



South Pole, ho

hunting meteors · checking ozone levels · measuring sea-level changes
Research teams head to Belgium's Princess Elisabeth station

p6

Tipping point



An ambitious agenda pays off
for Flemish environment minister
Joke Schauvliege

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

A full one-half of commercial medicines are made from plants, and many of the tropical rainforests that provide them are dying. If populations of bees, which are crucial to pollination, continue to dwindle at their present alarming rate, it will have a devastating impact on the climate.

These jolting statistics on endangerment and extinction of species and habitats were addressed at talks among 193 of the world's nations in Nagoya, Japan, last month. And, after last year's dismal efforts to reach a global deal to tackle climate change in Copenhagen, world leaders showed that – on

some topics at least – they are able to reach an international consensus.

The three-week long negotiations resulted in a tangible deal for a strategic plan from now until 2020, the mobilisation of financial resources to invest in programmes to protect species and a protocol to ensure that every country, rich and poor, has access to and shares in the benefits of using the genetic resources of the planet.

As Belgium currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU Council, Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege (pictured) was responsible for presenting the common European

position at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit. "Biodiversity is diminishing," she says. "The EU deadline to halt biodiversity loss by 2010 was not achieved. This was because we didn't have the necessary facts and figures. The Nagoya agreement now points out very clear targets."

These targets include an agreement to at least halve – and where feasible bring close to zero – the rate of loss of natural habitats; to expand protected areas both on land and at sea (currently less than 1% of the world's oceans are protected); restore at least 15% of degraded areas; and make "special efforts" to reduce the environmental pressures faced by coral reefs.

► *continued on page 5*

© Belpa

Torrential rain causes floods

Three die in Hainaut during the worst flooding in Belgium in 50 years

ALAN HOPE

Torrential rain last weekend caused serious flooding and damage across Belgium, as three days of heavy rain swelled rivers and canals and put additional strain on ground already saturated by September's high level of rainfall.

Across Flanders, more water fell in one weekend than in an average entire month of November. Experts said the flooding was the worst in 50 years. In Wallonia's Hainaut province, three people in their 60s and 70s died due to the flood, and one committed suicide after hearing of the death of her partner.

In Antwerp, 40 municipalities were affected by flooding, according to provincial governor Cathy Berx. There was a risk of flooding at Mechelen, Lier, Ranst and Boechout, as heavy waters flowed from

Wallonia and Flemish Brabant. The Antwerp authorities were keeping a close watch on the level of the River Zenne.

In Brussels, the provincial disaster plan was launched, as the canal broke its banks. Streets in the communes of Vorst, Ukkel, Watermaal-Bosvoorde and Drogenbos were flooded, and the city's fire service took more than 1,500 emergency calls on Saturday alone. Brussels public works minister Brigitte Grouwels said: "My thoughts go in the first place to the people affected by water. This flooding is mainly a result of the enormous mass of water flowing from the tributaries of the Zenne in the south of Brussels. I want to thank the people who have worked day and night over recent days to stabilise the situation."

► *continued on page 3*



© Reuters

A man in Zwalm, East Flanders, surveys his street

OFFSIDE

Top lawyer poked



A Facebook group set up in support of Vermaessen

Last week in Leuven, an Aarschot man was sentenced to a year in prison because he had carried out a campaign of harassment against two police officers, who had booked him for drunk driving. The report of the accident showed the man was "visibly under the influence" as well as "aggressive and threatening".

His response was to stalk the officers for a month on Facebook. (To be fair, he was also on trial for trying to run over a parking warden, so the social network harassment wasn't entirely to blame for his year-long sentence.)

Now something similar is happening to heavyweight lawyer Jef Vermaessen. Flanders' most high-visibility lawyer most recently represented the family of the victim in the notorious parachute murder. The jury followed his closing statements 100% down the line and brought in a verdict of murder despite the absence of any material evidence.

That victory brought considerable unease to many quarters. On Facebook, it gave rise to a number of groups expressing dissatisfaction with Vermaessen. The groups concerned were sarcastic and comical, as well as outraged and strongly critical, but generally stayed within the bounds of robust public discourse.

According to legal experts, Vermaessen, a media-savvy operator, cannot expect the level of polite respect that would be accorded to any normal person whose work was not constantly in the public eye, like the two Aarschot policemen. Public figures need to be able to swallow a little public criticism from time to time, the law argues.

Then came the death threats. Vermaessen reported that things had gone too far and filed an official complaint. The exact details are unclear, as is the question of whether the threats emanated from the Facebook onslaught. In any event, he had the Facebook groups, now characterised as "hate groups", taken down.

Critics point out that if accusing a defendant in court of having a "black soul" is all right, then parodying the accuser as "Showbiz Jef" should probably be OK, too.

FLANDERS TODAY

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



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

Editor: Derek Blyth

Deputy editor: Lisa Bradshaw

News editor: Alan Hope

Agenda: Sarah Crew, Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, 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

Editorial address:

Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

editorial@flanderstoday.eu

Subscriptions:

subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

or sign up online at www.flanderstoday.eu

Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese

02.373.83.57

advertising@flanderstoday.eu

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Derek Blyth

Don't forget

Get the news from Flanders online in English and French at www.flanderstoday.eu



FLANDERS TODAY
NOVEMBER 17, 2010

News in brief

A young man who was under the influence of alcohol, leading to an accident that **killed three medical students** last year in Oosterzele, East Flanders, has had his sentence increased by a court in Ghent. The 24-year-old was originally sentenced to six months suspended and banned from driving for three years with one year suspended. The prosecution appealed, and the sentence was last week increased to six months with three suspended and a ban of five years with two suspended. Last week was the anniversary of the accident, and a memorial stone was placed at the scene.

Close, member of the Brussels parliament and alderman in the city council. The technique has already been used in the Paris metro with some success. Meanwhile, the public transport authority said it was introducing new pay-toilets in Madou station in a pilot project it hopes to extend to other stations. Only 11 of the 66 stations currently has a public toilet, and many are closed after 19.00.

The staff of the federal agency for asylum affairs, Fedasil, has announced a **one-day strike on 19 November** in protest at the shortage of staff and the lack of accommodation places for asylum seekers. The agency has been hit in recent weeks by a number of court rulings forcing them to find places for asylum seekers or to pay €500 a day in damages. An estimated 6,000 people could be forced to live on the streets this winter as a result of the shortage of places.

Plans to introduce a special **internet domain name for Flanders** – .vla in place of .be – look like being shelved after a feasibility study revealed little interest and possible political problems, the computer magazine Datanews reported last week. A study by Deloitte into the proposal showed little demand from business or internet providers and pointed out that the move could provoke hostility from French-speaking Belgians. The study was commissioned by the Flemish government.

Brussels' metro and pre-metro stations should be treated with a special perfume to **mask the smell of urine**, according to Philippe

killers escaped with the family's Mercedes. The shots were fired by a man described as a light-skinned African with a moustache, 1m80 tall and speaking French.

The city of Aalst last week held a memorial to commemorate the victims of the armed attack on a Delhaize supermarket by the **Brabant Killers** exactly 25 years ago in which eight shoppers were murdered. The members of the gang, responsible for a series of raids in the 1980s in which 28 people died, have never been traced.

A pita bar in Antwerp last week won the unusual distinction of an entry in the new **Gault-Millau restaurant guide**, scoring 13 points out of a possible 20. The news came as a surprise to Sean Chacham, owner of Finjan, situated opposite the city's Fine Arts Museum. He had not even heard of the guide before winning a place. The restaurant, the guide said, supplies "Middle-Eastern dishes with a great feel for authenticity". Christophe Hardiquest from Bon-Bon in Brussels was named Belgium's Chef of the Year, while Peter Goossens' Hof Van Cleve in Kruishoutem topped the rankings for the eighth year running with 19.5 points.

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Julien Vrebos

It's rather rare, in a rubrique that calls itself "Face of Flanders", to have someone selected whose face is quite as distinctive as that of Julien Vrebos. It goes without saying that he's a member of the European Moustache Club of Antwerp. He's also a prominent "character" and media figure, earlier this year voted Brusselaar of the Year (or Brussel van 't joer) by Ara!, the organisation that supports the Brussels dialect.

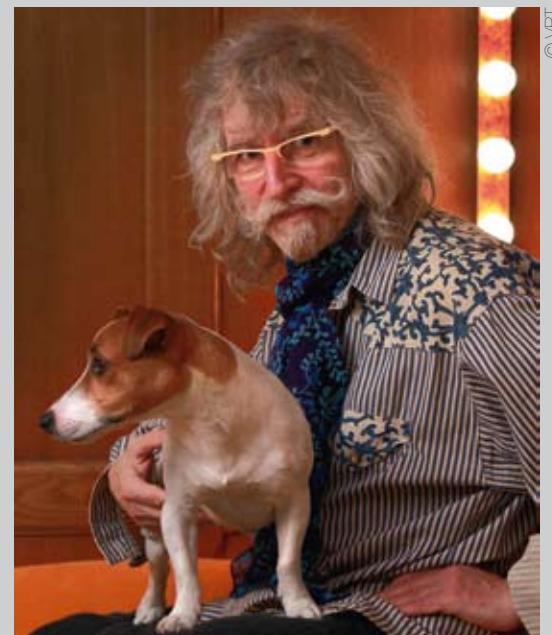
Fans of TV Brussel will know him for his occasional advocacy of the Brussels dialect, which he seems to speak perfectly, although nobody around these offices was in a position to confirm. He also does restaurant reports, and it's with a restaurant project that he hit the headlines last week.

But not just any restaurant. From 13 to 17 December, in a project that brings together TV Brussel and Flemish station één, he'll be hosting Brussels top chefs and the rather less media-visible homeless, in a series called *Onder de sterren* (*Under the Stars*).

The plan is simple: for five days, half of the tables at the temporary restaurant ZaZou will be occupied by homeless people, who will be treated for the meagre price of €1 all-in, to a gastronomic meal cooked by the star chefs of restaurants La Marée, Resto Henri, Switch, Le Grain de Sel and La Cantina. The other 40 seats will be taken up by anyone who wants to spend €25 for the meal.

"Flanders will be able to see that Brussels isn't the bear-pit people think it is, but a Tower of Babel where solidarity isn't just an idle thought," said Vrebos.

It's not the first time Vrebos has taken a sideways look at a clichéd TV format. Perhaps seeing things differently lies in his background: He trained as a surveyor and photographer before becoming a filmmaker. His first movie *Le bal masqué*,



daringly, was set against the background of the attacks by the Brabant Killers in the 1980s and leaned firmly towards the conspiracy theories of the time.

In 2007, he made *De 8*, in which eight students from a technical school in Aarschot were given the job of restoring a house and turning it into a community centre. Earlier this year, één broadcast his series *Kuleku*, in which he took the viewer on a travelogue through Wallonia, accompanied by his faithful Jack Russell, who loaned his name to the series.

His latest project, though, is docu-soap coupled with social action, both areas close to his heart. The first episodes of the "making of" can already be seen on TV Brussel.

www.tvbrussel.be

Breathe out

The government will introduce the alcohol lock for repeat drunk driving offenders from December. The lock forces drivers to give a breath sample before the car will start



Floods: residents await disaster relief

► *continued from page 1*

In **East Flanders**, schools in Ninove, Geraardsbergen and Brakel remained closed on Monday because of flooding. The Dender stood 46 centimetres above the alarm level, and the flow of water was estimated to be five times higher than normal. However, the province reported that cooperation with the emergency services had been "excellent". Homes were evacuated in Ninove and Geraardsbergen.

In **Flemish Brabant**, the railway line between Halle and Brussels was closed after the Brussels-Charleroi canal burst its banks. Houses in Beersel and Sint-Pieters-Leeuw were evacuated. The town of Herne was cut off entirely for a time, and fire services advised onlookers and the press to move away from the banks of the Brussels-Charleroi canal.

In **Limburg**, the Velp overflowed at Halen, and people were evacuated from their homes. A rest home was evacuated in Bree, and the roof of a store in Genk collapsed under the weight of water. No-one was injured, but material damage was extensive.

West Flanders was the least affected of all the provinces, with few call-outs in the coastal municipalities. Problems on Saturday in Kortrijk, Avelgem and Zwevegem were largely cleared up by Sunday, fire services said. Despite the widespread damage and the enactment of disaster plans in several places, acting prime minister Yves Leterme said the federal disaster plan would not be put into operation, as that would only hold up emergency aid efforts. The government would be following the situation closely, he

said, to consider if federal disaster aid was appropriate.

Federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom said her department was fairly certain that the Royal Meteorological Institute would confirm that conditions would merit the use of the disaster aid fund, which compensates victims for damage.

Belgians affected by the floods were being advised to take photos and videos of damage. The insurance industry organisation assured homeowners that anyone with a fire insurance policy would automatically be covered for water damage. The province of East Flanders also advised homeowners to mark the level the water had reached and check walls and ceilings for structural damage. According to weatherman Frank Deboosere of VRT television,

the flooding was made worse by developed areas in Flanders on land that would otherwise serve as a natural escape route for rainwater. Instead of flowing into the ground, the water gathers. In addition, he explained, construction and agriculture have both shifted rivers and streams from their natural courses, making flooding more likely.

"This is clearly an extreme situation," commented environment minister Joke Schauvliege. While admitting that heavy rainfall had much to do with it, she noted that "too many building permits were given in the past for construction in overflow areas." On Monday, she joined Flemish public works minister Hilde Crevits and minister-president Kris Peeters to visit some of the hardest-hit locations along the Brussels-Charleroi canal. ♦

Flanders signs agreement to restore war graves

As the world observed a minute's silence in commemoration of those who died in war last Thursday, 11 November, Flemish and British representatives were in Ypres to sign a new agreement that will ensure the maintenance and restoration of war graves in the region and a new visitor centre.

The agreement between the Flemish government and the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission (CWGC) will see the two partners working to restore and maintain war graves in the part of West Flanders known as the Westhoek, where much of the fighting of the First World War took place. The CWGC maintains graves and memorials of more than 1.6 million war dead in 150 countries across the world, nearly 205,000 of them in Belgium.

The new visitor centre will be built near Zonnebeke, a municipality that includes the village of Passendale. The area was in the middle of the Ypres Salient during the First World War, and Zonnebeke was completely destroyed and abandoned until years after the Armistice. Tyne Cot in Passendale is the largest British military cemetery in the world.

The CWGC's new director general, Alan Pateman-Jones, said: "The new visitor centre will create a landmark in the heart of the First World War battlefield region of Flanders. It will provide the public with fascinating insight into the importance of... remembering the fallen of two World Wars."

With the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War approaching, both the CWGC and Flanders region are expecting a huge increase in "war tourism" – the growing numbers of people who visit the sites of the battles and the memorials and cemeteries.

The Zonnebeke centre will also house a headstone-cutting workshop. The CWGC's headstones are currently made in France, but the new centre will provide supplementary capacity to cope with the restorations planned by the CWGC over the next 20 years. Visitors to the centre will be able to see the headstone workshop in action. According to Westtoer, the West Flanders tourism authority, visitors to the Westhoek area last year numbered 368,000, an increase of 2%, despite the economic crisis affecting tourism in general. Tyne Cot cemetery, with almost 334,000 visitors, was the main destination. In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres drew 207,000 visitors, and the German cemetery in Langemark 146,000. ♦

"First World War tourism in the

Westhoek is of major economic importance," said Flemish heritage minister Geert Bourgeois. "These tourists represent an economic input of about €35 million. The commemoration of the centenary of the First World War will be an occasion for the further growth of tourism in the Westhoek."

• Last week, acting prime minister Yves Leterme and heritage minister Geert Bourgeois, both native West-Flemings, represented the federal and Flemish governments respectively in the annual remembrance ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres.

In Brussels, meanwhile, Prince Filip replaced his father for the first time at the ceremonies there, laying a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Congress Column. The prince later talked to veterans of the Second World War.

Belgium's last surviving veterans of the First World War, former Tour de France cyclist Emile Brichard and émigré to the US Cyriel Barbry, both died in 2004. ♦

► www.cwgc.org

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



82,000

customers of mobile phone operator Base were suddenly cut off last week when their pre-paid phone credit was reduced to zero because of a computer error. The problem was resolved the following day

84,384

tonnes of road salt used in Flanders last winter, costing €15.4 million and almost double the usual quantity of around 50,000 tonnes

2,933,574

tax declarations made via the tax-on-web online service this year

€40

the new threshold at which charity donations become tax-deductible from 2011, up from €30 previously



trio.be

What the Belgian presidency of the EU is up to this week

On 17 and 18 November, Queen Paola hosts a conference at the Royal Palace on the problem of immigrant minors at risk of sexual exploitation. Last week it was revealed that there are around 80 underage young people living alone in Brussels hotels as part of the asylum-seeker population. In addition, other runaway minors can become the target of exploitation and prostitution.

The conference is being organised by the federal justice ministry, together with Child Focus and Missing Children Europe, which represents 24 NGOs in 16 member states of the European Union. Other NGOs will be represented, as well as officials from EU governments. Queen Paola is honorary president of Child Focus.

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

The right man at the right time

Who should be president of the Christian Democrat CD&V? Most party members agree that it should be Wouter Beke, the currently acting president. He is, in the words of former party president Marianne Thyssen: "The right man at the right moment".

Beke, who is still in his 30s, is an academic and an ideologue, known for his conservative views. He is said to be ambitious, but, as vice-president, he has mostly worked in the service of his party and its four (yes, four!) presidents since 2003. When Thyssen resigned, following the party's poor performance in the June elections, he became president *ad interim*, making him his party's number one negotiator in the talks to form a coalition.

That is not an easy task: until now, the Christian Democrats had always been in the pilot seat when it came to shaping governments, especially when state reform was at stake. This time, though, CD&V is no longer the main party in Flanders, and has had to let N-VA take the initiative. In doing so, the intelligent and well-spoken (if slightly bland) Beke has caused no ripples, inside or outside his party – which is quite a feat. He seems indeed to be the right man for the job.

The consensus on Beke becoming the next party president is so complete that the only discussion within CD&V is about whether the presidential elections to make this official should be held now or later. Normally, these elections would happen after a new government was in place. However, with talks to form a government still dragging on, the option of moving the elections forward is being discussed.

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters, who is considered the real political heavyweight in CD&V, is in favour. This would give Beke even more authority in the talks to form a government, he believes. Others fear that it would lead to unnecessary conflict, which should be avoided in these difficult times.

Before Beke rose to the occasion, Rik Torfs was believed to have his eye on the party presidency. Torfs, too, is an academic, but of an entirely different sort. He did not rise through the party ranks but was recruited because of his fame. As an authority on church law (hardly the most sexy area of study), the witty Torfs managed to become something of a celebrity in Flanders, often appearing in popular TV programmes. As celebrities do, though, he has got on many people's nerves. And that is one thing that cannot be said about Wouter Beke, who is anything but a celebrity.



Expat? Visit ING first.

Are you an expatriate? If so, you need support and advice. That's exactly what ING can provide for all your banking and insurance requirements. Our ING Expat service deals with everything, even before you arrive in

Belgium: accounts, bank cards, rental guarantee, etc. To find out what ING can do for you, don't hesitate to call one of our advisors on + 32 (0)2 464 66 64.

ING 

www.ing.be/expat



Tipping point

EU success at Nagoya bodes well for climate negotiations in Cancun later this month

» *continued from page 1*

At the start of Belgium's six-month presidency last summer, Schauvliege highlighted biodiversity as one of her priorities. Her role as the chair of the EU's council of environment ministers was to forge a consensus among member states so that all of the 27 EU nations would speak with one voice in Nagoya.

After meetings of ministers in Ghent and Luxembourg, the EU agreed on what Sabien Leemans, biodiversity campaigner for WWF, describes as an "ambitious agenda".

But that was only half the work. After two weeks of preparatory research by technical experts, ministers from all 193 nations, including Schauvliege (representing Europe), had to defend their positions at the international negotiating table.

"There was a strong willingness among all the parties to reach a consensus; no one wanted to return home with nothing in their hands," says Schauvliege. "But there were three difficult points that were left for the ministers: the strategic plan, the financing and the access and benefits sharing system."

Paying the tab

Concerning the financing for biodiversity schemes, developing countries wanted a ten-fold increase on what developed countries were offering. They also wanted the access and benefits-sharing scheme – agreements on allotments of economic benefits gained from resources mined from developing nations by corporations in the developed world – to be retroactive

so that they could be compensated for resources that developed countries had already farmed.

After years in which developed countries reaping the benefits of the rich plant and animal resources in regions like the Congo River Basin and the Amazon rainforest, Leemans says this was a "legitimate request". Much of the biodiversity loss in the developing world can be attributed to developed nations' exploitation.

An impasse on these points left ministers in last-ditch negotiations during the final week of the Nagoya talks, as reaching an agreement on targets was, in the minds of the developing countries, contingent upon a better offer in terms of financing and sharing benefits.

The position of the EU was that funds to protect biodiversity come not only from state coffers but also from regional projects, academic programmes and even from private investors. Environmentalists, however, were less than enthusiastic about developed countries' thinking. "It was clear from the start that developing countries did not come with their cheque books," says Leemans.

This was in spite of an acknowledgement that protecting biodiversity pays off in the long run. A report prepared by the United Nations, under whose auspices the talks were held, points to the economic benefits of protecting biodiversity and explains how we could measure its value. This is a point on which Schauvliege agrees.

"If we don't do something about soil

"If we don't do something about soil erosion, that will cost us an enormous amount of money in the future"

erosion, for example, that will cost us an enormous amount of money," she says. "And if we lose a plant that is good for making medicines, then we have the cost of searching for an alternative that humans can use."

A resolution was eventually found: ministers agreed to a so-called gap analysis that will examine how much is being spent at all levels and how much needs to be spent for the new strategic plan. Technical experts will report back at the next round of international biodiversity talks to be held in 2012, when a concrete sum could be agreed. On the subject of access and benefit sharing, nations also found a compromise. They decided to institute a multilateral fund into which countries could make voluntary contributions. Overcoming these sticking points paved the way for a compromise on the whole package, with all nations able to walk away having secured some of their aims.

"We thought the developed countries should have shown more commitment on financing, as it's a legitimate ask, and they have a big impact on global biodiversity," says Leemans. "Countries should also not see this as a cost but as an investment. Nevertheless, we were very glad that a compromise was reached."

Beyond Nagoya

Schauvliege does not plan to tick the box on biodiversity just yet. Despite the successful outcome at the Nagoya summit, she said there is still much to be done. "Biodiversity has a lot of links with other activities, and we need a multi-disciplinary approach to integrate biodiversity into other policies such as agriculture, fisheries and sustainable land use."

Another challenge is a public campaign to make citizens understand how this nebulous concept does make a difference to our lives. "We have to broaden the message and make more people aware of the impact of the loss of biodiversity," Schauvliege says, adding that reaching a deal in Nagoya during the EU's year of biodiversity was "symbolically important".

Her other goal had been to put sustainable materials management, a policy that should help Europe reduce its industrial waste mountain, onto the European agenda – this she achieved by holding a series of conferences – and ensuring better regulation for the environment.

Before Belgium's EU Council presidency ends in late December, Schauvliege will represent the European Union at the UN talks in Cancun, Mexico. These talks will already be starting in a sombre mood after the failure at last year's talks in Copenhagen to achieve a concrete result; instead of a legally binding treaty, a flimsy document – the Copenhagen Accord – was signed.

Already, the EU has acknowledged that the Cancun talks will not result in a legally-binding treaty. Instead, they will be an "intermediate step", which paves the way for something more concrete later on. This became apparent after developed and developing countries came to blows over financing, and the United States and China refused to sign up to serious emission-reduction targets.

Nagoya offers some hope for the climate negotiations. "Everyone agreed that if Nagoya had been a disaster, it would have been a very bad sign for Cancun," notes Schauvliege. "But on an international level, Nagoya shows that an agreement can be made even after the disappointment of Copenhagen."

Cancun will have its similarities to the Nagoya negotiations – notably with the apparent split between developed and developing countries – but also its differences, with the cloud of mistrust that lingered over last year's talks hanging over ministers. Schauvliege and the rest of the EU team will go armed with a common position, but, she warns: "We have to be ambitious but realistic." ♦

All photos: © Government of Japan



Clockwise from top left: Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege represented the EU as one voice at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit; 193 countries agreeing on something; the international conference brought out the best in special-interest groups, like the Global Tiger Initiative; American actor Harrison Ford, vice-chair of Conservation International, spoke at Nagoya

» www.cbd.int

The meteor hunters

Finding bits of a black solar system on a pure white carpet is part of the new expedition to Belgium's Antarctic station

© IPF/Steven Goderis

ALAN HOPE

This month sees the departure of a new mission to the South Pole and to Belgium's Princess Elisabeth station, where scientists from a range of disciplines will spend four months carrying out research. I caught up with expedition leader and International Polar Foundation founder Alain Hubert one hour before he was due to leave.

"This is my sixth season of travelling to the station," he tells me, "but the first where the station will be fully functional." The Belgian polar explorer will be leading two teams – one of geographers, one of geologists. The first team goes this month and next, spreading out to the coast to explore new terrain. "That's quite a challenge for us," says Hubert.

Hubert's job is to open up the station, which has been empty since the Antarctic winter began in June, and make sure everything goes smoothly and safely. "From what we've seen of the satellite photos, the station is looking pretty good," Hubert says. "We'll be bringing field guides for the scientists, as well as two young engineers to carry out work on the station itself."

In January, they'll set out to open up a new route to the Antarctic plateau. The Princess Elisabeth is the only station at altitude in Antarctica, and it's also the world's first zero-emissions research station, using a specially developed "smart grid" to balance energy supply and demand. The whole station runs on one-third of the energy consumption that would be considered normal, using entirely wind and solar energy.

That zero-emission aim – it hasn't quite been achieved yet, but this season could see the breakthrough – is one of the station's most important aspects. "We get companies asking if they can develop new technologies for us, so in fact we're stimulating the move towards better energy efficiency," Hubert says. "The station is a prototype, but it's constantly evolving. It sends a strong message that's good for the country – that Belgium had the vision to make it happen."

Zipping across Antarctica

There will also be other scientists travelling to the Pole to carry out different types of research. "At least this year I won't have to set out the tents for them like we did last year," Hubert says with a laugh.

One of them is Steven Goderis, a geochemist in the department of earth sciences at the Dutch-speaking Free University of

Brussels (VUB). Together with colleague Vinciane Debaille from the French-speaking Free University of Brussels (ULB), he'll be out hunting meteorites on the vast icy plains of Antarctica.

"It'll be similar to what we were doing last year," Goderis tells me, "only this time we're going to a different part of the continent. Last we were working in the Sør Rondane mountains, to the east of the station. This year we'll be on the Nansen ice field about 100 kilometres south of the Princess Elisabeth." The South Pole, he explains, is prime hunting ground for meteorites, which are basically pieces of space rock produced when planets break up that fall occasionally into our atmosphere. Anything that doesn't burn up immediately falls to earth as a meteorite. About 300,000-400,000 tonnes of space rock enters our atmosphere every year, though most of it doesn't make it to earth.

Meteorites, in fact, fall all over the world, but since much of our planet's surface is water, mountain, desert or jungle, they're not so easy to find. In Antarctica, however, they're falling onto pure white ice.

"The ice in Antarctica migrates constantly towards the sea, and, as it moves, the wind ablates the ice [scraps off a top layer] making it more likely for meteorites to be exposed," Goderis explains. In addition, once fallen, the meteorites are better preserved in the ice than in other environments.

To find them, the team set out on their snowmobiles, travelling in a V-formation and keeping their eyes peeled. "It can be pretty hard, going along at a 2,000-metre altitude with the wind in your face for eight hours a day," he says.

Goderis started off as a geologist but became interested in the solar system while studying impact craters where huge meteorites had landed. "Part of the study was to determine what different types of meteorites were responsible," he says, "where they came from, and why they fell to earth."

Last year, the meteorite-hunters picked up about 600 fragments, ranging in size from a few millimetres to one of five kilos. "The samples are sent to Japan, where they have a long history of dealing with meteorite fragments. They were actually the first to discover fragments in Antarctica," Goderis says.

There are about 30,000 fragments of meteorites currently in museum collections around the world, including the Natural

History Museum in Brussels. About two-thirds of them were found in Antarctica. "After their primary evaluation and classification of what we find, the VUB and ULB may take back some samples for geochemical analysis."

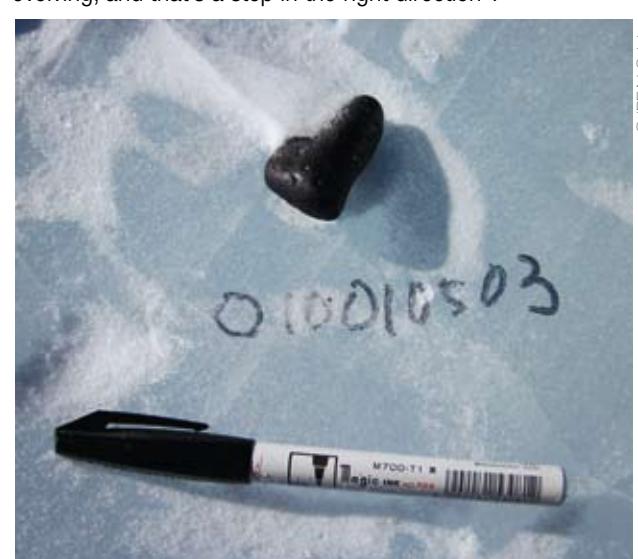
As a geologist, Goderis is used to being out and about; the discipline involves as much field work as it does lab research. But the South Pole is something else. "I got the chance to go last year, and I couldn't refuse," he says. "The Polar Foundation has a training programme for scientists, and we're also trained by the Belgian army, who have to live and work in all kinds of different environments".

Belgium's Princess Elisabeth station, meanwhile, provides a relatively comfortable environment for those who may be less accustomed than Alain Hubert to the planet's least welcoming environment. "It's a really nice station, a really beautiful construction," Hubert says. "And it's an example internationally. People from all over the world are really interested in how it's evolving, and that's a step in the right direction". ♦

© International Polar Foundation/Benoit Robert



Belgium's Princess Elisabeth Station in Antarctica will be re-populated by international scientists this month



Contrary to the impression given by Hollywood movies, most pieces of meteorites that make it to earth are smaller than a pen

Research at the bottom of the earth

Along with the hunting of meteorites, various other scientific research projects will be carried out during this year's expedition to the Princess Elisabeth station.

- The Belatmos project will study the atmosphere around the station, looking at ozone levels, UV radiation and aerosol particles
- A researcher for Belgium's Beldiva project will study the biodiversity of microbes around the station
- A team from Brussels' ULB and the US' University of Washington will look at the movements of the ice mass – the planet's largest – and effects on sea levels
- A researcher from the University of Cologne will study the hydrologic cycle, from the evaporation of water to the formation of clouds to the snowfall

Brink's files for bankruptcy

Local prosecutor calls move an abuse of the law, while unions file a complaint

ALAN HOPE

Unions representing striking workers at security company Brink's have criticised the decision by federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom to grant a temporary licence to a subsidiary of the company, as the parent company was filing for bankruptcy. Meanwhile, the Brussels prosecutor has told the commercial tribunal that the filing was "an abuse of the law".

The workers are striking over a plan by the company to close one facility in Wallonia and to change all of its cash transport personnel from their current status of "employee" to the lower status of "worker". That would have the effect of reducing their rights in the case of redundancy, and the unions see the move as a prelude to the loss of more jobs.

The strike led to difficulties for banks and large retail outlets, who found themselves unable to load cash machines or stock cash registers. But every effort at conciliation failed, even when federal labour minister Joëlle Milquet intervened in the dispute.

Attempts at finding a solution came to an end on 12 November, when the company filed for bankruptcy after a meeting of the board in Diegem. Brink's said the Belgian division (the parent company is American) had accumulated a debt of €14 million in recent years and is no longer viable.

Unions reacted furiously, describing the move as unfair, arrogant and "fraudulent". Roger Blanpain, an expert in labour law at the Catholic University of Leuven, advised the unions to file a complaint for fraudulent bankruptcy. This week, as *Flanders Today* went to press, the Commercial Court in Brussels opened a case on the bankruptcy filing. The prosecutor moved that the request be rejected because the demand had no basis. Bankruptcy



Pickets outside the Brink's facility in Machelen. The strike has been going on since 27 October

proceedings were, the prosecutor said, premature and "an abuse" of the law. The court's ruling is awaited.

About 420 jobs are at stake if Brink's goes under. About 30 of those affected are already assigned to move over to Brink's Diamond and Jewelry, a subsidiary of that last week was granted a temporary licence to carry out cash transports. Unions at Brink's were furious about that, too, and accused Turtelboom of leaving them standing in the cold. Turtelboom argued she had had no choice legally but to grant the licence.

The rest of the Brink's staff will now look to G4S, formerly Group 4, to pick up not only Brink's business but also a portion of its workforce.♦

However, G4S already accounts for a 70% market share in Belgium, and if it were to become more dominant, the competition authorities would be forced to step in.

The dispute has given impetus to moves to scrap the distinction between employees and workers, something that still exists only in Belgium. Unions were joined in their call for a single status by minister Turtelboom, who described the move as a "priority" for her, speaking on VRT television at the weekend. In the same programme, minister Milquet's top adviser called for the social arbitrator to be given a more proactive role in industrial disputes.♦

Call to use temps in public services

The liberal opposition in Flanders (Open VLD) has called for a change in the law to allow Flemish public services to be manned by temporary staff, something not currently permitted but which happens on an ad hoc basis all the same. The temp agency representative group Federgon carried out a study that found that regional and local authorities were using temps to replace

employees with long absences. An EU directive calls for all governments to allow temp replacements by 2012, but the issue is blocked at federal level until a new coalition government is in place. This week, Open VLD was due to table a motion to allow Flanders to move ahead without waiting for a federal decision.♦

EU Commission asked to look into Opel closure

The European Union last week became the last, slender hope of 1,300 workers at the Opel Antwerp plant, who could technically be unemployed from 1 December.

Last week unions addressed a formal letter to the EU Commission, with the support of a number of Flemish MEPs, asking the commission to take action, claiming that parent company General Motors (GM) had a dominant position on the European car market and that the closure was an abuse of that position. The commission's competition authorities were invited to investigate the case, but no formal complaint was lodged. The letter is an attempt to force GM back to the negotiating table with a Chinese investor that recently showed an interest in the factory.♦

The unions are convinced that GM has no intention of letting the site be used for car manufacturing. The company is expected to come forward with a buyer it has found for the site, but this will not be a car maker. That, together with GM's failure to reach a deal with possible acquirers of the factory, could be seen as a distortion of competition. GM Europe is still suffering huge losses: the company booked a loss of €406 million in the third quarter across Europe as a whole, bringing total losses for the first nine months up to €880 million. With their letter alerting the EU to possible illegalities in the case, Opel's unions are hoping to influence GM to rethink its position on the sale of the Antwerp site.♦

Businesswomen on the poverty line

One in three of all female business owners in Flanders earn less than €833 a month, the official poverty line for a single person, according to a study carried out by the Neutral Union for the Self-Employed (NSZ). According to the study, women are unable to invest as much time and energy in their businesses as they would like because they are also responsible for child care and housekeeping. Women also tend to be over-represented in vulnerable sectors such as wellness and catering, which are notoriously difficult areas to make profitable.

As a result, businesswomen with low earnings have to depend on their partners. If they then go through a separation or divorce, their precarious position becomes even more serious.

Across Belgium, 139,236 women give self-employment as their main economic activity. The number earning below the poverty threshold is 46,000,

or about 33%. Among self-employed men, the figure is 15%.

NSZ is now calling on businesswomen to create a safety net to protect themselves. The self-employed cannot take advantage of benefits like parental leave or time-credit, used by people in jobs to take unpaid leaves of absence. The organisation also called for a better social status for the self-employed, including tax relief for daycare and household help.

Meanwhile Unizo, which also represents the self-employed, echoed the call for a better safety net for businesswomen, after its own poll showed that 70% of women found that running a business was more difficult than it was for their male counterparts. Some 40% of businessmen polled agreed.

Unizo has its own support network for businesswomen: www.mabizz.be.♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Auto parts • Carglass

Carglass, the windshield supplier and replacement affiliate of Belgium's D'Ieteren group, has acquired 17 garages in four of Russia's leading cities, including nine in Moscow. The company is now positioned in 34 countries worldwide.

Autos • Sales

New car registrations increased by 9.68% in October, bringing the total for the year so far to 477,567, a 15.18% increase on the same period in 2009.

Banking • KBC

KBC, Flanders largest financial institution, has finalised the sale of its reinsurance affiliate Secura to the British QBE International Holdings for some €270 million.

Chemicals • Solvay

Brussels-based plastics and chemicals group Solvay is to invest €83 million in its French Tavaux mercury electrolysis facility. The aim of the move is to cut energy consumption and reduce its ecological footprint.

Retail • Walt Disney

The US-based Walt Disney group has opened its first Benelux store on Antwerp's main shopping street, the Meir. The shop sells only Disney brand clothing and other products.

Services • Gom

Gom, the Belgian affiliate of the Dutch Facilicom Services group, has acquired its competitor Group One/ACS Cleaning to become the country's second-largest professional office cleaning company. The market leader is ISS.

Wholesale • Trade Mart

Brussels International Trade Mart (pictured), which wholesales fashion and home décor to local and international buyers, is seeking to attract more international brands. The facility, located near the Atomium, is an affiliate of the Texas Crow group. At present, only 8% of on-site exhibitors come from abroad, but the company is in talks with Brazilian, Tunisian, Portuguese and Turkish textile producers to promote their stock. The Chinese Erke sport brand recently signed an agreement to open an outlet on the site.



Ghost in the machine

The subconscious comes alive when a suicide bomber blows up a Brussels shopping centre in *22 Mei*

LISA BRADSHAW

Flemish director Koen Mortier's first film, *Ex-Drummer*, was an adaptation of a darkly comic and sickeningly violent novel by Herman Brusselmans. His new film, *22 Mei* (*The 22nd of May*), is his own script and takes a look at another side of brutality – the aftermath of a suicide bombing. We follow a Brussels security guard as he is confronted by the physical manifestations of victims killed in a deadly explosion at a shopping mall.

Lisa Bradshaw: What inspired this choice of subject?

Koen Mortier: I always wondered how the security guards at the airport felt after 9/11. You can't call them guilty, because it's not their fault. But I guess that they must feel really guilty. Also, you read a lot in the papers about the suicide bomber – his name, what he's all about. But with the victims, they are just numbers. There were 15 or 55 who died in a bombing. How can we accept this? Who are they? I didn't want to make a melodramatic story about those victims but something about how bad luck and coincidence can play a game with you sometimes.

I wanted to make a film where all those elements come together and to follow the main character, the security guard, as if we are in his head – to confront him with his own thoughts and have those thoughts translated through the other people. And I also wanted to play out the bomber. I wanted to put the killer at the victims' feet.

Finally, I wanted to play with memory. In a film, memory is called flashback – as if human beings could literally remember their past. They don't. Even my memory from yesterday is vague and out of focus. The memory of a character should be the memory of a real human being with holes and question marks.

Most people in Western Europe are not preoccupied with suicide bombings, especially in shopping centres...



"In a confrontation with death, everything else looks good": Koen Mortier

In their conscience, they're not preoccupied with it. But in their unconscious, they are. Every human being who flies thinks for a second about it. I wanted to show that it's not as far away as you think it is. In terms of the setting, I wanted there to be people working there, not just travelling, and I wanted to emphasise coincidence as being extremely important – including the coincidence of the killer. He doesn't know he is going to the shopping centre. He goes there because a guy in the street shouts at him, and then he follows him in there. Maybe he was on his way somewhere else.

Also, these small shopping centres are very recognisable – close to home. Every city has one. If you blow up a subway, for instance, it's too specific. People can say: "Oh, I don't use the metro or that doesn't exist in my city".

In both films, style is as important as substance. Did you study visual arts?

Not at all. But sometimes I have visual images in my head when I write the first draft. A lot of the situations start out of images, even if it's absurd. Like in the shopping mall, there is a guy photographing a worker in a giant rabbit

suit. Right away I had that in my head because it's funny and sad at the same time. I knew I wanted something with the explosion that was very beautiful and fantastic. Even if it is about destruction, it gives you a very positive feeling, in a way. I follow a lot of photographers and how they think about images, and I'm influenced by Asian film tradition, where sometimes visuals are part of the minds of the characters.

In both this film and your first film the style is such that the violence is simultaneously horrible and mesmerising to watch. Do you not worry that you're in fact glorifying violence?

No. Because I don't. It's beautiful, but it's not cool. Quentin Tarantino makes it cool. I hope I'm doing the opposite. Like [French-based] Gaspar Noé's work, such as *Irréversible* – he makes beautiful films with violence, which serves to make it ugly, in a way.

At the end of *22 Mei*, it's really beautiful because of the sadness of it. I wanted to show the characters like a ball in a game. They can't do anything against it; they can't decide their last sentence. Which makes it sad or beautiful, or just human. ♦

FILM REVIEW ★★★★

LISA BRADSHAW

22 Mei

It's almost a shame that so much information about Flemish writer/director Koen Mortier's second feature has been divulged before its opening this week across the country. Because when its big moment arrives, it's so much more satisfying to not see it coming.

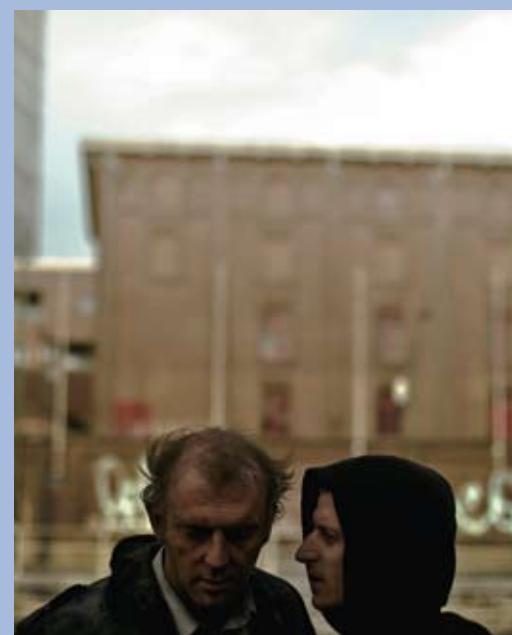
But, alas, it's impossible to describe the film any other way: a security guard goes to work at a Brussels' shopping centre just minutes before a bomb blows it to smithereens.

Still, Mortier being extremely skilled with style and timing, the explosion comes almost as a surprise anyway. In the merciful absence of a big, macho-infused celebration of fire and blare, we're given a death knell of silence, watching the security guard struggle to regain his hearing and his legs, surrounded by writhing victims and dust as thick as smoke.

Soon our security guard, Sam, does something distinctly human: he turns and runs away.

Sam (Sam Louwyck) spends the rest of the film dealing with guilt and shame, which manifest themselves to him – à la Dickens – as the ghosts of bombing past. The dead victims of the explosion appear – some angry, some sympathetic. One young man stands out: the suicide bomber himself (Titus de Voogdt).

Stylistically, *22 Mei* (*The 22nd of May*) is excellent, and Mortier's slow-motion sequence of the destruction at the end of the film combines visual beauty with violence. That's difficult to deliver while avoiding exploitation, and I would argue he achieves it much more successfully here than in his first film, 2007's *Ex-Drummer*. Throughout *22 Mei*, Mortier enhances details that humanise the tragedy and regularly returns the question on the minds of both bomber and guard, and of family members of bombing victims across the world: what would you give to get back the one you lost?



Protector meets killer in *22 Mei*

CULTURE NEWS

Making movies of Flemish novels is becoming more and more popular, and finally a film will be made based on a book by Tom Lanoye, one of the region's most prolific and popular figures in literature. *Sprakeloos* (*Speechless*), his 2009 autobiographical novel about his mother will be helmed by Flemish director Hilde Van Mieghem, whose third feature film, *Smoorverliefd* (*Madly in Love*), opens in cinemas next month. "Letting a book be filmed is an act of trust," said Lanoye. "I feel like a parent sending his kid off to his first job." The movie is expected in cinemas in 2013.

This year saw record-breaking attendance at **Boekenbeurs**, Antwerp's annual book fair. By the end of the final day last week, 182,000 visitors had come through the door to hear readings, meet authors and buy new books. Eighty percent of vendors reported an increase in sales from last year. The organisation Boek.be attributes the huge number of visitors to increased media attention and it's running concurrently with the autumn vacation in Belgium. Best-selling books this year included crime writer Pieter Aspe's *Erewoord* (*Word of Honour*), Flemish chef Piet Huyse's *SOS Piet 4* and children's book series *Fantasia* by the Italian author whose pen name is Geronimo Stilton. The "Most Beautiful Stand" award this year, chosen by a jury, went to Fundels, producer of interactive, educational programmes for the computer, which put everything in their stall at kid level.

→ www.boekenbeurs.be

The **Elle Belgium Style Awards** were handed out last week at Tour&Taxis in Brussels. The awards are public prizes, voted on by readers of the magazine. Award for Best Belgian Designer went to AF Vandervorst, the duo of An Vandervorst and Filip Arickx, who met at the Antwerp fashion academy. Best Belgian artist went to Flemish pop singer Selah Sue, while Woman of the Year went to movie producer Diana Elbaum. A new category, Best Blog, was won by I Love Belgium, an English-language blog dedicated to fashion, architecture and the arts by Stijn Verlinden and Tom Tack.

→ www.elle.be

It's hard to imagine what could make Brussels' centre of fine arts, Bozar, any better, but now that we've heard what they're opening on 10 December, we realise what it's been missing for years. **Bozar Brasserie** will serve food and drinks to peckish culture lovers seven days a week from 12.00 to 23.00. It's headed by chef David Martin of La Paix, the only brasserie in Brussels to have earned a Michelin star.

→ www.bozar.be

Where surprise is central

Luc Tuymans leads a journey through the contemporary art of Central Europe

ANNA JENKINSON

It's an exhibition with a little bit of everything: nudity, famous names, works that put a smile on your face, others that make you stop and think, installations, photography, paintings. *Luc Tuymans: A Vision of Central Europe* really is a panoply of modern creations.

Spread out over five locations, this art trail through Bruges requires a full day to be properly appreciated. You need time on your side to enjoy the 20th and 21st-century creations and to savour the walks between venues – oh, and to avoid getting frustrated at the poor signage at most places.

The starting point is the seventh floor of the Concertgebouw, accessible by elevator, which is next to the tourist information office. Here you can buy your ticket for the whole tour and admire a stunning panorama of the city. Then it's up to you in which order you visit the sites.

As the title suggests, the emphasis is on Central Europe – the exhibition is one of the cornerstones of the Bruges Central Festival – but its scope extends to other international artists influenced by the region. There are several works by Andy Warhol, who had a Czechoslovakian mother, and Japanese artist Takashi Murakami, who is currently causing controversy with his colourful, kooky work on display at the Palace of Versailles.

Curated by Flemish artists Luc Tuymans and Tommy Simoens, *A Vision of Central Europe* is extremely successful at making connections between works. Take for example the pieces on display at Arentshuis. Upstairs, there's a room dedicated to the Quay Brothers, American-born set designers and graphic artists perhaps best known for their film *Street of Crocodiles* (one of several screenings at the local Cinema Lumière that also forms part of the exhibition).

The twin brothers are heavily influenced by Polish and Czechoslovakian animation techniques, evident in their

series of moody, black-and-white drawings here. One that particularly caught my eye was of a man standing on a tram track with knee-length boots under his arms. Emerging from a haze in the distance is a tram and, even further away, just coming into focus is the "château" of the title.

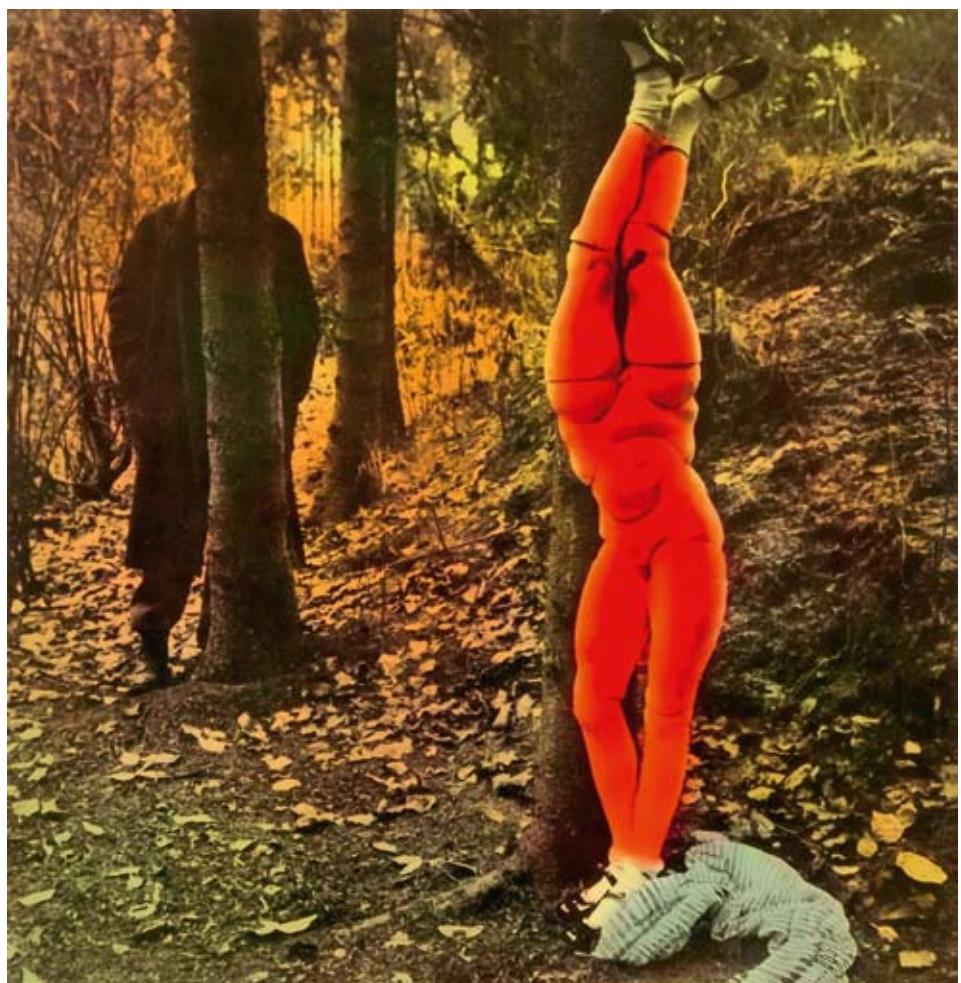
It's evening in the drawing, and the play of shadows is magical. The light cast from the lamppost made me think of a completely different work I'd seen earlier at the Concertgebouw by Croatian artist Igor Eskinja.

You first see Eskinja's two lampposts from a distance, on a wall at the end of a corridor. It's only when you get up close that you see it's just brown masking tape on the wall. Eskinja is well known for creating the idea of solid, 3D objects using common materials and forms that trick the eye.

This use of masking tape also comes back in German painter Neo Rauch's "Konspiration", in which a hostage is being bound to a chair with brown tape by his captors.

The Quay Brothers' room also includes a coffin/peepbox, on top of which are two worn-out, vintage shoes. The shoes immediately bring to mind the Andy Warhol shoe portraits hanging downstairs, which in turn led me to the Warhol self-portraits of him in drag, and from there to Flemish artist Guillaume Bijl's "Self-portraits before and after cloning". In the latter, Bijl takes a picture of himself as a young man, dated BC (ie, Before Cloning) and displayed alongside a series of photographs of him in increasing ages, dated AC (After Cloning). The work, which dates from 1979, not only picks up on ideas of cloning prevalent at the time but also raises the question of what is real and what is fake – one of Warhol's favourite subjects.

Of all the venues, the Episcopal Seminary is a stand-out and definitely worth the beautiful walk along the canal, which in any case allows you to escape the tourist hordes of the city centre. Before I even



Twentieth-century German artist Hans Bellmer's "La poupee" ("The Doll"), 1936

© Andie Breton Photographs

got to the art, I was won over by the peace and tranquillity of the setting (as well as the rarity of clear signposting).

As you step into the cloisters, you are greeted by a plain vase atop a plinth, in front a silkscreen landscape of three bands of colour: pale yellow, green and orange. The work by German sculptor Katharina Fritsch is not only visually appealing but also throws up all sorts of contrasts between the solid vase and the hazy landscape, opening your mind to many possible interpretations.

Just as you're immersed in this wonder, you start to register what sounds like the buzzing of bees. Heading round the left side of the quadrangle, the sound gets louder. It takes a while to discover the loudspeakers, hanging like church bells from the ceiling. "Annunciation" by Czech artist Pavel Büchler uses speakers that he recovered from a stadium near Prague, a relic from the communist age. Placed in the gallery's architecture, they connect two seemingly different worlds – communist and religious ideologies. The setting works perfectly.

From here you can wander into the garden at the back of the seminary and discover the 16-metre high "Bird Catcher" by Miroslaw Balka, a Polish artist whose work was on show earlier this year at London's Tate Modern. The towering piece at the Episcopal Seminary contrasts with another of his works at Arentshuis: a small, flimsy house made of sparklers – fun yet potentially explosive.

The list of works to look out for in *A Vision of Central Europe* is almost endless, but special mention certainly goes to Tadeusz Kantor's "Dead Class" at the Stadshallen, a sculpture made of a school bench filled with barefoot dummies dressed in grey uniforms looking up at an imaginary blackboard. Kantor, who was born in 1915 and lived through Nazi-occupied Krakow, lived



Bruges made space indoors for Paweł Althamer's world-famous self-portrait

© Sarah Bauwens

by his belief that "artists should be able to continue to create, whatever the circumstances".

As a 1978 acceptance speech for an award for "Dead Class", Kantor read a manifesto whose central tenet was "the reality of the lowest rank". It is these words, referring to the use of ordinary objects to make art, which the Bruges exhibition takes as its subtitle.

And finally, just in case you're wondering where the nudity is, head to the Hospital Museum where Polish artist Paweł Althamer's giant, inflated effigy is suspended from the beams of the attic. Don't say I didn't warn you: it's an exhibition full of surprises. ♦



Animation film *Divers in the Rain* by Estonians Olga and Priti Pärn, 2010

Luc Tuymans:
A Vision of Central Europe
Until 23 January
Across Bruges

► www.brugescentral.be



FLANDERS SHINES IN EUROPE SHINES IN FLANDERS



TAKE THE
EUROPE QUIZ!
FlandersShines.eu

The European Union shines in many ways: it invests, opens doors and creates opportunities. The Belgian EU Presidency offers an exquisite opportunity for Flanders to shine as well! We have much to be proud of. The Flanders in Action initiative will take us right to the top in Europe. Join the whole of Flanders in celebrating Europe! **Discover our many festivities at FlandersShines.eu.**



eu

trio.be

The Spanish legacy on the Flemish plate

Not without good reason is Spain the guest country of the Week van de Smaak

ZSÓFIA GYÖRI

You might want to sit down for what I'm about to tell you: Belgian chocolate probably originated in Spain.

Spanish influence on Flemish cooking dates back to the middle ages. As a result of trade with Spain and Italy, spices like nutmeg, cinnamon and pepper were introduced to the Low Countries in the 14th and 15th centuries. In the following centuries under Spanish Habsburg rule, numerous ingredients that came from the New World were shipped via Seville to Antwerp. Among these were oranges, saffron and cocoa beans.



One of Spain's culinary masters, Sergi Arola, is in Flanders for Week van de Smaak

"Belgians' love for chocolate, as well as for the *rijstpap* dessert [a rice porridge with milk and saffron] probably dates back to this time," says Nathalie Parys, a doctoral student in social and cultural food studies at the Free University of Brussels (VUB).

Dirk De Prins, Flemish star chef and editor-in-chief of *Ambiance* magazine, recalls another Spanish influence from that period. "It's called *escabeche*," he tells me, "a fish dish that is today considered to be both a Belgian and a Spanish speciality".

But the Spanish did much more than that, says Parys. They also brought green vegetables to the rest of western Europe, which started to appear in Dutch-language cookbooks in the 16th century. The same happened with jam and syrup, coming from Spain and Italy via France. By the 17th century, entire Spanish dishes, as opposed to mere ingredients, penetrated the region.

The real breakthrough, though, came 300 years later. As a result of increasing trade, migration and travel, "exotic" restaurants were established in 1960s Belgium, Spanish restaurants among them. Though not particularly refined, they were a starting point. The emerging ethnic trend was also supported by supermarkets that started to increase their selection of ingredients.

In the 1970s, traditional Spanish recipes such as paella and *gazpacho* started to appear in cookbooks, under the heading of exotic recipes. But Parys cautions: "These were not Spanish recipes through-and-through; they were adapted to the Flemish taste."

By the 1980s, dishes began to make their way into the mainstream,



© Week van de Smaak

appearing under traditional headings. So *gazpacho*, for instance, appeared simply under "soups", and *paella* under "rice".

In the last 20 years in Flanders, as with the rest of western Europe, people suddenly became immensely interested in different eating cultures. They wanted to learn not only about the dishes but also about the story behind them. This brought along the quest for authenticity. Dutch-language cookbooks started to mention relatively unknown Spanish dishes such as the centuries-old stew *olla podrida* because people were looking for recipes that hadn't been altered or adapted over time.

"People want to eat a particular dish at home as they would do it on holiday," says Parys. "They don't want to adapt the dishes to local tastes anymore. They go for the real thing."

Both Parys and De Prins think that Flanders is strong on Spanish dishes. "You know, we are quite obsessed with cooking," smiles De Prins, "so when we cook, we want to do it well."

Parys also points out that Belgian cuisine has lately become very preoccupied with going back to its

roots. "So on the one hand there is an interest in traditional Belgian dishes and, on the other, in authentic foreign cuisine and its innovative trends. The two don't mix anymore like in the 1970s."

Both food experts attribute the popularity of Spanish food and wine here to two things: Spain has been the number one holiday destination for Belgians since the 1960s, and there is a substantial Spanish community here, as a result of the civil war.

It would be, in any discussion of Spanish cuisine, impossible not to mention tapas, all the rage among hipsters and bureaucrats alike. De Prins, who is hosting discussions and tastings of Spanish food and wine during Week van de Smaak, says the reason is obvious: "You can eat very little or a lot of it, depending on your appetite. It also offers a big variety of dishes."

De Prins' favourite Spanish restaurant, by the way, is La Cueva de Castilla in the Brussels commune of Schaerbeek, run by brothers Roberto and Javier Ponte. De Prins has much praise for their creative spin on traditional Spanish dishes. ♦



© Week van de Smaak

Week van de Smaak

ALAN HOPE

Week van de Smaak, or Week of Taste, the annual celebration of all things culinary, goes on until this Sunday across Flanders and Brussels. Of the hundreds of events, we chose a few that focus on the festival's guest country.

Meet Flemish celebrity chef **Dirk De Prins**, one of the members of the jury on the TV series *Mijn Restaurant!*, at the Boortmeerbeek library in Flemish Brabant on the evening of 18 November for a talk on Spanish wines. And a tasting, of course.

Combine culinary enjoyment with education in three different restaurants – 't Boothuis in Massenhoven-Zandhoven, Antwerp province; Zarza in Leuven; and Tapa Tapa in Alveringen, West Flanders. The **special set menu** is influenced by classic Spanish dishes and ingredients and comes with a brochure explaining all about Spain's influence on Flemish cuisine and a culinary quiz, complete with prizes.

Few parts of the country are more Spanish than the area around Brussels' South Station, where in the 1950s immigrant workers from Spain stepped off the train and bus and settled in the area. Hans Vandecandelaere and Jeroen De Smet, authors of

the book *Midi del Sur*, host a food-based tour on 19 November.

Catalonia's annual **Castanyadas festival** on 1 November features roasted chestnuts and sweet wine. In Lochristi, just outside Ghent, the date is 19 November, and you can enjoy a range of chestnuts dishes in the city's library.

For an evening of Spanish cuisine on 17 November in Sint-Truiden, you're warned not to forget your potato peeler and tea towel because you'll be getting to know the dishes from the inside out. In groups of four, participants will **make their own Spanish menu**, with some tapas for sure, and a glass of cava to make it all flow smoothly.

Finally, you may not associate Spain with tea, but according to the library of Ypres, the drink came to us via the Moorish invasion of Spain, the Muslims having picked up the habit from the Chinese. On 18 November, it's an evening of **tea lore** and the chance to take part in a genuine North African tea ceremony, all for €5.

→ www.weekvandesmaak.be

Paella: tried and true, and yet every cook makes it their own

Moscow City Ballet presents *The Nutcracker* on December 5 at 15.00 in Cirque Royal, Brussels

xperience Brussels unlimited

Be part of Belgium with

Buy Brussels Unlimited
on November 18 and get a
special rate on tickets!



Don't miss this opportunity to see one of the world's most famous ballets that will without a doubt leave you dreaming!

Keep in touch with Brussels and Belgium

Find out about news, business, people, innovation,
style, culture, travel, food and the environment

**€ 85
one year**

► You get: Brussels Unlimited
every week for one year;
The Bulletin every month
for one year; two issues of
Newcomer; one issue
of the Expat Directory



Yes, I want to begin/extend my subscription now

	Belgium	Europe Airmail	Outside Europe Airmail
<input type="checkbox"/> one year ►	€ 85	€ 145	€ 235
<input type="checkbox"/> two years ►	€ 150	€ 270	€ 450

I will pay by:
 credit card bank transfer to KBC account 432-2012231-12
 bank transfer to ING account 310-0883533-46

Diners Club International

American Express MasterCard VISA

Card
number*

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Please add the three-digit number (Card Verification Number)
printed on the signature panel on the back of your card

Expiry Date.....

□□□

Signature.....

Last name.....

.....

Firstname.....

.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode.....

City.....

Country.....

Telephone.....

E-mail.....

As a result of responding
to this offer you may receive
promotional mailings from
other companies. Tick this
box if you prefer not to receive
such offers.

Fax your order now
on 02.375.98.22
or call 02.373.83.25.

* If you are sending your credit
card details, please put the form
in a sealed envelope for security
reasons and send to:
Ackroyd Publications
The Bulletin Subscriptions
Gossetlaan 30
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden
or email to:
subscriptions@ackroyd.be



Crossing Border

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

The British music magazine Q recently listed Crossing Border as one of the eight not-to-be-missed winter festivals from across the planet. Rightfully so. Since its start in 1993 under the impulse of the charismatic Louis Behre, the festival has been offering an always interesting mix of – in the broadest sense of the word – pop music and literature.

But hey, hold your horses – that's the Dutch edition of Crossing Border Q is praising, a festival that lasts several days and fills several rooms. Trying to start up a Belgian edition in 1998 in Ghent's Vooruit went awry: Due to disappointing ticket sales, it was cancelled only a few days before showtime. It wasn't difficult to find an explanation: Flanders already had its Crossing Border, called De Nachten and taking place every winter in Antwerp. Weirdly enough, the year after De Nachten moved from January to November (in 2008), the Belgian edition of Crossing Border finally saw the light of day...in November. Both of them kept their dates this year, which means that two weeks after De Nachten in deSingel, you're invited, next Sunday, to the Arenbergschouwburg for a collection of concerts, performances and readings.

Although Crossing Border is organising two Friday and Saturday night concerts, of Rufus Wainwright and Mercury Rev respectively, the real festival happens on Sunday. I'm

especially looking forward to the American slow-core band Low, who will preview their 2011 album. Rumours are they're using electronics and loops nowadays, so I'm wondering how that'll alter their sound.

More inventiveness from America: Spoon (*pictured*), a critics' favourite for more than a decade, before their indie rock crossed over to a mainstream audience. Their last record *Transference* even debuted at number four in the Billboard 200. That's a success Brit Ed Harcourt can only dream of. "I'm a recipe for disaster / I'm a has-been no good bastard", he likes to sing. But that certainly doesn't apply to his music: subtly arranged pop songs centred around a piano.

No idea where they found him, but Crossing Border managed to snare John Cooper Clarke, the performance poet who used to open, 30 years ago, for all the major British punk acts. Since the Arctic Monkeys' Alex Turner declared his love for Clarke's poetry, Salford's man in black is hip again.

Guest of honour of Crossing Border is Michael Madsen. Yep, that's your Mr Blonde from the cult film *Reservoir Dogs*. Mostly known for his acting, Madsen has been writing, for 15 years now, beat poetry, influenced by Jack Kerouac and Charles Bukowski. He'll bring some of his work and will be interviewed on stage. And if you ask it nicely, he might be

repeating his memorable "Stuck in the Middle with You" dance from *Reservoir Dogs*.

But our favourite literary guest is DBC Pierre, famous for his debut *Vernon God Little* and infamous for loads of other stuff. A man, too, whose books are filled to the rim with breathtaking, wonderful prose, like (from *Ludmila's Broken English*): "A radio hit blared across the road, featuring an electric guitar that plinked and plonked like a handful of bullets tossed into a pond." And then we haven't told you about his crazy, delirious stories. Buy, borrow or – he won't mind, no really! – steal his books. But first, let the plinking & plonking begin! ♦

21 November, from 16.00

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28
Antwerp

→ www.crossingborder.be

MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Moussem Festival → *Bozar, Brussels*

Bits & Pieces → *Beursschouwburg, Brussels*

Catalan Film Festival → *Catalan Representation, Brussels*



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
NOV 18 20.15 Zap Mama

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
NOV 19 20.30 Jelle Cleymans
NOV 23 20.30 Joris Roelofs with Gregory Hutchinson, Aaron Goldberg and Joe Sanders
NOV 24 20.30 Luz de Luna

Luchtbal Cultuurcentrum
Columbiestraat 8; 03.543.90.30
www.ccluchtbal.be
NOV 18 14.00 Steamboat Bill Jr

Sportpaleis
Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
NOV 18 20.30 André Rieu
NOV 20 20.30 Faithless
NOV 22-23 20.00 Lady Gaga with Semi Precious Weapons

Toneelhuis/Bourla
Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
NOV 17 20.00 Das Pop

Trix
Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
NOV 17 20.00 Big John Bates & The Voodoo Dollz + The Grave Brothers **NOV 18** 20.00 The Walkmen **NOV 19** 19.30 W.A.S.P. 22.00 Radioactivity with Jack Parow **NOV 20** 20.00 Zornik **NOV 21** 20.00 Les Savvy Fav + Sky Larkin + Cloud Nothings **NOV 23** 19.00 Deftones + Coheed & Cambria. 20.00 Coliseum + Bison BC + Kvelertak **NOV 24** 19.00 As I Lay Dying + Heaven Shall Burn + Suicide Silence

Bruges

Biekorf
Sint-Jakobsstraat 20; 050.44.30.40
www.ccbrugge.be
NOV 23 20.00 Ernst Jansz, songs by Bob Dylan (translated into Dutch)

Cactus @Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 050.33.20.14
www.cactusmusic.be
NOV 20 19.00 Seabear + Tarwater + Isan + The Go Find + Telekinesis

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique
Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be

Concerts at 20.00:
NOV 17 Mark Ronson & The Business Int'l 5tet. **Yelle** **NOV 20** Patrice **NOV 22** QMD **NOV 24** Spot on Denmark IV with Efterklang + The Kissaway Trail + Cody + Chimes & Bells

Atelier 210
Sint-Pieterssteenweg 210; 02.732.25.98
www.atelier210.be
NOV 24 21.00 Noria
NOV 25 21.00 Andromakers

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org
NOV 20 20.00 Florent Pagny
NOV 22 20.00 Timber Timbre 6 + Jónsi
NOV 24 20.00 Dany Brillant

Le Botanique
Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
NOV 17 20.00 Fool's Gold. Villagers **NOV 18** Nedry + Tall Ships + 65daysofstatic. Answering Machine + Tokyo Police Club **NOV 19** Chromeo. Isola + Alpha 2.1 **NOV 21** Gravenhurst + Frankie + Heartstrings + Paul Smith **NOV 24** Steve Wynn & The Miracle 3. Chief

Magasin 4
Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74
www.magasin4.be
NOV 20 20.00 PPZ30 + Alk-a-line + Emergent Sea + Love Gang SS
NOV 24 19.00 Zenzille + Lsdub

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
NOV 18 21.30 Black 'N' Jazz + Marumbacoco
NOV 19 21.00 Ignatz + Jozef van Wissem + Eric Thielemans + Razen

Viage
Anspachlaan 30; 070.44.34.43
www.viage.be
NOV 20 20.30 Sweet Coffee

GET YOUR
TICKETS NOW!

Hooverphonic

30 January, 20.00

Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

The 29 January show of this trademark Belgian band sold out in hours, but we're crossing our fingers that, by the time you read this, there's still some left for the second show. If so, you should snap them up. Alex Callier and Raymond Geerts are introducing the new singer of their three-piece alt-rock, electro-pop band, and fans are buzzing. It seems the drop-dead gorgeous young woman, without a singing lesson or performance to her name, stunned the pair with her ability to practically channel Geike Arnaert, who left in 2008 to pursue a solo career after 10 years fronting the band. Expect brand new songs from the album *The Night Before*, which releases next week.



Vorst-Nationaal
Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestrnational.be
NOV 17 20.00 Amy Macdonald

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
NOV 20 20.15 Kraakpand 5.2 with Tineke Postma, Ernst Löw & De Bloedvogels, TNile and Broken Glass Heroes

Kinky Star
Vlaamsestraat 9; 09.223.48.45
www.kinkystar.com
NOV 19 21.00 Fyoelk + Moemliem
NOV 20 21.00 JonGeDuld

Muziekpodium
Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekpodium.be
NOV 18 20.00 Black Rebel Motorcycle Club
NOV 19 20.00 Soulfly **NOV 20** 20.00 Rise and Fall + Black Breath + Nails + Harms Way **NOV 21** 20.00 John Grant + Kiss the Anus of a Black Cat

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
NOV 17 21.00 Giant Sand: 25th Anniversary Tour + Ionna Kelley **NOV 20** 20.30 Less Than Jake + Zebrahead + Sonic Boom Six **NOV 23** 20.00 Badly Drawn Boy. 22.00 Takka Takka **NOV 24** 20.00 Eric Chenaux + Kiss the Anus of a Black Cat

Kortrijk

De Kreun
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
NOV 17 20.00 Lady Linn and Her Magnificent Seven **NOV 19** 20.00 Action Beat **NOV 20** 20.00 Distance + Hughes + Dubgrow + Mate & Fudge **NOV 24** 20.00 M.I.A. + Sleigh Bells

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
NOV 19 20.00 Sound of Stereo + Highbloo

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00

Agenda

www.kursaalooostende.be
NOV 24 20.00 Das Pop



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasru 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
NOV 17 22.00 Playtime Session **NOV 18**
22.00 Jurassic Jam **NOV 19** 22.00 Nicola Lancerotti Quartet **NOV 20** 22.00 Hubdah NOV 23 20.30 JazzNight

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be

NOV 20 20.30 Brussels Jazz Orchestra & Bert Joris: Signs & Signatures

De Hopper
Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
NOV 22 21.00 Metafour

Rataplan
Wijngemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
NOV 17 20.30 Han Bennink Trio

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaa 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
NOV 21 20.30 The Music Maker Blues Revue: The Last Lost Blues Survivors

Bruges
De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
www.dewerf.be
NOV 19 20.30 Lee Konitz New Quartet

Brussels
Archiduc
Dansaertstraat 6; 02.512.06.52
www.archiduc.net
NOV 21 17.00 Rüdiger Carl

Jazz Station
Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
NOV 17 20.30 Pascal Mohy Trio **NOV 18**
20.00 Rafael Zaldívar Trio **NOV 20**
18.00 Jean-Nicolas Trottier Quartet **NOV 24** 20.30 Lorenzo Di Maio Trio

Recyclart
Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
NOV 18 21.30 Black 'N' Jazz + Marumbacoco

Sounds Jazz Club
Tulpstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
NOV 18 Visioni Sonore **NOV 19** Intrigo
NOV 20 21.00 Brussels Rhythmn Blues Club: Live and Los Malditos Mojarras
NOV 22 Master Session **NOV 23** 'Grillo' avventure ironico erotiche **NOV 24** Caribe con K - Los Soneros del Barrio

The Music Village
Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
NOV 17 Mahieu Robert Quartet **NOV 18**
Julie Jaroszewski Trio **NOV 19-20** Maxime Blésin HBS 6 Project **NOV 21** Tanel Ruben 5-Tet **NOV 24** Balanced Exposure



Antwerp

De Roma
Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
NOV 17 20.30 Rodrigo Leão & Cinema Ensemble (Portugal)
NOV 18 20.30 Gésloten hart: Ode to Wannes Van de Velde, folk

Luchtbal Cultuurcentrum
Columbiablaa 8; 03.543.90.30
www.cluclhtbal.be
NOV 20 19.00 Rafik El Maai & Hassan Boufous (Andalusia)

Nova
Schijfstraat 105; 03.259.04.20
www.nova-kiel.be
NOV 18 20.15 Maggid

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaa 14; 03.248.01.00
NOV 18-19 20.30 Määk & Albert Anagoko Ensemble: Kojo
NOV 24 20.30 Sanjo Project

Ardoorie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
NOV 19 20.30 Radio Negra

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
NOV 19 20.00 Vinylio, rebetiko (Greece)
NOV 20 20.00 Lasse E Jensen, boogie woogie (Denmark)

Le Bar du Matin
Alsembergsesteenweg 172; 02.537.71.59
www.bardumatin.be
NOV 18 21.00 New Found Land
NOV 19 22.00 Voodoo Funk
NOV 22 20.00 KC McKanzie

Prague House
Palmerstonlaan 16; 02.230.94.91
brussels@cityofprague.cz
NOV 17 20.00 Garage & Tony Duchácek

Théâtre Molière
Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpublieke.be
NOV 17 13.00 Broodje Brussel: BASTA!
NOV 19 20.00 Balanescu Quartet (Romania/UK)
NOV 24-25 20.00 Mamady Keita & Sewa Kan (Guinea)

Geel

CC de Werft
Werft 32; 014.56.66.66 www.dewerft.be
NOV 17 20.15 Gerry De Mol and Lieven Tavernier



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80

trio.be

America: It's Also Our History!

Until 9 May

Tour & Taxis, Brussels

Belgians and Americans tend to like each other culturally: we flock to their movies and gape at their skyscrapers, and they get down on their knees to thank the beer and chocolate gods for our existence. This major exhibition takes a look at this lighter side, but also gets into the nitty-gritty of shared history, economic relationships, immigration and war alliances. Find out why Americans feel



at home in western Europe and vice-versa through this multi-media show of education and nostalgia.

→ www.expo-europe-usa.be

Belgium is supporting a host of events during its presidency of the European Union. Each week, we highlight one. For more, visit www.eutrio.be

FLANDERS TODAY
NOVEMBER 17, 2010

www.amuz.be
NOV 21 15.00 Roberta Invernizzi, soprano; Fabio Bonizzoni, harpsichord; Barbara Strozz, Monteverdi, Giulio Cesare Netti, Frescobaldi

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
NOV 17 20.00 Bl'ndman conducted by Eric Slechim: Matthew Wright, Slechim **NOV 18** 20.00 Collegium Vocale Gent conducted by Philippe Herreweghe: Bach, Christoph Graupner **NOV 19** 20.00 Tomasz Wja, baritone; David Santos, piano: Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, more **NOV 24** 20.00 Champ d'Action & Zwerm: Frederic Rzewski

Queen Elisabeth Hall
Koninkin Astridplein 26; 0900.26.060
www.elisabethzaal.be
NOV 20 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Michael Schonwandt: Mahler's Ninth Symphony

Bruges
Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
NOV 18 20.00 Anima Eterna Brugge conducted by Jos van Immerseel: Monteverdi
NOV 19 20.00 Piotr Anderszewski, piano: Bach, Schumann
NOV 21 15.00 Cambini Quartet: Haydn, Mozart, Hyacinthe Jadin

Brussels
Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
NOV 18 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Michael Schonwandt: Mahler **NOV 19** 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller: Lalo, Mahler **NOV 21** 11.00 Julien Wolfs, harpsichord: Martin Weckmann, Froberger, Bach. 20.00 De Munt Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carlo Rizzi: Puccini, Giuseppe, Tchaikovsky, more **NOV 22** 20.00 Kaoru Tashiro, piano: Beethoven, Schubert/Liszt, Prokofiev, more **NOV 24** 20.00 Leif Ove Andsnes and friends: Brahms, Wagner, Stravinsky, more

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 www.demunt.be
NOV 19-21 times vary Orkest van het Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel, musicians from De Munt Symphony Orchestra and De Munt Children's Choir conducted by Howard Moody and Denis Menier: Moody's The Brussels Requiem

Miniemerk
Miniemerstraat 62; 02.511.93.84
www.minimes.net
NOV 17 20.00 Ricercar Consort conducted by Philippe Pierlot: Sebastian Duron, Antonio de Literes, Alessandro Scarlatti **NOV 21** 10.30 Miniemerk orchestra and choir conducted by Philippe Gérard: Bach cantatas

Musical Instruments Museum
Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30 www.mim.be
NOV 21 11.00 Trio Vidas: Frédérique Debencq, Louise Farrenc, Brahms

Royal Music Conservatory
Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcbr.be
NOV 22 20.00 Leif Ove Andsnes and friends: Bartók, Honegger, Sorensen, Mozart **NOV 23** 20.00 Leif Ove Andsnes and friends: Bartók, Berg, Mahler, Brahms

Ghent
De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyvensstraat 2 09.233.68.78
www.debijloke.be
NOV 19 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Michael Schonwandt: Mahler

Leuven
Lemmensinstituut
Herestraat 53; 016.23.39.67
www.lemmens.be
NOV 18 20.00 Terpander Chamber Choir conducted by Johan Van Bouwelen: Duruflé, Dupré

Ghent
Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until NOV 23 15.00/20.00 Mozart's Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio), conducted by Umberto Benedetti Michelangeli, staged by Eike Gramss (in Spanish, English and Arabic with Dutch surtitles)



Ghent
Vlaamse Opera
Schouwburgstraat 3; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until NOV 23 15.00/20.00 Mozart's Die Entführung aus dem Serail (The Abduction from the Seraglio), conducted by Umberto Benedetti Michelangeli, staged by Eike Gramss (in Spanish, English and Arabic with Dutch surtitles)

DON'T MISS

Spoken World 10

24 November – 5 December

Kaaithete & Kaaistudios, Brussels

I think, therefore I am. I travel, so who am I? With these words, Kaaithete opens its richly rewarding annual festival Spoken World. Through performances, exhibitions and plain old conversation, movers and shakers from across the planet present the state of the world. This year's theme is Mobility and Identity, so you'll get Brussels troupe Irma Firma's film/exhibition *Home & Away* on contemporary nomads; *Tagfish*, a new performance/installation piece by Antwerp-based group Berlin; and two-man-show *Doo* by Portuguese choreographer Miguel Pereira, who confronts his European identity with his Mozambique ethnicity. Also don't miss Spoken Night on 25 November, an evening of performances, lectures and "speech acts".

→ www.kaaithete.be



© Johannes van de Vord



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg

Arenbergstraat 28; 070.22.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be

Until NOV 17 20.30 Cie 13 in Olum Agiti, choreographed by Rosa Mei

deSingel
Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be

NOV 18-20 20.00 Cie Rosas in 3Abschied, choreographed by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Jérôme Bel

Theater 't Eilandje

Kattendijk-Westkaai 16; 03.203.95.85

www.flandersballet.be
NOV 19-27 20.00 Royal Ballet of Flanders in Artifact, choreographed by William Forsythe

Bruges

Concertgebouw

't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02

www.concertgebouw.be
NOV 21 20.30 B.O.G. Company in Meeting Bach: 40 years of Ballet, choreographed by Olivia Geerolf

Magdalenaazaal (MaZ)

Magdalenastraat 27; 050.44.30.60

www.cbbrugge.be
NOV 21 17.00 Via Katlehong Dance in Woza (ages 8 and up)

NOV 24 20.00 Peeping Tom in 32, rue Vandenbranden, choreographed by Gabriela Carrizo and Franck Chartier

Stadsschouwburg

Vlamingstraat 29; 050.44.30.60

www.cbbrugge.be
NOV 19 20.00 Tercera Llamada, flamenco

Brussels

Les Brigitines

Korte Brigittenstraat 1; 02.213.86.10

www.brigitines.be
NOV 23-26 20.30 Cie Giolisu in Loss, choreographed by Lisa Da Boit and Giovanni Scarella

www.vooruit.be
NOV 17-18 20.00 Vivarium Studio in Big Bang, directed by Philippe Quesne (in French with Dutch subtitles)

Leuven

Het Depot
Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be

NOV 18 20.00 Braakland/ZheBilding in Dansen Drinken Betalen (Dance Drink Pay), written and directed by Adriaan Van Aken (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be

Until JAN 16 Confluence and Consequence, tapestries by British artist Craigie Horsfield based on his own photographs



LISA BRADSHAW

Queer Film Festival

Until 26 November
Across Flemish Brabant

It's the 10th anniversary of this festival that takes place largely in Leuven but also spreads the love to several other cities in the province of Flemish Brabant. In honour of that milestone, they're showing some old favourites in the gay, lesbian and transgender film genre, as well as new work. Perfect, in other words, for those who have a little cultural catching up to do.

The anniversary selection contains many must-sees, including Andy and Larry (now Lana) Wachowski's *Bound*, the 1996 *film noir* that found ex-con Gina Gershon showing the ropes (so to speak) to the sultry, little black dress-clad Jennifer Tilly, while bumping off her mobster boyfriend. Both women immediately shot into the lesbian culture hall of fame, while the Wachowskis went on to make the *Matrix* series.

The festival will also screen *Boys Don't Cry*, Kimberly Peirce's 1999 film that introduced transgenderism to a wide audience, while relating the tragic story of a young transsexual man murdered in middle-America. Hilary Swank won an Oscar for her startling transformation into real-life victim Brandon Teena (pictured).

Among the newer crop of movies are the beautifully solemn *Eyes Wide Open*, Einayim Petukhoh's story of two orthodox Jewish men who fall in love in Jerusalem, and *No End*, Roberto Cuzzillo's eloquent tale of a lesbian couple who want to have a baby but must travel from their home in Italy, where artificial insemination for same-sex couples is illegal, to the Netherlands.

➡ www.holebifilmfestival.be

Diamond Museum
Kon. Astridplein 19-23 (03.202.48.90
www.diamantmuseum.be
Until DEC 31 For Honour & Glory: Treasures of Napoleon, the pomp and splendour of Napoléon and Marie-Louise's jewelry on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of their arrival in Antwerp

Fotomuseum
Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until JAN 16 Boris Becker 1984-2009, photographs by the German modernist
Until JAN 16 Willy Kessels 1930-1960, photographs by the Flemish modernist

Plantin-Moretus Museum
Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
www.museumplantinmoretus.be
Until JAN 16 Jan I Moretus, documents showing how the 16th-century Flemish printer built Plantin into one of the world's most significant publishing houses

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
Until DEC 5 MOOI: Over kwetsbare schoonheid (BEAUTIFUL: On Fragile Beauty), works by 12 artists, including Jan Fabre, Wim Delvoye and David Claerbout, on the definition of beauty (for kids ages 9-12)
Until JAN 23 Anselm Kiefer, works by the contemporary German artist

Bruges
De Bond
Buitenhofvest 1; 050.44.30.40
www.cbbrugge.be

Until NOV 28 Exhibition Models, installations on the question of identity by Teheran-born artist Chohreh Feyzjou, Benin artist Meschac Gaba and Flemish artist Wesley Meuris

Groeningemuseum
Dijver 12; 050.44.87.43
Until JAN 30 Van Eyck tot Dürer, paintings by Flemish Primitives paired with work by painters from Central Europe who were directly influenced by the Primitives (Part of Brugge Centraal)

Brussels
Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

Until JAN 23 Gilbert & George: Jack Freak Pictures, major exhibition of the Italian-British artist duo's stylised photographs with British flag iconography
Until JAN 23 The World of Lucas Cranach, work by the leading figure of the German Renaissance that places him in the artistic context of his time

Until FEB 13 Ensor: Composer and Writer, autographs, publications, documents and photographs by the Flemish Surrealist master James Ensor

ING Cultural Centre
Koningsplein 6; 02.507.82.00 www.bozar.be
Until FEB 13 Ensor Revealed, drawings and paintings illustrate the imaginary and artistic evolution of the Ostend artist on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth

Maurice Béjart Huis
Fourche straat 8; 02.347.44.68
www.maisonbejart.be
Until NOV 22 Maurice Béjart discovery exhibition, decors, costumes, sketches and other unpublished documents related to the famous dance school

Museum van Elsene
Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22
www.museumvanelsene.be
Until JAN 16 Paul Delvaux: Starting Points, paintings by the Belgian surrealist shown alongside works by artists who influenced him

Until JAN 16 From Dürer to Jan Fabre: Masterpieces, paintings from the museum's collection including 19th- and 20th-century works by Ensor, Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Miró, more

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces
Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33
www.legermuseum.be
Until NOV 30 Crazy Flying Machines, drawings by Belgian illustrator Jean Leclercq

Until JAN 31 Belgians Can Do Too! Het Belgisch-Luxemburgs bataljon in Korea Belgian military operations in the Korean War

Royal Museums of Art and History
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
www.kmkg-mrah.be
Until NOV 30 The Etruscans in Europe, multimedia tour of the Etruscan civilisation from their conquest of Italy to the rest of Europe

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11
www.fine-arts-museum.be
Until NOV 28 Javier Marín: De 3 en 3, urban installation by the Mexican sculptor
Until JAN 9 From Delacroix to Kandinsky, Orientalism in Europe, European Orientalist art during the 19th century with paintings, drawings and sculpture
Until FEB 6 Jules Schmalzigaug: A Futurist Belgian, retrospective of paintings by the only Belgian artist involved in the Italian futurist movement before the First World War

Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
Until DEC 5 Art in All of Us, photos from an around-the-world trip by Anthony Asael and Stéphanie Rabeniafara (www.artinallofus.be)
Until MAY 9 America: It's Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork

Ghent

Design Museum
Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99
www.designmuseumgent.be

NOV 20-FEB 27 03 Maarten Van Severen: The History of an Icon, models, prototypes, drawings and photographs of the development of the "03" chair by the Flemish designer
NOV 20-FEB 27 Art Nouveau and Art Deco from the Netherlands, a selection of objects from the Drents Museum Assen collection

Dr Guislain Museum
Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95
www.museumdrguislain.be
Until JAN 27 Boby Baker Diary Drawings: Mental Illness and Me, more than 150 drawings by the British performance artist illustrate her 10-year journey through psychiatric institutions

Museum of Modern Art (SMAK)
Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be
Until NOV 21 Tegenlicht (Backlight), young visual artists and writers confront famous artists from the literary, arts and music scene
Until DEC 3 Inside Installations, 10 installations from the museum's collection
Until FEB 27 Haren Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art, a highlight of the continuing contemporary aspect of work by James Ensor, shown with work by international contemporary artists

Stadsmuseum Gent (STAM)
Bijloke - Godshuizenlaan 2; 09.269.87.90
www.stamgent.be
Until MAY 1 Enlightened City, an examination of how light affects a city through diaries, models, paintings, photographs and installations

Hasselt

Fashion Museum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.239.621
www.modemuseumhasselt.be

Until JAN 9 Devout/Divine: Fashion vs Religion, examples of religious symbolism in designs of the past decennia

z33
Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60 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

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302
Houtmarkt-Begijnpark; 056.27.78.50,
www.kortrijk1302.be

Until JAN 9 OnGELOOFlijk: van hemel, hel en halleluja (UnBELIEVable: From Heaven, Hell and Hallelujah), religious objects and symbols from the past 500 years

Leuven

Centrale Bibliotheek
Ladeuzeplein 21; 016.32.46.60
<http://bib.kuleuven.be>

Until NOV 30 De slaap neemt geen plaats in (Sleep Occupies No Space), photographs, paintings, collages and video on street children in Kinshasa by Flemish photographer and anthropologist Kristien Geenen

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29
www.mleuven.be
Until DEC 5 The Anjou Bible: A Royal Manuscript Revealed, a rare manuscript from the 14th-century court of Naples
Until DEC 5 Matthew Brannon, lithographs and screenprints by the American artist

Until JAN 9 Ozo: Joke Van Leeuwen, works by the Dutch author, poet, illustrator and performer
Until JAN 16 Robert Devriendt: Victimes de la Passion, paintings by the Flemish artist
Until JAN 23 Mayombe: Meesters van de magie (Master of Magic), sculptures and objects from the Congolese collection of the Catholic University of Leuven



Moussem Festival: The 10th edition of the annual Arab culture festival, featuring literature, theatre and music
Until DEC 4 across Brussels and Antwerp www.moussem.be

Week van de Smaak: Fifth edition of the Week of Taste with more than 1,200 culinary activities
Until NOV 21 across Brussels and Flanders www.weekvandesmaak.be

Antwerp

Crossing Border: The Antwerp edition of the famous Dutch festival combining literature and music, with concerts by Rufus Wainwright, Mercury Rev and John Cooper Clarke, among others, plus readings by poets and authors including Lies Van Gasse, Peter Verhelst, DBC Pierre, more
NOV 19-21 at Arenberg, Arenbergstraat 28 www.crossingborder.be

Bruges

Brugge Centraal: Festival celebrating the art and culture of Central Europe, with dance, theatre, music, literature, film and major exhibitions
Until JAN 30 across Bruges www.bruggecentraal.be

Brussels

Belgian Literature? To Belge or Not to Belge: Belgian writers discuss what they have in common
NOV 24 20.00 (in French and Dutch) at Passa Porta, A Dansaertstraat 46 02.226.04.54, www.beschrijf.be

Cocoon: The interior design and home decoration fair celebrates its 20th anniversary
NOV 20-28 at Brussels Expo, Heysel 02.474.89.81, www.cocoon.be

Dr Jane Goodall: Public lecture by the primatologist and UN Peace Messenger (in English)
NOV 22 19.30 at VUB (Auditorium Q), Pleinstraat 2 0488.87.80.41, ilke@janegoodall.be

Drago Jancar: The Slovenian writer talks with Pavel Ocepek (in English)
NOV 19 20.00 at Passa Porta, A Dansaertstraat 46 02.226.04.54, www.beschrijf.be

Jorn De Cock: The Flemish writer talks about his new book Arabische Dageraad (Arabic Dawn; in Dutch)
NOV 17 12.30 at Passa Porta, A Dansaertstraat 46 02.226.04.54, www.beschrijf.be

Norway Now: Festival of contemporary Norwegian culture with classical and pop music, literature, architecture, film and graphic design
Until MAY 24 across Brussels www.abconcerts.be

Scottish writer series: John Burnside, poet and short story writer
NOV 19 13.00 at Scotland House, Schuman roundabout 6 Registration: brusselsevents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Skoda Jazz: The 25th edition of this international jazz festival features an all-star line-up, including Herbie Hancock, Toots Thielemans, Philip Catherine, Lady Linn, more
Until NOV 30 across Brussels www.skodajazz.be

Ghent

Het poëziefestival: Poetry café evening with readings, music, debates and more
NOV 23 20.00 at Vooruit, St Pietersnieuwstraat 23 0900.26.060, www.vooruit.be

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

Groove City

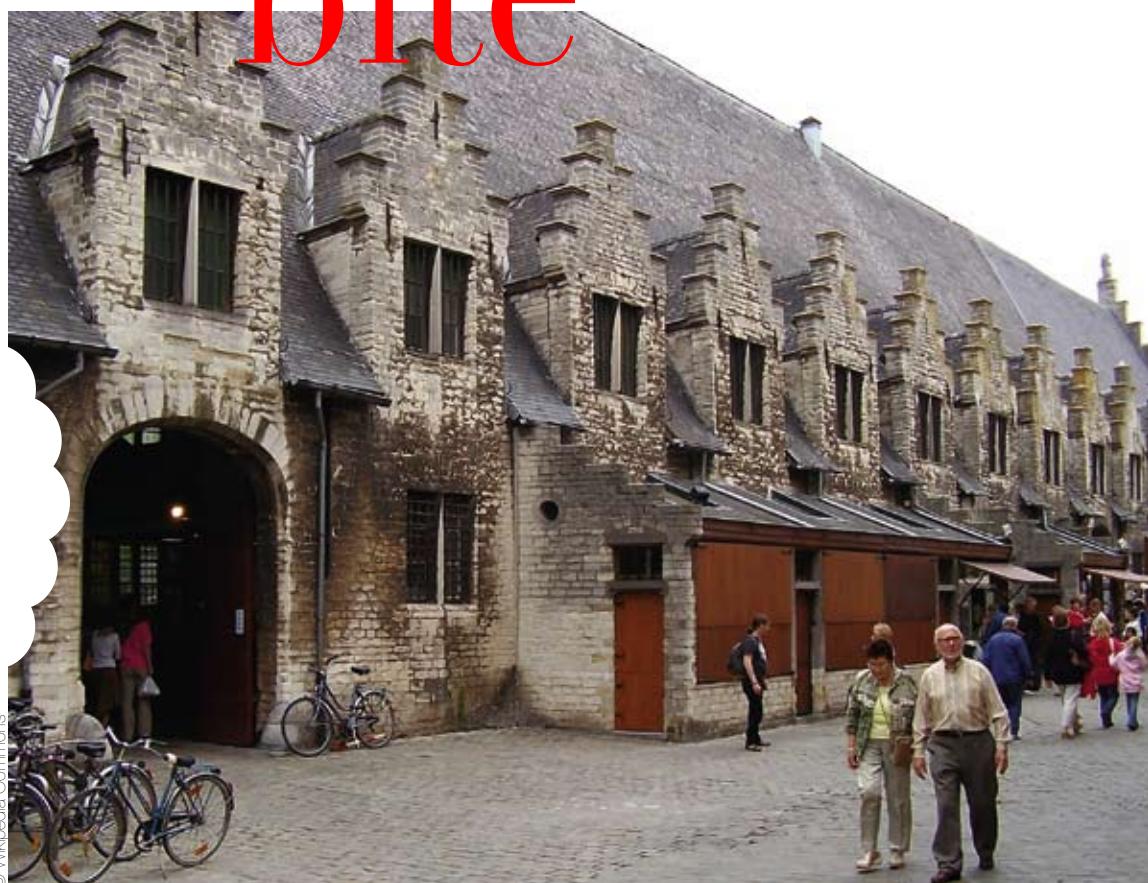
It's an unlikely location, but Brussels Kart Expo in Groot-Bijgaarden transforms into a real Groove City one night every November. The concept hasn't changed over its 11 years: four fun-filled party rooms with DJs playing house, techno, electro and drum & bass.

On 27 November, house fans are spoiled for choice with, among others, London duo Basement Jaxx (pictured) playing a set with funky bass lines and salsa rhythm. France's Martin Solveig returns to Groove City, where he'll spin some tracks from his latest album *Smash*. His first single "Hello", with a video clip where Martin Solveig and colleague Bob Sinclair rival it out on the tennis court, hit the charts right away. Also a Frenchman, David Vendetta will demonstrate what made his new album an instant success.

The line-up in the techno rooms is a real treat, too, in light of 25 years of Detroit techno. Agoria – also from France – is not a new to Groove City – after performances in 2006 and 2008, he's back for a third time with more

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



© Wikipedia Commons

Het Groot Vleeshuis

I do my holiday shopping in "The Big Meat House". Admittedly, Het Groot Vleeshuis in the centre of Ghent doesn't sound like a place where you'd expect to find the perfect gift. But my family back in the US appreciates a sack full of goodies they'd otherwise never have the chance to try.

Of course, there's a lot more inside this historic building in Ghent than meat alone. The name reflects its original function, from when it was built in the early 15th century up until the early 19th century. In the Middle Ages, meat was a delicate ware, so sales were restricted to covered markets, called meat houses or butchers' halls.

Once hygiene became easier to regulate, the private sale of meat was allowed, meaning Het Groot Vleeshuis was in for some big changes: In 1920 it was used as a market for fruit and veg, in the '60s for the sale of fish, and later even as a post office and parking garage. But finally, in 1996, the monument was renovated with respect for its mediaeval history. Special attention was given to the beautiful original fresco in the hall's chapel, as well as the sculpture of "Mary with the Inkpot" on an outside wall, the meaning of which has given birth to a good many legends.

In 2000, Het Groot Vleeshuis became a promotional centre for regional products from East Flanders. I suggest that you first sit down for brunch before even thinking about shopping for two reasons: it's not wise to shop on an empty stomach, and it's a good way to taste some of the products before you buy.

The suggested menu for November includes pumpkin soup with *pas de bleue* (blue cheese from Ghent cheesemaker Het Hinkelspel), Breydel ham (oven-baked Flemish ham) with Tripel Karmeliet sauce (made with the beer of the same name from Buggenhout), warm seasonal vegetables and potatoes and vanilla pudding with *speculoos*, all for €20. Wash it down with the beer of the month,

Kerstpater Lieven from Sint-Lievens-Esse, a strong dark ale of 9% – the perfect winter beer.

By now you should be ready to peruse the offerings. There is a wide selection of local beers, from Ename blond to Delirium Tremens, plus other specialty drinks like jenever, *advocaat* and RoomeR, a trendy Ghent cocktail made with elderflowers.

There's an entire section devoted to breakfast: Chocolate spread from Beveren, *peperkoek* from Lebbeke, coffee from Zottegem, honey from Serskamp and jam from Ghent.

True to its name, the centre offer three types of artisanally prepared ham: Ganda, Breydelham/Breydelspek Antonio and Superano ham Grega. There are other specialty meats as well, from Saint-Vith dried sausages to Ghent's own garlic horse-meat salami.

Let's not forget all the East Flemish cheese and mustard, including cheese from sheep farm Moerenham in Zele, and of course the famous Tierenteyn mustard from Ghent.

Saving the best for last, choose from a variety of chocolates by local sweet-makers Guylian, Van Hoorebeke, Duet, Marioca and Diane. But do leave a couple of boxes of Diane Belgian milk chocolate truffles for me, please.

→ www.grootvleeshuis.be

Groentenmarkt 7, Ghent
 Tuesday to Sunday, 10.00 to 18.00 kitchen open until 15.00 (16.00 at weekends)
 All the finest products from East Flanders, as brunch or in a gift basket

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #157

Science

Researchers at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science have discovered a new special of antelope in West Africa. We talk to them about what makes this finding so important

Arts

One of the cornerstones of the Bruges Central festival is an exemplary exhibition of Flemish Primitives and artists they influenced. Our critic explains why it's all not as daunting as you might think

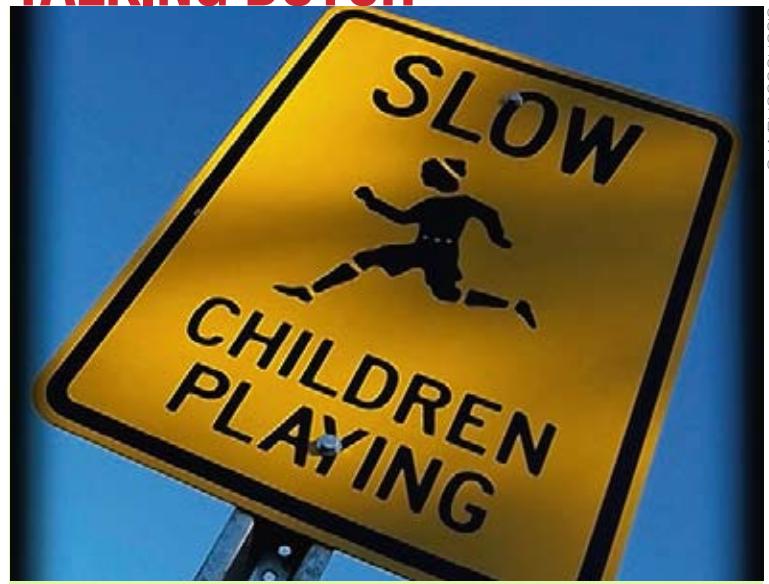
Agenda

The Anjou Bible, a fascinating royal manuscript from 14th-century Naples is on view in Leuven. Declared officially as a masterpiece by the Flemish Community, we'll tell you why if you don't see it now, you never will

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLEAN

© KYPHOSOCLOSSIS



‘misverstand’

Getting the wrong end of the stick is a risk you run in a foreign language, often resulting in *een misverstand* – a misunderstanding. It may be false friends who let you down in Dutch: *een douche* means a shower and nothing more; *de brave jongen* is just a well-behaved boy; *een slim meisje* is a smart girl, not necessarily slender, or if you're German, bad. Likewise, a Swede may become impatient if you say *ik kom straks*, and you come later rather than immediately.

Fair enough, words may look the same and mean something different, but sometimes it appears that the concept is simply missing in the other language. Take the phrase *te laat*, which you might think simply means too late. Well, that's so in the sentence *Ik was twee minuten te laat voor de bus* – I was two minutes too late for the bus, where the bus is a shrinking dot on the horizon. But what about: *ik kwam te laat op mijn werk*, which means I got to work late.

When confusing words are strung together, they may cause you to pause. The banner sported by a local baker's proclaims: "brood pain bread" in Dutch, French and English, yet the word bread turns it all into English for me.

Often I just confuse myself. Take last weekend. A newspaper spread on the breakfast table as

I spread butter on my croissant. I decided to amuse my captive audience by reading out interesting snippets.

One caught my eye: "Moeder vecht met zoon in winkel" – Mother fights with son in shop", a real Man Bites Dog headline. A young man was "aangevallen en bestolen" – attacked and robbed" by his mother. He had just started working but was refusing to contribute to his upkeep. The sordid details included the fact that "De jonge man kreeg klappen onder de ogen" – The young man received blows under the eyes," at which point I paused and pictured the scene as this battleaxe laid into her son with well-aimed punches.

I wondered aloud if under his eyes were weak spots and how the mother had aimed so well. The others were equally bemused, which led us to speculate for a moment on how the blows had been administered.

At which point I put down my coffee cup and read again: "De jonge man kreeg klappen onder de ogen van heel wat klanten in de winkel" – The young man received blows in front of ("under the eyes") of a good number of customers in the shop". Mirth all round, re-enactments of undereye punches, with the kitchen echoing to "onder de ogen".

THE LAST WORD . . .

That sinking feeling

"Suddenly our house was an aquarium."

A resident of Oudenaarde, East Flanders, hit like many in Flanders by the weekend flooding

Quite a splash

"There will be about 60 litres of rain per square metre this weekend. That's a lot."

Weather forecaster Sabine Hagedoren, whose forecast last week fell short in some places, where rainfall measured 74 litres

Road to war

"Euroscepticism leads to war."

Herman Van Rompuy, president of the European Council, delivering his State of Europe speech in Berlin

Winning ways

"I have to say that Flemish jury members are unbelievably good at getting their own way. And they do it in such a friendly way, there's not much you can say against them."

Jeroen Vullings, literary editor of *Vrij Nederland*, after yet another Flemish author took away a top Dutch book prize