



## OFFSIDE

### Making a list, and checking it twice

© Wowwee



If you thought there was an economic crisis going on, just wait until December comes around. Whether you adhere to the local tradition of giving kids expensive toys for Sinterklaas on 6 December, or on Christmas Day, this year looks like it will launch a severe assault on your bank account.

Last week the Belgian Toy Federation (BSF) announced its winners for Toy of the Year, and your children have probably already added them to their wish-lists.

All the big names are there: VTech, Lego, Playmobil and Hasbro. One name that's new around here, Wowwee, also happens to produce the toy most likely to be coveted by an adult. Paper Jamz (€40) are electronic toy drums, amps and guitars, the latter as thin as paper and without strings; they're played via electrodes that capture the movements of your fingers. Perfect for anyone who thinks the axes in Guitar Hero were a bit naff. They have built-in tunes, karaoke, and you can even play real chords of your own. (But what would be the point of that?)

Something else liable to keep Dad up late on Christmas night is the new Lego City freight train with flexible rails you can bend into shape. Lego has rightly been named the greatest toy of all time, but the price ticket is a little heavy: €170 for a train-set?

Some other tips for different age groups:

- My Talking Photo Album by VTech is for babies from six months and lets you load your photo and voice before packing the little one off to the crèche, in the hope that he or she will remember who you are
- Zhu Zhu Pets are interactive robot cuddly hamsters with their own personality
- J-Kart is a remote-controlled cart with carbon fibre wheel axes that can float, jump up into the air and even fly. At €30 it's a steal
- Kidi Pop & Rock is shaped like a guitar, but it's also a keyboard and a drum set. You can record your creations and play them back
- Finally, an old favourite. Play-Doh is still made by Hasbro and features a working conveyor belt in the new 2010 sweet factory. It's for ages 3 and over only, but even they'll be tempted to eat the stuff

ALAN HOPE

## News in brief

**André Denys**, the governor of East Flanders province, has taken a leave of absence of at least a month to be treated for cancer. "The governor is very motivated to beat this illness," said his office in a statement. "He is convinced his general physical condition and the speedy diagnosis will help." Denys, 62, previously served in the national and Flemish parliaments as a liberal.

Police in Maldegem last week discovered **13 migrants hiding in a truck**, the probable victims of human traffickers. Five of them were minors, and the rest were either sent to a closed centre or ordered to leave the country. One man escaped. The lorry driver claimed the men must have boarded his truck when he stopped at a petrol station in Drongen.

by a court. Travel agency Koning Aap said they could not guarantee the man's safety as a result of his condition, although he is an experienced traveller. "It was like being catapulted 100 years back in time," the man commented. The commercial court ordered Koning Aap to pay a fine of €650 and publish the ruling at their own expense in the press and on their website, as well as displaying it in their premises. They face a further fine of €1,000 for any further discrimination.

**Metal screws discovered in bread** delivered to rest homes in West Flanders last week were placed there deliberately, the Food Safety Agency has said. The screws were found in brown bread produced by an industrial bakery in Tielt, where about 70 loaves were affected. The bakery reported previous problems of vandalism, and police have begun an investigation.

Brussels has been voted the **fourth best European city** in which to do business, according to an annual survey by property company Cushman & Wakefield, winning back one place lost to Barcelona last year. Paris and Frankfurt were second and third, while London topped the list, as it has since the survey began 21 years ago. Brussels won praise for its languages spoken, transport connections and the accessibility of markets, suppliers and customers.

A man who **threw acid in his former partner's face** in December of last year, causing permanent disfigurement, has been released by a court because of a procedural error. Richard Remes, 55 and a former prison guard, was charged with attempted murder, which is now under the correctional tribunal, and no longer the assises court. As a result, prisoners on remand must have their detention renewed monthly, but the Brussels prosecutor's office only brought Remes back to court every three months, as required for assises cases. He is now free but will still face trial later. His victim, meanwhile, has gone into hiding, as her lawyer explained she fears for her life and the lives of her children.

A tour operator in Ghent who refused to allow a deaf man to book an adventure holiday in Jordan has been **convicted of discrimination**

**Klaus Van Isacker**, editor-in-chief of *De Morgen* since 2007, has stepped aside to take up another function within De Persgroep, which owns the daily newspaper. Bart Van Doorn will continue as editor, together with Wouter Verschelden, until now a political reporter at *De Standaard*.

A woman who **abandoned her newborn baby** in a parking garage in Ghent last week has been charged with reckless endangerment and released to continue looking after her two older children. The woman, who has not been named, admitted abandoning the baby because she could not afford to care for it. She faces a jail sentence of up to three years if convicted.

## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

### Bart Verhees

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Well yes, it's a plane, actually, but many people seem not to think so. "There's a UFO reporting site in Belgium, and about once a month they get in touch to ask if I've been flying," explains Bart Verhees of Verhees Engineering in Lommel, Limburg province. "They know me by now."

The reason for the calls is the Verhees Delta, a one-man light aircraft which, as the company says: "looks small but has the widest cockpit of all light aircraft; looks only suitable for flights around the airfield but is in fact a very comfortable travelling aircraft".

Above all, the Delta is silvery and triangular and, because Verhees flies by day, gives off the occasional (this is Belgium, after all) glint of reflected sunlight. You can imagine Limburgers looking up and thinking they were seeing the advance shock-troops of some intergalactic mother ship.

The Verhees Delta, according to Peter Kuypers, a commercial pilot for KLM with experience of everything from gliders to a B17 Flying Fortress, "would be a good machine for flying cross country."

On 5 April, 2009, at Beerzel, Antwerp province, at around 15.30 on a sunny afternoon, a witness saw a triangular object with a fin, of a light grey metallic colour in the sky, flying in front of a normal sports aircraft during a period of about one minute. The witness, who had had a keen interest in UFOs since the age of 15, was interviewed in August, 2009, by the UFO website [ufomeldpunt.be](http://ufomeldpunt.be).

In a 30-page report later published on the site, investigators report that the "object" could have been the Delta built by Bart Verhees. On further examination, that turned out to have been the case. "On 5 April I flew from Leopoldsburg to



Ursel, most likely over Beerzel," Verhees told UFO investigators.

Since then, other spotters have reported seeing an object similar to the Delta, near Geel in the summer of 2009 and in Zonhoven in February 2010 – both in Limburg. The Verhees Delta is not going unnoticed.

Does Verhees himself think his plane looks like a UFO? "Well, what does a UFO look like?" he asks in return. "Before I flew the Delta, I didn't even know the UFO site existed. But now I'm not surprised when I come back from a flight and get an email asking if it was me. Sometimes I go onto the site myself to see if anyone's spotted me."



[verheesengineering.com](http://verheesengineering.com)

## FLANDERS TODAY

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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, Robyn Boyle, Leo Cendrowicz, Courtney Davis, Stéphanie Duval, Suki Jenkins, Anna Jenkinson, Katrien Lindemans, Alistair MacLean, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Emma Portier Davis, Saffina Rana, Christophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton

General manager: Christine Van den Berghe

Publisher: Corelio Publishing NV

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FLANDERS TODAY  
OCTOBER 13, 2010

## Pearing off

China will import Flemish pears for the first time, after signing an agreement at the recent Asia-Europe summit in Brussels. The pears will come exclusively from the Waasland in East Flanders and Antwerp provinces



© Shutterstock

# Archbishop “concerned” as university rethinks role

→ continued from page 1

The institutional structure of the university now known as KUL was set up in 1834 by the bishops of the recently formed Belgium, and while its teaching included a major faculty of theology and one of canon law, it developed into a modern university, covering the entire range of modern learning, from philosophy to cutting-edge medical techniques.

“There’s nothing that happens in other universities that doesn’t happen here,” says rector Waer, an immunologist and former head of medicine at the university hospital. “We carry out a full and free programme of scientific research. We follow rules on medical ethics, but those are universal and certainly not determined by the Catholic Church.”

One of the pertinent questions is how international students view Flanders’ higher educational institutions. “It works both ways,” Waer says. “We have many students coming from Catholic parts of the world, and many come to Leuven specifically to study theology. For the rest, I don’t have the impression there’s a problem, though

questions are sometimes asked – whether you have to be a Catholic or do you need to sign something. They think we might be like some American universities that are clearly religious. We explain that we’re a university founded on Christian values, but we’re not a university of the church. We don’t receive a cent from the church.”

But the university is run by a governing board chaired by André Léonard, archbishop of Mechelen and Brussels, the senior Catholic clergyman in the country. He’s joined on the board by three former rectors and senior faculty. External members include the four Flemish bishops of Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent and Hasselt.

“The board is chaired by Monsignor Léonard, made up of different kinds of stakeholders from the wider society, the university and the bishops,” explains Dr Waer. “They [the bishops] are not in the majority, and they have nothing to do with the day-to-day running of the university. They don’t give advice, and they don’t set down conditions, and that’s how it’s been for the last 40 years.” Like an AGM, the board is there to approve the university management’s strategy and long-term policies.

The archbishop, on the other hand, sees his role differently. “Archbishop Léonard has no plans to change the way he performs his



© KU Leuven

A procession of university dignitaries after Mass at Sint-Pieter’s Cathedral, part of the official opening of the academic year in Leuven last month. Rector Mark Waer is second from the right, with the red stole

role,” his spokesman said last week. “It’s certainly not his intention to restrict himself to a purely formal function. The archbishop has had an academic career [at the KUL’s sister university in Louvain-la-Neuve]. He knows very well how things work in the real world.” ♦

## University, Church and Society

KUL’s debates, which are not open to the public, go on until February and cover such themes as the international dimension of a Catholic university, the church and medical research, and science and Christian inspiration. The university is considering producing a report on the debates when the series is complete.

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



4/10

students drink alcohol several times a week, according to a survey of university students in Ghent and Antwerp. About one in 10 male students show signs of a developing an alcohol problem, compared to about one in 50 women

54

extra security personnel for the Brussels justice palace, bringing the total to over 100, who will ensure the delivery of prisoners from the cells to the courtrooms above

10

little piggies dumped by their owner on the Theaterplein in central Antwerp last week, one of which had a note around his neck explaining that the creatures had become too expensive to look after. They were taken to an animal refuge in the city

65

cases of graffiti along Flemish roads in 2009, according to the mobility ministry, down from 95 in 2008. Most cases – 33 in all – were reported in Flemish Brabant

8,000,000

bottles of champagne exported in 2009 to Belgium, of the 293 million produced. Belgians drink on average more than one bottle of champagne a year per person, in second place worldwide after the French (at three)

## Belgocontrol goes into a nose-dive

Two air traffic controllers (ATCs) whose transfer from Charleroi to Brussels led to a strike should stay where they are, the Council of State ruled last week. The transfer of the two men led to a union dispute late in September that caused a 24-hour strike, bringing Belgian air traffic to a standstill.

Unions are worried about under-manning, made worse by the transfer. Charleroi airport already has too few ATCs, they say, and the cut in numbers from 18 to 16 was the last straw.

At the root of the problem lie the severe financial problems experienced by Belgocontrol, the company that runs air traffic control in Belgium. Earlier this year, a member of the Belgocontrol board warned that worn-out equipment, especially outdated radar, could be responsible for a disaster. He warned of a “Buizingen in the air,” referring to the rail accident last February in which 18 people died and 171 were injured.

Federal mobility secretary Etienne Schoupe, however, brushed the warning aside. “I don’t see how radar that was working perfectly today should suddenly become a danger.” Belgocontrol nevertheless ordered the new radar, adding to their financial crisis. ♦

## Fourth Te Gek album in stores

An unusual duet featuring folk singer Walter De Buck, the father of the Gentse Feesten, and Helmut Lotti, the world-renowned crooner, was the highlight of the launch last week in the Ancienne Belgique in Brussels of a CD called *Te Gek?*! (Too Crazy)

The name comes from a campaign started five years ago in the Sint-Annendael psychiatric hospital in Diest, Flemish Brabant. The purpose is to break down preconceptions and taboos surrounding mental illness so that people seek help earlier and have a supportive environment in which to recover. The CD is the fourth in the series.

Coordinator Mark Hellinckx pointed to the success of the Flemish Anti-Cancer League in bringing cancer out of the shadows. “We’d like to be as big as that,” he said.

Also on the CD, among others, are K’s Choice, Willy Willy, Meuris and Flip Kowlier. But it’s Lotti who probably has the widest audience, and he plans on using his fame. “I’m totally convinced that everyone at a certain point in their lives can have a problem with a psychiatric condition. But it doesn’t have to last forever,” he said. “We’re all living longer, but are we living well?” ♦

→ <http://sadbe.accounts.intructo.be/tegek>



© Ad Meskens



A new leisure and shopping complex near the Brussels Ring at Machelen was last week granted a planning permit by the local council. UPlace (pronounced You-Place) will cover about 55,000 square metres near the Vilvoorde viaduct and include restaurants, hotel accommodation, shops and offices, for a total investment of €600 million. Construction will begin in 2012, for completion in 2014. The complex lies just outside Brussels and is expected to compete with another major shopping centre planned for the Heizel plateau. The Heizel development has the support of the Brussels City council and the region. Brussels economy minister Benoit Cereghini is considering an appeal against the permit granted to UPlace. Unizo, meanwhile, called on the Flemish government to take measures to support the existing commercial centres of nearby Machelen, Vilvoorde and Zaventem, which would be affected by the arrival of the complex.

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

## FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

### The clarifier

These troubled times have given Belgian politics a whole new set of words. The royal palace seems to be particularly imaginative in coining new titles and phrases to suit the changing circumstances. Since the June elections, we have seen a *reformateur*, two *royal mediators* and a *high-level working group*, having already become familiar with a *royal explorer* as well as a *royal guide*. And now the king has bestowed upon Bart De Wever a mission “to clarify the positions of the seven negotiating parties,” which makes him a *royal clarifier*. It sounds like the title of a John Grisham thriller.

Meanwhile, a new electoral poll has been published, which reveals astonishing figures. If elections were to be held today, no less than 33% of the Flemish electorate would vote for De Wever’s nationalist N-VA. That is spectacular for a party that in 2003 struggled to get above the 5% electoral threshold and shortly afterwards, to ensure its survival, shaped a cartel with the Christian Democrat party CD&V.

Much of this has to do with De Wever’s larger-than-life personality, which is also reflected in another result. Asked who they would like to see as prime minister, some 33% opted for De Wever (although he, in fact, would rather leave that post to the French-speaking socialist Elio Di Rupo).

N-VA has become a true people’s party, the way the Christian Democrats once were, representing people from all walks of life and holding sometimes opposing views. In fact, only one in five of those who say they would vote for the party support the idea of Flemish independence, even though that is N-VA’s ultimate goal. The rest merely want more Flemish autonomy, while a small percentage wants exactly the opposite: a return to a unitary Belgium.

N-VA therefore faces the same paradox that CD&V encountered in the past: its supporters press for an end to the seemingly everlasting talks on state reform, while at the same time urging the party “not to give in.” How can you do both?

Flanders’ most popular politician may have broad shoulders, but the weight of responsibility that rests on them is enormous. He not only has to reconcile French-speaking and Flemish parties, but also has to meet many different expectations from his electorate.

Last week, it was argued in the media that his young party lacks the technical skills to broker a pragmatic deal, relying instead on general ideological principles. Moreover, N-VA is isolated in its wish to involve liberals in the coalition talks. This leaves lots to be clarified in the days to come.

## New drug tests come into force

**Scientists question reliability of saliva testing on motorists**

ALAN HOPE

Police have gone ahead with the introduction of saliva testing for motorists to detect whether they have taken illegal drugs, despite scientists' objections that the tests are unreliable. Mobility minister Etienne Schouuppe has rejected scientific claims. "We're not here to do science," he said. "We're here to try to get drug users off the roads."

Belgium is the second country in the world after Australia to employ the saliva test, which came into force at midnight on 1 October, with four drivers immediately testing positive. The test, which is carried out at the roadside, consists of taking a saliva sample using a sponge, which the subject has to keep in his or her mouth for a full three minutes.

The sponge is then placed into a testing apparatus for 10 minutes before the result is available. The apparatus shows a stripe if the result is negative for either amphetamines or cannabis; no stripe indicates a positive result.

The tests are aimed at tackling the problem of people who drive under the influence of drugs, following a fall in the number of drunk drivers. Until now, the presence of drugs in the body could only be determined by a blood test. The new system was used for the first time in Wervik, West Flanders. Police carried out 15 checks, and four drivers tested positive.

Jan Tytgat, a forensic toxicologist with a lab at the Catholic University of Leuven that analyses for the justice system, said the test was "not reliable enough. The chance of false results is too great." The test determines if the subject has used drugs in the preceding eight to 10 hours, which is not necessarily an indication that the driver is still under the influence.

Hugo Neels, another toxicologist from Antwerp University, said: "Someone who smokes a joint before going to bed every evening had better stay off the roads from now on because he will test positive on a saliva test."

Dr Tytgat agrees: "Determining if the driver is under the influence at the moment of the test can only be done with a blood sample. If minister Schouuppe had sat down for half an hour with the labs that carry out the analyses, we could have made that clear."

Schouuppe, however, calls the test "watertight. Drugs and driving no longer go together. Anyone with a demonstrable level of drugs in his body who gets behind the wheel is committing an offence."

Dr Tytgat warned of the consequences: "Whoever challenges the results of this test before the courts will win; I'm 100% sure of it." ♦

## Police could be armed with Tasers

**Debate follows fatal shooting in Antwerp province**

The government is to look into the possibility of arming police with the electronic weapons known as Tasers, following the fatal shooting of a 25-year-old man by police in Putte.

Interior minister Annemie Turtelboom last week agreed that the question would be examined after a request from police representatives and from the local police committee of the Brussels West zone, which had requested permission to issue Tasers to its officers.

The incident in Putte, near Mechelen, took place after the parents of Raphaël Verhoeven called police to calm their son, who was severely disturbed following an argument with his girlfriend. He had been suffering from depression following a road accident in which a woman died, for which he was soon due to appear in court. When police arrived, according to reports, he threatened them with a machete. Police opened fire, killing him. An investigation is under way.

The incident shows that police require something in their arsenal between pepper-spray and a firearm, Turtelboom said. "We need to look into whether the currently strict rules need to be made more flexible."

The Taser, manufactured by Taser International, is an electric-



The Taser X26

© Taser International

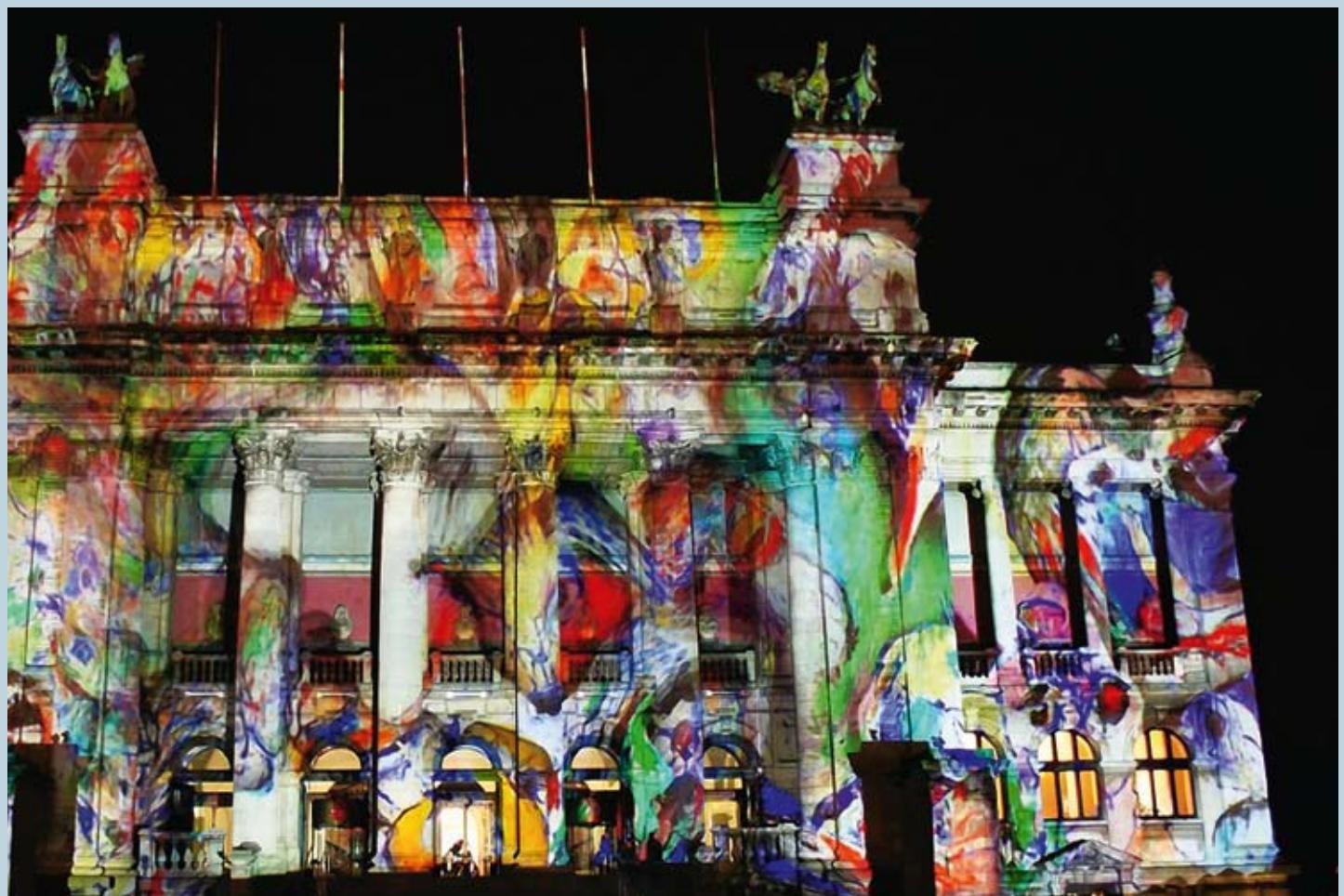
shock weapon that shoots probes into a target's skin; the target's muscular control is lost briefly, making it easier for police to overpower the target. It is one of a growing range of "non-lethal weapons" developed for law enforcement, but the description is somewhat optimistic: Amnesty International points out that 334 people were killed worldwide during Taser interventions between 2001 and 2008.

At present, only members of the special intervention squad of the federal police and the support unit of the Antwerp police are allowed to be armed with Tasers, and only on the express instruction of the interior minister. ♦

## CULTURE NEWS

American rock legend **Bruce Springsteen** has demanded €100,000 in damages from Ghent-based advertising agency WATF after they used an unauthorised version of his 1970s song "Fire" in an ad for a navigation system. A special panel of experts named by the court has decided that the music used was a plagiarised version of the song. Springsteen's lawyers are now looking to recoup the profits the agency made from the campaign, as well as punitive damages to "discourage this sort of practice". A ruling is expected in November.

The Flemish film and TV industries last week published an open letter to culture minister Joke Schauvliege to protest at the region's plans to cut spending. "The film sector creates as many jobs in Flanders as the auto industry," said director Hans Herbots. "Cutting into the budget for the sector runs the risk of undoing the growth that has taken place and going back to the situation of 10 years ago." Schauvliege said she understood the sector's concerns but warned they would have to make cost cuts the same as any other sector of the economy. Her colleague, media minister Ingrid Lieten, is due to present a plan to provide government support for TV fiction, documentaries and animation later in the year.



© KVSKA

Belgacom TV's cult hit **Who took my badjas**, the work of advertising agency VVL/BBDO, has been voted best Belgian ad of 2010 by the promotion and communication association Vepec. The ad involved a man in a woman's bathrobe inserted into movie footage featuring Nicole Kidman, Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman and other stars.



© Belgacom

**Closing Time**, the exhibition by painter Jan Vanriet that marked the closure of the Fine Arts Museum of Antwerp for four years for renovations, attracted a total of 85,000 visitors. The last visitor at the weekend was presented with a signed and numbered lithograph by Vanriet, and "De laatste dag" ("The Last Day"), a work by Belgian artist Pierre Alechinsky, was projected onto the museum facade. Works from the museum's collection will be loaned to museums in Belgium and abroad during the closure and can already be seen in the new James Ensor exhibition at the ING cultural centre in Brussels.

**Scala**, the female choir from Aarschot, Flemish Brabant, has signed a recording contract in the US with Atco Records, a subsidiary of Warner Music Group, which represents artists such as Art Garfunkel, Scarlett Johansson and New York Dolls. Scala's version of the Radiohead hit "Creep" features in the soundtrack of *The Social Network*, the new movie about Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. A CD release is planned shortly, and Scala will tour the US in April.

Flemish author **Peter Terrin** has been awarded a European Prize for Literature for his fourth novel *De Bewaker*, which will appear in English as *The Guard* in July of next year. The €5,000 prizes were awarded by national juries in 11 member states.

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

# The art squad

**A Brussels institute is responsible for the painstaking task of restoring and conserving masterpieces**

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

**S**eparated for two centuries, one piece lost and discovered just seven years ago in Belgrade, and all in need of conservation. An altarpiece by Flemish Primitive Juan de Flandes has been (mostly) reunited and partially restored to its former glory by a team of specialists in Brussels.

The panels – now on view in Antwerp – represent the story of John the Baptist and were painted by order of Queen Isabella of Castille in the late 1400s for the Miraflores cloister in Burgos in Northern Spain. In the early 19th century, the altarpiece was split, with the panels landing in various museums and collections.

Juan de Flandes is one of Flanders' masters (although he only found fame once hired by the Spanish court), and so it is only right that two of the five panels wound up in the hands of the army of conservationists, historians, scientists and photographers of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. It was here in a quiet, sunlit atelier overlooking Brussels' Jubelpark where I met Livia Depuydt's team of painting conservationists and restorers as they put the final, painstaking touches to these oak panels, which include the scene from the banquet of Herod where a young woman serves up John the Baptist's head on a platter.

## Conserving History

Pre-empting any purist streak I might have, Depuydt begins by telling me the principles of the institute (known locally by its Dutch initials KIK): there should be as little intervention as possible, it must be reversible, and it should be invisible. But that's only after the artwork has been studied, photographed, undergone radiographs, cleaned and any loose parts fixed.

All the artwork that arrives at KIK is subject to the same routine. Just as an indication of how busy these folk are, the digital photo library boasts more than one million images, keeping an accurate record of every piece that passes through these doors. And taking all these images is also part of the conservation process.



"The Banquet of Herod" is one of the four panels that have been restored and are on view at the Museum Mayer van den Bergh

"Of course, we examine an artwork with the eyes," says Depuydt, but her team also uses radiographs to determine the condition of a piece and infrared images to see underlying sketches, which can give crucial information as to the techniques employed by the artist.

The next stage is to ensure that the work can hold up to restoration techniques. "If things fall apart, then it's finished," says Depuydt. Then, the work has to be cleaned. "Varnish, for example, turns a painting yellow over time, so we have to remove the varnish," she explains.

Only then does the delicate task of touching up a painting begin. Depuydt explains that her workshop uses stable pigments – "so that the colour we add doesn't change over time" – and uses products that differ from the original. "This is to ensure reversibility."

Any previous attempts to restore the paintings are left in place. "If it's well done, then we leave it there. We don't take it away just to redo it," explains Depuydt. And while the principle aim is to conserve the paintings, I get to watch as a restorer, working on one of the panels, carefully rebuilds a detail, using other works by Flandes as a reference.

## Holistic approach

The *raison d'être* of the institute is to provide a one-stop shop for curators of public and private collections. Aside from the painting atelier, there are specialised units dealing with textiles (hardly surprising given Belgium's long tradition in tapestries), metals, glass and stained windows and sculptures in polychromed wood.

Stopping off in the textiles department, director Fanny Van Cleven shows me some pieces that have definitely seen better days, with either holes or which have been mended with bright fabrics that clash with the original work. Much of KIK's work involves providing backing support for these delicate, aged fabrics and repairing the damage.

"We try not to add too many materials or colorants. We put support behind a hole so that the weight of the fabric doesn't create any tension, and what we add is always very neutral," explains Van Cleven, showing me some creamy coloured tapestry wools used to fill in the gaps.

Over in sculptures, another artist is carefully removing layers of paint that have been added to a statue of Christ on the cross. "Sometimes, it's easy. We



Restorers work on historical paintings at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage



A restorer uses a scalpel and a microscope to remove paint that has been added to this statue, a task that can take years

can use a solvent to remove the paint layer," he says. But in this case, that's not possible so he's removing the layers with a scalpel and a microscope, a project he describes as a multi-year task.

Finally, the *pièce de resistance* is the laboratory where analysts study a painting's pigments and binding agents (egg whites were often used in paints) and ascertain the condition of some of the nation's treasures. I spy a slab of stone from the Stoclet Palace, a UNESCO heritage site on the Tervurenlaan in Brussels, which is being checked for porosity.

Now that they've received their holistic treatment, the two Juan de Flandes panels join two others for a special exhibition at the Museum Mayer van

den Bergh in Antwerp. The exhibition includes an explanation of the work that was carried out by KIK. The fifth panel – in fact the central panel, which is the largest – is in a private collection in Madrid and too delicate to be transported. ♦

## Juan de Flandes and the Miraflores altarpiece

Until 7 November  
Museum Mayer van den Bergh  
Lange Gasthuisstraat 19  
Antwerp

→ <http://tiny.cc/mayervandenbergh>

## Keeping it real

The discovery of a painting that's possibly by a famous artist is a thrilling occasion, but it doesn't always have a happy ending, thanks to the many fakes that haunt collectors' nightmares.

Earlier this year, a painting from a private collection thought to be by Wassily Kandinsky was sent to KIK for analysis. Alas, this was yet another of the Russian avant-garde forgeries that flooded the market in the post-Cold War era.

In the wake of Perestroika, Western collectors became keen on paintings of this genre, which are from about 1900 to 1935 and include schools

such as Futurism and Abstraction. The Kandinsky painting had followed in the footsteps of a series of paintings attributed to Liubov Popova, which were also found to be copies thanks to the highly specialised techniques used by the institute to examine the pigments in the paints.

Steven Saverwijn, head of the institute's laboratory (which is dominated by space age machinery I can't possibly ever understand), is keen to emphasise that minimum interventions are made to ascertain authenticity.

Most commonly, the tiniest sample of paint is taken

to measure the colour spectrum of the pigment, although the institute now has a laser system that takes images without requiring samples. The spectrum is compared to samples in a digital library. With synthetic pigments in particular, the institute is able to determine their earliest usage. In the case of the Kandinsky piece, pigments that post-dated his lifetime were found, allowing KIK to confirm that, unless he had come back from the dead, the painting, while beautiful, was definitely not his.

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

## NMBS trundles from crisis to crisis

### Fare increase criticised by minister

ALAN HOPE

The Belgian rail authority NMBS is in the grip of chaos. As *Flanders Today* went to press, industrial action affecting freight traffic in the Charleroi region in Wallonia was having a knock-on effect on the railway network in Flanders, as well as the motorway system.

On Monday morning, the road traffic authorities reported 425 kilometres of tailbacks, due to train travellers taking heed of warnings of possible disruption and using their cars instead.

Next Monday, 18 October, the whole nation is likely to be hit by a national day-long strike, bringing trains to a standstill.

Future cost-cutting plans are likely to bring further chaos to rail travellers. Many people were surprised at the beginning of last week when it was reported that the NMBS was planning to close ticket windows at several stations, plus phase out buying a ticket on the train, making ticket purchasing for many travellers impossible. The NMBS explained that the leaked document was a discussion of various options, none of which was up for implementation at the moment.

Another heavily criticised recent proposal involved charging passengers a €7 supplement to buy an international rail ticket from a ticket office instead of online. Critics pointed out that the measure would discriminate against those without internet connections, most notably the poor and the elderly. The situation worsened as visitors to the NMBS website saw that not all tickets are available online. The supplement was cut to €3.50 for most international tickets, though it remains at €7 for the TGV.

The NMBS also incurred the wrath of federal minister Inge Vervotte, responsible for government-owned enterprises, with its plan to raise fares from February. The average increase across the board was about 2%, but tickets for short trips would go up by much more – 17.6%.

Vervotte pointed to an agreement that caps fare increases at 1%. She called on the NMBS to "send a message" to users for its lack of punctuality and the serious disruption travellers have had to put up with in the past year. ♦



The entire NMBS network will shut down on Monday, 18 October

### Biscuit maker turns down the heat on workers

Unions and management at biscuit maker LU in Herentals have reached an agreement aimed at avoiding promised industrial action. The situation at the company took a negative turn last week after a long-time employee was sacked, apparently because co-workers refused to work with him. The decision was announced shortly after the man returned to work after three months' sick leave.

"The man who was sacked this week was informed by registered post that colleagues had made remarks," according to the representative of the socialist trade union ABVV. "The way I see is, it is the employer who hires and fires, and, if he fires you, he ought to take responsibility for that."

Another employee received a sanction following complaints from colleagues. Both received union support. Unions claimed the recent cases were only the latest examples of workers being punished on the basis of mere complaints from colleagues and not on the basis of proper disciplinary procedures. Last week, production stopped for two hours in impromptu protest actions, with further actions planned.

Management denied allegations that there was any sort of "tip-line" set up to encourage workers to complain about each other. Not only was there no tip-line, a spokesperson said, there wasn't even any formal procedure for evaluating employees. However unions are convinced the practice is operating informally.

"We get the feeling workers are encouraged to turn each other in," one union representative said. We've noticed over the past few months that there have been more sanctions handed out, and more than once the company has used the argument that it was basing its decision on the reports and remarks of colleagues."

The agreement reached at the weekend includes the reinstatement of the sacked worker, who will now transfer from LU to the parent company, Kraft Foods, also in Herentals. Unions and management are pledged to further discussion on internal discipline, but both sides have now agreed that complaints from co-workers would not be included in an employee's record. ♦

### GIMV invests in call centres

Flemish government investment branch GIMV has invested €3 million in DataControl, Poland's first-ever call centre, set up in 1995. Until this year, DataControl, which serves markets in Poland and Germany, was owned by the German publishing house Axel Springer. This year it was bought back by Jacek Barankiewicz, the man who originally set up the company.

The investment is intended to allow DataControl to open new call centres. It is not known how much of a share GIMV got for its money, but it will be installing two directors on the new board: Jan Dewijngaert, an expert on capital investments in emerging markets, and Radoslav Tausinger, their expert on Central Europe. ♦

### Say it with flowers ... and cheese

The Flemish centre for agricultural and fisheries marketing (VLAM) has started a new advertising and promotion campaign to push local cheese. The campaign will include two television ads by Jan Matthys, one of the directors of the TV series *De Smaak van De Keyser*, as well as internet and trade promotion and tasting points in supermarket car parks.

The campaign will focus on the advantages of Belgian cheeses: small-scale production, authenticity, local sourcing and attention to detail. The website gives information about cheeses, recipes and a calendar of the "cheesemobile", which will be visiting supermarkets for tasting sessions.

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

Meanwhile in Ghent, VLAM launched a campaign to promote the Ghent azalea, the only decorative product to be included in a list of regional products protected by the EU. Last week in the city, residents discovered empty flowerpots distributed through the streets. Next day the pots were filled with azaleas – a type of rhododendron – which residents were invited to take home. At the same time, about 2,000 were planted in public spaces.

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

• Next month, *Flanders Today* will begin a regular series on the regional products of Flanders, including many of the region's cheeses.

→ [www.vlam.be](http://www.vlam.be)



Marketing ninjas distribute free azaleas under cover of night

## THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

### Autos • Mercedes

Daimler has recalled 4,500 Mercedes cars in Belgium, following the discovery of problems with power steering in E-class and C-class vehicles. The problem is accompanied by a whistling noise from the steering wheel housing.

### Autos • Sales

New cars registrations rose 3.5% in September compared to the same period last year, bringing the total for the year so far to some 434,000 vehicles, a 15.8% increase on 2009. Analysts expect the year's total to reach a record 535,000 vehicles. Best selling brands in 2010 are Renault, up 27%; Peugeot, 19% higher; and Volkswagen with a 28% rise.

### Banks • Degroof

The Brussels-based privately owned Banque Degroof has lost one of its historical shareholders, the Bois Sauvage holding company. Its stake in the company has been acquired by the Antwerp-based Cigrang shipping and stevedoring family, owners of Cobelfret.

### Banks • Rothschild

The French Edmond de Rothschild banking group has opened an asset management subsidiary in Brussels to cover the Benelux countries. The move is part of the bank's European development, which includes openings in Germany and Spain.

### Chemicals • Critique Belge

The Tienen-based Critique Belge, which has specialised in the production of citric acid since 1929, has been sold to the German Adcurum holding company by the Dutch DSM chemical and pharmaceutical group.

### Ports • Antwerp & Brussels

The Antwerp Port Authority will invest €1.6 billion over the next 15 years to develop its activities, improve mobility, increase capacity and attract new foreign investors. Included in the programme are a new lock on the left bank of the Scheldt River, the recently approved building of a tunnel to complete the city's ring road, larger docking areas and the redevelopment of previous industrial sites. The port also plans to invest some €10 million in the Port of Oman to develop its activities. Meanwhile, the Port of Brussels is to invest €123 million over the next four years to renovate and develop its facilities.





a student guide

# ANTWERP UNIVERSITY



october 2010

## welcome to UA

The University of Antwerp has been here less than a decade, and yet its scientific and research credentials are among the best in the world

PHOTOS: MONIQUE PHILIPS

DENZIL WALTON

### A bit of history

The history of the University of Antwerp offers a major surprise: it was founded only seven years ago. That's a massive 578 years after the Catholic University of Leuven, and 186 years after the University of Ghent. So was Antwerp in the academic backwoods all this time while the boundaries of academia were being expanded elsewhere in Flanders?

Not at all. Although the University of Antwerp was not officially formed until 2003, its roots go back to a much more respectable 1852. This was when the Fathers of the Society of Jesus established an institute for business education in the port of Antwerp - one of the first business schools in Europe that awarded degrees. It eventually became known as the University Faculties of Saint Ignatius Antwerp (UFSIA).

As the years rolled on, it could even be argued that Antwerp's academic credentials surpassed those of other Flemish cities because, by the start of the 21st century, the city actually boasted not just one but three universities. In addition to UFSIA

there was RUCA (State University Centre Antwerp) and UIA (University Institution Antwerp). It made good sense to combine these under one umbrella organisation, and simplify the acronyms at the same time. UFSIA, RUCA and UIA simply became UA, the University of Antwerp.

UA has seven faculties: Applied Economics; Arts and Philosophy; Law; Medicine; Pharmaceutical, Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences; Political and Social Sciences; and Sciences. Its 13,000 students and 850 staff make it the third-largest university in Flanders. About 1,200 of the students - excluding exchange students - are from foreign countries, with a majority from EU member states.

UA's main campus (called "City Campus") is situated in the historic city centre; the other three are in the green belt to the south of the city (Campuses Drie Eiken, Groenenborger and Middelheim).



## Strong in science and research

UA ranks among Europe's leading universities in terms of impact in the natural and biomedical sciences. Many of its scientists belong to leading international research teams, while academic and research staff work together with other institutes in Belgium and abroad and participate in scientific exchange programmes.

The figures reflect this solid research orientation. External funding of scientific research at the university amounts to more than 50% of the operating resources provided by the government. More than 700 people on campus carry out research on externally-funded projects. Annually, more than 3,000 scientific papers are published, and about 400 students complete a post-graduate degree programme.

Many of the internationally renowned research teams work in the university's five Centres of Excellence: Nanostructures; Molecular Neurogenetics; Environmental Studies; Social Policy Research; and the Vaccine & Infectious Disease Institute.

These research successes are not without reason: UA is equipped with impressive core facilities that give expert technological support to researchers from both academia and industry.

**CalcUA** is one of the most powerful computer clusters in Belgium. It can perform demanding calculations in a broad range of research applications, such as computer science, mathematics, biomedical sciences, physics, chemistry and linguistics, at a speed of three billion operations per second.

Since 1927, the **AntwerpBiobank** has been building a large collection of human brain samples associated with neurological disorders. It provides samples to study Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, frontotemporal dementia, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and epilepsy.

**Biomedical Microscopic Imaging** harbours the latest instruments covering all aspects of imaging at cellular and tissue levels, while the **Genetic Service Facility** provides an integrated state-of-the-art genetic screening platform. Combining expertise in non-invasive molecular imaging techniques and neurological research is the **Bio-Imaging Lab**.



## Close to business

UA is no ivory tower, though; rather, it has its feet firmly placed in industry, business and commerce. For example, UA has established an on-campus Innovation and Incubation Centre, which works on industry-linked projects and encompasses three autonomous institutes. The Institute of Development Policy and Management offers Masters and Doctorate programmes in English and carries out several lines of research; the Institute of Transport and Maritime Management Antwerp has developed close working relationships with the port of Antwerp; while the University of Antwerp Management School includes a Euro-China Centre offering training sessions for Belgian companies working in China to boost trade between the regions

Alongside fundamental scientific research, a great deal of applied and policy-oriented research is also performed. Public authorities, federal and regional governments, the private sector and numerous national and international bodies regularly commission research from teams at the UA.

Under Belgian law, the university is the legal owner of inventions made by its researchers. However, UA encourages its researchers to commercialise their findings. With this in mind, UA has created a structure to help researchers identify the best marketing options for their inventions. An interface service provides a first point of entry for researchers reporting findings with commercial potential. The Innovation Council deals with policy issues and transfer of knowledge. UA also participates in an early-stage venture capital fund.

→ [www.ua.ac.be](http://www.ua.ac.be)



## Your source for news and culture in English

Flanders Today is a weekly newspaper covering news, science, business, arts and lifestyle in Brussels and Flanders. Pick it up every Wednesday at the City Campus' International Relations Office, the Management School or at one of our other 40 distribution points around Antwerp. Or sign up for a free subscription at

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



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ING

# Student Survival Guide

## Getting the best out of Antwerp

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

### ARRIVE

Foreign students are not left to their own devices at the University of Antwerp (UA). The good people of the **International Relations Office** help out in every way they can – from arranging accommodation to assisting with complicated procedures such as registering. At the beginning of each semester, they organise two Orientation Days, but the offices are open to questions all year through.

“We get all kinds of questions, but most of them are very practical, like how to get proper insurance, how to open a bank account – or where to buy a mattress,” says Eva Verrvecken of the International Relations Office. The university’s **Erasmus Student Network**, led by Belgian students, helps Erasmus exchange students integrate by organising all kinds of activities, such as “Ice Breaker Week” at the beginning of each semester.

### EAT

Grabbing a quick bite for lunch in the university’s City Campus area is very easy, as every street is lined with sandwich bars. But beware of long queues during the lunch hour if you’re pressed for time.

The student cafeteria at the university offers very good and cheap meals, though chances are great you’ll eventually be seduced by one of the many friteren, where you typically order a portion of French fries accompanied by some version of deep-fried meat and a dollop of strange sauce.

Other options worth checking out are **Pannacotta** (7 Lange Klarenstraat), which serves breakfast from 8.00 and lunch from 11.00. If you get hooked on their organic bread or fair-trade coffee, you can buy the former in their bakery and get the latter to go all afternoon. You can also get your coffee fix at **Vandoag is't** (Flemish dialect for “It's today”), where you can also take it away, but where it's also fun to hang out and read magazines.

Though students typically don’t go out to eat at night very often, preferring to save money and cook at their student residence, Antwerp offers plenty of places where the food is good and prices are low. **Da Giovanni** (8 Jan Blomstraat) in the old city centre is an excellent example of this: the pizzas are huge and, if you flash your student card, you get an additional 10% discount. In any case, it pays to ask for student discounts at restaurants in the city – and lots of other places, too.

*“I cook a lot, because it’s expensive to go out to eat. But the problem is I have a frituur across the street, so I buy a lot of fried food, too. It’s like you buy something to cook, and then beside it you have fries.”*

- Gustav Mellstig (Sweden)



### DRINK

To make meeting new and interesting people easier, there’s no better lubricant than Belgian beer. Ask any student in Antwerp, and they’ll point you in the direction of either Stadswaag or Ossenmarkt, two of the busiest squares in town after dark. In Stadswaag, discover new cocktails at **La Dolce Vita** (n°11), enter beer contests at **Markies de Sade** (n°17) or dance the night away at **Klimax** (n°19). During warm weather (it will come around next May), the square is filled with terraces, but even in winter, this place is always buzzing with activity at night.

Ossenmarkt is even closer to the university and is home to the snug **Kassa 4** (n°21), hip **Barracuda** (n°1) and noisy **De Salamander** (2 Lange Sint-Annastraat). Two other very popular student cafés are **Hill Diar** (118 Italiëlei) and **De Prof** (51 Vekestraat). Many students start their evening out in the afternoon, first snacking on a croque monsieur, then drinking beer as apéritif, dinner and dessert. A typical Wednesday or Thursday night at these bars ends well past dawn the next day. Don’t forget to go to class.

*“The beer here is really, really cheap compared to Madrid, so I drink beer all the time!”*

- Analia Plaza (Spain)



Antwerp, with its big city mentality but small town feel, is a popular destination for foreign exchange students. It literally has everything: culture, shopping, parties and an excellent *frietkot* (french fry stand) on almost every corner. Here’s how to navigate its meandering, cobblestoned streets.

### GOING OUT

If you’re looking to shake your groove thang, you have many, many options in Antwerp. The most popular nightclub at the moment is **Noxx** (Straatsburgdok, 3 Noordkaai), which is situated near mega cinema complex Metropolis, and is only a short bus ride from the city centre. Club-going in Antwerp entails a bit of dressing up, so don’t waste time standing in line for 30 minutes if you’re wearing sneakers: you most likely won’t get in.

Other student favourites are **Café d’Anvers** (15 Verversru), interestingly located in the city’s red light district, and **Café Local** (25 Waalse Kaai) more down south, where salsa music takes over at least once a week.

But the best parties take place behind closed doors, in someone’s dorm or living room. Ask around to find out who the biggest party animals are: theirs is probably a dorm you’ll want to hang out at. Remember, most Belgians who live and study in Antwerp leave for their parental home at weekends, so Saturday nights tend to be calmer than an average weeknight.

*“Often we go meet other people at the Ossenmarkt, and then we throw a party in someone’s kitchen. I’m not used to this, but here you can just walk into a night shop and buy beer, which you can’t do in Sweden.”*

- Gustav Mellstig



### FREE TIME

Antwerp is, if you didn’t know it by now, the fashion capital of Belgium. Even just an hour of free time in your schedule allows you to take advantage of what Antwerp has to offer in clothes. The **Meir** is your typical high street lined with chain stores, and conveniently located very close to the university. But make sure to check out the surrounding streets as well to discover what Belgian fashion is really about: **Kammenstraat**, **Nationalestraat**, **Kloosterstraat** and **Volkstraat** are the street names to remember for both quirky vintage stores and high-end, avant-garde fashion boutiques.

As far as culture goes, Antwerp has a wonderful **Museum of Fine Arts** (Leopold Dewaeleplaats), and on the Waalse Kaai you’ll find both the **Photo Museum** (n°47) and the **Museum of Modern Art** (entrance at 32 Leuvenstraat), both very much worth seeing. Want to catch a movie? **UGC** (17 Van Ertbornstraat) and **Metropolis** (394 Groenendaallaan) have special prices for students and show virtually every blockbuster. For indie features, head over to the small, charming **Cartoon’s** (4 Kaasstraat) in the old city centre.

*“The problem with shopping here is that everything closes really early. So if you wake up at 14.00, you can’t relax because everything is closed at 18.00!”*

- Analia Plaza



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trio.be

# The ultimate trilogy

Forget *Twilight*...the Belgian EU presidency and Bozar are screening premieres of the best new films from three countries

LISA BRADSHAW

By all accounts, Vanja D'Alcantara's grandmother was a remarkable woman. She was a young mother and wife of a Polish military officer when the Soviets invaded Poland during the Second World War. When her husband was taken prisoner, she was deported to a Gulag labour camp in Siberia.

More than 1.5 million people died in these camps in the 1930s and 40s, and the extraordinarily harrowing tales of survival are still being told – most recently last year in Dutch director Marleen Gorris' English-language film *Within the Whirlwind*.

Now D'Alcantara is telling the story of her grandmother in her first full-length feature film, *Beyond the Steppes*. "After having spent three years in Siberia, my grandmother crossed Uzbekistan and Iran and arrived at Bagdad, where she waited for the end of the war," says the Brussels-based director. "After that, she sailed on the Nile into Africa, travelling to the Congo, where my grandfather awaited her."

It turns out that D'Alcantara's grandfather had studied in Belgium and, not able to locate his family back in Poland after the war, returned here. With "a little help from some Belgian friends from the old school days," he found a job with chemical group Solvay in the Belgian Congo.

D'Alcantara's grandmother didn't speak about her past very often. The director was a teenager when her grandmother died and has pieced together the story as much as she could from writings her grandmother left behind. Research proved that her grandmother's experiences and harsh journey to reach safety were similar to other stories. "My grandmother was the wife of an officer who belonged to the country's intelligentsia," she says. "Millions of Poles were deported to Russia, along with other potential 'subversive' elements....the entire social elite was eliminated."

After their reunion in Congo, the couple had several children and eventually returned to Belgium, settling in Brussels.

Rather than make a biopic, D'Alcantara, 33, used her grandmother's story as an inspiration on which to hang a fictional narrative. *Beyond the Steppes* follows young Polish mother Nina (Agnieszka Grochowska) as she desperately tries to get the help needed for her ill child in a labour camp. When all fails, she sets out across Kazakhstan with a group of nomads in search of medicine.

In a style that recalls the films of Flemish director Peter Brosens and his American partner Jessica Woodworth (*Khadak*, *Altiplano*), the huge political and social issues are told through a personal portrait. "We wanted to talk as little as possible about the major historical events," explains D'Alcantara. "The context is actually not more than a pretext to tell that intimate story."

The film was shot in Kazakhstan in both Polish and Russian, a situation in fact not new to D'Alcantara, whose first film, the mid-length documentary *La tercera vida* (*The Third Life*), was shot in Spanish. "The problems you



Polish actress Agnieszka Grochowska of Belgian film *Beyond the Steppes* will be in Brussels to talk about the new movie

meet are not the ones you had been expecting," she says about shooting in remote locations and in languages she doesn't speak. "Language and distance are practical issues that can be solved. The most difficult thing was that the film I had in mind was not the film the Kazakh crew had in mind. It took a lot of effort to clearly bear in mind which film I was making: not a war film, not a historical film and certainly not an epic film – but an intimate, personal film, a personal journey."

### Three times the charm

Both D'Alcantara and the film's lead actress are present to introduce *Beyond the Steppes*, which opens the Cinema Troïka weekend at Bozar, an initiative of the Belgian Presidency of the EU that presents contemporary cinema from Spain, Belgium and Hungary (the past, current and future countries that consecutively hold the EU presidency). The line-up of more than 15 features, documentaries and shorts is nothing short of excellent. From Spain, Mar Coll won a wealth of awards this year for her film *Tres días con la familia* (*Three Days with the Family*), which breathes new life (so to speak) into a much-used plot of an extended family forced to come together for the funeral of its patriarch.

Among the films from Hungary is *Pál Adrienn*, the second feature from award-winning director Ágnes Kocsis. It is the story of a woman who impulsively chases a childhood memory in order to escape her unhappy life.

Your chance to see the best of recent Belgian cinema is right here. Besides *Beyond the Steppes*, you get *La Régate* (*The Boat Race*), which was all the talk of the Francophone International Film Festival last year in Namur, taking home the public prize. It's Bernard Bellefroid's first film and follows the story of a teenager training for rowing championships while struggling with an abusive home life.

You'll also see the new film by Sam Garbarski, who last gave us the crowd-pleasing *Irina Palm*, starring Marianne Faithful as a grandmother who goes into the erotic hostess business. This time, in *Quartier Lointain*, he catapults a middle-aged man backwards in time to experience his teenage years all over again. It's another case of a worn-out storyline getting a fresh treatment, and the critics are pleased.

In Flemish film, *Turquaze*, Kadir Balci's story of a young Turkish man dealing with love and racism in Ghent, will screen, as well as *Pulsar*, the new film by Alex Stockman that finds a young man (Matthias Schoenaerts) turning paranoid as technology takes over his life and threatens to ruin his relationship. *Pulsar* won't open in Belgium until January.

Many filmmakers and actors will be on hand during the weekend to discuss their films before or after screenings, including all of the afore-mentioned directors. Subtitle languages vary, so check the schedule carefully. ♦

### 22-24 October

Bozar  
Ravensteinstraat 23  
Brussels

→ [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

### More gifts from the EU presidency

It's unfortunate that the six-month Belgian Presidency of the European Union, which lasts until the end of the year, has been somewhat eclipsed in its own country by the ongoing government conflicts, because it is responsible for some outstanding events. Here are some highlights, but a complete list can be found at [www.eutrio.be](http://www.eutrio.be)

**Innovation Festival of Kortrijk** The people of Kortrijk have been asked to turn in their innovative ideas, some of which have been developed into products or projects. This event, combined with the city's big interior design festival Interieur (see page 13), puts Kortrijk at the centre of creativity and design this month. *Until 25 October*

→ [www.innovationfestival-kortrijk.be](http://www.innovationfestival-kortrijk.be)

**Building for Brussels** How can architecture and urban planning provide answers to the current challenges in Brussels? Find out at this exhibition in Bozar that looks at the five biggest challenges that face the capital and how other major European cities might help. *Until 18 November*

→ [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

**Rally in the European Quarter** Students in the final two years of secondary school are invited to gather at BIP (Brussels Info Place), where they will be given a GPS and taken on a journey through the European Quarter, completing tasks on the theme of "Europe in Brussels". *Until 30 November*

→ [www.blbe.be](http://www.blbe.be)



Piroska searches for the past to escape the present in Hungarian film *Pál Adrienn*

# Ensor everlasting

Two more shows celebrating the Flemish artist open this month

SARAH MCFADDEN

**W**hat, more Ensor? So far, the 150th anniversary of the Ostend painter's birth has been celebrated by a full-dress retrospective in New York and Paris and by a convivial show in his hometown of Ostend. Within the space of one year, don't the prospects of a third and, later this month, a fourth Ensor exhibition risk overkill?

The short answer is "no". James Ensor was a true original – his range of style and subject matter exceeded anything seen in his own era (1860-1949) and, arguably, since. Unclassifiable, the work continues to challenge even the scholars who specialise in it. In what remains of "Ensor's Year", those specialists are presenting the artist from widely different perspectives.

At the end of this month, a vast exhibition of contemporary art indebted to Ensor opens in Ghent; last week in Brussels, and for the first time ever, the many splendours of the world's largest Ensor collection were unveiled, along with a trove of little-known works from far-flung private and public holdings, in a show of 62 paintings and 145 works on paper that trace Ensor's full career.

The unrivalled collection belongs to Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp, where Ensor found his first committed group of buyers in 1905. It boasts 37 paintings – many of them, such as "The Oyster Eater" (pictured), icons of the artist's work – and more than 500 drawings, which the museum bought at the artist's death. It's the latter that are the revelation of this exhibition, aptly titled *Ensor Revealed*. They show the Flemish artist diligently copying the old masters and his peers, doodling humorously for his own amusement, giving free hand to fantasy and transforming his own drawings from earlier decades. His output,

imagination and skill as a draftsman were prodigious and, whether limning saints or grotesque figures, free association was his guide.

One of the least familiar paintings in the show, Ensor's final large canvas, depicts the religious procession that takes place annually in the West Flemish town of Veurne. In the foreground and surrounded by costumed figures, the aged artist is shown in conversation with a younger man in modern dress. To their left is a crude profile that would not be out of place in the deliciously repellent "Astonishment of the Mask Wouse" (also in the show). The anti-establishment Baron Ensor would have been delighted to know that the work is now owned by the Vatican Museums. ♦

## Ensor Revealed

Until 13 February  
ING Cultural Centre  
Koningsplein 6, Brussels

→ [www.ing.be/art](http://www.ing.be/art)

**Hareng Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art**  
31 October – 27 February  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Citadelpark, Ghent

→ [www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)



## FILM REVIEW ★★★★

IAN MUNDELL

### Zot van A

Last year, Flemish director Jan Verheyen said that Antwerp would get some marketing from him to make up for the sleazy image of the city he put on the screen in *Dossier K*. That gift is now ready to be unwrapped: *Zot van A* (*Crazy About Ya*) is a bubbly romantic comedy that shows off the city and fills it with practically every celebrity actor in Flanders.

The inspiration is Richard Curtis' *Love Actually*, filtered through a blockbusting Dutch film from 2007 called *Alles is liefde* (*Love is All*). Set in Amsterdam, that film revolved around Sinterklaas' annual return to the city by boat after passing the summer in Spain. Once on land, he rewards good children, while his blacked-up assistant Zwarde Piet punishes the bad.

Antwerp has the same Sinterklaas tradition, so it was a natural choice for a remake. If that sounds odd, given a Dutch original, remember that Flanders loves its local celebrities; packing the film with familiar faces makes all the difference.

*Zot van A* begins with preparations for Sinterklaas' entry into Antwerp. When the actor playing the saint has a heart attack, hitchhiker Jan (Michel Van Dousselaere) is drafted as a replacement. No-one notices that this bearded old gent has just arrived from Spain in a truck full of oranges.

Ripples begin to spread. The actor's death

reunites his daughter Anna (Veerle Baetens) with estranged husband Bruno (Koen de Graeve), while a chance encounter when Sinterklaas lands spells romance for shop assistant Astrid and tennis star Paul (Lotte Heijnen, Kevin Janssens). Further mishaps sow mistrust for Arno and Lydia (Mathias Sercu, Barbara Sarafian) and doubts for soon-to-be married Alain and Fred (Jan Van Looveren, Mathijs Scheepers). And that's just the beginning.

Verheyen is an effective director, so when he promises us *Antwerp Actually*, that is what we get. It's funny and charming, but ultimately a bit derivative. In-jokes such as pin-up Janssens playing a love-struck mega-celeb will make up for this with Flemish audiences, while outsiders will appreciate Sinterklaas explaining his methods to a passing African-American. "I don't punish the bad children," he says in halting English. "Black people do that. They are my slaves." (Yes, Flanders, this is weird to us!)

Otherwise my favourite strand involves predatory 18-year-old Lucas (Matteo Simoni), who strikes out with TV producer Annette (Joke Devynck) before trying his luck with Anna at her father's funeral. It may only be October, but this gets my vote for Movie Seduction of the Year.

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



But will she catch her man? Lotte Heijnen in *Zot van A*

## Sweet home Chicago

LAWRENCE DE GEEST

Luc Tuymans returns to his American roots

Autumn in the United States is the season of "homecoming", when university alumni return to campuses across the country to celebrate college, American football and American beer. And so it is, too, for Antwerp painter Luc Tuymans on his return to Chicago for his self-titled show (albeit with no sports and, of course, Belgian beer).

Following a warm reception for Tuymans thrown by Chicago's Honorary Belgian Consul – peppered with Belgians who live in the "windy city" – the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago opened the exhibition of about 75 paintings on 2 October. *Luc Tuymans* occupies the museum's entire fourth floor.

"My first show in the US was in Chicago back in 1995," he said during a speech at his reception. "At that show, I met my wife Carla during a cigarette break outside. That is why, in life, you should never quit."

Chicago is the last stop on an American tour, following Columbus, Ohio; San Francisco, California; and Dallas, Texas, before coming home to

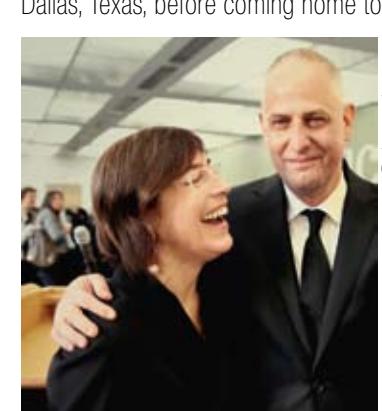
go on show in Brussels next February. Dallas was a good experience, Tuymans says. "They have New York money but aren't pretentious."

Chicago, though, is the only stop at which Tuymans also curated complementary exhibits of cinema (not his, though he used to dabble) and sources of his paintings (like Polaroids). He is also painting a mural on the museum's second-floor atrium based on Florence's Basilica of Santa Croce.

"So much of Luc's work deals with history, so it's great to have him in Chicago, a city of history," says Museum of Contemporary Art curator Madeleine Grynsztejn, who has known Tuymans for many years. "He is big on breaking memory conditioning. You'll see a painting of a skier and think, 'hey, skiing is fun', but then you see that it is really a painting of [Nazi architect] Albert Speer."

The US is a strong market for Tuymans, who says that his exclusive opening for potential buyers "went well".

Popularly remembered as a city of gangsters and blues musicians, Chicago nowadays is abound with private galleries and young artists cruising to them atop brightly collared bicycles. One such met Tuymans at his opening reception. "He's such an inspiration to all of us," she says. ♦



### Luc Tuymans

Until 9 January  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Chicago

→ [www.mcachicago.org](http://www.mcachicago.org)



## Monkey Sandwich

LISA BRADSHAW

Last weekend, I witnessed something I'd never before experienced in Belgium: a Wim Vandekeybus production was followed by a smattering of boos. The man behind me was a bit more subtle, muttering to his companion as the lights went up: "That was incredibly bad."

At some points in the performance, I agreed with him. But, by the end, I felt that *Monkey Sandwich* was the sum of its parts – an unsettling, grisly vision of humanity that, regardless of its delivery – which occasionally leaves something to be desired – instils one with a feeling of dread that is difficult to shake. Is it any wonder someone might say "boooo"?

Dutch speakers use the phrase *broodje aap verhaal* ("monkey sandwich story") to refer to those persistent rumours that in English we call urban legends. Vandekeybus has made a film (in English) referring to a number of these legends through a series of short vignettes, where one man (British actor Jerry Killick, an excellent choice) plays different characters. As the film plays, a solitary dancer onstage experiences – or perhaps re-enacts – much of the film's action, though in a sort of strange, alternate universe.

It starts off, in fact, very promising for the audience, who laugh as we meet the onscreen characters that pop in and out of the varying stories. In the first, a theatre director (Killick) tries to deal with his sensitive actors, while at the same time showing his crazier

sides: at one point, he becomes extremely angry when his actor doesn't *really* eat his victim, like the Shakespearian character does. "It's all fake!" he screams.

Later, he's working with a woman playing Ahab in *Moby Dick*; she gets a bit *too* into character, hurling around her director like a rag doll, as if he is the white whale incarnate (which in much of the film, he is).

What does Shakespeare have to do with *Moby Dick*? Nothing, and the film juts in and out of different stories and scenes rather irrationally, much like a David Lynch movie. Themes and symbols are introduced and abandoned, only to show up later – pigs, children and hunters playing major roles.

Vandekeybus, one of Belgium's top three choreographers and one of the most sought-after in Europe, is known for challenging – if sometimes schizophrenic – work. But his pieces are also highly entertaining, evidenced by return audiences in the last couple of years to previous productions like *Spiegel* and *Menske*. *Monkey Sandwich* is not only complex and distorted, the one dancer (Damien Chapelle) isn't dancing so much as crawling around, making a lot of pig noises and occasionally submerging himself in a large vat of water. Did I mention yet that he is naked throughout?

It all adds up to seeming like a lot of *avant-garde* nonsense. And yet, by the end, I didn't mind that overwhelming sense of not

knowing what's going on. Like a David Lynch film, in fact, it's not as important to understand it as to *feel* it.

Whatever Vandekeybus wants to say with *Monkey Sandwich*, what I heard was a number of unsettling realities. When you have children, you must give away a part of yourself. When you try to change the natural course of the universe, you will be met with disaster. What people are willing to do to animals, they are also willing to do to each other. And urban legends, though not necessarily true, are the manifestation of fears that derive from situations that are all-too true.

Days later, the visions of *Monkey Sandwich* are still ricocheting around in my head. Vandekeybus didn't exactly entertain me, but he affected me. And that's what art is for. ♦

**14 October, 20.00**

**Stadsschouwburg**  
Vlamingstraat 29, Bruges

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

**26-29 October, 20.30**

**STUK**, Naamsestraat 96  
Leuven

→ [www.stuk.be](http://www.stuk.be)

For more dates, visit

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



## MORE THEATRE THIS WEEK

**Eastman in Play** → *deSingel*, Antwerp

**Stillivingrooms** → sponsored by *Vooruit*, Ghent

**ETCetera in Absurd, absurd!** → *Studio Theatre*, Brussels

FLANDERS TODAY  
OCTOBER 13, 2010



## DON'T MISS

### For Real

**Until 31 October,  
17.00-midnight**  
Hasselt city centre

Hasselt keeps giving us reasons to visit this autumn: the brief return of the giant rubber duck to its canal and the excellent, topical exhibition currently on show at its world-class Fashion Museum are two. And now this series of projections in public spaces. *For Real: 28 Utopian Projections* is an ambitious project, staged both in Hasselt and across the border in Maastricht, that projects video art off the cities' largest shop windows. The setting becomes part of the story in work by international and local filmmakers, including well-known Flemish artists Nicolas Provost and Pieter Geenen.



→ [www.for-real.eu](http://www.for-real.eu)

**The Music Village**  
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
[www.themusicvillage.com](http://www.themusicvillage.com)  
**OCT 14** 12.30 1060

**VK Club**  
Schoolstraat 76; 02.414.29.07  
[www.vkconcerts.be](http://www.vkconcerts.be)  
**OCT 14** 20.00 The Wedding Present  
**OCT 16** 20.30 Teek + Giuliano Palma & The Bluebeaters + Curfew

**Viage**  
Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43  
[www.viage.be](http://www.viage.be)  
**OCT 16** 18.30 Dinner show with Will Tura and big band

**Ghent**  
**De Centrale**  
Kraankindersstraat 2; 09.265.98.28  
[www.decentrale.be](http://www.decentrale.be)  
**OCT 19** 19.30 Youngblood Brass Band, BRZZVLL

**Handelsbeurs**  
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65  
[www.handelsbeurs.be](http://www.handelsbeurs.be)  
**OCT 13** 20.15 Dez Mona  
**OCT 18** 19.30 Lostboy! aka. Jim Kerr

**Kinky Star**  
Vlasmarkt 9; 09.223.48.45  
[www.kinkystar.com](http://www.kinkystar.com)  
**OCT 17** 21.00 Gazz  
**OCT 19** 21.00 Black Up

**Vooruit**  
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060  
[www.vooruit.be](http://www.vooruit.be)  
**OCT 17** 22.00 Aloe Blacc + Ghostpoet  
**OCT 20** 20.00 Stray Dogs with Legoman

**Kortrijk**  
**De Kreun**  
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44  
[www.dekreun.be](http://www.dekreun.be)  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Infesticons + Speed Dial 7  
**OCT 19** 20.00 No Age + Gun Outfit

**Leuven**  
**Het Depot**  
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03  
[www.hetdepot.be](http://www.hetdepot.be)  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Dub Inc, reggae  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Aloe Blacc + Seu Jorge and Almaz  
**OCT 21** 20.00 Peter Pan Speedrock + Paranoiacs

# Agenda

FLANDERS TODAY  
OCTOBER 13, 2010

## Ostend

**Kursaal (Casino)**  
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00  
www.sherpa.be  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Erik & Sanne by Candlelight  
**OCT 17** 20.00 Zap Mama

## Vilvoorde

**CC Het Bolwerk**  
Bolwerkstraat 17; 02.255.46.90  
www.hetbolwerk.be  
**OCT 13** 20.30 Bob Geldof



## Antwerp

**Buster**  
Kaastrui 1; 03.232.51.53  
www.busterpodium.be  
**OCT 13** 21.00 Balanced Exposure **OCT 14** 21.00 Buster Jam **OCT 15** 22.00 Geert Schoeters Trio **OCT 16** 22.00 The Zoomatics (recording live) **OCT 20** 21.00 Playtime Session **OCT 21** 21.00 Buster BabL Jam

**Café Hopper**  
Leopold de Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33  
www.cafehopper.be  
**OCT 17** 16.00 Harry Happel & guests  
**OCT 18** 21.00 Alex Koo Derudder Trio

**De Roma**  
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40  
www.deroma.be  
**OCT 14** 20.30 BRZZVLL **OCT 16** 20.30 Lyenn **OCT 17** 15.00 The Belgian Swingjazz Orchestra **OCT 21** 20.30 Kayhan Kalhor & Brooklyn Rider

**Rataplan**  
Wijngaemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40  
www.rataplanvzw.be  
**OCT 16** 20.30 De Beren Gieren

**Zuiderpershuis**  
Waalse Kaaï 14; 03.248.01.00  
www.zuiderpershuis.be  
**OCT 20** 20.30 Exprezz Chopin

## Brussels

**Art Base**  
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Brrraka  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Vinylio, rebetiko (Greece)

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Sufi Night: Ensemble Rafik El Maai, Ensemble Ibn Arabi, Baye Fall, Sain Zahoor

**OCT 19** 20.00 Café de los Maestros ensemble

**Le Bar du Matin**  
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59  
http://bardumtein.blogspot.com  
**OCT 14** 21.00 Iva Nova (Russia)

**Koninklijk Circus**  
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15  
www.cirque-royal.org  
**OCT 13** 20.30 Celtic Legends

**Naamsepoortgalerij**  
Bolwerksquare 3;  
www.muziekpubliek.be  
**OCT 13** 12.30 Broodje Brussel: Mady Kouyate (Guinea Conakry)

**The Music Village**  
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com  
**OCT 14** 12.30 1060

**Jazz Station**  
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78  
**OCT 13** 20.30 Ivan Paduart **OCT 15** 20.30 John Smillie + Billy Dingle and the Moving Parts + Will Smith and Ken + more **OCT 16** 18.00 The Unexpected 4 **OCT 20** 20.30 Yves Peeters Group

**Sounds Jazz Club**  
Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50  
www.soundsjazzclub.be

Concerts at 22.00:

**OCT 13-14** Rosario Giuliano Quartet  
**OCT 16** 21.00 Brussels Rhythm & Blues Club: Remembering Thong **OCT 18** Master Session **OCT 19** Hermia-Tassin Quartet **OCT 20** Chamaquindo, salsa

**The Music Village**  
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com  
Concerts at 21.00:  
**OCT 13** 20.30 Trioxide **OCT 15** Claudio Roditi + Klaus Ignatzek + Jean-Louis Rassinfosse Trio **OCT 16** Emilia Kirova

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**OCT 20** Laurianne Corneille & Nicola Andreoli **OCT 21** Bill Sheffield

## Ghent

DeBijloke  
Joseph Kluyskenstraat 2; 09.269.92.92  
**OCT 20** 20.00 Dave Holland Quintet

## Hasselt

**Muziekodroom**  
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13  
www.muziekodroom.be  
**OCT 21** 20.30 Shawn Pittman

## Brussels

**Bruges**  
**Concertgebouw**  
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
www.concertgebouw.be  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Céline Frisch, harpsichord: Byrd, Ligeti  
**OCT 20** 20.00 Ecce Homo: installation by Ief Spincemaille and Wies Hermans

## Brussels

**Art Base**  
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20  
www.art-base.be  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Brrraka  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Vinylio, rebetiko (Greece)

## Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
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http://bardumtein.blogspot.com  
**OCT 14** 21.00 Iva Nova (Russia)

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Bolwerksquare 3;  
www.muziekpubliek.be  
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## The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
www.themusicvillage.com  
**OCT 14** 12.30 1060



## Antwerp

**Amuz**  
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80  
www.amuz.be  
**OCT 17** 15.00 Claire Chevallier, piano: Chopin

**OCT 21** 21.00 Ecce homo: musical installation by Ief Spincemaille and Wies Hermans

## deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28  
www.desingel.be  
Concerts at 20.00:  
**OCT 13** Le Concert Olympique

## Antwerp

**Vlaamse Opera**  
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02  
www.vlaamseopera.be  
**Until OCT 13** 15.00/20.00 L'Amour de loin (Love from Afar) by Kaija Saariaho, conducted by Koen Kessels, staged by Daniele Finzi Pasca (in the original French with Dutch surtitles)



conducted by Jan Caeyers: Haydn, Beethoven **OCT 14** Akademie für alte Musik Berlin: Bach's Brandenburg Concertos **OCT 16** Robert Holl, bass; Rudolf Jansen, piano: Schubert **OCT 20** Marieke Berendsen, violin: Simon Steen Andersen **OCT 21** MetA4 string quartet: Shostakovich, Mendelssohn, Jouni Kaipainen **OCT 21-23** B'Rock conducted by Frank Agsteribbe

## Bruges

**Bruges**  
**Concertgebouw**  
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02  
www.concertgebouw.be  
**OCT 16** 20.00 Céline Frisch, harpsichord: Byrd, Ligeti  
**OCT 20** 20.00 Ecce Homo: installation by Ief Spincemaille and Wies Hermans

## Brussels

**Bozar**  
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00  
www.bozar.be  
**OCT 13** 12.40 Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, piano: Ravel 20.00 Hélène Grimaud, piano: Mozart, Berg, more  
**OCT 15** 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by James Gaffigan: Frédéric Van Rossum, Beethoven, Stravinsky **OCT 16** 20.00 Huelgas Ensemble conducted by Paul Van Nevel: Tomas Hofhaimer, Petrus Tritonius, Johann Walter, more **OCT 17** 11.00 Ramon Ortega Quero, oboe; Peter Kofler, harpsichord; Luise Buchberger, cello: Telemann, Vivaldi, Bach, more **OCT 20** 12.40 Jerold Rubenstein, violin; Dalia Ouziel, piano: Schubert, Lekeu

## Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37  
www.kcb.be

**OCT 14** 20.00 Quatuor Ebène, Akiko Yamamoto, piano: Mozart, Faure, Brahms

**OCT 16** 20.00 Brussels String Quartet: Mozart, Ravel, Schubert (Concerts Carlo Van Neste)

## Ghent

**Conservatory**  
Hoogoort 64; 09.265.91.65  
www.handelsbeurs.be

**OCT 16** 20.00 Tetzlaff Quartett: Haydn, Dvorak, Schoenberg

## De Bijloke

Joseph Kluyskenstraat 2; 09.269.92.92  
www.debijloke.be

**OCT 15** 20.00 Symphony Orchestra of Flanders conducted by Andreas Delfs: Aaron Jay Kernis, Chopin, Schumann

**OCT 16** 20.00 Tetzlaff Quartett: Haydn, Dvorak, Schönberg

**OCT 17** 15.00 B'Rock: Five year anniversary of the baroque orchestra

## Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65

**OCT 15** 20.15 Blind Date with Ictus and Peter Vermeersch

## Leuven

**30CC - Wagehuys**  
Brusselsestraat 63; 016.23.84.27

www.30CC.be

**OCT 17** 11.00 Antonio Piricone, Megumi Tanno, piano: four-hand pieces by Clementi, Beethoven, Tommaso Giordani, more

## Lemmensinstituut

Herestraat 53; 016.233.967

www.lemmens.be

**OCT 14** 20.00 Oxalys with Céline Frisch, harpsichord: Ligeti, Berio, more



## Ghent

**Vlaamse Opera**  
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02

www.vlaamseopera.be

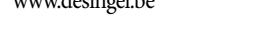
**Until OCT 13** 15.00/20.00 L'Amour de loin (Love from Afar) by Kaija Saariaho, conducted by Koen Kessels, staged by Daniele Finzi Pasca (in the original French with Dutch surtitles)



## Antwerp

**deSingel**  
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28

www.desingel.be



## DONT'MISS

### Interieur

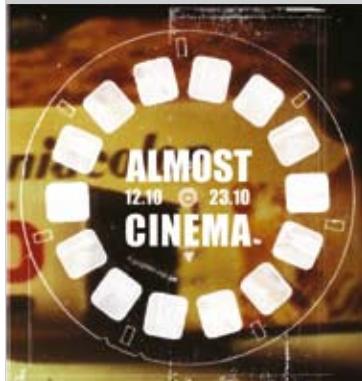
**15-24 October**

**Kortrijk Xpo**

This design biennale is one of the best in Europe, evidenced by its ability to pull in audiences that are not necessarily interested in the practices of architecture or design. With its host of exhibitors from international design houses, it's a sort of exhibition/fun park rolled into one. Even the styles worn by

### Almost Cinema

Until 23 October  
Vooruit, Ghent



Although the Flanders International Film Festival is spread all over Ghent, Vooruit is where you'll find its fringe programme Almost Cinema, where the true cinephiles climb the hundreds of stairs to the old building's attic to see some of the festival's more esoteric options. Almost Cinema is also home to the festival's annual exhibition.

I've never been disappointed by the exhibition of Almost Cinema, which always manages to surprise me with its creative choices of installations that illustrate the art of the moving image in unexpected ways. I stood for a full 15 minutes last year watching a 3-year-old run around and around a room full of tiny, white flags, learning how her movements created the airflow necessary to make them move. It was both simple and sophisticated, the 3-year-old and I agreed.

Visitors last year were also introduced to the work of Spanish artist Pablo Valbuena, who literally recreated a room using lasers. This year, he's designed a site-specific light sculpture on the back of the offices of the Ghent University rector, next to the back façade of the Vooruit. It incorporates all the surfaces, including windows and corners, becoming a moving image show for the masses walking along the canal.

The Flemish art group CREW, meanwhile, brings its latest fusion of art and science, "Bolscan", which puts the visitor into a movie. More interaction is to be had from British artist Duncan Speakman's "As if it were the last time", which hands the visitor a pair of headphones to listen to a soundtrack developed especially for a tour of Ghent.

And then there is "Studies for Longing/Seeing" by German artist Kerstin Ergenzinger, a "kinetic" installation of rubber mats that moves at the behest of the observer. I cross my fingers that a 3-year-old will be present.

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

## CAFE SPOTLIGHT

ROBYN BOYLE



**Festival of Flanders:** International music festivals fill streets, squares and waterways with guerilla and organised concerts, from classical and medieval to traditional world and modern regional music  
**Until OCT 24** across Flanders  
[www.festival.be](http://www.festival.be)

### Bruges

**Brugge Centraal:** Festival celebrating the art and culture of Central Europe, with dance, theatre, music, literature, film and exhibitions  
**Until JAN 30** across Bruges  
[www.bruggecentraal.be](http://www.bruggecentraal.be)

### Brussels

**Asia on Stage: Celebration of the music, theatre and dance heritage of Asia**  
**Until OCT 16** at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23  
02.507.82.00, [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

**Field Works-Office:** Site-specific performances by deepblue in Brussels' office spaces  
**Until OCT 15** times and locations vary  
[www.kaaitheater.be](http://www.kaaitheater.be)

**Freedom Festival:** Multidisciplinary festival promoting human rights through concerts, performances, exhibitions, international film competition, talks and more  
**OCT 21-30** at Théâtre National, Emile Jacqmainlaan, and KVS, Lakensestraat 23  
[www.festivaldeslibertes.be](http://www.festivaldeslibertes.be)

**Literair Museum**  
Bampsalaan 35; 011.26.17.87  
[www.literairmuseum.be](http://www.literairmuseum.be)  
**Until NOV 7** Tom Schamp: Feest in de stad (Party in the City), work by the Flemish illustrator

**z33**  
Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60 [www.z33.be](http://www.z33.be)

**Until DEC 12** David Huycke: Re-thinking granulation, sculptures by the Flemish silver designer  
**Until DEC 12** Toegepast (Applied), works by students selected from Belgian and Dutch design academies

### Kasterlee

**Frans Masereel Centre**  
Zaardendijk 20; 014.85.22.50  
[www.fransmasereelcentrum.be](http://www.fransmasereelcentrum.be)  
**Until NOV 30** Reunalla/Aan de grens, contemporary Finnish lithography

### Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation  
Westakker; 03.789.22.07  
[www.verbekefoundation.com](http://www.verbekefoundation.com)  
**Until OCT 31** Green Summer, ecological projects and art works  
**Until OCT 31** Stan Wannet: De Hondenmepper, moving installations and robotics by the artist-in-residence  
**Until OCT 31** Wout Hoeboer (1910-1983): Dandy Dada, retrospective of the surrealist Dutch painter

### Leuven

**Museum M**  
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29 [www.mleuven.be](http://www.mleuven.be)  
**Until DEC 5** The Anjou Bible: A Royal Manuscript Revealed, a rare manuscript from the 14th-century court of Naples  
**Until JAN 16** Robert Devriendt: Victimes de la Passion, paintings  
**Until JAN 23** Mayombe: Meesters van de magie (Master of Magic), sculptures and objects from KU Leuven's Congolese collection

### Meise

**National Botanic Garden of Belgium**  
Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20  
[www.plantentuinmeise.be](http://www.plantentuinmeise.be)  
**Until OCT 17** When Art Meets Science, watercolours of mushrooms by five European botanical artists  
**Until OCT 24** Boxes Brimming with Life, photo installations by Flemish wildlife photographer Tom Linster

### Tervuren

**Royal Museum for Central Africa**  
Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
[www.africamuseum.be](http://www.africamuseum.be)  
**Until JAN 9** Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of Congo, from source to mouth  
**Until JAN 9** 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building  
**Until JAN 9** Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today



### Trappistenhuis

#### Brabantdam 164, Ghent

Yet another example of old-meets-new in Ghent, Trappistenhuis has been around since the 17th century. Here at the entrance gate to the city, horse-drawn carriages would stop and allow passengers to take a break before climbing into smaller coaches that were able to manoeuvre through the centre's maze of small streets and alleyways. Of course a drink or two was as welcome back then as it is today.

Trappistenhuis upholds tradition through its atmosphere; a brown pub with low ceiling beams, its decor is limited to draping dried hops, classic beer advertisements, old wooden crates and barrels and an ultra-cosy wood-burning stove. There is also an intimate covered courtyard for small groups.

And Trappistenhuis gets a lot of small groups, as it is a favourite haunt of moviegoers from the nearby cinema Studio Skoop. For this reason, Saturday and Sunday evenings are notoriously packed at Trappistenhuis.

The best time to visit is on a relaxed weeknight, when you are sure to have ample time to read one of the newspapers on offer, play a board game, or even bury yourself in the menu if your Dutch is up to par. In addition to a fascinating introduction to the building's history, there are whole chapters on each beer type, from trappists and abbeys to artisanal and fruit beers, plus detailed descriptions of every bottle of beer on the menu (more than 150) and on tap (Witte van Watou, Westmalle Dubbel, Chimay Tripel and Enamel Blond).

Mine read: "Geuze Girardin, 37,5cl, 5°: This beauty smells sour, and that's how it tastes, too, with a nice bitter aftertaste. This Flemish-Brussels 'champagne' is lightly bubbly, refreshing and tasty. Take a big sip to stimulate the taste buds, and then continue to enjoy it in smaller sips."

Definitely order the *bierplank*, a wooden platter piled high with a mix of salami, cheese, pickles, onions, mustard and more perfectly beer-paired, thirst-arousing snacks.

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

## bite

ROBYN BOYLE

© Liliane Callegari



## Tante Marie

Seeing Damme is reason enough to go to Damme. But even if it weren't located in one of Flanders' most charming little villages, Tante Marie *pâtisserie-brasserie* is worth a trip all on its own.

Just six kilometres of a lush tree-lined canal separate Damme from Bruges, making Tante Marie (Aunt Marie) the perfect stop-over on a walk or bike ride. It doesn't matter what time of day it is; the menu caters to all tastes and appetites – big or small, sweet or savoury. In our case it was midday, so the lunch menu was appropriate. For €23.50, it includes a flute of Champagne, an assortment of hearty fare, a glass of wine and a cup of coffee. With our last sips of the decadent daytime bubbly, two warm plates arrived.

My companion's Mediterranean assortment consisted of an ample slice of Tuscan lasagne, thick focaccia bread cloaked in Parma ham and a flaky puff pastry stuffed with leeks and feta cheese. I opted for the Tante Marie assortment, figuring you can't go wrong with anything named after the house. Indeed I was pleased with large, homemade shrimp *croquette*, a helping of the same lasagne as across the table and an oven dish filled with gently warmed goat cheese.

Both plates were flanked by a side of green salad with homemade vinaigrette and fresh-baked, warm rolls with butter. There are eight different assortments, including a vegetarian option. This is an ideal way to dine if you are, like me, indecisive and love to dabble.

If it's later in the afternoon, try the tea-time menu: Champagne, an assortment of pastries,

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

ice cream, fresh fruit and a pot of tea or coffee for €16. There's also an option of three crêpes with various sweet toppings, such as different types of sugar and raspberry jam.

Just as we were contemplating ordering something from the fairly amazing display at the *pâtisserie* counter (Tante Marie has its own pastry chef), our coffee arrived and next to them two little servings of chocolate mousse topped with whipped cream and a homemade butter cookie. It's truly in the details. Following more than a decade of steady success, the original owners put up a "for sale" sign and went travelling. Who took over the business? Damme resident and one of Tante Marie's most loyal customers, Bernard D'Hoest, who traded in his legal career for an apron. "I didn't change a thing because I wanted to keep it just as good as it has always been," he smiles. What Bernard did do is open another Tante Marie last year, next to the Vismarkt in Bruges. It follows the same concept as the original but serves full traditional meals as well. Still, there's something about Tante Marie that feels intrinsic to Damme.

➡ Kerkstraat 38, Damme; 050.35.45.03  
🕒 Daily, 10.00-19.00  
★ Cosy and relaxed *pâtisserie* and brasserie, with a menu suited to satisfy every craving

➡ [www.tantemarie.be](http://www.tantemarie.be)

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #152

## Feature

Love him or hate him Wim Delvoye, with his tattooed pigs and waste-producing machines is one of Belgium's most famous artists. Bozar launches a new exhibition that finds Delvoye going gothic

## Arts

Ghent has just opened a new city museum and welcomed an astonishing 12,500 people the first weekend. What's on show, anyway?

## Living

Did you know that you can buy direct from designers boutiques once a year at a big discount? It's true, and you don't have to wait until January

## TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN



## • foto •

The front page of last week's Flanders Today was an eye-catching splash of red, which made me want to tear off the plastic wrapper. It was photo of a star in the film *Smoorverliefd* – Madly in Love. I then turned to the back page to see my column, or rather to see what the photo would be that accompanied it.

Michel, our art director, had found a great picture of a girl crowning herself with leaves to illustrate the word of the week, *herfst* – autumn (so much more interesting than that boring pen which used to appear at the top of my column).

And that's usually it. The photo leads on to the story, or you turn the page. Recently, however, I came across a full-page article in *De Standaard* newspaper titled *De zesde foto* – The sixth photo.

The subheading ran: *Foto's over de deportatie van Joden uit ons land tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog zijn zeldzaam* – Photos of the deportation of Jews from our country during the Second World War are rare. Apparently only five are known of. This has now changed: *Mogelijk is er nu een zesde opgedoken* – Possibly a sixth has now appeared.

I'll try to paint a picture of the scene. In a recognisable Antwerp street, an articulated lorry stands with a very long trailer crowded with people sitting on benches. Others stand around as the last climb aboard. The caption reads *Wat is er op de foto te zien?* What is there to be seen in the photo?

An analysis refers to 13

numbered pointers on the photo. Pointer 8: *De mannen met witte pet staan gebogen over documenten: Jodenjagers?* – The men with white caps bent over documents: Jew hunters? Pointer 5: *Deze vrouw draagt mogelijk een pruik* – This woman is probably wearing a wig, as is the custom with some Jews.

By now I was peering at the picture for anything that might reveal more. Pointer 11: *De lange schaduwen die de koffers werpen wijzen erop dat de foto in de vroege ochtend is genomen* – The long shadows cast by the suitcases point to the fact that the photo was taken in the early morning. The sinister implications begin to dawn: these people have been in hiding and have just been flushed out by the dreaded *Jodenjagers*.

But perhaps they are just a group of workers. Not according to pointer 6: *in de laadbak zitten mannen, vrouwen, kinderen en bejaarden* – in the trailer are sitting men, women, children and old people.

You can lose yourself in *de zesde foto*. You begin to imagine where those unfortunates have come from and where they're going. Its ordinariness and lack of violence is striking. Thank you, Lieven Saerens of *het Studie- en Documentatiecentrum Oorlog en Hedendaagse Maatschappij* – the Centre for Historical Research and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society (SOMA).

➡ [www.cegesoma.be](http://www.cegesoma.be)

## THE LAST WORD . . .

## Extreme intelligence

"State security has a particular interest in students of Arab studies. Feelers were put out to find people who were known to hold extremist views."

A former student at the Catholic University of Leuven, writing in the student paper *Veto*

## An ordinary boy

"Hansje was an ordinary boy. Too ordinary. That's what his brother thought, and his sisters, and all his friends at school, too."

The opening lines of a children's story written by N-VA party leader Bart De Wever, included in the collection *Papa vertelt (Papa Tells)*, published this week

## Pump down the volume

"A growling King Kong in the cinema is more dangerous than standing next to a Boeing 737 taking off with roaring engines."

Bart Vinck, audiologist at Ghent University, after a 17-year-old girl suffered hearing damage at the movies

## The face of God

"In each child that is born, we recognise the face of God. Also in an IVF child; perhaps even more in an IVF child."

Johnny De Mot, a Brussels priest, defending *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) in a Mass broadcast on television