



Istanbul Express

Two major festivals bring the heart of Turkey to the heart of Flanders

p13

The iron harvest

The discovery of an unexploded bomb in Brussels is a timely reminder that, in other parts of Flanders, such finds are a daily occurrence

DENZIL WALTON

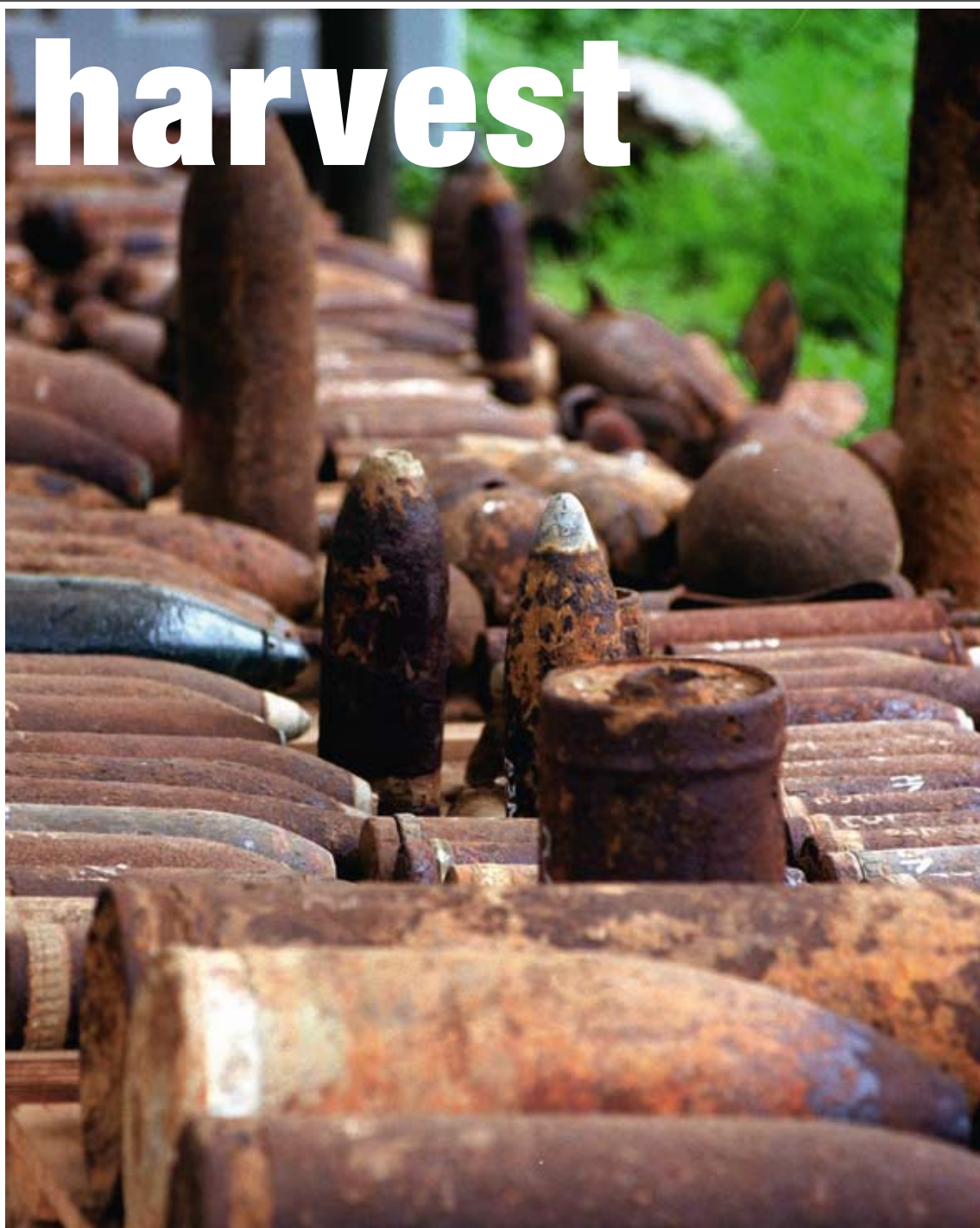
The discovery of an unexploded Second World War bomb on 16 November at the construction site of the new NATO headquarters in Brussels was reported worldwide. Newspapers from Washington to Seoul carried reports of the 250-kilogram American bomb and the evacuation of the current NATO building. Meanwhile, in the Westhoek of West Flanders – scene of some of the most severe battles of the First World War – the locals must have been wondering what all the fuss was about, because such discoveries in their region are far from newsworthy. Members of the local bomb disposal squad might have been caught smiling ruefully, too. In 2009, they were called out no fewer than 3,027 times – that's more than eight times a day – to pick up unexploded ordnance from the First World War. These call-outs resulted in the disposal of 215 tons of unexploded bombs, shells, mortars, grenades and gas canisters.

Yet the timing of the discovery of the NATO bomb couldn't have been more apposite. Only five days previously, the 11 November lecture of the Flemish Peace Institute was held in Saint Jacob's Church in Ypres. This annual event is jointly organised with the In Flanders Fields Museum.

The keynote speech this year was delivered by Flemish author Erwin Mortier. His prize-winning 2008 novel *Godenslaap* (*Sleeping Gods*) was reviewed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*: "This book depicts daily life during the First World War in such an impressive way that it seems as if Mortier has experienced the war himself."

In some respects, he had. When he was eight, he was playing toy soldiers with a friend on local waste ground; the game involved excavating mini-trenches and tunnels. "As we were digging deep inside a mound of earth, our fingers came across something hard and domed which felt granular and gave a dull metallic sound when we knocked on it."

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© Yves Logghe/REPORTERS

Record price paid for pigeon

Most homeowners have a few of them and consider them a nuisance. One Japanese man, however, just paid €170,000 for a pigeon. The record price was paid for Euro Diamond, a "super pigeon".

The sale took place online last week, organised by the auction house Pigeon Paradise (PiPa) in Knesselare, East Flanders. The sale lasted for two days, and 151 birds were sold. PiPa owner Nikolaas Gyselbrecht hopes that the total raised tops one million euros, which would be largely thanks to the huge interest in Euro Diamond.

Euro Diamond is an eight-year-old male, with an impressive record of long-distance races won, mainly between 2004 and 2007. That's when he stopped, around the usual age for racing pigeons, to enjoy a retirement of veneration and the occasional siring of offspring. The two German owners were offered €200,000 for him a few years ago, but they preferred to keep him for his stud value.



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Intense competition among pigeon-fanciers – or colombophiles – in the far east is responsible for pushing up pigeon prices in recent times, as the sport becomes more popular there. Belgium, Gyselbrecht says, is where they come first for the best birds.

Police raid suspected terrorist rings

Nine arrests made in Brussels and Antwerp

ALAN HOPE

Police last week carried out searches into suspected terrorist activity and arrested nine people in Brussels and Antwerp. In Brussels, 17 addresses were searched and 15 people detained for questioning.

At the centre of the investigation is the Belgian Islamic Centre in Molenbeek (CIB) and related website Assabyle.com. Police are investigating their roles in the collection of funds for terror activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the recruitment of *mujahideen*, or Muslim fighters.

In a separate investigation in Antwerp, seven suspects were arrested in connection with an alleged plan to blow

up a Belgian target. An eighth suspect was arrested later in the day. At the same time, in a related action, three men were arrested in Amsterdam and one in Aachen in Germany, where searches were also carried out.

The men are believed to belong to a pro-Chechen group known as the Caucasian Emirate, listed as a terrorist organisation by Russia and the United States. Three of the four arrested in Antwerp are also members of Sharia4Belgium, a pro-jihad organisation that hit the headlines when it helped disrupt a speaking engagement by writer Benno Bernard at Antwerp University. Sharia4Belgium has denied any links to a terrorist plan.

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OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

Ladri di biciclette



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Last year there were 38,000 bicycles stolen in Flanders and reported to police. Since many people don't take the trouble to report bike thefts, the real figure, according to estimates, could be up to four times higher. In any given year, about one family in 20 suffers a bicycle theft.

In fact, police do find a lot of stolen bicycles back. In many cases, thieves, in a spirit of easy come, easy go, just dump them. Two-thirds of those found, however, never make it back to their owners because they have not been reported stolen in the first place.

To tackle the problem, police in Brasschaat, a town in the north of Antwerp province, created a website where they could display found bicycles in the hope the owners would recognise theirs and turn up to claim them back. Now Antwerp province has extended the idea to cover its entire territory, and invited Limburg province to join them.

On 30 November, the new website was launched, appropriately in Brasschaat, by local mayor Dirk De Kort and city of Antwerp mayor Patrick Janssens.

The city of Antwerp accounts, of course, for a large number of stolen bicycles. One man in Antwerp alone, it was recently reported all over the Flemish press, is responsible for an amazing 623 thefts in the space of 78 days, or nearly eight bikes a day. Serge O confessed the thefts to police and admitted it brought him €16,000 in profit.

He was supposed to turn up in court last week to be sentenced in another case involving shoplifting from Delhaize, Colruyt and Media Markt, as well as (of course) the theft of a bicycle. Prosecutors were asking for a one-year sentence, but Serge O never turned up. The case of the 623 bikes is still hanging over him, but if he gets a year for that other string of offences, he can console himself with the realisation that it amounts to only 14 hours per bike.

Consult the stolen bike database at:

→ www.gevondenfietsen.be

News in brief

Supermarkets Delhaize and Carrefour, plus the grocery section of Ikea, announced that they will **stop selling northern bluefin tuna** because the numbers of the species have been reduced by over-fishing. The three retailers were among a number of businesses that signed on to the "Tuna Market Manifesto" drawn up by nature conservancy organisation WWF. The signatories called on governments currently meeting in Paris for the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) to take "drastic action" to save the fish.

Flemish swimmer **Kimberley Buys won silver** last week in the 200m freestyle at the European Swimming Championships in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, with a time of 2:10.14. The 21-year-old from Sint-Gillis-Waas, East Flanders, was in third place in the butterfly, moving into the lead on the backstroke and lost ground to Hungary's Evelyn Verraszto in the crawl.

Researchers at the Catholic University of Leuven have developed a system that can **detect a fall in the home of an elderly person** and automatically send an alarm signal. Seniors suffer an average of one fall every year, according to Professor Koen Milisen of the university's Centre for Hospital and Nursing Sciences.

The so-called FallCam will allow more elderly people to remain living independently at home for longer.

Cinema-goers are being subjected to **noise levels equivalent to a Formula One race car** driving through the cinema, according to Vlati, the Flemish organisation for sufferers of tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and hyperacusis (hypersensitivity to noise). Vlati measured sound levels in two cinemas, one from the Kinopolis group and one from UGC, and found dangerous levels in both – up to 118 decibels (dB). Prolonged exposure to anything over 90 dB can lead to hearing damage.

Brussels Region has given its approval for the construction of the **region's first ecoduct**. The ecoduct, which allows for safe passage of wildlife, will be built over the Brussels-Namur railway line that passes through the Zoniënwood in the south of the city. The 50-metre construction will enable wild animals to pass safely from one side of the tracks to the other.

The City of Brussels has extended **10 days of maternity leave** to the female partners of women who give birth, provided that one of the couple works for the city, alderman for personnel

matters Philippe Close announced. The measure extends to lesbian couples the rights that heterosexual couples already enjoy. Close said he would approach the Brussels Parliament to have the idea applied to all public services throughout Brussels Region.

A law introduced in April to allow patients to **register complaints of medical error** cannot be applied because the law required to set up a governing body failed to pass before the fall of the government, announced acting health minister Laurette Onkelinx. Patients who suffer the effects of medical error will still be covered by the law's protection, she said, but payment of compensation will have to wait for the necessary legislation to pass.

Two dozen top academics – 12 from Flemish institutions and 12 from French-speaking – have signed an open letter to the federal government warning that **funding for important research could run dry** if talks between the seven parties trying to form a government do not address the issue. The federal government currently pays €111 million a year to projects that straddle the language divide – money that could vanish if research funding is made entirely a matter for the language communities.

FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Peter Goossens

TV programmes in Flanders, as in many other countries, are dominated at the moment by cookery programmes. The three main channels all have a daily show: VRT with *Dagelijkse kost*, VTM with *De perfecte keuken* and VT4 with the hugely successful *Komen eten*.

However, when it comes to TV chefs, there is only one three-star maestro: Peter Goossens. The chef of the three-Michelin-star Hof Van Cleve in Kruishoutem, East Flanders, was there as mentor and judge for three series of *Mijn Restaurant!* (based on an Australian idea). He's just finished the second series of *De beste hobbykok van Vlaanderen* with the dishy Dutchman Sergio Herman. He's set up the digital cookery channel Njam! with Studio 100.

Now Goossens plans another series, this time bearing a strong resemblance to Britain's *Hell's Kitchen* with the notorious Gordon Ramsay. In it, he'll be taking a small group of professional chefs through 13 weeks of what we can only imagine will be Hell, to find one good enough to stand by him in his own restaurant.

Goossens was born in Borsbeke, East Flanders, in 1964, making him one of the few top Flemish chefs who's not from West Flanders. He studied there, though, at the prestigious Hotelschool Ter Duinen in Koksijde, before going on to earn his spurs in Paris and in Thoissey in the Rhône-Alpes region, close to where the famous *poulet de Bresse* comes from.

Back in Flanders, he opened Hof Van Cleve in 1987. In 1994 came the first Michelin star, followed in 1998 by the second, with the third awarded in 2005. In fact, he could have gained the first star much faster, but, as he explained in an interview a few years ago, the owner of the building Goossens



rents himself had a one-star restaurant nearby. He would only rent to Goossens if he avoided providing competition in the fine-dining arena. When the owner quit in 1992, Goossens stepped up his game, and his first star came in just two years.

His food is invariably described as exquisite. He's less of a trendsetter than Herman, but what he does have is a wide range of skills, from butchery to patisserie, and a deep knowledge of local and seasonal ingredients. The amateur chefs in his *Hobbykok* series have been treated to a crash-course in Flemish produce – as have viewers, too.

How things will work out for the hopefuls in his new series is another matter. In *Mijn Restaurant!* he has been criticised as being too tough. He may not have Gordon Ramsay's florid vocabulary, but he does have the same exacting standards. Excitement is assured.

→ www.hofvancleve.com

FLANDERS TODAY

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Blue on the bus

From March next year, police in Antwerp will be obliged to come to work by bicycle, bus or tram, in an effort to improve the city's carbon footprint



Suspects "raised money for Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya"

→ continued from page 1

According to police, the Chechen group used the internet to raise funds and volunteers for the struggle in Chechnya and other Central Asian republics formerly part of the Soviet Union. They also plotted an attack on a Belgian target, but that has not been identified.

The investigation has been going on since late last year, when an unidentified foreign intelligence service informed their Belgian colleagues of an Antwerp man's messages about a possible Belgian attack on an extremist online forum. In the year since, no specific target appears to have been selected.

The man was described as a 44-year-old of Chechen origin who has been living in Antwerp for 10 years with his wife and children. He is alleged to have worked from the Bangladeshi mosque in the city close to where he lives. His wife denied he was a terrorist. "We came here to flee the violence in Chechnya," she said.

In Brussels, the group of suspects centres on the so-called sheikh



One of the Brussels locations where terror suspects were arrested last week

Ayachi Bassam of the Islamic Centre, who is currently in prison in Bari, Italy, on charges of human trafficking. His supporters in the capital are suspected of continuing to recruit *mujahideen*. Bassam's lawyer claimed the action was a political exercise in "vote catching" at his client's expense. "The Belgian justice system has been trying to prosecute Bassam for years, but the truth is they have never found even the shadow of any evidence," said Sébastien Courtoy. "This time

will not be any different."

The current alert level for terrorist activity was not raised as a result of the police actions or the alleged plot, the government's crisis centre said. The level remains at two on a scale of one to four. "There are no elements which require a new evaluation of the situation by the Coordination Office for Threat Analysis (OCAD)," said spokesman Peter Mertens. "The house searches were carried out on the basis of information already in the

possession of the federal police in Antwerp."

The two men arrested in Brussels will have their first appearance in court on 3 December, and the seven men originally arrested in Antwerp will appear in court in Mechelen on 7 December. The eighth man arrested in Antwerp was due to appear in court in Mechelen on Tuesday (30 November), after *Flanders Today* had gone to press. ♦

FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

Plan E

Bye Bye Belgium was the name of a TV programme that was aired a couple of years ago by the French-language public broadcaster RTBF. This so-called docufiction aimed to show what would happen should Flanders break away from Belgium.

The programme caused panic among some French-speaking viewers, as well as bewilderment in Flanders: was this how our French-speaking compatriots viewed us? Ready to pack up and go any moment?

Recently, a Flemish version of *Bye Bye Belgium* was broadcast called *Plan B*. "Plan B" is the term, mostly used by French speakers, for a hypothetical post-Belgium situation. The fact that this time the Flemish public broadcaster made this programme shows that minds have moved on: even in Flanders, Plan B is no longer a totally fictional option.

As a matter of fact, Plan B was not docufiction, but a real documentary with a dozen professors explaining exactly what could happen. Splitting up the country is possible, they concluded predictably, but the transition would cause enormous turmoil.

The day after, Bart De Wever, the winner of the federal elections in Flanders and leader of the nationalist N-VA party, dismissed the programme with just one sentence: "The real plan B is elections". You might call it Plan E, or Plan V in Dutch (for *verkiezingen*, or elections).

Officially, seven parties from the north and the south of the country are still talking about forming a federal government, along with the state reform that this requires. Mediator Johan Vande Lanotte of the Flemish socialist SP.A party is still trying to find an agreement.

Off the record, though, all parties believe this will come to nothing and that new elections have become inevitable. These elections would be held in February, after Belgium has finished its EU presidency. They would be quite unique, being held so shortly after the previous round at the ballot box and with no federal government serving in between.

De Standaard newspaper has compared the current political situation to a game of chicken: all parties believe that the search for a government is doomed, but no-one wants to be the first to say so; it is an unwritten law of Belgian politics says that whoever calls for new elections will end up losing them.

Only 200,000 viewers watched *Plan B*, while some 1,700,000 opted for the light-hearted quiz show *De Pappenheimers* on another channel. With compulsory voting, new elections will attract millions more, but one wonders exactly how popular this option will be.

THE WEEK
IN FIGURES

207,954

students signed up for higher education this year, the first time the figure has passed 200,000, and 11,728 more than last year

€1,700

per square metre in annual rent for the best locations on Antwerp's Meir, the main shopping street. That's €50 more than the Nieuwstraat in Brussels, making Antwerp the most expensive in the country for the first time

600,815

tickets paid by SMS since its introduction in February for journeys with the Flemish public transport authority De Lijn. Currently only available to those with Proximus, an SMS ticket costs €1.30 and is valid for one hour by texting DL to 4884

5.4%

of Flemish people go weekly to mass. In 1976, the figure was 36%

12,836

companies in Flanders failed to file a tax declaration last year. In Brussels, the number was 10,692

Triple murder suspects arrested

Two men suspected of the murder of three members of a family in Wemmel last month have been arrested in Paris. Michel De Vleeschouwer, his wife Françoise Grumbers and their son Nicolas, 21, were gunned down by two men who had ostensibly come to the house to buy the BMW Nicolas had advertised for sale.

Instead, the men shot the family and fled, taking the two Mercedes belonging to the parents. But they left behind a witness, Nicolas' girlfriend Ebru, who, despite also being shot in the head, was able to raise the alarm and give police a description of one of the men.

Shortly after, a third man, identified as Frédérique M, was picked up driving one of the stolen cars in Luxembourg. He denied any involvement in the shooting and said he was paid simply to deliver the car to France. He is fighting his extradition back to Belgium.

The two shooters are described as Christian L, a 28-year-old Belgian, and Milton R, a 30-year-old Congolese man. Magistrates said traces of both the men's presence had been found in the De Vleeschouwer home. Neither has a criminal record in Belgium.

At the time of going to press, it was reported the two were refusing to cooperate with French police or to give

any sort of statement. The Brussels prosecutor has begun proceedings to have them extradited to Belgium.

Police said the two were caught following a telephone investigation carried out after the arrest of Frédérique M in Luxembourg. They were traced to the family apartment of Milton R in Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois, a Paris suburb. Both were arrested on the street by French police, in the presence of a squad from the federal judicial police based in Asse, Flemish Brabant, who travelled to France to help coordinate the arrest. ♦

Otter extinct in Flanders

The otter is now extinct in Flanders, according to the environmental organisation Natuurpunt. An intensive search for wild otters, which began in June this year, has produced not a single one, despite a reward of €500 for a confirmed sighting. Natuurpunt received news of claimed sightings, but the animals turned out to be beavers or muskrats.

This situation is estimated to be as bad in

Wallonia; otters in Belgium were virtually wiped out in about the mid-20th century by competition from fishermen and river pollution. There was hope that an improved environmental situation might allow the creature to re-establish itself, but that appears to not be the case. The unclaimed €500 reward will now go to Het Grote Netewoud, a nature reserve near Leuven.

→ www.natuurpunt.be



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trio.be

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

A delegation of about 100 officials led by Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege and federal climate minister Paul Magnette travelled this week to Cancun in Mexico to represent the EU at the UN conference on climate change. The EU intends to press for agreement on some important dossiers, following the lack of success of the last conference in Copenhagen a year ago, including an agreement on deforestation. "By holding down our ambitions we have a more realistic chance," minister Schauvliege said. She will attend the meeting as Flanders'

minister and chairman of the EU environment council, with Magnette representing the federal government. Schauvliege will maintain pressure for a 20% cut in CO2 emission by 2020. Other than that, the government is keeping expectations low. "We have to be realistic but ambitious at the same time," a spokesman for the minister said. "Every step we take, even a small step, is a step in the right direction." The conference will last for two weeks and involves 193 countries.

→ www.unfccc.int



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eu trio.be

The iron harvest

Farmers, children and backyard gardeners find munitions every day in West Flanders

→ continued from page 1

The two boys forgot about their game and started digging for buried treasure. Eventually they pulled out two soldier's helmets, rust-coloured through corrosion, one with a perfectly round hole in it. The boys took their finds to Mortier's father, who promptly forbade them to play in the heap of earth: "He said we were lucky, not because of our treasure trove but because our fingers had encountered a couple of helmets, and not anything far worse than that," Mortier recalls.

Discoveries in the Flemish soil that could be "far worse" were also touched on by Luc Dehaene, mayor of Ypres, at the 11 November lecture. He spoke of someone who was not so fortunate as Mortier and his friend.

Civil victim, 90 years later

Maité Roël was also eight years old when, on 6 July 1992, she was sitting with her friends around a campfire of the naval scouts in the military zone in Wetteren. There was an explosion, and everyone started shouting and running around. But Maité couldn't get up. She looked down and saw that her left leg was hanging by a piece of skin.

The screaming child was rushed by air to Ghent University Hospital. Surgeons took skin, muscles and arteries from her thighs, back and ribs to reconstruct her leg. Eventually, after 29 operations that involved Maité spending two years in hospital, heavily sedated on morphine, surgeons managed to save her leg.

Today she is recognised as a civil victim of the First World War. She even holds a First World War veteran's card ("mutilated in the war"), and when she shows it to gain reduced fare on the railway, ticket inspectors suspect she's stolen it from a dead ancestor.

It appears that one of the scouts had picked up an unexploded shell, thinking it was a mouldy log, and tossed it into the fire. Studying the shrapnel revealed it was an RAF bomb, dropped on the fleeing Germans in 1918. Ironically, Maité is partly British; her grandmother is a Scot who lives in Ostend.

Unfortunately, Maité's story is far from unique. Children playing in Flanders fields, or even in their gardens, frequently unearth war-time relics. Some, like Erwin Mortier, are lucky. They find harmless items such as coins, buckles, cutlery, buttons, belts and gasmask filters. Others, like Maité Roël, find items much more dangerous, sometimes with horrific consequences.

"In the district of Ypres, 599 people have died as a result of deadly ammunition that was left behind after the Armistice," says Dehaene. "The last victim died just two years ago, and nobody dares to say that this is finally the end."

The iron harvest

Local farmers also plough out unexploded shells every season. It's known as "The Iron Harvest". The source is the approximately 720 million shells and mortars that were fired on the western front between 1914 and 1918. Their reliability was so poor that it is estimated that at least a quarter of them did not explode at the time.

Many were recovered after the war, but experts estimate there may still be as many as 30 million shells lying in the earth along the front line. One in 20 contains poisonous gases that are still potent enough to kill.

Each year at least 3,000 shells turn up in the Westhoek; there are so many that the annual haul is measured in tonnage rather than projectiles. And, with farmers using heavier equipment and digging deeper, there is no sign of the figures decreasing.

Worryingly – and amazingly after nearly a century – it's a race against time. The years of corrosion have left the old shells with ever thinner, more leak-prone casings. When handled, gas canisters can more easily disintegrate and release their loads of mustard gas, phosgene or phosphor into the ground, or over their unlucky handlers.

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service (DOVO) retrieves ordnance each day from the Westhoek, where four of the First World War's great battles were fought. Sometimes the team makes several stops a day, often finding a pile of shells stacked up outside a farm's gates, like refuse left out for the garbage collector.

Bigger, single finds are also common. In 2006, near Brugellette, 450 kg of artillery and mortar rounds were discovered in a German ammunition bunker. And just last week, on 22 November, an entire village, further along the front line in northern France, was evacuated for a week while a team of bomb disposal experts cleared 30 tons of shells from a First World War German munitions depot. The depot measured 16 x 1.5 meters and was discovered one meter below ground by a villager while gardening.

Piling munitions in Poelkapelle

But what happens to this Iron Harvest? In West Flanders, the daily haul is trucked to the DOVO base in Poelkapelle, about 10 kilometres northeast of Ypres. Here, the shells are gingerly sorted by calibre and nationality. Until late 1980, projectiles identified as containing poison were dumped into the ocean off the coast of Belgium. Since then, they have been stacked on top of each other in readiness for being dismantled. (See photo, front page)



In the spring of 2009, 120 families had to be evacuated from Evergem, East Flanders, while the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Service diffused a Second World War bomb

Dismantling is a slow, labour-intensive process. Only 20 gas canisters can be handled each day; the current stockpile stands at about 20,000, which means plenty of dangerous work for years to come. To aid this work, the Poelkapelle unit now has two large X-ray machines, capable of detecting if a shell is filled with poison, and a neutron-induced gamma spectroscopy, for identifying which type of toxin.

The rest of their haul – varying in size from a can of Coca-Cola to a kitchen refuse bin – is placed in wooden crates, wired to a fuse and loaded into a deep hole in the ground. Every day, the holes are covered with earth, a warning siren sounds, a button is pressed, and the fields of Flanders once more resonate to the chilling sound of shellfire. ♦

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Luc Dehaene, Mayor of Ypres

© Michiel Hendrickx



Maité Roël underwent 29 operations to save her leg after a bomb from the First World War exploded in a camp filled with children in 1992

“Bilingualism is a utopia”

Flemish politicians stage event for expats and foreign journalists to set the record straight about Belgium's language situation

CLAIRE DAVENPORT

Flemish politicians are setting the record straight about the influence of French-speaking media, as they invite foreign journalists, diplomats and expats to hear their side of Belgium's story and why bilingualism is a utopia.

The Speakers' Corner on 8 December – an event of the Belgian presidency of the European Union – will discuss the question that has foreign media repeatedly asking: Why isn't Belgium just bilingual?

For the first time, De Rand, a non-profit organisation for the Dutch-speaking community living in the *rand*, or belt, of Brussels, has invited the foreign press to discuss Belgium's language laws. “Flanders realises that we are behind our French-speaking co-habitants, especially on the political issues of the moment,” explains Marijke Verboven of De Rand.

“We want to use the Belgian EU presidency to provide an academic explanation to foreigners of why we are in this situation,” says Geert Bourgeois, Flemish minister for interior and administrative affairs. “It can look trivial to people outside, but we want to explain why the sensitive language borders matter to people who live here.”

At Speakers' Corner, Bourgeois will be joined by Luc Van den Brande, president of the Liaison Agency Flanders-Europe (and Flanders' former minister-president) and Hendrik Vuye, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Namur in Wallonia.

As interest in Belgium's linguistic problems and political eruptions has grown, foreign journalists' questions have been raising eyebrows among Flemish politicians. Most international journalists based in Brussels and abroad don't speak Dutch and get their stories from Belgium's French-speaking media. The same can often be true for diplomats and other foreigners living in Belgium.

Vuye, also an advisor to Flemish politicians, argues that Belgium's linguistic problems should not be the spectator sport they have become. “We are not that unusual,” he says. “Switzerland and Canada are similar to Belgium; not only are there territorial divisions, but there are also linguistic divisions.”

He points out that Belgium's language policy, which, in theory, allows citizens to use either language in public places, does not go as far as a law in Quebec, where French has to be more prominent on street signs, menus and brochures.

Though Belgium is officially trilingual – including German – since 1962 the country has been split up into linguistic communities in which education, social services and local administration are available predominantly in just one language.

As everyone in Belgium knows by now, there are 27 municipalities – so called *faciliteiten* or *communes à facilités* – dotted around the linguistic borders that allow both languages to be used in education and public services. Six of these are the infamous municipalities around the “belt” of Brussels.

Kraainem is one, but attempts at co-existence end, for example, as a child reaches 12, when he or she will have to go to another town, like Woluwe-Sint-Lambert, to continue their schooling in French. Vuye argues that this does not disrupt children as they don't have to go much further than 10 minutes down the road to get to the next school over the language border.

What beggars belief in a foreigner's mono-linguistic eyes appears to be water off a duck's back in Belgium. Belgians are barely fazed, says Vuye, by the current lack of a federal government, as public services, driven by local governments, continue to run relatively unharmed. “Complexity has its advantages,” he says.



Despite this casual attitude to political turbulence, the Flemings and the Francophones show themselves to be irreconcilable in most matters of linguistic importance, and the two sides' protectionist instincts are greatest at election time. In the municipalities in BHV, located just outside of Brussels in Flemish Brabant, French voters can elect French candidates, while the same right is not extended to the Flemish living in the francophone Waals Brabant.

And both communities have fought against the infiltration of the other. In Liedekerke, for example, Flemish officials were talked out of teaching Francophone children on local playgrounds some Dutch “for their own safety”.

Dutch-speaking politicians are slowly coming round to the idea that reciprocal bilingualism is a *cassus belli* as French is simply a world language spoken by more foreigners and in more territories than Dutch.

“Bilingualism is a utopia,” Vuye insists.

But restoring the country's government may well be within reach, the professor adds, as both sides grow fonder of establishing a Belgian confederation – giving local authorities more power and leaving the federal government with jobs like foreign affairs. “Three years ago everybody said this was crazy. Now we are actually talking about it,” Vuye adds. ♦

Speakers' Corner: Why Isn't Belgium Just Bilingual?

8 December, 20.00

Colonial Palace of Tervuren
Paleizenlaan, Tervuren

→ www.derand.be

Talks are in Dutch, with simultaneous translations in English, French and German.
Registration is required at info@derand.be

A place at the table · New award recognises Belgian champions of gender diversity

SABINE CLAPPAERT

Today, women represent about half of the Belgian labour market and more than 54% of university populations. But the odds remain stacked against their professional success, with just 8% making it to the top of large Belgian companies.

This lack of women in the upper echelons of business has become a hot topic over the past years, driven to a head by the onset of the economic crisis in 2007 – a crisis that has in some corners been blamed on “excessive testosterone”.

“The under-representation of women is a pressing theme in all societies and in every company,” says Els Bleton, information officer at insurance and investment management company AXA Belgium. Together with Isabella Lenarduzzi of local women-in-the-workplace non-profit JUMP, Bleton has founded the Wo_Men@Work Award, which rewards business leaders that actively promote gender balance within their management structures.

The response to the launch of the award was beyond expectations, with more than 25 companies and organisations submitting nominations – an encouraging sign that gender balance is making strides up the strategic ladder in many companies.

An independent jury of experts from the public and private sectors selected three nominees: Frank Van Massenhove, managing director at FOD Social Security; Albert Ragon, general manager at Danone Belgium; and Marc Decorte, CEO of Shell Belgium. All three are fervent believers in the added value of gender diversity and have solidified their commitment by walking the talk, often in the face of resistance from within their own ranks.

Van Massenhove has affected a true culture shift within his department – based in Brussels – over the past two years; his management team today is a full 50% women. “An equal number of women and men throughout an organisation is good for both men and women,” he claims. “As the company culture becomes more diverse, creativity increases. It's stupid for an organisation to remain as masculine as possible.”

Ragon, whose groups in Brussels and Rotselaar market their products largely to women, agrees: “Gender diversity is not a project, it's a culture, an operating principle.” Ragon also notes that young mothers are a seriously sidelined demographic in many companies. “Young mothers are extremely competent,” he insists. “Their ability to make quick decisions, perform under pressure and multi-task make them valuable to the organisation. It is our role to ensure their chances of developing within the company remain intact.”

Shell Belgium recognises the business case for diversity. “Attracting and keeping top talent is vital for business success,” says CEO Decorte. “Recruiting and developing talent from a bigger pool strengthens the talent pipeline.” ♦

Online voting for the AXA Wo_Men@Work Award takes place until 2 December, and voters receive an invitation to the awards ceremony on 9 December

→ www.womenatworkaward.be



According to CEOs of top local companies, a lack of gender balance inhibits creativity, efficiency and is just plain “stupid”

Diamonds held hostage in Brink's dispute

Administrators have until February to find a new owner for beleaguered company

ALAN HOPE

The industrial conflict at security transport firm Brink's has seen supermarkets overstocked with cash and ATMs running out of banknotes. Last week, as the interior ministry cancelled the licence it had previously granted to a subsidiary of Brink's, the stakes were suddenly higher – some €200 million worth of raw diamonds were stranded in a safe in Zaventem.

The diamonds are intended for the Antwerp diamond industry. According to a spokesperson for the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (ADWC), Brink's Belgium would not open the safe because it was the property of the Brink's Diamond and Jewelry Services (DJS) subsidiary, which, meanwhile, refused to open the safe because they no longer had a licence to transport diamonds at Zaventem. Alain Zenner, one of the two administrators appointed by the Brussels commercial tribunal to oversee Brink's activities, said the attitude of the company was "obstructive". The ADWC said that the shipment was not the only one affected by the dispute, adding that the situation caused commercial damage to the diamond industry and had a negative impact on Antwerp's image as a world diamond centre.

Finally, the court approved a claim brought by the administrators demanding that the company open up the vault. DJS would also face a fine of €25,000 for every hour it delayed in complying. The subsidiary, which last year made an operating loss of €5.28 million on revenues of €24 million, quickly handed over the keys to the safe.

The problem surrounding the Brink's subsidiary comes as a result of an apparent attempt by Brink's to solve its long-running dispute with staff over its official status by closing down the main Belgian division of the US-based transporter and starting up again through the Diamonds and Jewelry subsidiary.

Brink's filed for bankruptcy but had its application thrown out by the commercial tribunal, which said that the management of the company had made serious errors and had not acted in good faith. To stop the transfer of business to DJS, the court put a stop to its transports through Zaventem and ordered freight handlers Flightcare and Aviapartner, which have contracts with the main Brink's company, to do no more business with DJS. At the same time, the court granted Brink's protection from its creditors to allow time to find



Court-appointed administrators Gérard Delvaux (left) and Alain Zenner

a takeover partner.

Brink's, meanwhile, broke a long silence to deny the tribunal's accusation. Willem-Jan Candel, commercial director for Belgium and the Netherlands, told financial daily *L'Echo*: "Public opinion sees us as bandits, and it's said we're the representatives of American-style capitalism. That hurts. We're a respectable company, and we've done everything possible to keep the business in Belgium going."

As *Flanders Today* went to press, the administrators were due to hold meetings with company representatives and the freight

handlers at Brussels Airport. The administrators have until 23 February to find a new owner for Brink's Belgium. There are now four possible candidates in the ring: Cobelguard, based in Brussels; Loomis in Switzerland; Seris in France; and Australian businessman and co-founder of the Australian diamond exchange Rami Baron. Seris used to own security firm GMC in Belgium, before selling it to Brink's. Baron, meanwhile, sold his own security company to G4S on condition that he could not compete with the buyer for a period of 10 years – an embargo that recently expired. ♦

Opel plant for sale online

The equipment from Opel/Antwerp's press and painting divisions is for sale on the website of the specialised dealer Maynard's. The lot consists of four items: a six-station sheet metal transfer press, a mechanical single action press and two try-out presses. Interested parties can visit the factory from now until 3 January, with a deadline for bids of 14 January.

According to motor industry analyst Vic Heylen, the sale could raise €150 to 200 million, with the buyer most likely to be a Chinese manufacturer. The sale is also a sign, he said, that the Astra production line has been sold to another buyer already – otherwise it, too, would have been offered for sale.

Union representative Rudi Kennes, however, is convinced that Chinese buyer Zhenzhou Hi-Tech

Vehicle (CHTC) has a business plan worked out under which it would invest €600 million to build 30,000 units of the old-model Astra in Antwerp for export to China, as well as the Landwind SUV and an electric bus. He denied claims made by Heylen and others that CHTC was a ghost corporation no-one had ever heard of. "It is a consortium of companies active in helicopter manufacture, the production of military night-sights and the construction of buses and lorry parts," Kennes told *De Standaard*.

Heylen countered: "My colleague has worked in China for years. He looked into the matter and couldn't find a single car manufacturer, supplier or investment company with the name CHTC. Nobody knows what these Chinese people are up to." ♦



© Maynard's

→ www.maynards.com

Bullying cases come to Flanders


Following a serious case of workplace bullying in a factory in Soignies in Wallonia, a similar case has emerged in Flanders. Last week, two employees of the Arcelor Mittal steelworks in Ghent were sacked after claims that they had harassed another employee working under them for more than a year.

The bullying ranged from ridicule and mockery to forcing the man to drop his trousers and draw on his private parts with a marking pen. "We absolutely cannot tolerate bullying," a spokesman for the company said.

Meanwhile in Ghent a widow has begun


a judicial procedure after her husband was allegedly driven to suicide following a long campaign of bullying by two fellow employees of the city's cleansing department. Patrick Coppenolle left details of his suffering in a suicide note to his wife. She took the note to the Ghent prosecutor and began a case against five people, three of whom had charges dropped. The two other men in question are still in work. The city of Ghent said it had known nothing of the situation at the time and would now wait for a verdict from the courts before deciding on disciplinary measures.

Last week, two members of the federal parliament called for hearings on the issue of workplace bullying. "We want to evaluate and amend the anti-bullying law because evidently it's not working well enough, and the barriers for victims are too high," said Open-VLD member Gwendolyn Rutten, who was joined by party colleague Maggie De Block. Among other changes, they want to double the length of time after which prosecutions can no longer be brought, raising it to 10 years. ♦



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THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking • Argenta

Antwerp-based bank Argenta is to redevelop its activities on the Dutch market after several years of reduced exposure. The company – which had a 4.3% market share in the Netherlands in 2006 – will seek to rebuild its position to reach about 2% next year.

Construction • Durabrik

Construction company Durabrik, based in Drongen, East Flanders, has been named the healthiest company in Belgium by a jury that included cardiac surgeon Pedro Brugada and sports physician Chris Goossens. In a competition organised by health-care company DKV, the jury looked at issues such as smoking, alcohol and drugs policies, stress management on and around the work floor and efforts to promote good nutrition and exercise.

Economy • Confidence

Consumer confidence rose again in November to reach its highest level since mid-2007, according to the Belgian National Bank. Meanwhile, business confidence rose to its highest level since March 2008, reflecting an upturn in the manufacturing industry's future prospects and higher demand in the services sector.

Pharmaceuticals • Research

Belgium is in eighth position worldwide in the "pharma valleys" index, based on the number of pharmaceutical patents registered last year. The country registers more patents in relation to its size than the US, the UK and Japan, according to Nature magazine.

Retail • Abercrombie & Fitch

The US-based clothing group Abercrombie & Fitch has confirmed its decision to open an outlet on Waterloolaan in the upper town of Brussels early next year. Its Hollister leisurewear affiliate has also confirmed plans for a store in downtown Brussels and one in Antwerp in the second half of 2011.

Retail • Club

Book and office supply retailer Club has opened its 32nd store in the country in Kortrijk. The company has also sold its online Proxis books and DVD sales affiliate to e-commerce specialist Medio.

Supermarkets • Delhaize

The country's largest supermarket group, Delhaize, has taken over three Flemish hypermarkets that were recently closed by French retailer Carrefour. One site in Genk and two in Antwerp are to be redeveloped and are expected to reopen early next year. The Linkeroever store in Antwerp had originally been selected by the Dutch Ahold chain for its launch into the Belgian market, but Delhaize was faster in signing the contract.

Old is new again

An Antwerp exhibition reveals how one magazine put Belgian art on the international map

REBECCA BENOOT

Flor Bex, the very first director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA), has always been an advocate of his country's artists. But little did he know when he created one of Belgium's first art magazines, *Artefactum*, what a profound impact he would have.

In December 1983, *Artefactum* was born. Bex, who was unemployed at the time after leaving his directorship at Antwerp's International Cultural Centre, gathered funds and created Belgium's first glossy, international art magazine, covering contemporary and Belgian art.

"The idea was to create a magazine – in no less than six language – that would also focus on Belgian art because Belgian artists were rarely featured in foreign publications," he tells me. "In the end, 15% of our articles were about Belgian – but predominantly Flemish – artists."

An international editorial board, "which had to stay completely independent and unbiased," decided which articles – sent from across Europe – would get published. "If the article was well written and interesting, it would get published with no pressure from potential advertisers, which was usually the case with other magazines," says Bex. "Just like me, the board never got paid."

Against all odds, *Artefactum* became a force to be reckoned with. It was unique at the time, combining expensive advertising and hip, high quality photographs with the latest and greatest artists, creating a magazine that itself felt like a thing of beauty. To enhance its international appeal, articles were published in the original language of the author.



© Richard Bacque, "Détive", 1986, collection M HKA, photo M HKA

"Several young art historians and critics started their careers writing for *Artefactum*; now many of them run their own magazines and museums," says Bex. *Artefactum* is also credited with launching the career of many a Belgian artist.

"I had subscribers across the world," continues Bex. "One day, one of the most important gallery holders in New York at the time, Ileana Sonnabend, called me and said 'tell me about the artist on the cover of your magazine'. I explained to her why I loved his work and what it meant to Belgian art at the time. She then told me he had to call her, and that's how Wim Delvoye got his first New York show." It's not a stretch to say that *Artefactum* put Belgian art on the international map. When Bex started at M HKA, the magazine was a major inspiration for its collection; several works that once featured on the cover were subsequently acquired.

The exhibition *De Artefactum Jaren* (The *Artefactum* Years) focuses on the dialogue between the museum and its first director through a display of 40 works out of the collection that were featured in the magazine from 1985 to 1995. These are accompanied by 14 articles on artists whose works were published but never acquired by the museum, despite their influence on contemporary art. Bex curated the exhibition, which combines sculpture, paintings, installations and photographs by artists such as Luc Tuymans, Cindy Sherman, Juan Muñoz and Wim Delvoye, whose breakthrough "Delftse Butaangasfles" is here. Each work is accompanied by details of the issue of *Artefactum* in which it was published and the magazine's 53 covers have been turned into a mesmerising mural of historic and artistic relevance. In the central hall hangs a disassembled issue of *Artefactum* – number

54, which was never published.

Although diverse, the works in the exhibition are cleverly synchronised. Many were selected due to their bond with the written word, such as Ben Vautier's blackboards or Guy Rombouts' school bench installation. Dialogue features literally in Ange Leccia's "Conversation", an installation with two chairs and two spotlights, and figuratively in the exhibition's confrontation between abstract and representational art. It's a small yet impressive display of local art history.

The catalogue that accompanies the exhibition also deserves some credit: with its glossy pictures and texts, it reflects the style of the magazine. It includes original sections from *Artefactum* and features all the works, articles and authors that were ever published, providing a comprehensive overview of its history as well as of the exhibition's genesis.

Despite many financial setbacks, *Artefactum* survived for 11 years. It was a true labour of love for Bex, who was left with many debts he was only able to pay off thanks to donations from artists of funds acquired through works sold at auction.

Regardless of its troubled history, the spirit of *Artefactum* is alive right now at M HKA. "I bought some great pieces during my time at M HKA, and I was very excited to see them again," concludes Bex. "I'm glad to say that they haven't aged and are still very relevant." ♦

The Artefactum Years

Until 20 February
M HKA, Leuvenstraat 32
Antwerp

→ www.muhka.be



© Artefactum no. 18, 1987

No, really, the smartest this time. We mean it • De slimste mens ter wereld pumps up the volume

LISA BRADSHAW



The outrageously popular TV quiz show, *De slimste mens ter wereld* (The Smartest Person in the World), which runs for just a few weeks every December and into January, is bringing back winners and finalists for the ultimate smarty-pants showdown.

De allerslimste mens ter wereld (The Very Smartest Person in the World) pits the 30 strongest contestants from the past eight years against each other. Hosted by film director Erik Van Looy, *De slimste mens* always features *bekende Vlamingen* (well-known Flemings) and is part quiz, part entertainment.

Those returning to the bright orange contestant chairs include last year's winner, journalist Linda De Win, and several politicians, including SP.A party president Caroline Gennez, Groen! party member Eva Brems and N-VA party president Bart De Wever, who has assured the electorate that participation in the show will not interfere with the non-forming of the federal government.

The show begins on the evening of 6 December on channel één.

→ www.deslimstemens.be

CULTURE NEWS

Brussels' Grote Markt was voted **Europe's Most Beautiful Square** by users of the popular Dutch website StedenTripper.com. Brussels beat out both Moscow's Red Square and Nancy's Place Stanislas, which came in two and three consecutively. "The result is somewhat surprising to us," said Steden Tripper's spokesperson Erik Lammers. "Extremely well-known squares like Trafalgar Square and Piazza San Marco fell much lower than we expected." Also in the top 10 of the 20 squares chosen is Antwerp's Grote Markt, which came in ninth.

Ghent playwright and theatre director **Eric De Volder died last weekend** at the age of 64. Often referred to as Ghent's best-kept secret, the director staged performances in his attic theatre, which is still the home of his Toneelgroep Ceremonia, founded in 1992. "Eric De Volder was a theatre icon who presented strong tableaux of both the old and the new Flanders," said Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege. "His death is a huge loss, but his oeuvre will continue to inspire theatre makers." De Volder died unexpectedly in his sleep after the premiere of his new play *Frans Woyzeck* at NT Gent.

Ghent's International Film Festival of Flanders, home of the World Soundtrack Awards, is sponsoring a **concert of film music** by members of the Brussels Philharmonic in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. The concert opens the European Film Awards, which take place this year in Tallinn, also the sister city of Ghent. The concert will present work by composers Shigeru Umebayashi, Alberto Iglesias, Arvo Pärt, Gabriel Yared and Belgium's own Dirk Brossé. Both Brossé and Yared will be present at the event. In other film news, Flemish director Eva Küppers' *What's in a Name* has won the prize for **Best Student Documentary** at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam.

Maji, the **grandmother giraffe** at Planckendael animal park in Mechelen, died last week. The matriarch had sustained an injury to her hip recently, causing her to lose the use of her entire left side. She could not sleep and refused to eat, and finally her caretakers decided to put the animal to sleep. Maji (pictured) was 26 years old, six years older than the average lifespan of a giraffe in captivity. (Those in the wild die much younger.) She leaves behind six children and a number of grandchildren, including two living in Planckendael. A third is expected within the next month.



© VRT 2010

Move that calf

The women of Vooruit met de Kuit are dancing like no one is watching

COURTNEY DAVIS

With old-fashioned costumes, red feather hats and a hodgepodge marching band in tow, the dancers traipse along the street, crowds gathering at the sides to watch the spectacle. With white boots marching and gold-festooned outfits snugly fitting, it's a sight hard to miss – and sometimes even harder to understand. Vooruit met de Kuit (roughly translated “Move that calf”) is a group of dancers and musicians from the Ghent area that perform an act balancing a fine line between fun and absurd, silly and stupid.

It was originally intended as a joke, in fact, for the opening of the Huis van Alijn museum of social history in Ghent about 10 years ago. “In the beginning, it was a mess,” laughs co-founder Philippe de Chaffoy. “The playing was far worse than it is now.”

Which doesn't exactly make now sound so glowing. But this is, in fact, part of the group's continued appeal. “We're amateurs, but funny amateurs,” explains Bien Vanderstappen, with the troupe since the beginning. “You see these girls dancing, and they're too old to be a majorette or maybe they can't really dance. And the music is good but not necessarily perfect. It's part of creating an expectation with the music and costumes –but upon closer inspection, you realise it's not what you thought. It's all part of the joke.”

“De Kuit” used to show up at public events

in Ghent, unscheduled and out of nowhere. But they have also become so popular, they are now asked to perform at public functions across Flanders, like markets, festivals and openings, both small and folky, and grand and upscale.

De Chaffoy, 64, is a professional musician and composes original pieces for the band. He also still occasionally performs with them, on the violin. “I like to see the reactions of the people,” he says. “They are always surprised.”

The motivation to be part of a joke, to both be laughed at *and* with, is quite clear to Vanderstappen.

“We make people smile,” the 32-year-old says. “If we have fun, then the audience will, too.”

When not marching with de Kuit, Vanderstappen works in an HR consultancy. “It is a competitive, dynamic and driven world. I love it, but it is not a place for silliness,” she says. “I'm supposed to be very serious. Sometimes it's an effort take myself seriously five days a week.” So on the weekends, she lets loose with de Kuit. “It's fun to be a different kind of girl on the weekend and leave the stress of work behind. I felt as my job responsibility increased, the appeal for participating in this did, as well. I can be something I'm totally not and not care what people say or think.”

The group serves this purpose for many



Don't look now: Vooruit met de kuit is coming down a street near you

of the women who take part. “Some of the other girls, they are quite shy or not very outgoing, but in ‘de Kuit’, they can be. It brings out everyone's various alter egos. And it gives de kuit a special dynamic.”

They also acknowledge an element of naughtiness, and even revenge. “One of the more universal appeals is that of being an actual majorette,” says Vanderstappen. “I think many girls dreamed of being one, myself included, but couldn't because their parents wouldn't allow it. Even though I was

fascinated by it and loved the costumes, it wasn't considered very classy or respectable. We love dancing, but it's more than that. It's nostalgia for being a majorette.”

Even De Chaffoy sees that: “For a girl to put a little majorette suit on and force herself into the public eye is a kind of therapy.” He laughs. “They are having their revenge when they're 30.”

And revenge is sweet. ♦

➡ www.vooruitmetdekuit.be

The worlds of André Delvaux • Cinematek DVD series makes up for lost time

IAN MUNDELL

André Delvaux (*pictured*) is one of the rare filmmakers who span Belgium's main language communities. Born into a Flemish family but educated in French, he made films in both languages, constantly returning to themes of national and personal identity. But despite being one of the most internationally successful Belgian directors of the 20th century, his work has been difficult to find, with only two films available on DVD.

Cinematek in Brussels is now putting this right with an ambitious project to bring out all of his fiction feature films. “He's one of the pioneers,” explains Erik Martens, editor-in-chief of the Cinematek's DVD series. “And since he had a very idiosyncratic style, his films don't age that much.” The first DVD to appear is *L'Oeuvre au noir* (*The Abyss*, 1988), Delvaux's final feature film and one that perfectly illustrates his cross-cultural credentials. Based on a novel by Belgian-born novelist Marguerite Yourcenar, it tells the story of Zénon, a doctor and alchemist whose quest for knowledge takes him around 16th-century Europe.



Delvaux's film focuses on the end of Zénon's travels, when he has returned to Bruges to contemplate his life. Living quietly under an assumed name, he treats the sick in one of the town's religious houses. But once his identity becomes known, the church authorities put him on trial.

While the source and language of the film are French, it has a strong Flemish flavour. The landscape and architecture of Bruges set the tone, and it paints a detailed picture of life in Flanders at the time of the Spanish occupation, along with the intellectual threads that bound it to the rest of Renaissance Europe.

The film's blending of present encounters, memories and imagined events continues Delvaux's interest in exploring his characters' perception. This is what some commentators mean when they talk of his “magic realism”, although what people usually understand by the term – the realistic treatment of unreal events – is less common in Delvaux's films.

The most “fantastic” of the films, *Un Soir, un train* (*One Evening, A Train*, 1968), has been the hardest to secure for the series, but it is now tentatively pencilled in. Starring Yves Montand and Anouk Aimée, it explores the sensitive issue of language identity, beginning with the conflict that split the Catholic University of Leuven before embarking on a strange journey into the night.

Equally contentious is *Een Vrouw tussen hond en wolf* (*A Woman Between Wolf and Dog*, 1979). Set during and after the Nazi occupation, it concerns a woman split between loyalty to her Flemish nationalist husband, who collaborates, and sympathy for a wounded French resistance fighter. The DVDs will be released over the coming two years, with the titles mentioned joined by *Benvenuta* (1983) and *Belle* (1973). *Rendez-vous à Bray* (*Appointment in Bray*, 1971)



and *De Man die zijn haar kort liet knippen* (*The Man Who Had His Hair Cut Short*, 1965) are already available on DVD but will be re-released as part of the series.



The series will also include a disk of short films, including an excellent meditation on Flemish mediaeval painter Dieric Bouts, and a new documentary about Delvaux's life and work. All will have English subtitles. ♦

The first film in the Delvaux series, *L'Oeuvre au noir*, is available to buy from the Cinematek website, Bozar shop, FNAC and other bookshops, as are previously released titles *Rendez-vous à Bray* and *De Man die zijn haar kort liet knippen*.

➡ www.cinematek.be



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A tale of two veggie-friendly cities

Part 1: Ghent

KARISHMA BHANSALI MEHTA

Antwerp and Ghent: one an avant-garde fashion capital, another an eco-friendly student town. And you can see these identities right down to the food on your plate.

Let's start with Ghent. Who'd have thought that a world-wide vegetarian movement would take root in a quintessentially meat-loving country like Belgium? But last year the Ghent-based non-profit Ethical Vegetarian Alternative (EVA) launched Donderdag Veggiedag (Thursday Veggie Day), convincing schools, city officials and local restaurants to promote vegetarian meals every Thursday.

It was a vegetarian milestone that made headlines across Europe and put the meat industry on the defensive. Some "5,000 city staff are encouraged to eat vegetarian food on Thursdays, and 95% of children at the 35 city schools opt for the veggie menu," says EVA director Tobias Leenaert.

But not everyone was so crazy about EVA's campaign. The Farmers Union of Belgium "sees the campaign as a threat," says Leenaert. "It distributed meat samples during city council meetings in Hasselt and Leuven, when the campaign was being discussed there."

But there's no stopping what EVA has started. Hasselt is on board with Donderdag Veggiedag and across the border in Germany, the town of Bremen has followed suit. Sao Paulo in Brazil has also adopted the movement.

Leenaert is pleased with the global attention, not in the least bit surprised. "I really believe the world will be vegetarian one day," he says. "We are sensitive and rational beings and are slowly reaching a state of evolution where we will not harm other living beings for food."

Garden of EVA

Leenaert founded EVA 10 years ago in Ghent, which has, in fact, long been an enclave of vegetarianism is a country obsessed with its cooking and its meat. The capital of East Flanders boasts the largest number of exclusively veggie restaurants per capita in Europe (13 restaurants for 240,000 people).

EVA's mission is to encourage eating more vegetarian foods as an imperative to a healthy body and a healthy planet. Some 60 billion animals are killed world wide every year for human consumption, and this demand is expected to double by 2050, when human population numbers are projected to reach nine billion. Leenaert: "At the rate we are consuming meat, we are headed towards a planetary disaster."

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) cites meat production as a major cause of the climate crisis, accounting for 18% of annual greenhouse-gas emissions. "The effect of all of Belgium having one meatless day a week for a year would equal a decrease of a million cars on our roads," notes Leenaert. Meat production is also responsible for deforesting an area the size of Belgium every year.

And then there are the health issues: high meat consumption is associated with increased risks of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and several forms of cancer.

But it was the ethical issue that gnawed at Leenaert's conscience, convincing him to finally give up meat completely after five years of working towards it. "I just couldn't justify why I was treating a cow any differently than a dog."

You are what you eat

Go to the tourist centre on any given day and you will find a veggie survival guide mapping out the locations of the city's 13 vegetarian restaurants as well as restaurants offering vegetarian options.

You'll find an exclusively vegetarian burger joint (Tasty World) and a veggie club sandwich (at Greenway) that was voted the best sandwich in Belgium in 2008. A die-hard Caesar salad fan, it was extremely comforting to know that in Greenway I don't have to repeatedly ask if the Caesar dressing is truly vegetarian (*sans* anchovies).

The highlight of my veggie trip to Ghent was my lunch at the family-owned Avalon with Leenaert. We decided to try the *dagschotel*, or daily platter. Most of Ghent's all-veggie restaurants offer a *dagschotel*, made up of a number of different foods together on one plate. It's always vegan (no eggs or dairy),

and it's the number one choice for locals. In fact, some veggie restaurants don't offer anything *but* the *dagschotel*.

On this day, Avalon's *dagschotel* included a subtly tempered lentil dahl served with brown rice; broccoli with a tasty creamy pesto sauce; raw beets sprinkled with coriander chutney and a very gourmet looking carrot tempura. It was delicious, visually inviting, and I couldn't believe it was vegan.

Impressed, I was keen to try it with friends over dinner but was disappointed to learn that the restaurant – like most of Ghent's veggie restaurants – is only open for lunch. Ghent's association with veggie food is typically gastronomic-cum-microbiotic, such as my *dagschotel*. Food – and drinks – are typically organic and locally grown or fair traded. Vegetarianism in Ghent isn't just about eating, it's about a way of life.

Leenaert says this level of consciousness can actually be problematic for consumers. "Most people think that this is how veggie food has to be, and, of course, it is difficult to prepare a dish like this at home."

Leenaert's next dream, though, might help take care of that, too: he wants to open a vegetarian cooking academy.

"Vegetarianism is still too often associated with sober living, something you don't do for pleasure. Vegetarians should be able to go to a cosy restaurant and enjoy a nice, long dinner, like everyone else."

EVA is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary. As a gift, Leenaert requests "a commitment to a certain number of veggie meals. As a return gift, we'll show you how much CO2 emissions you have saved the planet." ♦

→ www.donderdagveggiedag.be



Five courses of veggie gastronomy twice a month at Avalon



Saving the world one bite at a time: Tobias Leenaert

Going veggie in Ghent

LISA BRADSHAW

The EVA website and Ghent tourist office has a list of all Ghent's vegetarian options. In the meantime, we suggest these mainstays of veggie Ghent.

Avalon

Avalon is inside an old house along a cobblestoned road right across from Ghent's castle. A daily *dagschotel* is enhanced with a menu of pasta choices. Only open for lunch except every first Friday and Saturday of the month, when chef Kevin Storms prepares a five-course gastronomic evening meal. *Geldmunt 32*

→ www.restaurantavalon.be

De Warempel

It's impossible to find unless you know where you're headed, which is one of the charms of this veggie tradition in a sidestreet not two minutes from the central Belfortstraat. A daily choice of veggie or fish *dagschotel*s and excellent vegan desserts in one airy room. Only open weekdays for lunch, and reservations are recommended. *Zandberg 8, 09.224.30.62*

De Panda

The oldest vegetarian restaurant in Ghent and possibly the most gastronomic, De Panda (*pictured*) offers the traditional daily *dagschotel* for both lunch and dinner, but on Saturday night pulls out a special menu with a number of creative choices. Nobody knows how to work seitan like De Panda. The small restaurant is on the canal behind an attached organic supermarket. *Oudburg 38, 09.225.07.86*

Lekker Gec

Right across from Gent-Sint-Pieters train station, this democratic veggie restaurant is the epitome of Ghent consciousness-raising. Largely volunteer run and located right next to an Oxfam, the all-organic *dagschotel* is a do-it-yourself affair in which you take what you want and pay by the weight. It's also a meeting place for groups and wears its political heart on its sleeve, with shelves filled with resources on how to save the world. *K Maria Hendrikaplein 4-5*

→ www.lekkergec.be



Next week: Antwerp

The port city's vegetarian eateries are as posh as its high street

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presents

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Alfons Gossetlaan 11
1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

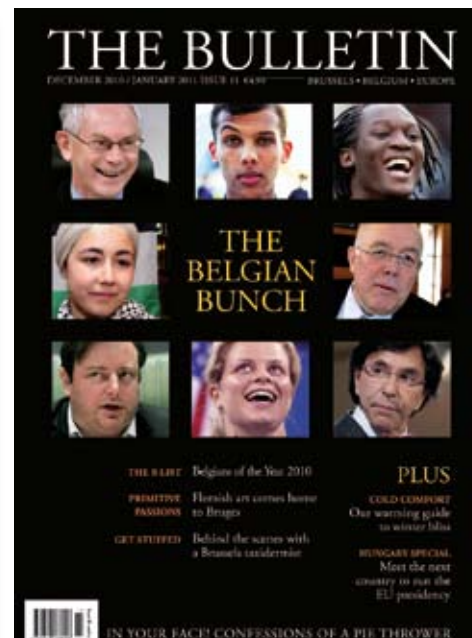
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Istanbul Ekspres & 0090

ANNA JENKINSON

Istanbul was 2010's European Capital of Culture, and Ghent and Antwerp are seeing it out with a bang. Ghent's Istanbul Ekspres focuses mainly on music, while the emphasis of Antwerp's 0090 (the name comes from the international dialling code for Turkey) is contemporary arts, including visual art, theatre and dance.

What Mesut Arslan, artistic director of 0090, likes most about his festival is how it opens up people's eyes to what Turkey has to offer culturally. "We break down the walls of what people think about Turkey and the arts," he says. "It's not all traditional and folkloric. It's much more than that."

Arslan, who is Turkish, has been living in Flanders for almost two decades, and he started the festival six years ago with two friends. The trigger was a suggestion by the Antwerp province for a festival for the Turkish community. The discussions involved various groups, but Arslan insisted it should be "an arts festival focusing on Turkey" rather than simply "a Turkish festival", which risked reinforcing a "Turkish delight" stereotype of the country.

No one could accuse 0090 of that. Its performances, which take place at Monty, the Toneelhuis and other venues across Antwerp, include contemporary dance premieres, an installation performance and new theatre works. Nor are the performers limited to those of

Belgian or Turkish nationality. "There are direct and indirect links with Turkey," Arslan says. That includes artists who have worked with Istanbul artists or whose work has to do with Istanbul in some way.

0090 is also keen to encourage exchanges and collaborations between Turkey and Flanders. For example, Flemish musician Eric Thielemans drove to Istanbul in a car packed with musical instruments to spend a month in the city. The result of this project, in which he asks questions about his role as a musician and the part played by the travelling musician, will be presented during the festival as a live radio performance called *We Are the World*.

Ties between Turkey and Belgium are also a key aspect of Ghent's Istanbul Ekspres, which includes everything from folklore to world music, via jazz, modern rock, hip-hop, pop and dance.

Attila Bakiroglu of intercultural centre De Centrale is organising the festival together with arts centre Vooruit. Bakiroglu and his team have brought Turkish and Belgian musicians together; in some cases, the local musicians travelled to Turkey for rehearsals – in others, the Turkish musicians will arrive in Belgium just a few days ahead of the festival.

The programme includes Belgian jazz group Aka Moon taking the stage with percussionist Misirli Ahmet; Tuur Florizoone exploring Baba Zula's exotic punk, and

Wouter Vandenabeele presenting his Istanbul Ghent project.

This year, which will be the third and final time that Istanbul Ekspres takes place, there will not only be music but also film screenings and a photo exhibition. Some 36 photographs of the city of Istanbul were selected in a competition that was open to budding and established photographers: the selection is on display at Vooruit and De Centrale.

As of next year, it's possible that Istanbul Ekspres may merge with 0090. Stay tuned and don't miss this year. ♦

0090

1-9 December
Across Antwerp

→ www.0090.be

Istanbul Ekspres

2-10 December
Vooruit & De Centrale
Ghent

→ www.vooruit.be



Antwerp

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be

DEC 3 20.30 Radio Modern with Cherry Casino and The Gamblers **DEC 4** 20.30 Stef Bos **DEC 8** 20.30 Lady Angelina **DEC 9** 20.30 Sandrine, Brahim, Bruyneel & Cole, motown

Lotto Arena

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be

DEC 4 20.00 Jan Smit

Monty

Montignystraat 3-5; 03.238.91.81
www.monty.be

DEC 5 20.30 Papermouth

Nova

Schijfstraat 105; 03.259.04.20
www.nova-kiel.be

DEC 2 20.15 The Valerie Solanas

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be

DEC 3 20.30 Jean Michel Jarre

DEC 5 20.30 Simply Red

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be

DEC 2 20.00 De Jeugd Van Tegenwoordig

DEC 5 20.00 Melechesh + Noctifera + Svart Crown

Waagnatie

Leopolddok 212; 03.545.97.00 www.fever.be

DEC 4 00.00 Fever 10 Year Celebration

Ardooie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw

Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduwnet

DEC 3 20.30 Group Deville with Mathias Seru

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be

Concerts at 20.00:

DEC 2 Bruce Bherman **DEC 6** Caro Emerald. Edwyn Collins **DEC 7** David Hallyday **DEC 8** Ke\$ha

Koninklijk Circus

Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org

DEC 1 20.00 Louis Chedid

DEC 7 20.00 Saint André

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be

DEC 1 20.00 Aidan & The Italian Weather Ladies + Get Well Soon. Hugh Cornwell

DEC 2 20.00 EuropaVox: Carlton Rara + Jaque + Madjo + Bai Kamara Jr + more

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recyclart.be

DEC 2 21.00 Collapse

DEC 3 23.00 Sonidero Quilombo + Kajhem Orchestra + Boom Pam + Shazalakazoo

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be

DEC 1 20.00 Elton John with Ray Cooper

DEC 5 18.00 Disturbed + Papa Roach + Buckcherry & Halestorm

Ghent

Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57 www.charlatan.be

DEC 1 20.00 Born Ruffians + I Got You On Tape + Young Rival **DEC 2** 20.00 Salem + Styrofoam + Rape Blossoms **DEC 4** 20.00 Little Annie & Baby Dee **DEC 8** 20.00 Das Racist

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be

DEC 8 20.15 Lieven Tavernier & United Brass

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be

DEC 3 21.00 Beljam Cup Clash: Papa Pedro Ent, Daktari Sound, Beatstreet Sound,

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Arsenal

23 April, 2011

Ancienne Belgique, Brussels

This Flemish duo is being very good to us...after their first two April shows at AB sold out so quickly, they scheduled a third. And not because they'll necessarily have time on their hands – the dance/pop stars will be touring their anticipated new album across Europe. Expect plenty of cuts from that, plus, no doubt, the crowd pleasing "Lotus" and "Estupendo", plus a guest appearance by Zita Swoon's Leonie Gysel.



→ www.abconcerts.be

Mystic Breeze Collective

DEC 9 21.00 Isobel Campbell & Mark Lanegan

Hasselt

Muziekodroom

Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be

DEC 4 20.00 Modklub with Frank Popp + The Modest Men

Kortrijk

De Kreun

Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be

DEC 2 20.00 Holy Fuck

DEC 5 20.00 Attack! Attack! + Destine + Until Broadway

DEC 9 20.00 And So I Watch You From Afar



Antwerp

Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be

DEC 2 21.30 Adhemar Solo and Open Jam

DEC 3 22.00 Les Anchoises

DEC 7 20.30 JazzNight

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be

DEC 7 21.00 Hopper Three-Oh

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be

DEC 2 20.30 Teun Verbruggen and Bart Maris

DEC 4 20.30 RadioKUKAorkest with Ellery Eskelin

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be

DEC 3 20.00 Splatter + The Thing

Art Base

Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be

DEC 2 20.00 Music Soup with Sal La Rocca

DEC 3 20.00 Fresh Waves Trio, gypsy jazz

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be

DEC 4 20.00 Herbie Hancock

MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

Spoken World → *Kaaitheater, Brussels*

Next 003 → *Kunsten Centrum Buda, Kortrijk*

Avatars From This World Film Festival → *Film Plateau, Ghent*

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
DEC 1 20.00 Maracujazz **DEC 2** 20.00 Jazz Station Big Band **DEC 4** 18.00 Afrodisax **DEC 8** 20.30 Collapse **DEC 9** 20.00 The Bundle

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
DEC 1 Chamaquiando, salsa **DEC 2** Marc Lelangués Blues Lab **DEC 3** Mimi Verderame invites **DEC 4** Andreu Martinez Project **DEC 6** Master Session **DEC 7** Raphael Debacker Trio **DEC 8** Caribe con K **DEC 9** Franck Ansallem Trio

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
DEC 1 20.00 RadioKUKAorkest & Ellery Eskelin
DEC 9 20.00 Aka Moon & Misirli Ahmet.

Muziekodroom

Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
DEC 9 20.00 Keith Dunn Band

Grimbergen

CC Strombeek
Gemeenteplein; 02.263.03.43
www.ccstrombeek.be
DEC 2 20.30 100 Years Django Reinhardt: Lollo Meier + Fapy Lafertin Quartet



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
DEC 3 20.30 Eric Thielemans' WeAreTheWorld
DEC 8 20.30 Rocío Márquez
DEC 9 20.30 Mamane Barka + Solo Dja Kabako

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
DEC 4 20.00 Altland, Jewish traditional music
DEC 5 18.00 Maria-Christina, electro-acoustic

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
DEC 5 21.00 Didier Awadi

Théâtre Molière

Bastionsquare 3; 02.217.26.00
www.muziekpublieque.be
DEC 3 20.00 Huong Thanh Trio (Vietnam)
DEC 4 20.00 Casbah Blues: homage to El Hadi El Anka (Algeria)

Ghent

Vooruit
St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
DEC 2 20.00 Istanbul Fasil Ensemble
DEC 3 22.00 Beljam Cup Clash, reggae
DEC 9 22.00 Baba Zula & Tuur Florizoone



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be
DEC 3 21.00 Film concert: HERMESensemble conducted by Marco Angius with Mireille Capelle, soprano: Ivan Fedele's The Fall of the House of Usher
DEC 5 15.00 Where Is My Soul?, musical theatre based on Monteverdi's Madrigals conceived and staged by Caroline Petrick, performed by Muziektheater Transparant & B'Rock conducted by Wim Maesele, chitarrone

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
DEC 1 20.00 Het Collectief: Webern, Schoenberg, Berg **DEC 2** 20.00 Akademie für alter Musik Berlin conducted by Ariadne Daskalakis, violin, choreographed and danced by Juan Kruz Diaz de Garaio Esnaola: Vivaldi's Four Seasons, Jean-Ferry Rebel's Les Elements **DEC 4** 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Otto Tausk, with Levente Kende, piano: Ligeti, Luc Van Hove, Prokofiev **DEC 8** 20.00 Het Collectief conducted by Robin Engelen, with Jacqueline Janssen, voice: Berg, Schoenberg, Webern **DEC 9** 20.00 The English Concert conducted by Harry Bicket, with Anna Caterina Antonacci, soprano; Sarah Mingardo, contralto: Vivaldi, Porpora, Pergolesi

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
DEC 2 12.30 Roeland Hendrikx, Massimo Ricci, clarinet; Filip Neysens, Bob Permentier, bassoon; Anthony Devriendt, Jan Van Duffel, horn: Mozart, Matyas Seiber, Beethoven **DEC 3** 20.00 DeFilharmonie conducted by Otto Tausk, with Levente Kende, piano: Ligeti, Luc Van Hove, Prokofiev **DEC 5** 15.00 Orchestre National de Lille & Choeur Régional Nord-Pas-de-Calais conducted by Jean-Claude Casadesus, with Julien Behr, tenor; Stephen Salters, baritone; Daniel Mesguich, narrator: Berlioz **DEC 7** 20.00 Grigory Sokolov, piano: Bach, Brahms, Schumann **DEC 8** 12.40 William Young, piano; Nils Mönkemeyer, viola: Schumann, Mozart, Brahms. 20.00 Liège Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pierre Bartholomée, Louis Langrée, Pascal Rophé: surprise concert to celebrate the orchestra's 50th anniversary

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be
DEC 3 20.15 Flenish Radio Choir conducted by Bo Holten: Elgar, Mahler/ Holten, more

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30 www.mim.be
DEC 5 11.00 Quatuor Parisii with Roberte Mamou, piano; Gemma Rodefild, cello; Christian Vanden Borgh, double-bass: Chopin

Protestantse Kapel

Museumplein 2; 02.507.82.00
DEC 2 20.00 Jos Van Immerseel, harpsichord: Forqueray, Duphy, more

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
DEC 1 20.00 Ricercar Consort conducted by Philippe Pierlot, viola da gamba: Dowland, Morley, Giovanni Coprario

Ghent

De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2 09.233.68.78
www.debijloke.be
DEC 2 20.00 Concerto Soave: Monteverdi, Alessandro Piccinini, Tarquinio Merula, more

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
DEC 9 20.15 Quatuor Terpsycordes with Jürg Dähler, viola: Mozart, Ligeti, Brahms

Leuven

Lemmensinstituut
Herestraat 53; 016.23.39.67
www.lemmens.be
DEC 2 20.00 Daniel Rivera, piano: Chopin, Liszt



Antwerp

Vlaamse Opera
Frankrijklei 1; 070.22.02.02
www.vlaamseopera.be
Until DEC 22 17.45/20.00 In de keuken van de opera (In Opera's Kitchen), an introductory course on opera



Antwerp

Zuiderpershuis
Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
Until DEC 16 20.30 Chokri Ben Chikha in Heldendood voor de beschaving: de finale (Heroic Death for Civilisation: The Finale) (in Dutch)

Brussels

Koninklijk Circus
Onderrichtsstraat 81; 02.218.20.15
www.cirque-royal.org
DEC 3 20.00 Moscow City Ballet in La Belle au bois dormant
DEC 4 15.00/20.00 Moscow City Ballet in Swan Lake
DEC 5 15.00 Moscow City Ballet in The Nutcracker Suite

Théâtre National

Emile Jacqmainlaan 115; 02.203.41.55
www.theatrenational.be
Until DEC 4 times vary Minutes opportunes, choreographed by Michèle Noiret

Wolubilis

Paul Hymanslaan 251; 02.761.60.30
www.wolubilis.be
DEC 9-11 20.30 National Ballet of Marseille in a mixed programme of contemporary dance

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)
Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00
www.sherpa.be
DEC 5 20.00 Michael Flatley's Lord of The Dance



Antwerp

Buster
Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
DEC 4 23.00-1.00 Hakims of Comedy, stand-up

Fakkelteater Zwarte Zaal

Reynderstraat 7; 070.246.036
www.fakkelteater.be
Until DEC 19 15.00/20.30 Ganesha, een perfecte god (A Perfect God), directed by Martin Michel (in Dutch)

DON'T MISS

December Dance

1-11 December

Across Bruges

© Tadeusz Paczula



This world-class dance event has teamed up with the Bruges Central festival to court the most intriguing companies from across Central Europe. Developing like Flemish dance has done over the last decade, much of the work is theatre/dance fusion and boasts plenty of live music. It's almost unfair to mention "highlights" of such a rich programme, but if you must stop at two, make them *Les Corbeaux* (pictured),

an experimental interplay of movement and illustration by Serbian-born choreographer/artist Josef Nadj, and *Impromptus*, a piece of seemingly impromptu surprises set to the music of Schubert by German choreographer Sasha Waltz. This festival within a festival also includes lectures, film and an exhibition of photographs by Nadj.

→ www.decemberdance.be

Stadsschouwburg

Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
Until DEC 12 20.00 Geert Hoste in Vulkana, stand-up comedy (in Dutch)

Theater aan de Stroom

Ijzerenwaag 6; 070.22.33.30
www.theateraandestroom.be
Until DEC 5 20.30 De Fluistercompagnie in Stepping Out, directed by Walter Van de Velde (in Dutch)

Theater aan de Stroom (kleine zaal)

Blancefloerlaan 181; 070.22.33.30
www.theateraandestroom.be
Until DEC 5 20.30 Agnes van God by John Pielmeier, directed by Guy Thys (in Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
Until DEC 16 20.30 Chokri Ben Chikha in Heldendood voor de beschaving: de finale (Heroic Death for Civilisation: The Finale) (in Dutch)
DEC 1-2 20.30 Dahlia Pessemiers in Mozaïk, directed by Sam Touzani (in Dutch)
DEC 4-5 15.00/17.00 Het Toneelhuis and Ro Theatre in SWCHWRM, directed by Guy Cassiers (in multiple languages with Dutch surtitles)

Brussels

KVS Box
Arduinkaai 9; 02.210.11.12 www.kvs.be
Until DEC 4 15.00/20.30 De Enthousiasten in Van Plato tot Nato (Fom Plato to Nato) (in Dutch with French and English surtitles)

Ghent

Scala Theater
Dendermondssesteenweg 163-165; 0473.71.91.89 www.scalaplatform.be
Until DEC 19 15.00/20.00 Wordt u al geholpen? (Are You Being Served?), directed by Geert Callebaut (in Dutch)



Antwerp

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



Cosmopolitan Chicken

Until 15 December

European Space for Sculpture

Brussels

Koen Vanmechelen's fascinating *Cosmopolitan Chicken* project brings together several threads important to Belgium's presidency of the European Union: bio-diversity, ethics and the promotion of regional artists. Vanmechelen's installation reflects his hands-on years of research

into genetic manipulation of chickens, in which he questions humans' relationships with nature and quest for perfection. This project has been presented before but perhaps never so well as in this green space of the Tournay-Solvay Park.

→ <http://eesculpture.blogspot.com>

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

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Live, we take care of the rest

Photo Museum (FoMu)

Walse 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
Until DEC 12 Our Dreams & Nightmares, photographs by the British photographer Rich Wiles

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

Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse

Dijver 17; 050.44.87.11
www.museabrugge.be

Until JAN 9 The invention of Bruges: The City of Delacenserie, projects and restorations by 19th-century city architect Louis Delacenserie

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 duos 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

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW



Int'l Short Film

Festival of Leuven

4-11 December

STUK

It's definitely worth a trip to Leuven for this fun little festival of the best of short film from around the globe. Though we might be accused of favouritism, Flemish shorts have been getting a great deal of international attention the last few years, and with very good reason, which you'll find out here. Several shorts are grouped in each screening; don't miss the Flemish Competition and the European Competition. If you've still time – these are *short* films after all – bring the kids to Short Films for Children and definitely yourself to Comedy Shorts. This being STUK, every evening finds concerts in the festival cafe.

→ www.kortfilmfestival.be

Centre d'Art de Rouge-Cloître

Rokloosterstraat 4; 02.660.55.97
www.rouge-cloitre.be

Until JAN 23 Expo Gourmandise, original illustrations on the pleasures of eating

Espace Architecture La Cambre

Flageyplein 19; 02.642.24.50

Until JAN 9 La Belgique des autres, exhibition on the identity and future of Belgium and the effects of migration with works by Belgian and international designers

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

Justus Lipsius

Wetstraat 175; www.spullenhulp.be

Until DEC 31 Fashion & Design: Second Hand Second Life, works by Belgian fashion and object designers made out of recycled clothing, objects and furniture from the Spullenhulp charity

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

Natural Science Museum

Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38

www.naturalsciences.be

Until DEC 31 Planet Observer: multimedia game exploring biodiversity

Until MAR 20 Destination Mars, interactive exhibition on the planet Mars

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be

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

Royal Museums of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11

www.fine-arts-museum.be

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

Until FEB 6 Reinhoud, tribute to the Belgian sculptor and graphic artist, member of the CoBrA movement, who died in 2007

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 Asaël and Stéphanie Rabemialafara

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

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until JAN 30 Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception, installations, paintings, drawings, and documents by the Mexico-based Flemish artist

Ghent

City Museum (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

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until 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

Until 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 Bobby Baker Diary Drawings: Mental Illness and Me, more than 150 drawings by the British performance artist illustrate her 10-year journey through psychiatric institutions
Until MAY 8 The Weighty Body: Of Fat and Thin, Perfect or Deranged, a history of fasting for personal, esthetic, religious or economic reasons

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03 www.smak.be

Until JAN 30 Paul Hendrikse: A Vague Uneasiness, works by the Dutch artist
Until FEB 27 Hareng Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art, a highlight of the continuing contemporary aspect of work by James Ensor, shown with work by international contemporary artists

Until MAR 27 Inside Installations, 10 installations from the museum's collection
DEC 3-MAR 27 Adrian Ghenie, paintings by the Romanian artist

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

Literary Museum

Bampslaan 35; 011.26.17.87

www.literairmuseum.be

Until FEB 26 Niet van de poes! De kat in het kinderboek, a collection of children's books and stories featuring cats

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

Until MAR 13 Alter Nature: We Can, works by international artists about humans' manipulation of nature

Kemzeke

Verbeke Foundation

Westakker; 03.789.22.07

www.verbekefoundation.com

Until APR 10 Certified Copy, works by 20 international artists on the theme of reproduction and cloning

Until APR 10 Mark Verstockt: A portrait, an overview of the Flemish artist's work in celebration of his 80th birthday

Until APR 10 Trou de Ville, group show featuring press releases, e-mails, videos and photographs of guerilla art

Until JAN 30 The Cloudknitters – 100 Records, record sleeves decorated by visual artists

Knokke-Heist

Cultuurcentrum Scharpoord

Meerlaan 32; 050.630.430

www.congocollectie.be

Until JAN 16 Congo Collection, Congolese sculptures and masks

Kortrijk

Museum Kortrijk 1302

Houtmarkt-Beginpark; 056.27.78.50,

www.kortrijk1302.be

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

Leuven

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 DEC 16 Beatrijs Albers: Patrimonies, installations by the Flemish 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

Tervuren

Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11

www.africamuseum.be

Until JAN 9 Congo River: 4,700 Kilometres Bursting with Nature and Culture, interactive exhibition on the lifeblood of

Congo, from source to mouth

Until JAN 9 100 Years in 100 Photographs, outdoor exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of the African Museum building

Until JAN 9 Indépendance! Congolese Tell Their Stories of 50 Years of Independence, multi-media exhibition looks at the Democratic Republic of Congo from independence to today

Until JAN 9 Congo belge en images, photographs by Carl Dekeyser and Johan Lagae



Belgium's EU Presidency: Belgium takes the helm of the European Union Council for six months, with a cultural programme to mark its presidency

Until DEC 31 across the country

www.brusselsinternational.be

Moussem Festival: The 10th edition of the annual Arab cultural festival, featuring literature, theatre and music

Until DEC 4 across Brussels and Antwerp
www.moussem.be

Antwerp

Antiquairs Antwerpen: Annual open-house walking tour via 20 antique dealers

Until DEC 5 across Antwerp

www.antiquairs-antwerpen.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

Christmas Market:

Annual ice skating rink and Christmas market

Until JAN 9 11.00-20.00 on the Grote Markt

www.brugge.be

Snow and Ice: Annual ice sculpture festival; this year's theme is Around the World, with magnificent ice sculptres of major world monuments

Until JAN 16 10.00-19.00 in front of the train station

www.icesculpture.be

Brussels

Danse balsa Marni d'automne: Dance festival featuring premiere choreographies and buffet dinners

Until DEC 2 at Théâtre de la Balsamine and Théâtre Marni
02.639.09.82, www.balsamine.be

Lucas Cranach and the Northern Renaissance:

Lecture on the German Renaissance painter delivered by Frank Woodgate of the Tate Modern and Tate Britain

DEC 8 20.00 at Gemeentehuis, Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe, Paul Hymanslaan 2
02.782.16.12 www.bridfas.org

Museum Nocturnes:

Late-opening in Brussels' museums, with at least six different museums open until 22.00 every Thursday, plus guided tours and special events

Until DEC 16 on Thursdays, across the city
http://nocturnes.brusselsmuseums.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

SpokenWorld: International festival exploring the current state of the world as performers, writers and academics express their thoughts. This year's theme is Mobility and Identity

Until DEC 20 at Kaaithheater and Kaaistudio's

www.kaaithheater.be/spokenworld

Ghent

Ghent Museum Night: Ghent museums open until 1.00 to kick off Ghent Art Week, with free admission to all of the permanent collections, temporary exhibits and activities

DEC 2 across Ghent

09.269.84.67 www.visitgent.be

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

Soulwaxmas



Not your average Christmas party, **Soulwaxmas** on 11 December in Hasselt's Ethias Arena celebrates an early holiday with plenty of beats and sweaty bodies. The all-night party originated in 2007 with Flanders' famous singing duo, David and Stephen Dewaele – otherwise known as Soulwax.

The Dewaele brothers perform as **Soulwax** but then later in the evening transform into their alter ego **2Many DJs**, spinning one mash-up after the other. Their infamous live mixes shun no controversy, and, by adding for instance the girly Vanessa Paradis with electro Daft Punk, they get the crowd dancing in no time.

As usual, the brothers don't like to celebrate alone. So they've invited a bunch of their national and international friends, such as the London-based **Erol Alkan**, who's been cheering up the Soulwaxmas people since day one with his hard electro beats. Like 2Many DJs, Alkan is a master of mixing and re-mixing poppy tunes.

All the way from Brazil, **Mixhell** spins its special brand of rocktronica. Made up of metal band Sepultura's ex drummer Igor Cavalera and his wife Laima Leyton, they've made their name mixing both classic and obscure hard rock: shout out for "The Number of the Beast" and "We Are Prostitutes" if you dare.

Also not to miss: **Busy Pictionary**. Busy P (the owner of French record label Ed Banger) DJs while illustrator So Me draws pictures to the energy of the music – projected, of course, larger than life.

Also featuring in the line-up: **Paul Chambers** (UK, get in the mood by watching "Yeah Techno" on Youtube), **Hong Kong Dong** (BE), **Ego Trooper** (BE), **The Living Islands** (BE) and **Drums are for Parades** (BE). Soulwaxmas promises a few surprise guests as well. Tickets come at a pricy €35, but, I can assure you, it's worth it.

→ www.soulwaxmas.com



Breakfast in bed

It's Saturday morning, 8.00, and it's cold and dark outside. Such are the days when you dream of picking up the phone to order room service. But you don't have to stay in a hotel to have breakfast delivered to your door.

You will need to give a bit of advance notice (one to two days), but there are several delivery services across Flanders that will be glad to wake you with a fresh breakfast basket. Simply type *ontbijtmanden* in Google, along with your city or province, to find a list of providers. Or visit www.verrasjepartner.be for their selection (under *Eten en Drinken* and *Ontbijtservice aan huis*).

Sweet-Taste, for example, offers the following themed baskets: Romantic, Italian, French and even Antwerp, which features regional products such as a bottle of Elixir d'Anvers liqueur and *Antwerpse handjes*, chocolate in the shape of hands (www.sweet-taste.be). Or order a Super Deluxe Breakfast from Ghent caterer Haenebalcke (www.lekkerwakker.be), which also includes local specialty products like Ganda ham and *speculoos*.

These baskets are an excellent way to surprise someone on a special occasion such as Mother's or Father's Day or a birthday. But I more enjoyed ordering one for no reason at all. When Good Meurning (www.goodmeurning.be) rang our bell early the other morning, I received the basket (pre-paid online at €40) and placed it on the kitchen table. What a pleasure it was to see my partner's face change from "Who's at the door at this ungodly hour?" to "Oh wow, what do we have here?".

The Zorgeloos Ontwaken (Carefree Awakening) wicker basket was stuffed with breakfast items, all buried under one another, so that opening it was a pleasure in itself. On top were four fresh and crusty pistolets (bread rolls), two croissants and two chocolate pastries. They came fresh from a local bakery.

Hiding underneath were two bottles of Minute Maid fruit juice, a sizeable packet of freshly ground coffee from Koffiehuis De Branderij in Aalst, plus a tea sachet. Next to this, were four miniature waffles, butter and jam, two kiwis and two Côte d'Or chocolate *bouchées*. Decoratively arranged around the sides of the basket were slices of artisanal ham, salami, cheese, yoghurt and chocolate spread from nearby farm Hof ten Henne in Iddergem. I couldn't have bought all of this together for much less than €40.

It was obvious that the basket had been prepared with great care just an hour or two earlier, as everything in it was fresh and flavourful. And it was so plentiful that we had enough for breakfast the following day, as well.

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

TALKING DUTCH

ALISTAIR MACLENNAN



‘speculaas’

Coming out of the station at Amsterdam Zuid we were greeted by the wonderful smell of *speculaas* from a nearby baker's. These gingerbread-like biscuits are instantly recognisable, combining *kaneel* – cinnamon, *nootmuskaat* – nutmeg, *kruidnagel* – cloves, and *gember* – ginger.

They're associated with the coming of *Sinterklaas* – Saint Nicholas on 6 December in Belgium, or the evening before in the Netherlands. We mentioned the *speculaas* smell to our Dutch colleagues, who in typical big-brother style asked: "*Hebben jullie ook Sinterklaas?* – Do you also have Saint Nicholas?" To which we politely replied, yes.

The *Sint* is having a hard time of it these days – not that he's done much wrong, but rather because of his helper, *Zwarte Piet* – Black Peter. In *Sinterklaas* lands the argument rages between the anti-racists and the heritage fundamentalists about whether *Zwarte Piet* is a symbol of oppression of the third world or a substantial part of the *Sinterklaas* tradition.

I'll duck the argument because whatever *Zwarte Piet* is, he's not the fearsome fellow of old. No longer do children tremble at the threat of being carried off in his sack if they're naughty. And Piet's *roe* – rod – no longer metes out punishment. This is in line with the Sint's official stance in recent years that "*Er zijn dit jaar geen stoute kinderen!*" – This year there are no bad children!"

This is all very well, but perhaps it was better in the old days when the rod was not spared; after all, *wie zijn kind liefheeft, spaart de roede niet* – spare the rod and spoil the child (“he who loves his child does not spare the rod”).

Perhaps this has recently been in the minds of some university professors who are fed up with disruptive students. They are clamping down on *laatkomers* – latecomers, *studenten die babbelen tijdens de les* – students who chatter during the lesson, *twitteren en surfen, alles doen behalve opletten* – twitter and surf, do everything but pay attention. This, some would argue, is the result of Piet's *roe* not being put to its proper use all those years ago when these students were kiddies preparing their letters for the *Sint*.

Yet, one thing you can be sure about is that nostalgia belongs firmly in the past. Perhaps the trouble is that many professors are and have always been boring; until fairly recently doodling was all that was available to the bored student. I asked some students the other day to describe their lectures: some were *saai* – boring; *inefficiënt*, and *ongeschikt voor de moderne, veeleisende student* – inappropriate for the modern, demanding student. It's not exclusion that is required but rather innovation.

Perhaps aromatherapy would prove useful: fill the lecture hall with the wafting smell of *speculaas* and see the beneficial effects.

THE LAST WORD...

Time for tea

"The Vlaams Belang wants to grow into a sort of Flemish Tea Party, a republican citizens' movement."

Filip De Winter, chairman of the far-right Vlaams Belang, sketching out his plans for the party

Fighting the glass ceiling

"It's important to attract women in order to fight against the unfair marginalisation of boxing."

Mohamed Maalen of the Brussels Boxing Academy, on its bid to attract women to the sport

Simply the best.

"Two girls on the beach /
They're reading fashion
magazines / They're looking
around / And dreaming of a
prince."

The first lines (translated) of *Twee Meisjes* by Raymond van het Groenewoud, voted the best Belgian song ever by listeners of VRT Radio 1

When does he sleep?

"I don't know if I work hard, exactly. That's for others to decide. What's for sure is that I work long days."

Hasselt caterer Bart Claes, named Hardest Working Fleming by a radio show, who puts in 126 hours a week

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #159

Gift Guide

What to buy, what to buy, what to buy? We'll cut to the chase of the best holiday gifts and tell you right where to find them

Focus

The American College in Leuven, which has been training priests from North America for 150 years, is closing. We find out why

Living

Ghent launched Thursday Veggie Day, but nobody had to convince Antwerp to reach out to its vegetarian eaters. We check out the best addresses in the port city for some serious meat-free chow