150 members of the Chamber of Representatives, and 40 directly elected Senators. In the election for the Chamber, there were 132 party lists featuring 2,081 candidates. For the Senate, there were 620 candidates on 21 lists. In all, 3,421 candidates for a total electorate of 7.73 million in Belgium and 42,489 abroad.

The lists are organised by province except in Flemish Brabant, where the area around Leuven is Flemish, while the areas of Halle and Vilvoorde join with Brussels and are bilingual. The Senate race is organised into Dutch- and French-speaking lists, which are national. As well as the 40 senators elected on Sunday, another 30 will be nominated by the regional parliaments or otherwise co-opted.

Voting is mandatory for all Belgian citizens over the age of 18, unless prohibited by law. In 44% of polling stations voting is electronic; in the rest, it is still done by marking one's choice with a red pencil on a paper ballot.

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



### 4/10

employees consider their salary too low in relation to the work they do, according to research by HR consultancy SD Worx. Six out of 10 would trade job perks like a car and lunch vouchers for more cash. One in five has too much work, and one in four suffers work-related stress

### 21

businesses in the food industry at the coast who were last week awarded the new Q-label, intended to guarantee a high level of service and cleanliness. The label is valid for two years

### €19,260

on average knocked off the asking price of a house in order to ensure a sale, according to internet estate agent Directmakelaar.be

### 6,946

complaints made to the rail authority NMBS in 2009, mainly about late trains and inadequate information regarding delays

### 53%

of Belgians take the car when they go on holiday, according to a survey by motoring organisation Touring. France is the favourite destination, attracting 23% of families, while one in 10 Belgians spend their holidays in their own country





## Massive beer fraud alleged in Ghent

ALAN HOPE

The Ghent prosecutor's office is investigating a massive tax fraud surrounding the supply of beer to as many as 1,000 cafés and restaurants in the Ghent area and at the coast.

The complaint, passed to the prosecutor's office by the Special Tax Inspection office (BBI), concerns Creve Drinks from Waarschoot in East Flanders. The business, popularly known as De Wilde after the founding family, supplies beer and other drinks to a large number of catering establishments in the province and in neighbouring West Flanders. In the city of Ghent alone, where there are 1,500 food industry outlets including 800 cafés, De Wilde supplies about one in three.

According to the BBI, the scheme, which has been going on for years, involved taking cash payments for part of each delivery and only issuing receipts for part of the shipment. As many as 1,000 different customers could be involved. Last week, an investigating magistrate in Ghent issued search warrants for premises involved in the fraud, and documents were seized.

The enquiry will also examine allegations that De Wilde delivered inferior beer in vats that the company claimed to contain more expensive brands like Maes and Jupiler. Among those premises searched last week were those of the company suspected of providing the inferior beer.

According to one café owner quoted by De Standaard, De Wilde put pressure on cafés to go along with the scheme, despite the fact that it brought little or no advantage. De Wilde owns a number of cafés as well as delivering drinks, making it easier to intimidate managers.

Individual café owners could themselves face heavy fines if the Ghent prosecutor decides to pursue them as well as De Wilde. According to Luc De Bauw, director-general of the industry's representative organisation Horeca Vlaanderen, such fines could signal the end for a number of businesses, already suffering from a loss of business due to the partial ban on smoking in cafés. ♦



© Shutterstock

## Complaints about ad scams double

The government's economic inspection service received more than twice as many complaints last year over bogus "business guides" as it did in 2008 – 1,166 complaints compared to 460. Unizo, the organisation that represents the self-employed, has called on prosecutors to take action against the scammers, and has instituted its own Fair Ad label to be awarded to companies who abide by their code of conduct in advertising.

The problem involves people who pretend to be compilers of local business guides and who appear in mass mailings to offer free advertising to businesses. However, locked away in the small print of the application for the free ad are costs and charges for paid advertising, often at extortionate rates. To make matters worse, the guides themselves may never materialise or, if they do, they are so worthless documents that recipients throw them away immediately.

Scammers are increasingly turning to the internet, because of the low cost of mass email campaigns, and because, compared to even an inferior print publication, a website costs virtually nothing to set up.

Business people who spot the scam, or suspect the offer is too good to be true, will ignore the pitch. But those who are too busy or careless to see the hidden charges later find themselves facing large bills for advertising they neither want nor need.

Some legal action has been taken successfully, Unizo said, "but this remains a tough virus that's tiring and difficult to eradicate. The profits for criminals seem big enough to make it worth turning up under another name, either here or abroad," the organisation said.

One recent offender is a company calling itself Tele Verzeichnis Verlag, which was the subject of more than 1,000 complaints in October last year. They operated out of Hamburg in Germany, but aimed massively at the Flemish market. Their approach was to send companies a "proof" of their free advertisement for correction. When the company replied with the corrections, of which there were always some, TVV landed them with a charge of €987 a year for three years. The contract, in Dutch, makes it clear that German law is applicable in case of disputes, and undertakes to respond to correspondence in English and German only, in the hope of discouraging enquiries or complaints.

Typical tricks include calling at peak times when the business owner will be under maximum pressure, or asking to speak to a junior member of staff who can be convinced that the business owner has already approved the ad.

Unizo advises business owners to warn their staff of the existence of the problem. They should never allow staff to pay cash on demand when representatives come to call and always check the "publishers" of these guides and their track records.

For business owners themselves, the Unizo site offers links to sample contracts from the scammers, as well as to the official complaints form of the economic inspection service. Most important: if in any doubt at all, throw the offer of a free ad away. If you can't remember ordering any advertising from a guide you never heard of, the chances are you didn't. ♦

→ [www.unizo.be](http://www.unizo.be)

## Design for [every]one combines form and function

The photo shows a bag designed to be carried by a handicapped person's companion-dog. It's just one of the revolutionary new designs presented by the University College of West Flanders' (Howest) Design for [every] one project.

The bag is inspired by the saddlebags commonly used by cyclists, and is meant to be easy to take off and put on the dog. It was designed by Basil Vereecke and Levi Algoet, with the help of a vet who advised them on how to make the bag safe and comfortable for the dog.

Among the other exhibits shown at the college in Kortrijk this month were an Autiklok by Thomas Valke and Jan De Paepe – a clock for autistic children who need regular routine in their lives. The clock allows them to mark the main events of their day on the clock face itself.

A badminton shuttlecock (Dries Coutigny and Thijs Van Hooreweder) is fluorescent and has a design to make it more visible for the partially-sighted. It also travels more slowly through the air for those with a hand-eye coordination handicap.

The Bumbo Seat (Fauve Collie and Elke Vanmaele) is designed to help

toddlers with cerebral palsy maintain a seating position which doesn't put pressure on their spines. It's adjustable, washable and includes a play-table.

The Schommelkuip (Frederick De Pauw and Manu Vollens) is an add-on which fits on any garden swing, and provides a safe, hammock-like way for handicapped children to swing without having to hold on. Swinging is an excellent therapeutic and relaxation activity for many handicapped people. Design for [every]one is a multidisciplinary research project involving the faculties of industrial design and ergotherapy, creating a bridge between product design and assistive technology. "In our society there is a great need for ergonomic aids for people with specific limitations," explained Michèle Nolf of Howest. "No two people and no two handicaps are the same, yet these people have to choose from a relatively narrow range of mass-produced aids. New digital prototyping technologies and the interactive internet are creating new opportunities for this niche market, opening the way to new open source designs where end-users are able to help develop their own aids, as well as produce and market them." ♦



## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Air Travel • Icelandair

Icelandair, based in Reykjavik, has launched a twice-weekly service between Brussels and Iceland. The new service is part of the country's plan to forge closer links with the European Union.

### Autos • Sales

New car registrations jumped 25% to 47,725 in May this year compared to the same period in 2009. Cumulative figures for the first five months of the year point to a 16% increase. The market leaders in Belgium are Renault, with sales 24% higher, followed by Peugeot with a 30% increase and Volkswagen, up 21%.

### Banking • ICBC

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), the country's largest financial institution, is to launch its Brussels-based operations in the coming weeks after winning approval from the Belgian banking regulatory authorities. The Bank of China (BOC) is also expected to begin operations in Belgium in the near future.

### Chemicals • Solvay

Brussels-based chemicals and plastics group Solvay, sitting on a €4.5 billion cash mountain following the sale of its pharmaceutical activities, is said to be considering a bid for the German Symrise, the world's fourth-largest producer of essences and fragrances for the food and cosmetics industries.

### Diamonds • AWDC

The Antwerp World Diamond Centre, representing the traders and cutters of the world's largest diamonds trading platform, has seen an upturn in its activities with export volumes up 2.3% and value jumping nearly 30%. The AWDC has signed an agreement with the Shanghai Diamond Exchange to develop the "Diamonds Love Antwerp" brand in China.

### Hotels • Aoft

US-based hotel group Starwood is to launch its Aloft brand in Brussels' EU district on 1 September. The new 147-room hotel, the company's first in Europe, will emphasise cutting-edge design and state-of-the-art technologies.

### Paper • Stora

Swedish paper group Stora has inaugurated its second green power station in Langerbrugge, near Ghent. The new €140 million plant will supply the nearby Stora-Enso paper production units, which produce 550,000 tonnes a year.



© Shutterstock

The "business directories" concerned are usually worthless, if they are published at all



# Landslide

Both Flanders and Wallonia are overwhelmingly clear in their choice of leadership

→ continued from page 1

With more than 28% of the Flemish votes, the electoral landslide of the Flemish nationalist N-VA, headed by the increasingly popular Bart De Wever, is historic. This is the first time that a non-traditional party has won so spectacularly.

N-VA has only been around since the beginning of this century. In the 2003 election, it earned just one seat. Seven years on, no less than 27 representatives will take up seats in the newly elected Chamber of Representatives. Except for the greens, the results of all the other parties dropped to historic lows.

What caused this tsunami vote?

The events of the past three years have radicalised the Flemish electorate. In 2007, N-VA formed a partnership with the Christian Democrats (CD&V), resulting in electoral victory. Yves Leterme of the CD&V was the Flemish voters' champion then. But he never managed to deliver on his electoral promises, leading to a split in the cartel.

Many voters blamed the French-speaking minority for blocking any kind of state reform, which was what all Flemish parties wanted. In the words of De Wever, this country consists of "two democracies". He proposes to let both of them follow their own courses – which seems to have struck the right chord with voters.

N-VA also stands for a new type of politics, less messy than the traditional compromises that have kept Belgium together in spite of all its differences. It remains to be seen how N-VA will behave with real power in its hands, but the voters have obviously judged it worth a chance.

Then there is De Wever himself. The man is larger than life. He is a self-declared conservative (a rarity in Belgian politics), fond of Latin quotes. As a family man, he prefers to take his holidays in Germany. He is overweight and rarely smiles, yet the young viewers of MTV find him "the coolest politician" in Flanders.

His frank way of speaking, heavily laden with sarcasm, has caught on. De Wever also became a media favourite after appearing on the celebrity quiz show *De slimste mens ter wereld*, as well as an obsession of his political opponents. All of this resulted in a personal vote of more than 760,000, almost equalling that of Leterme in 2007.

**So who lost?**

Everyone did, apart from the greens, who gain one seat. One of the biggest losers

was CD&V, which, for the first time in history, dropped below 20%. The reasons are roughly the same as those that explain N-VA's success. In the campaign, prime minister Leterme stood aside to make way for Marianne Thyssen. The new party president did what she could, but failed where no-one else could have succeeded either.

The final result of 17% is ruthless, leaving political heavyweights such as secretary of state Etienne Schouppe and Hugo Vandenberghe (voted "best senator" by the press) without seats.

The liberal party Open VLD, too, faces a major defeat. Up until three years ago, this country had a liberal prime minister, but Open VLD now drops to a paltry 13%, which makes it the fourth party. The new generation, headed by party president Alexander De Croo (who took control just six months ago), says it cannot put right what has gone wrong before in such a short period. Still, it looks like De Croo has fallen victim to a major rule in Belgian politics: he who causes the federal government to fall, pays the price at the ballot box.

The extreme right party Vlaams Belang is also licking its wounds. The party that once dominated the political debate (without ever gaining any real power), has lost no less than 6.3% to N-VA, reducing it to the fifth political force in Flanders. N-VA reaps what we have sown, lamented VB party leader Filip Dewinter. The N-VA has played on Vlaams Belang's traditional themes of nationalism and discontent, of course, but without its xenophobia. The Lijst Dedecker party, meanwhile, is left with only one seat.

Amidst this electoral carnage, the socialist party SP.A looks almost like a winner – losing only one percent and coming in third. Still, this is still a historic low for the socialists. Moreover, Frank Vandenbroucke, who fell out of grace with the party establishment, has proved that he is still very popular, which may lead to further internal instability.

**So what's next?**

Everyone is looking to Bart De Wever to form a government. With a result that is this clear, the process may be easier than it was in the past. However, De Wever has to find partners across the language border. And there, the results are very clear, too. Very different from the Flemish outcome, the socialist PS is the big winner in Wallonia.



© REUTERS/Sebastien Priet

An elated Elio di Rupo, who may well be Belgium's new prime minister after his Socialist party swept the French-speaking elections

This makes for quite a paradox. While the Flemish nationalists have never scored better, the future prime minister may well be a French speaker – the first one in over 35 years. On election day, French-speaking socialist party (PS) president Elio Di Rupo had already implicitly claimed this post by stressing that "the socialist family is the biggest in the country".

De Wever has no ambition to move into Wetstraat 16 (the Belgian prime minister's residence), knowing that this could only serve to reduce his iconic status. Moreover, he hopes that the PS will be more ready to compromise with their man in the driving seat.

**So will Belgium fall apart?**

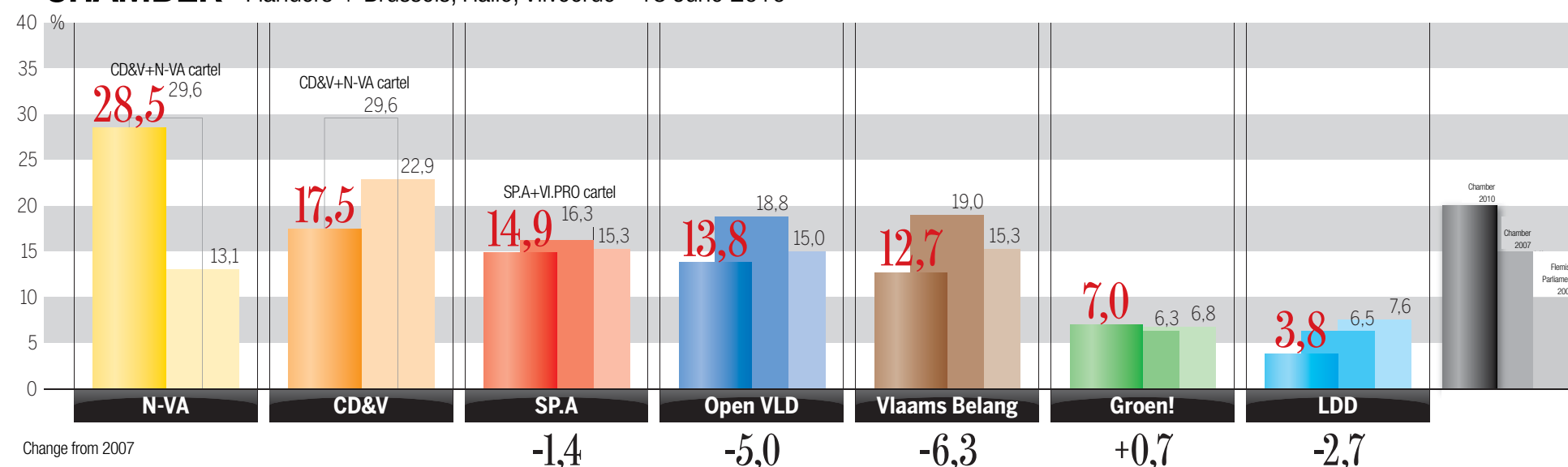
Not in the next couple of years, no. The Flemish nationalists – N-VA and Vlaams Belang combined – have a majority, but De Wever is not interested in joining forces with Vlaams Belang. Flemish independence may be the final objective of his N-VA, but he has repeated time and time again

that he seeks evolution, not revolution.

The election result will leave some French speakers shell-shocked for a while, but it has the advantage of clarity – state reform is what the Flemish want, now more than ever. This may make for some difficult talks, including compromises on the part of N-VA, as well, which is not something that this party has been known for.

The most likely outcome is a federal government of N-VA, CD&V and SP.A on the Flemish side and PS, CDH (Christian Democrats) and Ecolo (Greens) on the French-speaking side. This reflects the majorities in the regional governments. Bart De Wever personally will probably remain outside government, opting to act as its "mother-in-law" from the side. ♦

## CHAMBER Flanders + Brussels, Halle, Vilvoorde - 13 June 2010





# Good to be gay

Activist groups are now putting gender issues front and centre

→ continued from page 1

So how did Belgium, a largely Catholic country with a centre-right government, become a pioneer in the opening of civil marriage to all couples? There are two big reasons, says Aerts, who is a font of knowledge of LGBT history in Belgium. Number one, he says, "the Netherlands was first." Just as Wallonia looks at what is happening in the political and social landscape of France, Flanders looks at the Netherlands, the first country in the world to open up marriage to gay couples. "If there hadn't been a Netherlands, we would have never opened it up here," he says matter of factly.

The second reason is perhaps even more pertinent: change of government. In 1999, the elections yielded a government coalition of liberals (Open Vld), socialists (S.P.A) and greens (Groen!), which became widely known as the purple-green coalition. "For the first time in 40 years, the coalition government did not include the Christian-Democrats [CD&V]," says Aerts. "They had always been in the government and they almost always had the prime minister."

When the liberals finally got their turn, with Guy Verhofstadt as prime minister, they decided to "make the difference clear," continues Aerts. They changed the marriage law and then, after the same coalition was re-elected in 2003, they opened up adoption to all couples, too.

In doing so, they also made some unexpected allies. "Even some of the Christian Democrats voted for marriage," says Aerts. "And today they say they would never go back on that. In April of 2009, there was a very important anti-discrimination vote in the European parliament, and the Belgian Christian Democrats voted in favour of that law. They were an exception among Christian Democrat parties across Europe. Thanks to the opening of marriage, they changed their position more towards social equality."

Until recently Çavaria was called the Holebi Federatie – taking its name from the popular Dutch umbrella term "holebi": HOmo LEsbian BIsexual. But the organisation found the former name too limiting for its new mission strategy – to put more focus on issues of gender. This includes problems of transsexuals, who continue to suffer political, as well as extreme social harassment and discrimination, but also gender expression in general.

"Society makes assumptions," explains Aerts, "about what it is to be a male or a female and connects feelings or ideas with the fact that



Brussels Pride parade drew 35,000 this year, a record number. Antwerp Pride is still to come (see below)

someone is a woman or a man." Education, particularly in schools, will be a large part of upcoming gender work. "A recent study showed that a gay boy of 15 who is macho has fewer problems than a straight boy who behaves in way that people think is feminine," says Aerts. "Gender expression is often the reason why young people are harassed at school."

Adoption – or rather parental rights – is also an area where Aerts and the Çavaria staff of about 20 are not satisfied. If a woman gives birth, her partner must then adopt the child, even if the couple is married. If a man and a woman are married, the man is listed as the father, no questions asked. If they are not married, they can go through an administrative process where the father is listed as such before the birth. Çavaria wants that same legal recognition for a second mother before the birth. "There is a risk that if something should happen to the biological mother between the birth and the adoption, that the other mother is not considered the parent," explains Aerts.

And that can be a scary prospect if your partner's family is not overly supportive of your relationship or your decision to bring children into it. Which brings up a very good question: does Belgium being so progressive politically with regard to LGBT rights change the hearts and minds of average citizens?

"Visibility is higher thanks to the laws," says Aerts. "Today, you cannot be fired; you cannot be discriminated against just because you are gay. The law makes it possible to be more visible, and visibility changes mentality."

And government directives, says Juris Lavrikovs of ILGA, are a stamp of approval. "You can't wait for society to be ready. Legislation is a specific sign of the position of government. It's important that legislation is in place because without it, you can't move." ♦

→ [www.ilga-europe.org](http://www.ilga-europe.org)

→ [www.cavaria.be](http://www.cavaria.be)



*"Flanders is the best place in the world to be gay"*  
Yves Aerts, Çavaria

## Antwerp Pride • 24-27 June

The only Belgian city outside of Brussels to stage gay pride, Antwerp actually did it first, with the annual "Pink Saturday" in the 1980s. The port city has become something of a Mecca for LGBT Europeans. "I travel a lot, and if you consider the size of Antwerp – a small city with half a million people – you don't see other cities of that size with half as much going on," says Antwerp Pride director Bart Abeel.

The calendar of Antwerp's four-day event is packed, but you can't go wrong with these top three:

- The White Party: A mainstay of the LGBT calendar, this dance party – where everyone wears white – is a huge outdoor affair at the docks, with DJs, drag queens and other performances, plus plenty of beverages to make sure perceptions are altered enough so that everybody thinks everybody else looks good in white 26 July, from 15.00, Kaai 21
- Popi's Hysterical City Bus Tour: it's in English, and it lives up to its name. Don't miss it. Times vary, visit [www.popi.be](http://www.popi.be)
- Closing festival: Right in the centre of town on the Grote Markt, this is a big concert, party and collection of speakers 27 June, 15.00-18.00

→ [www.antwerppride.eu](http://www.antwerppride.eu)

## Go gay

You know and I know there's far too much to list, but here are some highlights of gay Flanders.

### Ghent

**Casa Rosa** The "pink house" in the centre of Ghent is home to gay rights organisations Çavaria, Flemish LGBT magazine Zizo and the city's best-known gay bar Kammerstraat 22

**Hephaestion** This "holebi-shop" just down the street from Casa Rosa is relatively new and doing great things. With books, DVDs and other merchandise for sale, there is also a bar, terrace and the nicest gay boy in town running the place. He organises group events outside the shop, too. Kammerstraat 29

### Antwerp

**Het Roze Huis** A friendly bar underneath and home to Antwerp groups, social events and political organising above. Fantastically large terrace out front – be and be seen here Draakplaats 1

**'t Verschil** Antwerp's biggest and oldest LGBT bookshop, with fresh coffee

and homemade cake besides. Head across the street to De Onderkant, where they sell their lingerie and sex toys. Minderbroedersrui 33

### Brussels

**The Rainbow House** The capital's central meeting place, located in the gay district, with a bar, tons of informational folders, group meetings and on- and off-site activities Kolenmarkt 42

**Tea Dance** Brussels and Antwerp are overflowing with gay bars and clubs, but the Sunday Gay Tea Dance at You nightclub is a classic. Mixed ages, styles and genders mingle with house music, cocktails and plenty of flirty glances

The Flemish department of **Gelijke Kansen**, or Equal Opportunities, publishes a handy little booklet that lists LGBT organisations across Brussels and Flanders. It can be picked up in resource centres or accessed on the department's website, [www.gelijkekansen.be](http://www.gelijkekansen.be).

The current equal opportunities minister, by the way, is **Pascal Smet**, the first openly gay Flemish minister.







Mapping Flanders creativity: selection fashion

LABMEMBER 3659



BRUSSELS  
Han Mannaert

With her collection “Every cloud has its silver lining,” Han wowed the jury and the crowds at her graduation show at Ghent Academy in June. The collection has colour, beautiful prints and optic effects, while being both hi-tech and organic. The concept is dizziness. Han enlarges and reduces motifs from nature and city streets, so that you look at a world which is ten times larger or smaller than normal. What happens when you fall out of an airplane and watch the world at such a high speed? How do you see a pedestrian when you drive at 300 miles an hour? Flashes, distortions, echoes. It’s all there.

We at Addictlab especially love the cape with fragmented cubes, based on the old TV test image. (previous page). Han says she created her collection for a woman with recollections of her childhood, of the wonder and bemusement she felt back then, but also with memories of past loves, her home country or a smell. All these fragments interrelate and weave this woman’s story and thoughts, seen from a staggering and dizzying perspective. Now that she has graduated, Han wants to do freelance styling, art shows and create concepts for stores and brands. We think she’s a talent to be watched – and hired.

photo: Alexander Popelier  
text: Karen Van Godtsenhoven

LABMEMBER 3244

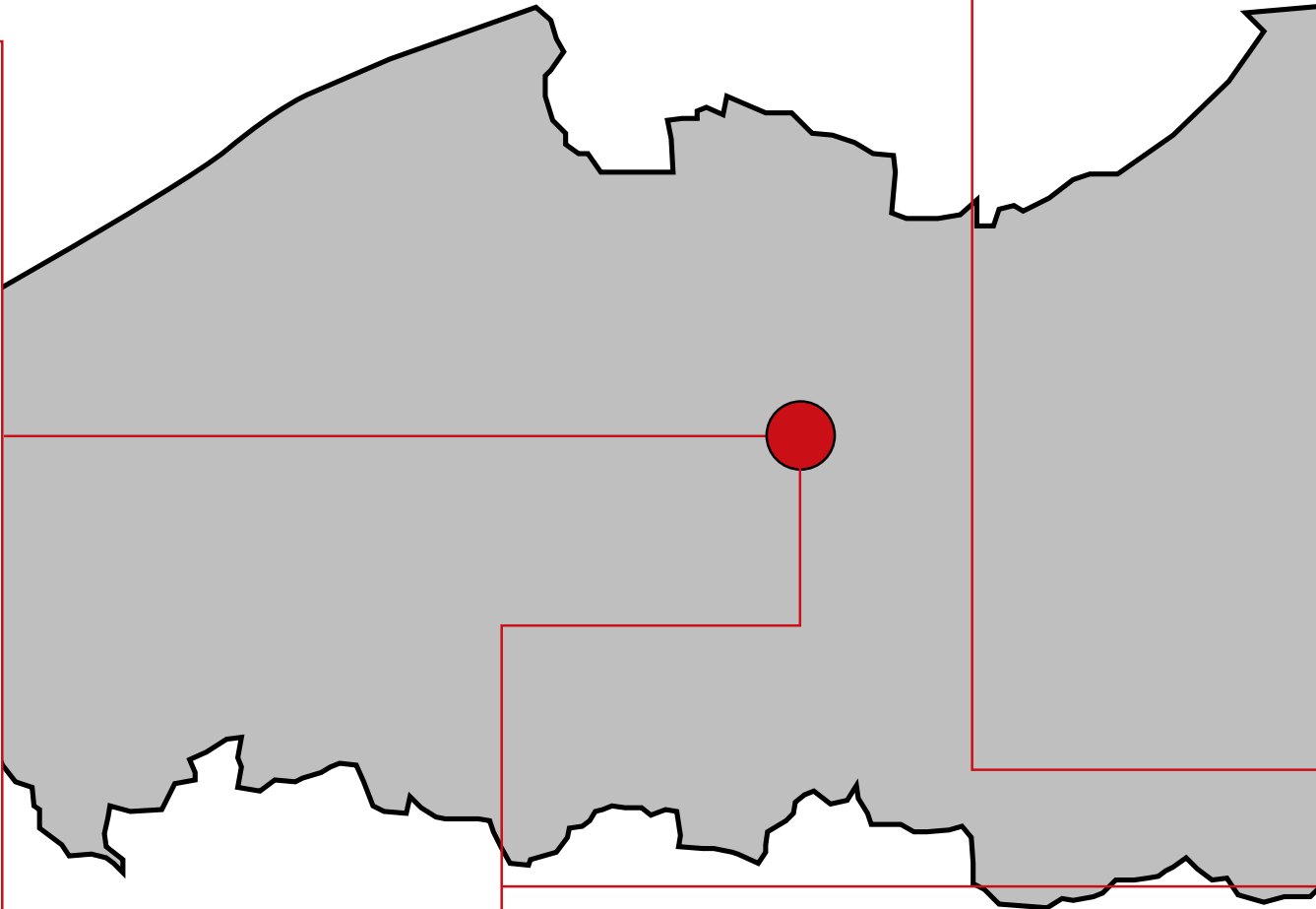


GHENT  
Soki

The story of Soki is one of two serendipitously intertwined minds that found each other at the Ghent Academy of Arts, both studying architecture. It soon became difficult to prepare separate projects as the ideas and forms in their heads were so similar. After starting to work as architects, they decided to launch a creative concept together called Soki.

Their collection of jewellery and accessories can be seen as a continuation of their quest for pure forms, cocoons, and inhabited objects. Anything can be an inspiration but the premise for all objects is a white base, and forms imprinted with images of daily scenes and objects, collages, old-fashioned family pictures, kisses and stamps. The white basic layer is a feminine, fresh and yet strong statement in a reaction against superfluous luxury and accessories. That makes it an accessory collection that is against bling.

Purity and essence are the core values of these two young talents, and they plan to keep it that way, in whatever form it may come. Their objects are discreetly yet strongly present. The collection consists of rings, earrings, pins, brooches, necklaces and postcards. Everything is handmade and can be customised with personal prints, words or dates. People can even ask for a specific creation based on their preferences and personality, without, of course, forgoing the basic concept/ ideas/thoughts of Soki.  
text: Karen Van Godtsenhoven

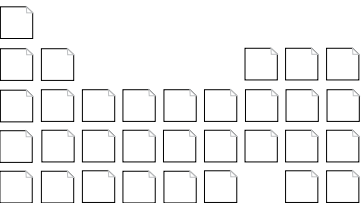


LABMEMBER 3947



GHENT  
Elles de Koe

Elles de Koe participated in the highly popular TV talent show ‘De Designers’. She loves old clothes and the nostalgia that goes with them. She adds changes, turning everything around, creating a new function. The result is suprising, unique and very personal.





## LABMEMBER 3628



### ANTWERP

Kim Stumpf

Kim Stumpf is a young designer, based in Antwerp. She studied fashion design at the Antwerp Academy and La Cambre in Brussels, where she graduated with distinction in 2007. During her studies, she did internships at several famous fashion houses and was selected at different international contests and fashion shows. Her first work experience as designer was with Natan, in Belgium. She worked as a costume designer for the artist Hans Op de Beeck and is now preparing her first womens' wear collection A/H 2011-2012. Focused on one product, based on a niche market, it is a high fashion ready-to-wear collection, containing innovative and timeless design with surprising tailoring and attention on high-quality fabrics.



SELECTION OF CREATIVE  
TALENT & INDUSTRIES BY  
FLANDERS TODAY &  
ADDICTLAB.COM

# #04

## LABMEMBER 3227



### EVERBERG

Laura Van Neygen

Laura Van Neygen, 23, became an interior designer after studying at "Fashion & Styling" (Syntra Brussels) and the Sint Lukas Hogeschool. During an internship with Michaël Verheyden, she developed a passion for fashion. She has a holistic approach, looking for a coherent concept, preferably with a touch of humour. She wants to create clothes with a 'happy' feeling. Fashion needs to be able to generate emotion.

Design and shape are important. That became quite clear when she presented a piece during the Designer Trail 2008 in Brussels. It's a symbiosis of three themes: photographer David Hamilton, Les Garçonnes and 3D. The dress is completely made out of white pom-poms. It won the Public's award.

## LABMEMBER 3281



### GHENT Glasjuweel

Collection Sweet Memories Candy bundles pure happiness and the innocent enjoyment of childhood memories.

The new jewellery collection launched by designer Elisabeth Leenknecht takes you on a magical journey into cherished memories, reflected in the playful shapes and enchanting colours of her blown-glass necklaces, earrings and rings. Everything she does is flawlessly complemented with precision metalwork, as a finishing touch. The collection recollects the allure of old-fashioned sweets that generous grandparents or relatives gave as special gifts, with

their enticing names such as clove rock, pear drops, lemon sherbet, mint humbugs, cream fudge, bulls eyes, jelly babies and dolly mixtures. The sweetest memories are frequently intertwined with the senses of taste and smell. In this way, sweets emphasise the joyful moments in life, bringing to mind births and birthdays, weddings, Sundays, Halloween, Easter and Christmas.

Elisabeth Leenknecht reverses the roles and translates the traditional candy techniques into a unique blown glass collection: Sweet Memories.

Flanders Today and the international creative think tank Addictlab are partnering up to inspire you with the work of Flemish creative minds.

The lab itself has originated from the region's fertile grounds, and the important Flemish selection of today's 4000 creative thinkers from 150 countries is proof of the innovation culture in Flanders.

Flanders Today will be diving in this huge database of people and concepts, and bringing you a selection regularly.

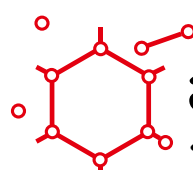
Following Addictlab's adagio 'Creativity is Chemistry', you will discover geniuses from different disciplines, such as art, design, fashion & so many more. This week we're proud to show you talented 'labmembers' active in "fashion".

#1	Transport	March
#2	Art and Photography	April
#3	Social media	May
#4	Fashion	June
#5	Eco	July
#6	Design	August

Do you want to be on these pages? **Are you a Flanders based creative mind?** Then go to [www.addictlab.com](http://www.addictlab.com) & register as a labmember.



# FLANDERS TODAY



**addictlab.com**  
global creative think tank



# Project Antwerp

We interrupt the students of the Fashion Department putting the – hopefully – final touches on their year-end collections before the big show

KATRIEN LINDEMANS & LISA BRADSHAW

Fashion is big. You might argue that it always has been, but the American TV programme *Project Runway*, with its supermodel hostess Heidi Klum and its sniffy judges making or breaking the careers of young designers, has brought fashion design into the home of the average person. The Flemish version, *De Designers*, has further shown local audiences how designers think, sketch, choose fabric and sew their way to fame – or to unemployment. The programmes are competitive, creative, heartbreaking and triumphant, and millions of people around the world are addicted. Here in Flanders, while university students are cramming as much as possible for final exams, students at the renowned Fashion Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp have already faced the judges of their final collections. Last week designers, buyers, fashion journalists, photographers and the greater public piled into Antwerp's Waagnatie for the big, annual catwalk show by students from one of Europe's most famous design schools. The week leading up to that all-important moment for a design student is, as you might expect, an endorphin-heavy mix of stress and anticipation. We caught up with two of them – rushing to finish, adding the final touches and hoping that the response to their collections is as excited as they are. ♦

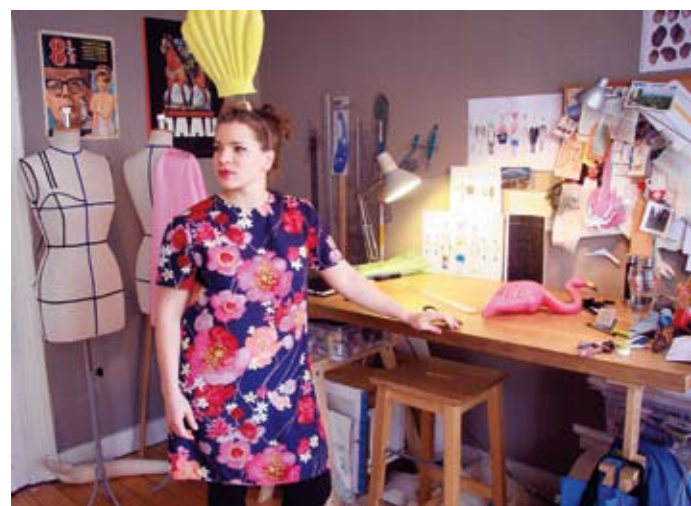
→ [www.modenatie.com](http://www.modenatie.com)



From Mariel Manuel's sea-inspired collection

**Name:** Mariel Manuel  
**Age:** 23  
**From:** Switzerland  
**Gets inspired by:** long haul flights  
**Year at academy:** fourth (and final!)

I've been at the academy for almost four years now, and I've learned all about designing, sewing, pattern-making, drawing, illustrating and organising. Over the years, I think I certainly became better at the last quality. I evolved a lot in the way I work by being more efficient and not losing as much time doubting things. I would describe my style as fun, ironic and intricate. I like to work with wool, silk, latex, glitter and kitschy prints. I always mix a wide range of fabrics, trying to make everything come together in a new way. Seeing what other students are pulling off motivates me to do and dare more. Competition works as a motivator, in my case. The biggest challenge at the academy is to keep going and going, to make it happen again and again. Every year has its own story, mood and feelings. I actually learned who I am and how far I can go. The weeks leading to the final show are especially busy. Even though I got the support of two teachers, in the end, I'm the one who has to make all the choices. I sometimes stressed and panicked so much I forgot to eat or fell asleep still dressed on my bed. But it's amazing to see how much I can produce under this kind of pressure. Although it's probably a bit scary for people who don't know me too well to see me in this state. For the final collection, we have to make 12 designs, including shoes and accessories. I had one school year to build up everything – from books



Mariel Manuel, blending into her studio

to designs to patterns, designing my own fabrics, making shoes abroad, creating a portfolio and looking for models. One year seems like a long time, but in that time I had to make a whole collection that normally requires the work of a team of four people. My show starts with Brigitte Bardot's "La Madrague", very quiet and poetic to welcome the first models. Then she trails off and the music switches to a hard electro beat where all the other girls come rushing out one by one. It will be a powerful show with 12 divas. After the final show, I think I'll travel and sit on the beach with a good book. I could do with a bit of a tan, actually. I want to draw a lot, too. I'll see where the wind brings me; I've got a few dreams to fulfill! ☺

*"It's amazing to see how much I can produce under this kind of pressure"*

style has always been similar, but along the way I filtered my personal interests. My inspirations grew in importance. I believe you find your style by making mistakes, but aesthetics and elegance are things you can't learn at school. You have to feel them. To me, a collection is a personification of the designer. You should be able to recognise the designer just by looking at the collection from a distance. The item I'm most proud of is an accessory I made for the collection XXXXX last year. The so-called self-tanning glasses are inspired by posters and comics where women sunbathe with a reflecting screen to catch more sun. The glasses are extremely reflective and shiny and are a take on all the science fiction collections we've seen over the last seasons. The actual result turned out to be even better than what I first sketched. For my final collection this year, I made eight silhouettes and accessories. We

are scored on the general impression we can evoke as young designers. I turned my collection into a catwalk performance where models are dancers and the proportions of the dresses are doubled. The first impression will be a surreal image; a woman in a three-meter long gown carried by a man. The audience will see a stretched female body with two male legs peeping from underneath the dress. These extreme proportions are a reference to Italian sculptures in cathedrals. I chose pale and matte colours and fabrics like canvas, silk and flannel, also referring to modern Italian monochromes. The focus has to be on texture and colour, so the models wear a minimum of make-up. For music, I chose a mix of opera, bird song and work by the Peruvian singer Yma Sumac. As for the future...I'll wait and see. I want to close my eyes and jump into the next adventure. ☺

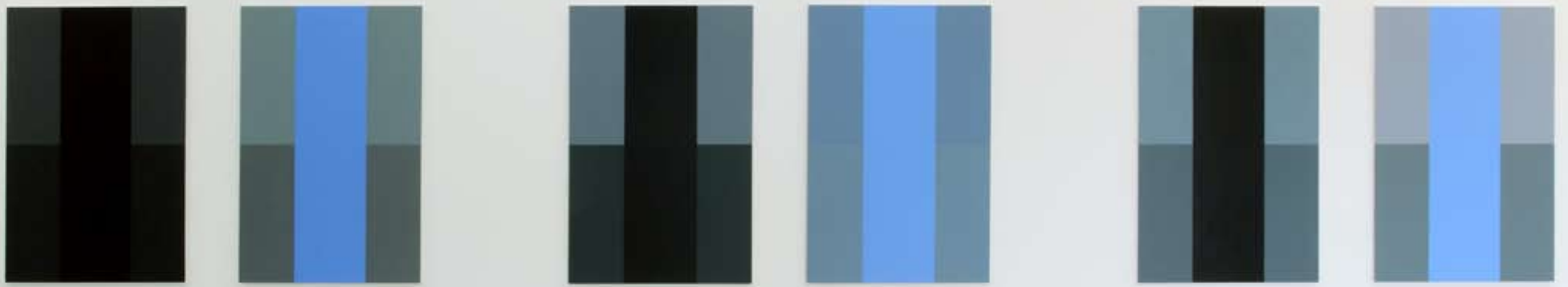


Part of Enya Vandenhende's sci-fi collection from last year's show

**Name:** Enya Vandenhende  
**Age:** 21  
**From:** Antwerp  
**Gets inspired by:** modern art  
**Year at academy:** third

I was only 18 when I started at the academy. But I learned a few valuable lessons I'll carry around for the rest of my life – such as 'listen to your heart' and 'don't let everything get to you'. A sense of humour and enthusiasm are musts. The competition with the other students can be very hard, but we do help each other out, as well. I would describe my style as pure. At the moment, my favourite materials to work with are light fabrics, hand dyed or otherwise manipulated. I like all shades of white or very pale, pastel colours. My





# The reality of accidents

Although fascinated by mathematical order, Philippe Van Snick accepts the help of fate

ANNA JENKINSON

Philippe Van Snick stands in front of "Eclats" and tells me how the coloured pieces of glass mounted on the wall once belonged together in a glass panel above his front door. Until one day some boys kicked their football in the direction of the door, and the panel shattered.

Life's accidents are a continual source of inspiration for the Ghent-born artist, and this particular one turned out to be the start of a new way of thinking. It was the trigger for introducing colour into his art, which until then had mainly been in black and white.

The role played by accidents in his oeuvre is surprising because Van Snick, whose work is currently on show at Leuven's Museum M, is an artist fascinated by mathematics (the number 10 in particular) and mathematical order. Graph paper, ellipses and numerical connections recur in his early work.

On one wall is a work that at first glance seems to be two musical staves made out of chains. In fact, each "stave" is made up of 10 horizontal chains, each one comprising 10 links. Opposite are 10 pieces of paper and A4 folders filled with graph paper showing the different possibilities of arranging the chain links.

"I'm playing with mathematics," he says quite simply before leading me over to another work created out of 100 pinheads divided into groups

of 10, each conjuring up a simple, yet beautiful, stellar constellation. His inspiration for this work was finding a small box of pinheads in a department store and realising how once it was opened up and its contents revealed, the unity of the simple object disappeared.

"Banal reality can be a source of new ideas and creativity," he says. The exhibition at M also includes a room created by the artist's 10 Masters students. A deceptively simple idea, it illustrates perfectly the way in which numbers and colours combine to create something personal.

The starting point is Van Snick's particular palette of colours, developed from his "earlier fascination with decimals and their infinite permutations". Each digit from 0 to 9 corresponds to a colour: the primary colours red, yellow and blue, the three complementary colours green, orange and purple, the non-colours black and white, and finally silver and gold.

Each student chose one of the colours and used it to paint a space on the wall of about nine square metres. The result, created under Van Snick's supervision, is a room filled with 10 monochrome paintings, each with different texture, shading and quality. As we go round, he points to each colour and refers to them by the artist's first name: "This one is Elise, here is Peter, the blue one there is

Kevin...the colours fit their characters perfectly," he says.

As we leave the room, I ask Van Snick what his personal colour is. "Blue," he says after only the slightest of hesitations. And at that moment we walk into the space filled with his most recent work, "Black and blue column", five diptychs where the dominant colour is blue, combined with black and shades of grey.

For Van Snick, who is a lecturer at Sint-Lukas College in Brussels and has been working with the Catholic University of Leuven on an art research programme for the last five years, it is absolutely crucial that he continues to create. He wants to convey the practice of art as well as the theory. The message he gives his students is: "Don't think too much. Do things. By doing, you can think."

A number of Van Snick's works were not created according to a predetermined plan but during the production process itself. This is evidenced by "Production State", where the artist started out by experimenting with a gypsum panel and the effects he could create with the plaster: at times it resembled the surface of the moon, at others Islamic architecture in the desert as seen on aerial photographs.

Van Snick was pleased with the effects and so made several of these panels. A lack of space in his



The colour fits the character: Philippe Van Snick and his geometry of hue



workshop, however, meant that he ended up propping them up one against the other in his living space. From the chance element of this random stacking, a pattern emerged – one that he kept in the final arrangement.

"I like rationality, but rationality has to be crossed over by irrationality to make it vivid," Van Snick tells me as we look out of the museum's floor-to-ceiling windows with a view of Jan Fabre's bright green beetle on a nearby square. "These accidents can make the piece exciting or attractive. They're related to reality because in reality you have these accidents." ♦

**Philippe Van Snick**

Until 29 August

**Angus Fairhurst**

Until 12 September

Museum M  
L Vanderkelenstraat 28  
Leuven

→ [www.mleuven.be](http://www.mleuven.be)

## Angus Fairhurst • Retrospective of Young British Artist

There's hardly an artistic medium that didn't pass through the hands of Angus Fairhurst, and it's all in this retrospective at Museum M this summer: collages, painting, animation, video, sculpture.

The show was originally put together for the Arnolfini contemporary arts centre in Bristol, England. "We were talking about doing something just before his death," says Tom Trevor, director of the Arnolfini, in Leuven for the opening of the show. "So it made sense to do an exhibition about him"

Fairhurst, who took his own life in 2008 at the age of 41, was one of the so-called Young

British Artists (YBAs) to emerge from the London art scene in the late 1980s.

When you look at many of Fairhurst's works, be it the gorilla-themed sculptures, the bus shelter model or the large-scale photographs that look like publicity posters, what initially strikes you is a sense of fun. Look a little longer, though, and you see how the artist is manipulating the images – removing the features of a face in a magazine or obliterating the words of a newspaper. It all leaves you with a sense of the absurdity of life.

This co-existence tallies with how Trevor, who knew the artist from their days at London's

Goldsmiths College, describes Fairhurst as having been "a funny bloke", as well as someone who had "a strand of melancholy" and was "slightly detached, enjoying the absurdity of situations."

Several of Fairhurst's best-known works are in the show, including "Billboard: everything but the outline blacked-in", inspired by the Yves Saint Laurent Opium perfume advert featuring Sophie Dahl, and "Gallery Connections", the recording of strange and at times heated telephone conversations between art galleries. ♦



Angus Fairhurst's "A Couple of Differences Between Thinking and Feeling II"



# Cycle paradise, part 3

## And you thought there were no deserts in Flanders

MELISSA MAKI

In a few weeks, we have used Limburg's incredible cycling network (over 2,000 kilometres of bike paths) to get up close and personal with some of Flanders' most stunning scenery.

And a diverse range of scenery it is. We've taken you through orchards, farms, forests and heath. We've traversed flatlands, rolling hills and engaging villages. Our Limburg biking series comes to a close this week in Lommel, a municipality in the far, northwest corner of the province that's known as the *Natuurstad van Vlaanderen* (Nature City of Flanders). And with this ride, I think it's safe to say that we've confirmed Limburg's claim as a *fietsparadijs* (cycling paradise).

For the first two trips, I followed a couple of new bike routes being promoted by the Limburg tourist office for 2010. Their detailed maps and simple system of interconnecting paths with numbered junctions make navigating easy, even for someone as directionally challenged as myself.

For my third ride, I decided to be a little more adventurous and create my own route. Itching for a change of scenery, I planned the final route around water and sand. The ride circles around Lommel and includes both conventional and unconventional features of the Flemish countryside – tree-lined canals (always a crowd pleaser) and "The Sahara," a surprisingly beautiful desert landscape.

I picked up the 2010 Limburg *fietskaart* (cycling map) and started at the Lommel train station, which is just a minute away from path 267 (follow the signs and head west from the train station). Be patient: the first several kilometres on 267 are the least attractive part of the ride. You'll navigate through a big industrial park and wind farm. But the trail is wide and flat and separate from the road – and something about passing so close to the giant energy-generators is slightly invigorating.

After the industrial park you'll be amongst trees and then a quiet residential area. There are numerous walking trails off the path as well as benches. Keep your eyes open on 267, as you near the bridge. The path brings you first under and then over a bridge that straddles the Beverlo canal. If it's a sunny day, you might welcome a stop at the shaded bench under the bridge.

At the *knooppunt* (junction) take path 260. It's a short but scenic ride, with leafy trees on one side and the canal on the other. In fact, around junction 260 is a perfect stopping point. If you've worked up an appetite, you'll find De 7 Heerlijkheden, a restaurant with a large terrace that specializes in charcoal-grilled ribs and Belgian cuisine.

There are also a couple of pleasant picnic spots near this junction if you've brought your own provisions. You can lounge at a picnic table and watch the yachts cruise around near De Blauwe Kei, a pretty and popular tourist area and marina at the intersection of the Beverlo and Maas-Schelde canals.

From 260, take 232, 231 and then 230. First you'll cross the Maas-Schelde canal and then you'll have a seven-kilometre ride along the water. This is a scenic stretch with plenty of greenery and wildflowers. You'll likely see a mix of both young and old, competitive and leisure cyclists on this straight, flat path.

At junction 230, make a right towards Lommel. After you pass the sports park, De Soeverein, turn right towards path 260. The scenery shifts here in unexpected and interesting ways. First I noticed the fragrant, sweet scent of pine needles warmed by the afternoon sun. Then there were tree-lined paths; finally there were sand dunes and an oasis of clear, blue water.

This is a very unique 200-hectare natural area dubbed "the Sahara." Years ago, a nearby zinc smelter took a toll on the vegetation of this area, leaving only the quartz sand that Lommel



© Melissa Maki

is known for (the fine, white sand is prized for glass making).

Sand mining in this area in the 1950s and '60s created the lakes. Pine trees were planted by the local government to create a "green belt", preventing further drifting of sand dunes and loss of habitat. The resulting desert-like landscape with sparkling blue lakes surrounded by Scots and Corsican pines is truly distinctive.

You can find several rare species in the Sahara, including beetles, birds and lizards. If you're lucky, you might see a Green tiger beetle or Northern dune tiger beetle on your visit, or a woodlark.

There is a covered picnic area where you can park your bike and walk out to the lake. I visited on a warm day and had to resist the urge to

take a dip – swimming isn't allowed, but I did see a few people wading into the cool waters and crossing the lake by means of a sand bar. Besides the bike path, there are two designated walking paths in the Sahara as well as an equestrian trail.

To finish the route, you can either keep going towards 260 (on the opposite side of the canal) and then retrace your route back to the station or you can just turn around (like I did) to make a loop of about 30 kilometres in total. Follow the signs for "Lommel Centrum" and then "Fietsnetwerk" and you'll come back to the station via the town's centre in no time. ♦

### Lingering in Lommel

If you have some extra time in Lommel, you might like to check out Het Glazen Huis, or The Glass House, the Flemish Centre for Contemporary Glass Art. This unique building (designed by Brussels architect Philippe Samyn) with its tall glass cone is definitely worth a stop. The centre features information and education about glass art as well as rotating exhibits of national and international contemporary glass artists.

→ [www.hetglazenhuis.be](http://www.hetglazenhuis.be)

### Getting there

You can rent a bike to explore this area for €9/day at De Soeverein sports park, which also has maps. From the Lommel train station, you can also take a De Lijn *belbus* (which you have to call in advance) to the Soeverein (Sportveldenstraat stop). Lommel is only serviced by one train an hour. If you get thirsty waiting for the next train, walk over to De Mulder, a friendly café with an outdoor terrace that's in view of the station.

**De Soeverein**  
Sportveldenstraat 10  
Lommel

→ [www.desoeverein.lommel.be](http://www.desoeverein.lommel.be)



© Melissa Maki





## Brussels Choral Society

ANNA JENKINSON

The Brussels Choral Society has a programme of contrasts planned for its first concert in Leuven. The centrepiece will be Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, but the choir will also perform a little-known work by the turn-of-the-20th-century French composer Lili Boulanger, as well as pieces for all-male and all-female ensembles.

"We seem to have a very eclectic programme that is very diverse, but at the same time, we're looking at works that are all very melodic," explains Eric Delson, the society's musical director and also the head of performing arts at the International School of Brussels. Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, which had its 1930 premiere in Brussels, was composed for chorus and orchestra, but will be sung for this concert with a piano accompaniment – "the black and white version," as Delson calls it. "As true aficionados of photography know, black and white is much more difficult and more interesting."

With the audience focussed on the voices, rather than being swept away by the orchestration, they will be able to appreciate

Stravinsky's "raw use of structure, harmony, pitch," he says. The Boulanger work, meanwhile, will be "something new to a lot of listeners and something fun for the choir, digging into a style that's very impressionistic," says Delson. Boulanger won the Prix de Rome in 1913 with her cantata *Faust et Hélène*, making her the first woman to win the prize for music. Nonetheless she is not a well-known figure, which can be largely attributed to her ill health through most of her short life and her death at the age of just 25. The focus is usually on her sister, Nadia, a music teacher who counted Aaron Copland and many other American composers among her pupils.

As well as French works, the Brussels Choral Society's upcoming concert also draws on the German musical tradition with Franz Schubert's *Nachtgesang im Walde* for men and Johannes Brahms's *Vier Gesänge* for women. The international programme reflects the choir's own composition, which is made up of about 140 members representing more than 20 nationalities.

The proceeds from the concert will go to a research project by Professor Stefaan Van Gool at the Leuven University Hospital on late-stage malignant brain tumours. ♦

**26 June, 20.00**

**Lemmensinstituut  
Herestraat 53, Leuven**

→ [www.brusselschoralsociety.com](http://www.brusselschoralsociety.com)

**Free tickets!**

Brussels Choral Society has five pairs of free tickets to give away to readers of *Flanders Today*. To enter to win, send an email with "Brussels Choral Society" in the subject line to [editorial@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:editorial@flanderstoday.eu) by Monday, 21 June. Winners will be notified by 22 June.



### Antwerp

#### Café Capital

Rubenslei 37 - Stadspark;  
[www.cafecapital.be](http://www.cafecapital.be)  
**JUN 19** 23.00 Where Were You? 1988  
Acid House Special with Tyree Cooper

#### De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40  
[www.deroma.be](http://www.deroma.be)  
**JUN 17** 20.30 To the BONE: Quiet Sessions  
**JUN 18** 20.30 Derek: Lila Cortina

#### Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27; [www.kellys.be](http://www.kellys.be)  
**JUN 18** 22.30 Steve Jones

#### Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00  
[www.trixonline.be](http://www.trixonline.be)  
**JUN 20** 19.00 Valient Thorrr + We're Wolves + Bliksem

### Brussels

#### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)  
**JUN 17** 20.00 Jackson Browne with David Lindley

#### Candelaershuyts

Brugmannlaan 433; 02.343.46.58  
[www.candelaershuyts.be](http://www.candelaershuyts.be)  
**JUN 18** 20.30 Tommigun

#### K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00, [www.k-nal.be](http://www.k-nal.be)  
**JUN 19** 23.00 Sound Pellegrino 'La Belle Night' Supersport: Sound Pellegrino Thermal Team & L-Vis 1990. Libertine: Rick Shiver, Dirk Smile

#### Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15  
[www.cirque-royal.org](http://www.cirque-royal.org)  
**JUN 19** 20.00 Charlotte Gainsbourg

#### Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59  
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>  
**JUN 17** 21.00 KMG's

#### Maison du Peuple

Sint-Gillisvoorplein 37-39; 02.217.26.00  
[www.maison-du-peuple.be](http://www.maison-du-peuple.be)  
**JUN 18** 20.00 Sonores

#### Piola Libri

Franklinstraat 66-68; 02.736.93.91  
[www.piolalibri.be](http://www.piolalibri.be)  
**JUN 17** 19.00 Aperó showcase: Milena Sandi

#### Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991  
[www.vorstnational.be](http://www.vorstnational.be)  
**JUN 18** 20.00 Connan Mockasin + Crowded House

### Ghent

#### Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57  
[www.charlatan.be](http://www.charlatan.be)  
**JUN 17** 21.00 Star Club West + Just Like Rainbow  
**JUN 18** 22.00 Nova Zembla: EP-release

#### El Negocito

Brabantdam 121; 0479 567395  
[www.mi-negocio.net](http://www.mi-negocio.net)  
**JUN 23** 22.00 Bandwiwok

#### Kinky Star

Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45  
[www.kinkystar.com](http://www.kinkystar.com)  
**JUN 18** 21.00 Laboratoire: Kosmische Keuterboeren  
**JUN 19** 21.00 iDufan Dufan!  
**JUN 20** 21.00 King Automatic

#### Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)  
**JUN 23** 19.30 Democracy and Ill City Topnotch Special: Sticks featuring Rico, Fresku, and Winne

### Ostend

#### Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00  
[www.kursaalooostende.be](http://www.kursaalooostende.be)  
**JUN 19** 20.00 Dana Winner

GET YOUR  
TICKETS NOW!

## Cactus Festival

**9-11 July**

**Minnewater Park, Bruges**

Our big summer festival guide is coming up later in June, but if you want to attend this utterly terrific weekend in Bruges, best to buy ahead. All the quality of the big music festivals without all the crowds, and a nice mix of local (Absynthe Minded, Admiral Freebee, Ghinzu) and international (Tori Amos, Elvis Costello, Macy Gray). And it's all hosted by amiable Flemish TV host Nic Balthazar.



→ [www.cactusfestival.be](http://www.cactusfestival.be)



### Antwerp

#### Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53  
[www.busterpodium.be](http://www.busterpodium.be)  
**JUN 17** 21.30 Buster BabL Jam **JUN 18** 22.00 Pieter Claus Quartet **JUN 19** 22.00 Cordelia Element **JUN 22** 21.30 Okon and the Movement

#### De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33  
[www.cafehopper.be](http://www.cafehopper.be)  
**JUN 21** 21.00 Winchovski Trio

#### De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40  
[www.deroma.be](http://www.deroma.be)  
**JUN 19** 20.30 Jef Neve & José James

### Brussels

#### Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78  
[www.jazzstation.be](http://www.jazzstation.be)  
**JUN 17** 20.30 Closing concert Vocal Jazz classes with Geneviève Frasselles and her students **JUN 18** 20.30 Sofia Ribeiro **JUN 19** 18.00 The Caribous 21.00 Sofia Ribeiro **JUN 21-22** 11.00-17.00 Royal Conservatory public exams **JUN 23-24** 20.30 Octurn

#### L'Alphabet

Waverssesteenweg 1387; 02.662.23.00  
[www.lalphabet.be](http://www.lalphabet.be)  
**JUN 19** 20.30 Peter Welch and Claude Dussart

#### Le Bar du Matin

Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59  
<http://bardumatin.blogspot.com>  
**JUN 17** 21.00 Krazy Mess Groovers

#### Sazz'n Jazz

Koningsstraat 241; 0475.78.23.78  
[www.sazznjazz.be](http://www.sazznjazz.be)  
**JUN 17** 21.00 Recital de Saz (Turkey)  
**JUN 18** 21.00 Sazz'n Jazz Quartet **JUN 22** 21.00 François-b **JUN 24** 20.30 Garrett List Master Class

## MORE CHORAL THIS WEEK

**Women's Choir Andante** → *Sint-Barbara Church, Maldegem*

**Organ and choir concert** → *Sint-Jan Onthoofdings church, Stavele*

**Brussels Bach Choir** → *German Evangelical Community, Brussels*





## Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50  
www.soundsjazzclub.be  
Concerts at 22.00:  
**JUN 16** Los Soneros del Barrio **JUN 17** Hermia & Tassin Quartet **JUN 18** The Witness & Late Special **JUN 19** Alain-Pierre Acous\_trees Quintet **JUN 21** Master Session **JUN 22** Will Vinson Group **JUN 23** Chamaquiando, salsa

## The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com  
Concerts at 21.00:  
**JUN 16** Marie S  f  rian Quintet **JUN 17** Coralee & No Trouble Blues Band **JUN 18-19** Judy Niemack **JUN 21** Laurianne Corneille & Nicola Andreoli (free) **JUN 22** M  lanie de Biasio/Steve Houben/Pascal Mohy Trio **JUN 23** The Metropolitan Quintet

## Viage

Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43  
www.viage.be  
**JUN 19** 22.00 Dida Robbert Trio

## Ghent

### Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57  
www.charlatan.be  
**JUN 22** 21.00 The Tony Express + Monkey Business + Stijn Bervoets

### El Negocito

Brabantdam 121; 0479 567395  
www.mi-negocio.net  
**JUN 16** 22.00 The Caribous

### Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
www.vooruit.be  
**JUN 19** 20.00 Harmonieorkest Wondelgem & Barbara Dex in concert



## Antwerp

### Fakkelteater

Reyndersstraat 7; 03.232.14.69  
www.fakkelteater.be  
**JUN 18** 20.30 Koen Deca with Raymond van het Groenewoud and Luc Van Acker

### Openluchttheater Rivierenhof

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192  
www.openluchttheater.be  
**JUN 20** 20.30 Kassav  
**JUN 22** 20.30 Tegan and Sara

## Brussels

### Espace Magh

Priemstraat 17; 02.611.87.48  
www.espacemagh.be  
**JUN 18** 20.30 Amalgama Trio (free)

### Th   tre Moli  re

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00  
www.muziekpublique.be  
**JUN 19** 20.00 End of Season: Coral Vados Flamenco, Malick Path   Sow & Bao Sissoko, Vanessa Torrekens, Nicolas Hauzeur & Muziekpublique Ensemble

## Viage

Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43  
www.viage.be  
**JUN 18** 22.00 Los Bandidos Del Viage, Latin big band

## Ghent

### Bij' De Vieze Gasten

Reinaertstraat 125; 09.237.04.07  
www.deviezegasten.org  
**JUN 18** 20.30 Magicson Ristk  ckx

### Kinky Star

Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45  
www.kinkystar.com  
**JUN 22** 21.00 Dan San

### Logos Tetra  der

Bomastraat 26-28; 09.223.80.89  
www.logosfoundation.org  
**JUN 17** 20.00 M&M Robot Ensemble in Brand! New! Tango!



## Bruges

### Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
www.concertgebouw.be  
**JUN 19** 20.00 deFilharmonie conducted by Edo de Waart, with Queen Elisabeth Piano Competition prize-winners

## Brussels

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**JUN 20** 11.00 Trio Goeyvaerts: Schoenberg, Webern, Schittke. 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Eivind Aadland: Magnus Lindberg, Shostakovich, Schumann (free, reservation necessary)  
**JUN 21** 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic conducted by Michel Tabachnik, with the Flemish Radio Choir: Debussy, Philip Glass, Schumann

### Miniemenkerk

Miniemenstraat 62; 02.511.93.84  
www.minimes.net  
**JUN 20** 10.30 Miniemenkerk Orchestra and Choir conducted by Beno  t Jacquemin: Bach (free)

### Protestantse Kapel

Museumplein 2; 02.507.82.00  
**JUN 17** 20.00 Amici choir conducted by Adrian Knott: Renaissance to 20th century

### Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37  
www.kcb.be  
**JUN 17** 20.00 Belcea Quartet: Haydn, Szymanowski, Brahms

### ULB Delvauxzaal

Paul H  gerlaan 20, Solbosch Campus; www.orchestre-ulb.be  
**JUN 21** 20.00 ULB Orchestra conducted by Zofia Wislocka: Rota, Faur  , Piazzolla, more (free)



## Antwerp

### Vlaamse Opera

Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**Until JUN 27** 15.00/19.30 Peter Grimes by Benjamin Britten with Jorma Silvasti (Peter) and Judith Howarth (Ellen). Vlaamse Opera Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leif Segerstam and Yannis Pouspourikas, staged by David Alden (in the original English with Dutch surtitles)

## Brussels

### De Munt

Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 www.demunt.be  
**Until JUN 30** 15.00/19.30 Macbeth by Verdi with Scott Hendricks (Macbeth) and Tatiana Serjan/Lisa Houben (Lady Macbeth). Paul Daniel conducts De Munt Symphony Orchestra and Choirs. Staging by Krzysztof Warlikowski (in the original Italian with Dutch and French surtitles). Introductions in Dutch and French 30 minutes before each performance



## Brussels

### Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be  
**JUN 18** 20.00 Aisha & Victor, tango dancing from Canaro to Piazzola  
**JUN 20** 18.00 Moumita Ghosh, classical Indian dance

### Beursschouwburg

August Ortsstraat 20-28; 02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be  
**JUN 18-24** 20.00 P.A.R.T.S. dance school second year students in a selection of solos from Rosas' repertoire: Quatuor No 4 by Bartok and Die Grosse F  ge by Beethoven

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**JUN 16** 18.00 Laughing Hole, choreographed by La Ribot

### Embassy of India

Vleurgatsesteenweg 217; 02.640.91.40  
www.indembassy.be  
**JUN 18** 18.30 Indian classical Odissi dance performed by Moumita Ghosh (free with reservation: info@indembassy.be)

### Kaaithheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59  
www.kaaitheater.be  
**JUN 17-18** 20.30 Bare Soundz by and with Savion Glover and the Otherz tap dance trio (Belgian premiere)  
**JUN 19** 20.30 P.A.R.T.S. dance school in RE:Drumming, a new version of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's choreography (1998) with music by Steve Reich

## Ghent

### Bij' De Vieze Gasten

Reinaertstraat 125; 09.237.04.07  
www.deviezegasten.org  
**JUN 17** 20.00 Dark Speeches, contemporary dance from Cuba, Taiwan and Argentina, featuring Lazara Rosell Albear

## Ostend

### Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00  
www.kursaalooostende.be  
**JUN 24** 20.00 Royal Ballet of Flanders in Impressing the Czar, choreographed by William Forsythe



## Antwerp

### Fakkelteater

Hoogstraat 12; 03.232.14.69  
www.fakkelteater.be  
**JUN 19-25** 20.30/15.00 De Speling in The Woman in Black, staged by Jean-Fran  ois D'hondt (in Dutch)

### Monty

Montignystraat 3; 03.238.64.97  
www.monty.be  
**JUN 17-26** 20.30 tg STAN in Misschien wel de meeuw of toch eerder zomergasten, a comedy in four acts based on The Seagull by Anton Chekhov and Maxim Gorky's Summer Guests (in Dutch)

## Brussels

### Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**JUN 19** 20.00 Mozart: Tale of an Expat, a play in arias by Alfredo Zucchi, staged by the Theater group, with Mirco Barbero, piano; Joanna Britton, soprano; Salvatore Scalzo, baritone (in English)  
**JUN 20** 20.30 Esther Ferrer, performance art by the Spanish artist (part of El   ngel Exterminador festival)

### Erasmushogeschool

Nijverheidskaai 170, Blok D; 02.507.82.00  
www.erasmushogeschool.be/musical  
**Until JUN 19** 20.00 Into The Woods by Stephen Songheim, conducted by Stephen Collins, directed by Lieven Debrauwer, (in Dutch)

### Magic Land Theatre

Hoogvorststraat 8-14; 02.245.24.53  
www.kvs.be  
**Until JUN 19** 20.30 Steigeisen and KVS in Billy, Sally, Jerry and the .38 Gun (in Dutch)

## Ghent

### Theater Tinnenpot

Tinnenpotstraat 21; 09.225.18.60  
www.tinnenpot.be  
**JUN 18** 20.00 Hans Van den Stock in De Z van..., one-man show (in Dutch)  
**JUN 23** 20.00 De buitenkant van Meneer Jules (The Outside of Mister Jules) by Diane Broeckhove, directed by Jan Verbist (in Dutch)



## Antwerp

### Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60  
www.muhka.be  
**Until JUL 4** Europe at Large #5, works by Vyacheslav Akhunov, Babi Badalov and Azat Sargsyan, related to the collapse of the USSR  
**Until AUG 22** August Orts: Correspondence, work by the four Brussels artists who make up the Auguste Orts production platform on aspects of apparatus (camera movement, editing, sound vs image) and the unstable status of language  
**Until SEP 19** Art Kept Me Out of Jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre

### Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 0484.42.10.70  
www.extracity.org  
**Until JUL 11** Val  rie Mannaerts: Blood Flow, sculptures and installations by the Brussels artist

### Fashion Museum (MoMu)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70  
www.momu.be  
**Until AUG 8** BLACK: Masters of Black in Fashion & Costume, historical phases of the colour black, its diversity in hue according to material and masterpieces by contemporary designers

### Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50  
www.middelheimmuseum.be  
**Until SEP 19** New Monuments in the Middelheim Museum, Belgian artists focus on the future of the monument

### Photo Museum (FoMu)

**Until JUN 20** Alain Van Haver, black-and-white photos by the Flemish photographer  
**Until JUN 27** Jacky Lecouturier: Polaroids, series of polaroids of every-day

## DON'T MISS



## Babies and water lilies

**20 June, 15.00-20.00**  
**National Botanic Garden of Belgium**

After being closed two years for renovations, the greenhouse that holds the botanic garden's famous *Victoria amazonica* water lilies opens this month with the return of the popular baby photo shoot. After reserving at 02.260.09.70, bring your baby (up to 12 months) to sit atop one of the giant lily pads, where a professional photographer will send you home with a unique photo. Although this month is the best for the lilies, you can see them throughout the year. They are harvested and re-cultivated in January and come back by May. Anyone with the name Victoria (or a derivative, like Victor or Victoire) gets free entry to the garden all summer.

→ [www.br.fgov.be](http://www.br.fgov.be)

miracles by the Belgian artist  
**Until SEP 5** Filip Tas, work by the late Antwerp-based photojournalist, critic and visual arts instructor, who helped usher in a new era of media photography  
**Until SEP 5** American Documents, Walker Evans' 1940s Labour Anonymous series and part of Robert Frank's The Americans from the 1950s join several well-known American photographers of the 1970s, including Diane Arbus, Robert Adams, Lewish Baltz and Mitch Epstein

## Ra

Kloosterstraat 13; 03.292.37.80  
www.ra13.be  
**Until JUN 30** Backstage, photographs by Sonny Vandeveld of fashion shows by students of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts

### Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09  
www.kmska.be  
**Until OCT 3** Closing Time, curated by Flemish artist Jan Vanriet, who presents his own work alongside related pieces from the museum's collection

## GET FLANDERS TODAY IN YOUR LETTERBOX EACH WEEK

Would you like a subscription to Flanders Today?

Fill in the form and send to:

**Flanders Today**

**Subscription Department**

**Gossetlaan 30 – 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden – Belgium**

**Fax: 00.32.2.375.98.22**

**Email: [subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu)**

**or log on to [www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu) to register online**

Name: .....

Street: .....

Postcode: .....

City: .....

Privacy policy: We fully respect Belgian legislation on the protection of personal information. The data we collect will only be used for distribution of publications and will not be disclosed to any third parties without express consent.



## Bruges

**Hospitaalmuseum**  
Mariastraat 38; 050.44.87.11  
www.museabrugge.be  
**Until NOV 7** Ivory in Bruges, rare pieces from museums, churches and monasteries

## Brussels

**Argos Centre for Art and Media**  
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03  
www.argosarts.org  
**Until JUN 19** Andrea Geyer: Spiral Lands, photos and documents examining the complex history of North America  
**Until JUN 19** Angel Vergara: Monday: Fireworks; Tuesday: Illuminations; Wednesday: Revolution, mixed-media work by the Brussels-based Spanish artist exploring the early days of the Belgian monarchy and its cultural, social-political and economic context  
**Until JUN 19** Alexander Kluge: Poetics in Between Media, video art by the German film director

**art)&(marges**  
Hoogstraat 312-314; 02.511.34.20  
www.arthis.org  
**Until JUN 27** Musik Oblik, music and visual art project exploring sound and vision

**Belgian Comic Strip Centre**  
Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80  
www.stripmuseum.be  
**Until AUG 29** Moomin: Tove Jansson's Dreamworld, work by the Finnish illustrator and author  
**Until JAN 30** The Studio of Franquin, Jijé, Morris and Will, rare documents and drawings show mutual influences between the four comic-strip artists who revolutionised the art form in Europe

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**Until JUN 20** Laurent Ney: Shaping Forces, first monographic exhibition by the Belgian architect-engineer  
**Until JUN 20** Junctions: Arno Roncada,

work by the Belgian artist paired with selections from Antwerp's FotoMuseum  
**Until JUN 20** El Ángel Exterminador, major show of contemporary Spanish artists exploring the ambivalence between exterior and interior, on the occasion of the EU Spanish presidency (part of El Ángel Exterminador Festival)  
**Until SEP 26** GEO-Graphics: Mapping Historical and Contemporary Art Practice in Africa, African objects from Belgian museums come face-to-face with work of contemporary African artists (part of Visionary Africa)

**European Quarter**  
Wetsstraat;  
www.thehumanrightsproject.org  
**Until JUN 20** The Human Rights Project, outdoor exhibition of photographs of South Africa by Lukas Maximilian Hüller and Juliane R Hauser

**Royal Museum of the Armed Forces**  
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33  
www.legermuseum.be  
**Until AUG 31** Andreas Magdanz: Camp Vogelsang, large-format photos of the Rhineland training camp in North Westphalia by the German photographer  
**JUN 22-OCT 30** Lisolo Na Bisu (Our Story) and Tokopesa saluti (We Salute You), objects, documents photographs and audio-visual material from private and public collections reveal 125 years of Belgo-Congolese military relations

**Royal Museums of Art and History**  
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11 ,  
www.kmkg-mrah.be  
**Until AUG 29** Isabelle de Borchgrave's I Medici: a Renaissance in Paper, life-size paper replicas of historical garments  
**Until AUG 29** Doorsnede (Intersection), 14 contemporary artists show their work among the museum's permanent collections  
**Until SEP 5** Art and Finance in Europe, new look at masters of the 17th century with 20 works from the museum's collection, including Seghers, Breughel, Francken, Rembrandt and Rubens

**Royal Museums of Fine Arts**  
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11  
www.fine-arts-museum.be  
**Until JUN 27** Symbolism in Belgium, the evolution of Symbolism from its origins in the romantic painting of the end of the 19th century, featuring Fernand Knopff, Félicien Rops, Jean Delville, more

**WIELS**  
Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50  
www.wiels.org  
**Until AUG 15** Rehabilitation, multi-media show by young artists on the theme of architectural renovation

## Deurle

**Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens**  
Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23  
www.museumdd.be  
**Until JUN 20** Sophie von Hellermann & Josh Smith, paintings by the German and American artists  
**Until JUN 20** Emo Verkerk, paintings by the Dutch artist

## Ghent

**Dr Guislain Museum**  
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95  
www.museumdrguislain.be  
**Until SEP 12** De wereld andersom (The World Inside Out), art brut from the abcd collection in Paris, including work by Adolf Wölfi, Henry Darger and Martin Ramirez  
**Until SEP 12** Innocent, Yet Punished, photographs of mentally ill criminals by Ghent-based photographer Lieven Nollet

**Kunstplatform Zebrstraat**  
Zebrstraat 32/001; www.zebrstraat.be  
**Until JUN 20** update 3/body sound, group show using sound, light and telecommunications

**Museum of Fine Arts**  
Fernand Scribedreef 1 - Citadelpark; 09.240.07.00 www.mskgent.be  
**Until JUN 27** Gustave Van de Woestyne, a retrospective of the 20th-century Flemish painter  
**Until JUN 27** Jean Delvin, paintings by the former director of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts

**Museum of Modern Art (SMAK)**  
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be

**Until AUG 22** Paolo Chiasera: Ain't No Grave Gonna Hold My Body Down, multi-media work based on concepts such as time and space by the Italian artist  
**Until AUG 22** Simon Gush: 4 For Four, video installation by the South African artist centred on the relationship between David Oistrakh and Sergei Prokofiev  
**Until DEC 3** Inside Installations, 10 installations from the museum's collection

**Verzameld Werk**  
Onderstraat 23a; 09.224.27.12  
www.verzameldwerk.be  
**JUN 19-SEP 11** Travelling by Book, exceptional international publications, plus related installations and film

## Hasselt

**Literair Museum**  
Bampslaan 35; 011.26.17.87  
www.literairmuseum.be  
**JUNE 20-NOV 7** Tom Schamp: Feest in de stad (Party in the City), work by the Flemish illustrator (opening party **JUN 20** 14.30)

## Leuven

**Museum M**  
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29 www.mleuven.be  
**Until AUG 22** Anthony van Dyck: Masterpiece or Copy?, two seemingly identical versions of the painting St Jerome with an Angel by Anthony van Dyck  
**Until AUG 29** Philippe Van Snick, paintings, installations and sculpture by the Flemish artist  
**Until SEP 12** Angus Fairhurst, retrospective of the late artist, a member of the Young British Artists movement

## Machelen-Zulte

**Het Roger Raveel Museum**  
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00  
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be  
**Until JUN 20** Pictografie: Schilderijen zijn ook tekeningen en vice-versa (Pictography: Paintings are Also Drawings and Vice Versa), group show  
**Until JUN 20** Zulma: Muze, model en madame, drawings, paintings and objects in memory of Roger Raveel's late wife, Zulma De Nijs

## Meise

**National Botanic Garden of Belgium**  
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20  
www.plantentuinmeise.be  
**Until NOV 2** Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

## Ostend

**Kunstmuseum aan zee (Mu.zee)**  
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18,  
www.pmmk.be  
**Until AUG 29** Bij Ensor op Bezoek (Visiting Ensor), the world of master Flemish painter James Ensor seen through the eyes of a variety of artists, writers and filmmakers who visited him in Ostend  
**Until AUG 29** Louise Bourgeois, 14 works by the recently deceased French-American artist from the collection of her Ostend friend and fellow artist Xavier Tricot

## Tervuren

**Royal Museum for Central Africa**  
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
www.africamuseum.be  
**Until JAN 9**, 2011 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition connected with the International Year of Biodiversity  
**Until JAN 9**, 2010 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building  
**Until JAN 9**, 2010 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of the Congo from independence to today

## Ypres

**In Flanders Fields Museum**  
Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220  
www.inflandersfields.be  
**Until AUG 15** Toiling for War, films, photos and objects tell the story of the presence of 140,000 Chinese workers in the Second World War



**Basilica Festival:** Limburg leg of the classical-oriented Festival of Flanders, featuring grand symphonic concerts in the Tongeren Basilica, intimate recitals by emerging young performers, a Hitchcock film with a live contemporary soundtrack by British composer Joby Talbot and a Day of Early Music on the Alden Biesen estate in Bilzen  
**Until JUL 10** across Limburg  
www.festival.be

## Antwerp

**India Festival Ratha Yatra:** Cultural festival sponsored by Hare Krishna with vegetarian good, traditional fire ceremony, parade through Antwerp, music, dance, Indian market and more  
**JUN 19** 12.00-19.00 at Groenplaats  
03.216.29.69, www.govinda.be

**Vitrine:** Fashion/art parcours by Belgian designers in public spaces  
**Until JUN 26** across Antwerp  
http://www.fifi.be/vitrine/

**Yann Martel:** The Spanish-born Canadian writer, winner of the Man Booker Prize for Life of Pi, talks about his new book Beatrice and Virgil with Flemish writer Johan de Boose (in English)  
**JUN 17** 20.00 at De Groene Waterman, Wolstraat 7  
03.298.75.82, www.borderkitchen.be

## Brussels

**Danse Balsa Marni Raffinerie & Senghor:** Annual contemporary dance and performance festival  
**Until JUN 19** in venues across the city  
www.balsamine.be

**European Gastronomic Festival:** Food from 20 European regions plus market stalls, music and children's entertainment  
**JUNE 19-20** 8.00-20.00 at La Chasse, Etterbeek  
0498.97.49.09

**Fast Forward Music Festival:** KVS and composer/saxophonist Fabrizio Cassol present this festival of African-inspired music, featuring Rockingchair & Baldwin, Sabar Ring, Kartet & Kris Defoort Trio, Marie Daulne and more  
**Until JUN 19** at KVS Bol, Lakensestraat 146  
02.210.11.12, www.kvs.be

**Once Upon a Time in England:** Talk by Spain-based British writer Helen Walshon about her new book (in English)  
**JUN 17** 12.30-13.30 at European Economic and Social Committee, Belliardstraat 99-10  
Reservation: literature@eesc.europa.eu

**Out Loud!:** Free films and concerts on the rooftop  
**Until JUN 26** 22.00 at Beursschouwburg, A Ortsstraat 28  
02.550.03.50, www.beursschouwburg.be

**Power and Paranoia:** British political philosopher John Gray talks about De Munt's production of Verdi's Macbeth (**until JUN 30**). Gray is interviewed by author Ger Groot, and Flemish actor Jurgen Delnaet reads from Shakespeare, accompanied by pianist Noémi Biro (in English)  
**JUN 20** 11.00 at De Munt, Muntplein 070.23.39.39, www.beschrijf.be

**Son del Sur:** Flamenco festival including a performance by dancer/choreographer Javier Barón  
**Until JUN 19** at Flagey, Heilig-Kruisplein  
www.flagey.be, www.bruselas.cervantes.es

**Visionary Africa:** Festival of literature, music, performance and exhibitions recognising the 17 African nations celebrating their 50th anniversary of independence  
**Until SEP 26** at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23  
www.bozar.be

# DUSK 'TIL DAWN

SAFFINA RANA



## Tomorrowland

Like the idea of spending two days out in the open air dancing away to superstar DJs with 49,999 other people? Then be quick to get your tickets for Tomorrowland on 24 and 25 July before they sell out by the end of June, like last year. Down in the lovely lakeside surrounds of De Schorre park in Antwerp province, the line-up includes global stars that even your parents will have heard of – David Guetta, Roger Sanchez, Grooverider, Jeff Mills, Carl Craig, Derrick May, Paul Oakenfold and Armin Van Buuren, among more than 100 others, spanning RnB and hip-hop to drum 'n' bass, dubstep, trance and house.

Tomorrowland is full on festival, with two stages, major special effects, camping, smelly chemical toilets and overpriced beer and food. But unlike festivals with well-loved bands, there's no crush to get to the front for a good view. Expect a very special loved-up crowd of people looking to lose themselves in the music.

In the meantime, if you're missing outdoor music this month just before the summer festival season starts, head to the roof of the Beursschouwburg in Brussels on Friday nights. The rooftop terrace will be rocking to the electro-acoustic sounds of duo Tape Tum from on the 18th and the quirky lo-fi pop of Nele Needs a Holiday on the 25th. There'll be a great view of the Bourse, a welcoming, rather rustic-looking bar under the rafters and a good-looking crowd with directional hair and the odd pair of bond-age trousers.

→ [www.tomorrowland.be](http://www.tomorrowland.be)  
→ [www.beursschouwburg.be](http://www.beursschouwburg.be)

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW

Brussels European Film Festival

23-30 June

Although young directors might consider it bad news, audiences will probably appreciate that the focus of this annual highlight of the Brussels film calendar has been expanded to include all European directors rather than just first- or second-time directors. So this year, among still many new directors, you'll find Hungary's Szabolcs Hajdu with his award-winning film *Bibliothèque Pascal* (a quixotic tale of the sex trade) and France's Romain Goupil with his new *Les mains en l'air* (*Hands Up*, in which an old Chechen woman 60 years in the future tells what happened to her in 2009 Paris).

Don't miss next week's issue of *Flanders Today* for previews and reviews of more films at BEFF

→ [www.fffb.be](http://www.fffb.be)



SHARON LIGHT

## bite



## Coffee &amp; Curiosa &amp; Champagne

Sitting right across the street from Ghent's Gravensteen castle is Coffee & Curiosa & Champagne, a coffee house and eatery with a clunky but cute name.

Our visit came during a bizarre bout of warm weather, and we sat outside on the sidewalk-cum-terrace, with sun on our faces, an excellent view of the castle and, unfortunately, a fair amount of traffic at close range. But, to be fair, Coffee & Curiosa & Champagne (which will henceforth be known as C&C&C) is not a place to visit for its outside. It is a place to visit for its Victorianesque, chandelier-clad interior that lives up to its (middle) name.

Also inside, you'll find flavourful café food, excellent coffee and baked goods and – why not? – baking supplies.

C&C&C's menu features standard café fare. We noshed breadsticks and a smooth sundried tomato pesto, an enjoyable beginning, then moved on to carrot soup, croque monsieur, toast with mushrooms and a plain omelette. Each dish was not only sizeable, it was respectable. You can also get more of a meal than we opted for, whether with one of their salads, pastas or a variety of meat dishes.

Some cafés offer food as an afterthought; these dishes were above average and quite satisfying for lunch. The prices were above average, too, which I suppose can be justified by the prime real estate and the ample portions, but it's still not a place to drop in for a quick, cheap eat.

It's an excellent place, though, to drop in for coffee. Although it will require some effort on your part, as their list of "curious coffees" takes some careful consideration. These beverages combine coffee, cream and alcohol, for a more serious coffee outing. The regular espresso/cappuccino/etc are also there, and they are good; plus, they are accompanied by a mini-cupcakes, topped with

a layer of brightly coloured citrusy sugar paste icing that brought me instantaneously back to my childhood. Partner your coffee with pancakes or ice cream for a perfect mid-afternoon break.

As the shop's name promises, there are indeed champagnes on the menu, although not as many as I would have expected given that it had earned eponymous privileges. The drinks list is quite long and varied, including about 20 teas and a few premium whiskeys.

Between the hot beverages and the alcohol, C&C&C is particularly worth a visit on one of the more cool and rainy summer days. The interior features large, cosy chairs gathered around coffee tables. Curling up there with a book or around the table with friends would be a cinch. There are also several simple wooden tables if you're taking a meal.

A bar from the venue's earlier incarnation as an ice-cream shop runs around the L-shaped room, and a few glass-domed cake trays will certainly tempt you towards their sugary delicacies.

Just past a statue atop an antique dresser are the baking merchandise. They stock a good selection of basics, such as patterned paper cupcake liners and a rainbow of cake decorating supplies. There are slightly more advanced and/or unusual options, such as the cake-mould-plus-figurine to make a princess-shaped cake. Sound out of your league? The café offers baking workshops that will undoubtedly make you a regular shopper in no time.

→ [www.coffeeandcuriosa.be](http://www.coffeeandcuriosa.be)

📍 Geldmunt 6, Gent

🕒 Sun, Tues, Wed 11.00-18.00  
Fri-Sat 11.00-22.00

★ An excellent selection coffees, teas and desserts in an affectionately antique atmosphere

Contact Bite at [flandersbite@gmail.com](mailto:flandersbite@gmail.com)

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #135

## Feature

The Democratic Republic of Congo achieved independence from Belgian colonialism 50 years ago this month. We look at the past, present and future of Belgium's relationship with the Congo

## Active

Combine visits to monumental castles with discovering the Flemish countryside in our new castle walk series

## Living

Jet Studio has been a home-away-from-home for Flemish musicians for decades. Now the landmark recording studio is up for sale

## TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



## geheugen →

When you see the words "research has shown", you should reach for the salt. Yet, I thought twice when I read that it has been shown that being bilingual, apart from the obvious benefit, protects the brain from ageing. Well, although I do my best to stave off the ravages of time, I occasionally find myself having a premature senior moment. Perhaps some brain training in Dutch is what I need. It's not that I have a memory like a sieve – *een geheugen als een zeef* or *als een garnaal* – "as a shrimp". Perhaps I should be more mindful, though I wouldn't get much done if I had to pause at every corner to absorb the scene.

So I bought a book. That always seems half the battle. I soon discover there is hope: *"iedere gezonde mens beschikt over evenveel gram hersenen* – each healthy person has the same amount of brains".

How good our memory is depends on how we use our brains: *"je kan je hersenen vergelijken met je spieren* – you can compare your brains with your muscles". This is beginning to sound like work: *"hoe meer je die gebruikt* – the more you use them"; yes I'm sure you can complete this: *"hoe meer je er van krijgt* – the more you get from them". The words "gain" and "pain" are appearing before me.

First the pain. Exercise one: *"je wil bijvoorbeeld de hele kalender van 2010 uit de hoofd leren* – for example, you want to learn the whole calendar of 2010 by heart". Wait a second, why would anyone want to do that? If I need to know what day 19 October is, then I flick through my diary. Imagine the effect if someone mentions that date and you chirp in with *"als mijn geheugen mij niet bedriegt is het een dinsdag* – if my memory serves me well, it's a Tuesday".

Though, as my book suggests, *"zou het niet leuk zijn om aan je vrienden te demonstreren hoe bijzonder jij wel bent* – would it not be fun to show your friends how special you are". Well, it might fill in some time after the Christmas turkey, but you might still get some funny looks.

I've just spent a precious part of 2010 reading through the instructions to commit 2010 to memory. Now I read that if I didn't get it the first time, I should read it *"nog eens* – once more": and encouragingly, *"oefening baart kunst* – practice makes perfect".

No, alas, this book will find a place besides the other tomes that promised to strengthen my grey cells, to gather dust. I'll go along with the boffins this time and speak as much Dutch as I can as insurance for a memorable old age.

## THE LAST WORD...

## Alone in Alaska

"Spending four days alone was unbelievably tiring. My sadness about Joris was enormous."

Sam Van Brempt, 24, who was finally rescued from a glacier in Alaska last week. His friend Joris Van Reeth died in a fall

## Cost effective

"A beer or a cup of coffee ought to cost at least €3. Any less is just not viable."

Professor Ghislain Houben of the University of Hasselt, who carried out a study showing Belgian bars are not profitable

## Fair play

"Maybe they're not all football geniuses, but they still have the right to play football with their friends on a local team."

A parent, after KV Drongen "sacked" seven schoolboy players

## In praise of aliens

"I don't understand why aliens in science fiction films are always shown as frightening. There's no need to be afraid. With this crop circle, they're trying to put us at ease: don't worry, we're looking after your planet."

Koenraad Janssens, alien enthusiast, in response to the crop circle found in Waasmont, Flemish Brabant