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# Not the funny pages

## Comic book magazine Stripgids celebrates its 25th edition

PHILIP EBELS

Toon Horsten is an intellectual. He is a writer, journalist, German studies graduate and the author of a book about books. And he is the lone editor of Stripgids, a free bimonthly about what the Belgians call the ninth art and, according to Horsten, "the only real comic book magazine in Flanders," whose 25th edition has recently been published. "It was a nice thing, being asked to make a new magazine," he says, seated at a garden table on a narrow patch of green behind his picturesque little house within the walls of the *begijnhof* in Turnhout. "And we, the publisher and myself, decided to make it a good magazine."

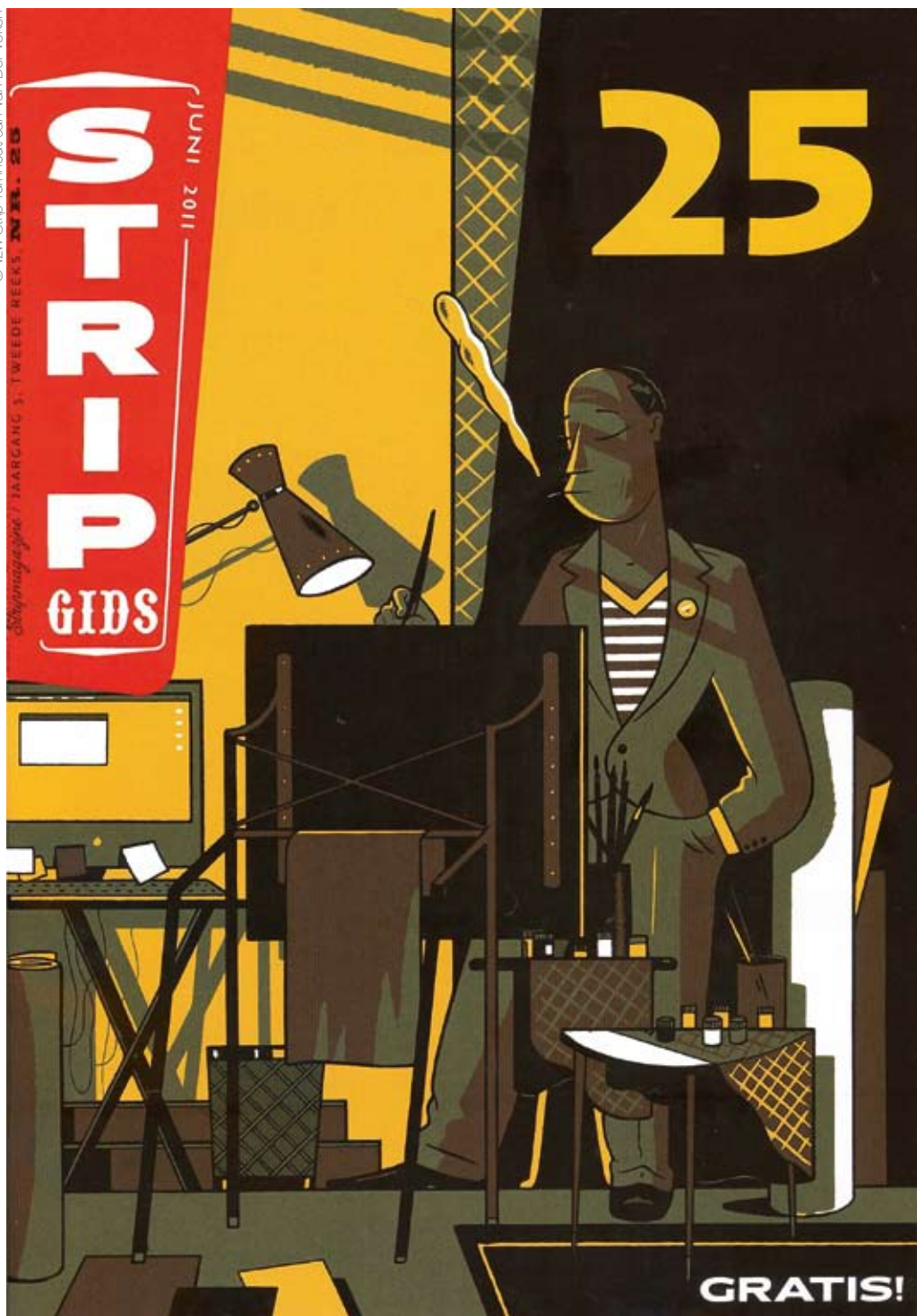
### A new life

That was in early 2006, when the province of Antwerp and the non-profit organisation Strip Turnhout – which also organises an annual comic book festival, the oldest and biggest of its kind in Flanders and an award ceremony for the Flemish Culture Prize for Comic Books – expressed their wish to relaunch the magazine that had existed in the early '80s, to inform the public about the developments in the flourishing Flemish comic book scene.

Back then, comic books were living in their heyday. It is when artistic comics began to appear, rather than just the strips, on the funny pages that had been a part of people's daily newspaper ceremony for years. It is when artists like Robert Crumb, Manara, or the Flemish Marvano burst on the scene. Belgian authors like Hergé (of Kuifje, or Tintin, the star of the soon-to-open film directed by Steven Spielberg and Peter Jackson) and Willy Vandersteen (of *Suske & Wiske*) had already established themselves internationally. "For many, it was the main form of entertainment," Horsten says.

The life of the first Stripgids lasted 11 years with 32 issues printed. The editor, Jan Smet, who throughout that period kept his day job and ran the magazine in his spare time, had decided to dedicate its content to Flemish rather than to international artists – or even Belgian artists writing in French, who got their share of attention from the international comic book press. "But there was absolutely nothing about what was happening in Flanders," he says in an interview, published in the first edition of the new Stripgids, in September 2006.

➡ continued on page 5



Illustrator Jan Van Der Veken agreed to create the cover of Stripgids #25

## Van Broeckhoven world champ

Limburger Steven Van Broeckhoven (*pictured*) has become the world freestyle windsurfing champion for 2011, after picking up the Freestyle World Cup in Fuerteventura on the Canary Islands last week.

Van Broeckhoven, 25, adds the title to his European championship wins of 2009 and 2010 and his fourth place worldwide last year. He is the first Belgian to win the world title and the first European in 11 years. And that's despite a knee injury in the first of the competition's seven stages, which took place in Vietnam. He then went on to win three of the next five stages and place second twice – enough to give him an unassailable lead before going entering the finals on the island of Sylt, Germany, last September.

"It's like winning the lottery. I'm going to need some time for it to sink in," Van Broeckhoven said. "I know what I'm capable of and what the jury wants to see, but I never dreamed I would take the title." ♦



## Belgacom boss accused of corruption

### Property deal raises questions for telecommunications CEO

ALAN HOPE

Didier Bellens, CEO of Belgacom, has been accused of corruption in connection with the sale in 2006 of a piece of real estate by a Belgacom subsidiary. The case is thought to concern an investigation into the affairs of Edmée De Groeve, former chair of Charleroi airport, the National Lottery and the rail authority NMBS. She is accused of a variety of offences, including forgery and using false documentation, as well as

submitting expense claims to both the airport and the NMBS. Bellens has been interviewed twice by detectives involved with the De Groeve case and has now been accused of "passive corruption", which suggests the taking of bribes in his capacity as head of a government business. (Paying bribes to officials and civil servants is known as "active corruption".)

➡ continued on page 3





## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



## News in brief

The Flemish public transport authority De Lijn is planning four **new tram routes** linking Flanders with Brussels by 2020, at a cost of €1.5 billion. The lines would link the capital with Ninove, Boom, and Heist-op-den-Berg, with the fourth still under consideration, possibly a circular route from Tervuren via Zaventem to Vilvoorde and Jette. At present, the Brussels MIVB operates trams to and from Tervuren, Ban-Eik and Groot-Bijgaarden, all in Flemish Brabant.

A former alderwoman from the municipality of Ninove in East Flanders was last week found **strangled to death** in the home in Denderwindeke of a man police are supposing to be the killer. The man later committed suicide by hanging. Mariette De Smet sat on the municipal council as a liberal since 1988, later changing parties to Lijst Dedecker and then the local group Forza Ninove. She was relieved of her post as alderwoman this year. Police are investigating.

Antwerp Zoo last week announced the birth of Mchawi, a **baby okapi** born on 4 July but kept indoors until now. Mchawi, whose name means "magician" in Swahili, is the 47th okapi to be born in the zoo. Mother Hakima was born there in 2006. The okapi is related to the giraffe, although its markings are similar to those of the zebra. Antwerp Zoo leads the European Endangered Species Programme for the okapi.

## Tijl Uilenspiegel

Since last week, visitors to the picturesque West Flanders town of Damme have been able to see something that hasn't been seen in public for 500 years: the 16 remaining pages of an unbound copy of the first publication of the adventures of Tijl Uilenspiegel, dating from 1510 or 1511.

Tijl Uilenspiegel, as he was originally known, (and still is in German), is the hero of a set of picaresque adventures composed in around 1500, possibly by Herman Bote from Brunswick. Almost certainly a fictional character, Tijl's legend has nonetheless been claimed by towns and cities he visited on his travels, like Cologne, Rostock, Bremen and Marburg, and including a gravestone in Mölln, where he is said to have died of the Black Death in 1350.

The Flemish connection comes from a rewriting of the legend by Charles De Coster, born in Germany in 1827, son of a Flemish father, who wrote in French and was a friend of the painter Félicien Rops. De Coster re-imagined Tijl being born in Damme in 1527, which explains the presence there today of a museum and an outdoor sculpture showing Tijl, his friends Lamme Goedzak and Nele, and the animals he met on his adventures.

De Coster's version of Tijl was more than just the empty-headed

joker of legend; he was also a symbol of the spirit of Flanders. He fought alongside the Geuzen against the Spanish occupier, led by Philip II and the Duke of Alva, as well as continually butting heads with the church, to the extent of having himself baptised six times in one day, and making a fool of the Pope on an enforced pilgrimage to Rome.

The book was a critical success, though the cost of an edition illustrated by Rops was too much to ensure high sales, and De Coster only escaped penury thanks to his job teaching at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels. He died in 1879, and is buried in the cemetery of Elsene.

The folios on display come from the first edition of the original by Bote, published in Strasbourg by Johannes Grüninger and sold in Frankfurt and Leipzig. The first Dutch-language version of the book was published in Antwerp between 1525 and 1547.

The exhibition *UnFASStbar* (a pun on "incomprehensible" and "unable to be caught"), a collaboration between three German museums and the Uilenspiegel Museum in Damme, runs until 6 November, after which it travels to Bemmburg and Mölln.

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

Civil servants working for the Flemish government have been told to stop taking their **cigarette breaks** on the street beside the main entrances to official buildings. According to administrative affairs minister Geert Bourgeois, "smoking at the entrance to buildings causes limited access, and damages the health of members of staff. Above all, it has a bad influence on the reputation of the Flemish government." The ban will also be exercised on visitors to government offices, although one legal expert told news agency Belga that the government has technically no say over what happens on a public thoroughfare.

A three-metre cross formed of **three phalluses and a scrotum** on display in an abbey in Koksijde has been hauled down by vandals. The sculpture by Peter Depelchin is part of an art route organised by the municipality's culture department, but has caused controversy in the town. According to the artist, the work is a reference to the recent sex-abuse scandal surrounding the Catholic church.

Archaeologists have unearthed **burial remains** from the first or second century which throw new light on cremation customs of the time. In each of the sites discovered in Merelbeke, East Flanders, diggers found a cooking pot with lid. According to the organisers of the dig, bodies were first burned on a funeral pyre, then the ashes gathered and buried together with a form of funereal offering such as food, intended to see the deceased through the journey to the afterlife.

The city of Brussels has abandoned a programme to **sterilise pigeons** in an effort to tackle overpopulation, after a video released by animal rights organisation Gaia showed the birds being surgically sterilised without anaesthetic. The birds were caught and transported to Paris for the procedure. Gaia is now calling for more dovecots to be installed in the worst-affected areas, where pigeon eggs would be replaced with fakes to lower the birth-rate.

The last barrier to the **demolition of the former race-course** at Groenendaal fell last week when the Council of State refused an application by Hoeilaart municipal council to protect the buildings. The Nature and Woodland Agency has ordered most of the course buildings to be demolished, and the course itself turned into grassland adjoining the Zonienwoud forest. Hoeilaart wanted to renovate the buildings and turn the site into a tourist attraction.

A 55-year-old woman from Knokke-Heist has been **convicted of fraud** and ordered to pay her victims a total of €810,000 in damages by a court in Bruges. The woman pretended to be related to a rich businessman and sought funds from dozens of victims to help her lay hands on a large inheritance – which never materialised. She was also sentenced to three years in prison and fined €550.

## OFFSIDE

ALAN HOPE

## Nose jobs: All in the mind?

More than four in 10 patients who seek cosmetic rhinoplasty – commonly known as a nose job – could be suffering from moderate to severe Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), according to a study by a team of researchers led by Professor Peter Hellings at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL) and the university of Heraklion in Greece. The study is published in this month's issue of the journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*.

BDD is characterised by an exaggerated concern with a perceived defect in the general physical appearance or in a particular feature. This obsession can lead to anxiety and depression, social phobia and an increased chance of suicide. "Body dysmorphic disorder is often present in a hidden state," the study says. "Patients are often too ashamed to seek help from their general practitioner or mental health practitioner. Moreover, they frequently show impaired judgment regarding the psychiatric origin of their problems and often seek cosmetic treatment because they are convinced they warrant medical rather than psychiatric attention."

To make matters worse, whatever cosmetic procedures are carried out are unlikely to satisfy the patient, whose BDD is rooted in the mind rather than the facial features. One in five of the patients tested had already had at least one previous rhinoplasty.

The study was carried out on 226 subjects at the ear, nose and throat department of the KUL hospital. Prospective patients for both functional and cosmetic surgery on the nose were given questionnaires developed together with the psychiatric department, and were asked to rate the shape of their own nose on a scale of one to 10. Their nose shapes were also rated objectively by two independent observers.

The study found signs of moderate to severe BDD in only 12% of those patients whose motive for surgery was functional – to treat a breathing problem, for example. In those whose motives were aesthetic, on the other hand, the proportion rose to 43%. Reason for surgery, together with psychiatric history and previous rhinoplasty were all factors influencing the higher result, whereas age, sex and ethnicity had no effect. Likewise, the presence or absence of an objectively determined nasal deformity had no effect on the occurrence of BDD.

BDD has been found to be present in up to 3% of the general population, rising to 5.3% among students in higher education. So the finding of signs of the disorder among one-third of patients seeking nasal plastic surgery is significant. The study did not specifically look at other examples of cosmetic surgery.

→ [www.tinyurl.com/hellings](http://www.tinyurl.com/hellings)

## FLANDERS TODAY

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Editor: Lisa Bradshaw

Deputy Editor: Philip Ebels

News Editor: Alan Hope

Agenda Editor: Robyn Boyle

Art director: Michel Didier

Prepress: Corelio P&P

Contributors: Rebecca Benoot, Laurens Bouckaert, Robyn Boyle, Leo Cendrowicz, Sabine Clappaert, Courtney Davis, Nicolas de Moy, Stéphanie Duval, Jacqueline Fletcher, Andy Furniere, Anna Jenkinson, Katrien Lindemans, Marc Maes, Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Monique Philips, Christophe Verbiest, Denzil Walton

General manager: Joske Plas

Publisher: Corelio Publishing NV

Editorial address:

Gossetlaan 30

1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

Tel.: 02.373.99.09 – Fax: 02.375.98.22

[editorial@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:editorial@flanderstoday.eu)

Free subscriptions:

[subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu)

or sign up online at [www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)

Advertising: Evelyne Fregonese

02.373.83.57

[advertising@flanderstoday.eu](mailto:advertising@flanderstoday.eu)

Verantwoordelijke uitgever:

Lisa Bradshaw







## Belgacom CEO no stranger to controversy

→ continued from page 1

According to reports unconfirmed by investigators, Bellens received holiday trips in exchange for the sale of the property to a company involved with De Groeve's husband, for a price below market value. The actual accusation apparently took place in June, after which Bellens informed the Belgacom board. In a statement, federal minister Inge Vervotte stressed that Bellens (pictured) was innocent until proven guilty and called on the Belgacom board to ensure the matter caused as little disruption as possible to the functioning of the business. The board of Belgacom, the country's largest telecommunications company, declined to comment except to say that the interests of the largely state-owned company were safeguarded. Bellens remains in his post during an internal investigation carried out by the company's audit committee. Flemish political party N-VA,

however, have demanded a full explanation of the matter from Vervotte, as well as federal finance minister Didier Reynders. It has called, together with green party Groen!, for an immediate recall of parliament's infrastructure and finance committee.

Bellens has been at the top of Belgacom since 2003 and was at the centre of controversy in 2008 during the renewal of his contract, when his generous remuneration package of over €3 million, one of the highest among the Bel20 companies, was criticised as inappropriate for a government enterprise. As part of the renewed contract terms, Bellens was forced to accept a pay cut to €2.2 million. He also experienced a negative evaluation from 10 of the 15 directors at the time, who found him lacking in international ambitions. In June 2009 Bellens was suspected of insider trading when he bought a package of shares



© Belga

in a company that Belgacom was eyeing up for takeover in 2005. The shares gained €300,000 in value in a matter of days, but Bellens was exonerated by the Commission for

Banking, Finance and Insurance. The case against De Groeve comes to court in Charleroi in the autumn. ♦

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



### €1,540

in municipal taxes paid by the residents of Nieuwpoort and Koksijde in West Flanders, the most expensive local authorities in Flanders. The cheapest at €310 was Herstappe in Limburg province

### 5.5

million tourist overnights in Brussels in 2010, an increase of 6.9% over 2009. Events such as the Belgian EU presidency and the Tour de France helped increase the figures

### 66,000

speeding fines handed out to motorists driving too fast in the area of roadworks on the E17 between Deinze and Zwijnaarde in barely four months. The total fines amount to €3.3 million, one-seventh of the cost of the works

### 557

motorists fined nationwide in 2009 for driving too slowly, which is also forbidden by law. In the first half of 2010, there were 238 cases

### 3-1

scored so far by the bonobos in Planckendaal animal park, in a contest to see whether they or the chimpanzees in Antwerp Zoo are the smartest (See Flanders Today, 29 June). The competition still has two heats to go

## Protests over noise restrictions on children

More than 600 parents and children gathered in Bruges last weekend to take part in a march to protest the ruling of a local judge who ordered a child-care centre to limit working hours after complaints from a neighbour over noise. Some children, in a symbolic protest, wore tape over their mouths with the word "Verboden" (Forbidden).

The Pietje Pek creche, which caters for children too young to go to pre-school, must now close at 19.00 on weekends and during school holidays. The creche is now faced with closure unless it decides to appeal the ruling, An Vissers, one of the march organisers, told the VRT. "Next time it will be a playground that has to move from the centre of town or a youth club, and we're not going to take it anymore. We don't want to turn our kids into houseplants.... For a healthy mind in a healthy body, you need to be able to play outside."

The youth council in the city has organised a letter-writing campaign asking Flemish ministers Pascal Smet (education and youth), Joke Schauvliege (environment) and Jo Vandeuren (public health) to protect children's right to play outside by law. Meanwhile, Open VLD members of the Flemish parliament Ann Brusseel and Mercedes Van Volcem (a resident of Bruges) have introduced a bill that would make a complaint about noise produced by playing children impossible as long as the play took place during daylight hours.

Earlier this month a child-care centre in Erondégem, East Flanders, was forced to move after losing an appeal against a similar complaint. A judge ordered the creche to close at weekends and to have no more than 15 children at any time. In March, a judge in Poperinge, West Flanders, banned ball



© Belga

games from a public playground to cut the noise nuisance to neighbours. Last year, complaints were brought successfully against noisy children in Ghent, Asse, Erpe-Mere and Beernem, where a creche was ordered to be surrounded by a sound-insulating wall.

"Children have to be allowed to play and not just within four walls," commented Van Volcem. "Surely we all agree about that? Yet the number of conflicts between playing children and neighbours has been growing over the last few years, and more and more often becomes a case for the courts, where the children are the losers." ♦

## Antwerp top-speed city for internet

Belgium has one of the fastest average internet speeds in the world, according to a global report published by consultants Akamai for the first quarter of this year. Belgium lies in ninth place in the world, with an average download speed of 6.1 megabytes per second (Mbps), 11% more than in the last quarter of 2010, and an impressive 29% higher than one year ago. South Korea was top of the table at 14.4 Mbps. Fastest in Europe

is the Netherlands at 7.5 Mbps. Within Belgium, Antwerp is the fastest at 6.7 Mbps. And Antwerp is the only Belgian city to figure in the city top 100, which is headed by Tokai in Japan. The best performance from a European city comes from Lyse in Norway, in 33rd place.

Belgium is in seventh place for peak speeds, just behind Portugal on 24.7 Mbps but doesn't figure on the list of the top 100 fastest cities for peak speeds.

More than half of all Belgian homes are connected to a network allowing data traffic of more than five Mbps, putting the country in fifth place globally, thanks in large part to the cable network and the relative population density: the Netherlands is in second place, while the US, with many remote areas, manages only 39% broadband connectivity, good for 12th place. ♦

## FIFTH COLUMN

### Climbing out

The Flemish socialists are very different from their comrades across the language border. They are the more modern social-democrats, but the main difference is the Flemish SP.A's electoral strength. While Wallonia is often described as a PS-state, Flanders is anything but socialist country. At the 2010 federal elections, only 14% of the voters backed SP.A; the left side vote, including the greens, totaled merely 20%.

Getting more voters is the number one job for SP.A's new president. In September Bruno Tobback, the only candidate for the job, will succeed Caroline Gennez as the head of the socialist party.

Over the past years, Gennez and her drawing voice have been blamed for SP.A's many shortcomings. As a prodigy of a successful generation, known as the Teletubbies, Gennez inherited a divided party. Having been in government for years, many people believed that SP.A had lost its soul. It certainly lost touch with its traditional worker electorate. "Loft socialists" is one of the more pleasant names the outgoing leadership had to endure.

Somehow Bruno Tobback, who belongs to the same generation as Gennez, has not been tainted by this. To most people, he is in the first place his father's son. Louis Tobback, currently mayor of Leuven, became a legendary opposition leader in the 1980s, when he was the loudest politician in town. He went out of fashion later, when, as a minister in the Dehaene government, he stood for austerity measures and law and order.

Later still, he became "emperor Louis", ruling over Leuven apparently single handedly. These days, Louis Tobback has become somewhat trendy again, with a widely read column in *De Morgen*. Rather in line with his character, he does not write the column himself (dating, as he does, from a pre-computer era), but dictates it to a journalist. How's that for being an oracle? But it is the son, not the father, who is to become SP.A president. Bruno Tobback shares with his father a confidence bordering on arrogance. Aside from that, little is known of the son, apart from a climbing accident some years ago which could have been fatal.

Young Tobback wants to represent "the other Flanders", bringing the party's message across more clearly. In the Alps, some years ago, Bruno Tobback was saved by his girlfriend. Whether anyone will hold Bruno's life line climbing out of the socialist abyss, remains to be seen.



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Toon Horsten, the lone editor of Strippgids

# Not the funny pages

“Ours is a literary, journalistic approach”

→ continued from page 1

## Better than the rest

Horsten decided not to change the course of the magazine too much, even though he also gives ample attention to artists from outside of Flanders. “We try not to belong to a single camp,” he says, “but to cover the full spectrum of the comic book genre: the graphic novel, the family comic book, manga, adventure or science fiction, Flemish or not. We try to have a journalistic approach. We publish many interviews, sometimes 16 pages long, and

not many cartoons. We put the emphasis on information, not on entertainment.” He says that most comic book magazines have a different approach, especially in Flanders. “Most magazines are run by comic book collectors,” he says. “When they go to meet an author for an interview, they bring a copy of his book to have it signed.” The stories they publish, he says, are often similar and remain superficial. “They never, for example, interview screenwriters,” he says, “who nevertheless play an

increasingly crucial role in the creation process.” Strippgids not long ago published an interview with the screenwriter of *Blacksad*, the immensely popular series about a hard-boiled private investigator in an anthropomorphic animal society set in 1950s America.

A quick look at the latest issue justifies any hint of pretension. There are no less than five interviews, including an interview with two sons of the late Bob de Moor, one of the Big Three of Flemish comic book authors (together with Willy Vandersteen and Marc Sleen, of *The Adventures of Nero & Co* and an interview with Nicolas de Crécy, one of the big names of the French alternative comic book scene.

## And better looking

But most of all, it looks good. It looks like a magazine made for the culturally savvy - almost like a literary magazine. “When we began thinking about design,” Horsten says, “we gathered all the comic book magazines we could find. But despite being graphic media, most of them didn’t look good. They looked like colouring books. We wanted to bring a sense of restfulness to our magazine. We like to print black-and-white photographs, for example, and our tone of voice is relaxed.” Relaxed, but not boring. The first issue of the new

Strippgids ran an essay of Art Spiegelman, the cartoonist and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Maus*, a biography of his father’s survival of the Holocaust, on “the art of insulting.” It touched upon the controversy around the Danish Muhammad cartoons, which were supposed to be published alongside the story. “That was a dilemma,” Horsten says. “In the end, we decided to run them, because the essay was about the cartoons, not the story behind it. Nobody even seemed to notice. After all, they’re just a couple of badly drawn cartoons.” There is a stable of literature writers who contribute to the magazine. Flemish authors Walter Vandenbroeck and Tom Naegels, for example, wrote about Morris, author of *Lucky Luke*, and the graphic journalist Joe Sacco respectively. Even John Updike wrote for Strippgids about Charles M. Schultz, author of *Peanuts*, who went off to become

the richest cartoonist ever. The article was only published, however, after Updike was duly informed by *The New Yorker* magazine that they wanted to publish it first.

## A national sport

Belgium has a long tradition in comic books, or *bandes dessinées* in French. France has as well. Not surprisingly, most early works from Belgium were written in French. Morris is from Flanders, but Lucky Luke speaks French. So does *Blacksad*, even though his creators are Spanish.

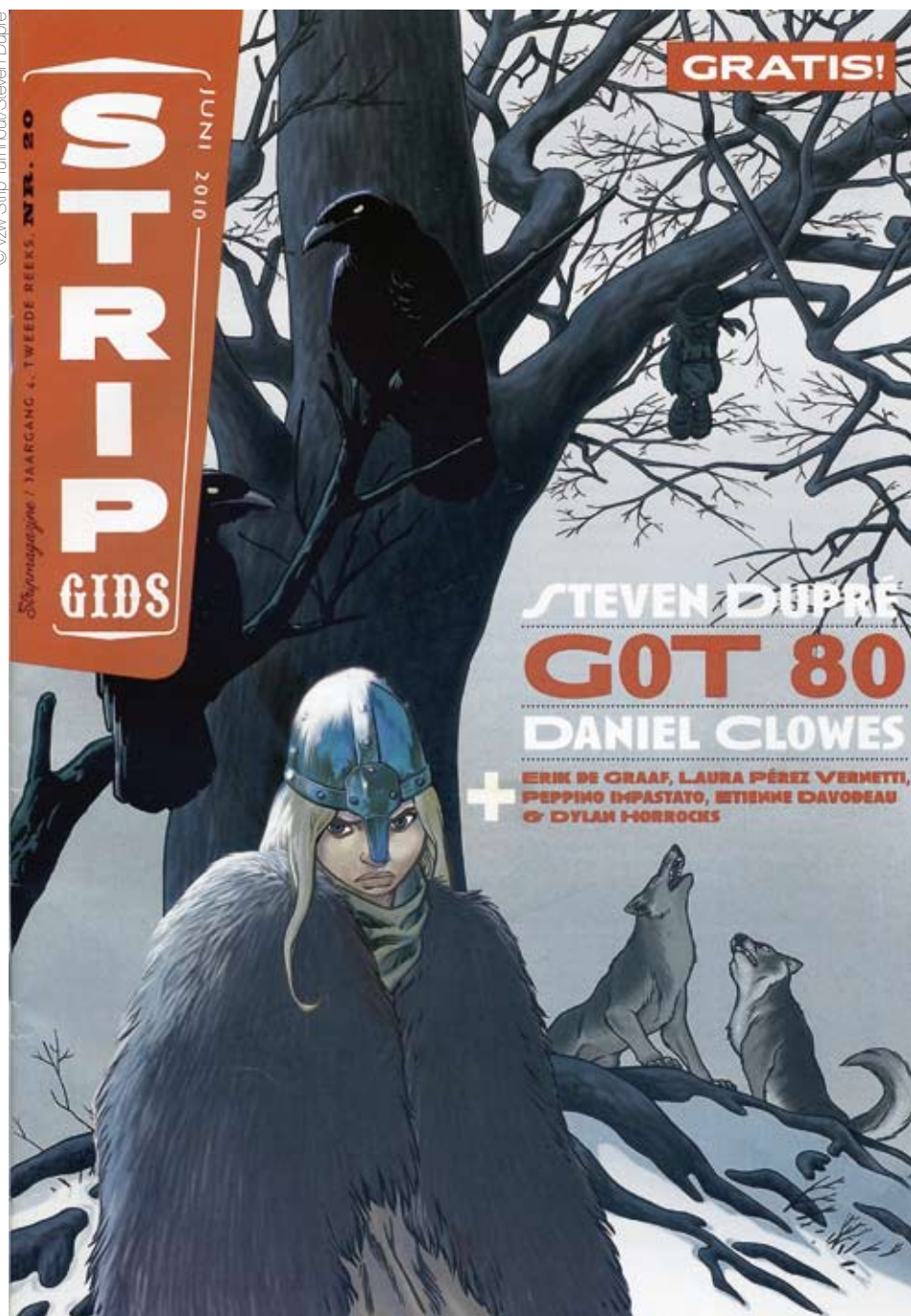
The French language is still dominant in the comic book scene, but different languages such as English and Dutch are slowly starting to nibble at its hegemony. “There is a new generation of Flemish comic book authors,” says Horsten, “like Brecht Evens [known for his prize-winning *Ergens waar je niet wil zijn*, published in English under the title *The Wrong Place*] and Judith van Istendael [of *De Maagd en De Neger*, or *The Virgin and The Negro*], who have been able to break into the mainstream.”

Comic books will, however, always remain a niche market, he says. And therefore most of their authors will as well. The hype that spawned successes such as Spiegelman’s *Maus* seems to have withered. “The comic book’s share of overall book sales is back

at its natural proportion,” Horsten says. Most graphic novels sell no more than 500 to 1000 copies. “But then popular comic books continue to do very well. Kiekeboe, for example, sells 800,000 copies per year and is Flanders’ best selling book.”

The Strippgids editorial offices are a computer that seems to hail from the ’80s and a desk covered in books, prints and papers. “It’s a lot of work,” Horsten admits, “but luckily, I can count on a group of good freelance contributors.” His bookcases bulge under the pressure of comic books big and small. But he doesn’t consider himself a collector. “I like to read them,” he says, “not look at them.” ♦

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



The cover of Strippgids #20 was made by the current laureate of the Flemish comic prize, Steven Dupré

# JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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# Vietnam chooses Belgian satellite

New monitor of environmental conditions will be launched by 2016

ALAN HOPE

The government of Vietnam has announced an agreement to manufacture a new environmental observation satellite for launch in 2016, in cooperation with a consortium of Belgian companies including QinetiQ Space of Kruibeke in East Flanders, and Spacebel of Liège and Hoeilaart. Feasibility studies are currently under way, with a formal contract expected to be signed in March of next year. The VNREDSAT-1B satellite will include remote sensing, high-resolution, multi-spectral and hyper-spectral imaging, to be used for regular and rapid monitoring of the environmental situation in South-East Asia. Its predecessor, VNREDSAT-1A, is currently being constructed in Toulouse, France, for launch in 2013 or 2014.

The satellite is of the Proba type (Project for OnBoard Autonomy), an intelligent micro-satellite backed by the federal science policy office since the 1990s. QinetiQ will be the main contractor for the construction, with Spacebel leading the development of on-board and ground software. Proba 1, launched in October 2001, is still going strong in an orbit 600 kilometres in space. Proba 1 was the first satellite to pinpoint the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland in 2010. Proba 3, an artist's impression (pictured), will be launched in late 2012 or early 2013, using technology from OIP Sensor Systems of Oudenaarde, East Flanders, to monitor the environment for the Flemish Institute for Technological Research in Mol, Antwerp province. ♦



## Sombre summer stifles sales

Retail stores sold on average 10% less during the summer sales period this year, which ended last weekend, according to figures from Unizo, the organisation for the self-employed, and Mode Unie, the clothing retail sector group. Bad weather throughout the month of July – described by the Meteorological Institute as the coldest in 10 years – is the main cause of the dip in sales, Unizo said. By contrast, shopping centres, where weather plays less of a role, managed to keep their sales up by as much as 16% compared to last summer. According to the figures, half of all retail outlets sold less than in 2010. Of those who did better, six in 10 sold the same as last year, while the rest

sold more. Part of the reason for the high number of shops selling less was the need to introduce a new round of discounts halfway through the month, in response to low demand. Shops are generally required to sell off their sales stock to make room for new winter stock, forcing them into deep discounts if sales volumes are low. One notable aspect of the poor sales performance: Even articles normally associated with holidays, such as swimsuits, sold badly, despite a surge in the number of people booking last-minute holidays in warmer climes. The last weekend of the sales was marked in Brussels by the opening of the country's first Forever 21 store on the Nieuwstraat. The brand already has 480 stores in the US. ♦



Antwerp's Meir shopping street, less busy than expected

## Brussels, Antwerp dearest for parking

Brussels and Antwerp are among the Top 30 most expensive cities to park your car long-term, according to a survey carried out by international real estate group Colliers. The survey looked at 156 central business districts across the world to figure out the most expensive places to park on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The data were collected in June this year. Brussels comes in 28th place and Antwerp in 29th place on a global scale, charging €374 and

€359 respectively for a month's parking. The table was headed by two locations in London. Brussels and Antwerp are, predictably, less expensive than London and New York, but more expensive than Paris, Madrid, Prague and Dublin. Cheapest place to park? Chicago, though the trip from parking place to office might add to the cost. ♦

## Foreign business owners on the increase

The number of self-employed of non-Belgian origin has risen in the past five years by 31%, almost four times as fast as the number of self-employed in general, according to the Neutral Union for the Self-Employed (NSZ). In 2010, there were nearly 952,600 self-employed in Belgium, of whom nearly 88,500 were of foreign origin – just over 9%. Five years ago, the latter figure was only 67,400. The largest number of foreign business owners are Dutch (17%), French and Italian (both 12%). However, the proportion of East Europeans is on the increase: Every

month some 250 citizens of those countries applies for the status of self-employed. "The problem is that only a third of that group is really starting up as a business owner," says Christine Mattheuws of NSZ. "The rest stop doing business immediately or declare themselves bankrupt, when they go knocking at the door of the [social aid agency] OCMW". The federal secretary of state in charge of tackling fraud, Carl Devlies, says he's aware of the problem. "Since 2010 we have been carrying out extra checks to tackle this sort of problem," his spokesman said. ♦

## Takeovers:

### Lufthansa's BA option; Delvaux bought by Chinese

German airline Lufthansa has a chance to take over Brussels Airlines in June of next year, assuming the share price moves in the direction expected, financial daily De Tijd reported. In 2009, Lufthansa bought 45% of the holding company that owns Brussels Airlines, SN Air Holding, for €65 million. At the same time, the Germans also acquired an option to buy the remaining 55% for a maximum price of €185 million. In the spring of this year, Lufthansa had the option to take up its sale but declined. Another chance will arise in June 2012, and the last in 2013. Everything depends on the share price at the moment Lufthansa decides whether or not to exercise its "call" option. Last year, BA made a small profit of €5.25 million. This year, however, the company is on track to lose €60 million as a result of higher oil prices, as well as fleet investments. If the share price follows those earnings figures, it's likely Lufthansa could pick up the remaining 55% of BA for less than the maximum price. According to Bloomberg, Lufthansa will wait until next year before reaching a decision on its option. If

they were to declare their intentions now, the share price of BA might go up and make the deal suddenly less interesting for Lufthansa.

Meanwhile, luxury leather goods house Delvaux, one of the most internationally recognised Belgian brands, has fallen largely into Chinese hands. Last week, the Hong Kong-based Fung Brands Limited obtained an undetermined stake in the company for an undisclosed price. Delvaux was set up in 1829 and specialised in travel trunks and suitcases, later moving into the handbags for which they are today so famous. In 1933, the Delvaux family sold to the Schwennicke family, which controlled the company until last week. After the Chinese deal, they retain a minority stake. Delvaux employs 245 people, 140 in Belgium and the rest in France and Vietnam. The takeover, the company said, will have no effect on jobs. ♦

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

## Chemicals • Solvay

Belgian chemicals giant Solvay reported an increase in turnover of 15% in the second quarter, compared to the same period one year ago. Thanks to price increases and a 4% increase in production, the company's profits were up more than 250%, from €44 million to €111 million. The company attributed its success to overseas expansion, especially in China, which makes it less vulnerable to recession-hit Europe and the US.

## Energy • Nuon

Italian energy concern Eni has bought Nuon Belgium from Sweden's Vattenfall for €157 million. The acquisition will not mean changes for Nuon's 340,000 customers in Belgium, nor for its 150 staff, the company said. However the name will change, as Vattenfall continues to own Nuon in the Netherlands.

## Finance • Société Générale

French bank Société Générale has struck a deal with the judicial authorities in Belgium to avoid appearing in court in connection with a major fraud case involving about 20 Belgian companies. In exchange for dropping out of the case, Société Générale has admitted guilt and paid an estimated €40 million to tax and judicial departments. The company declined to comment on the report.

## Food • Pringles

Potato chips brand Pringles is offering staff at its Mechelen production facility a premium of €7,000 if they stay with the company when it is sold by Procter & Gamble to Diamond Foods, unions said. According to the company, all options are still at the negotiating stage, with nothing yet decided. Unions said many workers had already left because of the uncertain future of the facility, something Pringles management denied.

## Media • De Standaard

Flemish news daily De Standaard has launched a new mobile platform for smartphones, featuring larger images, pages that can be navigated by touch-screen and a new search function. According to the Online Publishers' Association, 28% of Belgians now surf the web on a smartphone, with 21% more planning to buy one in the near future.

→ <http://m.destandaard.be>

## Software • Drupal

Internet sensation Twitter has called on Drupal, the open-source content management system invented by Antwerp entrepreneur Dries Buytaert, to create its new community site for software developers. Twitter joins companies like NBC and Al Jazeera in adopting Drupal. Last week Buytaert's American operation, Acquia, raised €10.4 million in new capital, after raising €5.9 million in November.

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



# Oh yeah

## Locals relive the 1950s

MONIQUE PHILIPS

Don't be discouraged if at first you can't find Café Kiebooms amongst the bright neon lights of De Coninckplein in Antwerp. Some people will have heard of the legendary '50s jazz club, but few will know it has reopened and under what wider flag it sails. So, enjoy this moment of the jazz club's mystique, then remember that you're in-the-know, Daddy-O, and head to the inconspicuous Café Olympia at nr 18.

When accordionist Leo Kiebooms bought the Olympia in 1949, he kept its name and some of its features – hence the lit-up discus-thrower at the entrance, a reminder of the Antwerp 1920s Olympic Games. But he spared no costs to decorate the rest of the joint with fancy blue lights and

had a little stage built, one that snugly fit his jazz combo. Soon the Olympia came to be known as Café Kiebooms, and the legend lives on today.

It's for this petite stage that Flanders' coolest jazz musicians are queuing up. Having been closed for about 20 years, Café Kiebooms and its authentic 1950s setting is reliving some of the glamour of its heydays. And young fans keen for that old jazz feeling have tuned in.

### Publicans by chance

Barmen Koen Raeymaekers and Victor Mees aren't your average café owners. In fact, they work for a non-profit organisation that, among other things, designs city tours

focussing on urban renewal areas. Their offices overlook the square of the De Coninckplein. When in 2008 they were looking for a surprise location to end a city bus tour that linked Antwerp to the iconic World Expo of 1958, they remembered this small café that had been closed for years.

They asked around and met up with its owner, Sylvia, Leo Kiebooms' granddaughter. Sylvia had been raised by her grandfather and revered him. When he died in 1990, she let down the café's rolling shutter for the last time and kept it intact and locked up like a shrine. Apprehensive at first, she eventually entrusted the two men with the keys of her beloved café. Knowing the neighbourhood well, she realised that it was high time for a project that might counter the growing numbers of drug addicts hanging around. Locals seemed desperate for an easy-going meeting place.

*In 1950s Antwerp, there wasn't a square without a jazz club*

Once the café opened up for the bus tour, the word-of-mouth effect was enormous. Enthusiasts wanted to rent the place for parties, and locals came knocking on the door, begging Raeymaekers and Mees to open the café on a regular basis. Which is what they did. "We hadn't exactly planned to become publicans as our final career move," Raeymaekers smiles. "Ours is the world of theatre and the arts. Our diaries are brimming with stuff to do. But we enjoy running the café, and it seems to be one of those projects we're just bound to follow up on."

They recently hooked up with KunstenNoord.net, a neighbourhood group of local arts projects. "It corresponds with our initial dream of offering an open stage to anyone young and creative," Raeymaekers says. "In doing so, we want to try and resurrect the creative vibe of the '50s Kiebooms café and once again offer this neighbourhood a beating heart."

### Antwerp, jazz and basketball

The Kiebooms vibe is infrangibly connected with Antwerp's historic jazz scene. The many American soldiers that remained stationed after the Second World War – the



## Big guns and living legends Jazz Middelheim celebrates

If there's one music festival this summer where the rhythmic sound of raindrops on the marquis will only add to the fun, it's Jazz Middelheim in Antwerp. Moreover. After three full decades, the festival has dipped into its 30-year-old address book and managed to call in an impressive line-up. Four days of performances will woo the crowds in the Den Brandt Park well into the night.

Trio Grande featuring Matthew Bourne will play the opening dance, on 12 August. Their urban folk music is skittish at times, but highly accessible. The first day of the festival further welcomes Flemish big guns Bert Joris and Toots Thielemans. The first is a composer with an impressive discography who has played over 200 concerts at Jazz Middelheim alone. He'll be accompanied by the Brussels Jazz Orchestra, who were once praised as one of the 10 best big bands by the American jazz magazine *Downbeat*.

The second needs little introduction. Accredited jazz master and widely known to be one of the best harmonica players in the world, 89-year-old *Brusseleer* Thielemans will set the pace when he plays with his Brazilian musical cronies, guitarist Oscar Castro-Neves, one of the creators of the bossa nova music style, and Aírto Moreira, a drummer and percussionist. Here's a man who has played alongside big jazz stars like George Shearing, Ella Fitzgerald, Quincy Jones, Bill Evans, Natalie Cole, Paul Simon and Billy Joel, and has been requested as

a soloist for many movie scores including *Midnight Cowboy* and *The Getaway*. Be ready to be mesmerised under the stars.

John Zorn's Book of Angels series will take up 13 August as a whole. Only a musician as prolific and versatile as this New Yorker can pull that off. Endlessly searching for the many musical languages in the world of improvisation, the world-famous composer and sax man often puts his compositions together like a trashy collage: fast successions of seemingly inconsistent musical elements. Zorn will also be playing an exclusive organ concert in the church of De Olijftak in Lange Winkelstraat 5. You'll need a separate ticket to get in.

Sunday, 14 August, will not be a day of rest. Trumpet player Dave Douglas, usually known from the New York downtown jazz scene, will be accompanying a couple of Artesis University College affiliates he has been coaching. After, the Ghent-based Lady Linn & Her Magnificent Seven will take the floor. By putting a tang of soul and funk into old-time jazz, they have come up with a very contemporary, poppy sound. This spring they released their new album *No Goodbye At All*, a cool second notch on their belt.

Living legend Allen Toussaint springs from the Rhythm & Blues scene of New Orleans, but has travelled many roads since. Paul McCartney, Paul Simon, Elvis Costello, Patti LaBelle, Joe Cocker, The Rolling Stones and many others have covered his songs.

Jamie Cullum is a world star and mixes jazz with contemporary influences. He sees jazz as a huge platform, onto which you can embrace dance, pop, funk and other music styles. His concerts are invariably highly entertaining. On 15 August the energetic Cuban Omar Sosa takes the stage. He created a unique style of Afro-Cuban jazz and is said to play like a shaman at times. Flowing on that same river of African-American jazz is Randy Weston, and the unpredictable Liberation Music Orchestra might well close the festival with yet another highlight. (MP) ♦

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

**Radio Klara**, lifelong partner of Jazz Middelheim, will be broadcasting all concerts live, as well as highlights from the last 30 years on Sunday evenings throughout the summer. The website [www.cobra.be](http://www.cobra.be) offers a virtual Jazz Middelheim museum, where you can check out audio and video material of the festival.

→ [www.klara.be](http://www.klara.be)



# as a legendary jazz club reopens in Antwerp

port of Antwerp at the time being Europe's main gateway for overseas troops and goods – left their mark on the city in unexpected ways. There wasn't a square in those days that didn't have both a jazz club and a café that sported a basketball team. A whole culture developed around them. Even today, you won't find many Antwerp squares without a basketball hoop.

And so, by the '50s and '60s café terraces began to envelop the vibrant De Coninckplein. The Firenze on the corner might seem like an ordinary bar today, but it used to be the square's popular basketball club. People would dress up on weekends and come here to dance. The whole square would be heaving with thrill-seeking crowds. You could start in Fien Tet and end up in Het Bokkenhof three hours later, and you'd still be dancing.

While some cafés were somewhat folksy, Leo Kiebooms' jazz club was one of the more fancy clubs on the square. A tie and suit were appreciated. Mees' father, Vic Mees senior, was a famous FC Antwerp football player and used to hang out here with his glamorous English wife Ida, a former radar plotter who used to track enemy airplanes near the end of the war. In those pre-television days, such a real live star drew crowds.

Things changed drastically when in the '70s the square was dug up to accommodate Antwerp's new metro system. The square lost its momentum, and the neighbourhood deteriorated quickly. Striptease clubs brought along the Albanian mafia, who instigated the infamous doorman's war in the 1980s. By the '90s, African bars dotted the landscape, which were fun to end up in after partying in the many gay discos of the adjacent Van Schoonhovenstraat, as Raeymaekers fondly recalls. "Then the junkies came and everything went steadily downhill," he says. "Until the noughties, when the city stepped in and began to redevelop the area by building the Permeke library."

## Play it again

Ever since, sporadic events and investments have been generating a new élan of urban optimism, welcomed by a new generation and the elderly locals alike, who still fondly remember the 1950s. "I'd say 80% of the original interior is intact," Raeymaekers says as he points out the fun details that characterise the place. "And we try to keep that '50s atmosphere alive for today's performances."

First to play at the newly reopened Kiebooms was accordionist Bernard Van Lent, whose performance set



The owners of Café Olympia, popularly known as Kiebooms, have retained many of its old fixtures, from the 1920s to the 1950s

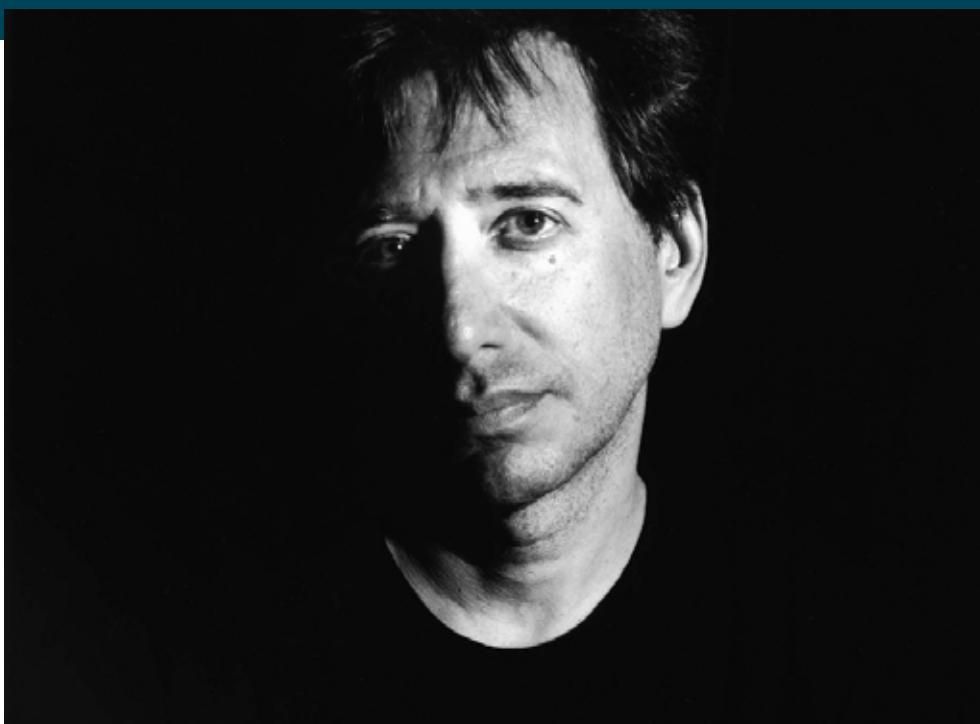
off a whole range of musicians wanting to play on the tiny stage. "We don't have to look for artists," Raeymaekers smiles. "They are lining up to play, and when they have, they line up again." A singer with an open invitation is the gifted Sofie Dijkmans, who knows how to bring an audience slowly to the boil.

The band Radio Muzak has become Kiebooms' house orchestra. "They specialize in the Django Reinhardt type of jazz," Raeymaekers explains. "The setting fits their retro nostalgic feel, and they have a young fan base. Jazz seems to have found a new cult following." Radio Muzak plays every second week and keeps the joint dancing until early in the morning. Surprise guests like Stef Bettens and

Fre Madou have joined them on Kiebooms' stage in the past.

So, what does Sylvia, Kiebooms' granddaughter, make of the revival? Raeymaekers smiles. "She's riveted. After all, she has always been very committed to the square. It's like her husband said, poetically: 'A sunflower shoots up and amazes people but is gone quickly. An oak tree takes some time to grow but sticks around. This is going to be an oak tree.' And when I walk home in the evening and for the first time in years see a kid shooting hoops on the square, I think: yes!" ♦

## 30th birthday



One of the most famous jazzmen in the world, John Zorn gets Middleheim's Saturday all to himself



Jazz Middleheim starts on 12 August at the beautiful Park den Brandt



# Fly, Fleming, fly!

An association of Flemings abroad aims to strengthen the bond with the motherland

PHILIP EBELS

The city of Bruges has long grown accustomed to the invasion of tourists, lured in by its Unesco-classified historic centre. Early last month, however, it was host to a different breed of foreigner: the Flemish. The Flemish living abroad, that is, about 100 of whom from 50 different countries had returned to their native soil for the “coming-back day” of Vlamingen in de Wereld, or Flemings in the world, “the only association for the Flemish who (want to) live abroad.” The day had been welcomed by the Flemish regional government, who partly finances the association, to emphasise the positive role emigrated Flemings can play in strengthening the reputation of the region abroad. “Public diplomacy,” a government representative called it during his speech in the mediaeval Provinciehuis on the Grote Markt. “Every emigrated Fleming is an ambassador.”

It is difficult to deny that the name Flanders doesn’t immediately ring a bell in, say, Buenos Aires or Singapore. “Most people have a hard time remembering Belgium,” one Flemish woman living in the US said during a group discussion in the afternoon. The region’s name is maybe most famous internationally for the poem “In Flanders Fields,” written by Canadian physician John McCrae during the brutal battles of the First World War. In fact, the Flemish government is currently preparing a “Flanders Fields Declaration”, to be signed by the countries involved and in remembrance of their fallen soldiers. Among those who do know it, the region and its people have a good reputation, most participants agreed. “We’re silent but hard workers,” one man said who lives in Dublin and deals in ramps for trucks. Another woman, also from Dublin: “We integrate well. We’re known for our language skills.” If anything, it’s the Belgian quarrels that cast a damp glow over the country’s reputation, according to many.

The returned seemed to enjoy talking with each other, sharing experiences of living abroad, soulmates from different parts of the world. Most were open to the words



Minister-president Kris Peeters seems to enjoy being around Vlamingen in de Wereld

of the government representative, calling upon them to be ambassadors of Flanders, however that may materialise in practice. “But then the government should also do more for us,” one of them said. “Our children go to the Dutch international school, run by The Netherlands.” Another, at the same table: “You decided to move abroad. Do you really insist on speaking your own language?” One point of concern, though, seemed to be voiced unanimously. “The government asks us to represent them,” one man said, “but we haven’t even elected them. The French living abroad have their own representative in the *assemblée générale*; we aren’t allowed to vote at the regional elections.”

Vlamingen in de Wereld has some 40,000 members across the globe. The total number of Flemish people living abroad is estimated to be three times bigger. Estimated, since emigrants aren’t obliged to tell anybody their destination. “When I move from Wevelgem to Kortrijk, the commune asks me for my new address,” said one member, who apparently would like to see the association grow bigger. “But when I move to Hong Kong, they don’t.” Walter Thiebaut, director of Vlamingen in de Wereld, thinks that his association will only grow in importance because people simply move about more easily. “The whole concept of immigration has changed over time,” he said. “Travel has become so much easier and will become even more easy in

the future. Students today often go abroad; pensioners go to Spain. Staying in touch has also never been easier. I remember when I lived in the United States, before the era of the internet. There was one small news item in *The Washington Post* that the Tindemans government had fallen.” Those days have indeed long gone. In fact, nothing stands in your way of getting in touch with, say, Flemings living abroad in your home country, to share tips and tricks about each other’s particularities. It might help you to understand this country a little better. ♦

➔ [www.viww.be](http://www.viww.be)

## A Belgian in Brazil

“One day, when God was in a good mood, I met my future wife in Leuven,” says Peter Puyneers, a Fleming living in Brazil. That was 17 years ago, when he was 29 years old. “I had always wanted to go abroad,” he says. Within four months, he got married, quit his job as an ICT consultant and moved to São Paulo, where he still lives today with his Belgo-Brazilian family. He says that it was difficult in the beginning. “I grew up in the green, Flemish countryside,” he says. “A city like São Paulo is something else. It’s very big and relatively unsafe. Not exactly comparable with the pastures of the low countries.” Also financially, he says, it wasn’t the best decision of his life. “I had a good job, and the ICT business was booming. Brazil was still a developing country. But it was all worth it.” He still feels Flemish, he says, after all these

years, but also Belgian. A true people’s ambassador, he created a Belgian club in Brazil, “a club for people to socialise, to network, or just to grab a beer together.” He also tries to interest the Brazilians in his native country. “I advertise for Belgium,” he says, without hesitation but not without a hint of Belgian humour. “I’m a living propaganda poster.” Any tips for Brazilians in Belgium? “Belgium’s cool,” he says. “It’s well organised. There is a good social security system, good schooling. The food is good; the drinks are good. It is quiet and safe, compared to Brazil. People will welcome you, especially if you make an effort to learn the language.” (PE) ♦

➔ [www.belgianclub.com.br](http://www.belgianclub.com.br)



Peter Puyneers (second from left) met his Brazilian wife (far right) in Leuven





© Dieter Quaghebeur

# Smurf's up

## Two Flemish sisters are among the world's top Smurf collectors

SABINE CLAPPAERT

The Smurfs, the worldwide iconic little blue people, celebrate their 50th birthday this year. With a feature film due to premiere in cinemas across the world this week, we paid a visit to Belgium's biggest Smurf fans: Veronique and Michelle are sisters who proudly own one of the biggest Smurf collections in the world. They even have – children avert your eyes – a pornographic Smurf comic. Those in the know call them The Sisters. Their surname, they say, is “irrelevant”, and their exact address is not something they share lightly. Together, they own more than 12,000 Smurf figurines and many rare collector's items, including one of the first prototype Smurfs ever made. They are among the top Smurf collectors in the world.

In an ordinary bedroom in a non-descript house in suburban East Flanders, Veronique, 43, holds out a small plastic jar containing a shrivelled, black Smurf. She carefully unscrews the lid and shakes the little character into her palm. “This is one of the very first Smurfs ever made,” she says, almost whispering in reverence. “The first Smurfs were painted in different colours, to test. It was quickly decided that neither white nor black would be a good choice, as they resemble human skin colour. After painting some blue and others red, the inventor, Belgian comic artist Pierre Culliford, decided that Smurfs should be blue.”

Surrounding us in the airless room, its

curtains drawn to keep out prying eyes, are floor-to-ceiling display cabinets filled with Smurfs. “This room contains only Veronique's collection,” Michelle, 38, says, prodding her sister playfully. “And she still has to unpack more than 30 boxes.” Every shelf is neatly filled with rows of her favourite blue character. “I've arranged them by theme,” smiles Veronique, left in the photo above. “This shelf here contains the sports Smurfs. The one above it contains the Smurfs at the beach; over here we have the cowboy and Indian Smurfs, and these are the Smurfs in space,” she says as she points to a bunch of figurines of all shapes and sizes in space suits.

The Sisters began collecting in their early 20s. “Like all kids, we had Smurfs at home,” Veronique explains. “My favourite was Swimmer Smurf. But I certainly wasn't besotted yet. That came later, in my early 20s when I bought a few Smurfs as a birthday present for a friend's kid. They stood on my mantelpiece for a couple of days waiting to be gift-wrapped, and I remember thinking how cute they were. When later my sister went to a second-hand market I told her: ‘If you see any Smurfs, won't you buy them?’”

Over the years, their collection has grown to be admired by fellow collectors across the globe. “And we don't even have the most important collection in the world,” Veronique laughs. “That honour also belongs to a Belgian woman, but she prefers to remain anonymous.” They smile at each other, conspiringly. “Let's just say

that she really doesn't need to worry about money. We've seen her collection. If she wants a specific Smurf, she'll pay whatever it takes.”

The Sisters are also renowned far and wide for their annual Smurf fair. Each year in October, collectors from as far afield as Canada and Australia come to Belgium to attend Blue Paradise, their one-day fair that attracts the world's most fervent Smurf collectors and traders.

*“The Smurfs... they're such peaceful people”*

“The Spaniards are clever about it,” laughs Michelle. “They arrive a day early to rummage through all our boxes.” By the time the fair starts on Sunday, they already know what's on offer.

The fair, just outside of Ghent, attracts some 600 international Smurf collectors every year. Many of the pieces fetch €500 or more. The Sisters show me two sculptures, each hand-crafted collector's items that, should they wish to sell them, could fetch thousands of euros each. “But we don't do it for the money,” Veronique says. “We do it because we love it. The sentimental value of this collection is unfathomable. But there are Smurf collectors who go well beyond collecting just the figurines, like we do. Some also collect sketches and paintings,

many of them originals, that often go for thousands of euros.”

Michelle concedes that even they, sometimes, have enough. “It may sound hard to believe,” she says, “but at the end of the fair we suffer from a Smurf overdose. Then I become Madame Gratuit,” she smiles. “We fill up boxes with all the Smurfs we don't want anymore – usually those we already have – and we give them away.”

Looking around at her collection, Veronique concludes: “I could spend all day in here looking at the Smurfs. They're such peaceful people. They never fight, they're never at war, they're never angry. Even Grouchy Smurf, whose favourite sentence always begins with ‘I hate’, only pretends to be angry. They're such a happy crowd,” she adds as she carefully replaces Papa Smurf, Gargamel and Smurfette back in the display cabinet. “Just looking at them brings a sense of peace and calm.” ♦

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



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## Victor Horta, Belgium's most celebrated architect

# LOST WORKS

NICOLAS DE MOY

Though it sounds like the title of a movie with dinosaurs, *A Lost World* is a retrospective of Belgium's most famed architect, Victor Horta.

As this year marks the 150th anniversary of Horta's birth, exhibitions and other activities have been organised throughout Brussels.

The location of this retrospective is one of his first notable buildings, the Autrique House in the commune of Schaarbeek, built in 1893 and saved and refurbished thanks to famous comic book artists Benoit Peeters and Luc Schuiten.

This exhibition focuses on the numerous buildings that did not stand the test of time, fashion or political will.

Which brings us to the infamous dismantlement in 1965 of the Maison du Peuple, or house of the people, built between 1895 and 1899 for the Belgian workers party, now the socialist party. In his memoirs, Horta wrote that he wouldn't be surprised to see this building demolished as the party it was meant for became ever more powerful. Even a petition signed by contemporary dignitaries did not prevent it from being obsolete and superfluous in the eyes of its owners.

As we discover the various drawings, pictures and tiny remnants of those grand

buildings, we also discover the Autrique House itself, which makes it a double show. Walking through an avant-garde house of the 19th century is quite a time-travelling experience.

Moving on, we come across the famous *grands magasins*, or department stores, that disappeared in flames or were altered to satisfy new users. Most famous is the "Innovation" store built in 1903 on Nieuwstraat, now the city's most vibrant shopping street. Horta wanted to compete with the Parisian department stores, but a dramatic fire destroyed the building in 1967.

The same thing happened to the "Grand Bazaar" department store in Frankfurt, also built in 1903, which was destroyed during the Second World War. Still standing though is the Belgian comic strip museum, which used to be the "Magasins Waucquez". Wolfers Jewellers now hosts the Krediet Bank offices.

This brings us to the idea that architecture is never static; the way we use a building changes as our way of life changes. Horta was too aware of that. In his last years he turned bitter, conscious that the style that typified his work, Art Nouveau, was well out of fashion in post-First World War Europe. He burned all his remaining drawings before dying in 1947.

The last notable building in this tour of cursed architecture is the "Hotel Aubecq", built in 1902 for one of the co-founders of cookware Le Creuset. It was Horta's proudest achievement. "Never were a client and an architect more grateful to one another," Horta said once, "and never did a family agree more to love the house and live in it." It was demolished in 1950, like many other grand residences on the Louizalaan at the time.

After such a voyage in the fog of nostalgia, it is probably wise to underline the words of Francoise Aubry, author of Horta's memoirs and curator of the Horta museum: "Sometimes, when such regrets are detailed about ones glorious past, new hope arises." ♦

Until 31 December

Autrique House  
Brussels

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



### Antwerp

**Sorghvliedt Park**  
Marneflaan 3  
**AUG 3** 20.00 Camping Louisa

### Brussels

**Recyclart**  
Ursulinesstraat 25; 02.502.57.34  
[www.recyclart.be](http://www.recyclart.be)  
**AUG 4** 22.00 Digital Me

### Ghent

**Dok**  
Koopvaardijlaan 13  
[www.dokgent.be](http://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](http://www.muziekodroom.be)  
**AUG 4** 22.00 Summer Camp #3: Rave Our Souls + Spacid + Exalt  
**AUG 11** 22.00 Summer Camp #4: Goldfox + Riot + Primate + Iridium, more



### Aarschot

**Café De Knoet**  
Schaluin 78  
[www.knoet.be](http://www.knoet.be)  
**AUG 5** 21.00 Saskia Laroo  
**AUG 6** 21.00 Future Groove Express

### Brussels

**Le Cercle des Voyageurs**  
Lievevrouwbroersstraat 18; 02.514.39.49  
[www.lecercledesvoyageurs.com](http://www.lecercledesvoyageurs.com)  
**AUG 9** 19.30 Raphaël Laguerre

### The Music Village

Steenstraat 50; 02.513.13.45  
[www.themusicvillage.com](http://www.themusicvillage.com)  
**Until AUG 27** 21.00 Brussels Village Festival, jazz & Latino festival:  
**Until AUG 6** Rey Cabrera y sus amigos  
**AUG 9-13** 20.30 Buster and the Swing



### Antwerp

**Contemporary Art Museum (M HKA)**  
Leuvenstraat 32; 03.238.59.60  
[www.muhka.be](http://www.muhka.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)

Nationalestraat 28; 03.470.27.70  
[www.momu.be](http://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

### Koningin Fabiolazaal

Jezusstraat 28; 03.203.42.04  
[www.provant.be](http://www.provant.be)  
**Until JAN 8 2012** The Moderns, top pieces from the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, including works by Emile Claus, James Ensor and Marc Chagall

### Middelheim Museum

Middelheimlaan 6; 03.828.13.50  
[www.middelheimmuseum.be](http://www.middelheimmuseum.be)  
**Until SEP 25** Erwin Wurm: Wear Me Out,

## DON'T MISS

### Sarah Moon

Until 14 August  
Botanique, Brussels

You still have a bit more than one week to go and see the extraordinarily mysterious works of Sarah Moon. Famed for the dreamlike world of her creations, the British fashion photographer has made her name over the last 40 years as an essential figure in the world of photography. She is a real artisan, crafting finely-worked scenes where reality and fiction blur into one.



© Sarah Moon

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

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](http://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

Walse Kaai 47; 03.242.93.00  
[www.fotomuseum.be](http://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](http://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](http://www.belle.epoque.blankenberge.be)  
**Until SEP 16** Hasseltse keramiek, Art Nouveau drip glaze pottery

### Bruges

**Bruggemuseum-Gruuthuse**  
Dijver 17; 050.44.87.43  
[www.uitgoedebroun.info](http://www.uitgoedebroun.info)  
**Until OCT 16** Uit goede bron, the history of Bruges and how it grew to be one of the richest Medieval merchant cities

### Site Oud Sint-Jan

Mariastraat 38; 050.47.61.00  
[www.expo-brugge.be](http://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](http://www.atomium.be)  
**Until DEC 9** Belgium & Immigration: Understand Better So We Can Better Understand One Another, interactive exhibition on migration to Belgium

## MORE ARCHITECTURE THIS WEEK

**Anne Heringer** → *Fondation pour l'Architecture, Brussels* →

**Transforming Landscapes** → *CIVA, Brussels*

**51N4E** → *Bozar, Brussels*





# Agenda

## 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

Belgiëplein 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

## Charliermuseum

Kunstlaan 16; 02.218.53.82  
www.charliermuseum.be

**Until SEP 30** A Hard Existence, paintings of farmers, fishermen, servants and other manual labourers by late 19th- and early 20th-century artists

## 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.deelektriciteitscentrale.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.fondationpourelarchitecture.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

Minimenstraat 21; 02.512.19.63  
www.mjb-jmb.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** Exposition: 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, Benjami 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

## Villa Empain

Franklin Rooseveltlaan 67; 02.627.52.30  
www.villaempain.com

**Until SEP 25** Of Women's Modesty and Anger, rituals, wigs, clothing, make-up and more constraints that determined the life of women for centuries

## 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'

## Kunsthall Sint-Pietersabdij

Sint-Pietersplein 9; 09.243.97.30  
www.gent.be/spa

**Until SEP 18** Bruno Stevens: Ground. Palestina 2000-2010, photographs of the Middle East by the Brussels photographer

## Museum of Contemporary Art (SMAK)

Citadelpark; 09.221.17.03  
www.smak.be

**Until AUG 15** Georges Rouault: Miserere, prints by the French artist from between 1922 and 1927

**Until SEP 11** Carlos Rodríguez-Méndez: Agua Caliente (Hot Water), a giant minimalist sculpture by the Spanish artist  
**Until SEP 18** Jorge Macchi: Music Stands Still, paintings, sculptures, installations and video by the Argentinian artist

## Hasselt

### Het Stadsmus

Guido Gezellestraat 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

## Jabbeke

### Provinciaal Museum Constant Permeke

Gistelsteenweg 341; 059.50.81.18  
www.muzee.be/nl/permeke

**Until NOV 6** Roger Raveel meets Constant Permeke, a selection of works of art by Roger Raveel from the Mu.ZEE collection in a dialogue with Constant Permeke's oeuvre and world

## Kortrijk

### Kortrijk 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 AUG 28** De Honderd, the 100 best photos taken by locals from Leuven  
**Until SEP 25** Pieter-Jozef Verhaghen: 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  
www.bruegelland.be

**Until 2017** Bruegelland, paintings by Pieter Bruegel and artists influenced by him (from the permanent collection of Antwerp's Museum of Fine Arts)

## Machelen-Zulte

### Het Roger Raveelmuseum

Gildestraat 2-8; 09.381.60.00

www.rogerraveelmuseum.be

**Until OCT 30** Albisola, ceramic works by various artists inspired by the Italian town

## Mechelen

### Toy Museum

Nekkerspoelstraat 21; 015.55.70.75  
www.speelgoedmuseum.be

**Until JAN 8 2012** Het circus kan beginnen! (Let the Circus Begin!), figurines, clowns and maquettes

## Meise

### National Botanic Garden of Belgium

Nieuwelaan 38; 02.260.09.20  
www.plantentuinmeise.be

**Until OCT 2** Groene Omzwervingen (Green Detours), works made of leaves and flowers by Sandrine de Borman following her year as artist-in-residence  
**Until NOV 6** Kriebelbeestjes van het bos (Crawling Bugs in the Woods), photographs of insects by Barbara Cook

# GET YOUR TICKETS NOW

## Milk Inc

### 23-24 September

#### Sportpaleis, Antwerpen

Milk Inc is easily Flanders' most popular dance duo. Regi Penxten and Linda Mertens make many a teenage heart beat faster whenever they take the stage with their uplifting euro-house tunes.

They've played all the big festivals and tour across the globe as one of the region's most successful export products. They were formed 15 years ago, and will celebrate their birthday with two concerts in Antwerp's biggest and most famous pop temple, Het Sportpaleis. A classic case of "get your tickets now!"



© Concertpax.be

## Oostduinkerke

### Nationaal Visserijmuseum

Pastoor Schmitzstraat 5; 058.51.24.68  
www.visserijmuseum.be

**Until DEC 31** Zeerotica: Over liefde en lust aan de kust (Searotica: On Love and Lust at the Coast), works on the theme of passion and the sea by Paul Delvaux, Leon Spilliaert, Aloïs Boudry and Edgard Tytgat, among others

## Ostend

### Kunstmuseum Aan Zee (MuZee)

Romestraat 11; 059.50.81.18

www.muzee.be

**Until SEP 4** Jean Brusselmans, paintings from the 1930s and 1940s by the Flemish artist

## Tervuren

### Royal Museum for Central Africa

Leuvensesteenweg 13; 02.769.52.11  
www.africamuseum.be

**Until SEP 4** FetishModernity, exhibition created by six European museums exploring the notion of modernity  
**Until SEP 4** Artists in Residence: Sammy Baloji & Patrick Mudekerezan, arts, sciences and collections

## Veurne

### Bakery Museum

Albert I-laan 2; 058.31.38.97  
www.bakkerijmuseum.be

**Until NOV 30** Gekneed als bakker (Kneaded Like a Baker), films, photos and objects illustrating the history of generations of baker families

## Ypres

### In Flanders Fields Museum

Grote Markt 34; 057.239.220  
www.inflandersfields.be

**Until NOV 13** Tribute to Donors, a wide selection of donated works, including paintings, drawings and photographs



**Roller Bike Parade:** Weekly roller skating and cycling parades

**Until SEP 23** 19.00 in Antwerp, Brussels, Hasselt and Koksijde  
www.belgiumrollers.com

## Antwerp

**Antwerpen Zingt:** Free public sing-along event

**AUG 7** 18.00 at Gedempte Zuiderdokken, Waalse/Vlaamsekaai  
www.vlaanderenzingt.be/antwerpen

**World Dance Festival:** 36th edition of the performing arts festival  
**AUG 10-17** at Hotel Ter Elst, Kattenbroek 1  
03.289.23.73, www.werelddansfestivaldelegem.be

**Zomer van Antwerpen:** Annual summer festival including circus, theatre, film, concerts, beach bar and more  
**Until AUG 29** throughout the city  
www.zva.be

## Blankenberge

**Sand Sculpture Festival:** International sand sculpture festival with a Disneyland Paris theme

**Until SEP 12** at Koning Albert I-Laan 116  
www.zandsculptuur.be

## Scavenger Hunt:

A special walk to discover the seaside town, with prizes to be won  
**Until OCT 15**, start at tourist office, Leopold III-plein  
050.41.22.27, www.blankenberge.be

## Bruges

**Klinkers 2011:** Diverse festival featuring film, comedy, circus, children's activities and open-air concerts by Zap Mama, Sergeant Garcia, Amparo Sanchez, Baloji and The Selector, among others

**Until AUG 13** across Bruges  
www.klinkers-brugge.be

**BrugesVama Veche:** Free summer festival of cosy caravans, terraces, live music and other performances

**Until AUG 6** in Koningin Astrid Park  
www.vamaveche.be

## Brussels

**Apéros Urbains:** Weekly aperitif every Friday in different areas of the city with live music and after-parties at Fuse, K-Nal and Vaudeville  
**Until SEP 2** 17.00-23.30 across Brussels  
www.aperos.be

**Brussels Beach:** Urban beach with 3,000 tons of imported sand, plus concerts, sports, family entertainment and straw huts selling global gastronomy and exotic drinks  
**Until AUG 7** on the banks of the canal at Sainctelette Square/Dijlestraat  
02.279.50.49, www.bruxelleslesbains.be

**Bruxellons!:** Performing arts festival with 18 performances ranging from theatre and dance to comedy and cabaret  
**Until SEP 4** at Kasteel Karreveld, Jean de la Hoeselaan 3  
02.762.95.02, www.bruxellons.net

**Camera Belgica:** Weekly evening entertainment including museum visits and outdoor film screenings  
**Until AUG 25** Thurs, 20.00 at Belvue Museum, Paleizenplein 7  
www.belvue.be

## Cathedral Concerts:

Organ concerts  
**Until AUG 30** Tues, 20.00 at St Michael and Gudula's Cathedral, Sinter-Goedeleplein  
www.cathedralestmichel.be

**Ecran Total:** 22nd edition of the summer film festival

**Until SEP 13** at Cinema Arenberg  
www.arenberg.be

**K-Nal (F)estival:** First-ever summer festival with music, photography and culinary adventures

**Until AUG 27** Thurs-Sat at K-NAL, Havenlaan 1  
0474.04.00.00, www.k-nal.be

**Midis-Minimes:** Lunchtime concerts covering a wide range of repertoires, from world music to Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and contemporary  
**Until AUG 31** at the Royal Music Conservatory, Regentschapsstraat 30  
www.midis-minimes.be



# SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVALS

**Mini-Europe by Night:** Sound and light show with fireworks and music ‘Emotions in Europe’  
**Until AUG 20** Sat, 22.30 at Mini-Europe, Bruparck, at the foot of the Atomium  
[www.minieurope.com](http://www.minieurope.com)

**Open-Air Cinema:** Free open-air film screenings  
**Until AUG 31** Wed 22.00 at Wolubilis, Paul-Henri Spaaklaan 1  
[www.wolubilis.be](http://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.recyclart.be](http://www.recyclart.be)

**Royal Palace Visits:** Annual opening to the public of the Royal Palace, designed by architect Alphonse Balat for King Leopold II  
**Until SEP 11** at Royal Palace, Brederodestraat 16  
[www.monarchie.be](http://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](http://www.kermis-feest.be)

**Ghent**  
**Gent Herdenkt (Ghent Remembers):** Remembrance ceremony of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with talks and classical music  
**AUG 6** 20.30 in the Korenlei  
[www.vrede.be](http://www.vrede.be)

**Parkkaffee:** Circus, tarot readings, campfires and other fun activities for the whole family  
**Until AUG 31** at Groenenstaakstraat 37 (Mariakerke)  
[www.parkkaffee.be](http://www.parkkaffee.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](http://www.cartoonfestival.be)

**Leuven**  
**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](http://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](http://www.sherpa.be)

**Theater aan Zee (TAZ#2011):** Theatre and music festival at the coast  
**Until AUG 6** at more than 30 unique locations across Ostend  
[www.theateraanzee.be](http://www.theateraanzee.be)

**Watou**  
**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](http://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](http://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, Kammenstraat 81  
[www.amuz.be](http://www.amuz.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 Dieltiens  
**AUG 5-13** at venues across Bruges and Lissewege  
[www.mafestival.be](http://www.mafestival.be)

**Vama Veche:** Free summer festival with music, food caravans and entertainment  
**Until AUG 6** 14.00-1.00 at Koningin Astridpark  
[www.vamaveche.be](http://www.vamaveche.be)

**Brussels**  
**Boterhammen in het Park:** Free outdoor lunchtime festival of Flemish and Dutch rock and pop music with line-up including Yevgueni, Berlaen, Axl Peleman, Eva De Roovere, Hannelore Bedert, Lucky Fonz III, Johan Verminnen and Hans Mortelmans  
**AUG 22-26** 20.00 at Warande Park  
02.548.24.24 or [www.abconcerts.be](http://www.abconcerts.be)

**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 Quintt, more. Plus film screenings, open-door museum events, street theatre, sound and light show  
**AUG 12-21** in venues around the city  
[www.bsff.be](http://www.bsff.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](http://www.themusicvillage.com)

**City Parade:** Massive party with DJs and dancing  
**AUG 27** at Heizel (under the Atomium)  
[www.cityparade.be](http://www.cityparade.be)

**Feeërieën 2011:** Free outdoor festival with an internationally edged musical programme. Many bands are performing for first time in Belgium and every evening has its own musical theme  
**AUG 22-26** 19.00 at Warande Park  
[www.abconcerts.be](http://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-duster of Mozart and Haydn operas  
**SEP 1-16** at venues across the city  
[www.klarafestival.be](http://www.klarafestival.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 4-7** at Festivalterrein Dranouter, Koudekotstraat  
[www.folkdranouter.be](http://www.folkdranouter.be)

**Eeklo**  
**Helden in het Park:** Free outdoor world music festival  
**Until AUG 18** at Heldenpark  
[www.n9.be](http://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](http://www.reggaegeel.com)

**Hasselt**  
**Mondorico:** Free world music festival featuring Yass, Bobo Youth, Quarteto Olinda, Trafassi, Freddy Loco and Moune A Case  
**AUG 7** 14.00-23.00 at Kapermolenpark, Elfde Liniestraat 21  
[www.sakasaka.be](http://www.sakasaka.be)

**Hoogstraten (Antwerp province)**  
**Antilliaanse Feesten:** The world’s largest Caribbean festival featuring Machel

Montano, Fally Ipupa, Manoline, Kuenta y Tambú, Sonambulo, La Piñata and more  
**AUG 12-13** at Festivalterrein, Blauwbossen  
[www.antilliaansefeesten.be](http://www.antilliaansefeesten.be)

**Hoeilaart (Flemish Brabant)**  
**Jazz Hoeilaart:** 33rd edition of the international contest for young jazz groups, plus concerts by Jef Neve Trio, Dre Pallemarts Quartet and Eric Melaerts & Jean Blaute  
**SEP 22-24** at De Bosuil, Witherendreef 1  
[www.jazzhoeilaart.be](http://www.jazzhoeilaart.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](http://www.pukkelpop.be)

**Leuven**  
**Cha Cha Festival:** Open-air African culture festival featuring music by Ballet Langi, Ithran, Dizzy Mandjeku & Odemba Ok Jazz All stars, plus gastronomy, fashion, literature, dance, art, storytelling and more  
**AUG 20** 16.00-23.00 at Zevensprong, Vital Decosterstraat 67  
[www.banaleuven.be](http://www.banaleuven.be)

**Colora Festival:** World music festival featuring concerts by various groups, plus a series of free café concerts  
**AUG 19-21** at Zevensprong, Vital Decosterstraat 67, and cafés across the city  
[www.colora.org](http://www.colora.org)

**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](http://www.marktrock.be)

**Piknik Musik:** Picnic in the park with live music by Ben & Nolle, Briz, Raoul Lambert, Mr. Critical, Bugalu Sound and Thierry Steady Go!, plus soup, sushi, vegetarian and Indian food  
**AUG 21** 13.00-21.00 at Van Waeyenberghpark, Edouard Remyvest  
[www.piknikmusik.be](http://www.piknikmusik.be)

**Lokeren (East Flanders)**  
**Lokerse Feesten:** Rock festival featuring Erykah Badu, Selah Sue, Jamie Lidell, 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  
**Until AUG 7** at Festivalterrein Lokeren  
[www.lokersefeesten.be](http://www.lokersefeesten.be)

**Mechelen**  
**Maanrock:** 15th edition of the free rock festival with line-up including 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](http://www.maanrock.be)

**Oostkamp (West Flanders)**  
**Gipsy’s in het park:** 9th annual family festival featuring concerts by Nomad Swing, Thierry Robin Trio, Mec Yek and Orchestre International du Vetex, plus film screenings and children’s activities including storytelling, games and circus acts  
**AUG 27** 17.00-00.00 at Beukenpark, Kapellestraat 19  
[www.gipsysinhetpark.be](http://www.gipsysinhetpark.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](http://www.feestinhetpark.be)

**Sint-Niklaas**  
**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](http://www.orgelinvlaanderen.be)

**Tessenderlo (Limburg)**  
**Moulin Rock Festival:** 10th edition of the rock festival featuring young bands and musicians  
**SEP 9-10** at Festivalterrein Moulin Rock, Molenstraat  
[www.moulinrock.be](http://www.moulinrock.be)

**Zevegern (East Flanders)**  
**Zeeverrock:** Outdoor rock music festival featuring Merdan Taplak, Admiral Freebee, Hindu Radio DJs, The Van Jets, De Jeugd van Tegenwoordig, Intergalactic Lovers, more  
**AUG 5-6** at Festivalterrein Zeverrock, Blijpoel  
[www.zeverrock.be](http://www.zeverrock.be)

## FESTIVAL SPOTLIGHT

### Antilliaanse Feesten Hoogstraten (Antwerp province) 12-13 August

The Antilliaanse Feesten is the biggest festival of Caribbean music in Europe and the result of the pioneering work of organiser Lode Verschuere. He has a nose for new talent, but never forgets that a festival also needs a couple of strong headliners. The combination of the feeling of being on an exploratory expedition and, at the same time, having the certainty that you’ll be entertained until almost dawn, is the key to the festival’s success. And indeed: if you linger on a bit after the last show, you will see the sunrise. Antilliaanse Feesten is a night festival; the first band starts playing at around 20:00. Kaseko, bachata, merengue, salsa, psycho-tropical or soca: it’s a tongue-twisting affair to describe the music styles present at the festival. You really don’t need to know who’s playing what kind of music to enjoy it. But you’d better put on your dancing shoes because all the artists present at the Antilliaanse Feesten aim at your feet. Specialists, however, will tell you that there’s a big difference between the soca from Trinidad and Tobago (presented by the Roy Cape All Stars, the band of one of the godfathers of the genre), for instance, and the Dominican merengue. The latter is the fastest music of the area, as you can discover during the show of Alex Bueno. Our favourite of this edition of the Antilliaanse Feesten is Grupo Gale, an orchestra from



La Piñata from Ecuador play ska fusion

Colombia that deals in swinging salsa rhythms. The festival isn’t only famous for its music. Its cocktail bar has a strong reputation, too. And did we mention the great supply and the wide variety of exotic food? You don’t have to get on an airplane to immerse yourself in Caribbean ambiance.  
➡ [www.antilliaansefeesten.be](http://www.antilliaansefeesten.be)



# bite

ROBYN BOYLE

## Den Nieuwen Hommel

Ninove may call itself the oldest, boldest and wisest of cities, but let's face it: It's not the first place that comes to mind for a night out. But the East Flemish city is full of surprises. At the heart of its historic centre, for example, stands one of Flanders' oldest Baroque churches, Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Hemelvaart, formerly part of the Norbertine Abbey and quite an impressive sight to see. Next to this, the flower-lined Kerkplein surprises as a green oasis in the middle of the city and home to a charming little restaurant.

My hungry companion and I arrive to a full house on a Friday night. The interior alone makes us feel right at home: candlelight, heavy wood-beamed ceilings, open hearth, worn furniture and even our table is a vintage treadle sewing machine.

We're pleasantly greeted by one of the owners, Anneken; husband Michaël is busy manning the kitchen. We promptly order two Witkap Stimulos, a local blonde beer from Brewery Slaghmuylder just down the road. While perusing the menu, Anneken brings us two complimentary servings of mini-Carpaccio, as if she knew how much we like this dish. The thin slices of raw red beef with their rocket salad, pine nut, olive oil and parmesan topping are just the thing to still our hunger until the starters arrive.

When they finally do, I'm pleased to discover

that the shrimp croquettes are fresh and handmade. Their crispy fried outer crust gives way to a smooth, slightly sweet filling stuffed with grey shrimp. The richness of the dish is perfectly offset by fresh lemon and a rocket salad with roasted pine nuts and tangy raspberry vinaigrette.

My dining companion goes seasonal and orders asparagus soup. Earthy white asparagus is the most prominent flavour, followed by cream and butter. It's a hearty and simple soup, silky smooth and topped with a few crunchy croutons.

His main dish is an imposing 500 grams of *côte à l'os* attached to an enormous T-bone, its juices running out onto the plate. The flavourful grilled steak is flanked by a proportionate amount of buttery béarnaise sauce infused with shallots and tarragon, a light salad with greens and tomatoes, and the indispensable bowl of fries.

With so many tempting dishes under Stews and Classics such as Flemish stew, *vol-au-vent* and meatballs in tomato sauce, I have a hard time making up my mind. But ultimately it's rabbit with prunes that wins me over. Not just one, but two succulent legs take up the whole of the plate. The meat is mild and savoury and falling from the bones. It is cloaked in a stew sauce made with brown beer (Witkap Pater Dubbel) and big, juicy prunes for sweetness.



Warm sour cherries add a nice tart touch. The dish comes with tasty little potato croquettes. Somewhat disappointedly, we fail to leave room for dessert because I would have liked to have tried the chocolate mousse with Kahlua and *crème anglaise*. But, on the up side, there is *Hasseltse koffie*, coffee with genever and whipped cream. My dining companion puts back a glass of sticky, sweet-sour limoncello, despite it not being cold enough. We take our after-dinner drinks with us to the back terrace where we unhurriedly carry on digesting the whole experience. The bill comes to €87.

- 📍 Kerkplein 2-4, Ninove 0475/29.93.82
- 🕒 Fri-Tue, 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-22.00
- 💶 Mains: €16-30
- ★ Ninove's best-kept secret offering fine Flemish fare against a romantic backdrop

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

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

## TALKING DUTCH

### Talking what?

I am humbled and delighted that people have actually reacted to my call for questions two weeks ago. There were far more than I expected. Some were even hand-written, like the meticulous letter from Mr Vanblaere of Ostend who asked about the "strange suffix" –*zaam*, like in *moeizaam* or *eenzaam*. It is used to create an adjective or an adverb, to put it grammatically, and can be compared to the English –*some*. *Moe*, tired; *moeizaam*, tiresome. *Een*, one; *eenzaam*, lonesome. (Compare also the German –*sam*.)

I'm sorry not to have answered all of you. But *een goed begin is het halve werk*, well begun is half done – or literally, a good beginning is half the work. I say it to oblige another reader who proposed to "dive into the vast and rich collection of Dutch proverbs." It may be a good idea to have at least one every week. *We zien wel*. We'll see.

The question I'd like to dive into this week, though, is the one posed by Ann Roes about the word "Dutch". "Most people understand it as Duits," she says, which in Dutch means German (still with me?). Also, she asks, "What is the difference between *Vlaams* and *Nederlands*, Flemish and Dutch?"

True, the word Dutch doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. Why not *Netherlandic*? Because in the Middle Ages, German and Dutch were not as distinct as they are today, and were generally referred to as *Duytsch* – or something similar. The only distinction in English was that between High Dutch (German) and Low Dutch (Dutch). Later during the Renaissance, however, when the people from the Low Countries set sail and conquered big parts of the world, it was they who came to be known as the Dutch.

They included the Flemish, at the time. Their language was different from the standardised Dutch, but also were the languages spoken to the

North and the East of the country's economic epicentre, Amsterdam. They still are. Dutch is a language ridden with accents and dialects that often betray the speaker's native neck of the woods.

Flemish today is a variety of the Dutch language. Written, there are as good as no differences. Dutch and Flemish newspapers share news articles. Books are distributed across the border. Spoken, however, there are, most notably the pronunciation of the "g" or "ch" sound (which are the same). The Flemish have *een zachte g*, a soft g, and the Dutch have *een harde g*, a hard g (with the exception of those south of the big rivers, ie the provinces of Zeeland, Brabant, and Limburg).

Questions? Keep 'em coming. *Tot de volgende!*



PHILIP EBELS

## THE LAST WORD...

### Now or never

"Five hundred thousand children have to be helped now. In three weeks, it'll be too late."

Philippe Henon of the Belgian Consortium of Emergency Aid Organisations, on the famine in the Horn of Africa

### Smoke and mirrors

"Certainly after four o'clock in the afternoon there's plenty of smoking in cafes because that's when the inspectors stop working."

Cindy Van Den Bergen of café De Bromfiets in Bonheiden, Antwerp province

### Knees up

"One toilet was so small you could barely close the door. You sat there with your knees almost up around your ears while you were peeing."

Benedikte Van Eeghem writes reviews of public toilets for the website <http://wcok.internethal.be>

### What's in a smurf?

"The Chinese [call them] Lanjingling. That means 'little blue spirit'. There are a lot of strange names out there, like in Hungary. They call them Hupikek Törpikék, which means nothing at all."

Veronique Culliford, daughter of Smurfs creator Péro, in *Het Nieuwsblad*

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #192

### Feature

Why do we like chocolate? Or chips for that matter? Researchers from the KU Leuven have found the answer. Alan Hope reports.

### Focus

Flanders Today hangs out with the marine rescue team of the Flemish coast.

### Arts

We talk to ceramic artist Natasja Lefevre, whose works can be admired at the Watou festival.