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The sea is a stage

Ostend's annual theatre festival has become something of an institution

GEORGIO VALENTINO

Theater aan Zee (TAZ) began life in 1997 as a small but ambitious festival in the streets of staid Ostend. It was an unlikely marriage from the start. Conceived on the more adventurous end of the art spectrum, early editions of the festival focused on an in-your-face brand of street theatre as well as experimental stage and video productions. So provocative were those first performances—and so unsuspecting was Ostend—that one of the artists was arrested for disturbing the peace. There have, however, been no arrests registered in recent history. Indeed, TAZ has succeeded in becoming an Ostend institution. It has broadened its scope to include music, film and other art forms, and is organized these days less around themes than personalities, specifically those of its guest curators.

This year marks another step in the evolution of TAZ. This edition finds the coast colonizing the capital, by way of an encore series of film screenings at Brussels' Cinematek, a kind of after-party following the 10 days of seaside proceedings. The project was proposed by film director Marc Didden at the invitation of this

year's TAZ curator, Josse De Pauw. "They asked me to be curator," the respected stage and screen actor says, "but I'm no curator! So I invited my friends and other performers I had been curious about." He reflects for a moment – then laughs, "It's a very opportunistic programme!"

So the centrepiece of this year's festival, the TAZ-Cinematek film cycle, is consecrated to the artistic pentavirate comprised of De Pauw, Didden and three other long-time friends: directors Jan Decorte and Dominique Deruddere as well as singer Arno Hintjens. The fab five – billed in the TAZ programme as "hombres complicados", after the title of a Deruddere film – have been pals and working partners since the 1980s, and they have the pictures to prove it. Witness the curious before-and-after photo set making the rounds (see page 5). The first was snapped at a Brussels café in the summer of 1987 by a young Frenchwoman who had recognized Arno. The second was staged in Ostend only months ago by TAZ brass. Hair has grown grizzled and faces wizened in the interim, but the gang is all here.

► *continued on page 5*

Unknown takes mountain stage in Tour

Little-known Flemish cyclist Jelle Vanendert (pictured) made a small piece of history last weekend on the 14th stage of the Tour de France, by becoming the first Belgian in 30 years to win a climbing stage of the world's most gruelling race. Vanendert, aged 26 from Neerpelt in Limburg province, and a rider with the Omega Pharma-Lotto team, came to the Tour as a helper for Jurgen van den Broeck, who suffered a severe fall earlier in the race in the ninth stage, and had to retire. Deprived of his helper's function, Vanendert came second in the 12th stage, and two days later achieved the only victory in his troubled career. This season was supposed to

be a renaissance for Vanendert, who had suffered three years of injury between 2008 and 2010, including a fractured hip and a serious knee injury. In the beginning of the season he helped his other leading team-mate, Philippe Gilbert, to three victories. Thanks to the unfortunate fate of Van den Broeck, he has now been able to add one of his own, after taking advantage of the fact that the leaders were more concentrated on each other than on him. He caught up with leader Sandy Casar, and then left him behind, with only six kilometres to go. "I decided to wait until we were higher on the climb before making my move," he said later.



VRThree

Public broadcaster gets third channel

ALAN HOPE

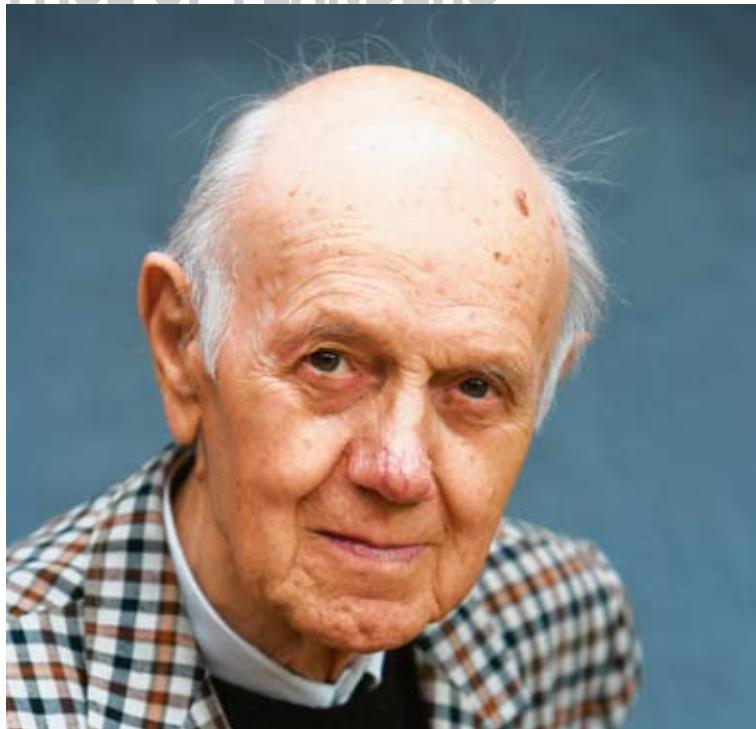
The Flemish public broadcaster VRT is to get a new third channel, joining Eén and Canvas. Last week the VRT and the Flemish government agreed upon the broadcaster's new five-year management agreement – the charter which governs the broadcaster's activities. The new agreement also includes extra funds for the broadcaster, and the closure of its international radio station. The agreement received immediate criticism on two grounds from the opposition in the Flemish parliament: that the decision to launch a third channel was "irresponsible" in a time of cut-backs; and that the

government agreed the charter after the Flemish parliament had risen for the summer. This week Open VLD media specialist Bart Tommelein submitted a request to the speaker of the parliament and the chairman of the media committee, calling for a recall of parliament to debate the issue. "Such a weighty dossier surely deserves a parliamentary debate," he said. His view was echoed by Bart Caron of Groen! and Jurgen Verstrepen of Lijst Dedecker. As Flanders Today went to press, it was announced the media committee will sit this Wednesday, 20 July.

► *continued on page 3*

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ALAN HOPE

Roger Raveel

One of Belgium's most important visual artists, Roger Raveel, last week celebrated his 90th birthday at home in Machelen-aan-de-Leie in East Flanders. Yet far from approaching the twilight years, Raveel is now enjoying a revival of interest in his work, with a major retrospective taking place in the Chilean capital Santiago, another featuring drawings from Dutch collections in Arnhem, shows in Jabbeke in West Flanders and Moeskroen in Hainaut, as well as an exhibition concentrating on his international artistic contacts in his home town of Machelen.

Raveel was born in Machelen in 1921, and studied first at the city academy in Deinze before completing his art education at the Fine Arts Academy in Ghent. He first came to public attention as part of the La Relève group in 1948. He later made the acquaintance of artists of the Cobra group which was then the major school in Belgium, but Raveel decided to go his own way, mixing figurative and abstract work, including his characteristic all-white canvases. In the 1960s he became prominent in the New Figuration movement with Raoul De Keyser, which rejected the traditional values of figurative art, going so far as to include actual objects in the work – one of Raveel's works includes a live pigeon in

a cage. Mirrors also became a signature: integrated into a painting, they become a way of introducing the external environment into the work, in much the same way as the pigeon does.

Raveel, thanks to the foundation which bears his name, received the highest accolade a living artist can receive when in 1999 a museum devoted to his work opened in his home town. They are currently showing an exhibition centred on Raveel's time in Albisola, a small town on the Ligurian coast of Italy which is considered an international centre for ceramics art, a discipline seen by many as three-dimensional painting. Raveel spent three months there in 1962, and not only put his own stamp on the discipline, but also made contact with many foreign artists from Italy, Cuba and Denmark among others. "Undoubtedly Raveel's activities and international contacts in Albisola had an impact on his later career," explained Piet Coessens, curator of the exhibition. Meanwhile at his home in Machelen, the East Flanders tourist office inaugurated a new Roger Raveel walking tour, which brings visitors from the museum through the town, past his old house and the school where he once had his atelier, to some of the surrounding countryside which inspired his art.

→ www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

FLANDERS TODAY

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



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

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FLANDERS TODAY

JULY 20, 2011

News in brief

The Pedestrian Movement has joined motorists in protesting at a proposal made in the federal parliament last week to allow cyclists to ride through red and amber lights in certain circumstances, such as when turning right. The movement said the new rule would endanger pedestrians using crossings on green. It also said the introduction of a new rule depending on local circumstances would "lead to confusion".

Belgacom has been ordered to pay €1,000 in damages to a customer who was presented with a bill for more than €400 when he decided to cancel his mobile phone subscription with the company. In the first case of its kind, the court ruled Belgacom had caused the man distress, even after they agreed to cancel the charges.

The heathland around Kalmthout in Antwerp province, severely damaged by fire in May, is once again open to the public, the nature and foresteries agency has announced. The heath had been closed after the fire to allow brooding birds to recover from the effects of the blaze. However the area is still vulnerable, the agency said, and visitors are reminded not to leave the designated pathways.

Federal interior minister Annemie Turtelboom has called for new funding for the **emergency 101 service in Antwerp**, which is seriously undermanned and last

OFFSIDE

Standing up for more toilets

When it comes to peeing in the open, nature has undoubtedly been kinder to men than to women, and for that reason, a court in Ghent has ruled, it's not discrimination to provide more public loos for men than for women. The unusual verdict came last week after the organisers of the Gentse Feesten, the annual summer festivities in Ghent, were brought to court by a group of protesters angry at the fact that the party-goers will be provided with 200 temporary public urinals, but only 100 public toilets. In other words, men have twice the opportunity to relieve themselves legally than women. A clear case of discrimination, the protesters argued.

Not so, the court replied. "Men, because of their anatomy, are able more often to indulge in public urination, so the city of Ghent may install more urinals than toilets," the judge ruled. In other words, as the alderman in charge of the festival Lieven Decaluwe pointed out, "men simply urinate in public more than women do," so the city's right to take action to prevent them.

"You may think it's a laughing matter," complained Baharak Bashar, leader of the action group set up to protest the problem, "but it's a worry for women. Women and men are being treated unequally, even though they both have the same need to empty their bladders."

The same need, but not the same solution, as previous years' experience has shown. Decaluwe's claim is upheld by the figures: most

week staged industrial action to call attention to their problems. Some callers have had to wait up to ten minutes before their call was answered. A new staff recruitment campaign will start in September.

Belgium has been added to the list of countries where **real-time traffic information** is now available on Google Maps, a division of the internet search company. Visitors to the site can ask for directions which take account of traffic delays, in real time as well as on a given date and time in the future. The service began in limited form in 2008, and last week 13 countries were added, including the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Austria and Switzerland. <http://maps.google.be>

Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege (*seepage 6*) has proposed a new system to allow **small cinema operators** to group together to buy digital projection equipment and digital films. The use of digital equipment is already widespread in the major chains, and most new films are now issued in digital form, but art-houses and smaller cinemas are slow in switching over because of the cost. The new group will be able to call on funding from the Flemish government to help them bring their equipment up to date.

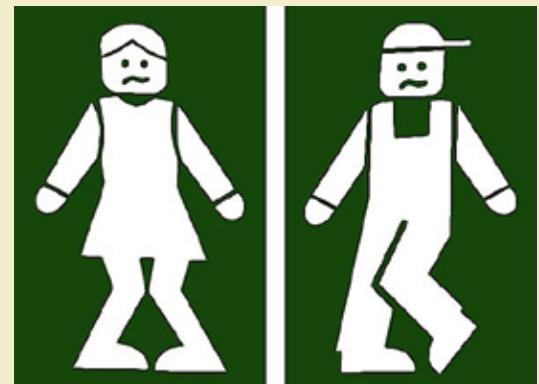
The **owners of a circus** set up in Schilde in Antwerp province have denied the escape last week of a number of camels into surrounding

farmland. They also explained that two elephants seen wandering in a cornfield had been walking with their handler at the time. The Circus Belly Wien has been the subject of protests from animal rights groups who point out that the circus is no longer allowed to operate in its homeland of Austria. They also claim incidents involving escaped animals took place in the Netherlands.

Rosa Dewitte-Loones, who in 1953 became the country's **first ever woman mayor**, has died at the age of 89. She took the job as mayor of Oostduinkerke in West Flanders when she was only 32 and the mother of five children, and stayed in office until 1964, when the job was taken over by her husband Honoré Loones, who continued until 1977. After he died in 1981, Ms. Dewitte-Loones continued to run a hotel and to be active in the town's social aid agency.

A day out at theme-park Plopsaland in De Panne last week proved too much for a 27-year-old woman from Molenbeek in Brussels, who **went into labour on the road home**, and gave birth on the Affligem off-ramp of the E40 motorway. Samira Ouanda, who was alone in the car, said it was "a unique experience". Mother and newly-arrived daughter Mellina are doing well.

ALAN HOPE



© Shutterstock

cases of public urination involve men, despite the way nature – and clothing trends – have made it easier for them. For people living in the centre of Ghent, who every year have to suffer loud music, crowds of revellers and drunks, the problem is very real, and the cost to the city of cleaning up the mess is quite substantial. While it may seem the city is full of good cheer for ten days every year, for many there is a serious downside.

The group is also complaining that women will have to pay a 50 cent fee, while the men can go for free. The court also rejected that complaint.

"The cost of maintenance of the women's toilets is higher than for the urinals," the court said.

"Let the polluter pay."

Having a ball

The Atomium in Brussels will soon receive its 3,333,333rd visitor since it reopened in 2006. The lucky winner, expected in early August, will receive champagne, a guided tour and some surprise gifts



New VRT channel “bad news” for commercial competitors

→ *continued from page 1*

The possibility of a third public channel in Flanders has been a subject of discussion for some time within the VRT, but when media minister Ingrid Lieten prematurely announced its pending arrival earlier this year, she was publicly corrected by minister-president Kris Peeters, who stressed that the decision still had to be made. Last week, it became a reality.

The new channel will be a sort of hybrid of Ketnet, the channel for children up to 12 years which now operates in the daytime, and switches over to Canvas in the evening. In the future, the channel will continue to broadcast after 20.00, with programmes aimed at older children and young people aged 12 to 20, on two to four days a week.

“What the VRT in recent years has done with Ketnet for children, they now have to do for young people,” said Lieten. “The uncoupling of Ketnet and Canvas creates room for a new channel for children and young people. The VRT will provide a distinctive alternative for the young.”

THE WEEK IN FIGURES



11,896,000
pigs slaughtered in Belgium last year, the equivalent of just over one per person, according to the economy ministry. The figure is 800,000 more than in 2000. Also slaughtered were 834,165 beef animals, 143,056 sheep and lambs, 7,951 goats, 8,296 horses and 307,956 poultry

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nuclear incidents in 2010, according to the Federal Agency for Nuclear Control, all of them at level one on the international risk scale, the lowest level

€200,000
given by the Australian government to the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917, commemorating the battles of the First World War in which there were 38,000 Australian casualties. The museum will become part of the Australian Remembrance Trail

2,160,328
online tax declarations filled in via Tax-On-Web by the deadline of 15 July. Declarations submitted by accountants and consultants have a longer deadline

14.3 degrees
registered at the Ukkel weather station on 14 July, the lowest maximum temperature on that day since records began in 1833

On days when it is not broadcasting, the space in the schedule will be taken up by, among other things, programmes aimed at foreigners living and working in Flanders. The main VRT channel, Een, will remain as it is. Canvas will now share the second channel with Sporza, the sports division of the VRT, and will itself provide more cultural and news content.

“This agreement clearly shows where the value of the public broadcaster lies: the VRT is now more than ever able to reach and reflect Flemish society in all its diversity, to guarantee high quality, to be transparent, and to aim for cooperation,” said VRT director-general Sandra De Preter, announcing the agreement.

Among other features of the new agreement are:

- An increase in the funding of the VRT from €275 to €293.4 million a year, slightly more than provided for by indexation;
- VRT radio will exercise a quota of 25% of music by Flemish artists; this is more than the existing quota of 20%, but less than the VRT actually broadcasts in practice;
- On TV as a whole, the quota for Flemish productions rises to 65%, which includes sports coverage, news and current affairs as well as series and films;
- The VRT also agrees to take a minimum of 25% of its productions from outside producers;
- New goals for diversity, with a minimum of 5% of people of immigrant origin in on-screen roles, and a minimum of 1.5% of persons with a disability in the staff as a whole, while signing for those with hearing difficulties extended to main news programmes;
- A ceiling of €69.7 million from commercial activities such as merchandising and DVD sales, as well as €16 million from sponsoring;
- Radio Vlaanderen Internationaal, a short-wave and satellite station aimed at Flemish expats living abroad, will close down. The agreement



The transmission tower at Meiserplein in Brussels marks the VRT headquarters

describes the station as surplus to requirements in the internet age, when the VRT's other stations can be listened to online.

Critics point to the lack of any real public demand for a third channel, as well as the difficulties which will arise from filling it with new youth-oriented programming, as well as programmes for other target groups like expats. The increases in the amount of money the VRT is allowed to earn for itself are also hard for some to accept.

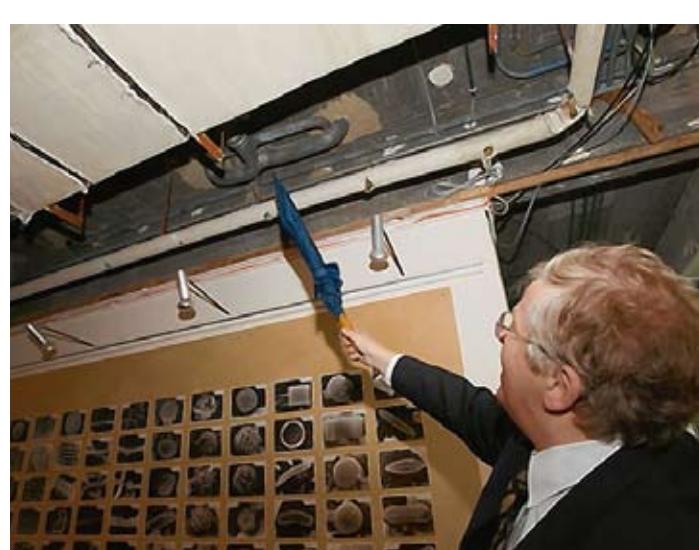
In various messages posted to Twitter, Tommelein pointed out that the agreement made the public broadcaster “even more dominant and even more commercial.” The

third channel was, he said, “a pure luxury in a time of cut-backs.”

Over at the competition, the Flemish Media Company (VMMa), which owns the commercial channels VTM and 2BE, the agreement was greeted as “bad news.” According to director-general Peter Quaghebeur, whose company also broadcasts children's channel vtmKzoom and youth station JimTV, “The VRT doesn't need a third channel, they already have a market share of more than 40%. We have been protesting since the issue was first raised, but clearly the Flemish government does not take account of the complaints of commercial broadcasters.”♦

Ticket offices to close

The railway authority NMBS is to close manned ticket offices in 20 stations in Flanders, out of a total of 38 nationwide, it announced last week. The stations concerned are Mortsel-Oude God, Kalmthout, Zaventem, Merchtem, Erembodegem, Merelbeke, Buggenhout, Kortemark, Wevelgem, Ingelmunster, Lierde, Dilbeek, Kortenberg, Herzele, Galmaarden, Herne, Zedelgem, Viane-Moerbeke, Haaltiert and Ede. The ticket offices will be replaced by automatic machines, while ticket staff are transferred to other jobs in the NMBS. In Brussels, two stations are affected: Schaerbeek and Ukkel-Kalevoet. According to the NMBS, demand is no longer sufficient to justify keeping ticket offices staffed, with each of the stations affected selling fewer than 100 tickets a day. The train users' group TreinTramBus said the decision was “a severe reversal of progress.”♦



Jan Rammeloo, director of the National Botanical Garden in Meise, points out the lamentable state of some of his installations, the result, he says, of a lack of investment over the last ten years. A decade ago, the Gardens were transferred to the Flemish Community under an agreement which reformed parts of the state institutions. However the real handover has never taken place, leaving the institution stranded in a limbo between federal and regional authorities. Last week the Gardens opened to the public for free in protest, and visitors were offered a guided tour to explain the problems.

FIFTH COLUMN

Upholding the state

With the exception of the Tour de France, where both French-speaking Philippe Gilbert and Flemish Jelle Vanendert won a stage, there is little to celebrate in Belgium, which has gone without a federal government for more than a year. The Royal Palace has therefore cancelled the traditional reception for the national holiday, for the second year in a row.

All eyes are on CD&V's Wouter Beke now. When *formateur* Elio Di Rupo (PS) produced a document for the formation of a new government, seven parties (socialists, greens, and liberals from both sides of the language frontier and the French-speaking Christian democrats) accepted it as a starting point (!) for negotiations. The nationalist N-VA, the winner of the federal elections in Flanders, rejected it outright.

The answer of the Flemish Christian democrats was less clear – typical, some people would say, of the party that has a reputation for saying “on the one hand this, on the other that.” Party president Beke first declared that there was no point in having talks without N-VA. Only later did he come up with CD&V's own objections, which have to do with the conditions attached to the split of the BHV constituency and with the budgetary efforts demanded from the regions.

Most parties have become convinced that an agreement with N-VA will never be possible. This means that CD&V is needed for a new coalition. Without it, there is no two thirds majority in parliament to vote the long awaited state reform. For this reason, Beke was invited to clarify his party's position last Friday. All of this happened in total discretion – a rarity in Belgian politics and one that demonstrates the gravity of the situation.

CD&V and Beke, who suffered a humiliating defeat at the elections, some 400 days ago, have been accused of hiding behind N-VA's back ever since. Beke could opt to enter a government without N-VA after all. This could then be explained as taking up responsibility and finally resolving the prickly issue of BHV once and for all. However, it also leaves CD&V open to accusations of giving in to the French-speakers, which contributed to its disastrous election result to begin with. Indeed, on the one hand this, on the other that.

The Flemish Christian democrats pride themselves on upholding the state, no matter what. Wouter Beke now finds out exactly how hard that can be. A lot harder, it turns out, than winning a Pyrenees stage in the Tour.

ANJA OTTE



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putting people first

The sea is a stage

Five old-time friends are in charge during Theater aan Zee

→ continued from page 1

What's more, Arno's flippant prediction that the original photo would one day prove its historical value turned out to be on the mark. The fivesome have built up a collective résumé of 60 feature-length films, many of them inter-hombre collaborations of one sort or another. Decorte, Deruddere and Didden are the directors. De Pauw is the star. Arno is the music-maker and occasional actor. Nine of their films will be screened at TAZ proper, with four more added to the encore cycle at Cinematek. De Pauw, Deruddere and Didden will be on-hand to introduce some of their works in person.

"Theater aan Zee isn't afraid to show the audience something unexpected"

There is, of course, much more to the TAZ programme, from theatre to music to literature to family events. The breadth of the festival was one of the aspects most attractive to this year's curator. "There's a little bit of everything," De Pauw says. He himself will be wearing different hats over the course of the festival: that of actor, musician and author (francophone author, no less, as he is slated to read excerpts from the French-language edition of his autobiography, *Le Temps de l'être*).

The iconoclastic actor also appreciates the fact that the festival mixes rough and smooth. "Theater aan Zee goes to the audience and isn't afraid to show them something unexpected," he says. "Some of the

performances go down easy but others are quite challenging. It's such an open, exciting atmosphere. I don't know any other festival like it."

As the motif of this year's edition of TAZ, De Pauw chose the refrain of a Dave Berry hit from the 1960s: "You've got this strange effect on me." The phrase operates on different levels, the most obvious being the transcendent. "When you see a really good performance," De Pauw observes, "it has a strange effect. It makes you feel something different." He also explains its significance to him and his hombres complicados. In the early years of their hombrehood, Arno regularly performed a punk-inflected cover version of "This Strange Effect". The unlikely transformation of De Pauw's childhood favourite had a strange effect on him, underlining the adaptability of art. Since TAZ is all about exploring that adaptability, it seemed a fitting theme for De Pauw's curatorship.

When asked about the fifth hombre, Arno, who has no official role in TAZ this year (although he has participated as both performer and curator in years past), De Pauw assures that the singer can't help but be present. "Ostend is, after all, his hometown," he says. The actor-cum-curator also discloses that, at his behest, Arno has recently restored "This Strange Effect" to his live set and so Ostend's favourite son might well find his way on stage at Theater aan Zee. "If he's not drunk," De Pauw adds with a grin. ♦

Theater aan Zee

From 28 July until 6 August
Across Ostend

→ www.theateraanzee.be



The five hombres complicados in 1987...



...and in 2011: Arno Hintjes, Jan Decorte, Marc Didden, Josse de Pauw, and Dominique Deruddere

Our pick at TAZ 2011



Hombres Complicados

Here is the titular inspiration and opener of both the TAZ film programme and Cinematek's reprise. *Hombres Complicados* is a road movie directed by Dominique Deruddere, written by Deruddere and Marc Didden, starring Josse De Pauw and featuring Arno's music—in other words, a hombre extravaganza. In its substance, it's the story of an odd-couple pair of brothers who are reunited after years of estrangement by the death of their mother. The inheritance falls short of the desperate, scheming brother's needs and, with violent thugs calling to collect outstanding debts, he turns to his upstanding brother for help. Hilarity ensues. Deruddere and Didden are set to present the film at the Cinematek screening.

Hearsee

Curator Josse De Pauw confided that it was the TAZ committee, not he, who invited the young buzz acts who crowd the top of the festival's musical marquee. For his part, De Pauw tapped the veteran gonzo big band, Flat Earth Society (FES), led by his pal Peter Vermeersch. FES has been active for over a decade, and their relationship with De Pauw goes back just as long. Their very first gig (and the band's *raison d'être*) was a surreal collaboration with the actor, entitled *Larf*, in 2000. FES have a new project for 2011: *Hearsee*. Vermeersch assembled, edited and scored a 75-minute hodgepodge of found film footage that is projected as he and his 14 band mates (did I mention it was a *big band*?) perform the soundtrack live. For those who would rather hear than see, they will perform an additional set of classic FES later that same evening.

Tanzung

If the truth be told, Jan Decorte is only a part-time hombre complicado. To wit, his grand passion is not film but theatre, and if we find his films on the reel at TAZ, we will find the man himself on stage, dancing with performers a fraction of his age. Although Decorte has incorporated dance in previous productions, *Tanzung* is his first proper dance piece. Instead of proceeding from a text, he developed the piece in rehearsal, in spontaneous dialogue with actors Sigrid Vinks and Tibo Vanden Borre and dancer Taka Shamoto. Decorte hardly needs a recommendation but Josse De Pauw sings his praises nonetheless. "Jan has developed his own language," he says of his comrade, "his own way of expressing ideas. He is one of the greatest theatre-makers in Belgium and his colleagues know it. There are many people outside the theatre world who still need to discover him."

A minister of concert

Joke Schauvliege talks about the state of the Flemish arts and environment

ANJA OTTE

When Joke Schauvliege (CD&V) became minister for culture and environment in the Flemish government, she met with plenty of criticism. Two years later, most of the criticism has died down. "The people who slated me then, now realize that I am an ally, rather than an adversary", she says.

Like many politicians, Joke Schauvliege was present at the Werchter rock festival. But unlike the rest, she had a job to do there. Schauvliege was checking out the sound levels, for which she recently produced new regulation. "There was a genuine need for sound level norms," she explains. "In 2009 a young man suffering from hearing damage even committed suicide. At the same time, we still want people to be able to enjoy music. Judging by the number of army recruits turned down because of hearing deficiency, it is a very real problem." Schauvliege called in a round table, bringing together concert organizers, musicians, sound engineers, academics, youth representatives and other interested parties. An earlier preliminary proposal will come into force, starting from 2012 with a transition period of a year to give clubs and youth houses the chance to adjust. "The reactions are very positive," Schauvliege says. "The only negative comments we have received are from people who did not understand the regulations in full."

The way the sound regulation was drawn up is typical of how Schauvliege functions. "I like to work from the bottom up," she says, "hearing everyone involved. In the end, of course, a decision has to be made, no matter how much opinions differ." Schauvliege's portfolio includes both culture and environment, two very distinct areas. "That's what makes it so interesting," she says. "It prevents me from getting stuck, as one area allows me to reflect from a distance on the other."

No joke internationally

As environment minister, Schauvliege, 41 years old, from Evergem, near Ghent, focuses on four topics: water, air, climate and biodiversity. She sums them up swiftly, demonstrating not only her typically fast East-Flemish intonation, but also her enthusiasm for the job.

"The Flemish government invests heavily in water purification," she explains, "as well as in flood prevention. The air quality has improved, but it is far from perfect. Flanders is heavily populated, with lots of industry and roads, centrally located, close to the German industrial Ruhr area. When it comes to air quality, our industry performs well, but there is still plenty of room for progress with mobility and building. We try to address this, for instance through the tax on new cars. Cars that pollute more will be taxed more; cars that are friendly to the environment less."

"We have learned how to meet environmental challenges with creative solutions"

Joke Schauvliege made a name for herself during the European presidency, when she was in charge of environmental issues. To the outside world, it may seem unusual that a regional minister can take up this role, but in Belgium it is not. "Just like the member states take turns for the European presidency, Belgium has a rotation system between the Flemish, Walloon, Brussels and federal levels", Schauvliege explains. "I represented the EU at two UN summits, one on climate change in Cancun and one on biodiversity in Nagoya. Both were successful because, unlike in Copenhagen, the EU spoke with one voice. In Belgium we have plenty of expertise on bringing together points of view. Also, as a densely populated area, we have learned how to meet environmental challenges with creative solutions."

One such creative solution is the idea of sustainable materials management. Come again? "Sustainable materials



Joke Schauvliege made a name for herself internationally during the EU presidency

management comes down to re-using waste as a raw component," Schauvliege explains. "The re-use of materials has to be kept in mind from the moment of manufacturing. Materials are scarce; Europe is heavily dependent on import. Re-using them is not only good for the environment, but also for the economy." Schauvliege found her inspiration in Flanders. "We are champions in selective waste collection and recycling. This is the logical next step. I will include it in future Flemish regulation and I am happy to see that the idea caught on in Europe as well."

State of the arts

On to the second area Schauvliege is in charge of: culture. Flanders' rich cultural past is well-known, but how would she describe the current state of the arts? "Very good, thank you. We are all over the place. Painters Luc Tuymans and Roger Raveel are in New York and Chili respectively; choreographer Anne Theresa De Keermaeker is in Avignon and our opera in Edinburgh. What more can you ask for?"

Going international is one of Schauvliege's priorities in culture. "Our international positioning has always been quite random," she says. "There was no clear policy and that needs to change. If we focus on theatre in Eastern Europe, maybe there are ways to get other artists involved? Or maybe artists could join us on economic missions? Likewise, if someone like Tuymans has an exposition in New York, why not send some business people along?"

But just how much can the government interfere in culture? "Artistically speaking we cannot," Schauvliege says, firmly. "But we support the cultural field, according to a number of criteria. The artistic is one of those criteria, but it is up to expert commissions to speak out on that. I do not meddle. However, co-operation between different disciplines is important to me, as well as sustainability. There are so many things festivals can do, for example, to limit their impact on the environment."

She's also planning to change the subsidy system. "I believe in offering opportunities to young artists. Now only 3 % of the

budget is available for artistic projects. The rest is structural funding. I plan to raise project funding to 10 %, to stimulate new initiatives. Again, this is something the cultural field asked for."

Removing obstacles

And what about the Flemish people, are they culture vultures, or rather coach potatoes? "Participation research shows that the Flemish are especially keen on heritage," Schauvliege explains. "One in every two persons visits at least one museum a year – which is better even than film. We can never force people to participate in culture, but I aim to remove the obstacles for those that do. That is why we invest a lot in cultural education at school. The plays I saw in school were invariably boring, but that is something of the past. Now there are so many great things kids can get to know."

There are other obstacles too, she says. "Some people simply don't know how to attend a performance: when to show up, what to wear, even when to clap. People with young children are not always aware about family matinées, which are more practical to them. All of this I want to address with a so-called *Vlaamse vrijetijdspas*, or Flemish leisure card, that everyone can use to participate in cultural events."

July sees Schauvliege in Avignon, where she is proud to support Flemish artists such as Anne-Teresa De Keersmaeker's dancing troupe and the Toneelhuis performance of a play by Flemish author Tom Lanoye and directed by Guy Cassiers. What a contrast this makes to Schauvliege's early days as culture minister, when Lanoye amongst others portrayed her as something of an ignoramus. "Some of their criticism was correct," she admits. "I was hardly an expert on everything cultural. Then again, who is? It is an initiation rite every culture minister goes through. Since then, the culture field has realized that I am an ally, rather than an adversary. Holland cuts up to 30 % of its culture budget; in Flanders this is limited to 2.5 %. I must be doing something right, no?" ♦

→ www.jokeschauvliege.be

No more bashing, please

Brussels still has a long way to go if it wants to attract more gay tourists

NICHOLAS HIRST

He shouted gay abuse at my friend. When I responded, the other one kicked me in the stomach and grabbed me by the throat. I'd heard stories about gay-bashing and I thought: Now it's my turn." It was three o'clock on a Sunday night in early June and Bart and a friend had been followed down Boulevard Anspach.

"I ran towards a pita shop, but someone tripped me," he says, sitting at the kitchen table of his Brussels apartment. "Three to four guys punched me in the face and another smashed me over the head with a wooden chair. As I fell into the shop, they kicked me."

With the police on their way, Bart's attackers ran off. Doctors said Bart was lucky to have passed a brain scan. "They had total hate for me. We weren't doing anything, but they wanted to kill me." As word spread of Bart's ordeal, the outrage was palpable. The attack received prominent coverage in the press, whilst Brussels' gay community staged impromptu debates and a kiss-in on Grand Place in protest of what was described as a surge in homophobic violence.

The claim was taken up by several politicians, with Pascal Smet, Flemish minister for Brussels, going so far as to denounce the "new Belgians" who were going about like "vice squads."

These accusations may come as a surprise in a country that has been one of the first to legalize gay marriage and adoption and whose capital city has recently been rebranded as a top destination for gay city-breakers.

"Low-level violence and discrimination persists," says Michel Duponcelle, director of Tels Quels, a Belgian gay rights organisation and credited as the father of the law on gay marriage. "But in broad terms, you can't deny that the situation in Belgium has got better."

The figures would seem to bear up this position. In 2010, the Centre for Equal Opportunities opened 85 files for homophobic incidents in Belgium, with only four homophobia-related public prosecutions launched that year nationwide.

Yet start to scratch below the surface and it quickly becomes evident not only that these figures are implausibly low, but also that Bart's experience is part of a range of homophobic incidents occurring, in the main, after nightfall in the centre of Brussels.

Reality on paper

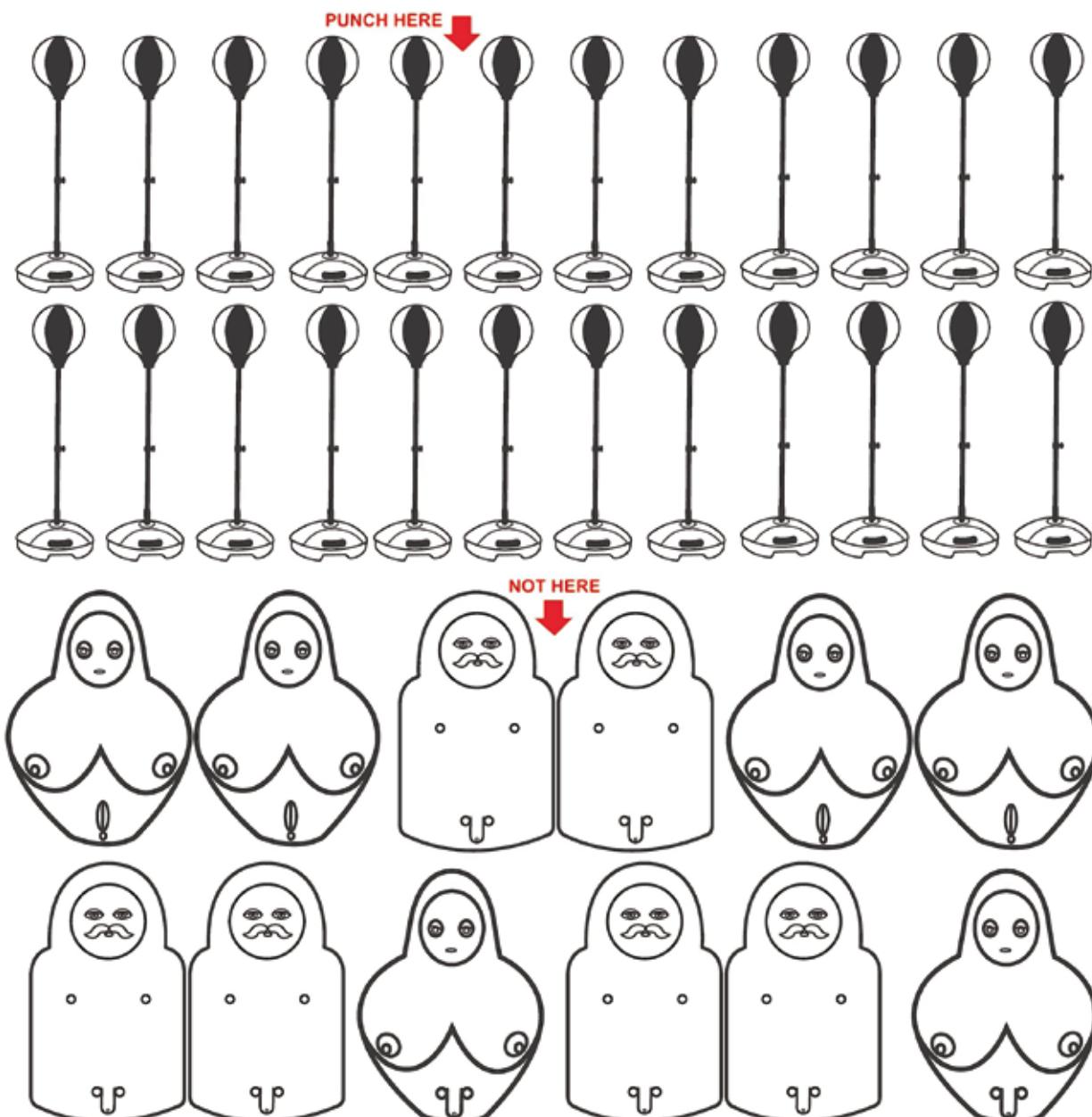
The Centre for Equal Opportunities is itself quick to flag up the shortcomings in its figures. Obtaining accurate figures for homophobic hate crimes is a challenge, whether in Brussels or elsewhere. A number of factors explain this under-reporting: a sense of shame at being a victim; an unwillingness to come out in public; a lack of sympathy on behalf of the police; a lack of faith in the likelihood of prosecution; or a resignation that such homophobia is inevitable.

Indeed, the leading report on homophobic crime in Brussels, published in 2007, estimated that only one out of every three incidents of homophobic violence was reported. This figure falls to one complaint for every 12 incidents where homophobic threats are made. The report also estimated that one in 10 gay people living in Brussels had been a victim of homophobic violence.

This alarming and silent undercurrent of violence is confirmed by those active on the nightlife scene. Stéphane Abraham, owner of a long-standing popular gay bar, confirms that hostility has increased over the last few years. He has been obliged to take on a bouncer in order to keep troublemakers out of his establishment and tells of clients being robbed, assaulted and even kidnapped because they are gay.

Other local bar owners in the Sint-Jacob neighbourhood, Brussels' gay quarter, were ready to confirm the threatening climate, citing violence, acts of vandalism and the routine verbal abuse to which their clients are subjected by passersby.

"With the law on marriage and adoption, the gay scene has become more visible. We no longer need to hide inside," says Abraham. "Bars have opened their doors and clients spill out onto the streets, something that would never have happened before. But it has led to more tension."



Part of the street art exhibition against hate crime, "Punch here/not here" by Sara Conti is "something of an instruction manual"

A number of other factors can reasonably be said to add fuel to the fire. The Sint-Jacob neighbourhood is beautifully located in the historic quarter, but is surrounded by some of the city's more destitute areas. The police in the centre of Brussels are overstretched and there is little in the way of surveillance.

Indeed, an instructive comparison can be drawn from Brussels and other European cities. Both Stockholm and London have campaigned vigorously to encourage the reporting of homophobic crimes and have established special units trained to deal with hate crimes. Figures suggest their police forces are doing a better job investigating and are more willing to push for prosecution.

For example, in 2008 Swedish police opened 367 homophobic crime case-files, most of these occurring in Stockholm. These led to 28 prosecutions for homophobic crimes being launched. In London, over a thousand complaints led to a total of 139 such prosecutions being brought in 2008. Yet in Belgium, two years later, prosecutors opened only a total of four such cases, one of which was in Brussels.

Rainbows on the horizon

But attitudes may be changing. In May 2011, the Brussels region, in conjunction with the police and community groups, launched a campaign, urging the victims of homophobic crimes to come forward.

The campaign, using posters, flyers and an exhibition of street art, is very visible both across the Sint-Jacob neighbourhood and in police stations. Indeed, the Centre for Equal Opportunities claims that as a result of this campaign, called hatecrime.be, and of another campaign – [Signalez-le!](http://Signalez-le.be) – five more victims have come forward to file complaints in recent weeks.

Furthermore, the Brussels region, in conjunction with the Centre for Equal Opportunities, has been training police officers to deal with such complaints. Officers are advised on how to receive a gay victim and how to detect the signs of homophobic violence where these are not explicitly mentioned in the initial complaint.

These initiatives have been pushed through by Bruno de Lille, Brussels' secretary of state for equal opportunities. He points out that the Region's competences do not include police or prosecution policy, but does believe that the new initiatives will have a positive and real effect on the fight against homophobic violence.

"It's important to show victims that it's in their interest to file a complaint," he says. "Without complaints the police cannot make the issue a priority."

The same principle applies for increasing the number and proportion of cases that make it to court. "We want to create an attitude in society that these things are unacceptable," says de Lille.

He cites, as a good example of this, federal minister of justice Stefaan de Clerck's recent instructions to prosecutors that they should be tougher on homophobic crimes.

Brussels' complex governance structures would indeed appear to make strong co-ordinated action, of the like seen in London or Stockholm, difficult.

Nevertheless, the measures in place, coupled with the indignation and participation of the gay community, should go some way to ensuring that tourists attracted by Brussels' celebrated gay nightlife are not treated to the sight of gratuitous homophobic abuse being hurled in the streets – and, sometimes, much worse. ♦

→ www.hatecrime.be

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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Good and bad in Belgium's economy

OECD report praises recovery, but points out shortcomings

ALAN HOPE

Belgium withstood the effects of the financial crisis better than many other industrial countries, but there are still reforms which urgently need to be put in place, according to a report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) announced last week.

The report was the latest in a regular cycle: the OECD presents a report on the economic situation in its member countries every two years. It was presented by Angel Gurria, secretary-general of the organisation, who came to Brussels to present its conclusions to acting prime minister Yves Leterme (*pictured with Gurria on his left*. "Hurrah! Belgium is the only country where good news is presented in three languages," he joked.

The report presents some positive conclusions: Belgium did better at withstanding the effects of the financial crisis of 2009 than many other OECD countries, with only a modest increase in unemployment. As a result the recovery has been faster, while the budget deficit is falling quickly.

However, a number of issues demand urgent attention:

- Government debt, at 97% of GDP, is still too high, and has to be brought

down by cutting spending and making plans for the increased costs in the future associated with the greying of the population. Multi-annual budgeting is also important for longer-term control – although the situation at present prevents the Leterme government from making even one-year budget plans without special dispensation from the King;

- Young people, immigrants and women need special measures to help them gain access to the workforce, for example by allowing a mix of work and studies, and increasing the minimum youth wage. Immigrants would benefit from language training and later streaming in education – in other words being forced to choose between academic, technical or work-related disciplines, something the Flemish government has already proposed;

- Wage costs could be cut by reducing marginal tax rates, by cutting off the avenues to early retirement, and by reforming – and eventually scrapping – the automatic index-linking of pay, something unions are unlikely to swallow easily;

- The economy needs to become greener, by tying energy policies to economic growth. That would involve increasing environmental taxation, which is particularly low in Belgium



at the moment; a carbon dioxide tax applied to housing and transport would tackle emissions and raise revenue. The programme would also include congestion charges and road pricing, as well as scale back on company cars and commuting – in other words, increasing the practice of home-working. Leterme, who was present to receive the report personally from Gurria, welcomes the report's conclusions, but defended the index as a "thermometer" of the economy which pointed the way to developments in the future. Above all, he said, it was "one of the keystones of the Belgian social model."♦

Others saw the OECD report differently, taking it and a recent similar report from the EU as a possible avenue of escape from the current government crisis, now in its 14th month. If the economic provisions of the recent note by Elio Di Rupo, which met some resistance because of the apparent discrepancy between budgetary discipline on the one hand, and an imbalance between cost-cutting and new taxation on the other, were to be replaced by the recommendations of the OECD and EU, it was being said, there might be more of a basis for agreement.♦

Ex-minister turns down "shameful" salary to move on

Former minister Luc Van den Bossche last week appeared to turn down a salary of €689,000 per year to take a new job paying presumably less. But the story, which first reported the inflated salary, turned out not to be so simple.

Van den Bossche, father of current Flemish energy minister Freya Van den Bossche, is currently chairman of the board of Brussels Airport Company, which manages the national airport. Last week it was reported that he had put in a demand for a salary of €689,000 per year before tax – €549,000 basic and a variable component of €140,000 in performance-related pay.

As the newspapers pointed out, that salary compared very favourably with those of federal ministers, at between €210,000 and €226,000. It was also richly higher than that of newly-appointed head of the IMF Christiane Lagarde, who pockets €394,000. Van den Bossche is a former Flemish minister for internal affairs, administrative affairs and education, as well as a former federal minister for internal affairs, health and government enterprises.

Finance minister Didier Reynders, not usually accustomed to commenting on private sector salaries, said the request was "shocking". The Groen! party said it was "beyond shameful". The problem appeared to be not that Van den Bossche, after more than two decades of public service, had found – as so many politicians do – a cosy pre-retirement sinecure, but that he was a socialist. His own former political colleagues in the sp.a were particularly shocked that he arranged for the salary to be paid to his management company LVDB, to avoid personal income tax (in a perfectly legal way). Prospective sp.a president Bruno Tobback said, "At a moment when we have to save billions of euros, we cannot permit the government to be taken in by schemes to avoid social and fiscal contributions."

Later the same day, it emerged that reports, emanating from La Libre Belgique, had got it all wrong. Van den Bossche had not demanded the salary, he explained. It had been put on the table as an offer by BAC, in

an effort to keep him on board – "Because I'm worth it," he explained. In vain, as it turned out: Van den Bossche is to leave his post with BAC to become chairman of the executive committee of Optima, a financial planning company currently involved in an attempted takeover of Ethias Bank. He has been involved with Optima since 2003 as chairman of the board of directors, and the new post depends on the success of Optima's bid. The huge salary was all notional: it might as well have been dreamed up by Optima itself, such has been the publicity given to their new chairman.♦

Compensation demanded after mobile network crashes

Telecommunications minister Vincent Van Quickenborne has clashed with Belgacom over the company's Proximus mobile phone network, which became inaccessible to customers outside of Belgium last weekend, making it impossible for them to make or receive calls. The reason appears to be saturation of the network caused by large numbers of people travelling abroad on holiday.

"The thing that upsets me the most is that Proximus hardly communicated at all over the issue," Van Quickenborne said. And he complained that Proximus failed to issue any information either on its website or on social networks. Customers outside of Belgium were also unable to contact the Proximus helpdesk.

The operator did ask clients calling from Belgium not to persist in trying when a number became unobtainable, as this would put even more pressure on the network. Extra capacity was added, and the problem was fixed by midnight on Saturday.

Now Van Quickenborne is calling on Proximus to compensate customers who were affected. "Not only for the lack of communication, but because customers pay dearly for that service," he said. Parent company Belgacom rejected the criticism, as well as the proposed compensation. "We did indeed communicate sufficiently," a spokesman said. "Belgacom is the only victim here."♦



THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Autos • Opel

Industrial assets auctioneer Maynards Europe last week completed the sale of equipment from the former Opel assembly plant in Antwerp, with the auction of three giant metal presses. Two of the buyers of the presses, which are used to shape coachwork, were from European companies, and one from Thailand. A paint-spray unit failed to find a buyer.

Brewing • InBev

InBev's CEO Carlos Brito used the occasion of his first newspaper interview since taking the job six years ago to calm speculation InBev was planning a takeover of major competitor SABMiller. "We have the feeling we've reached the right scale, we're in the right markets, and we have the right products. We don't need any more than that," he told De Tijd.

Cable TV • Telenet

Mechelen-based cable TV and internet provider Telenet has announced price increases for its cable TV customers, just weeks after spending more than €50 million on football rights for digital TV clients. The increase averages 4.2% for cable subscriptions, the first increase since 2009. Internet subscriptions are not affected.

Food • Campbell's

Plans by the US-based Campbell's Soups food group to cut 770 jobs will not affect its plant in Puurs in Antwerp province, where Campbell's Soups Europe is headquartered, a company spokesman said. In fact, the Puurs plant is taking on staff.

Metals • Umicore

Brussels-based materials technology company Umicore (formerly Union Minière) is to invest €25 million in its recycling centre in Hoboken near Antwerp. The plant recycles some 350,000 tonnes of metals every year, and expansion works should be complete by mid-2013.

Transport • De Lijn

Flemish public transport authority De Lijn has reached an agreement with unions on a new set of employment conditions starting on 1 January. The package includes a pay increase of 0.3%, promises on maintaining employment in the technical services, and improved training and career prospects.

Waste • Van Gansewinkel

Puurs-based waste treatment group Van Gansewinkel has taken over the Belgian operations of French company Veolia Environnement for an undisclosed sum. The French-owned company, formerly Biffa Belgium, was previously thought to be targeted for takeover by West Flanders-based Vanhee. The company has €96 million in annual sales and employs 450 people. The acquisition makes Van Gansewinkel the second-largest waste management company in Belgium after Sita.

Sex and the sea

In a sleepy coastal village, one exhibition has everyone talking

SABINE CLAPPAERT

The National Fisheries Museum in Oostduinkerke: not exactly a concept that sparks the engine of imagination or makes the blood run wild. Yet *Zerotica*, the newly opened exhibition about “love and lust at the seaside”, does exactly that.

Maja Wolny, the exhibition’s 34-year-old curator and director of the museum since September 2010, tells how a young Polish immigrant came to be the head of a Flemish fisheries museum and host of an exhibition on eroticism and the sea.

“I actually had the idea for the *Zerotica* exhibition before I even had the job at the museum,” Wolny begins. “I’d seen the position of Museum Director advertised and thought to myself: There’s no way that I, a Polish-Flemish woman, stand a chance of getting this position. But I have a great love for the sea,” she adds in perfect Flemish, “so I applied anyway.”

It’s easy to see why Wolny got the position she thought she could only dream of. A warm, fashionable brunette with curious hazel eyes, Wolny is no cultural lightweight. She speaks five languages, holds degrees in communication and European Culture Management, and started her career as a journalist and later cultural editor at one of Poland’s leading weeklies. Since arriving in Belgium in 2001 she has worked as guest curator and consultant for the Flemish heritage sector and become a member of the board of directors of the museum “Huis van Alijn” in Ghent.

“My work means that over the years I have got to know many Flemish museums very well” she says. “I remember seeing the National Fisheries Museum here in Oostduinkerke for the first time: it was love at first sight. The space, the story of the fishermen and their horses – it is really unique in the world.”

Soon, she was one of the final two candidates competing for the position. “We were each asked to give our vision for the future of the museum and what we thought needed to be done to make it flourish.”

Wolny penned her vision, developed a multi-year plan for the museum and, although it wasn’t expected, included her idea about an exhibition on the link between eroticism and the sea. “I’d just read the book “*Vissen Redden*” (Saving Fish) by my good friend Annelies Verbeke,” she says. “It is a book about a female writer who, after a failed relationship, leaves her old life behind to become an activist to help save the world by joining the fight against overfishing. In essence it is a novel about self-discovery, love, salvation and facing the truth in which the sea plays a central role. I remember thinking that an exhibition about love and lust on the seaside would be an interesting concept. The name *Zerotica* also just popped into my head. It was a gut feeling. When I had the idea, I just knew it: Yes!” she exclaims, stabbing her finger in the air, “This is it!”

“It may sound unlikely, but there is nothing obscene about the exhibition”

She got the job and *Zerotica* opened its doors to the public on 17 June to visitor numbers never before seen at the museum. “The relationship between man and sea is a very intimate one,” Wolny says. “And I’m not just referring to fishermen. It holds for all of us: our earliest childhood memories of sunburnt shoulders after a day at the beach, a first stolen kiss in the dunes or a long lonely walk along a windswept coast. The connection between man and sea is universal, very primal.”

Wolny built the exhibition around four themes. “Sensual Sea” delves into the erotizing aspects of oysters, caviar, crayfish and other sea creatures. It shows us the *Shokushu goukan* or “tentacle erotica” of Japan and makes us spectators to the love lives of giant shrimps.

The second theme, “Mermaids”, follows the wake of the seductively finned mistresses of the sea. Collaborating closely



Sirens seducing Ulysses in a painting by Herbert James Draper (1909)

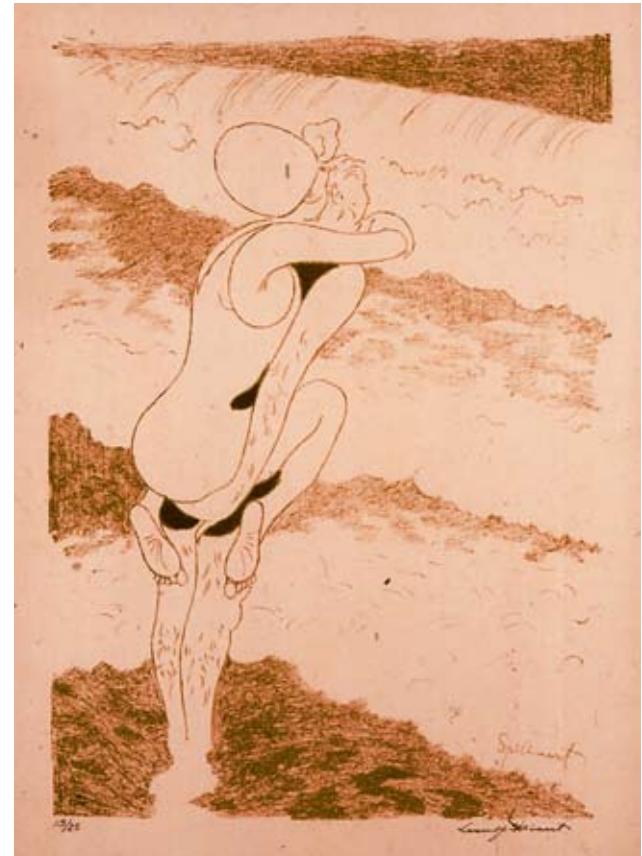
with Wolny, singer-songwriter An Pierle composed a haunting interpretation of the sirens’ song used by the dangerous bird-women who lured sailors with their enchanting voices to shipwreck on the rocky coast of their island. The audio fragment, sung by Pierle in ancient Greek, can be heard as part of the installation. Interpretations of the goddesses of the oceans, girls who lured men from their loved ones with their heavenly bodies and sweet songs, from as far afield as Africa and Japan, complete the installation.

“My soul makes love to the sea,” said the artist Johan Tahon. In the third theme “Eros and the Fishermen” visitors are given a glimpse into the love lives of fishermen. Long forgotten love letters; audio fragments with intimate revelations of longing and lust at sea; even a literary peepshow with an erotic text from Annelies Verbeke’s *Vissen Redden*, the book that started it all, hidden behind a red velvet curtain.

The fourth and biggest theme of the exhibition is “Naked at the Coast”, in which visitors can look back upon a history of erotically-laden images spanning more than a century of life at the beach, including the evolution from knee-to-neck bathing suits to bikinis to monokinis and nudism. Big names populate the four themes, with works by Paul Delvaux, Leon Spilliaert, Alois Boudry, Edgard Tytgat and Johan Tahon.

“For those that haven’t seen the exhibition it may sound unlikely,” Wolny says, “but there is really nothing obscene about it. We didn’t use any pornographic images, and it certainly is an exhibition for the whole family. Yes, we played with boundaries, but we also wanted to keep it playful and unexpected.” She winks: “Isn’t that what’s most fun?”

Wolny stops before a small, understated lithography of a bathing couple by Léon Spilliaert (pictured): She is clinging to his back, legs wrapped up against his flank to avoid the waves, his arm protectively cupping her hip, both gazing out at sea. “Love was born from the sea,” Wolny remarks. “Aphrodite, the goddess of love, arose from the silver foams of the ocean, more than 200,000 years ago, in a deep mythological past.” ♦



Zerotica

about love and lust at the seaside

Until 31 December

Nationaal Visserijmuseum

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► www.visserijmuseum.be

Colour and graffiti, forgery and fire

New exhibition shakes up Poland's artistic image

ANNA JENKINSON

The exhibition of Polish art in Brussels this summer explodes all the clichés of Poland as a grey and bleak country. The show at Bozar opens with a burst of intense, bright colour, with Jozef Mehoffer's 1903 masterpiece "Strange Garden" hanging next to spectacular canvases by contemporary artist Jakub Julian Ziolkowski. It is a bold and brilliant start that draws you in, opens your mind and reminds you why the show is entitled *The Power of Fantasy*.

The exhibition of Polish art in Brussels this summer explodes all the clichés of Poland as a grey and bleak country. The show at Bozar opens with a burst of intense, bright colour, with Jozef Mehoffer's 1903 masterpiece "Strange Garden" hanging next to spectacular canvases by contemporary artist Jakub Julian Ziolkowski. It is a bold and brilliant start that draws you in, opens your mind and reminds you why the show is entitled *The Power of Fantasy*.

At first glance, the Mehoffer painting seems a typical country garden scene. But as you look more closely you see a larger-than-life dragonfly at the top of the painting. This surreal attribute distorts the perspective and introduces a fantastical element.

Ziolkowski explores the subconscious and the imaginary in extremely precise and detailed canvases full of bizarre and, at times, disturbing figures, plants and insects. Take for example his work "The Great Battle under the Table", which depicts a pretend battlefield in the artist's own apartment. As well as having hundreds of tiny soldier figures marching in formation under a table, the picture is full of details such as a tiny self-portrait of Ziolkowski at an easel. At one level, the work appears playful. Yet one cannot look at a Polish artist's depiction of a battlefield without thinking of how Poland has been a battleground in history. This dialogue between past and present runs throughout the exhibition, re-contextualising Polish art and highlighting how key 20th-century themes have continued to be explored in new ways in post-1989 artworks. The exhibition, which coincides with Poland holding the EU presidency, is the largest of its kind since the collapse of communism in 1989.

Photography also has a place. Photographs of the artist, dramatist and philosopher Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz, who took his own life in September 1939 upon learning of the Red Army's advance on Poland, are juxtaposed with work by contemporary photographer Zofia Kulik. On one wall are portraits of Witkiewicz dressed up as Napoleon and performing for the camera; opposite are beautiful black and white photo collages by Kulik where she has woven together hundreds of small photographs into larger images.

Not every room has a confrontation between a modern and a contemporary artist; some are dedicated to a single artist. As co-curator David Crowley said as he showed me around, "In every space, we've tried to create intense, focused experiences." One such experience is Robert Kusmirowski's "D.O.M.", the recreation of a graveyard in the Polish town of Konskowola. To quote Crowley, Kusmirowski is "a master forger." As a student, for example, the artist designed stamps, put them on letters and tried to get them through the Polish postal service. In D.O.M.,



© Olaf Brzeski

we have a work whose title is a play on words: D.O.M. is an acronym for Deo Optimo Maximo (The Greatest and Best God), a familiar inscription on church doorways, while *dom* is also the Polish word for house or home. "In this way," says Crowley, "the installation offers a melancholic view of the homeland." The mystery of the work is wonderfully accentuated by the lighting, which allows the gravestones at the front to be clearly visible while you can't quite make out the details of what lies at the back.

Painting, photography and installations are all genres you would expect to find in an exhibition of modern and contemporary art. But how about a piece by a graffiti artist? Mariusz Waras, born in 1978, is a street artist and graphic designer who has created hundreds of mural paintings around the world and become an internet sensation. "He's a celebrity," Crowley tells me as we stand in front of the Waras work commissioned for the exhibition. "People are coming just for this." Using black spray-paint through a stencil onto the white Bozar wall, Waras has created a work that looks futuristic and yet whose intricate motifs are actually chimneys and symbols of 19th-century technology. "The past ripples into the present," Crowley says. The Waras work isn't the only one where Bozar showed its willingness to take a risk. For Olaf Brzeski's "Dream - Spontaneous Combustion" (pictured), the image used for the publicity materials and the catalogue, the gallery had to allow a fire in order to create black smoke on the white wall.

Many of the artists in the exhibition cross the boundary between the old and new Poland, having spent their childhoods and youth in the authoritarian People's Republic of Poland and their adult and working lives in a democratic Poland. In several of the contemporary artists' works, symbols of communist Poland are used or subverted, raising questions about the past and present. Julita Wojcik's "Wavy Block" crochets a communist-style housing block out of pink and cream threads, reappraising the buildings in a witty way. Maciej Kurak's "Fifty fifty" is an installation of a sewing machine hooked up to a Fiat 126p, essentially the only car found in communist Poland and for which there was a waiting list of many years. "It displays a lightness and humour characteristic of this generation," Crowley said of the work.

The show features major works by internationally renowned contemporary artists including Monika Sosnowska, whose spatial installations are often inspired by post-war modernisation or post-industrial ruins; Wilhelm Sasnal, whose painting dedicated to Copernicus questions the power of science by redefining a famous Warsaw statue of the Polish astronomer; and the prestidigitator of contemporary art Paweł Althamer, whose piece "Brodno People", comprising life-size figures made of salvaged material sprayed silver, is on display. The exhibition is a must-see not only for the contemporary art, but also for the iconic 20th-century masterpieces such as Mehoffer's "Strange Garden", Jacek Malczewski's "Vicious Circle" and one painting of the "Execution" series by Andrzej Wroblewski, an artist who died in 1957 just short of his 30th birthday. "This artist is being rediscovered," Crowley said of Wroblewski. "Bozar is catching a wave."

Most important though is the dialogue between the two eras, the way in which Polish art is put in a new context. As Crowley says as we leave the exhibition, "We want to break the negative image, the negative stereotypes, and embrace Poland's sense of optimism and its place in the world today." ♦

Focus on Polish culture

As well as its art, Poland will also be showcasing its music, films, theatre and literature during the six-month EU presidency that began earlier this month. Most events are in Brussels, but also Antwerp, Ghent and Leuven get a look-in.

One of the latest confirmations is that Polish film-maker Roman Polanski will make an appearance in Brussels in the autumn to coincide with an exhibition illustrating his career through photographs, archive footage and film posters.

On the classical musical front, one composer who will be in the spotlight is Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937), whose musical influences were from his homeland as well as from Debussy, Ravel and Stravinsky. Music by Krzysztof Penderecki, described as Poland's greatest living composer, will also be performed, and in one concert Penderecki will conduct his own violin concerto no. 2 with the Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra.

Other projects include the I, Culture Orchestra, bringing together young musicians from Poland and countries to the east of the EU, such as Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine in order to emphasize how both the East and the West influence Europe's cultural identity.

On July 21 creative sewing workshops will take place in 12 capital cities around the world, including Brussels. They will be open to everyone with or without sewing experience. "There's nothing more individual," said Olga Wysocka of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute, which is coordinating the presidency's international cultural programme. "And yet at the same time, there's nothing more collective."

Another highlight is the recognition of the late Czesław Miłosz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, whose birth was 100 years ago this year. Miłosz will be celebrated with the publication of an audio book of his poetry recorded in several languages.

→ www.culturepolonaise.eu

The Power of Fantasy

Until 18 September

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels

→ www.bozar.be

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The young lions of art YOUNG BELGIAN PAINTERS AWARD

SABINE CLAPPAERT

Kelly Schacht, a young artist from Ghent was recently awarded the "Best Young Belgian Painter Award 2011" for her work "Un Tour d'Horizon". The prize, which is awarded every two years to Belgian artists under the age of 35, gives the winner 25,000€ - "which is a whole lot of money to do new things with," Schacht smiles.

"Un Tour d'Horizon" is a sober installation. Schacht calls it a "minimalist scenography" that explores the relationship between the work of art, the space and the viewer, and the way in which this relationship results in an individual's active participation in the work. Asked why she chose this specific title for the work, Schacht recalls a work meeting with the foundation that funds the prize, when a commission member declared: *C'était un tour d'horizon*. "The phrase triggered something in me," states the young artist. "Horizons are such a classic theme in fine art, but they also relate closely to our personal perspectives. I wanted to play with that. As part of the installation I placed six performance artists to look directly at the work. One of them is blind. I wanted to reflect on the way the art world always seems to approach a theme in the same manner. I wanted to question whether we still had anything meaningful to tell if we continued to do that."

In a time when concepts such as unique or new have become highly debatable, Schacht is praised for exploring the notions of ownership and originality. "Many of my works are installations because I think there is something very endless about installation art: where does the work end and reality begin? I'm also intrigued by the way the viewer interacts with the work. What is their relation to the screen, how do they move through space - it is a choreography unique to each



Kelly Schacht © Bozar/N.Gervais 2011

viewer. It alters the work every single time."

The international jury praised Schacht's "intense search" and unanimously awarded her – the only woman amongst the ten finalists – the first prize.

The jury awarded a further three prizes of 12,500€ each to Pieterjan Ginckels, Freek Wambacq and a shared prize to Paul Hendrikse and David Catherall.

On the closing day of the exhibition, 11 September, Schacht will again personally show her work including the six performance artists. ♦

Until 11 September

Bozar
 Ravensteinstraat 23
 → www.bozar.be

MORE IN BOZAR THIS WEEK

La Frontière / De Grens → until 11 September →

Jeff Wall, the crooked path → until 11 September

Beyond the document → until 25 September



Antwerp

Deurne Openluchttheater Rivierenhof
 Turnhoutsebaan 232; 070.222.192
www.openluchttheater.be
JUL 20 19.00 Absynthe Minded + Justin Nozuka
JUL 22 13.00 The Jacqueline's. 19.00 New York Ska Jazz Ensemble
JUL 26 19.00 Joss Stone
JUL 28 19.00 Comedy time featuring Jeroen Leenders, Bart Cannaeerts, Bert Gabriels, Lies Lefevere, more

Het Stadsmagazijn

Keistraat 5-7; 03.292.63.80
Until JUL 29 Croque Musique, terrace concerts with lunch

Kelly's Irish Pub

Keyserlei 27
www.kellys.be
JUL 23 20.00 Steve Keane

Ardoie

Cultuurkapel De Schaduw
 Wezestraat 32; 0479.80.94.82
www.deschaduw.net
JUL 22 20.30 Nameless Sound

Brussels

Recyclart
 Brussels - Chapelle train station
 25 Rue des Ursulines; 02.502.57.34
www.recycleart.be
JUL 21 23.00 Rebel Up Soundclash #4: Global Lo-Fi & Folkpop
JUL 22 23.30 Emika + Dark Sky

Ghent

Dok
 Koopvaardijlaan 13
www.dokgent.be
Until AUG 31 Dok beach, open daily with free entertainment, plus breakfast, picnic lunches and more

Hasselt

Muziekodroom
 Bootstraat 9; 011.23.13.13
www.muziekodroom.be
JUL 21 22.00 Summer Camp #1 - Drum 'n Bass
JUL 28 22.00 Summer Camp #2 - Dubstep

Zeebruges

Beach
 Zeebruges; 070.25.20.20
www.sherpa.be
 Doors open at 16.00:
JUL 24 19.00 Bon Jovi + Arid, open-air concerts (www.bonjovizeebrugge.be)



Brussels

The Music Village
 Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45
www.themusicvillage.com
Until AUG 27 21.00 Brussels Village Festival, jazz & Latino festival
Until JUL 23 Zizalie Quintet
JUL 26-30 Alain Cupper Quartet



Brussels

Bozar
 Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00
www.bozar.be
JUL 20 20.00 Belgian National Orchestra conducted by Andrey Boreyko with Anna Vinnitskaya, Denis Kozhukhin, piano: Rachmaninov, Ravel (free; prelude to the Belgian National Day)

DON'T MISS

Freestate

25 June to 11 September
 Port of Ostend

Young artists usually don't get the exposure they deserve, according to the curators of Freestate, who last year for the first time put together a big exhibition that would provide an overview of what is stirring in the Belgian art scene of today. This year, they're doing it again. 21 young Belgian artists have been invited to showcase their best and newest work, on an industrial site in the Ostend port, "in splendid isolation," as the subtitle reads.



© Delphine Deguisse



Antwerp

Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)
 Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60
www.mhka.be
Until AUG 21 Ten Oosten van 4°24' (East of 4°24'), group show of artists from the Caucasus, India, China, Iraq, Egypt and more
Until SEP 18 Collection XVIII: If you shoot a bullet in a vacuum, will it keep travelling forever?, selected works and films by British artist Emily Wardill

Fashion Museum (MoMu)
 Nationalstraat 28; 03.470.27.70
www.momu.be

Until AUG 14 Unravel: Knitwear in Fashion, a wide variety of knitted garments and accessories from across the centuries, with a focus on high fashion pieces and their vernacular interpretations

Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50
www.middelheimmuseum.be
Until SEP 25 Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out, open-air display of performative and living sculptures by the Austrian artist

Museum aan de Stroom (MAS)

Hanzestedenplaats 1; 03.338.44.34
www.mas.be
Until DEC 31 Masterpieces in the MAS: Five Centuries of Images in Antwerp, the first temporary exhibition in the new museum shows how Antwerp and Flanders significantly influenced 16th- and 17th-century Western European imagery

Photo Museum

Waalse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00
www.fotomuseum.be
Until SEP 25 Insight, photos by Elke Andreas Boon, Elinor Carucci, Alexandra Cool and Jacques Sonck

Plantin-Moretus Museum

Vrijdagmarkt 22; 03.221.14.50
www.museumplantinmoretus.be
Until AUG 28 Inzichten en Vergezichten (Insights and Panoramic Views), the book and designs of Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, designer of the light panels for the new MAS Museum

Blankenberge

Belle Epoque Centrum
 Elisabethstraat 24; 050.42.87.41
www.belle.epoque.blankenberge.be
Until SEP 16 Hasselt keramiek, Art Nouveau drip glaze pottery

Agenda

Bruges

Site Oud Sint-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00

www.expo-brugge.be

Permanent From Pablo Picasso to Joan Miró, permanent exhibition of more than 100 works by Picasso, plus works by Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Joan Miró, more

Brussels

Atomium

Atomium Square; 02.475.47.72

www.atomium.be

Until DEC 9 Belgium & Immigration: Understand Better So We Can Better Understand One Another, interactive exhibition on migration to Belgium

Autrique House

Haachtsesteenweg 266; 02.215.66.00

www.autrique.be

Until DEC 31 Victor Horta: A Lost World, works highlighting decisive moments in the career of the architect born in Ghent 150 years ago

Belgian Comic Strip Centre

Zandstraat 20; 02.219.19.80

www.stripmuseum.be

Until OCT 2 The Publiart Adventure, comic strip in advertising

Until JAN 15 2012 Bob De Moor & De Zee, comic strips by the Antwerp artist and Hergé colleague, who was passionate about the sea

Bibliotheca Wittockiana

Bemelstraat 23; 02.770.53.33

www.wittockiana.org

Until OCT 1 Le Fonds Michel Wittock: de la passion au don (The Gift of Passion), collection of remarkable bookbindings from the Renaissance to the present day

Bozar

Ravensteinstraat 23; 02.507.82.00

www.bozar.be

Until SEP 4 51N4E: Double or Nothing, sketches by the Brussels architecture firm

Until SEP 11 Jeff Wall: The Crooked Path, works by the Canadian photographer together with prose responding to the work

Until SEP 11 Young Belgian Painters Award 2011, works by the 10 finalists in the prestigious art competition

Until SEP 18 The Power of Fantasy: Modern and Contemporary Art from Poland, works by more than 30 contemporary Polish artists

Until SEP 25 Beyond the Document, works by 14 contemporary Belgian photographers

Brussels Expo

Bielgiéplein 1; 070.25.20.20

www.kingtutbrussels.be

Until NOV 6 Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures, reconstruction of the Ancient Egyptian king's tomb, with over 1,000 replicas of funerary objects, including amulets, coffers, chairs, weapons, musical instruments and more

CIVA

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.71

www.civa.be

Until SEP 25 Transforming Landscapes, the work of Norwegian architectural firm Reiulf Ramstad

Until OCT 2 Brussel, een sterk staaltje van engineering (Brussels, Engineering Prowess), the world of engineers in the Brussels region

City Hall

Grote Markt; 02.279.64.24

www.brupass.be

Until SEP 25 Barok onthuld (Baroque Unveiled), a new way of looking at sculpture in Brussels and Belgium

Costume and Lace Museum

Violettestraat 12; 02.213.44.50

Until SEP 25 Midsummer Night's Dreams, textile works by Diane Didier

Until DEC 31 Hand-made clothing and accessories from before the invention of the sewing machine, including patterns, hats by Brussels milliners, men's waistcoats and women's corsets

De Elektriciteitscentrale

Sint-Katelijneplein 44; 02.279.64.45

www.dreelektriciteitscentrale.be

Until AUG 21 Jane Alexander: Security - Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope), sculptures, installations, photographs and videos by the South African artist

Fondation pour l'Architecture

Kluisstraat 55; 02.642.24.80

www.fondationpourlarchitecture.be

Until AUG 28 Anne Heringer: Building Differently, plans, sketches and photographs by the German architect

House of the Dukes of Brabant

Grote Markt 19

www.this-is-belgium.be

Until AUG 30 This is Belgium - A Signature of Excellence, chronological interactive journey through Belgium's history and heritage by way of the country's best brands

Interactive Media Art Laboratory

Koolmijnen kaaI 30; 02.410.30.93

www.imal.org

Until AUG 19 Danse, Pouacre & Çavachute, installations by Véronika Usova

Jewish Museum of Belgium

Minimstraat 21; 02.512.19.63

www.mjbjmb.org

Until AUG 28 After Images, multidisciplinary show by contemporary American artists

Le Botanique

Koningsstraat 236; 02.218.37.32

www.botanique.be

Until AUG 14 Sarah Moon: Coincidences, photos by the British fashion photographer and filmmaker

Marc Sleen Museum

Zandstraat 33; 02.219.19.80

www.marc-sleen.be

Until SEP 25 Nero, Yuri Gagarin and Other Astronauts, space travel in comic strips

Museum van Elsene

Jean Van Volsemstraat 71; 02.515.64.22

www.museumvanelsene.be

Until SEP 4 Explosion: Graffiti art in Brussels, 25 years of urban art including works by both pioneers and contemporary artists

Royal Museum of the Armed Forces

Jubelpark 3; 02.737.78.33

www.legermuseum.be

Until SEP 4 1945-2002: Belgian soldiers in Germany, rare photographs documenting 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries

Until OCT 16 War&Game(s), photographs by Virginie Cornet and toys from the period of the First World War

Royal Museum of Fine Arts

Regentschapsstraat 3; 02.508.32.11

www.fine-arts-museum.be

Until SEP 4 Art and Finance in Europe: 18th-Century Masterworks in a New Light, 20 major works by Francesco Guardi, Benjamin Wolff, Léonard Defrance, more

Sint-Gorikshallen

Sint-Goriksplein 23; 02.502.44.24

www.sintgorikshallen.be

Until AUG 29 1000 voetschrapers, photos of old boot scrapers still outside some Brussels doors, by Christophe H with texts by Laurence Rosier

WIELS

Van Volxemlaan 354; 02.340.00.50

www.wiels.org

Until AUG 14 Charlotte Beaudry: Get Drunk, paintings, drawings and videos by the Brussels-based artist

Until AUG 14 Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes - Reflections on Indian Modernism, paintings, drawings and photographs by the Indian artist

Ghent

Design Museum

Jan Breydelstraat 5; 09.267.99.99

www.designmuseumgent.be

Until OCT 16 Esprit Porcelaine, contemporary porcelain from Limoges

Until OCT 16 Die Essenz der Dinge: Design and the Art of Reduction

Until OCT 16 Johanna Dahm: Rings, ring designs by the Swiss artist

Dr Guislain Museum

Jozef Guislainstraat 43; 09.216.35.95

www.museumdrguislain.be

Until SEP 4 In the Margin: Belgian Documentary Photography, work that documents the deviant, the extraordinary, the unnoticed, the other

Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03

www.smak.be

Until SEP 18 Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculptures, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

Hasselt

Het Stadsmus

Guido Gezellesstraat 2; 011.23.98.90

www.hasselt.be

Until AUG 28 Hasselt aan Zee: Een eeuw marineschilderkunst (Hasselt on the Sea: A Century of Marine Paintings), works by 20th-century artists inspired by the sea

z33

Zuivelmarkt 33; 011.29.59.60

www.z33.be

Until AUG 21 Kris Verdonck: EXHIBITION #1, installations and videos by the Flemish theatre maker and artist

Koksijde

City Hall

Zeelaan 303; 058.51.29.10

www.koksijde.be

Until JUL 31 Getij-Dingen 2012, preview maquettes of next year's beach installations by 18 artists

Kortrijk

City centre

Grote Markt 45; 056.27.74.40

www.kortrijk.be/tentoonstellingen

Until AUG 28 Paradise Lost Paradise, contemporary art parcours at various locations throughout the city centre

Leuven

Museum M

Leopold Vanderkelenstraat 28; 016.27.29.29

www.mleuven.be

Until SEP 25 Pieter-Jozef Verhagen: In het spoor van Rubens (In the Wake of Rubens), paintings by the 18th-century Flemish artist

Until SEP 4 Through the Romanticist's Eyes, 19th-century Dutch and Belgian paintings from Jef Rademakers' collection

Until SEP 11 Gert Robijns, contemporary art installations by the Flemish artist

Lier

Stedelijk Museum Wuyts-Van Campen

Florent Van Cauwenberghstraat 14

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SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS

Open-Air Cinema: Free open-air film screenings

Until AUG 31 Wed 22.00 at Wolubilis, Paul-Henri Spaaklaan 1
www.wolubilis.be

Poland's EU Presidency: Poland takes the six-month helm of the European Union Council for the first time, featuring a major programme of cultural events

Until DEC 31 across Belgium
<http://culturepolonaise.eu>

Recyclart Holidays: Free summer activities on Thursday & Friday evenings featuring concerts, screenings, communal bread making, workshops and more

Until AUG 5 at Recyclart, Ursulinenstraat 25 02.502.57.34, www.recycleart.be

Royal Palace Visits: Annual opening to the public of the Royal Palace, designed by architect Alphonse Balat for King Leopold II
www.monarchie.be

Zuid Fun Fair: 130th edition of the annual fun fair with rides and games

Until AUG 21 stretching from Hallepoort to the end of Zuidlaan 02.279.25.31, www.kermis-feest.be

Ghent

Festival of Ghent: 168th annual cultural folk festival with concerts, parties, performances and much more

Until JUL 25 across Ghent
www.gentsefeesten.be

Knokke-Heist

Cartoon Festival: 50th anniversary of the festival featuring more than 300 cartoons from all over the world

Until SEP 18 at the Casino beach pavilion
www.cartoonfestival.be

Leuven

M-idzomer: Festival of concerts, comedy, dance, literature, exhibitions, more

JUL 28-31 at M Museum, Vanderkelenstraat 28 016.27.29.29, www.m-idzomer.be

Zomer van Sint-Pieter: Lunch-time concerts, a sister event to the Midis-Minimes festival in Brussels

Until AUG 26 at Saint Peter's Church, Grote Markt
www.zomer-van-sint-pieter.be

Ostend

Mamma Mia!: Musical (in English with surtitles in Dutch & French)

Until AUG 14 at Kursaal (Casino), Monacoplein 1 070.22.56.00, www.sherpa.be

Kunstenfestival Watou: Third annual arts festival with artists and curators bring together word and image through a variety of media

Until SEP 11 at venues across Watou
www.watou2011.be

Antwerp

Jazz Middelheim: 30th edition of the open-air jazz festival featuring Toots Thielemans, Brussels Jazz Orchestra with Bert Joris, Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven, Allen Toussaint & Marc Ribot Duo and Liberation Music Orchestra

AUG 12-15 at Park Den Brandt
www.jazzmiddelheim.be

Laus Polyphoniae: The Festival of Flanders' Antwerp stint, devoted this year to Portugal, with the Huelgas Ensemble, Jordi Savall and his Capella Reial de Catalunya, fado singers and special concerts for children and babies

AUG 20-28 at Amuz, Kamenstraat 81
www.amuz.be

Sfinks Mixed Festival: Open-air festival of world music, dance, film and circus featuring AfroCubism, Emir Kusturica & The No Smoking Orchestra, Alpha Blondy & Solar Sytem, Hindi Zahra, Bomba Estéreo, Ballet Royal du Cambodge and Khaira Arby

JUL 29-31 at Molenveld, Boechout 03.455.69.44, www.sfinks.be

Bruges

MAfestival: During its stopover in Bruges, the Festival of Flanders explores the theme of 'Testament'. Guests include the Bl!ndman ensemble, harpsichordist Christophe Rousset, singer Lucilla Galeazzi and cellist Roel Deltiens

AUG 5-13 at venues across Bruges and Lissewege
www.mafestival.be

Brussels

Boterhammen in het Park: Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music with line-up including Yevgeni, Berlaen, Axl Peleman, Eva De Roovere, Hannelore Bedert, Lucky Fonz III, Johan Vermassen and Hans Mortelmans

AUG 22-26 12.00 at Warande Park 02.548.24.24 or
www.abconcerts.be

Bruksellive: Free festival in the shadow of the Atomium featuring The Cinematic Orchestra, Vismets, STIJN & friends, Benji B, SX, Drums are for Parades, Phaeleh, Title & Delvis, Onda Sonora, Head full of Flames and more

JUL 30 at The Green Theatre, Ossegem Park
www.bruksellive.be

M-idzomer

28-31 July

It's only the second edition of the M-idzomer festival in Leuven, but it already feels like the summer wouldn't be complete without it. One of its trumps is the marvellous location: the courtyard of Museum M in the centre of town. But it would be worth nothing if M-idzomer didn't present a strong line-up.

The most remarkable name this year is John Cale, the headliner of the first day. The Welsh singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist hasn't released new material in almost six years, but his songbook counts a few hundred pages, so he can still come up with a surprising set-list. He'll be bringing a band with him, so expect a rock show and not a solo recital, as you might have seen him play in the past.

A lesser known but as impressive a musician is Ethiopian Mulatu Astatke, who fuses African grooves with jazz and funk. He got a surge in popularity six years ago, when Jim Jarmusch used his music in *Broken Flowers*. M-idzomer prides itself also on a few interesting Belgian bands – swinging Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven or local hero Anton Walgrave. But the festival has more than only music on offer. Fans of comedy, spoken word and performance won't be disappointed, either. The list of stand-up comedians looks really strong, with the absurdist *ancien Kamagurka* and the up-and-coming talent Lies Lefever, who

Brussels Summer Festival: Tenth edition of the annual festival featuring a diverse music programme by Jamie Cullum, Caravan Creek, The Hong Kong Dong, Xaman-Ek, Baden Baden, Ian Kelly, Tailors of Panama, Harvey Quintin, more. Plus film screenings, open-door museum events, street theatre, sound and light show

AUG 12-21 in venues around the city
www.bsf.be

Brussels Village Festival: 7th edition of the summer jazz & Latino festival with 45 live concerts featuring one band each week

Until AUG 27 Tues-Sat at The Music Village, Steenstraat 50 02.513.13.45, www.themusicvillage.com

City Parade: Massive party parade with DJs and dancing

AUG 27 at Heizel (under the Atomium)
www.cityparade.be

Feeëriëen 2011: Free outdoor festival with an internationally edged musical programme. Many bands are performing for the first time in Belgium and each evening has its own musical theme

AUG 22-26 19.00 at Warande Park
www.abconcerts.be

Klarafestival: 'Utopia' is the central theme of the Festival of Flanders' Brussels stopover - a lavish extravaganza starring cellist Steven Isserlis, pianist Markus Groh, conductors Roger Norrington and Neville Marriner and other classical celebs. The guest of honour this year is Belgian conductor René Jacobs, an indefatigable champion of long-lost Baroque masterpieces and de-cluster of Mozart and Haydn operas

SEP 1-16 at venues across the city
www.klarafestival.be

Royal Park Music Festival 2011: Series of free Sunday jazz concerts featuring Fanny Bériaux and South London Jazz Orchestra

JUL 24 & 31 Sun, 11.00 & 15.00 at Warande Park
www.travers.be

Dranouter

Folk Dranouter: Flanders' purest folk festival featuring Kayam, Band of Gypsies, Zule Max, Ozark Henry, The Leisure Society, Kayam, Grant Lee Buffalo, Rodrigo y Gabriela, The Jayhawks, Sons of Noel and Adrian, An Pierlé & White Velvet, Salvatore Adamo, Ben Harper and more

AUG 12-13 at Festivalterrein Dranouter, Koudekostraat
www.folkdranouter.be

Eeklo

Helden in het Park: Free outdoor world music festival

JUL 28-AUG 18 at Heldenpark
www.n9.be

Geel

Reggae Geel: Reggae festival featuring Herb A Lize It, General Degree, Kingstep, The Mighty Jah Observer, Blackboard Jungle Sound, Jah Shaka, more

AUG 5-6 at Festivalterrein Geel, Zandstraat
www.reggaegeel.com

Ghent

Sint-Baafsabdijconcerten: Five concerts bring Baroque, classical, world sounds and jazz to the beautiful abbey, featuring viola da gamba player Philippe Pierlot, violinist Lorenzo Gatto, pianist and harpsichordist Alexei Lubimov and Palestinian oud player Moneim Adwan

Until JUL 21 at Saint Bavo's Abbey
www.debijloke.be

Hoogstraten (Antwerp province)

Antilliaanse Feesten: The world's largest Caribbean festival featuring Machel Montano, Fally Ipupa, Manoline, Kuenta y Tambú, Sonambulo, La Pinata and more

AUG 12-13 at Festivalterrein, Blauwbossen
www.antilliaansefeesten.be

Kiewit (Limburg)

Pukkelpop: One of Belgium's biggest rock festivals featuring Foo Fighters, Thirty Seconds to Mars, Rise Against, Skunk Anansie, Paul Kalkbrenner, Fleet Foxes, Eminem, Deftones, Bloody Beetroots Death Crew 77, Within Temptation, The Offspring, dEUS, Duck Sauce, Trentemøller, Lykki Li, Das Pop, The View, Stromae and many more

AUG 18-20 at Festivalweide Kiewit, Kempische Steenweg
www.pukkelpop.be

Leuven (Flemish Brabant)

Marktrock: Free Belgian rock and pop festival featuring Intergalactic Lover, Willow, Gorki, K's Choice, Zornik, The Galacticos and more

AUG 12-14 at Oude Markt, Leuven
www.marktrock.be

Lokeren (East Flanders)

Lokerse Feesten: Rock festival featuring Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven, Balthazar, The Heartbreaks, Roger Daltrey performing The Who's Tommy, 2ManyDJs, Arsenal, Daan, The Subs, Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, North Mississippi Allstars Duo, Goose, Kelis, Primal Scream, Das Pop, Ozark Henry, Joe Cocker, Robert Plant & The Band of Joy, Paolo Nutini, Gabriel Rios, Triggerfinger and more

JUL 29-AUG 7 at Festivalterrein Lokeren
www.lokersefeesten.be

Mechelen (Antwerp)

Maanrock: 15th edition of the free rock festival with line-up featuring Fixkes, The Van Jets, Mintzkov, Das Pop, Arid, Hermanos Inglesos, Mama's Jasje, Leki & The Sweet Mints, The Magical Flying Thunderbirds, De Kreuners, Clouseau and more

AUG 20 & 21 in the city centre
www.maanrock.be

Oudenaarde

Feest in het Park: Outdoor music festival featuring Flip Kowlier, Hermanos Inglesos, Sean Paul, Kruder & Dorfmeister, Pete Doherty, Arno, Triggerfinger, more

AUG 11-14 at Festivalterrein Donkervijvers
www.feestinhetpark.be

Sint-Niklaas (East Flanders)

Flemish Organ Days: Discover the instrument through three days of concerts, demonstrations, workshops for children and grown-ups, plus an exhibition and competition

AUG 18-20 at churches across the city
www.orgelinvlaanderen.be

Tienen (Flemish Brabant)

Suikerrock: 25th edition of the rock festival featuring De Jeugd Van Tegenwoordig, Zornik, Moby, Basement Jaxx, Heather Nova, Soulsister, Tom Jones, Tom Dice, Natalia, The Baseballs, Triggerfinger, Iggy & The Stooges, Deep Purple, Roxette and more

JUL 28-31 in the centre of Tienen
www.suikerrock.be

FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT

CHRISTOPHE VERBIEST

M-idzomer

28-31 July

It's only the second edition of the M-idzomer festival in Leuven, but it already feels like the summer wouldn't be complete without it. One of its trumps is the marvellous location: the courtyard of Museum M in the centre of town. But it would be worth nothing if M-idzomer didn't present a strong line-up. The most remarkable name this year is John Cale, the headliner of the first day. The Welsh singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist hasn't released new material in almost six years, but his songbook counts a few hundred pages, so he can still come up with a surprising set-list. He'll be bringing a band with him, so expect a rock show and not a solo recital, as you might have seen him play in the past. A lesser known but as impressive a musician is Ethiopian Mulatu Astatke, who fuses African grooves with jazz and funk. He got a surge in popularity six years ago, when Jim Jarmusch used his music in *Broken Flowers*. M-idzomer prides itself also on a few interesting Belgian bands – swinging Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven or local hero Anton Walgrave. But the festival has more than only music on offer. Fans of comedy, spoken word and performance won't be disappointed, either. The list of stand-up comedians looks really strong, with the absurdist *ancien Kamagurka* and the up-and-coming talent Lies Lefever, who



capsulates her humour in funny songs. And in the installation "Le CinérotiC" you'll have to bike to see some films projected, but apparently you'll be compensated for your endeavours. Ride and see! If ever you get bored outside, you can always find refuge in the Museum M. This summer it presents 19th-century Dutch and Flemish romantic paintings and the playful installations of Flemish contemporary artist Gert Robijns.

→ www.m-idzomer.be

bite

ROBYN BOYLE

De Met

Our editorial office is located in a large industrial zone, just a stone's throw from the Brussels ring. That means that if my colleagues and I are interested in skipping out to a restaurant together at lunchtime, we have to be pretty motivated.

I'm pleasantly surprised, however, to discover that the whole outing cost us far less effort than anticipated. The closest town, Groot-Bijgaarden, is not only a breezy 10-minute walk away, but it's also quite cosy and has a handful of dining options to choose from, all with outdoor terraces.

We pick a restaurant at random and take a seat at the back of the modern and stylish dining area. The place is buzzing with other groups of lunch-breaking co-workers, but the servers are quick to come over and welcome us. They don't hesitate to turn down the shades to soften the glaring midday sun, or push together a few tables to accommodate our large group of nine. And they offer menus in Dutch, French and English – perfect for our Belgian, Irish, English and American crew.

I fall for one of the suggestions posted on the chalkboard: toast with mushrooms. Simple yet devilishly good, this dish is also surprisingly filling due to the overflowing cream sauce and plump oyster mushrooms. A bottle of Old Geuze Boon beer makes for a refreshingly dry and tart match.

Contact *Bite* at flandersbite@gmail.com

We 'ooh and aah' as two colleagues are presented with their orders of Ostend shrimp and tomatoes. The juicy little grey shrimp, piled high in a long diagonal line across the plate, are topped with ripe red cherry tomato halves, hard-boiled eggs and parsley. It is the most enticing way of serving *tomaat garnal* I've ever seen. And it surely tastes as good as it looks – tangy, fresh and of the sea. Two others are equally impressed when their *salade niçoise* shows up. No tinned tuna here. Instead, a solid slab of seared tuna rests atop an enormous bowl of lettuce and mixed vegetables. My colleagues were even asked in advance how well cooked they would like it, as you would do for a piece of meat. One happy diner says she "would definitely go back just for that salad."

Affirming nods from the far end of the table let us know that the old classic, steak and fries, is another topper, thanks in part to a divine pepper cream sauce. And the fact that it's not just your average steak, but tournedos (beef tenderloin) with a Meritus label signifying quality Belgian beef.

Our most health-conscious eater is cleaning off a plate of buffalo mozzarella and tomatoes drizzled in olive oil, and soaking up the remaining oil with pieces of bread. Across from her, an order of salad with an entire wheel of warm goat cheese, heaps of crispy



bacon and balsamic syrup is also going down easy.

No one is tempted by the section of the menu called Sweet Temptations, but only for lack of space. The desserts include warm apple pie, *crème brûlée*, chocolate mousse and all sorts of ice cream. But we have to return to work for a few more hours, so a round of lattes it is. These come served in smart glass mugs, with a cookie on the side – always a nice touch. I think it's unanimous: We'll be back soon.

→ www.demet.be/grootbijgaarden

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TALKING DUTCH

Send me your questions

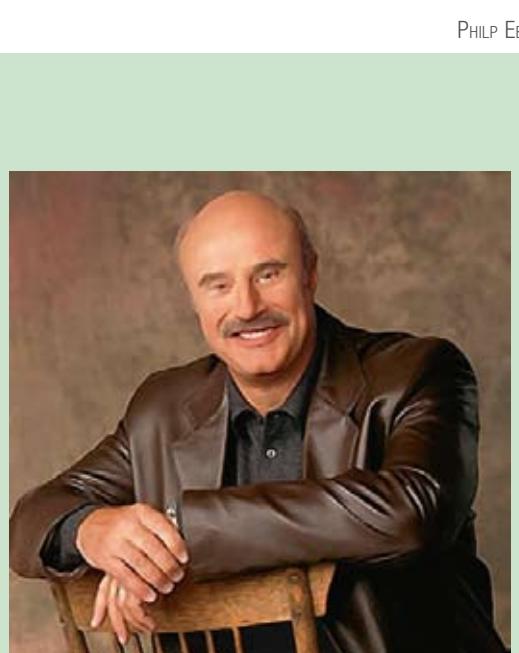
It is a particularly artsy issue, this week's *Flanders Today*. Which is not a crime, considering *de zeeën van tijd*, the seas of time (an expression used to say a lot of free time), that overwhelm you at the outset of the summer holidays. You, not me, since our dear *hoofdredacteur*, head editor or editor-in-chief, is on holiday and has left the rest of our editorial team to fend for ourselves.

Als *de kat van huis is*, as they used to say in a time when people still used proverbs, *dansen de muizen op tafel*. When the cat's away from home, the mice dance on the table (or: When the cat's away, the mice will play).

So, I have a proposal: I would like you, my ever so loyal reader of the Talking Dutch column, to tell me what you would like to know about the Dutch language. What's the difference between *Vlaams*, Flemish, and *Nederlands*, Dutch? Is it the same language? Why is it called Dutch? Why do we use so many pronominal adverbs – therewith unnecessarily complicating things? What is a pronominal adverb? Do we do it on purpose?

It can be anything. Something you hear on the radio or see on TV. Something you see written on a signboard somewhere or on the back of the shampoo bottle – a great way to expand your *woordenschat*, literally treasure of words (beautiful!), vocabulary. It can be about *werk*, *liefde* of *het leven in het algemeen*, work, love, or life in general. It can be *wanhopig*, desperate, angry, *boos*, or just *nieuwsgierig*, another beautiful concoction of *nieuws*, news, and *gierig*, greedy. Curious.

We all know that the Dutch language can be challenging and isn't the most forgiving when it comes to trying to learn it, let alone speak it in real life with real people. So send me your frustrations, your annoyances and your fears.



PHILIP EBELS

I'll be here for you. I'll be here to answer all your questions. I'll be your Dr. Phil.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

philip.ebels@ackroyd.be

PS. I would also like to remind you that there is a possibility to discuss the issues raised in this column and to leave comments on flanderstoday.eu/dutch.

THE LAST WORD . . .

Stormy weather

"The circumstances in which hailstones are formed are so specific they are almost impossible to manipulate. According to our observations, hail-cannons have never had an effect."

The Royal Meteorological Institute has a let-down for fruit-growers in Limburg who install cannons to prevent hail damage to crops

Speaking metaphorically

"It's like a cocktail with dozens of ingredients. You can't explain how it tastes, you just have to taste it yourself."

Journalist Leen Vervaeke, writing in the *Volkskrant*, on her difficulty explaining Bart De Wever to the Dutch

Sweet surrender

"The retailers pretend Liege waffles are the real thing, and cover them in chocolate and whipped cream. Meanwhile the Brussels waffles are hardly sold at all."

Member of the Brussels Parliament Joel Riguille is demanding action to stop the Walloon invasion of the capital's waffle shops

Badass kid

"It wasn't hard for me, but it was for my Dad. I only had a bit of pain in my legs."

Alexander, aged nine from Noorderwijk near Antwerp, cycled up Mont Ventoux, one of the most formidable climbs of the Tour de France

NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #190

Feature

Bees in Flanders, as elsewhere, are dying off in worrying numbers. Why? What are the consequences and what can be done about it?

Focus

4D Dynamics is a Flemish company that scans objects to make 3D images. One of their clients is the US government. A remarkable success story.

Arts

Flanders Today talks with director Johan Heldenbergh about his newest film *Schellebelle 1919*, coming out next week.