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# The next generation

Veteran polar explorer Dixie Dansercoer teams up with a Flemish medical student to set a new world record in Antarctica

ANDY FURNIERE

There is an international press horde at the briefing for the new expedition to Antarctica of Flemish explorer Dixie Dansercoer. A Chinese colleague asks me how to best define him, and I find myself juggling titles. Adventurer, endurance athlete, polar explorer, documentary maker, writer, motivational coach, ecological activist, Unicef ambassador. It all fits. But above all, Dansercoer (*photo, left*) is known for his daring undertakings on both poles, and with the Antarctic ICE expedition, he proves that his ambition is increasing with his age.

Dansercoer, 49, has just set off on an attempt to set a world record for the longest-ever polar expedition without outside support or motorised aid. He and his sidekick, student Sam Deltour, are travelling with a sled over 6,000 kilometres across Antarctica in 100 days. They left on 5 November and are expected back in February. To make this arduous journey, partly through the uncharted territory of east Antarctica, the pair have the sponsorship of telecom operator Mobistar – and the help of two surprising expedition partners.

### Cold and isolation

Deltour (*photo, right*) is a 26-year-old medical student at the Catholic University of Leuven (KUL), who has only recently made his first trip to the icy continent at the South Pole. Deltour replaces Troy Henkels, a seasoned explorer with whom Dansercoer travelled previously. But Dansercoer isn't worried about his inexperience.

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## Flemish Bib Gourmands

Last week Michelin issued its latest list of "Bib Gourmand" restaurants, where diners can eat well for a reasonable price. Bib Gourmand restaurants are chosen on the basis of value for money: They must offer a good menu for a maximum price of €35.

This year saw 59 establishments listed in Flanders and 19 in Brussels. West Flanders is ahead of the pack, with 26 names on the list alone. It is also home to one of the only two three-star restaurants in Michelin's more prestigious guide – De Karmeliet in Bruges, whose sister bistro Refter (*pictured*) features on the new list.



Don't go rushing off to the new arrival on the list in Limburg: The restaurant Delicouz in Eksel closed before the list was published. "It's a real shame because the food was

very good," the town's mayor, Raf Truyens, told *De Standaard*. There was apparently some problem with the rental agreement, he said. This is not the first time Michelin has blundered in listing Flemish restaurants. In 2004 the Ostend Queen was given two forks for its food before it had even opened. In 2009 Michelin announced a first star for Fleur sur l'Eau in Dendermonde on the very day its owners shut up shop for good. "It's a great pity for us and for the owners," Michelin's editor said. "But there isn't much we can do about it."

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

## Flanders gears up for 2014 centenary

Great War remembrance plans announced last week

ALAN HOPE

The centenary in 2014 of the start of the First World War will be marked by a major remembrance effort, including an invitation to the 50 countries who lost soldiers in the war, a symposium of Nobel Peace Prize winners and the establishment of remembrance gardens in foreign cities, landscaped with soil imported from Flanders. The programme, which involves an initial investment of €15 million, was announced in Brussels last week by Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters and heritage and tourism minister Geert Bourgeois.

The main commemorations will take place between 2014 and 2018, but the government plans two important events prior to that.

**Declaration** After discussions with various international partners from Russia, South Africa, France and others, the Flemish government has drawn up what it calls the Flanders Fields Declaration, to be signed by representatives of the 50 governments of countries that lost soldiers in the war. The signing is planned for Armistice Day next year.

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## FACE OF FLANDERS

ALAN HOPE



## News in brief

The city of Antwerp has introduced a **ban on gatherings** of more than five members of the Turkish and Kurdish communities, following clashes last week in which five people were injured. The measure was introduced by city and police following talks with representatives of the two communities.

The Ghent port authority has purchased the late Gothic **House of the Free Shippers** on the Graslei in the city centre, which was the site of the city's original port in the 11th century. The authority plans to turn the building into a harbour house, with a permanent exhibition on the port's history, offices and meeting rooms.

In December, Flemish public TV channel Canvas will begin broadcasting a seven-part **series on the potato**, showing its importance as a basic ingredient in Flemish food culture. The series will be presented by TV chef Jeroen Meus and begin in Peru, birthplace of the humble tuber.

Police in Mechelen are to inaugurate the first **monthly Twitter hour** on 21 November from 18.00, when members of the Twitter public will be able to ask questions on policy, including security, traffic, nuisance and police operations. The Twitter account @PolitieMechelen has been in existence for six months and has more than 1,100 followers.

Els Clottemans, sentenced in October last year to 30 years in prison for the so-called **parachute murder**, is to take her case to the European Court of Human Rights in an attempt to force a new trial. Clottemans' lawyers



believe she was convicted on the basis of insufficient evidence and that police failed to fully investigate other possible leads.

The Central Library of the Catholic University of Leuven will hold a **book sale of superfluous volumes** on 23 and 24 November in the exhibition room and under the library's arcades. The sale runs from 9.00 to 19.00, with a special discount of 40% on the Thursday.

→ <http://centrallibkuleuven.wordpress.com>

Prince Filip, Princess Mathilde and their four children made an unannounced **visit to the Boekenbeurs** in Antwerp last week, where, despite the Prince's interest in the rare €22,000 illuminated manuscript *Breviarium Grimani*, the couple took away only a stack of children's books, as well as a book by comedian Wouter Deprez. There were nearly 170,000 visitors to Flanders' largest book fair this year, down 16,000 on last year.

Brussels city council last week gave the go-ahead for a **new street in Haren** to be named after Joe Van Holsbeek, the 17-year-old murdered in Brussels Central Station in 2006 during an attempt to steal his MP3 player. The Van Holsbeek family lives in Haren.

This year's award for **Best Musical in Flanders** has gone to *Toon*, a show based on the life and work of the Dutch cabaret performer Toon Hermans, which also took the Best Actor award for Alex Klaasen in the lead role. The Flemish version of the Monty Python-inspired musical *Spamalot* won a Best Director award for actor Stany Crets, as well as prizes for best newcomer and male supporting actor. Best Actress

went to Hilde Norga in *Oliver!*, which also won best ensemble and the Radio 2 public prize.

**Paul Bogaert** has won the 2011 Poetry Prize of the Flemish Community, which is awarded every three years, for his 2009 collection *De Slalom Soft*. The book also won the prestigious Herman De Coninck prize in 2010. The Flemish Community prize includes €12,500 and a bronze sculpture by Johan Tahon. The jury praised Bogaert for his rich language and new approaches to poetry.

Sensoa, Flanders' centre for sexual health, last week launched a new **website offering advice on sexually transmitted diseases**, contraception and inappropriate sexual behaviour, as well as tips on teaching children about sexuality. Meanwhile the Safe Sex helpline, launched as the Aids line in 1985, is to close because of a drop in the number of callers.

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

Eight documentary **films made by Henri Storck** (1907-1999), one of the pioneers of Flemish documentary, are to be released on DVD and Blu-Ray. The films feature Storck's birthplace, Ostend, and were made in the 1930s, offering a unique picture of the coastal town at the height of its tourist heyday.

The new **MAS museum in Antwerp** has attracted 580,000 visitors in its first six months, more than double the number forecast, Antwerp alderman for culture Philip Heylen revealed. Last week, Heylen visited the World Travel Market in London, where he said the MAS was being greeted as "an example of how you should set up a new museum these days."

## The Fall of Icarus

It's been an open secret, especially among art historians, but the definitive news last week still came in like a cruise missile. The jewel in the crown of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Brussels, the painting titled "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus", is not by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

A question which until last week was politely left open has now been definitively answered: The painting dates from after the death of the great 16th-century Flemish artist and is made by an inferior hand, but is probably a copy based on a previous work by Bruegel, now lost to us.

The final confirmation of what had long been suspected was presented last week during a study day at the Royal Institute for Art Heritage (KIK) in Brussels. It will not come as a shock to the museum, which for some time has been careful to mention the doubts over the painting's authenticity. However, the final conclusion of the experts affects not only the future view of the painting, it also reaches back into history. In 1938, the English poet WH Auden visited the Brussels museum, and his poem "Musée des Beaux-Arts" is a meditation on the indifference of the common people to the

cataclysm taking place just out of their sight. It's based on the Icarus painting, which is dominated by two figures (neither of whom is the fallen Icarus, who's barely noticeable in the lower corner, his thrashing legs the only part of him still above water).

Auden's reflections still apply, but not his attribution of the painting to Bruegel. The same goes for the American poet William Carlos Williams, who was also moved by the painting to write a poem. His "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" was published in 1960 and included in his 1962 collection, which he even titled *Paintings by Bruegel*.

Or not, as it turns out. The researchers, Christina Currie of the KIK and Dominique Allart of the University of Liège, presented more than enough evidence for their claim. The most convincing was the canvas on which the work is painted, which they dated to the period 1582-1625. Bruegel died in 1569.

At the Fine Arts Museum itself, they're taking it on the chin. "The full report first has to be studied," a spokesperson said. "In the meantime, it is too early to draw conclusions."

## OFFSIDE

## Worm's days are numbered

Readers of a squeamish nature are advised to look away. This week's subject is an extremely important one, but it is also undeniably icky.

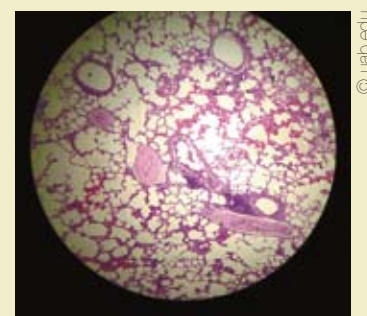
*Ascaris lumbricoides* is a parasitic roundworm, one of some 16,000 parasitic nematodes. The nematode can measure up to five centimetres long, with bodies covered in ridges, rings, warts or bristles. The mouth has three or six lips, sometimes lined with teeth.

About one in four of the world's population are infected with roundworm, with the rates running as high as 45% in Latin America and 95% in parts of Africa. Children are particularly vulnerable.

Typically, infection occurs after eating food contaminated by faeces containing *Ascaris* eggs. The worm's larvae (*pictured*) then hatch in the intestine, burrow through the intestinal wall and move to the lungs. From there, they climb into the

mouth, are swallowed again and take up residence in the gut, clamped to the walls of the intestine, where they feed on nutrients. Infection can lead to anaemia, enlargement of the liver or spleen or pneumonia. But hope is at hand. Last week researchers, including a team from Ghent University announced it had succeeded in deciphering the genetic code of *Ascaris suum*, a close relative of *A. lumbricoides*. Their results have been published in the journal *Nature*, and already epidemiologists are looking forward to the development of new vaccines to combat roundworm infestation.

"The roundworm's genome includes about 18,500 genes, including a vast arsenal that enables them to affect the immune system of both human and animal so they can survive for a long time in the body," explained Professor Peter Geldhof of the university's



laboratory on parasitic diseases. "The unravelling of the genome brings essential information for the future development of new control strategies, such as vaccines." That'll be good news to the one billion or so people infected every year, of whom some 135,000 die, making the parasite roughly as much of a world health burden as the more visible tuberculosis or malaria.

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

## FLANDERS TODAY

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## Remembrance gardens will be “witness to hope, peace and unity”

→ continued from page 1

“The Declaration will emphasise that war and suffering still haven’t been banned from our world,” Peeters told a gathering of ambassadors and other international representatives last week. “It will reiterate that cooperation between nations, disarmament, regional integration and respect for international laws and human rights remain key elements for a better future.”

**Symposium** A year later, Peeters will host an international peace symposium, with invitations extended to laureates of the Nobel Peace Prize. Two of them, South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former South African president FW De Klerk, have already agreed to attend. Other possible invitees could include former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, US president Barack Obama, former US vice-president Al Gore, former US president Jimmy Carter and former Finnish president Martti Ahtisaari. Peeters is also planning to commission a peace hymn called “No More War”, “which will be performed on a regular basis throughout the commemoration period,” Peeters said. More plans before and during the centenary period include:

**Remembrance Gardens** The Flemish government is exploring the establishment of remembrance gardens landscaped with soil from the Westhoek of Flanders, where much of the fighting took place. Plans are already moving ahead for gardens in London and Paris. “The gardens will serve as a lasting witness of hope, peace, reconciliation and international unity,” Peeters said.

**Renovation** At home, the government plans renovation and restoration work at several important sites in Flanders. The In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres closed this week for major renovation and extension works. Around Poperinge, the Lijssenthoek military graveyard, Talbot House and the town hall, including its death cells and execution yard, will be renovated. The visitors centre De Ganzepoot and the Yser Tower site and museum in Nieuwpoort, would all be renovated and made more accessible.

“In Zonnebeke, in the vicinity of the Tyne Cot Cemetery, we are planning the expansion of the Passchendaele Memorial Park,” said heritage minister Bourgeois. “This pertains to the military account of the action in the region, with the Battle of Passchendaele being its focal point.” Bourgeois also made note of the support given to the production of



“Honouring the victims”: heritage and tourism minister Geert Bourgeois

the British-American drama series *Parade’s End*, which is set during the First World War and is filming in Flanders now, as well as a planned series for Eén titled *In Vlaamse velden* (In Flanders Fields). “It is my firm conviction that all our efforts and endeavours will create a public platform for Flanders, in concert with the other nations concerned, to fittingly commemorate the Great War and honour the millions of victims it claimed during its tragic course,” Bourgeois said.

### Armistice Day honoured across region

Last Friday, 11 November, Armistice Day was marked throughout Flanders by ceremonies at 11.00. At the Menin Gate in Ypres, some 9,000 people were present to hear the playing of The Last Post,

among them Princess Mathilde, Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters and West Flanders governor Paul Breyne. International Olympic Committee chairman Jacques Rogge was also present, along with a delegation of Flemish Olympic medal winners, including cyclist Eddy Merckx, steeplechaser Gaston Roelants and swimmer Frederik Deburghgraeve. Visitors from Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and Germany took part in a Poppy Parade from the city’s St Martin’s Cathedral to the gate.

In Brussels, meanwhile, Prince Filip laid a wreath on the tomb of the unknown soldier, the ceremony marked by a 21-gun salute. ♦

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES



24

officially recognised mosques in Flanders, after seven more were added to the total in October, according to integration minister Geert Bourgeois. The mosques share €538,000 in subsidy

€120

fine handed out to 15 cyclists in Dendermonde found in breach of a new regulation limiting the size of cycling groups to 10

6,000

solar panels installed on the roof of the main production unit of Alken-Maes brewery in Limburg, capable of producing 1,338 megawatt hours of electricity

€1.5 million

in regional development funding to be repaid to the EU by the owners of the Land Van Ooit theme park in Tongeren, which went bankrupt in 2007

2,500,000

tickets sold by SMS so far this year for travel on buses and trams of the Flemish public transport authority De Lijn, accounting for one in four of all tickets sold

## Brussels Airlines makes cuts in flights

Brussels Airlines last week announced it was retiring three planes from its fleet and cutting flights to European destinations in an attempt to stop a financial decline that sees it facing losses this year of €60 to €80 million. The planes have come to the end of their lease contract and will be replaced in the spring. The company blamed the drop in demand for flights to Greece and Portugal as a result of the economic situation in those countries. The losses, meanwhile, are largely due to the increase in fuel prices, the company said. Unions representing Brussels Airlines staff have warned of possible strike actions in the week of 21 November if their questions concerning purchasing power and flight schedules are not answered. These issues are holding up a new pay agreement.

“We are not being inflexible,” a union representative said. “We are giving the company time to reply.”

But not all is cuts and cancellations: Brussels Airlines will start flights to the US in June next year and in the summer season will add a new plane to its fleet serving destinations in Africa.

Meanwhile, former members of the staff of Sabena, the national airline that went broke in 2001, gathered in Brussels National Airport last week to mark the 10th anniversary of the airline’s closure. The company’s bankruptcy, which allegedly was purposefully caused by its Swiss majority owners, led to the loss of 7,000 jobs. According to Christoph Müller, the last CEO of Sabena, the airline was its industry’s equivalent of Lehmann Brothers: “The proof that no single company is too big to fail.” ♦

## New method for school registrations

The Flemish parliament last week approved a new system for registering children for school, which it says will put an end to the situation where parents literally camp outside school gates in a bid to obtain one of the few available places at the school of their choice.

The new rules increase the cases of priority. Previously, places in Flemish schools were reserved for siblings of existing pupils, socially disadvantaged families and Dutch speakers. Priority is now extended to children of staff and to pupils from another section of the same school, passing, for example, from primary to secondary. In Brussels, 55% of places will be reserved for Dutch-speaking children. Children from disadvantaged families will still have a measure of priority, but the exact quota will be decided locally. In Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp, parents will be able to register via an online system. The new rules will be able to be used in practice by the 2013-2014 school year. ♦



About 70 people, including the mayor of Aalst, took part last week in a ceremony to mark the 26th anniversary of the supermarket shooting in the town, in which eight people were killed and many more injured. The raid was part of the series of shootings by the so-called Brabant Killers, a case that has never been solved. Also present were families of victims and the man who helped carry out the investigation for 15 years, Commissioner Eddy Vos

## FIFTH COLUMN

ANJA OTTE

### The city of taste

Many people think of Hasselt as a quiet place, with friendly people. In an attempt to modernise its image and attract more visitors, Hasselt crowned itself “city of taste” some years ago – an epithet many Hasselaars, modest as they are, abhor.

Cosy Hasselt’s image was smashed brutally recently, when VRT aired a documentary on an internal police conflict. Hasselt mayor Hilde Claes (SPA), nicknamed “saint Hilde” after the Pukkelpop disaster, stumbled her way through the allegations, leaving her reputation in tatters. Moreover, her predecessors, whose statuses seemed equally saintly, were named as the instigators of all that went wrong.

One of them, Steve Stevaert, known simply as Steve, was the most popular politician of his time. He became known nationally for making the Hasselt busses free of charge, *gratis* being his buzzword. Stevaert has left politics since. When he makes the headlines now, it is because of a seedy blackmail affair.

Another local politician, the affable Herman Reynders, was a basketball star in his younger days. He is now governor of the province of Limburg, officially a non-political function. But in Limburg, everything is politics. Stevaert, Reynders, Claes, all stepped into the Limburg tradition, where old boys’ networks take care of everything. The total mess at the local police station is just one result; the city buying the Pukkelpop grounds is shady, too. Most people in Limburg can name dodgy deals like this, but no-one seems to be able to stop them.

So what about the opposition? Well, in Hasselt there is none. The city government is a so-called “reflective college”, which includes every democratic party. When Stevaert introduced this, it was seen as yet another act of his generosity, while in fact it means that every Hasselt politician is in on the game. The same goes for the local press, whose interests reach far beyond the popular daily *Belang van Limburg*.

Enter Ivo Belet (CD&V), the MEP who will be Claes’ challenger at the local elections next year. Belet, a former political journalist, has a squeaky clean image, having kept himself far from all the Hasselt shenanigans, with which his party was also involved. He promises an end to all shifty deals with “real estate and architect connections”.

Integrity is what he claims. Will he be to the taste of Hasselt and become its next mayor? If not, Belet prefers to stay in the European Parliament. That’s one way of keeping your hands clean.

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



THE WEEK  
IN BUSINESS**Banks • Optima**

Ghent-based Optima Financial Partners are finally allowed to acquire ailing Ethias Bank and its 30,000 customers. A first bid for the affiliate of the Ethias insurance company had been earlier rejected by the regulatory authorities.

**Construction • Six Construct**

Brussels-based Six Construct, an affiliate of the Besix group, has won the €170 million contract to build a 263-room Four Seasons hotel in Bahrain. The new 50 storey building is slated for inauguration in April of 2014.

**Energy • Publigaz**

The public Publigaz group, owner of the country's gas operator Fluxys, is to raise some €250 million to help Fluxys finance its recent €860 million acquisition of pipelines in Germany and Switzerland.

**Food • Puratos**

Bakery additives and yeast producer Puratos, headquartered in Groot-Bijgaarden, just outside of Brussels, will invest €30 million to build a 16,000-square metre production unit in Pennsauken, New Jersey, to strengthen its position on the US market. The company already operates some 50 units throughout the world.

**Pharmaceuticals • Ablynx**

Ghent-based pharmaceutical company Ablynx is developing its partnership with the German Merck group to develop a medical treatment against osteoarthritis. The agreement includes a €20 million co-development payment to Ablynx and a further €15 million depending on future results.

**Property • Century 21**

According to the international Century 21 property brokerage group, Flanders' households occupy an average of 119 square metres against a European average of 87 square metres.

**Telecom • Belgacom**

Telecommunications group Belgacom has signed an exclusive agreement with Paris-based music download site Deezer. The deal will allow Belgacom customers to access some 13 million titles on all telecom applications.

**Transport • Hupac**

The first rail connection linking the Port of Antwerp to Chongqing in China has been inaugurated. Operated by the Swiss Hupac transport group, the freight only service cuts container travel time from 40 days by sea to 25 days.



# Security lapses at waste treatment plant

## Local worker photographed breaches at the mainly Dutch-owned facility

ALAN HOPE

Waste management company Indaver had admitted problems at its site at Doel in Antwerp harbour and promised that safety will remain a priority, after an anonymous worker at the plant sent a file of photos to the newspaper *Gazet van Antwerpen* showing numerous health and safety breaches.

Indaver, a mainly Dutch-owned waste management business, has plants in Antwerp, Kallo, Grimbergen, Willebroek and Leuven. The plant at Doel handles household and business waste, with six incineration ovens and two dumping places for hazardous and non-hazardous waste.

The photos were taken over a period of two years and show emergency exits padlocked, wet floors around the entrance to incinerators, electrical cables running by open water, a fire extinguisher fixed in place with tape and leaking pipelines carrying

hazardous gases.

"It's been bothering me for years," the worker, who did not wish to be identified, told the *Gazet*. "I know I'm running a risk because I'm officially not allowed to take photos, but I've just had enough. Nobody does anything about it, and there have already been serious accidents."

The last incident reported by the company was in June, when a worker was burned after a fire broke out in a bunker used to store household waste. The cause of the fire was never revealed.

"There are indeed a number of photos where we have to admit that the situation is less safe than we require," said Indaver spokesman Jos Artois. "Safety for us is an extremely important priority. We carry out regular safety rounds in the plant, and if similar situations arise, they must be notified by personnel so that we can



do whatever is necessary to avoid them."

The company, he said, actively encourages staff to report unsafe situations, so it cannot explain why the worker in question should have taken

his photos to the press rather than to management. "It's not our concern who might have passed the photos along," Artois said. "But we want to do everything possible to avoid unsafe situations in the future." ♦

## Agriculture: police escort for veterinarians, new veg label launched

• The municipal council of Sint-Lievens-Houtem in East Flanders last week sent **police officers to accompany veterinarians** attending the annual cattle market in the town, the largest such market in Europe. The decision was taken after several incidents of aggression and threats towards vets in previous years. The vets are there to ensure animals – mainly cattle and horses – are properly treated at the market and during transport to and from town.

• The vegetable sector in Flanders is still **destroying tonnes of produce** as a result of low prices, the Farmers' Union said. Earlier this year the EHEC scare led to the destruction of 500 tonnes of tomatoes and 600 tonnes of cucumbers in the Mechelen market alone. Some estimates put the total of destroyed food at 3,000 tonnes. Last week the price of lettuce at the wholesale market was seven cents, compared to an expected price of 60c.

• Last week the Flemish horticulture sector launched a new brand in Mechelen. The Bel'Orta label aims to commercialise the so-called **"forgotten vegetables"** such as parsnip, parsley root, quince, kohlrabi, black radish (pictured) and chard. Vegetables included in the brand will be promoted in supermarkets and local shops. ♦



## Dehaene to return before parliament

The Flemish parliament will recall former Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene to appear before its committee investigating the collapse of Dexia bank. Last week the parliament's finance committee heard Dehaene in a session some members later said had produced "a lot of information". Members have invited Dehaene, who is the outgoing chairman of Dexia, to appear again on 21 November.

The main question Dehaene was able to clarify, members said, was whether crucial matters such as the bank's portfolio of interest swaps had been communicated to Municipal Holding (GH), which is now in liquidation as a result of its exposure to Dexia debt. Two weeks ago, the chairman of GH, Francis Vermeiren, told the Flemish parliament that GH had no knowledge of some high-risk paper auditors had signalled to the Dexia board. Dehaene contradicted that claim and stressed that directors had been given all important information from the auditors' report.

As *Flanders Today* went to press, the committee was due to meet twice, on Monday and Wednesday, to hear from four financial experts: professor Paul De Grauwe, formerly of the Catholic University of Leuven and now at the London School of Economics; Eric De Keuleneer and Roland Gillet of the Free University of Brussels (ULB) and independent economist Geert Noels of the think tank Econopolis.

The committee said that later it would also like to interview former Dexia chairmen François Narmon and Pierre Richard, as well as former CEOs Axel Miller and Claude Piret. No dates for those hearings have yet been set. ♦

## Week in innovation: no budget cuts for innovation; plastic from waste water

• The Flemish government will not include innovation in the areas where it will be forced to make budget cuts, minister-president **Kris Peeters pledged this week from India (pictured)**, where he is on a trade mission together with 30 Flemish companies. "However difficult the cuts will be, we will certainly not cut into innovation," he told VRT radio from Mumbai, where he had taken part in the World Economic Forum. "We will do everything possible to see that the resources for innovation remain uncut."

• The Brussels water supply company Aquiris is looking for a contractor to commercialise its pioneering work in **extracting biodegradable plastic from waste water**. The company has been carrying out the work – the first such project in the world – in a little-publicised test phase and is now ready to move to the next level. The plastic is created from

polymers excreted by bacteria fed on certain nutrients filtered out of the waste water during purification. The plastic can then be used in a number of different applications, such as packaging.

• Belgacom internet clients will soon be given the opportunity to **open up part of their own wireless network connection to the public**, in return for which they will be able to connect to other private data networks when away from home without paying extra connection charges. The move comes after the company's takeover earlier this year of the Spanish network Fon. Each client's signal will be split into a private and a public portion, available for use by anyone who signs up to share their own network. Belgacom assures its clients their own data will be perfectly safe, but it will be possible to opt out of the sharing scheme. Belgacom hopes to increase the number of open hotspots to half a million. ♦





# The next generation

## Nutritional slabs, stuffed toys and ice-cube champagne in tow at South Pole

→ continued from page 1

“Yes, he is young enough to be my son, but I know what he is capable of. Eight years ago, we ran together in Switzerland during a mountain marathon. Since then I have kept track of his career in kite surfing and sled dog racing. When Troy cancelled, I immediately thought of him. One of the reasons, I admit, is that his hunger for adventure reminds me a lot of myself at his age.”

It is, admits Dansercoer, “still a mystery how he will cope with more than three months of extreme cold and isolation from the outside world.” Temperatures in Antarctica average 30 degrees below zero.

“I will also have to temper his unrestrained enthusiasm sometimes, or our equipment will not last long,” Dansercoer laughs. But, on the other hand, Deltour and him make a complementary team. “I can turn on computer devices, but that’s about all. Fortunately, Sam is much more familiar with advanced technology.” Thanks to that, you can follow the pair’s progress via Twitter or on the expedition’s website, where you can also see their route and send them a personal message.

### Best barometer for climate change

The Flemish explorers will be travelling only on wind power, “our third expedition member” in the words of Dansercoer. Their wind kites should allow them to travel up to 300 kilometres a day, though they need only average 60km a day to break the current world record of Norwegian Rune Gjeldnes, who trekked 4,800 kilometres in 90 days five years ago.

Still, this extra expedition member cannot be trusted unconditionally. “The wind that is strong enough to pull us is only found high up in the air in Antarctica,” explains Dansercoer. “Moreover, we have to be on our guard for brutal gusts of wind that can fling obstacles in our way or throw us off balance in a split second.”

It sounds daunting, but, says Dansercoer: “We will be cautious but not scared, since we are both accomplished kite surfers.”

But the trip is not just an extreme sport event, the duo also has a scientific mission. Because no human has ever set foot on certain parts of eastern Antarctica, first-hand information about this desolate place is of great value to researchers.

The two explorers will measure wind patterns and supply information about the quality of the ice they encounter to universities all over the world. “The poles are the best barometers to determine the effects of global climate change,” says Dansercoer. “You detect there the first consequences of the heating of the atmosphere. On Antarctica, the most worrying is the ever-increasing speed with which the ice in the coastal areas is melting.”

### Studying Mandarin

With all his experience, Dansercoer fully realises the difficulty of his scheme. “The wind route we are relying on is only based on computer models up until now. We will constantly have to adapt to the weather conditions of the moment. Therefore, we will be in close contact with weather stations via our satellite telephones.”

To prepare physically, Dansercoer and Deltour have trained in Norway, Iceland and Antarctica, each time for stints of about two weeks. Although the physical requirements for such an extreme challenge are daunting, Dansercoer is more concerned with the mental side of things. “It’s easier to train your body to be ready, especially if you have done it before. And we’ve had plenty of time for that. But to acclimatise your mind to such an unforgiving atmosphere is far less straightforward. It’s very important to visualise the obstacles that lie ahead to prepare yourself.”

“His hunger for adventure reminds me a lot of myself at his age”

Dansercoer has long been practicing yoga. “It invites tranquillity into the soul,” he says. “I practice it before and during expeditions, to help me focus.” To much delight of the Chinese press, Dansercoer also plans to study Mandarin during the few idle moments of his trip. To keep his mind fit, “but also with a practical goal to win the appeal of the huge Chinese public.” Like many athletes, Dansercoer has superstitious habits to



Top: Dixie Dansercoer and Sam Deltour will be pulled along 6,000 kilometres by kites, hauling sleds behind them. Above: Medical student Deltour will keep the Flemish pair connected via satellite phones, a website and Twitter

assure the success of his undertaking. “I can only set up my tent in one certain order of actions; no way would I deviate from it. I always carry a particular shawl of Julie’s [Dansercoer’s American wife] with me as a talisman, and I can’t help but pack some small plush animals that belonged to the kids – although we have to be extremely selective in what we take with us. Everything you bring is weight you have to drag along the ice on your sled.”

### Belgian chocolate for lunch

The purposeful packing especially applies to their food rations. Thanks to an innovative diet, they just have to eat 900 grams of food to get their necessary 5,000 calories – the amount needed per day to keep up their energy. They’ve taken around 100 kilos of food to safely last the preconceived 100 days. The diet is designed by Flemish chef Frank Fol of culinary advice organisation FutureFood, specialised in inventive healthy foods.

Although the seemingly rubber slabs of nutrition don’t look exactly appetising, they are a kind of luxury for Dansercoer. “On former expeditions, I ate the same thing every day. Now we have different meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We even have a sweet lunch made of real Belgian chocolate.”

That’s not the only treat they have allowed themselves. “Normally we only drink water, by melting ice. But for the holidays we have some frozen ice cubes of excellent champagne.”

With the Antarctic ICE expedition, Dansercoer wants to honour Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, the first man on the South Pole exactly 100 years ago. “Of course I look up to pioneers like him, and with my own efforts I want to continue what they have started.”

One of Dansercoer’s greatest motivations is to preserve the Belgian legacy of polar travels. Four years ago he sailed from his native town Nieuwpoort to Antarctica, re-enacting the route that Belgian explorer Adrien de Gerlache took in 1897 with his ship *De Belgica*. “Belgium has an impressive history of polar travels. I don’t want it to disappear.”

A statue of Dansercoer in Nieuwpoort already secures his own place in history. “It is flattering, of course; everybody likes to have their work appreciated. Children want to be praised, but big CEOs also look forward to their bonuses,” he smiles.

But is it not almost time to pass on the baton to eager beavers such as Deltour, now that he nears the age of half a century? “I think I can still keep this up for about a decade,” he grins. “But yes, it’s very pleasing to see that a new generation follows in my footsteps.”

Whether there also is a successor amongst his own four kids, he is not sure. “Maybe the youngest, Robin. She must be one of the only nine-year olds in the world who has been on both the South and North Poles.” ♦

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



## The computer faster than Road Runner

**ExaScience Lab at imec is researching the world's fastest computers**

**“B**eep beep”. Who remembers Road Runner? This cartoon character is chased endlessly by Wile E Coyote. But because of Road Runner's super-power speed, he manages to escape every time.

It's most likely this super speed that inspired IBM engineers in 2008 to name their super-power computer “Roadrunner”. This device has the same computing power as some 100,000 laptops and was used to make simulations of climate and other scientific models. Today, Roadrunner – the computer – has been surpassed by the Japanese “K” which is 10 times more powerful.

And the story continues in the woods near Leuven, where scientists at the ExaScience Lab are researching the next generation of super computers. “This lab – on the premises of imec – is one of our four in Europe that develop new technologies for exascale supercomputers,” explains Karl Solchenbach, manager of Intel's European Exascale labs. The Leuven lab was set up last year by imec and five Flemish universities – KULeuven, UGent, VUBrussels, Uantwerpen and UHasselt.

Many hurdles have to be jumped to develop these computers that promise to be 100 times faster than even the K.

### One power plant for each computer

The K computer uses as much energy per day as 10,000 families. “If we would use the same technologies for exascale computers as were used for today's super computers, we would need to build an entire power plant next to each exascale computer,” says Wilfried Verachtert, lab manager of the ExaScience Lab. “New concepts are needed to significantly decrease the power usage of super and exascale computers. In the past, engineers used faster processors to make faster computers. However, today we have reached the limit with 3GHz processors. 6GHz processors are not realistic because of energy consumption and heat dissipation. The way to go, then, is to use more processors instead of faster processors. An exascale computer will have one to 10 million cores.”

### A super computer breaks down every minute

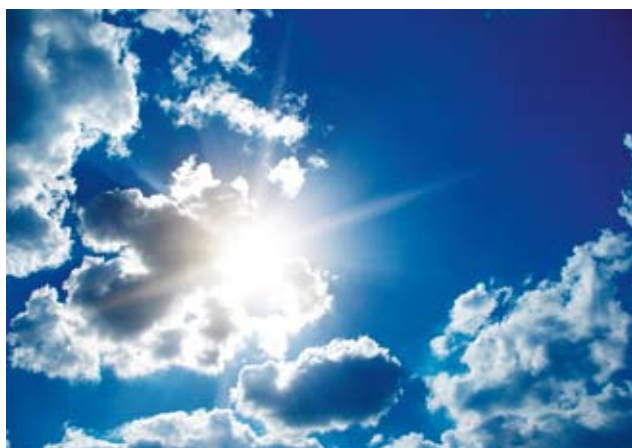
But with so many processors in a computer comes an increased possibility that a processor fails and knocks out the exascale computer. Verachtert: “Current supercomputers – with some 100,000 cores – can work for some days before a core fails. Still, this is enough to complete a computing task. However, with millions of cores, an exascale computer would break down every minute. In our lab, we develop software that can cope with these hardware failures.”

### How to utilise millions of processors?

If you imagine an exascale computer as a group of millions of people that have to work together to perform a task, you understand how difficult it is to cope with this extreme parallelism. Wilfried Verachtert: “We need to develop new software and programming languages that are able to use the processors and memories most efficiently and that matches the computing task to the resources.”

By 2020, the lab hopes to develop exascale computers that work efficiently both in terms of energy and workload. “These computers will lead the way to advances in scientific research in the fields of climate, healthcare and economics, but also for companies,” explains Verachtert. “The use of more efficient and cheaper super and exascale computers is an important asset to, for instance, run simulations instead of developing real prototypes.”

## Why do we need supercomputers?



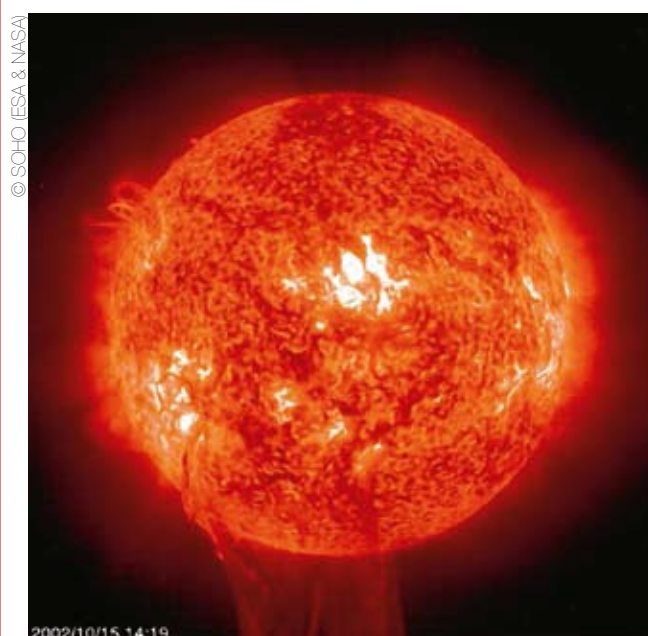
Supercomputers allow us to make improved weather forecasts. With even more computing power (exascale computers), we would be able to make forecasts more accurate. Scientists also use these computers to test climate models and do simulations – for example, to see what would happen with the ice caps if the temperature on earth rose by five degrees.



Companies such as Johnson & Johnson use supercomputers to develop new medicines. Also, the medical world uses this computer power to simulate the functioning of proteins in our bodies or the interaction between neurons in our brains.



Supercomputers are used to make predictions of where to search for petroleum. The Exascale Computing Research Center in Paris – one of the four Intel labs for exascale computing – develops software for exascale computers to do these predictions more accurate and thus to avoid today's expensive test drillings for petroleum.



The sun ejects charged particles into space. This solar wind has its effect on communication satellites, spacecrafts and aircrafts. For this reason it's important to forecast solar activity and the accompanying weather in space. The ExaScience lab in Leuven – one of the four Intel labs for exascale computing – develops software for exascale computers to make accurate forecasts of space weather.



# Open innovation: business as (not so) usual

Wim Vanhaverbeke's business model is opening doors in the chemical industry

SENNE STARCKX

In the 20th century, the omnipresent business model for companies around the world was "closed innovation". For many industries, this is still the case today. Closed innovation means that all R&D – attempts to develop new products and services – stays safely inside the company. In closed innovation, the key word is "control". In this more and more old-fashioned model, R&D is strictly separated from the scientific community outside.

The direct opposite business model is open innovation. According to its believers, it's a new paradigm in the world of business – because it requires a radically new way of thinking and managing.

"Open innovation requires that a company collaborates with another party on an equal level, with the condition that both partners can profit," explains Wim Vanhaverbeke, professor of Strategy & Organisation at the University of Hasselt and a visiting professor of open innovation at the ESADE Business School in Spain.

Vanhaverbeke is the author of *Open Innovation: Researching a New Paradigm* and is one of the keynote speakers at this month's Tomorrow Starts with Chemistry event in Brussels (see sidebar).

An outside partner in the open innovation model could be another company, a spin-off firm, a research institution or an individual entrepreneur, he says. "Open innovation is a really welcome gift for companies in the chemical sector. Most of these companies are quite big, have extensive R&D departments and innovate on a science-based level. I notice that since the early 1990s, big chemical companies like DSM and Unilever are spending increasingly more money on open innovative initiatives."

Philips, for instance – technically not a chemical company but with a comparable situation – holds more than 10,000 patents, says Vanhaverbeke, "of which less than 20% have been valorised or commercialised. That's a huge waist of technology and knowledge! Instead of being locked up, these patents could be very useful for other companies – perhaps much smaller than Philips – to develop new things."

## Sharing the riches

But big companies are not very fond of opening up their patent archives. "Not only because they're afraid to give away valuable stuff," explains Vanhaverbeke (pictured below), "but also because it's not very profitable for these companies to arrange hundreds of license agreements, while the actual profit will be peanuts."

So what can convince these companies to share knowledge and technology with other companies, even competitors? "Governments – and I believe we need a supra-national approach here – have to provide strong incentives to open this closed chain of carefully guarded knowledge and technology."

"We have to think more in terms of an ecosystem in which big and small companies, together with universities and research institutions, are all interconnected"

We have to think more in terms of an ecosystem in which big and small companies, together with spin-offs, universities and research institutions, are all interconnected with each other."

In Flanders, says Vanhaverbeke, the "policy is still too much focussed on closed innovation. We still consider companies as the core of innovation. But that's not entirely true. The locus of innovation is not just inside anymore; it has moved outside company walls, into the structure of the ecosystem."



See living statues of famous historical scientists at Tomorrow Starts with Chemistry. From left: pioneering radioactivity researcher Marie Curie; British chemist Dorothy Crowfoot; French scientist Irene Curie and Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel

## Starting the process

Open innovation occurs in a number of steps. First a company needs to know what the future will bring. Because it lacks a crystal ball, the company will try to identify developments that are likely to become important in the future. "This is possible by collaborating with (and investing in) universities and so-called 'poles of innovation'". A good example of this, says Vanhaverbeke, is nano-electronic research centre imec in Leuven.

"A company can't rely anymore on a traditional human resources department, but will need some kind of a 'scouting division'. It's not only about looking for the best people anymore and convincing them to join the company. These 'scouts' have to identify the best scientists outside and try to cooperate in their ideas and projects. Secondly, when a promising strategy or technology is selected, the company can – maybe with the support of venture capitalists – develop it commercially and bring it to the market."

The development of Dyneema was the product of open innovation in the chemical sector. This super-strong fibre was invented by a small company in the Netherlands, but DSM made it a commercial success. Vanhaverbeke: "DSM is a real pioneer in open innovation. It has already been working this way for more than 15 years."



What are the difficulties for a company when it chooses to switch from closed to open innovation? "Everyone realises that working together with spin-offs, bringing new technologies into the company and licensing in-house technologies to other firms, are all good strategies to become more profitable," says Vanhaverbeke. "But the real challenge is situated at the management level."

Managers have to let go of the entire process – from science to product – happening inside their company. "They now have to look outside for interesting stuff," says Vanhaverbeke. "It's a totally different way of managing a company." An open innovation company needs not only smart people in its R&D department, "but also people who are able to understand technology and science and who combine this with excellent negotiation skills – because they'll have to negotiate with other companies."

Some companies have trouble with this process because it "is not the same," explains Vanhaverbeke, "as talking to a supplier, who is in general rather obedient because he depends on the company. I consider these negotiating skills – vital in open innovation – as a form of art, and there are not many people who have them. That's why roughly 80% of all companies are not yet ready to deal with the changes that open innovation brings to the management level." ♦

## Tomorrow Starts with Chemistry

In recognition of 2011 as the International Year of Chemistry, the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) is holding a major three-day event at which to discover the latest achievements of chemistry and research that will lead to tomorrow's great breakthroughs.

Industry partners, academics, decision makers, local school kids and students from around Europe will attend for lectures, conferences and debates. The event is open to the public, and chemistry students from local universities will be present throughout the event to act as guides. One of the highlights is the exhibition *Chemistry of the Future*, which illustrates three societal changes: mobility, housing and water. Live demonstrations and experiments are interesting for the whole family, and it's also a chance to see the "Solar Impulse" solar-powered airplane.

**21-23 November**  
**Academy Palace**  
Hertogsstraat 1, Brussels

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



# Design bootcamp

## An organisation takes new designers from hobbyists to entrepreneurs

COURTNEY DAVIS

When you think of artists, you don't necessarily think of business. Yet when you consider any other person working with their hands – be it a plumber or an architect – the business side of their work is far more obvious. Designers can fall somewhere in-between these two. How can a designer make the transition from talented to profitable?

De Invasie has the answer. A platform for Flemish and Dutch designers, De Invasie has grown and evolved rapidly since its inception in early 2010 as an event in Bruges. The organisation, based in Wachtebeke, East Flanders, has two goals. First, it assists young designers in showing their products, in trying to sell them and in communicating products through collective campaigns. It also brings designers and their products closer to the market through networking events. The second goal is supporting young artists at developing their entrepreneurship.

"We support young designers to bridge the gap between the idea and the real entrepreneur," says Bert Pieters, one of the founders.

They achieve this through several means, including quality control, determined through an external jury. The website of De Invasie features the work, all available for purchase, of more than 50 Flemish and Dutch designers, from jewellery to home furnishing to kids' products.

But just because you have an online store doesn't mean you're top quality, which is where the jury comes in. They determine the worthiness of every applicant, so you can be assured that your time perusing online will be rewarded with beautiful images of necklaces, bookshelves and stationary, all unique and all well made.

### Power in numbers

De Invasie uses the power of collectiveness – or mass attacks as they like to call them. These events combine many artists to create

a larger event than any singular artist could do. "The first event was organised because of the difficulty of people to get connected to a broad audience," explains Pieters. "Young designers were at that time a little 'stuck' between handicraft-type events and the big high-end events. We filled the gap." Designers also collaborate on their own. De Invasie's "bootcamp" last month found dozens of them in one place. "The bootcamp has been developed to support young designers in developing their entrepreneurship," says Pieters, 31. "They are free workshops, open to everyone. Several topics of entrepreneurship are covered, such as creating your product, communication or copyright."

The driver for such an event stems from "the lack of entrepreneurship and professional approach of young designers," he continues. "There is sometimes too little time spent at branding, portfolio, market analyses and so on. There's loads of things happening here, and we want to create a new world of young creative companies, in all sorts of disciplines."

### Going to bootcamp

De Invasie gets their speakers and workshop leaders through the assistance of Flanders DC, a Flemish government agency dedicated to increasing creativity and innovation in Flanders. At last month's Bootcamp, culture advisor and Poppunt policy worker Tijs Vastesaeger talked about taking your talent from hobby to career, and next month finds former *Knack Weekend* editor Trui Moerkerke offering her tips for a good communication strategy. Attendees have the opportunity to talk with them and with each other to work on solutions to personal and specific issues.

"Events alone don't do the trick," notes Pieters. "This is why the bootcamps exist. When they leave, we want them to be inspired and able to take a next step on their own, to develop in their entrepreneurship."



Conquering the world of design: The Hub workspace in Ghent

Surprisingly, the bootcamps are absolutely free. As De Invasie has no paid employees, all the events are run by volunteers and paid for by sponsors. To be a member of De Invasie, there is a small fee; but in general, this organisation really isn't about the money. However, they have an interesting policy where you do have to pay if you register but don't show up.

This wasn't too much of an issue for their first bootcamp, which surpassed expectations. "We were fully booked within a couple of hours," says Pieters. "There was a great spirit among the designers and almost everyone showed up. Tijs Vastesaeger facilitated the first workshop, and it was about translating your idea to a product – and back. The reactions were great. Most of the designers really got inspired and were able to take the next step. It was a total success. Let's hope we can continue this way."

Taking place at their workspace in the funky warehouse district of DOK on the north side of Ghent, their next bootcamp is on 14 December. When not being used for events, the space serves as a free workplace called The Hub for Invasie members.

"The workspaces are meant for our warriors – designers associated with De Invasie. 'Warriors' seemed an appropriate term for people who want to conquer the world with their designs. They can use The Hub for projects: creating a new collection, presenting it to the press. It's simply a matter of presenting the project, and we give them the keys."♦

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

## Home and away • International internship programme celebrates 10th anniversary

DAAN BAUWENS

International internships, especially those at a place like Unesco or the World Health Organisation, are invaluable and hugely popular, including with those who have already been in the workforce and are, as a 20- or 30-something, changing career directions. Last week, the United Nations Association Flanders Belgium welcomed Flemings to a celebration of 10 years of a subsidy programme that made their internships possible. International organisations such as the aforementioned and also, for instance, the World Labour Organisation and the International Monetary Fund graduates the chance to be an intern. As most of these internships are unpaid and based in major cities with a high cost of living like Vienna, Paris or New York, very few young Flemings in the past took a chance on them.

That's why a decade ago the Flemish government began subsidising these internships. If you are offered an internship at, say, the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross and are younger than 35, the Flemish government will grant you a fixed monthly allowance of about €1,000, even if the internship lasts more than two years. The government annually spends €216,000 on this programme and intends to increase this amount in the coming years. In 2011, approximately 50 interns received funding.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary, all interns who have made use of the programme were invited to the Errera House, the official residence of the Flemish minister-president, and were welcomed by minister-president Kris Peeters. In his opening speech, Peeters stressed the uniqueness of the programme and emphasised that the number of Flemings in international organisations should keep on rising.

"International organisations are of tremendous importance in today's world," Peeters told *Flanders Today*. "That's why it is very important to have a maximum number of Flemings working there. It allows us to have a privileged partnership with these organisations. We encourage the interns to develop a career within the international organisations after their internship. But even if they don't, they will have had a unique experience, and they will become people with an international vision."

The interns have excellent role models at their doorstep: from 1994 to 2008, Flemish doctor Peter Piot was director of UNAIDS. Flemish diplomat Koen Vervaeke is currently the European Union's ambassador to the African Union in Addis Abeba. European Commissioner for Trade Karel De Gucht and president of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy are both Flemings. Gilles De Kerchove was appointed EU counter-terrorism coordinator. And the list goes on.



Jasmin Van Daele, a post-doctorate researcher in history at the University of Gent, speaks at the intern programme celebration

"But we have to stay modest; we are not unique," insists Peeters. "Still, there are a few typical Flemish talents that are very much appreciated by others: good language skills, the willingness to listen, the ability to compromise. All of this is because we are a small country, a small region, with an open economy."♦

→ [www.vvn.be](http://www.vvn.be)



# Flight to the future

Flemish journalist follows the lives of immigrant children who arrive alone

ALAN HOPE

A great deal is said and written about asylum seekers, but the global figures disguise one aspect involved in fleeing one's home to try to start a new life in a strange land. Every three hours on average, an asylum-seeker lands in Belgium who is an unaccompanied minor. A child, in other words, facing the ordeal of displacement without the support or comfort of family.

Catherine Vuylsteke is a journalist with Flemish daily newspaper *De Morgen* and the author of books both on China, her speciality, and on the lives of gay men in Morocco. The plight of unaccompanied minor refugees

caught her attention, and the result is a new book and exhibition, both titled *Vroeger is een ander land* (Before is Another Country).

To find out how children like these managed on their arrival, Vuylsteke (pictured right) contacted the Brussels-based Catholic charity Caritas to help her contact a few of the many children involved – there were 1,600 new arrivals in the first six months of this year alone. She then followed their lives from September 2010 to June this year.

"A lot is written about migration and asylum, but nobody talks about the children," Vuylsteke explains. "They don't have a voice, and I wanted to give them one."

The book is the sound of that voice: the stories of Raza from Afghanistan, Jacob from Sudan, Dinesh from Sri Lanka, Imad from Ghana, Benjamin from Morocco, Ibrahim from Guinea, Sabo from Syria and, finally, the only girl of the eight, Maryska from Ukraine. (Most of the names have been changed to protect the children's identity).

Each of them had a different reason for taking flight: domestic abuse, war, ethnic oppression, the dangers of living on the streets. Each of them is haunted by a different past and faced with the challenge of a new future.

Although only eight ended up in the book, Vuylsteke met with many more. "In some cases it was difficult. I went to Aalst to talk to one boy, but, in the end, he didn't want to take part. He spent an hour and a half telling me the whole story of his life. They just want someone to show an interest, to be ready to listen, to be a friend. They need a chance to tell their story. I didn't use his story, though. It's important to respect his wishes."

The stories are by turns harrowing and hopeful and help to remind people that asylum seekers are not automatically *profiteurs* who come to Brussels or Flanders solely to benefit from the welfare system. For every child who has suffered, there are dozens of adults who have to fight for recognition, let alone sympathy.

"The government does its best, but its services are overwhelmed," Vuylsteke says. "Some of the rules are meant well, but they turn out to be bad in practice. For instance, these children are taken into care, usually by the [social aid agencies] OCMWs. If they get a positive response to their asylum applications, they have to leave those facilities. The support they get is pretty good, but there's a lack of places."



© Dieter Telemans

Still, she says that so many requests here, "must mean we're doing something right. It's because these people have a belief in our sort of society. But it's worth remembering that the numbers we get are peanuts in comparison with countries like Kenya."



## Photo show by Nadaar collective

On 23 November, the BELvue Museum in Brussels opens an exhibition based on the Catherine Vuylsteke's book, featuring photographs taken by members of the Brussels photographer collective Nadaar. The exhibition is free and runs until 29 January.

On 8 December, the museum is the setting for a debate on the subject of immigrant minors, with Catherine Vuylsteke; Wouter Vandenhoele, who teaches human rights at the University of Antwerp; and David Lowyck of the support centre Minor Ndako in Anderlecht. The debate is also free, with an advance reservation at [www.deburen.eu](http://www.deburen.eu).

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

## STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

### Antwerpse handje

Stroll through the streets of the historic centre of Antwerp and you may be surprised to find a roaring trade going on in confections based on a lopped-off body part. A severed hand, in particular, which, gruesome as it may seem, is a central symbol in the city's folklore.

Legend has it that the river Scheldt was at one time guarded by a giant named Druon Antigoon, who exacted a heavy toll from ships passing on the water. Any captain who refused to pay the toll would have his right hand cut off and thrown into the river. Druon Antigoon's reign of terror continued until a Roman centurion named Silvius Brabo killed the giant, hacked off his hand and threw it into the water.

According to folklore, this is the origin of the city's name: *hand werpen* = to throw a hand. Brabo, meanwhile, gave his name to the ancient duchy of Brabant.

The truth behind the city's name is

rather more prosaic, but the legend lives on in the statue of Brabo by Jef Lambeaux that stands before the City Hall and in the local confectionery, the *Antwerpse handje*.

In 1934, the Royal Association of Pastry Bakers of Antwerp held a competition to find the perfect sweet for the city. Six of the 43 entrants had the idea of a hand, but the competition was won by Jos Hakker. In 1956, the exact ingredients, shape, size and baking process were set down by the Syndical Union of bread, pastry, chocolate and ice producers, and those rules are still in force. In 1982, a chocolate version was developed by chocolatier René Goossens, then president of the Federation of Belgian Confectioners.

The plain *handjes* are buttery biscuits made with an extremely short dough, baked to a pale golden brown and sprinkled with almond flakes. They're slightly hard to the bite, but the biscuit crumbles to a

fine shortbread, not too sweet, but rich with butter and eggs.

The chocolate version comes in various sorts: milk, white, praline-filled and, the most exotic, filled with marzipan and Elixir d'Anvers. For my money, these are less interesting than the biscuits. Chocolate is chocolate, after all, and nothing on earth, not even a folkloric shape, is ever going to make white chocolate palatable.

Elixir d'Anvers, a liqueur based on 32 plants and herbs, was once marketed, believe it or not, as a cure for colic in horses. Older Flemings may recall being given a few drops on a sugar cube as a remedy for stomach ache. Violently yellow in colour, it does indeed taste medicinal, so it's probably not too controversial to point out that pairing it with dark chocolate is not exactly the most inspired of flavour combinations.

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



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# Special Edition

## THE Bulletin Newcomer

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO EXPAT LIFE IN BRUSSELS AND BELGIUM

BRUSSELS  
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# Welcome home

LEISURE

Bars, books and  
what's on the box

WORK

Employment  
and retirement

HOME

A guide to  
and settling

Newcomer is published by The Bulletin twice a year to give you all the information you need to start a new life in Belgium. Our writers know the country inside-out — so we know the sort of questions people ask and the answers that can make all the difference as you settle away from home.

Preparing · Formalities

### Getting legal

Before settling in Belgium for more than three months, it's important to make sure all the right paperwork gets filled out. This can be the most complicated part of the move.

#### visas

To simplify travel in Europe, 13 countries, including Belgium, have signed the Schengen agreement, which allows for free movement across borders. However, there are still documents to be obtained and rules to be followed if you plan to stay in Belgium for substantial periods of time.

For European Union citizens who come to Belgium for a period of less than three months (90 days), obtaining a visa is not necessary. These individuals can stay based on their national passport or identity card, provided they report their presence to the local municipal administration within eight days of moving to their new home. This is only necessary if they are not staying in a hotel, hostel or similar lodging. Certain non-EU citizens — such as those from Canada, the US and Japan — do not need a visa for stays under 90 days in any six-month period.

#### non eu

Non-EU nationals must have a visa if they intend to stay in the country for more than 90 days. The specific type of visa to apply for is a "temporary residence permit" or Type D. There are only a small number of reasons for which non-Belgians and non-EU citizens can obtain a visa. These are: to study, for employment, for self-employment, family reunification, cohabitation and marriage. The documents required are a passport valid for at least 15 months, a certificate of good conduct issued no more than six months earlier, a medical certificate and a work permit or other documentation explaining why a visa is necessary.

For those wanting to come to the country for reasons other than work, proof of having the financial means to support themselves and their families must be obtained.

#### work permits

Obtaining a visa is important if you are going to be working and living in Belgium for extended periods of time. For EU citizens, EEA nationals and those of Switzerland and similar countries, work permits and professional cards are not needed, although formalities must be followed. Visit the websites below for details of the procedures for each region, and see also our explanation of Belgium's regions on p.92.

#### FLANDERS

www.vlaanderen.be

#### WALLONIA

www.walloniamag.be

#### BRUSSELS-CAPITAL

www.brussels.be

#### GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

www.dgfi.be



#### renting

In Belgium, there are two common rental lease options: a standard flexible lease for a period between three and nine years, and a short-term lease for contracts up to three years. The nine-year lease allows the tenant to break the lease with three months' notice (and payment of a penalty). The rent amount is fixed for nine years, apart from annual increases linked to the Belgian cost-of-living index. The short-term lease may be set for any period up to three years and may not be broken by either tenant or landlord. It may be renewed once only, up to a maximum of three years — for example, a one-year lease may be renewed with a two-year lease.

#### RENOVATION

If you settle on a property that needs renovation, familiarise yourself with the taxes and costs involved. The remainder of the money changes hands at this point. Unfortunately, the price agreed upon in the contract and the amount you end up paying can be quite different. As well as legal fees, most properties require a 12.5 percent registration tax to be paid to the state. However, if

Settling down · Moving in

### Renting and buying property

#### deposits

The lease will require you to put down a security deposit, normally equal to two months' rent, against any damage caused to the property during your lease. On moving in, tenants are generally responsible for a detailed examination of the property, called an état des lieux/état van het huis. Be sure to record all defects in the property so you don't get charged for them when moving out.

If you want to renovate a rented place, it's possible to draw up a 'renovation lease', where the landlord agrees to the transformations being made and pays the tenant by reducing the rent. It's best to get legal advice while drawing up this contract.

#### buying

Buying a home is another viable option if you plan on settling in Belgium on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. The first step is to find a notary, as they will need to spring into action the second you find your house. This is a legal requirement. It is typically the seller's notary that drafts the sale agreement. This is a legally binding document for both the buyer and the seller. Upon signing, the buyer becomes responsible for the property, and therefore must insure it. At this time, a down payment is also required from the buyer (usually about 10 percent of the total cost). Closing follows within four months' time.

The remainder of the money changes hands at this point. Unfortunately, the price agreed upon in the contract and the amount you end up paying can be quite different. As well as legal fees, most properties require a 12.5 percent registration tax to be paid to the state. However, if

you don't own any other properties in Belgium, you are eligible for a rebate.

#### mortgages

Mortgages can be fixed for the term of the loan, variable annually, or renewed every three or five years, with options on the type of interest payment. The fairly common practice of using a mortgage broker can be helpful.



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Bulletin  
Newcomer



# The birth of the age of consumption

## Nostalgic images of post-war optimism courtesy of Frank Philippi

TOM PEETERS

From the 1950s to the early 1970s, the Flemish landscape changed dramatically. Cars and Coca-Cola, ready-made clothes and washing machines, miniskirts and high-rise buildings entered the streets and the households.

Antwerp-born photographer Frank Philippi documented this era of unprecedented growth and belief in the future. His images are a goldmine for historians, retro lovers and nostalgic souls.

Still, it's only this year that Antwerp's Photo Museum (FoMu) started digging in the extensive archives of the photographer, who died last year. The result is a fine exhibition that illustrates the changes in mindset taking place in the first decades after the Second World War. Because Philippi's assignments were in publicity, as well as in fashion and business, his camera was a prime witness to the maturing idea of advance.

"Next to the enormous size of the archive and its historical value, is another important consideration," says curator Brecht Bostyn. "Philippi was a real aesthete. His clients asked him mainly for clean shots of their products, or even their offices. He also had to deliver well-behaved and never too explicit images of fashion models. But in spite of this, his work was frivolous and very fresh."

In fact, when you go digging in his test shots for catalogues, you find material that's not at all outdated. Take for instance the fashion photo that made it to the cover of the book *De Gouden Jaren van Frank Philippi, fotograaf* (The Golden Years of Frank Philippi, photographer). One could not tell for sure if it was made in the 1960s or the 1990s. Of course, back then, it didn't make it to the neat catalogues of department stores like Grand Bazar (the herald of the GB chain) and A l'Innovation or mail order companies like 3 Suisses, all clients of Philippi. Fortunately, he kept everything. "Even his house, garden and kitchen photography made it to his chronologically ordered archive," adds Bostyn.

Because it's so large and well structured, this gigantic collection works as a timeline, marking the vibes of renewal and progress that conquered the country between the '50s and the '70s. In 1958, for example, Philippi photographed the Brussels World's Fair, where visitors got a first glimpse of what their lives would look like in the next few decades. He portrayed the astonished eyes of the countrymen visiting the Belgian capital and seeing big American cars and Coke bottles for the first time in their lives.

"He also photographed the first supermarkets," says Bostyn. "People were used to going to the local grocery with their shopping lists, but now they were all of a sudden confronted with an abundance of food and other consumer goods; and it was just dazzling."



Publicity shot for Terlenka fashion label in 1963 Brussels

### The egg came first

Although now Philippi's photographs are considered of great historical value, that's not what he had in mind when he first picked up a camera. He wanted to be an art photographer. Like colleague Filip Tas, he was a member of the avant-garde movement G58, and his artistic experiments – most famous is his series of eggs – were shown in galleries and museums.

"He was accepted as a full-fledged artist," explains Bostyn, "but back then you couldn't make a living out of photo art. So he had to compromise. He began a small studio in Hoboken, a district of Antwerp. When he noticed there was more money in the fashion and advertising industry, he moved to Brussels, where he worked for the big 'Mad Men' style advertising agencies." We are talking of the time that the smooth American business model came into vogue. Philippi was not only asked

to take photographs of new products that soon would invade the market, he also took pictures of the infrastructure, the offices, the computer room. The results were put up on the walls of the workplace or published in the company's magazine. Bostyn: "Nowadays we have websites for that, but in those days print was booming, and it was the main instrument for business communication."

In the 1960s Philippi became influenced by the British fashion photographers. Browsing through his pictures you can see how women's skirts gradually got shorter. "These were the swinging '60s," confirms Bostyn. "There was new music all around. You could see the change of mentality on the television screens that had conquered the living rooms, hear it on the radio, see it in the catalogues of the fashion industry and finally also in the streets of your own town."

Philippi was there with his camera when it all happened. Without really knowing

it, he registered through his own eyes a new-found optimism. Call it the birth of the age of consumption. It's only now, when much that he photographed has disappeared, that it's possible to see the relevance of his work.

A feeling of nostalgia comes to mind when looking at pictures of vanished icons like Brussels' Martini Tower or Antwerp's Cinema Rex, covered in neon. Alongside a jukebox with smash hits from the past and some vintage furniture, the photos of Frank Philippi offer a great time-travel experience. ♦

Until 29 January  
Photo Museum (FoMu)  
Walsekaai 47, Antwerp  
→ [www.fotomuseum.be](http://www.fotomuseum.be)





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## A day in the deep future

# TEDxBRUSSELS

COURTNEY DAVIS

Luc Steels isn't a man you often get the chance to talk to, given the commitment of his in-depth research. But it's this very work that makes him so fascinating, for he studies robots.

"It turns out there are three problems with robots: empathy, meaning and insight," he tells me. "It is all about the relationship of the robot with the world around it. For example, with empathy, how can we get robots to recognise behaviour in other robots or in people and relate it to their own behaviour? If they see someone moving or waving their arm, how can they relate that to moving their own arm? It's about the relationship of your own body and the behaviour of another."

Insight, meanwhile, is difficult for robots because it "is about being able to solve a problem without applying a routine solution. So if you don't have a hammer but have to hit a nail, you could use something else, like your shoe. This sounds abstract, but I hope to make it clear and concrete in the talk."

A professor of computer science at the Free University of Brussels (VUB), Steels will present his research at TEDxBrussels and, in keeping with the event's format, will inundate the audience with fascinating stories and examples limited to just 18 minutes. This is the kind of person whose brain you'd want to pick for hours, but instead of getting frustrated, you will most likely get distracted.

Joining Steels in the event subtitled "A Day in the Deep Future" are more than 20 experts in entirely different fields with an equally fascinating perspective. They include Lorenz Bogaert, co-founder of Ghent-based social networking site Netlog (pictured); Canadian Andrew Hessel, an

advocate for open source DNA coding, British-Israeli quantum mechanics guru David Deutsch and American business commentator Julie Meyer, a passionate supporter of entrepreneurs.

With such a short time frame, Steels actually hopes to raise more questions than answer them. "I hope to particularly to make people aware of the limitations and what we need to tackle for artificial intelligence," he says. "We've been asked to think about the future for this particular event, so I'll probably talk about the deep problems we're facing trying to develop autonomous, intelligent robots, illustrated with experiments I'm doing myself."

The moment he starts describing his work, ideas, questions and possibilities begin to flood the mind. This is, in fact, the goal of TEDxBrussels, says its director Samia Lounis. "From the beginning, we focused on science, technology and entertainment. This year, we wanted a battle of visions, only with speakers who are able to give their vision of the world in 50 years. I'm very interested in the world I live in and what's next, where we're headed. We live in a global, open world. The more we share, the more we can have a common narrative and do something good with it." ♦



**22 November, 9.00-18.30**

**Bozar**

Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels

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



Scandinavian crime is all the rage, be it the books, the films or the TV series. Who among us hasn't seen Danish mystery *The Killing* or at least heard about detective Lund's Nordic ski sweaters? The news that VRT will air the second season beginning on 25 November is good news for *Killing* fans (such as yours truly), and the news that film distributor Lumière is hosting a Scandinavian Crime Festival next weekend in Ghent is good news for the genre's fans in general.

At the Crime Festival, you will meet the latest in Denmark's line of brilliant mystery storytelling: *The Bridge*. In the first episode, a body is discovered in the middle of a bridge. Nothing so strange there, but this is the Øresund Bridge, and the body is laying across the border – half of it is located in Denmark and half in Sweden. A bi-national team must work to find the killer (making for a story of its own). The festival screens all 10 episodes of the first season back-to-back (breaking for lunch and snacks).

The following day, different series and films will screen, including Norway's



*Varg Veum: Black Sheep*, Sweden's *Irene Huss: The Man with the Small Face* and the excellent new Norwegian film *Headhunters*, in which a businessman-cum-art thief finally targets the wrong victim (pictured). Tickets to the event are sold per day and include a goodie bag with DVDs. (Lisa Bradshaw)

## Crime Festival

26-27 November

Sphinx & Vooruit, Ghent

## MORE FILM THIS WEEK

### Across Flanders

**Het Varken van Madonna (The Madonna's Pig):** New film by Flemish director Frank Van Passel (*Villa des roses*) starring Kevin Janssens as a travelling salesman of a robotic hog with pheromones to help pig farmers with breeding. A West Flemish fantasy, in cinemas now [www.hetvarkenvanmadonna.be](http://www.hetvarkenvanmadonna.be)

### Brussels

**Jacques Rancière:** The French philosopher has a conversation with Corinne Diserens, director of Brussels' School of Graphic Arts, ahead of a screening of Béla Tarr's 1988 film *Damnation* **NOV 18** 20.00 at Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23 [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

**Pink Screens:** You can still catch the tail end of this queer film fest, including the legendary closing party **Until NOV 19** at Cinéma Nova and Bruxelles-Congrès [www.gdac.org](http://www.gdac.org)





## MUSIC FESTIVAL

## Jazz & Sounds

17-19 November

Across Ghent

A lot of jazz musicians like to colour outside the lines. Not content to be placed under the restricting label “jazz”, these artists prefer to be taken at face value, freeing them up to experiment with unique and exciting sounds. In this context, the Jazz & Sounds Festival welcomes with open arms experimental and avant-garde musicians. Seventy-five year-old Brazilian icon Hermeto Pascoal will be there, as well as a number of new generationers, including Robin Verheyen, Lisa Cay Miller and Jazz plays Europe. This last group brings together young musicians from seven different countries. Other highlights include Henry Threadgill (*pictured*), hailing from Chicago and one of the genre’s most imaginative composers and saxophone players, and Brazilian super-composer, guitarist and pianist Egberto Gismonti. (Robyn Boyle)

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



### MORE FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

#### Antwerp

**Crossing Border:** Combined literature and music fest featuring more than 60 international artists  
**NOV 19-20** at Arenbergschouwburg, Arenbergstraat 28  
[www.crossingborder.be](http://www.crossingborder.be)

#### Brussels

**Vrijheidsfestival:** International festival of freedom featuring documentaries, debates, readings and more  
**NOV 17-26** at Théâtre National & KVS  
[www.festivalvandevrijheid.be](http://www.festivalvandevrijheid.be)

#### Kortrijk

**Next Arts Festival:** Theatre, dance and performing arts  
**NOV 18-DEC 3** at Budascoop and De Kortrijkse Schouwburg  
[www.nextfestival.eu](http://www.nextfestival.eu)



## VISUAL ARTS

## Enter in Blue 2

19 November, 20.00

Stadsschouwburg, Sint-Niklaas

De Wase is a group of underwater film and photography enthusiasts with a very unique concept for your viewing and listening pleasure. *Enter in Blue* takes breathtakingly beautiful underwater images and sets them to live music by Flemish big band Enter. The combination of horns and nostalgic swing with flowing, underwater imagery is a winning one, as they found out during the first

edition of the event last year, which sold out to an audience of more than 500 awed spectators. The photos and film footage come from experienced divers as well as young talent, with below-the-surface images from Thailand set to the song “My Funny Valentine”, those from Indonesia to “Soul Bossa Nova” and from Mexico to “Smoke on the Water”, just to name a few. (RB)

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



### MORE VISUAL ARTS THIS WEEK

#### Aalst

**Frank Theys:** Nachtkoorts: Multi-screen film installation by the Flemish filmmaker/artist/philosopher, based on his interpretation of work by Kafka  
**Until NOV 20** at Netwerk, Houtkaai  
[www.netwerk-art.be](http://www.netwerk-art.be)

#### Ghent

**Johan Grimonprez:** It's a Poor Sort of Memory that Only Works Backwards: Retrospective of the work of the Flemish filmmaker and video installation artist  
**Until JAN 29** at SMAK, Citadelpark  
[www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)

#### Leuven

**Mika Rottenberg:** Cheese, Squeeze and Tropical Breeze: Seven surreal video installations by the Argentinean artist  
**Until FEB 26** at M Museum, Vanderkelenstraat 28  
[www.mleuven.be](http://www.mleuven.be)



## CONCERT

## Sade

20 November, 20.00

Lotto Arena, Antwerp

Sensual rhythm & blues sensation Sade burst onto the scene in 1984 with her single “Your Love Is King”. She confirmed her legendary status with a constant string of hits for years after. A few months ago, after a 10-year hiatus, Sade enchanted fans in Antwerp with a set-list that included classic songs like “Kiss of Life”, “Smooth Operator”, “No Ordinary Love”, “Sweetest Taboo” and “By Your Side”. There are still seats available for this week’s performance. Don’t miss the stylish soul diva whose presence is enough to transform any concert hall into an intimate night club. She’s still got it, and so does her smooth, sultry entourage. (RB)

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



### MORE CONCERTS THIS WEEK

#### Brussels

**Yes:** The classic, symphonic British rock band deliver work from the last four decades  
**NOV 20** 20.00 at Ancienne Belgique  
[www.abconcerts.be](http://www.abconcerts.be)

#### Kessel-Lo (Leuven)

**Karma to Burn:** Explosive stoner rock/metal trio from West Virginia  
**NOV 18** 19.00 at Sojo, Eén Meilaan 35  
[www.orangefactory.be](http://www.orangefactory.be)

#### Sint-Niklaas

**Vieux Farka Touré + Tamikrest:** Unique double concert combining Malian desert blues with rock ‘n’ roll à la Jimi Hendrix  
**NOV 18** 20.30 at De Casino Concertzaal, Stationsstraat 104  
[www.decasino.be](http://www.decasino.be)



## EXHIBITION

© Jennifer & Kevin McCoy, SoftPains #6/Suburban Horror



### MORE EXHIBITIONS THIS WEEK

#### Ghent

**Rua na Rua (Street After Street):** Part of Europalia. Brazil is this vibrant show of photographs by Brazilian street artist José Cleiton, who creates graffiti in the *favelas* of Recife and pairs it with the equally colourful inhabitants  
**Until 30 NOV** at KASK, Louis Pasteurlaan 2  
[www.europalia.be](http://www.europalia.be)

#### Knokke-Heist

**The Panamarenko Paradox:** In celebration of the unveiling of Flemish artist Panamarenko's permanent monumental installation "Wuivende Krabben" ("Waving Crabs") in Knokke, comes this retrospective that illustrates the great diversity of the character of his work  
**Until 15 JAN** at CC Scharpoord, Meerlaan 32  
[www.panamarenkoparadox.be](http://www.panamarenkoparadox.be)

## Architecture of Fear

Until 31 December  
Z33, Hasselt

Are we paranoid? Or should we in fact be living in a code red state, where the only safe haven is marked by a change of colour? The multi-media *Architecture of Fear* shows some of the ways in which fear is constructed – often to our own delight. Fear gives us a thrill, as many of the works on display demonstrate. But the expression "culture of fear" has come to indicate various mechanisms meant to incite panic in mass audiences in order to gain control over them – politically, economically and emotionally. From swine flu to new credit ratings, there's always a new scare around the corner. And a new solution to fix it. But are the dangers we fear the most really the ones threatening our very existence? German artist Susanna Hertrich delivers a sober answer in her "Risk" and "Reality Checking Device". Statistically speaking, you're not very likely to become a victim of a terrorist attack. Chances are significantly higher that cancer, for instance, or heart failure will make an end of you.

Other artists at Z33 focus on an eerie white picket fence village or on picture-perfect replicas of Dutch houses functioning as a holiday resort in Turkey. A false sense of security is as much a part of our "culture of fear" as fear is. In his inaugural address, at a time when the Great Depression had hit rock bottom, American president FD Roosevelt claimed that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself". The exhibition shies away from replacing fear with uncalled-for optimism or unwarranted worldwide conspiracies. Not to abandon all fear, before you enter here. (Bjorn Gabriels)

→ [www.z33.be](http://www.z33.be)

## PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL

### Spoken World: Powers of Speech

25 November to 10 December  
Kaaithheater & Kaaistudio's, Brussels

A speech is a powerful tool, capable of driving political and social movements, even revolutions. Speeches are arguments formulated to captivate audiences, influencing thoughts and opinions in the process. For this fourth edition of Kaaithheater's Spoken World, a handful of international theatre-makers have created various lectures and performances focussing on the power of speech. Many of the events are in English.

Rhetorical is a series of potent speeches presented by Mpumelelo Paul Grootboom that delve into South Africa's colonial past. *Although We Fell Short* by British writer/director Tim Etchells is a comical yet unsettling collision of different types of rhetoric, from political

campaigns and debates to other unexpected forms of dialogue. In *Character Witness*, three actors merge the stories of historical figures such as Malcolm X, Hillary Clinton, Margaret Thatcher and Ariel Sharon into one single speech based on footage of conversations, speeches and debates compiled by Dutch scriptwriter Nicoline van Harskamp.

And surely don't miss *Black Power of Speech*, an animated talk with 1950s beat poet and one of the founding fathers of rap, Amiri Baraka (aka LeRoi Jones), together with the young, multi-talented Saul Williams (*pictured*), one of hip hop's most powerful voices to date. (RB)

→ [www.kaaitheater.be/spokenworld](http://www.kaaitheater.be/spokenworld)



### MORE PERFORMANCES THIS WEEK

#### Antwerp

**Listen to the Silence:** A pianist and an actor present the fascinating world of American composer John Cage in an interactive musical performance  
**NOV 20** 14.00 at Zonzo Compagnie, Leopoldplaats 10  
[www.zonzocompagnie.be](http://www.zonzocompagnie.be)

#### Brussels

**Hello Dolly!:** The Brussels Light Opera Company presents Jerry Herman's award-winning Broadway musical (in English)  
**NOV 24-27** at Auderghem Cultural Centre, Vorstlaan 183  
[www.bloc-brussels.com](http://www.bloc-brussels.com)

## DUSK 'TIL DAWN

KATRIEN LINDEMANS

### Lotto Groove City

26 November  
Brussels Kart Expo

For house, electro, techno and bass fans, the end of November means just one thing: a long night with the best DJs at Groove City.

On 26 November, the Brussels Kart Expo (which is in fact in Groot-Bijgaarden) welcomes thousands of music lovers, all hungry for a large portion of beats. And that's exactly what they'll get, as the organisers managed to cook up a very attractive music menu.

On the House Boulevard, you'll find Fedde Le Grand (from the Netherlands). His 2006 track "Put Your Hands Up 4 Detroit" granted him instant fame, and it won't take long before his latest, "SomuchLove", also gets everyone going on the dance floor. Tipped as the hottest Flemish DJ of the moment, Dimaro (*pictured*) was chosen to record the official Groove City anthem. You can see him at work down on the House Boulevard, too.

On the Techno Highway, you'll meet some international masters like producer/label owner James Holden (UK), for instance. Later in the evening, Ellen Allien (Germany) will make you feel like you're in a nightclub in Berlin. You can try your own hand at spinning via music website vi.be, which, together with multi-media



store Fnac, is throwing a DJ contest, where the winner will be offered the chance to open the Techno Highway!

Down the Bass Avenue, Cookie Monsta (UK) will be playing some dark and upbeat dubstep. Brussels talent behind the decks as well, with the scratching and mixing skills of System-D.

Don't miss the Electro Road, where Ghent-based duo Le Petit Belge et Le Cheval will demonstrate their love for samples, and Rave Our Souls take you back with some good old skool rave from the early '90s.

Tickets for Groove City are €27 if you get them in advance. The party starts at 20.00 and goes to sleep at 6.00, so that's only €2.70 an hour. No one wants to be caught on the outskirts of Groot-Bijgaarden at 6.00, so check the website for party bus transport info.

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



# bite

ROBYN BOYLE

## 't Hellegat ★★★★★

Flanders flat? Nonsense! In the southernmost tip of West Flanders is Heuvelland, a lovely region with two defined mountains (okay, big hills): Rode Berg and Zwarte Berg. And just over the border in France is the Kemmelberg and Katsberg.

In bringing some friends up to see Rode Berg, I thought I was introducing them to one of Flanders' best-kept secrets. But on this particular Saturday, we are definitely not the only ones out enjoying the panoramic views and colourful foliage. Walkers, mountain bikers and pram parades are everywhere.

We pick out the area's smallest, oldest-looking restaurant and make a quick call to reserve a table for four. Turns out the restaurant isn't old at all – only open for seven years now – but the 19th-century house is. Inside the lights are dim and the wood-beamed ceiling is low, creating a warm and cosy atmosphere. Some authentic elements remain, owner Kristof explains, such as the charming brick open hearth, cottage pane windows and half-timbered walls.

The menu lists an impressive 55 beers, including one that really reflects the part-French, part-Flemish character of this region. The 3 Monts Bière de Flandre (Three Mountains Beer of Flanders), from Brasserie de Saint-Sylvestre is a 75cl treat. It's clearly a Flemish-style ale, with a lot of spice and citrus in the nose and a Champagne-like carbonation. At 8.5%, it's best paired with a filling meal.

This doesn't happen very often, but there's an item on the menu (the house specialty no less) that we've never heard of: *ovenkoeken* (cutely translated on the menu as "oven breads"). These big, fluffy, white, oven-baked loaves are powdered with flour and slightly crispy on the outside and incredibly soft on the inside.

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

You can have these *ovenkoeken* one of two ways: stuffed or accompanied with a filling plus salad. My three dining companions opt unanimously for the *ovenkoek* stuffed with *vol-au-vent*, so I have no choice but to branch out and order mine with fresh bacon and a side salad. We forego a dozen other tempting *ovenkoek* combinations, including bolognaise sauce, cow tongue, Camembert cheese, Heuvelland pâté, ham, Gouda cheese and meat pie.

My friends' *ovenkoeken* are enormous – chock-a-block with some of the tastiest, creamiest chicken and mushroom stew I've ever tasted. But it's the heavenly bread surrounding it that is most noteworthy. However, none of them manages to eat the whole thing, and they end up taking half of it home to enjoy later. Not bad for €7 apiece.

Although I didn't know quite what to expect from my order of "fresh bacon", I was pleasantly surprised to find two thick strips of smoked pork resting atop my *ovenkoek*. The bread is slightly different from the stuffed version, as it is served cold. I fill it up with the bacon, some butter and a smidge of spicy mustard. The meat had such a lovely smoked flavour that the mustard is all it takes to complete this simple and delicious glorified sandwich.

We finish off the night with a couple of espressos and Flemish (jenever-spiked) coffees. Even including the two large bottles of beer, the bill comes to a more than reasonable €16 a head.

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



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Westouter (West Flanders); 057.44.81.83  
🕒 Fri-Sat from 17.00; Sun & holidays from 11.30  
💶 Mains: €7-€15  
👉 Cosy tavern on the border with France, specialising in *ovenkoeken* and good beer

## TALKING SPORTS

LEO CENDROWICZ

### The future of Flemish football

It's a tough time for the brightest Flemish footballers, hoping to shine on the biggest stages. Belgium just missed out on Euro 2012, pipped in the qualifiers last month by a very beatable Turkey (who just lost 0-4 at home to Croatia in their play-off), meaning a Flemish-free zone during next summer's football fest in Poland and Ukraine.

And Genk, which did so well to reach the Champions League this season – and recorded a memorable 1-1 draw with super-rich Chelsea this month – are still firmly rooted to the bottom of their group, a reminder that feisty Flemish spirit on the field is little match for the expensively assembled, multi-national sides that dominate the competition.

There is a particular sting given that this was supposed to be such a promising generation of players, many of whom were the exciting side that reached the semi-finals of the Olympic competition in Beijing in 2008.

But this is no time to dwell on the past. National team coach Georges Leekens has rightly started the task of rebuilding the side around the freshest players, with a focus on reaching the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. The process has at least begun with a morale-boosting 2-1 victory against Romania in Liège last Friday.

Bayern Munich's veteran defender, Daniel Van Buyten, gave Belgium the lead when he headed home from corner by PSV Eindhoven's Dries Mertens, and Genk's Anthony Vanden Borre doubled the score when he scored a deflected goal. Tuesday night's more testing game against France took place after *Flanders Today* went to press, but this at least suggested that the home team was recovering well.

And there are other encouraging signs that are not borne from the national team's fortunes.



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Flemish talent is still very much in demand across Europe. This is not just a reflection of Thomas Vermaelen in Arsenal, Vincent Kompany in Manchester City or Benfica's Axel Witsel, but of less familiar names.

These include current Under-21 stars Timothy Durwael of Genk (photo, right), Sint-Truiden's Dimitri Daeseleire, and Ghent's Yassine El Ghanassy. But perhaps the most striking is the news that Manchester United has signed 15-year-old Andreas Pereira. The son of Brazilian star Marcos Pereira (who in his day played for Mechelen, Antwerp and Sint-Truiden), he is already a Belgian youth international, and will move to Old Trafford on his 16th birthday (on New Year's Day). There he will join two other Flemish hopes, Charni Ekangamene and Marnick Vermijl, who are already in United's youth team.

There have been false promises and disappointments before. But there are too many prospects worth watching for fans to despair, despite Belgium missing out on the party next summer.

## THE LAST WORD...

### Simple pleasures

"Party, the three youngest grandchildren just baptised, and now my first Tweet on top of it all! Just the budget to go and life will be perfect!"

Federal justice minister Stefaan De Clerck has a Twitter account

### Culture shock

"We make swords in our classes; is that something that would interest you?"

A delegation of Chinese school principals visited schools in West Flanders last week to explore possible cooperation

### High hopes

"If I can't jump in the region of two metres, I won't go to the games."

Flemish high-jumper Tia Hellebaut sets herself a high standard for the 2012 Olympics

### Feet on the ground

"I like to think my small efforts can help make a difference, although that airplane will take off without me. But it gives me some satisfaction to stay true to my principles."

Bart Cannaerts of *Benidorm Bastards* will not attend the Emmy Awards in New York, where his show is nominated, because flying contributes to climate change

## NEXT WEEK IN FLANDERS TODAY #207

### Feature

She was the voice of Flanders' most popular international band since she was 17. Now Geike Arnaert is finding her own voice. We talk to the 30-something about her first solo album and life after Hooverphonic

### Living

The splashy new BBC war drama series *Parade's End* is filming in Flanders as we speak. We go behind the scenes to see the stars – and the outspoken Flemish extras – donning their period costumes in local castles

### Arts

It's worth a trip to Knokke to see Panamarenko's new monumental sculpture of crabs waving – his largest work ever – in the Zege Lake. But there's also an exhibition of his decades of work next door. We'll guide you through the retrospective of this inimitable Flemish artist