

Designs on Brussels 10

The capital's Design September proves exactly how much design affects everyday life, brings you a kitchen that digests its own waste and tours Finnish designers around in a *friet* wagon



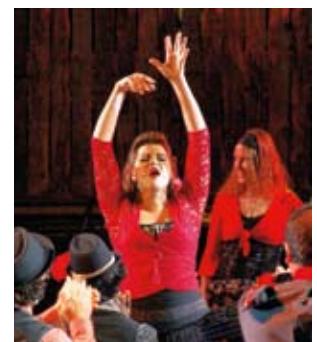
Up and away 11

Kitesurfing is booming at the Belgian coasts, despite the lacklustre weather this year. We meet the pros who've opened the schools that are teaching the masses



Opera outdoors 13

Sit under the stars to see the opera that humiliated Georges Bizet before becoming one of the world's best-known stage works. *Carmen* comes to Bruges and Deinze



#144

Unknown Ostend

We found some off-beat spots in Flanders' first City of Culture, including a fort that saw no conflict whatsoever

ALAN HOPE

This is the story of the fort that never was. The first thing that strikes you about Fort Napoleon in Ostend is the dates: construction started in 1810 on the orders of Napoleon, and the fort (originally called Fort Impérial) was completed in 1814. We know now that by then Napoleon's time was almost up. And, sure enough, Fort Napoleon never saw a shot fired in anger. The idea was a good one. Napoleon feared the British would attack from the sea, as attempts at Bredene in 1798 and Walcheren in 1809 suggested. The fort is pentagonal, a form used for centuries because it gives the best outlook; two sides of the five provide a complete panorama of the horizon.

From the roof of the fort, you look out on the endless sea, and it's easy to imagine the tense anticipation of waiting to see Her Majesty's navy appearing over the horizon.

It never happened that way, but it might have.

We begin our visit on the first floor, where the soldiers who manned the fort were billeted. A free audio guide provides excellent, clear commentary in Dutch, English, French or German.

Fort Napoleon had several functions in its time. The French used it as a defence against a possible sea attack. The Germans used it as an officers' mess. From 1932 until the

Second World War, it was a local history museum. Following the Second World War, until the construction of the open-air leisure centre Duin & Zee in 1956, it even housed a children's playground.

Following years of neglect, the fort has been restored as close to its original state as possible. Part of the first floor has been turned into a cocktail corner for functions, but the rest of the fort has been kept pristine. There's no set dressing, which leaves everything up to the imagination. When we're told that the men were issued two blankets but made do with one and used the other to block window draughts, you can certainly imagine how cold and inhospitable the place must have been.

Downstairs, it was a different experience for the German officers in the First World War. They built a huge decorative fireplace and added frescoes to bring some warmth to the place. They also built a secret passage to allow them to import additional warmth, in the shape of Ostend's ladies of the night.

► *continued on page 6*



© Monique Philips

British singer dies at Pukkelpop

The 25th anniversary of the rock festival has been plagued with freak incidents

ALAN HOPE

Charles Haddon, lead singer of the British synthpop group Ou Est Le Swimming Pool, committed suicide last week at the Pukkelpop music festival in Kiewit, near Hasselt. Haddon, 22, was reported to have climbed a GSM mast behind the festival area and jumped off. His body was found by Jan Van Biesen, head of radio station Studio Brussel.

It was not immediately clear what may have led to the incident. Newspapers made a link to an incident earlier in the day when, during his band's set on the festival's second day, Haddon threw himself into the audience to crowd surf and injured a teenage girl, who had to be taken to hospital. Haddon immediately provided contact details in case the girl's family made a damages claim. She was later released from hospital and her condition was said to be not serious.

According to other reports, the band had recently severed links with a long-time collaborator, which had left Haddon depressed. Hasselt public prosecutor Marc Rubens, who happened to be at the festival as a spectator, said the death was being treated as a suicide.

The release of the band's first album in October will go ahead despite the singer's death, the record company said this week. The band, which was due to play concerts in Europe before embarking on a tour of Australia in September, have released three singles and made their name playing at Glastonbury and Bestival and supporting La Roux on its recent tour.

► *continued on page 3*

GM puts Opel Antwerp plant on the market

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters has criticised a decision by General Motors (GM) to seek a buyer for the Opel Antwerp plant by the end of September.

Last week GM revealed that the factory will be closed and the ground sold off as soon as possible if no agreement about a takeover is reached by 30 September. According to the Flemish government, six potential takeover candidates have come forward – two Chinese car manufacturers, one European parts supplier and three other companies from outside the auto sector. While no details were revealed, Peeters said three of the candidates were serious contenders.

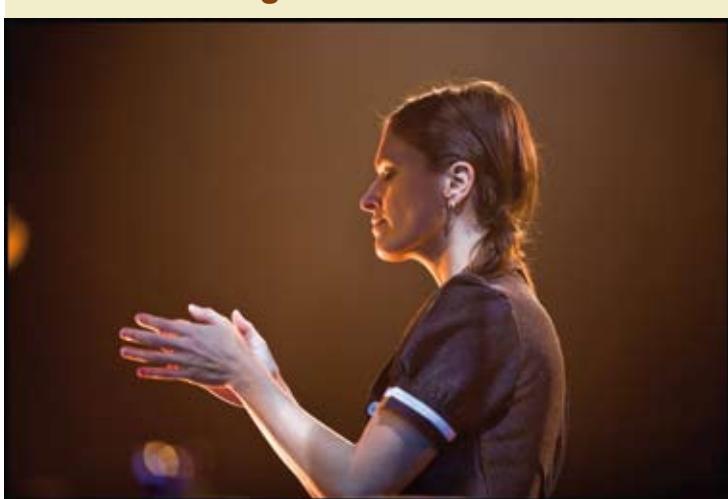
The factory is still operating after about 1,300 workers, half of the workforce, took redundancy in June. The future of

those remaining still hangs in the balance. According to Peeters, GM's decision "goes against all the agreements made" and "sends the wrong signal". His position was supported by the ABVV trade union representing the remaining workforce. GM has called in estate agent CB Richard Ellis to handle the sale of the factory and the site on which it stands. First option goes to the municipal port agency, a condition of the sale of some land to GM in 1965. A spokesperson last week said the appointment of an estate agent had led to "surprise" at the authority, which was in broad support of Kris Peeters' policy. "We want to allow every chance for the search for an investor and consider our rights subordinate to that," the authority said. ♦

OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

The most dangerous woman in Flanders



Flemish singer/songwriter Eva De Roovere is the most dangerous BV, or Famous Fleming, on the internet, according to research carried out by McAfee, the online security company.

For the last four years, McAfee has done a survey to find out which celebrities are the most popular among the purveyors of viruses and other forms of malware. In other words, which famous person is the average web surfer most likely to click on, ignoring all security precautions and leaving themselves open to virus infection or even having their computer or identity taken over by the ill-intentioned?

Overall, the worldwide favourite is actress Cameron Diaz; if you click on a link promising photos or gossip about her, you have a one in 10 chance that the site you land on will put your computer at risk. Diaz is followed by the perennial Pretty Woman, Julia Roberts, who has a 9% chance of doing you harm.

Not surprisingly, most of the dangerous celebrities are female stars, including actresses, singers and models, particularly underwear models: three of the top 10 are Victoria's Secret models: Gisele Bundchen, Adriana Lima and Heidi Klum. Gentlemen seeking ideas for birthday presents for their wives are advised to be extra cautious.

The Belgian list seems more dangerous, but that's because the numbers include a variety of different search terms and not only a name. Searching for Eva De Roovere puts you at a nearly 25% risk of malware. In second place comes Toots Thielemans (17.7%), followed by Helmut Lotti and Bart Peeters. The music business then gives way to comedy, with popular stand-up Wim Helsen at No 5.

Belgium, clearly, is attracted by a different sort of celebrity. The top 10 continues: tennis player Justine Henin (12.7%), novelist Herman Brusselmans (8.9%), tennis player Kim Clijsters (8.7%), TV personality and magazine eponym Goedele Liekens (8.2%) and former TV presenter Paul Jambors (7.3%).

At the bottom of the list, the safest names to search for include teen idol Justin Bieber and Miley Cyrus, as well as Sarah Palin and Barack Obama. The McAfee survey is, needless to say, carried out in order to promote the company's own web-protection software.

FLANDERS TODAY

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FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 25, 2010

News in brief

Ingrid Daubechies, one of Flanders' most distinguished mathematicians, has been elected president of the **International Mathematics Union**. Daubechies was born in Houthalen, Limburg province, and studied at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). She now teaches at Princeton University in the US. Her most notable work was on wavelets, a mathematical calculation that allows digital photographs to be compressed so as to take up less space.

Brussels' **car-free Sunday** this year is on 19 September. Without a special permit issued by the municipal authorities, all vehicle traffic other than taxis, public transport and emergency services will be banned within the Brussels Region from 9.00 to 19.00.

The federal public health ministry last week announced a multi-year plan leading to the **sterilisation of most cats** by 2016. Initially, cats in shelters will be sterilised. The measure will then be extended to breeders and dealers, with a general sterilisation plan introduced in 2016 to cover all privately owned cats. Last year in Belgium, shelters took in more than 37,000 cats, 25,000 of them strays. More than 13,000 were put down.

Charity shops in Limburg will accept old-style **Belgian francs** from 15 September in a publicity action to last until 2 October. The Kringloopwinkels in Genk, Tongeren and Bilzen will take BEF banknotes in payment for goods. According to the National Bank, there are still more than 15 million

The Peirsman family from Kasterlee, Antwerp province, last Sunday celebrated the baptism of **three-year-old Harley Davidson**, the latest addition to their 12-strong brood. Father Eddy, motorcycle enthusiast, said Harley was well on his way to becoming a biker himself. Last week, a family in Limburg celebrated the arrival of baby Barça, named after "the best football club in the world".

Belgian franc notes out there, worth a total of €169 million.

Road works on the E40 motorway between Sterrebeek and Bertem will not be completed in time for the original 13 September deadline, the roads agency said last week. The stretch of road sees about 100,000 vehicles passing every day. The resurfacing work is now expected to last until early October.

More than half of all small- and medium-sized businesses in Belgium do not have **their own website**, according to Google Belgium, which last week revealed that most of their sales of keyword advertising come from foreign companies advertising on the Belgian market. In other European countries, about 80% of companies have websites, but Belgian businesses are leaving their markets wide open to competition from abroad, Google said.

Magazine publisher Roularta published net profits of €15.1 million for the first half of this year, compared to a loss of €10.8 in the same period last year. The company said the turn-around was due to restructuring, cost management and new titles. Roularta publishes Knack and owns 50% of commercial broadcaster VTM.

FACE OF FLANDERS

Tia Hellebaut

She might come back again, but it's a long shot. For the moment, Flemish high jumper Tia Hellebaut has once again given up sport for motherhood as she expects her second child.

Of course, retiring from sport is a wrenching experience for professional athletes. When Hellebaut first announced she was hanging up her spikes in December 2008, she went out – excuse the pun – on a high: she had won the gold medal at the Beijing Olympics that summer, and she was three months pregnant with daughter Lotte.

Yet the itch to compete proved too much. She unexpectedly announced her return to athletics in February of this year, on her 32nd birthday, targeting the London 2012 Olympics. The Antwerp-born champion, who has also competed in the long jump, heptathlon and pentathlon, said she was inspired by fellow Flemish sports star Kim Clijsters, who came back from tennis retirement and new motherhood last year to win the US Open.

At the European Athletics Championships in Barcelona last month, Hellebaut (*pictured above with Lotte and King Albert*) came in fifth, clearing 1.97m, well off her personal best of 2.05m. Just six months into her comeback, it seemed understandable that she was not on the podium. Now we know that she was already pregnant at the time, by two months. Hellebaut started high jumping at the relatively late age of 11 and competed in her first heptathlon at



LEO CENDROWICZ

© Reuters

the national championships at 15. Although she has been on the international athletics circuit since she was 18, it took a relatively long time before Hellebaut mounted the podium at overseas events. Her twelfth place at the Athens Olympics in 2004, when she was 26, did not promise much. But her high jump gold at the 2006 European Championships in Gothenburg set her on track for glory.

Hellebaut lives in Tesselrode with her trainer and partner Wim Vandeven and their daughter. She is immensely popular and recognisable in Flanders – even more so since big names like Pizza Hut, Asics, Ernst & Young and Kia cars have signed her up for advertisements.

Hellebaut said that she wasn't sure whether this second pregnancy would end her career. "That will depend on a number of factors, including the birth itself but also the baby's sleeping habits and life with two children," she said.

www.tiahellebaut.be

Cheers!

The Flemish catering industry federation has advised its members to pass on a beer price increase by raising the price of a *pintje* by five to 10 cents



Stage accident may have triggered singer's suicide

→ *continued from page 1*

The release of the band's first album in October will go ahead despite the singer's death, the record company said this week. The band, which was due to play concerts in Europe before embarking on a tour of Australia in September, have released three singles and made their name playing at Glastonbury and Bestival and supporting La Roux on its recent tour.

A statement on the Pukkelpop website said: "After performing with his band, singer Charles Haddon decided to take his own life. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends." Festival director Chokri Mahassine said the singer's death was "a severe personal blow" but defended his decision to let the three-day festival go ahead. About 65,000 people per day attended the event.

The death was the second to have marred what should have been a celebration, as Pukkelpop marked its 25th anniversary. On the first day of the festival, 19 August, 60-year-old American Michael Been collapsed and died of heart failure while working as sound technician for his son's band, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. Been was himself a performer in the 1980s and '90s, as front-man of The Call. ♦



Charles Haddon (right) was Pukkelpop's second death this year

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



€150,000

paid per worker made redundant at Opel Antwerp. Parent company General Motors said last week it had €400 million set aside for paying off the workforce

8

lives saved in Hasselt in one month thanks to a new scheme that gives tips on CPR, or heart massage, over the phone when callers dial the emergency number. The scheme will be extended across the whole country from October, the health ministry said

7,871

illegal weapons seized in Belgium in 2009, according to the Central Weapons Register. There are more than one million firearms held legally

€605

average cost of materials for a child going back to a Flemish school on 1 September. For French-speaking schools the cost is higher – €905, largely due to the cap on costs imposed by the Flemish government

10%

fewer first-year students registered at Ghent University compared to last year, but the university said there was "no need to panic" as admissions are expected to rise before term begins

Woman's body found in dunes

Kitesurfers on the beach at Zeebrugge last week found the body of a woman after noticing a hand sticking out of the sand in the dunes. The woman is between 25 and 35 years old, with dark hair, a white T-shirt and leggings. According to the prosecutor's office in Bruges, the cause of death would need to await toxicological and other tests, but it was estimated she had been dead for two to three weeks. The body showed no outward signs of violence.

The Disaster Victim Identification team (DVI) immediately established a crime scene on the beach, before carefully digging away the sand to uncover the body. Alain Remue, head of the Missing Persons Unit which is also involved in the investigation, said the DVI's work amounted to "forensic archaeology" similar to work done in uncovering the pyramids. Once the body is laid bare, the sand on which it has lain is sifted for evidence traces, while the medical examiner carries out tests on the corpse itself. The police have started a murder investigation, given the way the body was buried.

• Meanwhile the body of a man was recovered last week from the sea at Nieuwpoort. The victim was identified as a Frenchman, aged about 60, from Lille. His boat was moored in the harbour, and it is thought he became unwell while on board and fell into the water. ♦

Charities combine forces for Pakistan

After a hesitant start, Belgium now has its own aid fund for the victims of flooding in Pakistan. The aid consortium 12-12 has opened a fund for donations, after claiming for several weeks that there was no popular support in Belgium for such an action.

The consortium includes Caritas International, Médecins du Monde, Handicap International, Oxfam-Solidariteit and Unicef Belgium. Each charity has been taking donations individually since the flooding started in July. Donations will now be made to the well-known account number 000-0000012-12, which was set up at the time of the Asian tsunami in 2004, when €48 million was raised, and later revived for the earthquake in Haiti, for which €22.5 million was raised. Two prominent charities, Doctors without Borders and the Red Cross Belgium, are going it alone; their accounts are 000-0000060-60 (DwB) and 000-0006566-67 (Red Cross).

The Pakistan flooding has led to the loss of about 1,500 lives, and material damage is extensive. Some six million people need food aid because of the loss of farmland and livestock, while an estimated 700,000 families have lost their homes. Experts warn that the final death toll from disease could exceed the number already killed by the floods. The United Nations has estimated that some €362 million is needed to tackle the most urgent problems, of which €98m has already been pledged.

The European Union has made a grant of €140 million in emergency aid to Pakistan. Nicolas Tuts of the Belgian department of the interior's crisis unit is leading a five-strong team in an investigation of Pakistan's aid needs on behalf of the EU. Emergency physician Luc Beaucourt was sent on a scouting mission by Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, with a view to sending out the Belgian first aid and support team B-Fast. ♦

CULTURE NEWS

The short-list of candidates for the annual **Monument Prize** has been announced. The buildings, which this year represent newly restored sites, are Pietersheim castle in Lanaken, Limburg province; sculptures on the façade of the Broodjeskapel in Antwerp; the conversion of a former Jesuit college to a university building in Ghent; conversion of the former pigeon-shooting range in Ostend to a restaurant and bar; and the restoration and conversion into a restaurant of the 's Hertogen water mills in Aarschot, Flemish Brabant. The €12,500 prize will be awarded in September.

The **Drive-In Movies** that normally show in August and September in Brussels' Jubelpark have been cancelled this year. Organiser VO Events was unable to find sufficient private sponsors in addition to the institutions that normally support the event, forcing them to take "a sabbatical year".

The mayor of Spanish holiday resort Benidorm has demanded the removal of his town's name from the title of 2BE's successful hidden-camera series **Benidorm Bastards**, claiming it will have a negative effect on tourism. The show's makers, Antwerp-based production house Shelter, has already sold the format to a number of foreign markets.

Flemish readers **bought six million books** in the first half of this year for a total value of €78 million, according to the publishing industry association boek.be. The figure is down slightly on the record year of 2009. Biggest growth categories were gardening (+20%), cookery (+17%), comic strips (+15.6%) and children's books (+6%), while fiction and general non-fiction remained steady.

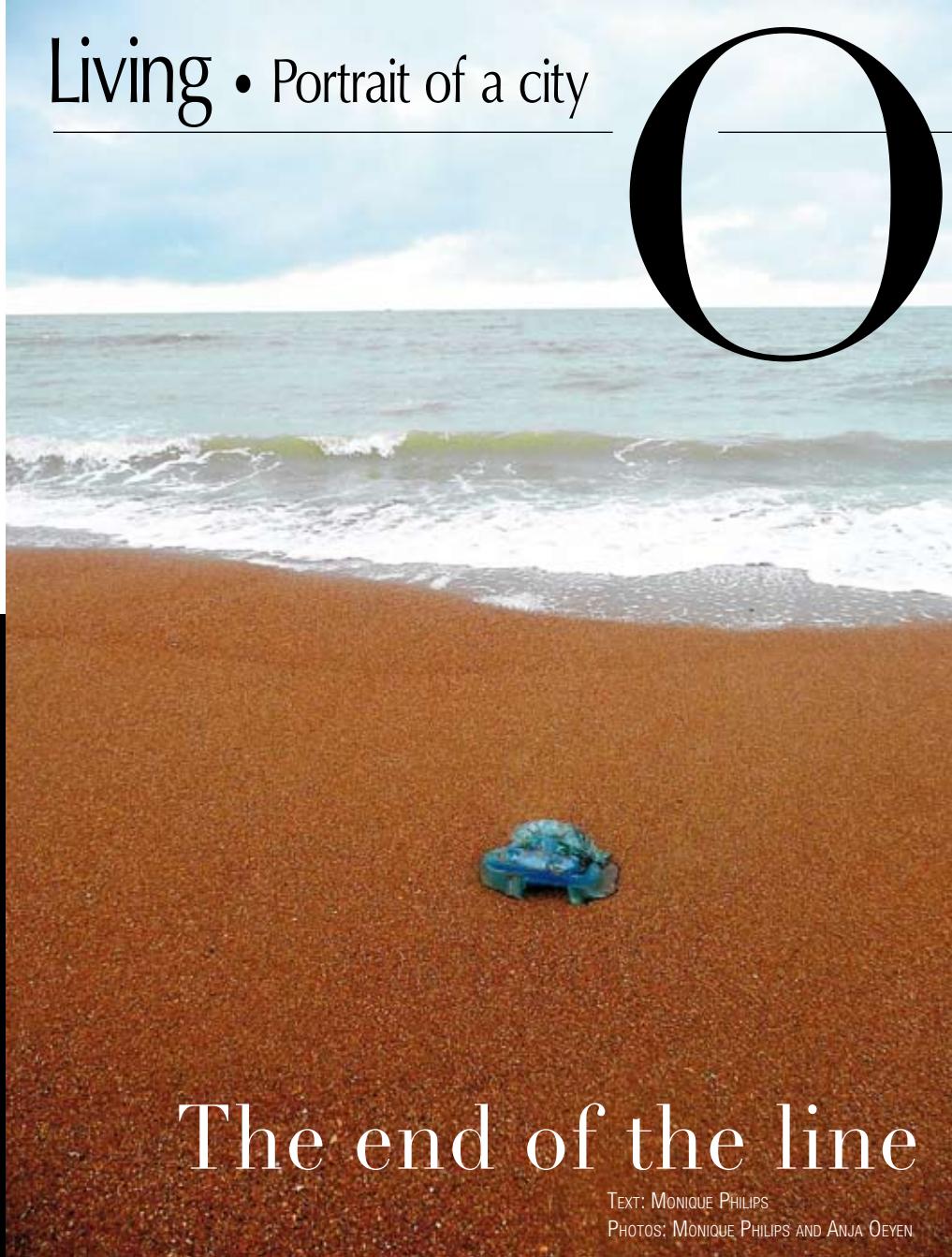
Heavy rain across the region last week was responsible for pushing **TV viewing figures to record highs**. The daily quiz on Eén, *De premiejagers*, topped its own record for the third time in a month with 1,239,744 viewers, a share of 56% of the viewing public for its time slot.

An unidentified Belgian couple were the buyers of an early work by Dutch painter **Vincent Van Gogh**, on sale at Art Nocturne in Knokke last week. The sale price was not revealed but was said to be lower than the €2.75 million estimate.

The city of Antwerp will sell the buildings that formerly housed the museums of folk art and ethnography behind the city hall, following the **move of the collections to the new MAS museum**. The city block, which also includes three houses and an 850-square-metre garden, is expected to raise €7.6 million, which will go towards construction of the MAS.



A diver 10 metres tall is reunited with his beloved niece after a weekend of searching for each other throughout Antwerp. The event was the latest show by master puppeteers Royal de Luxe, who brought the Sultan and the Elephant to the port city on 2006. This year, more than 800,000 people joined the search, which started when the diver emerged from the River Scheldt, where, according to legend, he had been thrown by pirates who refused to pay the toll he exacted for crossing the river. Uncle and niece finally came together on the Sint-Jansplein, where the giant had slept for the duration of the three-day spectacle, part of the Summer of Antwerp festival.



The end of the line

TEXT: MONIQUE PHILIPS

PHOTOS: MONIQUE PHILIPS AND ANJA OEYEN

When James Joyce stayed in Ostend in 1926, he never tired of phoning the factotum of the hotel, as he just loved to hear him say: "Hello, the porter of The Ocean speaking."

It's the sum of small pleasures that makes this Flemish beach resort an attractive place. A stroll along the beach is to be had anywhere on the coast, but only Ostend combines the pleasures of city life and the up-close roar of the sea.

Minutes before you pull into the train station, you can see the other side of the Ostend inlet on your right, a working port with a dwindling fishing fleet and huge mail boats between old warehouses. Snug between the dunes lies Fort Napoleon, refurbished into an attractive restaurant and exhibition centre. The area feels remote but can be explored by taking the tram that says "De Haan" above the perky driver. Ostend is the perfect place to leave it all behind; it's the end of the line, after all. Many runaways and socially disadvantaged find their way to Ostend, or so the myth goes. It's as far away as you can get from regular life in Belgium. Over the years, some great artists and musicians have tuned in to this undercurrent of non-conformism. One of them is, of course, the man of masks, James Ensor. Others include the painter Léon Spilliaert, rock musician Arno and cartoonist Kamagurka.

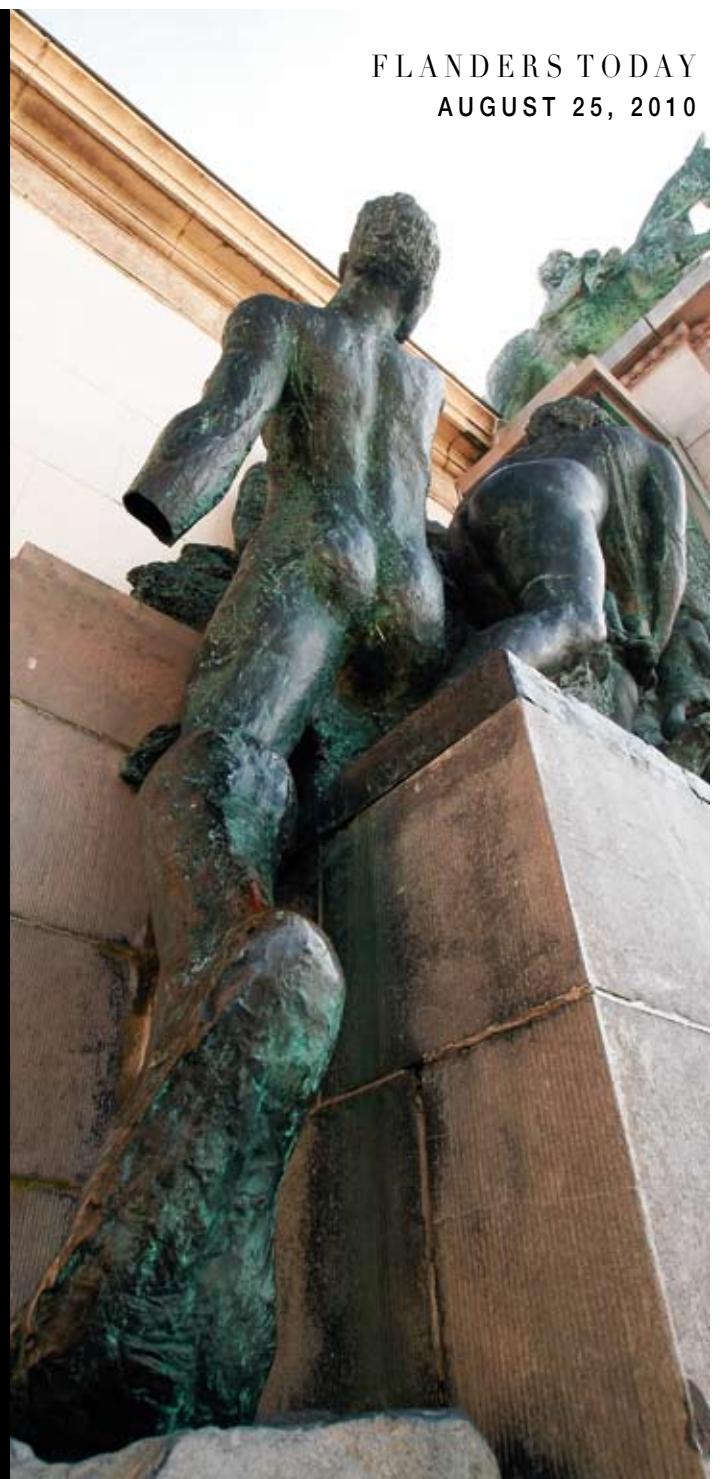
As you walk along the quay to the beach, you'll pass the colourful fish stalls selling snails, shrimp and other seafood before the smell of the sea hits your nostrils. Enjoy your first view and then briskly walk on to the next bend, where the beach finally gives way to the vastness of the sea. Benches of pensioners watch how sunbathers move in and out with the tide and the meals.

Buy an ice cream as you walk on to the next showstopper: the Royal Arcades. The omnipresence of King Leopold II inspired Ostend's nickname: "Queen of the beach resorts". His architectural legacy also includes the Wellington horse race track next door. A Belle Époque tourist attraction was born. Leopold's statue still stands tall in the middle of the promenade, admiring fisherfolk on one side of its base, naked Congolese on the other side. In a rebellious act, some unknown *Oostendenaars* have chopped a hand off of one the Congolese men to remind us of that darker legacy of Leopold's reign.

Nowadays, Ostend prefers the perhaps less grand but more fitting title "City by the Sea" and promotes its city centre shopping and excellent restaurants. As the day draws to an end, don't go home yet. This is by far the best time on the Belgian coast to sit down on the beach. Watch the families and kids drag their feet to go have dinner, a bath, a nap in a sand-strewn bed. Feel content, melancholic or lost. Feel free. ♦



STEND



Unknown Ostend

The coastal city has a long history of military conflict

► *continued from page 1*

On the ground floor we have access to the *caponnières*, one on each of the five walls. These long, low buildings (the name means a sort of henhouse) are lower than the floor of the fort, and each side has 10 slits through which the soldiers could shoot. In theory, attacking troops would scale the outer wall and, if they survived the six-metre drop on the inside, landed in a dry moat. The defenders in the *caponnières* could then pick them off from two sides with ease.

The *caponnières* provide positions for 200 men; the first floor was intended to provide billet space for 500. In fact, there were never more than about 150 living there – 100 fusiliers and additional

artillerymen for the cannon and mortars on the roof.

After Napoleon was gone, the name was changed to Fort du Souverain, and then to Fort William after the Dutch king. In 1830, it was renamed again after the new Belgian king Leopold, and shortly after that it got its present name. The fort is now run by the Flemish heritage organisation Erfgoed Vlaanderen.

Fort Napoleon is open to the public Tuesday to Sunday until 31 October, and then Wednesday to Sunday thereafter. Nocturnes, groups and guided visits are available on request. To get there by coast tram, get off at the Duin & Zee stop. ♦

► www.fortnapoleon.be



A devastating siege that destroyed a city and made an Infanta weep

Ostend was originally a village on the east end of the island of Testerep, with Westende, not surprisingly, at the west end. At the end of the 14th century the town decided to rebuild behind sea dykes. Ostend was now protected against the sea, but it continued to be battered by invaders, including the soldiers of Maximilian I of Austria, the British and the Dutch.

The most significant attacks came between 1601 and 1604 during the three-year Siege of Ostend. The Geuzen – Dutch rebels who opposed Spanish rule of the Netherlands – had taken refuge in Ostend, which had been fortified, ironically, by the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, the so-called Iron Duke.

William of Orange's son Maurits was leading the Dutch troops in Ostend, where they had withdrawn after the battle of Nieuwpoort in 1600. They were joined by Scots, English, Germans and French, for whom Ostend had become an enclave of Protestantism in a continent of Catholic rule.

The city was besieged by the Spanish troops of Archduke Albert of Austria, nephew of the Spanish king Philip II, who had given Albert and his new bride Isabella (Philip's daughter) the Netherlands as a wedding gift.

The action lasted three years and three months, and left Ostend in ruins. About 77,000 lives were lost on both sides. By the end, the Dutch

and their allies were using dead bodies to shore up the ramparts of their last entrenchment, which they named Little Troy.

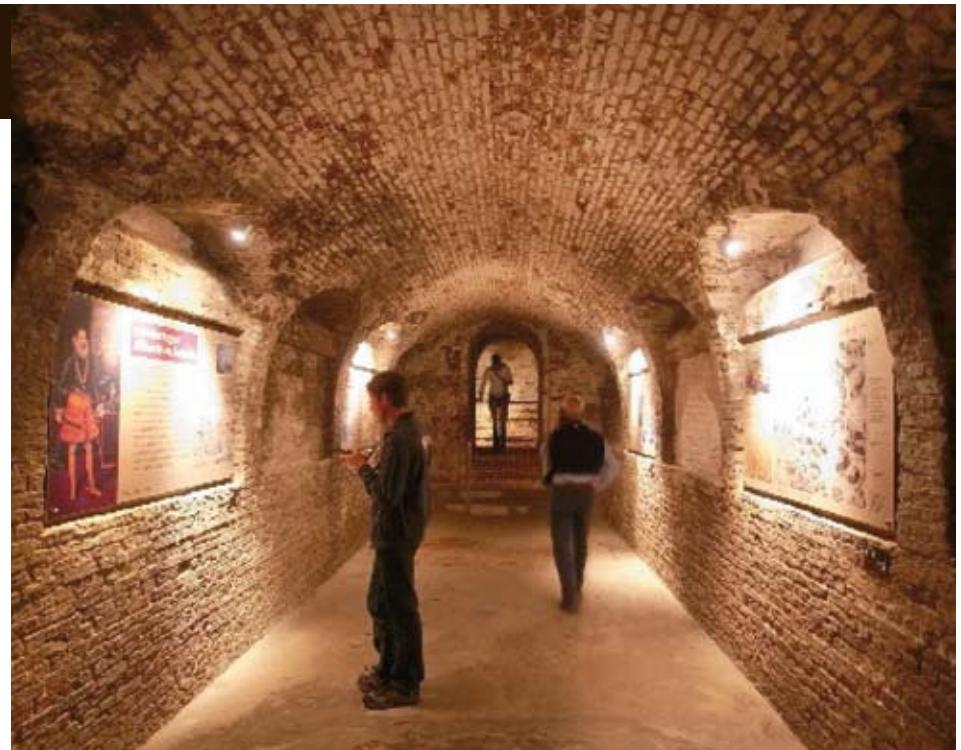
When Albert and Isabella made a "triumphant" entry into the city following the surrender in 1604, Isabella is said to have wept at the desolation she saw. There followed a 12-year truce, during which Ostend was rebuilt.

The Napoleonic period, two centuries later, saw the construction of Fort Napoleon but no military action. Another century later came the First World War, and Ostend once more became a target for attack, this time to blockade the German submarine fleet based at Bruges-Zeebrugge, which threatened British shipping in the channel.

The British planned to attack Zeebrugge in 1917, but the plan was only carried out in April 1918, with 75 volunteer ships and a mere 200 soldiers. Two blockade ships were supposed to be sunk at the mouth of the Bruges-Ostend canal to prevent the U-boats' escape.

So many things went wrong that the raid was a failure, though it was not reported as such at the time. The British lost eight men, and the U-boats could still make it out to sea. The operation served as a warning when it came time for the planning of the operation on Saint-Nazaire in the Second World War.

At Saint-Nazaire, Allied forces attacked a heavily defended German-occupied port in



Normandy, rendering it useless for the repair of large vessels and thus forcing them to return home to Germany. Because it was such a blow to the Germans, Hitler ordered the construction of an Atlantic Wall defending Dutch, French and Belgian ports on the coasts facing Britain. Many of the bunkers built for the Atlantic Wall are still visible along the coast. The promenade along the front at Ostend, as well as some

harbour installations and the railways serving them, were damaged by Allied bombardment before the D-Day landings.

Once again, the attack, when it came, was not at Ostend. Although defences on the Atlantic Wall had been ordered by Berlin to fight to the last man, when the Ostend batteries were finally challenged, they put up little resistance, and the town was taken without damage.



Ostend: City of Culture

While you're in Ostend visiting Fort Napoleon, don't forget that it's Ostend's big year: the coastal city has been named the very first City of Culture, a biennial designation to bring performances and audiences to Flemish cities under-utilised by artists. Besides motivating the city to bring in national and international acts, larger audiences are discovering the quality festivals it hosts every year. This week alone offers a wealth of choice.

FUZEE! 10 For four Saturdays during the summer, this evening street theatre festival takes over Ostend. This weekend marks the final one, and it all ends with a pyromania spectacle of sparks and flame. *28 August, across Ostend, from 20.00*

MooN 2010 Composer Michaël Vancraeynest and artist Brigitte Claeys, both of Ostend, collaborated on this new work of orchestral music, choir and video art. Dieter Staelens conducts Camerata

Ostendia choir and the Arcabateno Orchestra, among others, for this emotional performance, inspired by the tides. *28 August, 20.00, Kursaal Ostend, Monacoplein*

Fin d'Saison It's worth saying goodbye to summer just to get to Ostend's official end-of-summer celebration. Theatre, installations and clever musical performances are staged in the city's beach cabins. Stop at one to see a photography exhibition, another to watch a puppet show, the next to hear a mermaid's song. The evening ends with the Fin d'Saison ball featuring DJs Dedju and SaVa. *29 August, from 10.00, on the beach. Bal: from 19.00, Vrijstaat O, Zeedijk 10*

► www.oostende2010.be

Discover more of Ostend on page 4

Mapping Flanders

creativity

n°06 /DESIGN

SPECIAL SELECTION OF CREATIVE TALENT AND INDUSTRIES

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P _h	photography
F _a	animation
A _r	art
M _a	music
I _{ll}	illustration
F _i	film
A _d	art direction
G _d	graphic design
P _a	product
M _u	music
A _u	audio
P _{co}	performing arts
S _t	string
D _e	design
A _c	architecture
P _{ri}	printing
C _w	copywriting
A _n	animation
I _d	interior design
L _u	texture
T _y	typography
C _a	costing
A _g	advertising
I _a	interactive art
F _o	food
T _r	travel
C _B	cross border
C _r	cross border
T _e	technology
B _r	branding
G _a	graphic
N _a	newspaper
E _{co}	environment
R _e	retail
S _a M _a	social media
A _l	artistic instalg.
L _{ux}	luxury
W _o	women
M _{ed}	medical
T _r	travel

Mapping Flanders creativity: selection design

LABMEMBER 3611



ANTWERP

Peter Van Riet

Designs by Peter Van Riet (1970) cannot easily be put into boxes and categories. This Belgian product designer uses cross-disciplinary methods to create products with a large surplus value. Van Riet's professional career is marked by drive and a passion for the field. Upon graduating as product developer from the Henri Van de Velde Institute in Antwerp (1994), he gained experience at various companies and captured numerous nominations and prizes. Aside from his work as a designer and product developer, Van Riet has shown himself to be a successful entrepreneur. His training at the Inno-

vation & Entrepreneurship department of Vlerick Management School, combined with much of his own research, led to the founding of different firms. He counts among his successes the creation of the first Belgian snowboarding magazine Prime Magazine (1996), design firm Product Projects (1998-2007) and the company Beyond Products (1997-2009), which developed a new snowboard binding under the name Beyondsnow. In 2009, he opened the design firm Studio Peter Van Riet, with projects that range from singular products to a company's global image strategy.

www.petervanriet.com
www.studiopetervanriet.com



LABMEMBER 1809

GHENT

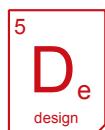
Bart Baccarne

Baccarne Design is both a think-tank for product design and a production house. In a renovated old brewery, Bart Baccarne and his team research, experiment and realise projects. They're keen on new materials and new applications, resulting in new designs. They are particularly turned on by recycled materials; their outdoor furniture programme, for instance, proves that recycled plastics can be upgraded into practical, beautiful objects that feel warm, dry quickly and are nearly impossible to damage..

www.baccarne.be



LABMEMBER 4103



STEKENE

Fox and Freeze

Fox and Freeze is a creative cooperation between Belgian designers James van Vossel of JAMES and Tom de Vrieze of TOVDESIGN. ("Vos" is Dutch for "Fox" and "vriezen" means "freeze") They started their collaboration in 2009, making the Ff1 lounge chair from a single square sheet of synthetic felt. There is no loss of material (except for the drilled holes), and it is supported by flax rope instead of wood or metal. The shell and base of the Ff1 are not separated from the sheet but remain connected. The pair twisted and twisted again, just like a scarf, ending in an object that is both symmetric and asymmetric, literally showing form following function.

Their hilarious strength test can be seen on youtube:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXASazH8R_E
www.foxandfreeze.com



5
D_e
design**SCHOTEN**

Ben Hagenaars

Master in Product Design, graduated in 2009 at the Media & Design Academy in Genk (Belgium)

Animation Vegetation

This autumn, designer Ben Hagenaars will launch TransPlant, a creative project addressing liveability in the city of Hasselt (Belgium). Inspired by the graffiti movement, Hagenaars has created POA, an "ecological doll" that, with the support of the city's residents, will sprout across the city, creating seemingly spontaneous green spaces.

Animation Vegetation is an interactive design project to generate more urban green spaces. Cities are often criticised for their lack of green space, which is important for the overall liveability of a city but also to filter air and generate oxygen.

Hagenaars' inspiration for resolving this problem in Hasselt stems from both the spontaneity and the limitlessness of graffiti artists, who work on

any available wall or clean surface. The Animation Vegetation project applies the same guerrilla tactics to spread green. Hagenaars, with a Master in Product Design with the Media & Design Academy in Genk (2009), designed POA, a 3D character, out of jute, a vegetable fibre. This character can be filled with a mixture of soil and plant seeds, watered, then allowed to flourish over time. The POA character serves as an ecological equivalent to a graffiti tag that thrives best in a public environment. The website www.animation-vegetation.be provides a tutorial to assemble your own POA to "green up" your nearby environment. All you need is some jute, some seeds and soil to start your own personal animation vegetation project. After planting the character in your neighbourhood, you can take a photo and email it to info@animation-vegetation.be. The pictures will be displayed on the website and hopefully inspire others to do the same, so that not only Hasselt, but many cities can become a bit greener.

For more information about Animation Vegetation, visit www.TransPlantHasselt.be (online 17/09)

LABMEMBER 1002

HOUTHALEN

Linde Hermans

"Feet on the ground" is a shoe developed for medical workers by IBS. They are made of EPDM-PP, a material that can be sterilised under high pressures and temperatures. The structure of the material symbolises clay and earth, moulded around the feet. This image comes across as ironic in contrast with the sterile demands of the medical sector. With these shoes IBS wants to express the idea of "earthen".

Messages are carved into each shoe. In the left: "Head in the sky" (left symbolises the feminine, the spiritual) In the right: "Feet on the ground" (right symbolises the masculine, the rational) It's up to the user to find the right balance between body and soul.

www.rodeschoentjes.be5
D_e
design

LABMEMBER 1704

SINT TRUIDEN

Boonen Design Studio

5
D_e
design

"Well designed products make the difference on the market"

Boonen Design Studio researches, develops and designs products as varied as furniture, lighting, bicycles, cash machines and generators. Rather than spreading them too thin, this mixture feeds their creativity.

A design task begins with a personal conversation. "We find out what the needs and the desires are. Most companies have more potential than they realise. Together with the company, we investigate thoroughly the latent possibilities and create new business models or products."

From an economic and philosophical viewpoint, Boonen Design Studio creates products for consumers. Besides this user-centered strategy, the development of sustainable and

ecological components is increasingly important. Although minimising both production costs and installation time is part of any design process, the goal is to create a successful product the first time – with a good design, the right materials and the best colours.

The final product depends on the capabilities and budget of the production house, and Boonen works with both national and international factories for parts and production. Production for one produce might be in Europe, the next in Asia. The studio always follows the process closely to ensure quality.

In the initial phase of design, Boonen works closely with clients to ensure a full introduction of the product using new media, photography and accessories.

Boonen Design Studio offers the entire design process from research to production. A successful product today requires more than mere engineering.

www.fredericboonen.eu

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 design.

- #1 Transport
- #2 Art and Photography
- #3 Social media
- #4 Fashion
- #5 Eco
- #6 Design

- March
- April
- May
- June
- July
- August

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

**FLANDERS TODAY**

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global creative think tank

Their designs, Your world

Next month, Brussels shows how design controls our moods, choices and pocketbooks



© Jean-François D'Or, "The Book" / Photo by Peter Verplancke

SUKI JENKINS AND LISA BRADSHAW

Design" is often, in modern usage, considered a term of status and pretension. In pure usage, though, design is the factor that defines the feel of an era and is a direct result of the needs and desires of our present society. "Form and function", people like to say, knowing that good design should be a work of art with a specific purpose – a product that appeals to more than one sense.

Every year, a group of people and places work to bring the public closer to an understanding of the impact and importance design has in our daily lives. Whether it's the shape of a building, the pile in a carpet or the colour of your toaster, design has the power of invention and innovation, and designers strive to sell it all in one big, attractive package.

Antwerp has dominated the Belgian design scene for years, producing major talents in fashion and architecture. It was Conix, for instance, an Antwerp architectural firm, that won the bid for the renovation of the Atomium, bringing it up to its full potential.

But not in September. The entrance to the greyer part of the Belgian year will be brightened up next month – as it has been since 2006 – in Brussels. Design September begins.

This major, international festival follows the example of design Meccas such as Paris, London, Milan and Tokyo. International influence has always been embraced by Belgian designers. Historically, they are well-travelled traders. This is what drove Napoleon to burn locally produced goods repeatedly in Brussels' Grote Markt; he found the styles not adequately uniform and certainly not very French, but a mishmash of all their journeys.

In the same spirit of experience and diversity, the capital of Europe is a perfect location for this event, as it has a history in the development of avant-garde research since the industrial age, while leaning on its sense of humanism. Think of the scientific basis of Art Nouveau and its curves compared to the steadiness of Art Deco.

Design September takes place all over the city, with a dynamic programme that includes exhibitions, conferences, film, debates, visits to designers' studios (haven't we all been curious?), markets and more. It offers a multi-faceted view on the true jewels of the Belgian design scene as well as bringing in a solid number of international speakers.

The all-star line-up includes Italian architect and interior designer Michele de Lucchi, Finnish furniture designer Harri Koskinen, Paris avant-garde product designer Mathieu Lehanneur and two of the Netherlands' best products and lighting designers, Ineke Hans and Kiki Van Eijk.

The most obvious way of getting to know design is through the exhibitions, which count about 30. The Belgian team of Thalen &

Thalen, for example, are in the Kelman Visser Gallery. The focus of T&T is function and fit. Does a teapot have its own hotplate that fits on the tray with the cup, milk and sugar, wasting no space? At this firm it does, presented in stunning contemporary silver made romantically in a film-worthy studio.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Cyclical Kitchen on view at Micromarché. A "living" kitchen designed by Brussels' own Infrastuctures, it "digests" kitchen waste, which is transformed into gas that can be used to cook food. The system is powered by the normally wasted heat given off by the refrigerator.

Fighting the Box, meanwhile, is on display at Elektriciteitscentrale and features 20 respected Belgian designers as they explore the relationship between raw design and industrial manufacturing, the challenging process of maintaining integrity as designs travel from the workshops of forward-thinking artists to mass-producing factories. Follow that up with *Prospectives 010* at Designed in Brussels gallery. Direct from Paris, this exhibition by Specimen Editions offers young designers the chance to make one-of-a-kind work without the constraints of conforming to the needs of industrial production. And you can see what kind of unadulterated design poetry comes from that. From graceful simplicity to complex organic works that rather defy definition, you'll find a light bulb dangling from a sculptured desk clip and an intricately carved marble bedside table. Contemporary and challenging, this is a guaranteed star on the slate of exhibitions. The journey from design to manufacturing is clearly at the heart of design discussions these days: De Lucchi, a headliner during the rise

and fall of the MEMPHIS design collective, will tackle the subject as well, and talk about the role of the architect in executing projects with both a respect for aesthetics and a responsibility for quality. The €7 entrance also buys you a guide book to design in Belgium.

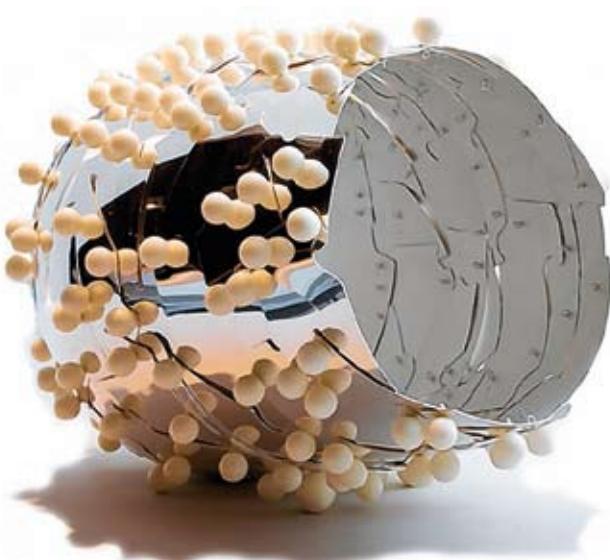
Other in-person highlights reach from Jeremy Morisson of Sotheby's auction house to Dutch Design (one of the most influential forces in the search for simplicity and smart use of materials) to Neo-Graffiti and Post-Graffiti, a commentary on art in urban spaces at Recyclart.

Now the fun bit: shopping. "Made in Belgium" is a travelling *friet* van driven by the Finnish-based design duo Company, who brought their designs to the respected craftsman of Belgium to realise them. They'll pull into three locations in Brussels, including Tour & Taxis, which is also the spot for this year's Brussels Design Market. This is an event in and of itself, attracting treasure hunters who do not even necessarily realise it's part of Design September. You'll find international retro designs from the 1950s to the 1980s in this market that doubles as a showcase of European post-war design. As usual with festivals, there is something for kids. Bluub, the Children's Movable Centre for Arts and Architecture will present its bright red, portable, plasticine pod. (If that sounds familiar, they also participated in the recent Human Cities festival.)

For the peeping-Toms among us is Designers Open Doors, happening later in the month. The list of Brussels-based designers extending their hospitality around town is too long to list and sundry in nature. It includes architects, artists, graphic designers, product designers, brand designers and industrial designers, the likes of Xavier Lust, Danny Venlet and Laure Kaisers.

Design September is a complex, interesting, stimulating and fun event. Grab a programme and create your own schedule of opportunities to learn why the world around you looks and feels the way it does and if it's going to stay the same way much longer. ♦

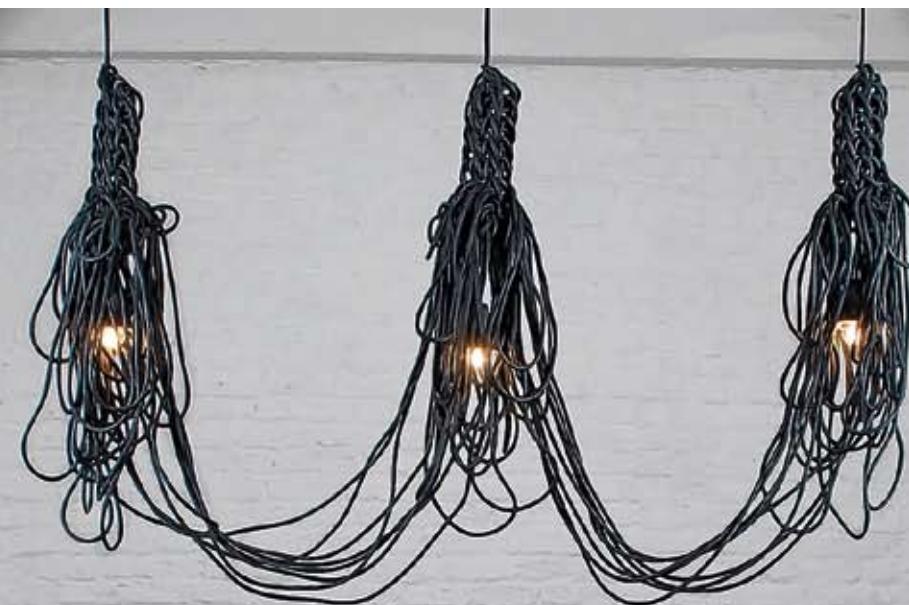
Although Design September officially begins on 9 September, some of the exhibitions are already running. Check the programme for details



© Thalen & Thalen, silver bowl "The Romans Wanted It"

Design September
9 September – 1 October
Across Brussels

→ www.designseptember.be



We can fly

Kitesurfing champions are attracting more beginners than ever to their schools on the coast

COURTNEY DAVIS

Standing in the rain, strong winds whipping my hair in my face, I'm unhappily facing the roaring surf of a storm-surged ocean. I am cold, wet and, worst of all, strapped to a kite large enough to fling my body any way the wind blows – literally.

For the past two hours, I've been flying an enormous sail 20 meters in the air as the first step in learning how to kitesurf. A relatively new sport, this ocean-based pastime has been gaining in popularity all over the world. Your body is harnessed to a kite, while your feet are secured to a surfboard with straps. Once you know what you're doing, the winds pulls you along the water and potentially up and out of the water. For kitesurfing, the ocean and its surf isn't as important as the wind. On Flanders' coast, one can expect ideal kitesurfing weather at least twice a week. I'm not so lucky – depending on whom you ask. Having just spent the last 10 minutes reviewing the various safety releases and emergency eject scenarios, I'm relieved the wind has changed

directions. I'm on the coast at Knokke, and my kitesurfing instructor, Ellen Bauwens, determines the conditions both unsafe and difficult to manage for a beginner. We trudge the rain-hardened sand back to drier land.

Bauwens has been blissfully ignorant of my lacklustre response to what is obviously the love of her life. With bleached-blond hair and a freckled face, she looks more like a Californian beach bum than a 27-year-old nursery school teacher from Ostend. Her sunny enthusiasm is not quite contagious, but I can certainly understand the appeal. "There are so many things I like about kitesurfing," she says, convincingly. "You determine how far you go, you choose the risks you take." She pauses, then repeats something she's mentioned a few times today. "And freedom. You

go out there on the water, and you forget about everything."

I'm having a hard time forgetting about the miserable weather. She laughs. "Some don't want to be in the cold water, the rain. It's not for everyone." But, she continues, "anyone can kitesurf."

Back inside, we're at the company headquarters of Surfer's Paradise, where describing the attitude as laid back is an understatement. A large wooden building with a wide porch, bustling café and plenty of flip-flop wearing tweens is where owner Frank Vanleenhove works. Tanned, straightforward and also totally hooked on surfing in all of its forms.

After winning the Belgian windsurfing championships in 1980, Vanleenhove took second in Europe and fourth in the world in 1982. A few years later, he opened this club in a small, white, summer shack. A year later, it was three shacks, and now we're sitting in what feels like a very cool tree house. He added kitesurfing to his programme around 2000 and also runs a summer camp (which explains the kids). Vanleenhove has taken great pains to make Surfer's Paradise a Mecca of all things beach related, with surfboards on the wall and reggae music playing. He points to the various decorations, revealing a story behind each one. "The Tiki god is from Tahiti. The cow skull is from Mexico."

Travelling to kitesurf is very much a part of the sport's culture. Vanleenhove goes away every October, when things slow down on the Belgian coast. This winter he is heading to the Philippines. Bauwens went to Mexico and Brazil this year. Another of their instructors winters annually in India.

A bit further down the beach at Belgium Kitesurf School, you find Thibaut Michiels, Belgian kitesurfing champion in 2005. "Kitesurfing is a way of life," he explains. "My team works during the summer season in Belgium and go abroad in the winter to teach in warmer countries."

But it isn't simply chasing the wind. Kitesurfing can be a dangerous sport, which requires focus and an awareness of a number of factors: your gear, your surroundings and the constantly changing weather. Sadly, it took a woman's recent death in Ostend for the

authorities to set down regulations.

"We already met all the standards," says Vanleenhove, "but it makes it safer for everyone else. Now you have to have lessons from a recognised school, and you can only go in a kitesurfing zone." Those are just two of the regulations; also included are wearing a lifejacket or wetsuit and having specific insurance. "These are important to prevent tragedies," says Vanleenhove.

A way to ensure one meets all the new criteria is to take lessons with instructors certified by IKO, the International Kiteboard Organisation. Both Surfer's Paradise and Belgian Kitesurf School have certified instructors. "Kitesurfing is our core business," says Michiels. "We have over 10 years of experience and 15 kites, so we can teach in every condition."

Standing on the shore watching the kitesurfers with various levels of expertise, from learning to fly the kite to trying tricks out on the ocean, it's easy to see the need for lessons. This isn't simply grabbing a surfboard and paddling out to sea, not with the ropes, lines, bars and the kite. In addition to the equipment, understanding the weather is vital. Yet despite these technical aspects, it is gaining in popularity. "You cannot imagine a beach without a kitesurfer if there's wind," muses Michiels.

And, unlike windsurfing, which has unwieldy equipment, or surfing, which can take years to master, kitesurfing is relatively easy to learn. "A full set of kite equipment easily fits in a small car," Michiels says. "The big advantage is that you can do it with light wind, while for windsurfing, you need more. Plus you can ride waves and jump up in the air up to 20 metres!" He clarifies the last terrifying comment: "Twenty metres for professionals."

For beginners, most schools offer starter packs that feature three to four classes, costing about €300. But be forewarned: you'll start on the shore simply flying a kite, but you might end up like Bauwens, staring wistfully at the ocean and dreaming of freedom.♦



Thibaut Michiels kitesurfs at Big Bay in Cape Town, South Africa

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QUARES

Cost-cutting panic or investments in human capital?

In times like these, where we have to do more with less, there are two types of managers. **Those who cut costs** across the board, and **those who even now choose to continue to invest** prudently. Which type are you? The financial crisis and the uncertain economic situation are confronting managers with new challenges, but all too often they are also driving them to take decisions that are infused with panic and doom-and-gloom. But the ones who are forward-thinking and keep to their own course don't slam on the brakes – instead, they invest in the future.

Knowledge determines your competitive power

An organisation that wants to maintain and strengthen its competitive position in the global economy must be powered by a well-oiled knowledge engine. Your workforce is your greatest capital and lifelong learning is an absolute necessity. The acquired knowledge flows back into your company and your knowledge capital grows larger and larger, increasing your competitiveness. This will keep you competitive in the rapidly changing economic context. We call this 'learning with impact'.



Investing in training: costs versus benefits

Too often, training is still regarded as a cost instead of an investment. However, companies that view their personnel policy from a strategic standpoint continue – even when the economy becomes a serious challenge – to invest in training programmes for their most strategic employees. Investing in talent and training now guarantees you a significant jump on the competition when the economy gets going again.



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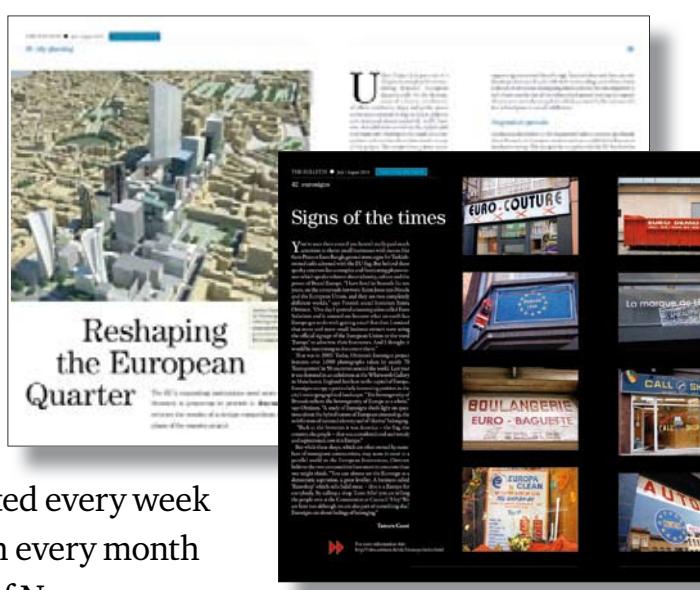
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Agenda

Sankai Juki

The wondrous spectacle *Hibiki* by Japanese choreographer Ushio Amagatsu and his company Sankai Juki is a butô-style performance, part of Bozar's Asia On Stage
→ www.bozar.be



FLANDERS TODAY
AUGUST 25, 2010



Carmen • open-air opera

MARIE DUMONT

"Love is a rebellious bird," sings the Gipsy Carmen in the eponymous opera by Georges Bizet. "Love stays away, you wait and wait / When least expected, there it is!" For Bizet himself, success, rather than love, proved elusive and fickle. In spite of all the care he poured into his final opera, a sizzling tale of passion and jealousy set in 1820s Andalusia, its Paris première in March 1875 was a spectacular flop. Botched up by second-rate singers and musicians, slowed down by interminable scene changes, taxed with obscenity, it was withdrawn from the stage after only a few weeks. Bizet, who was 36, died heartbroken. Had he lived a few months longer, he would have seen his fortunes turn: *Carmen* was next taken to Vienna where everyone loved it, not least Wagner, Brahms and Tchaikovsky, who predicted that it would eventually become the most famous opera on the planet. He was right of course: *Carmen* has become as mythical as the "Mona Lisa", its title (Latin for "song", but also "spell") an apt summary of its enduring pull on audiences. While it has become hard to be shocked by its so-called licentiousness, there is a touching timelessness about this tragedy of a couple who falls in and out of love, he driven to murder by passion and she doggedly refusing to be pinned down by men or laws.

One of *Carmen*'s greatest modern fans is Cédric Monnoye, the founder of Idée Fixe, a tiny Belgian company that stages outdoor classical concerts and opera productions around the country's poshest monuments. Monnoye is about to stage his third *Carmen* in the company's 16-year existence, this time in front of Bruges' city hall and on the grounds of the Ooidonk Castle in Deinze, plus spots in Wallonia.

Led by Yannis Pouspourikas, the resident conductor at the Vlaamse Opera, staged by François de Carpentries and starring the young mezzos Anne-Fleur Inizan and Romie Estèves in the title role, the production promises to be a slick and entertaining affair – provided you don't mind the amplified sound system.

Don't expect any radical new insights either – Idée Fixe believes more in feasting listeners than in challenging them. Not that many will mind, wrapped in pashminas to fend off the evening chill as they take in the opera's beauties: the famous *habanera*, which has become its signature tune, although it isn't actually by Bizet (he re-used an existing tune by a Spanish composer); the "Lilla Pastia" song, in which Carmen exerts her seduction on the upright Don José; the despondent aria in which she reads her imminent death in a pack

of cards; and the lovers' gruelling final argument set against the cheers of a bull fight. Not to forget the ode to the cigarette sung by factory wenches in Act I, their voices as light and heady as the whorls of smoke they depict – to my mind the opera's loveliest passage and, in these sexually liberated but tobacco-free times, the only one to retain a faint whiff of scandal.♦

9-11 September, 21.00

Bruges City Hall
Burg 12

16-18 September, 21.00

Ooidonk Castle
Ooidonk dreef 9, Deinze

→ www.ideefixe.be

MORE OPEN-AIR SHOWS THIS WEEK

Bruxellons! → Karreveld Castle, Brussels

De Boddelkeer → Sint-Genovevaplein, Sint-Truiden

Het Gevolg in Maria Vaart → canal along Sint-Jozef, Rijkevorsel



Antwerp

Café Capital
Rubenslei 37 – Stadspark;
www.cafecapital.be
Until SEP 9 18.00-5.00 Bar Jeudi:
food lounge, exhibitions, music and
dance parties every Thursday

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; www.deroma.be
AUG 26 20.30 Société Anonyme
AUG 27 20.30 Marble Sounds

Den Hopsack

Grote Pieter Potstraat 24;
www.denhopsack.be
AUG 28 21.00 One Man One Guitar

Jolly Joker

Rijnkaai 14; www.jollyjoker.be
AUG 27 21.00 De Roes + De Gentse
Hoppers + Miss Mary Ann and
the Ragtime Wranglers + The Owl
Jolsons
AUG 28 22.00 Isbells + The
Bony King of Nowhere + B-Kant
Soundsystems + Koentje & Rakesh

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof

Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,
www.openluchttheater.be
AUG 29 20.30 Komil Foo De Luxe
AUG 31 20.30 Milow
SEP 2 20.30 Ed Kowalczyk

Ghent

Kinky Star
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45
www.kinkystar.com
AUG 29 21.00 A Clean Kitchen Is a
Happy Kitchen
AUG 31 21.00 Small Metal Gods

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
AUG 26 20.00 Hatebreed
AUG 28 22.00 Modklub: Sacre Bordel
feat. Muriel Scherre



Antwerp

Buster
Kaastrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
AUG 26 21.00 Buster Jurassic Jam
AUG 27 22.00 Jula ook! **AUG 31**
21.30 Karamell's **SEP 1** 21.30 Tom
Van Dyck Quartet

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Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
AUG 29 16.00 Yvonne Walter
AUG 30 21.00 Joppe Bestevaer Trio

De Heksenketel

Pelgrimsstraat 22; 03.283.56.73
www.heksenketel.org
AUG 29 15.00 Daniel McBrearty

Brussels

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Until AUG 31 20.30 Léon Friends



Antwerp

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; www.deroma.be
AUG 31 20.30 Quinteto Astor

Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192,

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Xavier Rudd

29 November, 20.00
Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

Xavier Rudd doesn't sound all that appealing on paper: an Australian folk artist with a didgeridoo. But this young man, who sells out concerts around the world, can play just about anything, and much of it at the same time. Jaws drop as he puts his hands, feet, mouth and elbows to work on a banjo, harmonica, djembe, stomp box, ankle bells, guitars (more than one) and the aptly named "tongue drum" all in the same song. With multiple albums and an anarchist's soul, he's both a crowd pleaser and a truly multi-talented musician.



www.abconcerts.be



Brussels

**Kerk van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw ter
Kapelle**
Kapellemarkt; 02.675.71.62
www.placeadelachapelle.org
AUG 25 20.00 Ensemble Gioia,
medieval organ music
AUG 28 20.00 French chanson by
Ensemble Musica Nova with Joseph
Rassam, organ

St Michael and St Gudula Cathedral
Sinter-Goedeleplein; 02.507.82.00
www.cathedralestmichel.be
AUG 31 20.00 Dalibor Miklavcic,
organ and pedal-pianoforte: Bach,
Schumann, more



Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
SEP 2 20.00 Sankai Juku dance
company in Hibiki, choreographed
and staged by Ushio Amagatsu



Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
SEP 2 20.00 Sankai Juku dance
company in Hibiki, choreographed
and staged by Ushio Amagatsu



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60

www.muhka.be

Until SEP 19 Art Kept Me Out of Jail, performance installations by Jan Fabre

Diamond Museum

Koningin Astridplein 13-23; 03.202.48.90

www.diamantmuseum.be

Until AUG 31 HarT voor HarD, heart-shaped jewellery

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 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, Lewis Baltz and Mitch Epstein

Until SEP 5 Jacky Lecouturier: POLAROIDs (and others), polaroids by the Belgian photographer

Until SEP 5 Outlandish: A Specter From the Land of If, photography group show

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

Until OCT 3 Jongbloed! (Young Blood), electronic music, mixed media/video, graphic design and photos by nine young artists inspired by the Closing Time exhibition

Bruges

Hospitaalmuseum

Mariastraat 38; 050.44.87.11

www.museabrugge.be

Until NOV 7 Ivory in Bruges, rare pieces from museums, churches and monasteries

Kunstcentrum Oud Sint-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00

www.miro-brugge.be

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Until OCT 3 Expo Miró, lithographs, ceramics and manuscripts from the surrealist painter Joan Miró

Brussels

Archief en Museum voor het Vlaams Leven te Brussel
Arduinkaai 28; 02.209.06.01

www.amvb.be

Until AUG 31 Herinnering & Migratie: Erfgoed van nieuwe Brusselaars (Memory & Migration: The Heritage of new Brussels), presentation of the stories behind the arrival of 19 new immigrants to Brussels

Atomium

Heysel Park; 02.475.45.75
www.atomium.be

Until AUG 31 BE.WELCOME: Belgium and Immigration, interactive exhibition on the migration experience in Belgium

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

Belvue Museum

Paleizenplein 7; 02.511.44.25
www.belvue.be

Until SEP 12 Facing Brussels, contrasting views of the city by the Nadaar photography collective
Until SEP 19 Brussels: A City with a View, interactive exhibition focusing on Jean-Baptiste Bonnecroix's 17th-century painting Gezicht op Brussel, showing panoramas of the city

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 21; 02.770.53.33

www.wittockiana.org

Until SEP 11 Parti pris: the duo Léon Wuidar and La Pierre d'Alun, books and illustrated bookbindings
Until SEP 11 Françoise Clabots, books, objects, prints and drawings

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

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)
Until OCT 10 A Passage to Asia: 25 Centuries of Exchange between Asia and Europe, a selection of 300 objects, including funeral urns, jewellery, semi-precious stones, gold and glass, Buddhist and Hindu images, ivory, manuscripts, textiles and archaeological finds

DON'T MISS

Set & Still

Until 3 October
Japanese Garden, Ostend

Kris Dewitte is Flanders' number one behind-the-scenes photog: he haunts film sets and festivals across Europe to get candid shots of movie stars and directors. This open-air show, staged in conjunction with the upcoming Ostend Film Festival, is made up of shots from Flemish film sets, including *Loft*, *Aanrijding in Moscou* and *De helaasheid der dingen*.

► www.filmfestivaloostende.be



Brussels Info Place (BIP)

Koningsplein; 02.563.63.99
www.biponline.be

Until DEC 31 Europe in Brussels: Fragmented Past, Shared Future?, video exhibition looking at the European quarter, from its beginnings to the present day (www.europeinbrussels.be)

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45
www.elektriciteitscentrale.be

Until OCT 3 Fighting the Box: 20 Belgian Designers, 20 Stories Behind the Products, the relationship between local designers and the international industry

European Quarter

Wetstraat; www.thehumanrightsproject.org

Until SEP 10 The Human Rights Project, outdoor exhibition of photographs of South Africa by Lukas Maximilian Hüller and Julianne R Hauser

Hallepoort Museum

Zuidlaan 29; 02.533.34.51

www.kmkg-mrah.be

Until AUG 29 Brussels Calling!, works by 10 Belgian and international artists, who were all lured by the capital at one time or another

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjbj-jmb.org

Until OCT 3 Bericht aan de bevolking: De joodse geschiedenis op affiches (Message to the People: Jewish History in Posters), more than 250 documents from the museum's collection

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

Until OCT 30 Lisolo Na Bisu (Our Story) and Tokopeza saluti (We Salute You), objects, documents photographs and audiovisual material reveal 125 years of Belgo-Congolese military relations

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 26 Charles van der Stappen (1843-1910), sculptures by the Belgian artist

Until SEP 26 Marcel Broodthaers, modern works with objects from everyday life by the late Belgian artist

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

Town Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.31

www.brussels.be

Until SEP 19 The Age of Symbolism in Latvia, paintings, etchings and drawings from turn-of-the-20th-century Latvia, including work by Jānis Rozentāls, Vilhelms Purvītis and Jānis Valters

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until SEP 12 Wangechi Mutu: My Dirty Little Heaven, collages by the New York-based Kenyan artist, Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year

Until SEP 12 Martin Laborde: The old sow sent them out to... they got into it and rolled down the hill, works by the American and 11 other artists based on the text of the children's story The Three Little Pigs

Yaruna

Waversteenweg 214B; 02.512.93.12

www.anunsroom.com

Until OCT 14 Jeanne: A Nun's Room, interactive installation by Scottish artist Paul Morris

Deurle

Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

Museumlaan 14; 09.282.51.23

www.museumddd.be

Until SEP 19 Biënnale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biennale of Painting: The Sublime Past), a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (See also Roger Raveelmuseum in Machelen-Zulte)

Ghent

Caermersklooster

Vrouwebroersstraat 6; 09.269.29.10

www.caermersklooster.be

Until SEP 5 We zijn goed aangekomen! Vakantiekolonies aan de Belgische kust (1887-1980) (We have arrived! Vacation Colonies on the Belgian Coast), film, photos and sound fragments

Design Museum

Machelen-Zulte

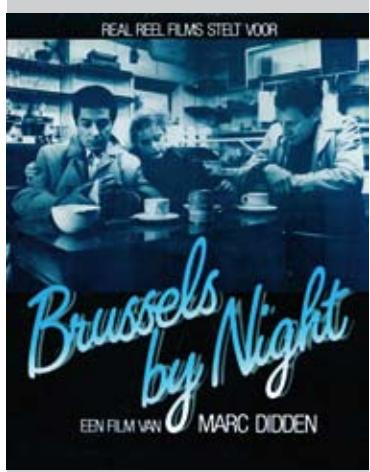
Het Roger Raveelmuseum
Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00
www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Until SEP 19 Biënnale van de Schilderkunst: het sublieme voorbij (Biënnale of Painting: The Sublime Past), a subjective look at painting over the last 100 years (also at Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle)

Meise

National Botanic Garden of Belgium
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20
www.plantentuinmeise.be
Until OCT 24 Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

WEEK IN FILM

Openlucht cinema



Brussels

Filmotek: Open-air screenings of international shorts and features, video art and selections from Atelier 340's archives

Fri-Sat until SEP 11 at Atelier 340 Muzeum, de Rivierendreef 340

→ www.atelier340muzeum.be

Camera Belgica: Screenings of Belgian film classics. Coming up: Brussels by Night

Fridays until AUG 27 on the terrace at BELvue Museum, Paleizenplein 7

→ www.belvue.be

Ghent

Viewmaster010: Outdoor film screenings with "machine" as theme, plus live music, DJs and a bar. Coming up: Metropolis, with live improvisation by Kaboom Karavan

Fridays until AUG 27 at ACEC site, Dok Noord 4

→ www.viewmaster010.be

Mechelen

Drive-In Movies: Open-air cinema with free entry for those driving antique cars. Avant-premieres and a cava bar. Coming up: Knight and Day and The Switch

Thurs-Sat until AUG 28 at Sportpark De Nekker

→ www.utopolis.be

Neerpelt

Musica
Toekomstlaan 5B; 011.61.05.10
www.musica.be
Until SEP 5 Good Vibrations: Summer in Your Ears, international exhibition of sound-art installations at various locations between the train station and provincial park Dommelhof

Ostend

Japanese Garden
Koningspark; 059.70.11.99
www.krisdewitte.com
Until OCT 3 Kris Dewitte: Set & Still, photos from Belgian film sets by the Flemish photographer

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 SEP 30 Bonjour Congo, photographs and documents from Brusselaars on the presence of the Congo in Brussels

Until JAN 9 2011 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of Congo, from source to mouth
Until JAN 9 2011 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building
Until JAN 9 2011 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multimedia exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today

Ypres

In Flanders Fields Museum
Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220
www.inflandersfields.be
Until OCT 10 More Force Than Necessary, photos and films by Brazilian artist-in-residence Rodrigo Braga



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months and launches a series of events to mark its presidency

Until DEC 31 across the country

Festival of Flanders: Seven international music festivals fill streets, squares and waterways with guerilla and organised concerts, from classical and mediaeval to traditional world and modern regional music
Until OCT 24 across Brussels and Flanders

www.festival.be

Vlaanderen Zingt: Huge group sing-alongs to live music on public squares
Until SEP 26 across Flanders

www.vlaanderenzingt.be

Zin in Zomer: Literary festival in Limburg with open-air readings, interviews, music and more

Until AUG 30 in Genk, Hasselt and Sint-Truiden

www.zininzomer.be

Antwerp

Cultuurmarkt Vlaanderen: Free cultural market with information stands on cultural centres, museums, theatre groups and more, plus free performances of theatre, jazz, circus, classical music and dance
AUG 29 11.00-18.00 in the centre of Antwerp

www.cultuurmarkt.be

De Stad van Elsschot: Months-long celebration of 20th-century Antwerp author Willem Elsschot on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death, featuring theatre, film and Dicht bij Elsschot, the first public exhibition of his complete archives
Until DEC 31 across Antwerp

www.destadvanelsschot.be

Het Theaterfestival '10: Annual theatre festival bringing together a jury's choice of the most innovative Dutch-language productions from the past season in Flanders and the Netherlands, from children's theatre to dance theatre, from mime to theatrical installations. The traditional State Of The Union is given this year by Flemish performance artist Benjamin Verdonck

AUG 26-SEP 4 at deSingel, Toneelhuis and Monty

www.theaterfestival.be

Kunstkritiek: Presentation of Stomp niet af, stomp terug (Don't Stomp Off, Stomp Back) by Wim Van Gansbeke, followed by discussion of the theatre book (in Dutch)
AUG 26 14.00 at deSingel, Desguinlei 25

www.desingel.be

Laus Polyphonie: Antwerp leg of the Festival of Flanders devoted to early music. This year's edition, Manu Scriptum (Hand-Written) revolves around 12 polyphony manuscripts from the period 1050-1550
Until AUG 29 at Amuz, Kammestraat 81

www.amuz.be

Zomer van Antwerpen: Annual summer-long festival with parties, concerts, circus acts, theatre, film, BBQs and more

Until AUG 29 across the city

www.zva.be

Blankenberge

Sand Sculpture Festival: Annual event of the world's top sand sculptors, this year going Around the World, with sculptures of 100 wonders of the world
Until AUG 31 at Duinse Polders, Koning Albert I laan

www.zandsculptuur.be

Zomershow: Fun summer revues, with singing, dancing and comedy, for the whole family

Until AUG 28 at Casino

Blankenberge, Zeedijk 150

www.zomershow.be

Brussels

Apéros Urbains: Weekly aperitif plus after-parties at one of three partner clubs: Fuse, K-Nal and the Vaudeville; free entrance to clubs with purchase of drink at Apéros Urbains

Until SEP 3 across the city

www.aperos.be

Bal Moderne: Brussels' parks are transformed into dance floors in a series of public events where you can learn a new choreography in 45 minutes

Until AUG 28 across Brussels

0476.47.03.67, www.balmoderne.be

Boterhammen in het Park: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music, including Els De Schepper, Fixxes, Komml Foo, Raymond van het Groenewoud, more

Until AUG 27

at Warande Park

www.abconcerts.be

Bruxellons 2010: Annual summer theatre festival with an emphasis on comedy

Until AUG 30 at Château du

Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3

02.724.24.24, www.bruxellons.net

Ecran Total

Annual summer film festival with classics, reprisals, a

Chris Marker cycle and a focus on

John Cassavetes

Until SEP 14 at Cinema Arenberg,

Koninginnegalerij 26

02.512.80.63, www.arenberg.be

Feeërieën 2010

Free outdoor festival of folk and rock, featuring Marble

Sounds, Isbells, Amatorski, more

AUG 23-27 20.00 at Warande Park

www.abconcerts.be

Festivaeria

Outdoor festival providing a platform for young

artists, with musicians, singers, DJs,

dancers, bodypainters, jugglers,

photographers and street theatre

artists

Until SEP 18 at Jubelpark

www.myspace.com/playnewconcept

Fiesta Latina

Latin-American music festival with concerts, DJ parties,

cocktail bars and more

AUG 27-29 on Louizalaan

www.fiesta-latina.be

International Brigittines Festival

Annual theatre and dance festival

promoting new and original

choreographies. The theme of

the 2010 edition is Societies of the Night

Until SEP 4 at Les Brigittines, Korte

Brigittinenstraat 1

www.brigittines.be

Midis-Minimes

Lunchtime classical

concerts

Until AUG 27 at Miniemerk, Miniemerstraat 62, and the Royal

Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30

www.midis-minimes.be

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

Elversele (East Flanders)

Mellowtime: Outdoor music festival

featuring lyrical and vocal jazz with

literary intermezzi

SEP 5 at Da Boerenhofke,

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



‘meezingen’

As any of you who have been to the Belgian coast during the summer know, it's not the place to go to get away from it all. Of course, a few spots of rain will leave you alone on *de dijk* – the promenade, and at low tide you can sing to the waves without attracting much attention. So I knew what to expect when we went for the weekend to Nieuwpoort Bad. Yet, when old grumpy here looked out from our balcony overlooking the end of *de dijk* and saw another temporary stage being thrown up, I moaned “not more din”.

That evening we had an enjoyable seafront meal at Twins, while in front of us on *de dijk* young hopefuls draped with Miss Coast Belgium sashes posed beside a stable of Porsches. As we strolled back, we were greeted by strains of “*Oh laat de zon in je hart* – Oh let the sun in your heart”, a standard of Flemish crooner Willy Sommers. There was no Willy, but instead a thousand-odd singers under our balcony. The event was organised by *Vlaanderen zingt* – Flanders sings. It started in the 1990s in a café in Antwerp, where *een zangavond* – song evening – was held every other month. It has grown into an *openlucht meezafeest* – open-air sing-along, which this year is touring 38 locations in Flanders.

Back on our balcony, we soon

defined love as being like the moon hitting your eye like a bigga pizza pie and became chickens along with Urbanus: “*Gans mijn lijf staat vol met pluimen* – All my body is covered in feathers.”

A quick glance revealed that we were not alone in letting loose: every balcony was crowded with *meezingers*. A neighbour came out of her shell as she sang along with Ann Christy’s “*Gelukkig zijn* – Being happy”. Some balconied ladies were so carried away that they were belting out each number into hairbrushes. Samantha’s Eviva Espana had everyone swinging to “*Ik hou van dansen en muziek* – I love dancing and music” as a Spanish flag and vuvuzela appeared on one balcony.

The crowd below were also being swept along by the music, so when Eddy Wally declared that “*Ik spring uit een vliegmaschine alleen om jou te zien* – I’d jump from a flying machine just to see you”, a thousand singers jumped with him. They then declared that you’ll never walk alone, visited Les Lacs du Connemara with Michel Sardou and ended with Thank you for the Music. It all wrapped up in the dark, 37 songs later. So many had raised their voices in song, perhaps for the first time in ages.

Go to www.vlaanderenzingt.be to find out where the fun is until the end of September.

De Avonden

It's not the first time I've had to wait 10 minutes for a table to free up in a restaurant, despite having made a reservation. It is, however, the first time that it's happened on a Wednesday night and that I've been offered a drink on the house for “having to wait”. Not just any drink, mind you, but a Witkap Stimulo, coincidentally one of my favourite beers, mostly only found in the area around Ninove where it is brewed. It is a rarity here in Ghent. But then again, so is this restaurant.

Down an unassuming street not far from the ignoble Dampoort train station, with not a single other restaurant or café in sight, De Avonden is an equally unassuming townhouse, its location given away only by the dozen or so bicycles parked out front. Upon pushing open the door, a blast of warm air and wonderful aromas confirmed that we were indeed in the right place.

Once upon a time, this was some family's living room and, well, it still feels that way, except the tiny space is now filled with seating for about 30. The wooden tables are decked with various tablecloths – some flowery, some checked – and candelabras provide most of the lighting. Not one plate is the same as the next, as if they come out of grandmother's cupboard, collected and passed down through the years. Surprisingly, bright pink walls add to the homey atmosphere. Our attention is drawn to the giant chalkboard in the middle of the room, revealing our menu choices for the evening.

The menu changes as quickly as Belgian weather, and there's good reason for that. Chef and owner Murielle Liekens is passionate about where she gets her ingredients – they have to be fresh, local, in season and, whenever possible, organic. She uses these to create traditional, but no less incredibly tasty, Belgian dishes.

My plate arrived adorned with big, juicy slices of duck breast, crispy on the outside and soft and rosy on the inside, resting on burgundy cubes of sweet marinated beets and cloaked in a tangy blackberry *coulis*. Next to this, a complementary light salad. And on the other side of the table was an over-generous portion of mash and goat cheese serving as a bed for the enormous piece of lamb that had been slow cooked in a slightly spicy saffron-cumin mixture. It was an unexpected twist on an old favourite.

Next to that, adorable little silver casseroles arrived, one holding white beans and the other little roasted potatoes in the skin that were so delicious I could have easily eaten another bowl – or three.

Although we hadn't left any room for it, one of the three listed desserts was particularly tempting: *panna cotta* with Greek yoghurt, peaches and prunes. Instead, we carried on sipping from our glasses of organic Cantillon Gueuze lambic, as good a dessert as any. After an evening filled with this much cosiness, friendly service and amazing food you tend to cringe when it comes time to pull out your wallet. But because De Avonden is only open during the week and because it has already made a name for itself among locals, it is packed every single night. And this, thankfully, is what keeps it affordable, as evidenced by our painless €44 bill.

→ Ham 39, Ghent
Mon-Fri from 18.30
★ A place with so much soul it's like having dinner at an old friend's house

→ www.deavondengent.be

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #145

Feature

Belgium is at the helm of the EU; we talk to Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters about the goals and priorities of the next four months

Living

The Flemish who live outside of Brussels are notoriously sceptical of their capital city. Our photo-journalist takes an honest look at Brussels in our Portrait of a City series

Arts

The Brussels leg of the phenomenal Festival of Flanders looks deep into the heart of Mahler

THE LAST WORD . . .

Wall view

“I've always found it pleasant to live here. You could at least see things moving. Now my garden looks out on a wall. They didn't need to put those panels there, if you ask me.”

Roland De Meester, who lives beside the E40 motorway in Erpe-Mere, where the Flemish authorities are constructing acoustic walls to protect residents from noise

Double Dutch

“If the Borlée brothers want to become standard bearers for Belgian athletics, like Kim and Tia, they'll have to learn to speak Dutch.”

Wilfried Meert, organiser of the Memorial Van Damme

No free ride

“I've got a reasonable amount of money, which will go to my family later. But I don't want my children behaving like big shots with speed-boats and Ferraris. They have to work and earn a place in society.”

Desire Collen, chairman of Thrombogenics, who donated €150 million in profits to a foundation for scientific research

Clijsters keeps cool

“There's absolutely no reason to panic. I don't have the slightest doubt about the US Open.”

Kim Clijsters, Flemish tennis star, who won last year's US Open