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© Dieter Quaghebeur

The promised land

Flanders struggles to manage its growing number of Roma immigrants

SABINE CLAPPAERT

“The city of Ghent no longer has the influx of Roma people under control.” With these words the mayor of Ghent closed one of his last public statements of 2010.

He wasn't exaggerating: Ghent has an estimated 5,000 Roma living in and around the city, according to Tinten, a non-governmental organisation behind the weekly food distribution programme that serves the city's illegal immigrants.

The explosion of Roma, or Romani – people entering Belgium from newly annexed Eastern European countries

over the past few years – has been a hot topic in the media: television documentaries detailing the harsh circumstances in their home countries; stories of tour operators capitalising on faulty newspaper headlines that “Belgium welcomes all Roma” with a one-way bus ticket from Sofia to Brussels costing as little as €56; or articles discussing the political loopholes and opposing viewpoints surrounding the migration boom. “The Roma” seem to be everywhere. It's a rainy Friday afternoon in Ghent when we visit Elias Hemelsoet of Tinten at the weekly food distribution drive, which is due to begin at 14.00 in an old building behind

Sint-Baaf's cathedral. According to Hemelsoet, who is completing his doctorate on the Roma people in Ghent, the term “Roma” has grown to be a vessel for all our fears, prejudices and doubts surrounding the recent migration boom from Eastern Europe and its impact on social security, educational systems and the labour market. “Yes, some do beg or steal,” he says. “But we tend to forget that no-one flees voluntarily.”

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If you want to get ahead, get a Doodle

One picture may be worth a thousand words, but when it's given pride of place on Google's homepage, it may be worth a lot more. Antwerp web marketer (and art lover) Bruno Dillen found this out earlier this month.

“Doodle” is the name given to those illustrations that occasionally appear on the main Google search page to commemorate some special event. On 19 January it was the birth (172 years ago) of French painter Paul Cézanne, commonly referred to as the father of modern art. The Doodle was a pastiche of a Cézanne still life in which the pots and vases spelled out, in abstract style, the letters of the name “Google”.

Clicking on a Doodle brings you to a search page on the subject, and high on the list of results

for anyone who did so was Art in the Picture, a website on art history in English, maintained by Dillen. Last week he told the tech website The Next Web what the outcome had been of all that attention.

- On the day of the Doodle, he received an average of 2.5 visits every second: a total of 220,116 visitors in one 24-hour period, or more than he usually gets in a month
- 30% of visitors stayed to visit two or more pages
- Nearly 2,500 of them took the trouble to click on an advertisement, bringing in the equivalent of three months' ad income in a single day

→ www.artinthepicture.com

Demonstration draws 34,000

But forming a government still won't be easy

ALAN HOPE

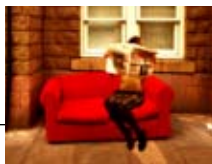
SHAME. A single word served to express a complicated political and emotional situation during last Sunday's march in Brussels, which involved 34,000 protestors, according to police (the organisers claim a figure of 45,000). The message to politicians was clear: enough of conflict and delay; it's time to start working together to form a new government.

Time is of the essence. On 17 February, Belgium will have been without a government for 289 days, equalling the world record set by Iraq. Already, Belgium has overtaken the record for the longest time spent on negotiations to form a government, set by the Netherlands at 208 days in 1977. By

Sunday, Belgium had chalked up 224 days of stalemate.

The demonstration was the idea of a group of young people, one of them the son of a federal minister, who set up a Facebook page that rapidly attracted thousands of supporters. Politicians were asked to stay away, as the march was intended to be non-political, but some demonstrators nevertheless carried signs attacking the main politicians in the ongoing talks: N-VA party president Bart De Wever and French-speaking socialist party president Elio Di Rupo.

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FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE

Peter Piot



© Imperial College London/Tom Whippes

Flemish scientist Peter Piot has taken up a new post as director of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), one of the world's leading institutions for research into global health.

Piot was born in Leuven and studied medicine at Ghent University, where he was part of a team in 1976 that discovered the Ebola virus, named after the river in Congo where the first outbreak happened in 1976 at a hospital run by Flemish nuns. The virus causes a fever that can kill up to 90% of those infected.

Later Piot completed a PhD in microbiology in Antwerp, working at the Antwerp Institute of Tropical Medicine, as well as the Free University of Brussels (VUB) and the University of Nairobi. The health concerns of the developing world have been an abiding interest: he has served as chairman of the International Aids Society, associate director of

the Aids programme of the World Health Organisation and director until 2008 of the United Nations' UNAIDS programme. He was elevated to the rank of baron by the king in 1995.

His concentration on medical matters, however, doesn't prevent Piot speaking out on political matters. Last month, he wrote a column in the *Financial Times* in which he called for new funding strategies for the fight against Aids: "We cannot continue to address a long-term problem and life-long treatment with annual funding cycles. Budget cycles should move to 10-15 years, while programme indicators should change to measure long-term impact, such as new infections and deaths, rather than just short-term process gains," he wrote. "The real challenge will be for leaders to put policies in place to prevent the most infections possible and save the most lives."

News in brief

Police in Antwerp province have introduced "pyromaniac patrols" to track down an **arsonist who has so far set fire to 10 vehicles** in the north of the Kempen region. In one incident last week, four cars were set ablaze in Essen. Each of the cars was parked in a carport adjoining the owner's home, whereas in previous incidents the cars set alight were parked on the street.

Crime suspects will have the **right to a lawyer being present** during questioning for the first time in Antwerp and Limburg. The decision comes following a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. Until now, suspects in Belgium could be questioned by investigating magistrates without a lawyer present. For the moment, the right does not extend to questioning by police. Other judicial areas are expected to follow soon.

This year's **Gouden Schoen (Golden Shoe) award** for the footballer of the year has gone for the second time to Anderlecht's Mbark Boussoufa, confounding expectations that the prize would go to his teammate Romelu Lukaku. Boussoufa, 26, born in Amsterdam to Moroccan parents, started his pro career with AA Gent before moving to Anderlecht in 2006. He first won the Golden Shoe that same year. (See *related story*, page 16)

One man was killed and another seriously injured in separate **accidents in Leuven's train station** in the space of 12 hours last week. In the first incident on Tuesday evening (18 January), a man in his 50s was running after a departing train when he fell under the wheels. He was transported to hospital in critical condition. On Wednesday morning during rush hour, a partially-sighted man appears to have tripped and fallen onto the rails as the train from Hasselt was entering the station. He was killed instantly.

The number of **counterfeit banknotes** detected by shops, banks and police in Belgium last year reached 43,657, an increase of 59% on the previous year, the National Bank reported. The fakers' favourite is the €50 note, followed by the €20. Belgium is particularly vulnerable to counterfeiters because retailers are hesitant to check the authenticity of notes, explained a spokesman for the anti-counterfeiting service of the bank. The quality of fakes, mainly manufactured in other countries, is generally poor.

Belgium will soon be **exporting fresh water from Zeebrugge to Qatar**, the tiny oil-rich state in the Persian Gulf. The Flemish port plans to build a massive reservoir to maintain ready stocks of fresh water, allowing Qatar to become less dependent on the expensive

and environmentally damaging process of desalination of sea water. Qatar will transport the water in the ballast tanks of their tankers making a return trip after delivering gas to Zeebrugge.

The owner of the Anderlecht abattoir, whose property also houses a weekend market, intends to turn the whole complex into a **new covered food market** with apartments, he said last week. Joris Tiebout, CEO of Abatan and the new director-general of Voka, the Flemish organisation for the self-employed, said the company had received €6 million in subsidy from the Brussels Region, with work due to start in 2013. "We want to become the major food market for shoppers, with all sorts of food stores: meat, fish, vegetables, fruit and everything else besides. We don't yet have anything like La Boqueria in Barcelona here in Belgium," Tiebout said.

Brussels region has named 2012 the **Year of Gastronomy**, with activities organised under the name Brusselicious. As well as sustainable and responsible gastronomy, there will be an accent on local products like *witlof* (endive). The city also plans to convert a tram into a restaurant and host the European final of the Bocuse d'Or world chef championships.

→ www.brusselicious.be

OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

No monopoly for *speculoos* spread

It was such a brilliant idea, it was a wonder nobody had thought of it before – *speculoospasta*, a creamy sandwich spread with the taste of Belgium's famous *speculoos* biscuits, just the thing to brighten up the kids' lunchboxes.

Unfortunately for Lotus Bakeries, the company that patented the idea, someone had thought of it before. Last week in Ghent, a court threw out the group's patent, leaving the field open to other companies to make the same product.

Speculoospasta first came to the public eye through the VRT programme *De bedenkers* (*The Inventors*) in 2007. Members of the public competed for the chance to commercialise their innovative ideas. *Speculoospasta* (pasta as in "paste" rather than Italian noodles) was introduced by Els Scheppers, who made the final, and by chef Danny De Maeyer and his partner Dirk De Smet, who failed to place.

Lotus, which makes *speculoos* biscuits, bought the recipe from De Maeyer and engaged De Schepper to publicise the new product. Three other Flemish producers made their own versions, and Lotus, on the basis of the patent they had obtained, tried to stop their production.

Last week that challenge failed, with the court ruling that Lotus could not claim to be the inventor of a product that already existed. The evidence, brought by the competition, showed that a recipe for *speculaastaart* –

essentially the same as Lotus' spread – had featured on a Dutch website as long ago as 2002.

Lotus is now considering an appeal, though CEO Matthieu Boone last week said he was "not afraid of the commercial effects. Our product is unique because of its taste".



FLANDERS TODAY

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Tomb ornaments found

About 15 statues and carvings stolen from graveyards in and around Brussels have been recovered on an illegal rubbish site in Anderlecht. The bronze figures were among 150 stolen by thieves who thought they were made of copper



© Shutterstock

Politicians pledge to listen to marchers

→ continued from page 1

Following the success of the event, politicians made public statements on Sunday. Steven Vanackere, the acting interior minister, said the demonstration was a "clear signal to politicians" of "collective reproach".

"A government, but not at any price," said Di Rupo on RTL television. "Don't forget that we have to form a government with a party whose goal is the independence of Flanders." On Saturday evening before the march, De Wever commented:

"No-one who is really concerned about the people's welfare can go on being satisfied with the status quo. We do indeed need a government, but we need one that can tackle the major problems of the country."

Finance minister and MR leader Didier Reynders called on his fellow politicians to listen to the calls of the protesters and warned against making political capital out of the march. Alexander De Croo, leader of Open VLD, which has not taken part in the negotiations, said it was "now time for all politicians to begin negotiating in a serious manner."

Caroline Gennez, head of the Flemish socialist party, pointed out the unique character of the Belgian march: "People usually demonstrate against a government or against policies, but this was a case of demonstrating for a government," she said.

International attention

The march was closely followed by the international media. French daily *Le Monde* reported that Dutch and French speakers were united and noted the presence of "a good number" of Belgian flags, something its correspondent described as "a symbol of a unitary Belgium, now outmoded by circumstances".

The BBC put the number of those attending at 50,000 and spoke repeatedly of fears that Belgium



© Reuters

THE SHAME PROTEST
IN FIGURES

34,000

participants, according to police (45,000 according to organisers)

44%

came from Brussels

35%

came from Wallonia

21%

came from Flanders

could split, a point also made by *The New York Times*. *The Guardian*, meanwhile, recalled the Belgian march in November 2007, when 35,000 demonstrated in protest at the 161 days of deadlock in the attempt to form a government. Most newspapers also pointed to the uneasiness of the financial markets at the continuing lack of a government. ♦

What they wrote: the papers react Last Word, p16

Phone-in games face ban

An undercover journalist blows the whistle on TV games

ALAN HOPE

Television phone-in games are being given one last chance to come into line with strict new rules or face a total ban from the airwaves, the federal minister in charge of gambling policy, Carl Devlies, warned last week.

The games, in which viewers are encouraged to call a premium number to answer questions, like riddles or arithmetical problems, came under severe scrutiny last week after the VRT TV show *Basta* completed a four-month undercover operation to show that the games were rigged, making it virtually impossible for callers to win.

A Basta actor worked on one of the shows as a presenter and planted a microphone inside the production office. *Basta* also recruited a maths expert, who devised a computer programme to break the cipher used in the questions. But when he provided the correct answer on air, he was told it was wrong.

The investigation also revealed that producers regularly switched envelopes containing the correct answers, posed questions which had several "correct" answers and blacklisted people they knew to be capable of answering correctly.

The show in question was broadcast in the night hours by VTM and 2BE, and the Flemish Media Company (VMMA) that owns the two channels withdrew them from the airwaves.

The new rules would oblige games producers to clear their quiz questions with the Gaming Commission and ensure the answers are able to be calculated from the information onscreen. However, VMMA may not return the games to the air in any case. Games are now only broadcast by French-speaking broadcaster RTL. ♦

Bond offer disappoints

The government last week went to the capital markets with a bond offer, two weeks in advance of the scheduled date. The government wanted to raise up to €5 billion from the issue of the 10-year bonds, while hoping to avoid paying an excessive rate of interest in order to attract buyers. However, following a worrying bond issue by Portugal, as well as forthcoming issues by Spain and Italy, the government decided to abandon its plans to hold an auction on 31 January and instead to hand the bond issue over to a consortium of friendly banks – BNP Paribas Fortis, Royal Bank of Scotland, Société Générale Corporate and Investment Banking and UBS Investment Bank – for them to pass the bonds on to their institutional clients. The sale went ahead last week, but raised only €3 billion. The rate of interest was set at 4.25%, slightly down from where

it had stood a week before. Meanwhile the so-called spread – the difference between the German interest rate and the Belgian – closed the day at 107 basis points, having peaked at 119 during the day. The week before, it had gone as high as 144 points.

"There could have been a lot more, but you couldn't call it a setback," commented Anne Leclercq, director of the government's Debt Agency. Part of the reason the Agency started the day with €6 billion in orders and closed it with half of that turned into sales, was that the EU finance ministers had been expected to increase their emergency fund, which is intended to help out member states in trouble. "Because that didn't happen, a lot of investors backed off," Leclercq said. ♦

THE WEEK
IN FIGURES

€160,000

owned on average by each Belgian family, according to figures from the National Bank. The sum includes property, savings, shares and other assets, but excludes outstanding mortgages and debts, giving a national total of €1.8 billion

€1,700

Damages paid to the owner of an eight-year-old Jack Russell, killed by another dog while it was staying in kennels in Damme, near Bruges. The award includes €1,250 for emotional suffering, the first time a court has recognised more than the financial effects of losing a dog

8,989

people in Belgium underwent a stomach stapling operation in the first nine months of 2010, twice as many as a decade ago. The operations, which are aimed at tackling obesity, cost the social security budget about €6 million a year

€289 billion

in banknotes and coins in circulation in Belgium, as well as cash in current and savings accounts, according to National Bank figures, representing about €26,000 per family on average

717

Cases of copper cable theft from the railway system in 2010, compared to 290 cases in 2009, according to NMBS Holding, which manages railway infrastructure. The thefts, as well as representing material loss, often lead to delays and cancellations of trains

A clear signal

More than 30,000 people marched the streets of Brussels last Sunday demanding the speedy formation of a new federal government. Being Belgian, we take the 220 days that have passed since the last elections in stride. Still, *trop is te veel en te veel is trop* (too much is too much, a phrase used by both languages groups, coined by a former prime minister, Paul Van den Boeynants).

The protest march was organised by a number of students using Facebook to spread their message. The French-speaking press – relieved to hear something come out of Flanders other than what it perceives as separatist rhetoric – supported the march. Hence the call for national unity from many protesters – something the organisers, claiming political neutrality, had not intended.

To many observers, the march is a clear signal. But what kind of signal? What is it that the protesters really want to happen?

In Flanders, there are two clear signals. The march is one. It stands for the people who want to see the deadlock finished. If that means that not every Flemish demand is met, then so be it. The other signal is almost the exact opposite. A good number of people feel that the Flemish should not give in. If that means the stalemate continues, then so be it.

Bart De Wever's N-VA, the party that won the elections, unites both signals. Part of its electorate voted N-VA because they believed De Wever was the man who would "get it over with". Another part, the traditional nationalist backing, believed the contrary: that De Wever would strongly resist the French speakers' demand for a status quo.

This makes De Wever's position almost impossible. Whatever decision he makes means letting down part of his electorate. His natural instincts are to stay out of government, attacking it from the outside. But how can he do that, given the mandate the voters have given him? Moreover, all other parties want to see him in government, fearing that he would be even more popular in opposition.

These vague and conflicting strands of public opinion have resulted in a largely anti-political climate, which makes comedians at the end of their wits resort to remarks such as "all politicians are rubbish". Laughs guaranteed!

Still, it is up to the politicians to provide an answer to those two conflicting signals – "get it over with" and "do not give in". It's not going to be easy.



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putting people first

The promised land

“Here is still better than there”

→ continued from page 1



© Dieter Quaghebeur

Tinten offers bread, coffee and a few basic sundries to illegal immigrants every Friday in the centre of Ghent

Not all Roma – an ethnic group that comes to Flanders from many different places, including Slovakia, Kosovo, Romania and Bulgaria – can be lumped together. “Not all these people come here with the same intentions,” he explains. “Some are indeed migratory and stay only a few weeks or months, trawling city streets to beg for money that they send back to their families. The Roma we see begging in the streets of Ghent are mostly from Romania. They are the smallest but also the most visible group. We estimate that there are about 100 of them in Ghent.”

These are the people who fit the profile commonly known as gypsies. “These Roma have no intention of settling in Belgium,” continues Hemelsoet. “They travel from country to country, they often speak several languages, and they never travel with their children.”

But in Ghent are also large communities of Roma from Slovakia and Bulgaria, “and they are almost always serious about settling here,” says Hemelsoet. “Finding a concrete reason for a sudden increase from a specific country is difficult. Often it is something as simple as word-of-mouth, other times it can be traced back to more sinister reasons, such as organised traffickers that lure people here to exploit them in illegal, cheap labour circuits.”

The bells of Sint-Baaf’s strike 14.00. At the peeling white doors of the building behind the Cathedral, a volunteer gets ready to admit the ever-growing group waiting for the canteen and shop to open. She pulls back the doors, and a medley of dark-skinned people of all ages and origins spills into the cavernous cellars. They are met with neatly-set tables, a buffet of bread and flasks of freshly-brewed coffee. Amongst the jostling throng, I spot a young couple looking lost and flustered. She has long, dark hair, plastered to her face and hugs a small, doe-eyed boy in a red cap across her pregnant belly. The man wraps his arm protectively around his wife and son to shield them from the pushing and shoving, while his eyes nervously scan the room.

Fleeing family

Dennitsa, 21 and her husband Mladen, 29, arrived in Flanders last year. Theirs is a story of forbidden love. She’s Bulgarian; he’s Roma. They fell in love when she was just 14. Her family refused to accept Dennitsa’s choice of a Roma – a people who for hundreds of years were held as slaves throughout Eastern Europe and who are still widely regarded as second-class citizens.

The young family (pictured on page 1) eventually fled

to Belgium, drawn by a relative’s promise of abundant opportunities. One year later, they sit before me, drawn and disillusioned. Dennitsa has worked in a café on the outskirts of Ghent for the past six months, and the owner allowed them to live in a studio above the café. “The first month he promised to pay me €1,000,” says Dennitsa. “The following month, he paid me €20 or €30 every week, with the promise that the rest would follow.”

But the following month was the same story and, for the last three months, he has paid her nothing. “I couldn’t keep sending our son to preschool because we didn’t have the money to pay for it,” she says. She breaks a roll in two, handing a piece to her son. “Now he’s told us that he has sold the business and that we have to move out by Sunday. We have nowhere to go. We came here today hoping someone can give us advice.”

Dennitsa hands me a photocopied map of Ghent. It is marked with big red crosses. “They told us we must look for these places,” she tells me, pushing the map across the table. Hemelsoet looks over my shoulder. “Kraakpanden [squats],” he comments. “Those are the squatter houses many Roma live in. Often they have no proper windows or doors, no heating, electricity or running water.”

Dennitsa is seven months pregnant and, in less than three days, she and her family will be homeless. “I want to work,” she says. “I want to earn enough to send my son to school and make sure we have a roof over our heads.” She has seen a doctor twice during her pregnancy, but cannot afford to go again.

“Not for people like us”

To ask whether Belgium has lived up to their expectations seems ridiculous. Mladen answers in broken Dutch: “It’s a good place for crooks, but not for people like us.” He, too, has tried to support his family, but time and again people have taken advantage of him. First, a Turkish man employed him to renovate a house. Mladen worked 16 hours a day. He wasn’t paid. Then he worked on a flower farm just outside Ghent, placed there by “a Bulgarian lady”. For six weeks he worked eight to 10 hours a day. He was paid €150. “The Bulgarian lady” still owes him €610 since last August.

So why don’t they just go back to Bulgaria? “There is nothing for us to return to,” states Dennitsa. “Mladen doesn’t have any family left, and my family will not help us. There is no future for us in Bulgaria. We cannot go back. We have to make this work,” she adds, as she folds and refolds her

photocopied map of Ghent.

Behind me a skinny man hovers, trying to catch my attention. “He’s heard you’re from the newspaper,” says Hemelsoet. “He wants to tell you his story.” On a worn-out couch beside him a young woman puts a blanket over her sleeping child while she rearranges her food rations in bags.

Dennitsa follows my gaze. “For many people, even if we don’t have a house, even if we don’t have money, here is still better than there.”

And that in a nutshell is the real problem, according to Flemish integration minister Geert Bourgeois. “It is unacceptable that people within Europe [have to] leave their country because of social neglect or discrimination,” he says. “It is also unacceptable that illegal networks earn large sums to dump these people here and that they are then further abused by criminal organisations that blackmail them and take a part of their wages. In this regard, the countries of origin carry a responsibility.”

“It is unacceptable that people within Europe have to leave their country because of social neglect or discrimination”
Geert Bourgeois

Flanders advocates a linked approach with Europe and also with the Belgian state in terms of immigration control, says Bourgeois. “If we can control the influx, we can also help the people who stay here legally to integrate. Their situation is heartbreaking. Flanders can act here together with its cities: provide education to the children of these people, ensure that they have proper housing, provide them with integration programs, help them find work.”

But he also stresses that new immigrants must make an effort to learn the language and find legal work. “The conclusion: all links in the chain must work, but especially work together.” ♦

→ www.detinten.be

The home office

Three new co-working cafes in Antwerp get freelancers out of the house

MONIQUE PHILIPS

If you are a commuter and work long hours in a crowded office, you might be surprised to learn that someone is very envious of your life. At least the bits where you stand in line for the photocopier, have a smoke or a coffee break and discuss work with colleagues.

That someone is a freelancer, growing lonely and tired of working at home alone.

But now in Antwerp, freelancers can go and do just that: work, have a drink, a chat, a conference. And at the end of the day, they return home energised and cheerfully call out: "honey, I'm home!"

The Bar d'Office is a co-working café. It wants to be more than a just a bar and more than just a place to network. It believes in being both. Co-working can lead to all sorts of collaborations within a trustworthy network of people.

Co-working cafés have been an established presence in the US ever since the first one, 9 to 5, opened in San Francisco in 2005. The starting point was the desire to accommodate the ever-growing group of freelancers who felt isolated. Designed to meet their specific needs, these hubs became a success.

Now, almost simultaneously, three are opening in Antwerp. At A Space in Borgerhout you can rent an individual workspace at a long table, thus feeling surrounded by colleagues and the various necessary quips of an office. Meanwhile, over in northern Antwerp, enthusiasts were already knocking on the door of Burooz even before they opened.

Just a few streets away on Dambruggestraat, Goedroen Vanlerberghe works as a "matchmaker" at Bar d'Office. Since quietly opening last November (their splashy grand opening is next month), she has gained a good insight into where their concept, envisioned by coordinator Klara

De Smedt, might lead them in the supply and demand of the freelancers market.

Bar d'Office is divided into a coffee bar on the ground floor and a more secluded lower floor, both opening up to an airy patio. For now, it's part of the Design Centre Winkelhaak, but in the future the concept and network should thrive independently, and new locations will be set up in Kortrijk, Ghent, Leuven and Brussels. Other potential partners, such as Flanders DC, have shown interest.

Vanlerberghe makes it her priority to personally talk to anyone who wants to become a member. Therefore, you can only become a member – or an "officer", as they like to call you – if you drop by in person. In getting to know you and your projects, she hopes to be able to set you up with other members of the network who might find collaboration fruitful. She has discovered that the most unlikely of partners can surprise you.

"I truly believe in the power of collaboration," Vanlerberghe explains. As she experienced in her previous job as quality manager in banking, a lack of teamwork often proves to be a major stumbling block for many companies. Employees, who are, understandably perhaps, afraid to lose status or even their jobs, often don't trust their own colleagues enough to share ideas.

Bar d'Office sets out to bring independent members together to meet with open minds, convinced that collaboration leads to great results if given half a chance. "We feel privileged to be in a job where we can enable this process," she says.

The various matchmakers each have their own expertise and experience, ranging from starting entrepreneurship to freelancing, and all have an extensive network for referrals.

As you might expect, freelance artists and



Freelancers can collaborate on a daily basis, or just find some company, at Bar d'Office

musicians are cottoning onto the Bar d'Office idea, but so are an array of other kinds of workers. Johan Coolen owns his own business, Factor 4, an energy audit company. "I'm finding the process of how they are developing their concept very inspiring," he says. "If someone can pull this off, I think they can. They have the right level of professionalism."

Not meant for a specific profession or age group, Bar d'Office aims to keep in close contact with the locals of 2060 Antwerp, a diverse and lively neighbourhood a few minutes' walk from Antwerp Central Station. "This area is perfect to not only break free from your professional cocoon, but from so much more," says Vanlerberghe. "Diversity is inspirational."

Bar d'Office even gets their provisions at local caterers, designers and sustainable coffee-roasting factories. A collection point for fresh organic fruit and vegetables has been set up in the bar.

And milk and sugar are strategically placed so that clients need to get up and go to it. "Everything to get people talking," Vanlerberghe smiles. "On all levels we try to be positive and supportive. I would like us to start soon with trainings and workshops tailored for our members." ♦

BAR D'OFFICE IN BRIEF

- Membership is €1 a day
- A one-day free trial is available on request
- Drinks, copies, etc are added to your invoice
- Meeting room is €10/hour
- Grand Opening on 10 February
- ➔ www.bardoffice.be

"Unique in the world"

UNESCO's vision of education is realised in Leuven

MUHAMMAD BAIG

As if there weren't enough UNESCO heritage sites in Flanders, the designation has now been given to a college in Leuven.

Group T Leuven Education College became a certified member of the UNESCO Associated School Project Network (ASPnet) last year for its unique teacher training programme and its International Educational Classes. With that, it became the first UNESCO associated school in Flanders.

The quality label indicates that education at Group T is in line with the fundamental ideas of UNESCO. "It is in a way an international recognition of what we have already been doing for a long time," says Stijn Dhert, dean of Group T. "Our educational policy is already formed around the UNESCO's 'four pillars of education', and since we have from the beginning acknowledged the potential of cultural diversity and the diversity of ideas, the UNESCO recognition is really a milestone for us."

Established in 1953, the ASPnet now comprises 8,500 primary, secondary and vocational schools and teacher training programmes in 180 countries. Being a

part of this huge network has radically changed the stature of Group T as an education college. "On an international level, it has had an effect on our standing as an institution," says Dhert. "It has moved us up into a different league, so to speak, so we have a louder and stronger voice now. And the label affirms that our vision on education is in line with UNESCO's."

UNESCO's four pillars of education (learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be) were established in the 1990s, with the guiding principle that education takes place throughout one's life in many forms, and no one area of learning should take precedence.

Despite the strict language legislation in Flanders regarding education, Group T's Postgraduate International Educating Class (PIEC) is taught in English – the only programme of its kind taught in English in Flanders. The PIEC is intended to reach beyond Flanders by opening its doors to students from all over the world. "We have a programme here that is truly unique in the world," explains Dhert. "We get students from countries as far away

as Indonesia, South Korea, Pakistan, Nigeria, Cameroon and China."

The idea is to educate the young minds of today from a UNESCO perspective: to encourage them to contribute to the sustainable development of their communities and act as agents for peaceful co-existence. "I believe the programme also contributes to the personal development of students, as they learn from each other as much as they learn from the curriculum," says Dhert. "We use cultural diversity as a tool to better understand our world together."

In an address in Paris last April, soon after the Leuven college was awarded the UNESCO designation, the ASPnet international coordinator, Lyvia Saldari, encouraged Group T to set up further educational initiatives and to develop innovative educational materials for schools belonging to the network.

"The programme of your university reflects what ASPnet is all about," she said. "I do hope that Group T will play a central role in the further development of the ASP network in Flanders." ♦

➔ www.piec.be



Stijn Dhert, dean of Group T, receiving the ASPnet certificate from UNESCO ASP network co-ordinator Lyvia Saldari in Paris last year

Tolls for trucks from 2013

Drivers from abroad will have to buy stickers

ALAN HOPE

Trucks and vans over 3.5 tonnes using Belgian roads will have to pay a toll from 2013, the three regional governments agreed last week. At the same time, private cars will need to carry a special sticker. The income from the sticker will go towards road maintenance. The roads covered by the toll system will be mainly the major traffic axes such as the E19 from the Netherlands, the E40 toward Germany and the E411 to Luxembourg and France. However the regions will be free to add to the basic network, and make selected roads subject to tolls.

The truck-based system – which will be developed, installed and run by a private company – will be similar to one already in use in Germany. Trucks that use Belgian roads regularly would be fitted with an on-board unit to report their kilometres to a satellite detection system; drivers who visit or transit only seldom would be able to pick one up at entry points.

The tolls charged will depend on the roads used, the time and the place, as well as the environmental impact of the particular vehicle in question, with greener trucks paying less. The costs of the system will be shared by the three regions according to an agreed structure. The income from tolls will go the region according to the roads used, so that a truck in transit from the Netherlands to France could end up paying all three regions, while one passing from the port of Antwerp to Germany might only pay to Flanders.

The main fear of opponents of the system is that forcing a toll on freight traffic will affect Belgium's competitive position. A study has been commissioned to determine the impact, which will report back in March. However since Germany and France both now operate tolls on major roads, it's not easy to see how the haulage industry could avoid Belgium



to any economic effect. The Dutch haulage industry organisation EVO and the transport sector organisation TLN estimate the system will cost industry €36 million a year, without reducing congestion or contributing to the upkeep of roads. The Belgian motoring organisation Touring described the system as "a new form of taxation," but the Flemish region denied it would see any profit from the system.

Foreign cars will have to pay

The other part of the system is the "road sticker", which will be required for all cars using the roads. For cars registered in Belgium, the sticker will form part of the normal road tax already paid, with possible additional payments for heavily-polluting cars. The governments involved have denied

that the new system will lead to an increase in payments, except in the case of cars with heavy emissions.

Drivers from abroad would also have to buy a sticker, though in the interests of protecting the tourist industry, visitors from the Netherlands, for example, would be able to buy a low-cost version to allow them to make regular trips to a particular city (such as Antwerp) or to come from Zeeland into West and East Flanders.

The income from the new sticker would, in the case of drivers living in Belgium, go to the region where the driver is resident. For income from foreign cars, the regions have still to agree on a division, with the Walloon mobility minister André Antoine last week suggesting a split of 52% to Flanders, 38% to Wallonia and 10% to Brussels. ♦

Peeters calls for measures for pig farmers

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters was this week due to ask the EU Commission to take steps to withdraw quantities of pork from the market and put it into storage until prices paid to producers can recover. The measure, if it is agreed, would lead to possible shortages of pork in the market, and higher prices for consumers. The pig sector has had to face an increase in the cost of feed, made worse by the fact that prices offered by slaughterhouses for pork have fallen in recent months by about 10 cents a kilo, as a result of a dioxin crisis in Germany which has pushed down prices in that market. The importance of the industry is crucial: pig farming accounts for 30% of Flanders' total income from agriculture.

The pig sector's response was to attack the retail sector: a distribution centre in Moorsele in West Flanders serving Lidl – a German company – was subject to a blockade, as was a

meat processor in Waarschoot in East Flanders. Unsolicited, Colruyt pledged it would pay pig-farmers €5 on top of the the slaughterhouse price for each animal. And Delhaize launched a campaign to promote Belgian pork to consumers; the supermarket sells almost exclusively Belgian pork in its stores.

This week, on Monday, Flemish minister president Kris Peeters, who is also responsible for agriculture, was due to present a proposal to the European Commission to allow the EU to withdraw pork from the market and put it into storage in order to artificially create a shortage on the market, and push prices up.

The Commission's response was still not known as *Flanders Today* went to press. However there is a weight of support on Peeters' side – the Dutch are in favour, as, according to reports, are France, Spain, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Luxembourg, Ireland and Italy.



• Meanwhile it was claimed that 58% of chickens sold for meat are resistant to four different antibiotics, which means infections caused by their bacteria are more difficult to treat. The claim comes in research by a doctoral student at Ghent University. Three out of four chickens produced in Belgium are treated with antibiotics for

most of their short lives. One of the main dangers is the antibiotics-resistance of *E. coli*, a germ produced in the gut which contaminates much meat during the slaughtering process. If that is passed on to humans, treatment of any infection (which can be fatal) would be much harder. ♦

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Autos • Second hand

Some 674,000 used cars were registered last year in Belgium, while an additional 200,000 were exported. The best-selling second hand model is the Volkswagen Golf, followed by the BMW 3 series and the Opel Corsa. The second-hand market remained stable in 2010 despite the record number of new cars sold in the country last year.

Autos • Audi

The Brussels-based Audi assembling facility is to expand production of the best selling A1 model and will launch five-door and convertible models later this year. Also under consideration is a four-wheel-drive Quattro range to be built from mid-2012.

Banks • ICBC

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) officially inaugurated its Brussels offices last week. The bank aims to provide comprehensive financial services to Chinese customers in Belgium and to act as a bridge for Chinese-Belgian and European trade and economic cooperation.

Economy • New jobs

Some 500 of the country's leading companies have announced plans to hire new employees in the first half of this year, according to a recent survey on future hiring policies. Leading the pack is discount supermarket Colruyt, which is seeking 1,500 additional staff members. Other firms looking for extra personnel are supermarket Carrefour, railway operator NMBS, Belgacom and the banking sector as a whole. The total number of new jobs is estimated at some 20,000. Meanwhile, the number of unemployed in Flanders dropped by 20,000 last year and now stands at 9.3%. According to the Flemish authorities, the total number of people out of work fell below 200,000 at the end of December.

Energy • Fluxys

Gas importer and distribution company Fluxys has signed an €80 million contract with the Norwegian Statoil oil and gas group. Under the deal, Fluxys will stock some 100 million cubic metres of gas over 20 years at its Loenhout underground facilities, near Antwerp. The move, which follows another agreement signed late last year with Russia's Gazprom group, strengthens the country's role as a leading European gas transit and stocking centre. Fluxys is also considering investing a further €70 million to develop further docking capacity at its Zeebrugge LNG terminal.

Finance • foreign investment

Direct foreign investments in Belgium rose more than 50% last year to \$50.5 billion. The figure represents the second highest in Europe after France and is significantly higher than the \$34 billion invested in Germany or the \$46 billion earmarked for the UK. The attractive notional interest legislation is said to be one of the key elements in this country's success.

Travel • Best Tours

The bankrupt Best Tours travel operator, one of the country's largest with some 40,000 long-haul customers, has been taken over by the Swiss Kuoni travel group.

Poetry in motion

Everything you need to know about Flemish poetry is summed up in five nominations

REBECCA BENOOT

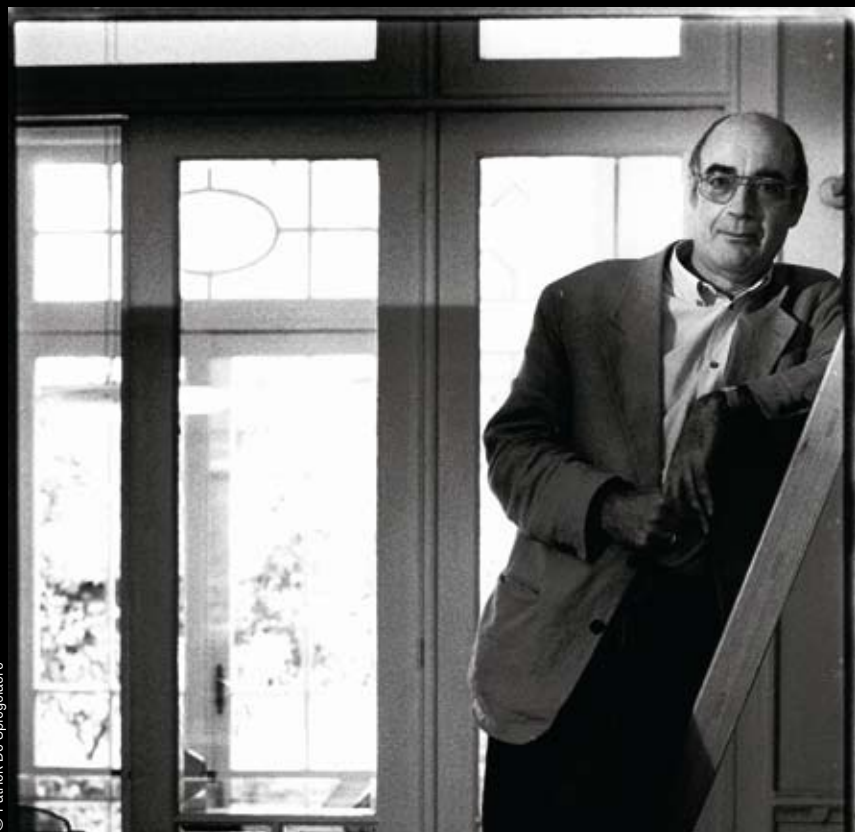
Together, Flanders and the Netherlands celebrate Gedichtendag (Poetry Day) on 27 January, and the fifth annual Herman de Coninck Prize will be awarded to the best Dutch-language poetry collection by a Flanders-based poet during a jazzy evening in Antwerp's Arenbergsschouwburg. The Herman de Coninck Prize is named after one of Flanders' most beloved poets and literary critics who died in 1997. There are three prizes that will be awarded during this swanky night, with music by Jack van Poll and Jeff Neve: Best Poetry Collection, Best Poetry Debut and Best Poem, which has been selected out of the five nominated collections. The general public will decide on the winning poem, which will then be made into a free poster that will be available at all bookstores. The prize is a significant event in the

life of a Flemish poet, says Joke van Leeuwen (*pictured, right*), who hails from the Netherlands but makes her home in Antwerp. She is nominated this year for her collection *Hoe Is't*, (*How is It*). "It's always nice for writers and poets to be credited in an age where the sell-by date of books is rather short," she says. "I also think it's important that we pay tribute to Herman de Coninck because he died too soon and had a tremendous influence on literature in general."

A jury of well-read journalists, authors and literary enthusiasts have the daunting task of deciding who of Flanders' top poets gets this year's €6,000 cash prize. The nominees for best collection are an eclectic bunch, to say the least, but one thing's certain: each one represents a particular aspect of what makes Flemish poetry so distinct. ♦

Herman de Coninck

The man who lent his name to Flanders' prestigious poetry prize



© Patrick De Spiegelaere

Born in Mechelen in 1944, Herman de Coninck studied in Leuven and began his career as a journalist for the Flemish weekly *Humo*. Eventually tiring of interviews, he became editor-in-chief of the magazine *Nieuw Wereld Tijdschrift* (*New World Magazine*), where he combined literature and journalism. The result was one of the Low Countries' most important guides to poetry. His main goal was to produce poetry for the masses, to make it comprehensible and less elitist. He was with the magazine until his death in 1997.

De Coninck debuted his first collection of poems in 1969. He became known for his parlando style with an understated and often ironic tone that was entwined with themes of love, mortality and loss. He also worked to

bring poetry closer to everyday reality by incorporating familiar situations and pop culture, making his work accessible and himself the most widely read poet in Flemish history.

Later, more romantic elements found their way into his collections, but his intentions remained the same. Besides poetry, he also wrote many essays on poetry and was one of the leading literary critics of his time.

De Coninck died of a cardiac arrest at the age of 53 during a literary symposium in Lisbon with his wife, Flemish writer Kristien Hemmerechts. To this day, his first collection, *De lenige liefde* (*The Lithe Love*), is one of the best-selling volumes of 20th-century Flemish poetry. A selection of his poems has also been translated into English, *The Plural of Happiness*.

Johan de Boose takes us around the globe with his *Geheimen van Grzimek* (*Secrets of Grzimek*). Filled with impressionistic poems that search for hidden truths, this collection proves that he is an eloquent wordsmith with a passion for Eastern-European history and culture.

Marleen de Crée, a poet and artist who already has quite an impressive oeuvre. *Het is niet de Lava* (*It's Not the Lava*) is a deceptively simple but powerful collection of poems in which she plays with words, shapes and the reader's expectations.

Stefan Hertmans has created a soothing yet occasionally shocking collection in which he portrays human life as a temporary phase. *De val van vrije dagen* (*The Fall of the Free Days*) combines the ordinary with the mythological and searches for the next phase of our existence.

Marc Tritsmans' *Studie van de schaduw* (*Study of the Shadow*) focuses on the little things we often take for granted. Clear observation of the here and now have made him create a compassionate collection filled with poignancy, insight and revelations.

Joke van Leeuwen's *Hoe is't* is a superb collection of all the poems she created during her two years as city poet of Antwerp from in 2009 and 2010. "I've been nominated several times before," she says, "but seeing as it's a collection of city poems this time, I feel that the nomination isn't just for me. Most poems were inspired by events in the city and by conversations with people in Antwerp. Being a city poet gave me the opportunity to create poetry in an extraordinary way because you are very limited in time and space; the poems are mostly about what was going on in Antwerp at a certain point in time."



Fresh fiction

The latest books in Dutch on the shelf

Het konijn op de maan
(*The Rabbit on the Moon*)

Paul Mennes

Flemish author Paul Mennes is a man of all trades, known for mixing pop culture and alienation to ultimately end up with a dazzlingly fresh and funny narrative. His latest fictional endeavour is a quirky love story about Samuel Penn who moves to Osaka with his Japanese girlfriend Midori and soon realises that the culture clash is the least of his troubles, as he embarks on a voyage of personal growth and plastic kitties. *Het konijn op de maan* was written in a small apartment on location in Osaka.

Dieperik
(*Depth*)

Leo Pleysier

At 65, renowned Flemish author Leo Pleysier has once again created a thing of beauty. This short yet incredibly powerful book focuses on a young boy who experienced something that will haunt him for the rest of his life. Unable to talk about it, he gets on with day-to-day living but cannot erase the memories of the past. *Dieperik* is a socially relevant family chronicle with a simple rural setting that Pleysier majestically brings to life with slow-burning phrases. It doesn't get any more Flemish than this.

Legende van een zelfmoord
(*Legend of a Suicide*)

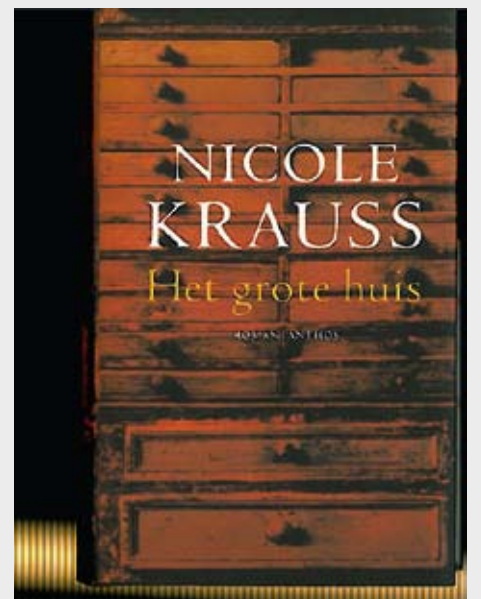
David Vann

In his semi-autobiographical debut novel, American author David Vann recalls his father's suicide and comes to terms with his own guilt and depression. Five stories illustrate the crucial moments that made his life take several unexpected turns. This harrowingly tender novel filled with love, loss and survival introduces a remarkable new writer whose no-nonsense and eloquent style will have you relishing every bittersweet moment.

Het grote huis
(*The Great House*)

Nicole Krauss

One of the most anticipated novels of 2010 was the recently released *Het grote huis* by American author Nicole Krauss, her first novel after 2006's international bestseller *De geschiedenis van de liefde* (*The History of Love*). In her mesmerising and sensual new book, she delves into the burdens of the past with a story about a desk that holds the secrets of all who have owned it. It is a multi-layered masterpiece with an impressive cast that travels beyond the realms of the human heart and unveils the mysteries of writing, war and Judaism.



Swap meet

Idealism and art come together at Truc Troc

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

If you think art fairs are high brow events for the rich and famous, think again. With its beginnings in a spirit of 1970s co-operation, Truc Troc is an accessible art event where visitors "buy" a piece of art by exchanging it for anything but money.

A year of legal advice, a scooter, dental care, 20,000 ear plugs... These are only a few examples of objects or services that have been exchanged for art during the past editions of Truc Troc.

The concept of this innovative art fair originated in the early 1970s, when budding sculptor Mon De Rijck felt the need for an accessible art fair. Together with others, he organised arts shows where art could be rented directly from artists. The first Truc Troc was organised in 1975 in the Malou castle in Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe.

It ran for a few years and then petered out, but, in 2004, "De Rijck's son revived the concept," explains spokesperson Catherine Husson. It's been going strong ever since at Bozar.

Artists of all sorts can apply to join the event. They're invited to come before a jury composed of art experts. "For the edition of 2011, we received more than 500 applications," Husson says. "We chose about 150 of them, based on the quality of their work, the creativity and the novelty. You'll find paintings, sculptures and even performances."

How does it all work? "When entering Truc Troc, visitors get a set of post-its. If they see something they like, they can write down whatever it is they want to give in exchange and stick it next to the art work," Husson explains. "When the event is over, the artists will pick the bid they like – or need – the most."



Visitors get more creative every year, as proves the long list of remarkable exchanges. "One artists chose to swap his work for 20,000 earplugs, as he needed them to compose his next installation," says Husson. "Another artist chose a year of free juridical advice, as he needed some extra knowledge on author rights. Quite often people offer plane or train tickets or a stay in their holiday residence abroad. Anything goes."

Last year's edition saw a record 20,000 art buyers and the curious coming through the doors of Bozar. A host of other activities make up the Truc Troc weekend: On Friday evening, DJs Laurentzhino and Fady One master the decks until 2.00. If you're planning a visit on Saturday afternoon, enjoy a spot of tea organised by Wolubilis culture centre's

renowned thematic restaurant Cook & Book. They will serve breakfast on Sunday as well. Do bring your kids, as this year Truc Troc pays them special attention. In association with the Kindermuseum, professional entertainers will introduce kids to the world of art. So while mum and dad work out what to give away in exchange for the painting or sculpture of their dreams, their youngsters will explore their artistic side. ♦

4-6 February

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23
Brussels

→ www.tructroc.be

And here's where they kept the pigs... One of Flanders most fascinating buildings opens up to tours

LISA BRADSHAW

Peter Van den Eede admits he absolutely cannot give a tour of the building in which he has worked for 28 years. Public tours of the historical Vooruit building in Ghent's student district were first arranged last year and have been brought back by popular demand. But they're only 90 minutes, "and I can't do it in 90 minutes!" he exclaims. "It's impossible for me."

Van den Eede is one of the programmers at Vooruit, an arts centre since it was saved from demolition by a group of enterprising students in the early 1980s. Originally built between 1910 and 1914, combining Art Nouveau with other architectural styles and constantly being added to and embellished, Vooruit was a socialist cultural centre – bombastic to some, proof of the strength of the party to others.

Vooruit has, at last count, 367 rooms. "It was a socialist cathedral," says Van den Eede. "It was a bit of a paradox: on the one hand, you have the socialist movement, the working class, with a building like this. On the other hand, the party thought, why shouldn't the working class get to see an opera?"

On the tour, you'll hear about the controversial beginnings of the building, which can still, says Van den Eede, cause controversy, depending on who's in the tour. Some on the tour are socialists, who know a thing or two about

the history of their party and aren't afraid to disagree with the guide. "When we say something critical about the socialists, their faces get red," says Van den Eede. Then they say 'no!', and we say 'yes!', and that's fun." He also greatly enjoyed a tour he once led – back when he led them – that included a group of architects. "This is a strange building," admits Van den Eede. "It's officially called eclectic, meaning it's a mix of styles. So we say that something is Art Deco, and one of them says 'No, it's Art Nouveau,' and then they would all start arguing about it. Sometimes they would just take over the tour and do the talking for me."

The real leaders of the tour, which are all given in Dutch, are former employees of Vooruit. Though not typical tour guides, they are the only ones who really know the building, says Van den Eede. "They worked here, drank beer here, still have friends here," he says. "The tour members can see that they really love the building."

Besides seeing a few of those 367 rooms normally closed to the public, you'll also see the concert and theatre halls from a different perspective, such as from the stage – the way the artists see them. And you'll hear the stories of Vooruit during the wars, when Germans turned the concert hall into a stable for pigs and horses. ♦



Tour Vooruit

5 & 26 February, 15.00
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
Ghent

→ www.vooruit.be

Check the website for more dates in April and May

CULTURE NEWS

Flemish choreographer, dancer and founder of Brussels-based dance school PARTS, **Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker**, performed her solo piece *Violin Phase* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York last weekend. The piece is part of *Fase: Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich*, which she created in 1981. *Violin Phase* is danced in sand, which was brought into MoMa; through her movements, De Keersmaecker draws a circular design in the sand. The performance was part of the exhibition *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*.

Antwerp's Fashion Museum (MoMu) has brought together five of the alumni of the Fashion Department at the Academy of Fine Arts to create **installations for the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week** in Berlin. The installations were on view for the duration of the week, which ended on 22 January. Each installation included a classic Mercedes, such as the Estate from 1977 (pictured) and the SL-Class Roadster from 1971.



Flemish minister of education Pascal Smet has announced that Flanders will open **top culture schools** for secondary students, which will operate in the same way as special secondary schools for sports do now. Students will pursue a specific discipline at the same time as receiving a general education. The first culture school has been designated as the Royal Ballet School of Antwerp, which already operates but will now, with the help of the region, move to a new location with better facilities and attract international students.

N-VA party president Bart De Wever has announced that he will not take part in the **final of the quiz show *De allerslimste mens ter wereld*** (*The Very Smartest Person in the World*). His recent score on the show placed him within the top six positions for the final week, but, said De Wever: "I just can't say when this week I would be free." His participation earlier this month caused controversy, with Belgium in the middle of a political crisis. The final episode of *De allerslimste mens* is this Thursday, 27 January.



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Match made in heaven

Entrepreneurs pair two things Flanders does very well – cafes and chocolate



A Bailey choc, a Ti Amo or a Mexican from the god of chocolate bars, Queztal

COURTNEY DAVIS

There is nothing a Belgian won't put chocolate on. Since they invented the praline in 1912, they have been creating ever more new ways to get chocolate into their daily diet. Though classic desserts are the Dame Blanche (ice cream smothered in chocolate sauce) and chocolate mousse, chocolate isn't limited to dessert in this country – not when they eat 21.5 pounds of chocolate per year.

To live up to that kind of consumption, Belgians also start their day gorging on the good stuff, choosing between a traditional breakfast of *chocoladekoek* (chocolate croissant) or bread smeared with chocolate paste. But many are thinking, why stop there? Why merely eat chocolate when you simultaneously drink it?

Enter **Queztal**, a chocolate café where the chocolate is for the sipping. With over 2,000 chocolatiers throughout the country, the addition of three more could easily go unnoticed, if it weren't for the actual lines of people waiting to get their hands on a proper hot chocolate.

It is worth the wait. Behind the counter one woman is quickly scooping chocolate sauce into a cup and blending it with steamed milk to make a rich, warm and completely satisfying indulgence. There are four types of melted chocolate temptingly on display (white, light milk, milk and dark), plus 15 designer hot chocolates on the menu, making it hard to choose just one.

Most opt for the house specialty, the Queztal. This has four scoops of chocolate – one of each flavour – and is so rich that one nearly waddles away from the café. There are some with cinnamon, others with cardamom; the menu is extensive and creative.

I was in awe of the Chili, where a scoop of hot chilli

powder and a squeeze of honey are added to the milk chocolate. The flavour of the cocoa overwhelms any pepper taste, but the heat remains, allowing for the most literal interpretation of hot chocolate I've ever had. It warmed me to my toes.

"I'm trying to redefine how people think of drinking chocolate," says Vincent Verschooris, the Ghent-based owner of the Queztal franchise – also located in Leuven and Antwerp. It is a fixed idea that it is 'just hot chocolate'. I had to change the way people drank chocolate, and my menu shows this."

Enter nine types of chocolate milkshakes, five kinds of chocolate sundaes, plus the various chocolate/coffee combinations, and you can drink a different kind of chocolate for weeks on end. As an additional temptation, every drink is served with a large sample of the house specialty dessert – a homemade chocolate brownie.

It is a chocolate lover's heaven, and Verschooris is pleased with the association. "When I was a kid, I loved [the book] *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. I remember thinking how amazing it was that this one family would share one bar of chocolate a year, and that it was the most rare and precious thing. So this café is a temple of chocolate, and Queztal is its god."

The name of the café is after the Guatemalan god of chocolate. He starts discussing the history of chocolate and the types of cocoa beans used, but my eyes have glazed over – I've happily slipped into a chocolate coma.

You can get your fix at Queztal from noon every day, seven days a week. This is a place where they understand the meaning of cravings. ♦

→ www.chocoladebar.be

Pure and simple

STÉPHANIE DUVAL

Whereas Queztal specialises in drinking your chocolate, one intimate Antwerp spot wants to feed it to you whole, washed down with the best cup of coffee in the city.

Some say the arrival of big international chains – such as Starbucks – is proof of the rising influence of coffee culture in our nation. While in fact, it's the ever-growing independent coffee places honouring the culture of a true barista that mark the growing popularity of coffee around here.

Bar Choq is one such café. According to owner Jens Oris, it's "just a regular coffee bar, but one that lays an emphasis on high quality." He is selling the concept – and himself as its originator – a bit short. Oris drew inspiration from bars and cafés

he visited abroad. As a coffee aficionado, he favours filtered coffee, espresso shots and cappuccino: "I like pure products best."

But Oris lives in the land of chocolate and realises the need to combine the sweet and the bitter. That's why you'll find chocolate muffins literally bursting apart from the centre with chocolate chips. And cappuccinos that look almost like ice cream sundaes. And the Golden Girl, a huge cup of coffee adorned with a web of sugary caramel and served with a golden spoon. "People are instinctively drawn to sweetness," he says.

Oris invests a painstaking amount of time and energy in finding the best coffee blends and roasts and figuring out the best

way to serve them. He's constantly on the look-out for innovations. "We're currently switching from espresso to filtered coffee," he explains. "The difference between both is the grinding, which is reflected in the taste and texture of the coffee. I'm also trying to improve doses, and I look for the best suppliers. Six months ago I started working only with fresh, full-fat milk, but not everyone can deliver that."

Since its opening in 2008, the cosy and slightly quirkily decorated Bar Choq quickly became a favourite meeting place with Antwerp's shop hoppers and creative crowd: exactly how Oris intended. "I see the bar as a place where people come together. It's not a work environment; it's like a home away from home." ♦

→ www.barchoq.be



And don't forget the cookie: Bar Choq

Saints to the left, sinners to the right

EMMA PORTIER DAVIS

Walking up Kerkstraat from Tervuren's marketplace, one is presented with a choice: to the left, this small, Flemish town's beautiful church; to the right, the prospect of liquid heaven in the form of a cup of dreamy hot chocolate.

As I push open the door to the cosy tearoom, which is filled with the aroma of pralines from its extensive and enticing chocolate counter, I feel like one of the naughty villagers in Lasse Hallström's movie *Chocolat*. And I haven't even ordered yet.

Hanna Stübener opened **Chocola** in 2005. Before that, she had run a small gift shop on Brussels' trendy Zavel; but when rents skyrocketed there, she found her perfect little patch in Tervuren, where she wanted to do "something different".

Her house specialty is the Choco Maison. A mug of steaming milk arrives on a platter with two bowls of chocolate chips – one dark, one milk. She told me how to combine them for

the perfect mix, but I gave into temptation and tried as many combinations as one mug would allow.

My guilt is assuaged when I discover her cocoa treats come from Tienen-based Kim's Chocolates, winner of a Belgian award for being the most energy-saving business in Flanders. Stübener's goal is to sell artisan products that are natural, ecologic and with a good price/quality ratio.

Aside from the array of chocolates on sale, Chocola also has a selection of patisseries, the most famous of which is the cheesecake, made by Les Tartes de Françaises in Elsene. If you need to justify a trip there with some savouries, she also serves salads, quiche and spaghetti. After supping up and munching through a praline (I try Stübener's personal favourite, the Praha, which has crispy bits inside), I leave the warmth of this quiet haven and scurry impishly past the church. ♦



Sin is in at Chocola

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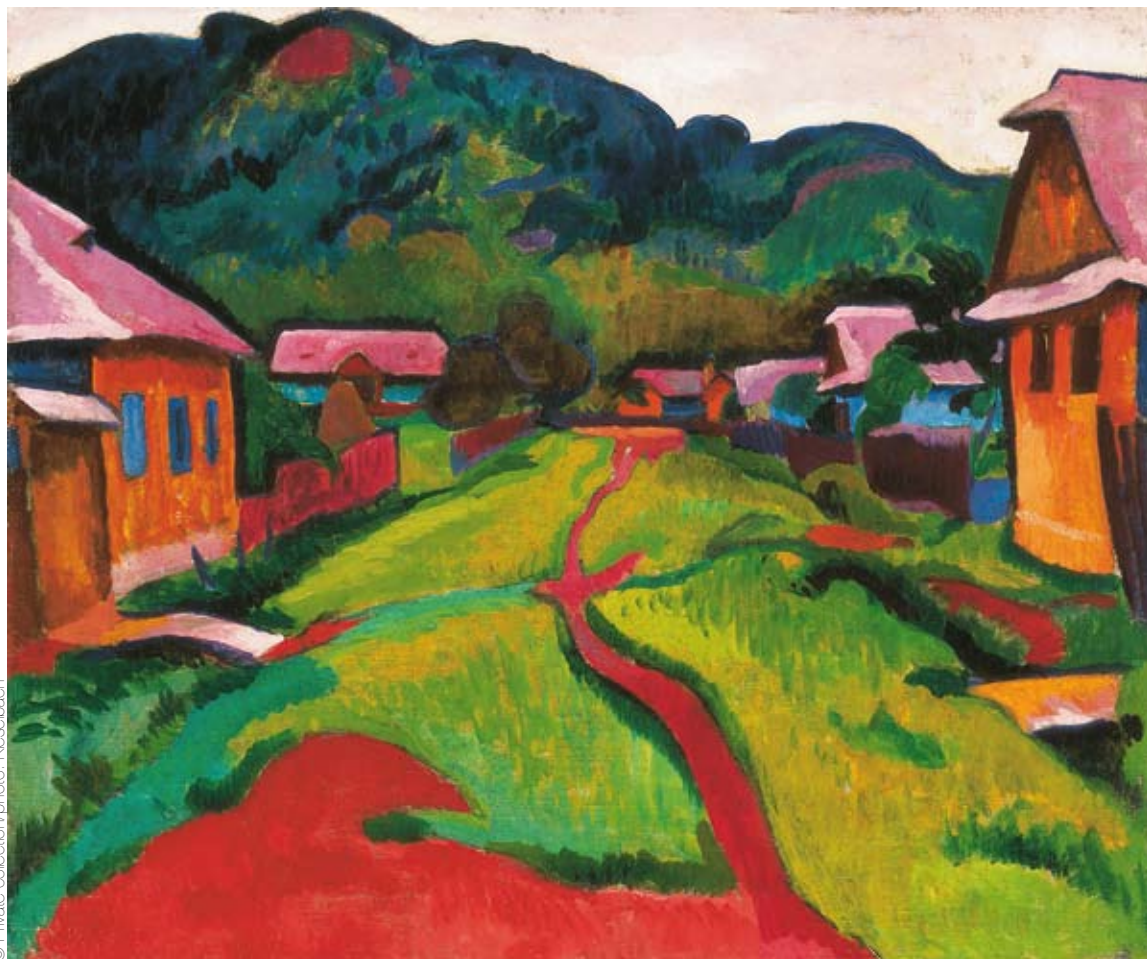
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Hungarian Fauvism

ANNA JENKINSON

"Hungarian Fauvism" was a new term for me. Hungarian art, sure. Fauvism, ok. But a combination of the two?

"Fauvism," notes Hungary's Secretary of State for Culture, Géza Szócs, "has been considered a virtually Francophone phenomenon up until now". After all, the artistic style derives from the French word *fauves*, meaning "wild beasts" and was first used by a critic in 1905 about a Paris exhibition. It described the violent reactions of the exhibiting artists, which included Henri Matisse, Raoul Dufy and Maurice de Vlaminck, to prevailing painting styles.

In fact it is these artists who immediately spring to mind as you enter the Brussels exhibition *Hungarian Fauvism*, staged in Brussels Town Hall in co-ordination with Hungary's presidency of the European Union. You are struck by the bright reds, oranges, blues and greens of canals, boats and views from windows painted by Béla Czóbel, Vilmos Perrott-Csaba and their contemporaries.

At the start of the last century, many Hungarian painters travelled to Paris for further training, often at the Académie Julian. They soaked up the latest trends in the small galleries and collectors' salons, and Matisse and his circle of Fauves

were a big influence on them. In 1908, Matisse opened his own academy, and Perrott-Csaba, Géza Bornemisza and, according to some sources, Valeria Denes were among his students.

Many of these art students also travelled to Belgium – and in particular Bruges – to paint during this first decade of the 20th century. Bruges was an "important setting in the evolution that led Hungarian painters towards Fauvism," according to exhibition curators, who use geography as a way to structure the show, with Belgium and Paris the focus of two separate sections in the ground floor room, while Hungary is the central theme of the downstairs space.

It is this Hungarian room where the show comes into its own, full of works painted towards the end of the 1904-14 period and combining styles and elements picked up in Paris with the artists' home settings. Take for example Bornemisza's "The Veresvíz Street in Nagybánya" (pictured), a scene from Central Europe's largest artist colony, Nagybánya. Painted in vivid colours, particularly greens and reddish-pink, the compelling work simply depicts a path lined with small houses in higgledy-piggledy fashion and leading into the distant hills.

The fauvists' strong colours have been transplanted to Hungary.

The works are far from uniform in style, however. Hanging in the same room is Sandor Ziffer's "The Baross Square". The work, depicting broad avenues and grand buildings in Budapest, is painted in muted blues and pinks and brings to mind works by neo-Impressionists such as Camille Pissarro or Georges Seurat. As you walk around the exhibition, which contains some 50 works borrowed from Hungary's major museums and private collections, it is almost impossible not to find yourself comparing the Hungarian works with those of their better-known French contemporaries. Then again, by entitling the show *Hungarian Fauvism*, curators are almost asking us to make that comparison. Enjoy this Hungarian take on the artistic movement. ♦

Until 20 March
Brussels Town Hall
Grote Markt
→ www.brupass.be



MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

On Vacation! → *MIAT, Ghent*

Cindy Frey's She's got it! → *CC Kortrijk*

Jose Guzman's The State of L3 → *Muhka, Antwerp*



Antwerp

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
JAN 26 20.30 Mathieu & Guillaume

Petrol

Herbouvillekaai 21; 03.226.49.63
www.petrolclub.be
JAN 29 22.00 Ill City

Sportpaleis

Schijnpoortweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
JAN 28 20.30 Natalia meets Anastacia

Trix

Noordersingel 28; 03.670.09.00
www.trixonline.be
FEB 2 20.30 The Airborne Toxic Event

Brussels

Ancienne Belgique

Anspachlaan 110; 02.548.24.24
www.abconcerts.be
Concerts at 20.00:
JAN 27 BUURMAN **JAN 28** Jena Lee. True Bypass + Murder **JAN 31** Neon Trees + Twin Atlantic + Angels & Airwaves **FEB 1** 19.00 Masters of Reality + The Cult. Drums are for Parades

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
FEB 3 20.30 Silver Junkie CD release

Café Central

Borgval 14; 0486.72.26.24
www.lecafeccentral.com
JAN 27 20.00 Origami once a month #4: El National Quarterback + Inkata

De Markten

Oude Graanmarkt 5; 02.512.34.25
www.demarkten.be
JAN 30 15.00 Eddy et les Vedttes

Fuse

Blaesstraat 208; 02.511.97.89 www.fuse.be
JAN 29 23.00 Eyes Wide Open album release: Butch, Pierre, Deg

K-NAL

Havenlaan 1; 0474.04.00.00, www.k-nal.be
JAN 29 23.00 Boys Noize records new compilation 'Super Acid' release party

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32
www.botanique.be
Concerts at 20.00:
JAN 27 Glasser **JAN 28** Cloé De Trèfle. The Phoenix Foundation **JAN 29** El National Quarterback + Oh No Oh My

Magasin 4

Havenlaan 51B; 02.223.34.74,
www.magasin4.be
JAN 26 19.00 Child Abuse + Gay Beast

Maison des Cultures

Belgradostraat 120; www.stgillesculture.irisnet.be
JAN 29 20.00 Blue Velvet

Marni Club

Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.80
www.theatremarni.com
FEB 1 21.30 Pocket Brass Band

Recyclart

Ursulinenstraat 25; 02.502.57.34
www.recyclart.be
JAN 28 19.00-1.00 Mister Babouche with Enes Rahmoune. 22.00 Privacy Party: Legowelt + Alden Tyrell, more

Vorst-Nationaal

Victor Rousseaulaan 208; 0900.00.991
www.forestnational.be
JAN 29 21.30-6.00 MNM Party Zone, 80s and 90s music with Technotronic, Gala, Ray & Anita, SASH!, Corona, Reel2Real & special guest Ray Cokes
JAN 30 20.00 ABBA The Show 2011, tribute show with the London National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthew Freeman and tribute band Waterloo

Ghent

Cafe Boom Boom

Overpoortstraat 50; 09.223.22.27
www.democrazy.be
FEB 3 20.00 Rauw & Onbesproken

Charlatan

Vlasmarkt 6; 09.224.24.57
www.charlatan.be
FEB 2 20.00 Izzy And The Kesstronics + La Sera

DON'T MISS!

Henry van de Velde Awards exhibition

Until 26 February

De Loketten
Flemish parliament

Celebrate the 16th edition of the prestigious Henry Van de Velde Awards and Labels with a visit to the award-winning designs on display at the Flemish Parliament building in Brussels. Among this year's winners are young textile designer Diane Steverlynck for her poetic fabrics and the Jaga Ontwerpstudio company for the child-friendly radiator "Play". The awards celebrate Flemish creativity in the spirit of Van de Velde's multi-faceted career as architect, designer and co-founder of the Art Nouveau style in Belgium. Visitors get a free catalogue that describes the work of all the winners, and group tours can be arranged.



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→ www.designvlaanderen.be

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JAN 26 22.00 Marble Sounds **JAN 28** 20.30 Pennywise + Red Tape Parade + Flatcat **FEB 3** 19.30 The Vaselines + Schwervon

Kortrijk

De Kreun

Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
JAN 28 20.00 Mauro & The Grooms + Nieuw Zwart Trio **FEB 3** 20.00 The Subs

Leuven

Het Depot

Martelarenplein 12; 016.22.06.03
www.hetdepot.be
JAN 27 20.00 Mauro and The Grooms **JAN 28** 20.00 Soulsister

Ostend

Kursaal (Casino)

Monacoplein 2; 070.22.56.00
www.kursaalloostende.be
JAN 29 20.00 Soulsister



Antwerp

Arenbergshouwborg

Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergshouwborg.be
JAN 31 20.30 Chad McCullough + Bram Weijters Quartet

Buster

Kaasrui 1; 03.232.51.53
www.busterpodium.be
JAN 26 21.30 Playtime Session **JAN 27** 21.30 Cello Joe **JAN 28** 22.00 Root **JAN 29** 22.00 The Modern Agriculture **FEB 1** 20.30 JazzNight **FEB 2** 22.00 Tribe **FEB 3** 20.30 SingersNight

De Hopper

Leopold De Waelstraat 2; 03.248.49.33
www.cafehopper.be
JAN 30 16.00 Yvonne Walter & guests
JAN 31 21.00 Marjan Van Rompay Group

De Muze

Melkmarkt 15; 03.226.01.26
www.demuze-jazz.be
JAN 29 22.00 JAZZILAN

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.deroma.be
JAN 27 20.30 De Bankroet Jazz Live!

Rataplan

Wijnegemstraat 27; 03.292.97.40
www.rataplanvzw.be
FEB 3 20.30 Alexis Thérain & Thibault Dille

Ardooi

Cultuurkapel De Schadu
Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduwnet
JAN 28 20.30 Simply Jazz Kwintet

Bruges

De Werf
Werfstraat 108; 050.33.05.29
www.dewerf.be
JAN 29 20.30 Quentin Dujardin Quartet

Brussels

Charliermuseum
Kunstaal 16; 02.218.53.82
www.charliermuseum.be
FEB 1 12.30 Gorgona Projekt

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be
JAN 26 20.15 Anne Wolf with Théo de Jong, Jaco Van der Kaaden, Ben Ngabo, Christa Jérôme and Mizzy

Jazz Station

Leuvensesteenweg 193; 02.733.13.78
www.jazzstation.be
JAN 26 20.30 Jacques Piroton Quartet
JAN 29 18.00 Qu4tre **FEB 2** 20.30 PIXL Trio **FEB 3** 20.00 Jazz Station Big Band

Marni Club

Vergniestraat 25; 02.639.09.82
www.theatremarni.com
JAN 27 20.15 Fabien Degryse and Co

Sounds Jazz Club

Tulpenstraat 28; 02.512.92.50
www.soundsjazzclub.be
Concerts at 22.00:
JAN 26 Chamaquiando, salsa **JAN 27-29**
Aka Moon **JAN 31** Master Session **FEB 1**
Tassin-Di Maio Quartet **FEB 2** Caribe Con
K - Los Soneros del Barrio **FEB 3** Marc
Lelange Blues Lab

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Concerts at 21.00:
JAN 27 Jazzstrings Quartet **JAN 28**
Caçamba with Osvaldo Hernandez
FEB 1 The Unexpected **4 FEB 3** Thierry
Crommen Trio

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5; 0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
JAN 28 20.00 Jef Neve & Liebrecht
Vanbeckevoort

Kortrijk

Concertstudio
Conservatoriumplein 1; 056.37.06.44
www.dekreun.be
FEB 2 20.15 Quentin Dujardin Quartet



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
FEB 1 20.15 Paco Peña - Flamenco sin
fronteras

Lotto Arena

Schipmportweg 119; 070.345.345
www.sportpaleis.be
JAN 30 20.00 Musikantenstadl 2011,
German folk music

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
JAN 28 20.30 Perunika trio **JAN 29** 20.30
Claudine Muno & the Luna Boots

Brussels

Art Base
Zandstraat 29; 02.217.29.20
www.art-base.be
JAN 28 20.00 Flávio de Sousa & Ritmus
Project (Brazil) **JAN 29** 20.00 Tanar
Catalpinar & 'Acha', flamenco from
Turkey and Kurdistan **JAN 30** 18.00
Dimitra Mantzouratou, piano; Dimitris
Papagiannakis, violin (Greece) **FEB 3** 20.00
Tzigani Gypsy Quartet

The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
FEB 2 21.00 Clare Louise

Ghent

Handelsbeurs
Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
JAN 29 20.15 Lura (Portugal)
FEB 2 20.15 Amparo Sanchez with
Dapedro (Spain)

Vooruit

St Pietersnieuwstraat 23; 0900.26.060
www.vooruit.be
JAN 27 20.00 Murder, folk



Antwerp

Amuz
Kammenstraat 81; 03.292.36.80
www.amuz.be
JAN 28 14.00 Children are born
composers: schoolchildren present their
own compositions
JAN 29 21.00 The Times They Are a
Changin': HERMESensemble performs
music by composers aged 12 to 20
JAN 30 15.00 Flemish Radio Choir
conducted by Luc Anthonis, with Stéphane
De May, piano: Dvorák

deSingel

Desguinlei 25; 03.248.28.28
www.desingel.be
JAN 27 20.00 Marc-André Hamelin, piano:
Berg, Liszt, more
JAN 29 20.00 L'Arte del Mondo conducted
by Werner Ehrhardt, with Christoph
Prégardien, tenor: Graupner, Telemann,
Bach

Bruges

Concertgebouw
't Zand 34; 070.22.33.02
www.concertgebouw.be
FEB 2 20.00 Lecture performance by Pascal
Amoyel & Anima Eterna: Liszt
FEB 3 20.00 Anima Eterna conducted by
Jos van Immerseel, with Pascal Amoyel,
piano: Liszt

Brussels

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
JAN 26 20.00 Hungarian National
Orchestra and Choir conducted by Zoltán
Kocsis and Matyas Antal: Liszt, Bartók
JAN 27 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra
conducted by Theodor Gulschbauer:
Mozart, Bruch, Offenbach
JAN 29 20.00 Brussels Philharmonic
conducted by Michel Tabachnik:
Mendelssohn, Canteloube, Webern,
Debussy
JAN 30 11.00 Lorenzo Gatto, violin;
Eliane Reyes, piano: Mozart, Saint-Saëns,
Prokofiev
FEB 2 12.40 Jan Sciffer, cello; Hans
Ryckelincx, piano: J Jongen, Debussy,
August De Boeck, Chopin

Espace Senghor

Waversesteenweg 366; 02.230.31.40
www.senghor.be
JAN 29 20.30 Ensemble 21 with Laure
Delcampe, soprano: Berio

Flagey

Heilig Kruisplein; 02.641.10.20
www.flagey.be
JAN 29 20.15 Ensemble Musiques
Nouvelles conducted by Jean-Paul Dessy,
cello: Gorecki
JAN 31 19.30 Charlemagne Orchestra
for Europe conducted by Bartholomeus-
Henri Van de Velde: Beethoven's Coriolan
Ouverture

Kaaithheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaithheater.be
FEB 2 20.30 Ictus conducted by Georges-
Elie Octors: Liquid Room 2

Minimienkerk

Minimienstraat 62; 02.511.93.84
www.minimes.net
JAN 30 10.30 Minimienkerk Orchestra
and Choir conducted by Julius Stenzel: Bach

Musical Instruments Museum

Hofberg 2; 02.545.01.30 www.mim.be
JAN 30 11.00 Quatuor Kryptos: J Jongen,
Prokofiev

Royal Music Conservatory

Regentschapsstraat 30; 02.213.41.37
www.kcb.be
JAN 29 20.00 Alina Ibragimova, violin;
Alban Gerhardt, cello; Steven Osborne,
piano: Schubert

Ghent

De Bijloke
Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2 09.233.68.78
www.debijloke.be
JAN 28 20.00 RIAS Kammerchor
conducted by Michael Alber, with Philip
Mayers, Philip Moll, piano: Brahms,
Schubert, Schumann

Handelsbeurs

Kouter 29; 09.265.91.65
www.handelsbeurs.be
JAN 26 20.15 Ictus Liquid Room #2: music
by Benjamin de la Fuente, Philip Glass, and
other contemporary composers
JAN 28 20.15 Quatuor Ysaye: Debussy,
Fauré, Schumann

Leuven

30CC - Schouwburg
Bondgenotenlaan 21; 016.23.84.27
www.30CC.be
JAN 26 20.00 Almschi: musical play by
Annelies Verbeke retracing the life of the
composer Alma Mahler, featuring SKaGeN
and the Octopus Solisten

Keizersberg

Mechelsestraat; 016.23.84.27 www.30cc.be
JAN 26 20.00 Flemish Radio Choir
conducted by Luc Anthonis: Dvorák's
Stabat Mater



Brussels

De Munt
Muntplein; 070.23.39.39 www.demunt.be
JAN 27-FEB 20 15.00/18.00 Wagner's
Parsifal conducted by Hartmut Haenchen,
directed by Romeo Castellucci,
choreographed by Cindy Van Acker (in the
original German with Dutch and French
surtitles)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5; 0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
FEB 1-2 19.30 Die Fledermaus, comedic
operetta in three acts by Johann Strauss
Jr, directed by Hans Nieuwenhuis
(in German with Dutch subtitles)



Antwerp

Stadsschouwburg
Theaterplein 1; 0900.69.900
www.stadsschouwburgantwerpen.be
Until FEB 13 Oliver!, the musical
JAN 26-30 So You Think You Can Dance,
based on the popular TV show with
choreographies by finalists, plus concerts by
winners from the My Name Is TV show

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
JAN 27 20.30 Aditi Mangaldas

Brussels

Kaaithheater
Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaithheater.be
JAN 26-27 20.30/19.00 Sans-titre
(Untitled), with Faustin Linyekula,
choreographed by Raimund Hoghe

Rijke Klaren

Rijke Klarenstraat 24; 02.548.25.80
www.lesrichesclaires.be
JAN 26-FEB 5 20.30 Compagnie Nyanga
Zam in Je me suis mariée toute seule (I Got
Married All By Myself), choreographed by
Ebalé Zam

Théâtre 140

Eugène Plaskylaan 140; 02.733.97.08
www.theatre140.be
Until JAN 27 20.30 La Reine s'ennuie (The
Queen is Bored), choreographed, written
and performed by Andrea Sitter



Antwerp

Arenbergschouwburg
Arenbergstraat 28; 070.222.192
www.arenbergschouwburg.be
JAN 29-31 15.00/20.15 BATS (British and
American Theatrical Society) in Robinson
Crusoe (a pantomime), directed by Daniel
Sossi and Zena Waters (in English)

De Roma

Turnhoutsebaan 327; 03.292.97.40
www.onemanshow.be
FEB 2 20.00 Youssef El Mousaoui in Child's
Play, one-man comedy show (in Dutch)

Fakkelteater Keldertheater

Hoogstraat 12; 070.246.036
www.fakkelteater.be
Until JAN 29 20.30 De Speling in Het
Atelier (The Studio) by Jean-Claude
Grumberg, directed by Ronny Verheyen
(in Dutch)

HetPaleis

Theaterplein 1; 03.202.83.11
www.hetpaleis.be
FEB 2 20.15 Ultima Thule in Zijde (Silk),
written and directed by Wim De Wulf (ages
12 and up; in Dutch)

Theater Froe Froe

Namenstraat 7; 03.225.28.39
www.despiegel.com
Until JAN 30 15.30/20.30 Theater De
Spiegel in De Ballade van de Grote Hand,
hand puppetry directed by Ela Baumann
(in Dutch)

Toneelhuis/Bourla

Komedieplaats 18; 03.224.88.44
www.toneelhuis.be
JAN 29 20.00 Jan in betty & morris,
directed by Peter Seynaeve (in Dutch)
JAN 30 20.00 Walpurgis in Want zo was
het nog nooit (It has never been like this
before), based on poems by Rainer Maria
Rilke, set to music by Paul Hindemith (in
Dutch)
JAN 31 20.00 Bad van Marie in Vasio-
levsky (in Dutch)
FEB 2 20.00 Opus XX, monologue by Sofie
Declair (in Dutch)

Zuiderpershuis

Waalse Kaai 14; 03.248.01.00
www.zuiderpershuis.be
FEB 2 20.30 Helmer Woudenberg and Ali
Kouchiry in Identiteit (Identity), written
and directed by Woudenberg Kouchiry (in
Dutch)

Brussels

Bronkstheater
Varkensmarkt 15; 02.219.99.21
www.bronks.be
JAN 26 14.30 Laika & BonteHond in
Watou (in Dutch; ages 4 and up)
JAN 30 15.00 Toneelmakerij & Firma Rieks
Swarte in Storm (in Dutch; ages 8 and up)
FEB 2 20.00 Arend Pinoy in Talking about
Kevin (in Dutch; ages 14 and up)

KVS Bol

Lakensstraat 146; 02.210.11.12
www.kvs.be
JAN 29-FEB 5 20.00 KVS & Ro Theater in
Dieven (Thieves) by Dea Loher, directed by
Alize Zandwijk (in Dutch with French and
English subtitles)
FEB 3 18.00 Dea Loher and Alize Zandwijk
talk to Liet Lenshoek (in Dutch, reservation
necessary)

Kaaithheater

Saintelettesquare 20; 02.201.59.59
www.kaaithheater.be
JAN 27-29 20.30 A Two Dogs Company
in Talk, installation/performance by Kris
Verdonck (in Dutch with French subtitles)

Theatre de Poche

Gymnasiumweg 1a; 02.649.17.27
www.poeche.be
FEB 3-19 20.30 Historia Abierta,
multidisciplinary performance with three
visual artists from Chile, directed by Lorent
Wanson (in Spanish with French subtitles)

Ghent

Capitole
Graaf van Vlaanderenplein 5; 0900.69.00
www.capitolegent.be
Until FEB 27 20.00 Kommil Foo De Luxe,
music/cabaret (in Dutch)

NTGent Schouwburg

Sint-Baafsplein 17; 09.225.01.01
www.ntgent.be
Until FEB 19 15.00/20.30 Toneelgroep
Amsterdam in Kinderen van de zon
(Children of the Sun) by Maxim Gorki,
directed by Ivo van Hove (in Dutch)

DON'T MISS



Kids at M

29 January & 6 February

M Museum, Leuven

Want to design your own
tattoo? Play detective in a big
museum? Too bad for you, it's
only for those up to age 12 at M
Museum's creative workshops.
In the spirit of British artist
David Shrigley's exhibition of
satirical drawings, sculptures
and animated film, kids from
nine to 12 can create their own
tattoos on 29 January while
their parents peruse the works.
In the same vein, don't miss
the museum's Gezinszondag
(Family Sunday) on 6 February
and the launch of Antwerp
writer Joke van Leeuwen's
detective story *Vreemde Vogels*.
Kids (aged six to 12 this time)
are invited for snacks, face
painting, detective work and
a drawing workshop with the
book's illustrator, An Candaele.
→ www.mleuven.be

Kortrijk

Schouwburg
Schouwburgplein 14; 056.23.98.50
www.cultuurcentrumkortrijk.be
JAN 28 20.15 SKaGeN & Octopus Solisten
in Almschi, written by Annelies Verbeke,
with music by Gustav and Alma Mahler,
more (in Dutch)

Turnhout

De Warande
Warandestraat 42; 014.41. 69.91
www.warande.be
JAN 27 20.15 SKaGeN & Octopus Solisten
in Almschi, written by Annelies Verbeke,
with music by Gustav and Alma Mahler,
more (in Dutch)



Antwerp

Central Station
Van Immerseelstraat-Kievitplein;
02.537.68.75 www.artinallorus.be
Until MAR 30 FC De Kampioenen,
exhibition on the comedy show, which
ends this year after 20 years on Flemish
television

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)

Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.muhka.be
Until JAN 30 The State of L3, photos, video
and installations by Dutch-Panamanian
artist Antonio Jose Guzman and The State
of L3 Contemporary Arts & Film

Extra City

Tulpstraat 79; 03.677.16.55
www.extracity.org
Until FEB 6 Drawing Documents, projects
by various artists that explore the medium
of the drawing in its relation to memory
and the representation of history
Until FEB 6 Emre Hüner: Adverse Stability,
sculptural objects, drawings and film by the
Turkish artist

Grauwzusters - Antwerp University

Lange Sint-Annastraat 7; 03.286.88.52
www.maroeurope.org
JAN 27-FEB 20 Morocco & Europe,
six centuries of exchanges, a history of
intercultural relations seen through the
eyes of diplomats, travellers, artists, writers,
more

Maagdenhuismuseum

Lange Gasthuisstraat 33; 03.338.26.20
ocmw.antwerpen.be/Maagdenhuismuseum
Until APR 3 Kanttekeningen, a glimpse

into the history of lace production in Antwerp

Royal Museum of Fine Arts
Leopold De Waelplaats; 03.238.78.09
www.kmska.be
JAN 29-APR 30 Museums in the 21st Century. Concepts, Projects, Buildings, the most significant trends in contemporary museum architecture, including 29 projects by internationally renowned architects

Bruges

Bogardenkapel
Katelijnestraat 86; 050.44.30.40
www.bruggeplus.be
Until FEB 6 Johan Verschaeve: Pressure-Spot, paintings by the Flemish artist

WEEK IN FILM

LISA BRADSHAW



Music and Films

3 February, 20.00
Bozar, Brussels

Op vakantie Film Festival

28-30 January
MIAT, Ghent

Press releases pour into news outlets with any numbers of bells and whistles attached, all asking you to pay due attention to their own very special, extremely important event. So when one arrived blatantly stating that it was promoting “stupid movies”, I rather appreciated the honesty. Bozar gathered four Belgian composers to score eight short films that often, shall we say, put form over function. Still, there’s some interesting stuff here, including Dutch documentary-maker Joris Iven’s only attempt at fiction, *Branding (Breakers)*, and a silent *Felix the Cat* from 1926. The National Orchestra of Belgium performs, conducted by Dirk Brossé, a specialist in film scores. Meanwhile, over in Ghent, the MIAT (museum of industrial archaeology) launches its first ever film festival in its tiny reconstructed Art Deco cinema (*pictured*). In keeping with the museum’s current exhibition *Op vakantie (On Vacation)*, the theme is travel. The three-day programme includes *Licht (When the Light Comes)*, the 1998 film by Flemish director Stijn Coninx in which a Flemish student interrupts the insular life of a Norwegian trapper, and *Eldorado*, Belgian director Bouli Lanners’ darkly comic 2008 road movie. And over in the regular cinemas, Belgian film *Marieke Marieke* opens this week, giving Flemish actors Barbara Sarafian and Jan Decleir the chance to show off their French in the feature directorial debut of Sophie Schoukens.

➡ www.bozar.be
➡ www.miat.gent.be

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 them (Part of Brugge Centraal)

Brussels

Argos Centre for Art and Media
Werfstraat 13; 02.229.00.03
www.argosarts.org
Until APR 2 Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquility, installation by the multi-disciplinary Flemish artist
Until APR 2 Shelly Silver: Here, His, video
Until APR 2 Down Low Up High: Performing the Vernacular, video

Belgian Comic Strip Centre
Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80
www.stripmuseum.be
Until MAR 6 European Comic Strip Treasures, original works from the past 100 years by 50 European comic-strip artists

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
Until FEB 13 Ensor: Composer and Writer, publications, documents and photographs by Flemish master painter James Ensor

Designed in Brussels
Lakensestraat 99;
www.designedinbrussels.be
Until FEB 3 101% Designed in Brussels, works by Brussels-based designers Chevalier Masson, Nathalie Dewez, Jean-François D’Or, Lhoas & Lhoas and Hugo Meert

Flemish Parliament - De Loketten
IJzerenkruisstraat 99; 02.227.60.60
www.designvlaanderen.be
Until FEB 26 Henry van de Velde Awards & Labels 2010, works by the design award winners

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

Goethe Institute
Belliardstraat 54; 02.230.77.25
www.goethe.de
Until MAR 25 Stefan Moses: Deutsche Vita, 50 photographs by the celebrated post-war society photographer

Marc Sleen Museum
Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80
www.marc-sleen.be
Until APR 4 Marc Sleen and Brussels, special exhibition on the Flemish comic strip artist’s relationship with the capital

Natural Science Museum
Vautierstraat 29; 02.627.42.38
www.naturalsciences.be
Until MAR 20 Destination Mars, interactive exhibition in three sections: The Imaginary, The Planet and Exploration

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 Museum of Fine Arts
Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11
www.fine-arts-museum.be
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 Flemish sculptor and graphic artist, member of the CoBrA movement, who died in 2007

Royal Museums of Art and History
Jubelpark 10; 02.741.72.11
www.kmkg-mrah.be
Until APR 24 Tussen hemel en hel (Between Heaven and Hell), exhibition on death in the Middle Ages

Sint-Gorikshallen
Sint-Gorikspelen 23; 02.502.44.24
www.sintgorikshallen.be
Until JAN 31 Bruges & Venice, photographs by Luc Teper comparing the history and art of the two cities
Until JAN 30 euReka! 48 onderzoekers in de kijker (43 Researchers Under the Microscope), photographs by Denia Zeroualia of some of the 13,000 scientific researchers in Brussels

Toy Museum
Verenigingstraat 24; 02.219.61.68
www.museedujouet.eu
Until JAN 31 Het dier in het speelgoed (Animal Toys)

Until MAR 31 Husa, genie van het houten speelgoed (The Genius of Wooden Toys)

Tour & Taxis
Havenlaan 86C; 02.549.60.49
www.tour-taxis.com
Until MAY 9 America: It’s Also Our History!, three centuries of cross-Atlantic relations with frescoes, charts, audiovisual material, installations, objects and artwork
Until APR 3 Zes miljard mensen (Six Billion People), photographic project by Yann Arthus-Bertrand

WIELS
Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50
www.wiels.org
Until JAN 30 Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception, installations, video, paintings, drawings, and documents by the Mexico-based, Antwerp-born artist

Ghent

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

Kunsthall Sint-Pietersabdij
Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30
www.gekleurdverleden.be
Until APR 25 Gekleurd verleden. Familie in oorlog (Coloured Past. Family at War), stories of World War Two by everyday people in 1944

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, spotlight on 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
Until MAR 27 Adrian Ghenie, paintings by the Romanian artist

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

Hasselt

Fashion museum
Gasthuisstraat 11; 011.23.96.21
www.modemuseumhasselt.be
JAN 29-JUNE 5 Alter Nature: The Future That Never Was, a ‘futuristic’ look at the year 2000, from the point of view of designers from the sixties (Cardin, Rabanne, Courrèges, more) and a glance at new possibilities in fashion (www.alter-nature.be)

Literair 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 about cats

z33
Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60 www.z33.be
Until MAR 13 Alter Nature: We Can, works by international artists about human 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 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 on guerilla art

Leuven

Museum M
Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29
www.mleuven.be

Until FEB 13 Katrien Vermeire, nature photographs by the Flemish artist
Until FEB 13 Koenraad Tinel: Flandria Catholica, drawings by the Flemish artist
Until MAR 20 David Shrigley, drawings and sculptures by the British artist

Ostend

Kunstmuseum Aan Zee (MuZee)
Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18
www.muze.be
Until MAR 27 The Responsive Subject, works by Flemish artist Guy Mees

Venetiaanse Gaanderijen
Zeedijk/Parijsstraat; 050.40.34.38
www.west-vlaanderen.be
Until MAR 13 Visual Arts Competition 2010, recent works by West Flemish artists



Antwerp

Wild Wild East Festival: Concerts and performing arts from Asia
FEB 3-5 at Zuiderpershuis, Waalse Kaai 14
www.zuiderpershuis.be

Brussels

Brussels Antiques & Fine Arts Fair (BRAFA): Brussels most prestigious art fair, from painting and furniture to antique jewellery and silverware, from the middle ages to contemporary arts
Until JAN 30 at Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86C
www.brafa.be

Brussels Holiday Show: Travel, holiday and leisure fair. Serbia is the host country
FEB 3-7 10.00-18.00 at Brussels Expo, Heizel
02.474.89.81, www.vakantiesalon.eu

Hungary in Focus: Hungarian festival to coincide with the country’s presidency of the European Union, with music, exhibitions, cinema, theatre and literature
Until APR 30 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23
02.507.82.00, www.bozar.be

Love Bugs Parade: Third edition of the Volkswagen Beetle car parade
FEB 13 14.00 leaving from Jubelpark (in front of Autoworld)
02.772.34.26, patriciaaees@scarlet.be

Gedichtendag (Poetry Day): Annual celebration of Dutch and Flemish poets, with readings and other activities
JAN 27 20.00 across Brussels and Flanders
http://www.gedichtendag.com

Winterjazz: Annual jazz festival with big bands, film, a children’s concert, dance party and performances by Robin McKelle, Mélanie de Biasio, Tutu Puoane, Maria Joao and David Linx, among others
Until JAN 30 at Théâtre Marni and Flagey
02.641.10.20, www.winterjazz.be

Ghent

Ghent Light Festival: Five-kilometre trail along unique indoor and outdoor locations that are alight with the works of internationally renowned light artists and designers
JAN 27-29 18.00-00.00 through the city centre and along its waterways
www.lichtfestivalgent.be

Lichtfeest (Candlemas): Pancakes, hot chocolate, glühwein and a fire show for all ages in the inner courtyard of the “museum of things that (n)ever pass”
FEB 2 17.15-19.00 at Het Huis van Alijn, Kraanlei 65
09.269.23.50, www.huisvanalijn.be

Groot Bijgaarden

Cirque du Soleil: The Canadian circus group’s show Corteo
Until JAN 30 at Brussels Kart Expo, Alfons Gossetlaan 9
www.cirquedusoleil.com

Ostend

IM (In Memoriam): Dick Matena: Anna Luyten talks with the Dutch illustrator (De avonden, Kaas en het dwaallicht, Kort Amerikaans, more) to find out how he would like to be remembered after his death (in Dutch)
JAN 30 15.00 at Vrijstaat O, Zeedijk 10
059.26.51.27, www.vrijstaat-o.be

DUSK 'TIL DAWN

KATRIEN LINDEMANS



Radio Modern

F4 February, from 20.00
Het Depot, Leuven

If you’ve always dreamed of a beehive or ducktail, save the date. On 4 February, the jolly bunch at Radio Modern takes over Het Depot one last time before the seminal Leuven venue on Martelaerenplein closes for at least a year for renovations. Put on your dancing shoes and prepare for an evening of rock ‘n’ roll spitfire.

Prepping for a night out can take a long time. Nothing to wear, and what do I do with my hair? Well, you still have to come up with the retro dress or slacks (don’t forget your bow tie), but swing on over to Het Depot, and the rest is sorted on the spot, as Radio Modern brings their own hairdresser and make-up studio to their swing party events.

Until 23.30, the Modernettes will be teasing up one beehive after another, using litres of hair spray. Those who prefer Brylcreem are at the mercy of hairdresser duo Schara & Tomdeuze.

The Floogees (*pictured*) are visiting from the Netherlands to teach you how to jump and jive from 21.00 to 22.00, then the British The Jive Romero’s play a live set of swing. If your feet don’t hurt after that, let yourself go during the DJ sets of Flanders’ own Boppin’ Benvis Brothers until late.

Tickets are €13-€15, get them at www.hetdepot.be. Get in the mood at www.radiomodern.be.

But Radio Modern is not the final event in Het Depot before it officially closes, oh no. You can wave goodbye to the old interior at concerts until 27 February, when it closes for a period lasting up to 18 months. It’s final week will see concerts every night, including American blues legend Tony Joe White, Hooverphonic and Triggerfinger (that last one is sold out).

But even then Het Depot will not be out of the scene: it relocates to a former nursing school in the Kapucijnenvoer, where regular concerts will be staged.

Before Het Depot became a music venue, it was a cinema. Renovations will morph the dated place into a modern music centre, increasing its capacity from 640 to 800 standing. The bar and the cloak room will get an intense makeover as well.

ROBYN BOYLE

bite



De Olijfkruik

I wanted to introduce two foodie friends to some place they'd never been to, nor heard of, before. The problem was, I didn't know much about De Olijfkruik myself, aside from some online text. Imagine my heightened anxiety as we approached the restaurant, a new-build home in a nondescript residential area of Machelen, a municipality of Zulte in East Flanders.

Although it felt uncomfortably akin to ringing a stranger's doorbell, all worries vanished as soon as we crossed the threshold.

Owner Arlette Haeck took our coats and welcomed us to choose our own table, so naturally we took a spot next to the fireplace. From there, we could look out the window onto the fairytale-like garden, abundantly green even at this time of year. It was easy to imagine sitting out there late into a summer's evening, amid the trees, pond and terracotta olive jars.

Judging from the interior, you would think this house was 100 years old. But Haeck opened the doors to her restaurant just two years ago. Wooden plank floors, soft colours and a gorgeous beamed ceiling breathe old-world charm. The tables are soberly decorated in white linen, and the walls are adorned with paintings by Machelen-born contemporary artist Roger Raveel.

First, we ordered a glass of bitter Picon with a twist of orange peel. To our surprise, the aperitif came with a platter of three snacks: a cup of courgette-leek soup with grey shrimp, toast under warm goat cheese, herbs and honey, and a slice of 10-month aged Italian ham that melted on my tongue. I ordered a glass of white wine to wash it all down and waited excitedly for the next course. With a glass of house red in his hand, my friend leaned back to allow Haeck to set down a substantial platter of Carpaccio. The finely sliced beef was played up with shaved parmesan, fresh rucola leaves, olive oil and ground black pepper. Meanwhile, our other friend was tasting a plate of smoked eel, rolled up and nicely presented alongside bits of granny smith apple and white

onion. My starter was almost too pretty to eat – a line-up of smoked duck breast, each piece rolled and placed on a slice of red beet, then topped with crumbled walnuts and a drizzling of sweet balsamic cream.

Main course: Out came a dish of butter-browned sole, with a crispy spinach topping and shoestring fries. The meat on the fish was plentiful, seasoned just right and practically falling off the bones. My friend was hovering over his hunk of loin of roe venison, which was smothered in white grapes and a red wine and cognac sauce. This combination of sweet and sour did full justice to the tenderised meat.

The third main was a Belgian white-blue filet mignon, nicely succulent. The accompanying pepper cream sauce contained tasty little green pepper balls that made our eyes water. Fortunately, there was a big communal bowl of fresh salad on the table.

At this point, every single course had exceeded our expectations, so we figured we'd keep going. Dessert was a layered chocolate cake made by the owner's daughter. The top layer was solid dark chocolate, followed by thick white cream and frothy chocolate mousse below. As if that weren't enough, it came with a scoop of vanilla ice cream (also homemade). I didn't think I could consume anymore, until the coffee arrived – with two little (homemade!) cookies.

→ www.deolijfkruik.be

- 📍 Kruishoutemstraat 97, Machelen (Zulte)
09.386.61.71
- 🕒 Tue-Wed & Fri-Sat, 18.30-21.30
(also 12.00-14.00 with reservation);
Sun, 12.00-14.00 & 18.30-21.30
- ★ Burgundian cuisine for fervent lovers of rich food and wine and with ultra-friendly service

Contact Bite at flandersbite@gmail.com

TALKING SPORTS

LEO CENDROWICZ



The scramble for Romelu Lukaku

Last week was a moment to savour for Belgian football. It was not because of the Red Devils and their fitful campaign to qualify for Euro 2012. Nor was it related to the Champions League, the Europa League or even the domestic Jupiler League. In fact, it had nothing to do with events on the field. It was, rather, about the frenzy surrounding a promising Antwerp-born player, Romelu Lukaku.

At one point last week, Belgian papers were reporting that the 17-year-old Anderlecht striker had signed a €30 million deal with Manchester City, which would have smashed the previous Belgian record for a transfer (Marouane Fellaini's €20 million move from Standard Liège to Everton in 2008). But they appear to have been misinformed: the men in suits in Manchester and Brussels denied the claims and, for the moment, Lukaku remains with Anderlecht.

However, for a few hours, the entire football world was focusing on a Belgian player. Although the deal fell through, no-one doubted that Manchester City wanted Lukaku and that they valued him at that stunning figure. City manager Roberto Mancini signalled as much even as he denied the reports last week. "Lukaku is a good player, and he is young," Mancini said. "Maybe in the future something will happen but, at this moment, no."

City's takeover by the Abu Dhabi United Group now makes it the

richest club in the world, and its current position – third in the English Premiership – shows how serious their new Arab owners are. That Lukaku, dubbed the "new Didier Drogba", was also linked to Chelsea, Real Madrid and Arsenal, also says much about how highly he is rated.

Born in Antwerp of Congolese origin, Lukaku joined the Lierse youth team at six, where he scored 130 goals in 68 games. He moved to Anderlecht at 12, and, since making his first team debut in 2009 at just 16, he has scored 28 times in 54 appearances. He also became the youngest player to appear in the Champions League, when, at 16, he played against Lyon in a qualification match.

Lukaku's physique is stunning: at 1.92m and 95kg he is the size a basketball player, and he can certainly impose himself on the field. He has also formed a formidable striking partnership at Anderlecht with Mbark Boussoufa, who last Wednesday claimed Belgian football's Golden Shoe for best player (Lukaku was second).

The bond between the two players is so strong that Lukaku was invited on stage at the awards ceremony by Boussoufa, who said: "He deserves this just as much as I do, and I want to congratulate him on a fantastic season." It was a poignant moment: like anyone else who has seen him, Boussoufa knows Lukaku is unlikely to remain in Belgian football for long.

→ www.romelu-lukaku.com

THE LAST WORD . . .
THE FLEMISH PAPERS ON THE PROTEST

Serious protest

"Parties who don't take the message seriously are making a mistake. Parties who say they get it and call on others to act are just as wrong. It's not the fault of others. It's their collective fault."

Guy Tegenbos, *De Standaard*

New direction

"Politicians, unionists, associations and the student movement: none of them knew what to make of this demonstration. Forty thousand people had no need of their guidance to bring them out on the streets."

Bart Eeckhout, *De Morgen*

State reform

"Only when people at every political level face up to their responsibilities and accept the consequences of their own decisions can we arrive at a solution. That implies a reform of the state. Responsible politicians know that. It is now time for them to do something about it."

Eric Donckier, *Het Belang van Limburg*

Sick of games

"You can tell them a thousand times that the caretaker government has everything under control and point out that Kris Peeters goes on with his Flemish government, but evidently they're not buying it anymore."

Liesbeth Van Impe, *Het Nieuwsblad*

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #165

Feature

Last year, a group of Belgian researchers headed down the Congo River on a research mission. As an exhibition opens in the National Botanical Garden of Belgium, we find out what they discovered

Arts

Marc Sleen is a legend in Belgian comic strips. We talk to the man responsible for *The Adventures of Nero* as one of his most famous stories is translated into English

Living

One woman's garbage is another's chic hat when Trashilicious gets a hold of it. We meet the Flemish woman who turns trash into fashion