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The Flemish minister-president leads a delegation of business and educational leaders

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Manifest destiny

Europe's only roving arts biennial opens in Genk

Lisa Bradshaw

It's the moment the arts community has been waiting for: the opening of Manifesta 9 in the old Waterschei mine site in Genk, Limburg province. One of the top three visual arts events in Europe, the nomadic biennial chose the region for its post-industrial cultural transitions and its rich coal-mining history

In the 1950s, Greek labourer Spyros Roumeliotis, like so many other southern Europeans, travelled to Genk to work in the coal mines. In his pocket was a photo – or rather, half a photo. He and his wife had torn apart a portrait of the two of them. He had the half with her image, and, back in Greece, she kept the half with his. When they were reunited in Genk, they sewed the two pieces of the photo back together with yarn. This creased and stained photograph, taken in 1952 and no larger than a few square centimetres, came from the son of those immigrants, who still lives in Genk. When he saw the little photo

of his parents in its grand and dignified setting at the Manifesta biennial inside a former mine site in his own city, he broke down in tears.

There are many examples of how the Manifesta biennial can leave a lasting impression on a city and its residents, but it's difficult to find one more relevant than that when it comes to Genk. Manifesta, the only European arts biennial that travels to different cities, chose Genk not despite its coal-mining heritage but specifically because of it.

What is Manifesta?

What opened earlier this month in Genk is Manifesta 9, the latest edition of one of the top three contemporary arts exhibitions in Europe – the other two being the Venice biennial and the five-yearly Documenta in Kassel, Germany (which is also taking place now). Manifesta, however, is the only one that is nomadic; it is staged in a different city every two years, a “pop-up” biennial, if

you will.

This makes Manifesta an event that is ever-changing and dynamic – never allowed to fall into a pattern – but it also comes with the difficult challenge of attracting new visitors with every edition. “Manifesta all has to happen in a single moment,” comments this edition's chief curator Cuauhtémoc Medina. “Unlike in Venice, Istanbul or São Paulo, there is no audience growing around it.” Medina is an art historian from the National Autonomous University of Mexico in Mexico City and worked on Manifesta with two co-curators – Dawn Ades of the British Academy and Katerina Gregos, based in Brussels. Manifesta recruits a completely new curatorial team for each edition, contributing even more to its great diversity in form and expression.

What sets Manifesta further apart from its contemporaries is its geo-political, socio-economic focus. The Amsterdam-based foundation was established in 1996 to specifically address the questions of a European identity. “We investigate political

FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope

Claire Tillekaerts



Good news and bad news in recent days for Claire Tillekaerts. The bad news: the International Film Festival of Flanders, on whose board she sits, will probably lose all its government subsidy. The good news: She's been appointed by the same Flemish government as director-general of Flanders Investment & Trade (FIT), the body that represents the region to the world's investors. Tillekaerts was born in Ghent in 1957 and studied law at the university, from where she went on to open her own practice, specialising in the fields of commercial and insurance law. She also taught at the university and, in 2001, was invited to head their own legal service. There, she helped oversee the creation of the Ghent University Association, which groups a number of higher education institutions together with the university. She also sits on the board of the Flemish-Dutch accreditation organisation NVAO, which governs the recognition of academic credentials between the two systems. In 2005, she obtained a business management degree and the following year became general manager of the new FIT, formed from the fusion of Export Vlaanderen and the Flemish Investment Service. FIT was headed by Koen Allaert, former

boss of Export Vlaanderen. A year ago, Allaert became ill, and Tillekaerts took over the leadership position during his absence. Allaert died in August of last year, and it has taken since then to confirm Tillekaerts, 54, as his official replacement. She was considered a front-runner, but there were about 30 other candidates to consider. Flanders accounts for 82% of Belgian exports and on a per capita basis ranks eighth in the world as an export power. Last year FIT brought in 174 investments to the region, good for the creation of more than 3,700 jobs. In the wake of reports that an extreme right Israeli politician recently refused to shake the hand of federal minister Laurette Onkelinx because she is a woman, Tillekaerts says she sees no problem with a woman representing Flanders on the international business stage. "Of course as a woman I wear a headscarf when I visit a mosque abroad, but I won't do so when I receive a Saudi delegation here in Brussels," she told *De Standaard*. "That's never caused me any problems. I've even appeared on Iranian TV without a headscarf. A few people around here thought I was taking a chance, but there was no problem."

News in brief

Swiss authorities have completed their **investigation into the March bus crash** in that killed 28 people from two schools in Flanders, 22 of them children, in a tunnel on the A9 in Sierre. The public prosecutor for the Valais canton of Switzerland is due to travel to Flanders this week to personally inform parents in Lommel and Heverlee of the investigation's findings.

The Flemish lawyers association has threatened to go to the Constitutional Court if the proposal for the **splitting of the judicial area of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde** (BHV) passes unchanged through the federal parliament. The Flemish bar objects to an article of the law that makes it impossible for a Dutch speaker ever to take the top job as prosecutor in the Brussels area. The current chief prosecutor, Bruno Bulthé, would therefore be unable to fill his own post under the new law.

Socialist party senator and women's rights campaigner **Marleen Temmerman** has announced that she is leaving politics to accept the position as director of the World Health Organisation's Department for Reproductive Health and Research in Geneva. Temmerman, a practising gynaecologist who is head of obstetrics at the Ghent University Hospital, has for years run reproductive clinics in a number of African countries. Her place in the senate will be taken by Leona Detiege, both former mayor of Antwerp and Flemish minister for social affairs.

► www.marleentemmerman.be

The new **Diabolo rail links** project to Brussels Airport was inaugurated last week. The new lines and changes to existing lines cost €678

million, which was paid mostly by rail infrastructure company Infrabel. The service will improve travel times for passengers from Antwerp, Leuven and Mechelen. Passenger advocacy organisation TreinTramBus criticised the new service for being inadequate for weekend, early morning and late evening commuters and for charging a supplement of €4.30 per trip.

A wave of cases of mumps, which has infected more than 350 people in the Ghent area since March, has been **officially declared an epidemic**, according to the Flemish health care agency. The Scientific Institute for Public Health has confirmed that the disease is caused by a variety of the virus that originated in Groningen and swept across the Netherlands in 2010 and 2011. Mumps affects children and young people, and symptoms include fever and a swelling in the glands of the neck. Most of those who were infected had been inoculated.

The federal health ministry received 976 opinions from members of the public during a consultation into a planned new field project for **genetically modified crops** in Wetteren, East Flanders, carried out by the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology and Ghent University. The reactions, only one of which was positive, came from as far afield as Canada, Spain and France, as well as local residents. Most concerned fears over the risk of GMO seeds spreading to other parts of the area.

Preserved eels, smoked beef and farmhouse ham are the latest to be **awarded the streekproduct label** as an authentic, traditional Flemish product. The eels

come from Sint-Laureins in the Meetjesland area of East Flanders, the smoked beef from Zandvliet in Antwerp province and the ham from Neerharen in Limburg, and together they bring the total number of products recognised to 160.

► www.streekproduct.be

Tunnels under the Jubelpark and Wetstraat in Brussels closed this week for three months of renovations. Closure to city-bound traffic, the Brussels mobility service warned, is likely to cause severe disruption to traffic, and drivers are advised to use public transport as much as possible. The tunnels coming out of town are not affected.

► www.tunnels2012.be

Hundreds of people will gather this week on the Europaplein in front of Brussels' Central Station to **burst balloons sporting racial and homophobic slurs** in protest against gay bashing, sexism, racism and other hate crimes. The event is organised by Brussels secretary of state for equal opportunities Bruno De Lille and aims to encourage people to report hate-crime incidents.

The rectors and vice-rectors of **29 Brazilian universities were in Hasselt last week** as part of a tour of universities and university colleges in the region, aimed at forging new science and research relationships. In Brazil's booming economy, higher education institutions have set up a programme called Science Without Borders, which has 75,000 scholarships to give away to post-graduate and doctoral students from abroad. Last week's trip to Hasselt included a visit to a research lab and an explanation of the university's international Masters programme

FLANDERS TODAY

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OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

Down on their luck

It's a tough time to be an artist in Flanders, and not only because of the row over culture subsidies. There also appears to be a sort of *lèse majesté* in the air whose victims are some of our foremost creative geniuses. Take the case of Peter Goossens, a Michelangelo of gastronomic art, who has been suffering in recent months from burn-out. In January, Goossens was involved in an accident in which his car collided with a van, a wooden post and a potted plant. Later it emerged he had dipped his ladle in the *coq au vin* one too many times, and a court in Oudenaarde gave him a €1,200 fine and a month's driving ban. Another cultural giant who suffered a setback is Kanye West, one of the world's foremost rappers. He performed at the Sportpaleis in Antwerp last week, and after his show decamped with his entourage to a local brasserie. A restaurant employee explained that the star was an hour



late for his reservation and the kitchen was closed – even to musical icons. But possibly an even bigger slap in the face came when police in Ghent wrote a parking ticket for an installation that forms part of the *Sint-Jan* exhibition in the city's Sint-Baaf's cathedral. The exhibition is dedicated to Jan Hoet, founder of Ghent's museum of modern art and one of Flanders' most

legendary curators. The installation in question is by French artist Ange Leccia and consists of two Mini Coopers parked nose to nose (*pictured*). According to police, not only is that sort of parking illegal, the cars were in a pedestrian-only area. Rather outraged, the organisers of the exhibition moved the cars to a side street. Unfortunately, a parking ban is also in operation there.

Flemish region makes first trip to Israel

Kris Peeters leads a delegation of business and education representatives

Alan Hope

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters last week made a three-day trip to Israel and the Palestinian areas, the first time he has visited that part of the world. Peeters was at the head of a delegation that included key business leaders and representatives of Flanders' universities. Peeters had talks with foreign minister Daniel Ayalon, energy minister Uzi Landau and industry minister Shalom Simhon. A planned meeting with Israeli president Shimon Peres was cancelled. He also visited the Weizmann scientific institute in Tel Aviv. During a visit to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, he joked about the recent controversy over a leaked email from media minister Ingrid Lieten. Later he planted a tree on Jewish National Fund (JNF) property in the Jerusalem Hills, close to Yad Kennedy, the monument to former US president John F Kennedy. He also visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and discussed the construction of a

new memorial museum in Mechelen dedicated to those deported during the occupation. According to reports, a number of companies are looking to create contacts in the Middle East, including with a view to winning contracts on the gas extraction work off Israel's Mediterranean shores. "I represent the vision of a new type of industrial policy," said Peeters, in a speech to the JNF, "and during my term in office, I intend to put Flanders up among the five leading economies of Europe. I regard the concept of 27 countries of a united Europe as very important for the future of the continent. At present, the burning issue is the continued existence of European solidarity for purposes of aid to those countries with an economy in crisis." In the Palestinian territory, Peeters was met by first minister Salem Fayyad and spoke with Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. He also paid a visit to the new town of Rawabi near Ramallah on the left



Kris Peeters visits the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

bank of the Jordan, where some of the Flemish companies in the delegation hope to win construction contracts. The university representatives, meanwhile, sought to forge academic and research links. The tree Peeters planted is a terebinth (*Pistacia palaestina*), mentioned in the book of Genesis,

and which gave its name to the valley where David fought Goliath. "I intend to come back here to visit and water the tree," said Peeters. JNF director Avinoam Binder replied: "The tree needs to be watered once a week, on Wednesdays. You're very welcome to take part on a regular basis."

Proposal to stop requiring licenses for travel agents

Tourism minister Geert Bourgeois has submitted a proposal to repeal a law he himself introduced in 2007 required travel agents to be licensed to operate in Flanders. If passed, travel agents will no longer require a licence after 2014. The decision follows a court case brought by the Union of Flemish Travel Agencies against OKRA, an organisation for senior citizens. The union sued OKRA for organising trips for its members. The case, which OKRA lost, led to accusations that the law was not working in practice. "There are no longer any requirements being imposed regarding professional expertise, and this for a sector with billions of euros in turnover," said the Union of Flemish Travel Agencies in a statement.



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Airport robbery was fraud

An American tourist who was shot in the foot when he intervened in an apparent robbery at Brussels Airport last year was the victim of a set-up, it has emerged. Jesse Urban stepped in when two men snatched the handbag of an elderly woman travelling with her companion to Brazil. The woman later told police she was taking €200,000 in cash to her brother. But, according to the Brussels prosecutor, the woman and the two "thieves" hatched the plot in order to keep the money. The investigation continues.

Sharia4Belgium leader in prison for six months

Fouad Belkacem, the leader of the radical Islamist organisation Sharia4Belgium, will spend the next six months in prison after being arrested last week in connection with the riot in the Brussels commune of Molenbeek. The unrest was sparked when a woman in niqab was ordered by police to reveal her face. She refused, allegedly assaulting a police officer. Belkacem, whose group is based in Antwerp, posted a video online advising Muslims

to use violent means of protest, which prosecutors allege intended to inspire hatred and violence. Whether the courts agrees still has to be determined, but Belkacem has now been required to serve a sentence he was handed last year for the same kind of offence. Because of the overcrowded state of jails in Brussels and Flanders, it is rare for anyone sentenced to less than three years to go to jail, but in this case an exception can be made, federal

justice minister Annemie Turtelboom said after talks with the Brussels prosecutor. Meanwhile, federal interior minister Joëlle Milquet is considering whether to introduce a law to ban organisations like Sharia4Belgium that advocate the use of violence and whether to withdraw Belkacem's Belgian nationality. Other politicians point out that Sharia4Belgium is not an official organisation, so it would be impossible

to ban and that its members – estimated at no more than about 70 – would simply gather under another name. Other Muslim groups distance themselves from Sharia4Belgium, but are opposed to revoking Belkacem's nationality, as they say it would send the wrong signal to other naturalised immigrants.

FIFTH COLUMN

Anja Otte

Public Enemy No 1

The events in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek last week following the arrest of a woman wearing a niqab are disturbing. Not only was there rioting in the streets, a French extremist travelled all the way to Brussels in order to kill some police officers. (He stabbed two in the metro, before he was arrested.) In the wake of these events, all fingers point at one man, deemed responsible for the series of events. Fouad Belkacem, the spokesperson for the radical organisation Sharia4Belgium, is believed to have incited hatred against non-Muslims over the internet, something he was already convicted of last year. Belkacem has now become public enemy number one in the press and political circles, though most Muslims consider him to be nothing but a troublemaker. The attention Belkacem has received recalls similar events in 2002, when a Muslim teacher was killed in the Antwerp district of Borgerhout. The racist murder sparked several nights of rioting. In the wake of those events, all fingers pointed at one man, deemed responsible. Dyab Abou Jahjah, the spokesperson for the radical organisation Arabisch-Europese Liga (AEL) was believed to have incited the rioting youth, though he was later acquitted. In 2002, Abou Jahjah became public enemy number one, leading to one of the most remarkable episodes in Belgian politics when then prime minister Guy Verhofstadt announced Abou Jahjah's arrest. To this day, there is discussion over whether this formed a breach in the separation of the judicial and executive powers. In the months before the Borgerhout riots, Abou Jahjah had become a controversial public figure. Eloquent, outspoken and with the looks of a Middle Eastern film star, the media could not get enough of him. He seized the opportunity to talk about racism and the growing unrest with the youth of Moroccan descent. In his 2005 novel *Los*, Flemish journalist Tom Naegels portrays Abou Jahjah as an exemplary product of integration, with only his love of Chris De Burgh as a slightly odd reminder of his Lebanese roots. Ten years on, opinions about Abou Jahjah have evolved. Yes, his ideas were radical, but at least he was intelligent, open to discussion and a democrat too, none of which can be said of the caricature Belkacem. Before he moved to Lebanon two years ago, Abou Jahjah warned that something much worse than AEL would rise up. Is this what he was talking about?

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

3,261

tonnes of rubbish dumped by the sides of Flanders' roads in 2011, an increase of 13.5%. Collection of the rubbish cost €4 million

5%

of the civil servants working in Brussels for the Flemish government actually live in the city, according to figures from the ministry of administrative affairs

40,000

downloads for a smartphone app to learn West Flemish dialect words and expressions. Three out of four downloads were for the iPhone, the rest for Android phones

47%

of young people in Flanders would like to see more green spaces in towns and cities and nearly one-third favour car-free town centres, according to a poll by youth organisation Steunpunt Jeugd

1 in 10

workers in Flanders fear for their jobs, according to an online poll carried out by the University of Leuven and the newspaper supplement *Jobat*. Eighteen percent feared a loss of income in the coming months

Manifest destiny

Manifesta 9 explores the effects of the coal-mining heritage and changing industrial landscapes

► continued from page 1

climate, cultural identity, geo-politics, technology and the status of Europe itself," explains Manifesta director Hedwig Fijen. "We closely watch social and political developments throughout Europe."

In other words, Manifesta, unlike similar initiatives, is not a platform to explore the status of contemporary art; it's a platform to explore the status of Europe *through* contemporary art. Having been previously staged in cities like Rotterdam, Murcia and Ljubljana, the event avoids the main economic and cultural centres to immerse itself in areas that are current examples of a Europe challenged by expansion, economic urgencies and an industrial landscape in upheaval. Which took them right to the city of Genk.

Why Genk?

Genk, in central Limburg province, was a tiny farming village in the early part of the 20th century, its agriculture centred on mills and grain (and beer). Then, in 1901, Belgian geologist André Dumont hit coal 541 metres under the heathland. Efforts had been made previously to reach the coal deposits in Limburg, but it is buried so deep, those efforts had proven futile.

And so Limburg officially entered the coal mining industry quite late in the game, opening its first mine in 1917. Six would follow, and the area would become famous for coal, rather than grain.

The mines shut down just 70 years later, the last – Winterslag, now converted to the multi-purpose centre called C-Mine – closing for good in 1988. Genk in fact made the industrial transition less painfully than other European cities; it is still a centre of manufacturing and technology development, led by Ford Genk.

Cities and/or regions bid to host Manifesta, and, along with a financial investment, must fit in with the biennial's profile. "The proposal was in response to the very particular history and context of the city of Genk and of the wider region," explains Manifesta co-curator Katerina Gregos. "Genk is one of the three most important industrial regions in Flanders and forms a kind of general access to the southern part of Belgium – the former coal mining and steel works in the Borinage – and connects to the Aachen region in Germany and also symbolically to Britain. So that whole region was the industrial heartland

of Europe prior to the process of de-industrialisation that happened since the 1960s onwards."

Manifesta was intrigued, then, by Limburg's place in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, one of the many cross-border regions in Europe that cooperate with each other in a variety of areas, such as commerce and trade. The Belgian province of Liège, the German-speaking part of Belgium, Germany's Aachen region and the southern section of the Dutch province of Limburg make up the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion, which encompasses three languages.

Manifesta sees Limburg as a sort of mini version of the European Union, partly due to its place in the Euroregion and partly due to its situation where three countries come together. But possibly most compelling is its role in the formation of the EU itself. Limburg lies at the centre of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), a treaty between France, West Germany, Italy and the Benelux, which was a direct predecessor of the EU.

If you are looking for a scale model of the effects of a changing political, industrial, cultural and social landscape in the EU, look no further than Limburg. "The exhibition takes its cue from this rich period of mining history," says Gregos, "but also from the shifting centres of industrial production and the shifting geographies of the industrial product."

Strange bedfellows: art & industry

The Manifesta exhibition is housed in its entirety inside the main building of the old Waterschei mine, one of Genk's three coal mine sites. Genk has preserved many of the buildings of its former mining sites as protected heritage. While most of the interior walls of the 24,000 square-metre Waterschei have been torn down,



amounts of equipment, that 39 contemporary artists – most of whom are European or live in Europe – were asked to stage existing work or create entirely new ones. The curators set out in search of artists that were producing work in the areas of their focus, including "the restructuring of the economic system, which has repercussions both in materials and in humans," says Gregos. "Social changes, the demise of the welfare state, the changing nature of labour, the myth of clean labour. We chose artists who have a long-term engagement with these ideas."

Many of the artists spent months researching the area and the site itself, all the while gazing across the Waterschei's once-flat heathland at the slagheaps – hills created in the

The Deep of the Modern

This year, there are two firsts in the history of Manifesta: For the first time, the entire exhibition is taking place in one single location. This was decided in order to best utilise the space and keep all the installations in the context of the industrial setting. (And it's a blessing for those who want to see the entire exhibition.)

The tagline for Manifesta 9 is *The Deep of the Modern*, a reference to the physical depth of coal mining and the traces that defunct industry leaves on contemporary society. In order to sufficiently bridge the past to the present, curators decided to include a historical art section, another first for Manifesta. Housed inside a climate-controlled venue built inside the

coal, influenced the work of artists and filmmakers, aesthetically, in terms of content and in the making of propaganda.

Most visitors will gravitate towards Manifesta's most massive installation first. Ni Haifeng's "Para-Production" is made up of quite literally a mountain of discarded black fabric direct from mass-manufacturing in China. The Chinese artist, who lives in Amsterdam, has been adding to this mountain, which also consists of a giant quilt of pieces of fabric sewn together, for several years. The black, which indeed resembles a mountain of coal, brings the sheer amount of fabric waste by-product into sharp focus, while the motley quilt is Ni's suggestion that "useful" is subjective. You might find Carlos Amorales' nearby "Coal Drawing Machine" more refined – an irony, considering that the Mexican artist wants to emphasise that coal has long been considered too crude to use in the creation of art. His machine draws randomly beautiful patterns onto rolls of white butcher paper, which are then torn off and hung up nearby.

Edward Burtynsky, a photographer and filmmaker whose 2006 movie *Manufactured Landscapes* opened the world's eyes to the

"When we use the term post-industrialism, we have to tread with caution. China is certainly not post-industrial, and coal is not dead and buried"

the shell of the imposing Art Deco building remains.

It is within this shell, once home to offices, showers, lockers and vast

landscape out of rubble from under the earth, now planted with foliage and seemingly natural. Almost like planned works of natural art.

Waterschei, the collection includes paintings, photography and film from the late 18th to the 21st century that illustrate how industry, and especially





environmental and cultural effects of mass production in China, shows a selection of photographs of the spectacular changes taking place in that country, where one can drive for hours past rows and rows of industrial buildings and workers' houses, often eerily ordered and symmetrical. "There's a big difference," says Gregos, "with how we perceive labour today in Western Europe and what is happening in China and other parts of the east. China still gets 50% of its energy from coal, but there is a decrease in visibility. When we use the term post-industrialism, we have to tread with caution. China is certainly not post-industrial, and coal is not

dead and buried." Dutch historian Johan Pijnappel and Dutch artist Irma Boom, famous for her handmade books, have built an installation around their famous work *The Think Book, 1996-1896*. The book is a kind of commemorative historical document made for the Dutch holding company SHV, which grew from a coalition of eight family-owned coal companies more than 100 years ago. Along with other documentation and a soundscape of interviews, pages of questions lay atop a boardroom table: How are you, and why? Why did you get up this morning? Are you short of something? Who is Free? Regardless whether or not you are familiar

with *The Think Book*, some of the questions will keep you pondering for hours (trust me).

Flemish artist Ana Torfs drew her inspiration for the colourful installation "[...]STAIN[...]" from the 1910 catalogue of the Bayer's Dye Factory. Research taught her that many big corporations today, including chemical companies and pharmaceutical giants (like Bayer), began as producers of synthetic dyes, derived from coal.

The historical section of Manifesta, meanwhile, offers some gems of both painting and photography. One of my favourites is a photo montage put together by 19th-century Belgian photographer Olivier Beviere, who shot images of men working in the mines and then stacked them vertically to accentuate how deep the mines were. British artist Henry Moore's "Four Studies of Miners at the Coalface" does something similar in a visually complex use of pencil, crayon, watercolour and ink, though the effect emphasises more the cramped environment. The miners are like moles curled up under the ground. American painter Charles Demuth's "Incense of a New Church" (1921) is an Art Deco precursor, with curvaceous curls of smoke easing out of a steel foundry. It's a sexy kind of image, but also dangerous – like an industrial *femme fatale*.

"Au pays noir" from 1893 is a rare example of a landscape work devoid of people by Brussels artist Contantin Meunier. A superb example of the influence of industry on landscape painting, it was found in storage at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Sixteen tons, what do you get?

Genk is a city of about 65,000 people – and 85 nationalities. It's a striking number, and it's because of coal. Not enough Belgians wanted to work in the Limburg mines, so foreigners were recruited from around Europe. In the early years, most came from Central Europe and later, in the 1950s, from Italy, Greece and Spain. The final wave of migrants came from Northern Africa and Turkey.

And they brought their cultures with them. "There are 32 languages being spoken in Genk right now," says Gregos, who herself hails from Greece. "I did a tour recently with about 50 Greeks from Genk, all second generation. They speak Dutch and Greek. It's a really multi-cultural society, considering that it's a small city."

A third section of Manifesta, dubbed "17 Tons", is dedicated to the heritage of the miners, including the tens of thousands of immigrants who poured into Limburg throughout the 20th century. This is where you'll find that photo of Mr Roumeliotis and his wife and a number of other moving installations, such as a huge collection of prayer rugs – the one item that every Turkish immigrant brought with him – and dozens of sculptures by former Spanish miner Manuel Durán, who carves the heads of his fellow labourers out of a potato pulp mixture that he makes himself. Art events across Flanders these days are very big on emphasising that they hope to leave impressions long after the art is gone. What Gregos sees for Manifesta is that organisations that now struggle for recognition will become star players in the arts and heritage scene.

She mentions the Mine Depot, which is run by former miners and maintains a permanent exhibition

and conducts tours of some of the old shafts of the Waterschei site. "People in the contemporary art world tend to colonise locations and then disappear without a trace," says Gregos. Manifesta is invested in helping the Mine Depot and other local heritage organisations with the representation of their existing collections. "The traces that we hope to leave behind are the knowledge and experience we bring as curators so that other organisations can better profile themselves. There's a limit to what an exhibition can do, and I think what we are doing is raising awareness of this very important heritage."

Manifesta 9 is most rewarding if you do a bit of homework first or take a tour with one of the "art mediators". Tours are available daily, no need to reserve unless you are with a large group. Pick up a copy of the Manifesta newspaper at tourist offices and cultural centres around Flanders and/or read the website for historical information to enrich your experience

MANIFESTA 9

Look for the Manifesta logo throughout this issue for more Genk- and mine-related activities



Photos opposite page:

- ▶ Ni Haifeng's attention-grabbing Para-production
- ▶ Carlos Amoraes' "Coal Drawing Machine" creates beautiful, random designs before your eyes
- ▶ Edward Burtynsky photographs the somewhat disturbing new landscapes of China
- ▶ Ana Torfs' "[...]STAIN[...]" about one of the earliest chemical industries – synthetic dyes – was made especially for Manifesta

Photos this page:

- ▶ Co-curator Katerina Gregos gives a tour of Manifesta 9
- ▶ Greek coal-mining immigrant Spyros Roumeliotis and his wife Polyxeni Papoutsis
- ▶ Charles Demuth's "Incense of a New Church" (1921)
- ▶ "Coal Sacks Ceiling" foregrounds "Les régistres du Grand-Hornu", an installation of hundreds of miners' metal boxes with photos attached, evidence of child labour in the mines
- ▶ The main building of Genk's Waterschei mine was completed in 1924. The building, which houses Manifesta 9 until September, will eventually become home to the Thor business and science park

UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER Waterschei mine site

André Dumontlaan, Genk

▶ www.manifesta9.org

LIVING IN PARALLEL



Although Manifesta 9 takes place all in one venue (for the first time in its history), "the parallel events" will take you across Limburg and over the border to Wallonia, Germany and the Netherlands. All the areas of the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion are climbing aboard the Manifesta train for a total of more than 80 arts- and heritage-related events.

One of the most high-profile Manifesta parallels is *Hotel de Inmigrantes: Cosmopolitan Stranger*, a project bringing together 40 international artists and curated by Koen Vanmechelen, world famous for his Cosmopolitan

Chicken Project. Vanmechelen brought the artists to his studio and required them to live and work like illegal immigrants during the first week of June. The exhibition in Hasselt now follows, with each artist's response. It's part of an international series of projects based on the Immigrant's Hotel, a complex of buildings in the port of Buenos Aires, where immigrants could stay after their arrival in Argentina.

▶ www.parallelevents9.eu

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Agricultural exchange

Farmers from Mali are visiting Flemish dairy farms to share know-how and ideas

Alan Hope

An unusual sight in the yard of Hendrik Van Den Haute's dairy farm in Ninove last month was Ousmane Barke Diallo, clad not in blue overalls and Wellingtons but in a colourful green-and-white cotton suit with matching cap. Everyday dress for Mali, but more than eye-catching for East Flanders. When the two men talked together, though, it was one professional speaking to another.

Diallo is a dairy farmer in Mali in west Africa, and he was taking part in an exchange programme organised by Veterinarians Without Borders (DZG), a spin-off of Doctors Without Borders. DZG is a non-profit that arranges visits between Western professionals and those from the developing world.

Mali was chosen, according to DZG education officer Koen Van Troos, because the country is an important milk producer in Africa, and one in three of the population is directly dependent on dairy farming for their living – the average annual income is only about €1,200. The country of 14.5 million people has seven million cows, 16 million other ruminants, like goats and sheep, and half a million camels, which also produce milk for human consumption. By comparison, Flanders has about 1.3 million cows and 97,000 sheep.

Veterinary surgeon Fatoumata Samaké, the second visitor, is director of a local development association that is DZG's partner on the ground, and she brought along Diallo, a major milk producer and head of external relations for the Association of Professional Peasant Organisations in Mali.

Diallo came with only one preconception, he told the VRT – that of super-abundance. "One day



Malian dairy farmer Ousmane Barke Diallo and veterinary surgeon Fatoumata Samaké talk business with Flemish farmer Hendrik Van Den Haute

I saw a farm on TV, and they were throwing away so much milk. I couldn't understand it," he said. "I'd like someone to explain it to me because I don't understand how a farmer can throw away milk."

Later, when inspecting the Ninove farm, he saw the milking machines in action. It's not something he foresees his fellow producers adopting any time soon. "Our cows

don't give 30 or 40 litres, so we don't need something like that."

Ninove farmer Van Den Haute, meanwhile, was surprised to find out how much the two producers had in common. "Just because we're working on a different scale doesn't mean the problems aren't the same," he said. "We're producing milk for low prices or prices that don't cover our costs, and over there they have

the same sort of problem."

DZG will continue its exchange programme later in the year: "The same kind of thing, but the other way around," Van Troos said. Two farmers from Flanders will travel to Mali to investigate conditions there. DZG visited Mali in 2008 with a dairy farmer and a cheese maker. "We had a very good result," Van Troos said. The organisation, based

in Brussels, also operates projects supporting women running small-scale livestock farms in Mali, a local veterinary medicine network in Rwanda, projects to improve production yields in Congo and the provision of better veterinary services in Niger.

► www.dierenartsenzondergrenzen.be

Biobase Europe complex launched

Flanders and the Netherlands create a Euroregion for bio-based economy

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters and the Dutch economy and agriculture minister Maxine Verhagen this week inaugurated the Biobase Europe complex in Ghent and in the Dutch province of Zeeland. The Biobase Europe Pilot Plant is now officially open in Ghent, as is the Biobase Europe Training Centre in Terneuzen.

Last year Flanders and the Netherlands signed an agreement on economic cooperation, particularly in the delta region, called the Scheldt Estuary Euroregion. The joint venture brings together Zeeland and East and West Flanders for matters such as management of climate change, waste and natural resources. It also aims to improve the partners' overseas trading position.

A bio-based economy is one that provides employment and prosperity while heeding the environmental situation – the manufacture of products based on natural materials which are biodegradable and safe for humans and the environment.

The Biobase Pilot Plant in Ghent develops such products and processes and scales them up for industrial production elsewhere, working on behalf of companies and research centres worldwide. It also offers help in applying for public funding for research and development.

The Biobase Training Centre in Terneuzen aims to promote the development of a sustainable bio-based economy by offering general and company-specific training and hopes to address the shortage of skilled operators and technical staff needed. **Alan Hope**

► www.bbeu.org

Especially for the fans

VRT tunes in to the lives of expats with new TV programme and online platform

This September, Flemish public broadcaster VRT is launching a new TV programme for English-speaking foreigners living in Flanders. *Fans of Flanders* will air on the VRT's third network Op 12. A digital platform in English with the same name will air the daily news to the growing international community in the region.

Fans of Flanders on Op 12 will cover news events (such as the forthcoming local elections) as well as provide a light-hearted look into the daily lives of expats in the region. The digital platform will mostly cover current events but focused on the needs of foreigners living, studying and working in Flanders.

VRT's English-language editorial office that is responsible for flandersnews.be will provide a news stream relevant to expats, and videos, blog posts, tweets, humour and archive material should further create a dynamic online community. The VRT is counting on the input of expats to develop the platform.

"Thanks to many conversations and surveys, we have gotten to know the international community better," says Els Van de Sijpe, project leader of *Fans of Flanders*. "We also learned that TV and online should go hand-in-hand. We will cooperate with two partners that will pool their respective expertise to achieve an integrated product."

The two partners are Borgerhoff & Lamberigts TV, the TV department of the Flemish publisher, and the communication agency Boondoggle. **Andy Furniere**

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Nominees line up for Export Lion award

Businesses sell Flanders to the rest of the world

Alan Hope

Next week will see the crowning of this year's Export Lion, the winner of an annual competition by Flanders Investment and Trade (FIT). Two businesses, one with fewer than 50 employees and one with more than 50, will receive awards from Flemish economy minister Kris Peeters for their export performance in the past year. There are three nominees in each category. Of companies with fewer than 50 employees, **Huyghe brewery** from Melle, East Flanders, whose leading beer is Delirium Tremens, has only 17 employees but achieved sales in 2011 of €16.1 million, 76% of which came from exports to 59 countries. **Medec Benelux**, based in Aalst, East Flanders, manufactures anaesthesia equipment and last year exported to 85 countries, which accounted

for 99% of their €8.6 million sales last year.

Skyline Communications from Izegem, West Flanders, developed the DataMiner software programme in 1985, and it has since become an international standard, making Skyline one of the world's leading developers of multi-vendor network management. Skyline exports to 65 countries and last year made €8.3 million in turnover, 74% of it from exports. In the category of companies with more than 50 employees, **SESVanderHave** from Tienen, Flemish Brabant, is the world's leading producer of sugar beet seeds, with one in three of the world's beets growing from one of their seeds. Turnover last year was €139.5 million, 96% of it from export to 50 countries.

Soudal from Turnhout in Antwerp province is a family



Last year's Export Lion winners Bert Van der Auwera of Belgian Electronic Sorting Technology (left) and Steven Cuypers of Orfit Industries

firm and produces mastic, glues and polyurethane foams for insulation. The company has four

factories in Flanders and 33 in other countries, employing 1,453 people total. In 2011, Soudal made €380.1 million, 86% of it from exports.

Waterleau from Herent, Flemish Brabant, specialises in environmental technology for water treatment, air purification, waste management and renewable energy. The company made €74.4 million in 2011, 77% of it from exporting to 78 countries. Waterleau won the Export Lion award previously, in 2004.

Former winners of the Export Lion include dredgers Deme, brewers Duvel Moortgat and video detection experts Traficon. The winners receive a trophy and are part of a promotion campaign in the 90 offices of FIT around the world.

► www.leeuwvandeexport.be

Fashion graduates show their stuff

The work of graduating students of the Fashion Department of the Antwerp Royal Academy of Fine Arts was on display last week at Show2012 at Hangar 29 in the docks area. The catwalk show featured the final collections of 11 Master's degree students, who will now go on to try to replicate the successful influence the Antwerp academy has had on the worldwide fashion industry in the last 25 years, following in the footsteps of such names as Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester and Dirk Bikkembergs.



Building industry rejects whereabouts plans

A proposed new law that would make the electronic registration of every construction worker's whereabouts obligatory would be a burden on businesses and unlikely to achieve its desired effect, says construction industry federation Bouwunie.

The proposal for a new law at federal level would make site bosses responsible for registering the presence of workers on all construction sites over 500 square metres. In practice, that means nearly all sites larger than a single private home construction. At present, that represents about 15,000 sites employing 136,000 construction workers.

The goals of the proposal are improving safety and tackling social fraud. In the case of safety, each worker would be the responsibility of a contractor or subcontractor in the event of an accident, removing the possibility for an employers to deny,

as happens now, any connection with the victim of an accident.

The system of "whereabouts", a phrase borrowed from the sports world, which requires pro athletes to report their whereabouts at all times for drug testing reasons, would also make it impossible for someone receiving unemployment benefits to perform casual labour on a building site, with fines for both the worker and the contractor.

"A major construction site is not like an office building, with clear exits and entrances," said Hilde Masschelen, Bouwunie managing director. "Building workers are often active on several sites at once. Does that mean they would have to carry three or four badges to stay inside the law? We've been asking for the means to tackle social fraud on our sites, given that our members are among the biggest victims, but this proposal would better be scrapped."

More grocery stores than ever before

Between the years 2005 and 2010, Flanders saw the arrival of more than 267,000 square metres of new grocery shopping facilities – the equivalent of 53 football fields. The total area of premises given over to shopping rose from 1,596 million square metres to 1,863 million. Supermarkets saw the greatest increase, while hypermarkets grew slightly, according to figures from the federal economy ministry.

According to Flemish organisation Unizo, which represents small businesses, the rise of supermarkets is seen most strongly in the cities,

where many are operated under a franchise such as a Delhaize Proxy or GB Express. In many ways, retail analyst Luc Ardies said, they have taken over the role of the local grocer, while also grabbing back market share from the larger supermarkets, offering customers the benefits of proximity while stocking a wider range of products than smaller shops.

The growth of local supermarkets also comes at a time when research shows more and more consumers are reluctant to use the car for grocery shopping, preferring instead

to shop more locally and more often. However, while the surface area of shops has grown, sales figures have not: People are changing the way they shop, but they're not buying more, according to figures from the EU's statistics service Eurostat. Across Europe, retail sales fell by 2.5%, while in Belgium the fall was 4.5%.

The two sets of figures together means that grocery stores have seen a fall in their profitability, which Ardies now puts at around 2.25% of sales. The problem is particularly harsh in Belgium, reckoned to be one

of the world's most dense shopping environments, with more shopping space per head of population than anywhere else.

That means that grocery stores have more of a problem keeping profitability up, not only in the local corner shop but among the supermarket giants: Carrefour has seen a round of shop closures in Belgium; Delhaize's profits fell by 1.9% in the first quarter; and even super-efficient Colruyt suffered a 7.6% drop in its most recent half-year earnings figures.

THE WEEK IN BUSINESS

Equipment

► Best

Leuven-based sorting equipment producer Best has been sold to the Norwegian Tomra Systems for €138 million. The move strengthens Tomra's position in western Europe, the core markets of Best's activities.

Hotels

► Thon

The Norwegian hotel group Thon recently opened its fifth property close to the European institutions. Other hotels expected to open in Brussels in the next year are the Tanglia in Sint-Lambrechts-Woluwe and the Astoria in the city centre. An additional 600 new hotel rooms will be added in 2014, with the expected openings of Motel One and a Pierre et Vacances facility, bringing the total number of new rooms on the market to some 2,000 in less than four years.

Logistics

► Katoen Natie

The Antwerp-based Katoen Natie handling and distribution group has taken over the Italian Rivalta Scrivia logistics company. The company operates a distribution centre and a rail terminal in the north of Italy.

Pharmaceuticals

► UCB

The Brussels-based pharmaceutical products group has acquired a majority stake in the Brazilian Meizler Biopharma for an undisclosed amount. Meizler specialises in treatments for the central nervous system and immunology.

Shipping

► Exmar

Antwerp-based Exmar shipping group, specialised in gas transport, is considering splitting its activities into three separate companies. The firm would operate its LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas), LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) and Offshore research activities separately. The company has also announced that it is investing some €240 million to build the first offshore gas liquefying platform, expected to start operating off the Colombian coast in early 2015.

Travel

► TUI

The Belgian TUI Travel tour operators is investing €30 million in a new headquarters and terminal at Brussels Airport to centralise local operations. The new facility will group activities spread across six other nearby locations.



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Beyond Manifesta

Everyone will be heading to Genk this summer for the big biennial. A three-day weekend will help you get the most out of this part of Limburg

Diana Goodwin

Heading to Genk to see Manifesta 9 is the perfect excuse to explore the surrounding area. Limburg's former mining region has over the last decade transformed into a valuable cultural and recreational destination. Genk's star attraction is C-Mine, a former mining site that has been converted into a multi-purpose business and leisure complex. Like Waterschei, where Manifesta takes place, Winterslag was one of three coal mines in Genk. The "C" now stands not for coal but for creativity, the theme that unites such diverse enterprises as a multi-screen cinema, the MAD-faculty (Media, Arts and Design school) and the studio and showroom of famous ceramicist Piet Stockmans. The newest addition to C-Mine is Expedition, an interactive tourist attraction installed underground in a former mine shaft. Visitors can experience the lives of mine workers using touch, sound, sight and even smell. The high

point, literally, comes at the end, when you can climb the tallest headframe in Belgium. At a height of 60 metres, the platform at the top offers a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape. The area around C-Mine preserves the original "garden city" built by the mining company for its workers, many of whom were newly arrived immigrants, between 1911 and 1930. Different housing styles were intended for managers, engineers and workers, but every house had a garden, and each neighbourhood had common buildings such as schools. The main commercial street, Vennestraat, retains its character as a multi-cultural shopping and dining destination.

Pick up your new identity

Open-air museum Bokrijk, also in Genk, is a classic school trip destination, with historic buildings from all over Flanders grouped to recreate typical villages and farms.

Different areas represent the Kempen, Haspengouw and East and West Flanders, giving visitors a taste of old-fashioned rural and town life. Part of the charm of Bokrijk is that it doesn't change, even as the real Flanders embraces modernity and progress. This year, Bokrijk introduced a major new attraction, effectively bringing the park into

the 20th century. A new neighbourhood recreates a more recent past: the swingin' sixties. Each visitor is given a passport with the identity of a typical Genk resident in the 1960s, which determines how they experience the attraction. The assigned identity roughly corresponds to the visitor's age and gender but varies in terms of social class, education and work. At each location in the 1960s town, your passport triggers a different interactive experience. (Entrance to "The Sixties", unlike the rest of the park, requires a reservation.) If you like your history and culture seasoned with a bit of shopping, then nearby Maasmechelen Village is the place to go. The largest outlet centre in Flanders, it sports more than 100 clothing stores, restaurants and speciality

shops. Limburg fashion designer Stijn Helsen recently opened an outlet there. The best part, of course, is that everything has up to 60% off regular retail prices... and it's open on Sunday.

Heavens above

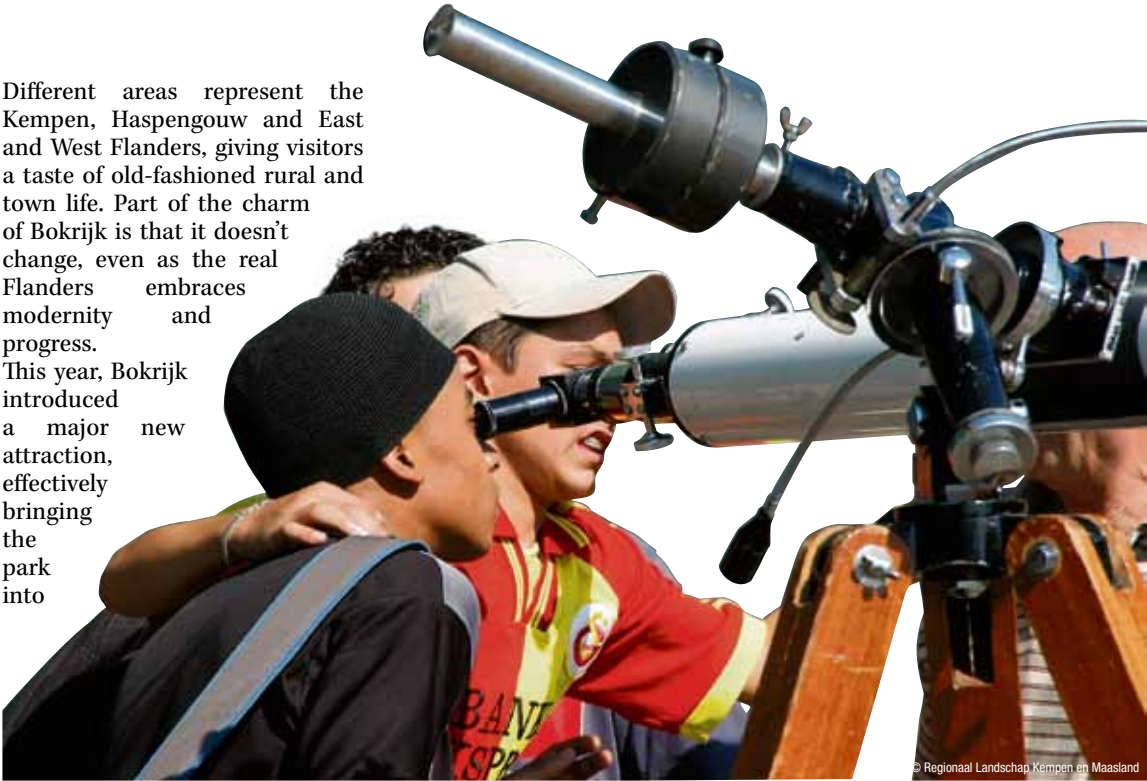
Genk is also home to Kattevennen, one of the gateways to the Hoge Kempen National Park, the largest nature reserve in Flanders. The main attraction here is the Cosmodrome, a spectacular planetarium and observatory offering diverse programmes about space and the natural world. After each planetarium show, visitors can look through the three-metre telescope and observe the heavens. Other activities in Kattevennen include a newly renovated mini-golf course, horse riding, hiking

and cycling. The sleek, modern visitor's centre next to the Cosmodrome is a good place to start your visit. With so many things to do, a long weekend is in order. The Carbon Hotel is conveniently located in the heart of the city right across from the train station. As its name suggests, this chic hotel pays homage to the black gold that drove the mines. Genk-based architects Peter Cornoedus & Partners used the theme of coal along with the five Chinese elements of wood, fire, earth, metal and water in their concept. The colour palette is black with touches of gold. And the bed linens were designed by none other than Stijn Helsen.

► www.uitingenk.be



After a tough day of exhibition touring, visitors hang out on the terraces of downtown Genk



One of Limburg's top visitor centres: the Cosmodrome at the Kattevennen gateway to the Hoge Kempen National Park

STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

Alan Hope

Maasland knapkoek



© VLAM

The word *knap* in Dutch means good-looking, smart or capable. *Knapkoek* is all of those things, but in this case the word is onomatopoeic: *knapkoek* is a cake that makes a snapping sound when it breaks. *Knapkoek* is a traditional product from towns and villages all along the Maas valley in Flanders and the Netherlands. The

story goes that it began as a sweet version of hardtack and was bought by the sailors who navigated the river, thanks to its long-lasting qualities. Others say it was made of leftover dough from Limburg *vlaai* – the tart everyone in Limburg bakes and eats at every opportunity. In its modern form it's a round biscuit, somewhat thicker than the sort of thing you'd eat with a cup of tea, crumbly almost like shortbread and characterised by the crystal sugar baked into the top. *Knapkoek* comes principally from around Maaseik in Limburg, where it's traditionally baked in September in a gigantic wood oven on the marketplace. (There's an instructive video on YouTube; search for "*knapkoek*"). Of course, it's also made the rest of the year and sold all over Flanders. The recipe is very simple: butter, sugar, flour, eggs and vanilla. The secret lies in the kind and amount of spices, such as mace, cinnamon and nutmeg, which vary from household to household and from baker to baker. There's also a trick to rolling out the dough and pressing it into shape with the fingers, then baking it to exactly the point where it's as

knapperig, or crisp, as it needs to be. The test is reputedly to press the centre of the circle, when the whole should break into four (fairly) equal portions. Even if it doesn't, it's still a delicious thing, with that buttery-sandy texture of shortbread and the crunch of the sugar crystals. The variety recognised as a genuine Flemish *streekproduct*, or regional product, is a recipe from the beginning of the 20th century closely guarded by Vandenbosch bakery in Dilsen, close to where the Maas now forms the frontier between Flanders and the Netherlands. Nobody is giving up the secret, so don't bother even asking. If you want to try your hand at making *knapkoek*, you'll need 150g of both butter and sugar, creamed with the vanilla and spices to taste. Add one egg, then 250g self-raising flour. Form the dough into a ball and allow to rest for an hour, then roll and press into shape. Score into portions with the back of a knife, and bake in a 180-degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes until it's sand-coloured but not browned. Cool and eat.

► www.streekproduct.be

Double vision

Dutch photographer Thijs Koelink captures Antwerp's docklands in a monochromatic experiment

Lisa Roolant

It's not often that the industrial backbone of the Antwerp docklands is celebrated for its beauty. Still, the way in which Dutch photographer and filmmaker Thijs Koelink captures the area in the exhibition *Structures: Abstract Analog Antwerp*, is undeniably elegant.

The panoramic black-and-white photographs, on show in Antwerp's new Gallery Louiza, are abstract constructions of industrial lines and graphic patterns. Each image is a product of a double-exposure technique the 31-year-old photographer mastered through experimentation. In a time where we're using smartphones to filter our digital images to get fake analogue effects, the authenticity is refreshing.

Just before the opening night of Koelink's first solo show in Flanders, he sits in the gallery's courtyard admiring how crisp the oversized photographs look across the bright room. "I love that the space has a bit of Asian influence, as Japanese culture has inspired my own work," he says, referring to the bamboo trees and wooden spirit house that recall gallery owner Elly Kostense's three decades of expat life in Asia. "The space is also very clean and intimate," continues Koelink. "It really complements the monochromatic tone of the photographs."

Monochrome and Japan are common elements in the projects curated by Studio Ayqido, the



multidisciplinary design collective in Utrecht that Koelink started with his partner, fashion designer Manuela Eringaard.

Just a few hours later, the same courtyard is packed with people sipping coriander cocktails. The wall is animated with a captivating projection of the *Robodock* video footage that Koelink created to complement his static images.

Surprises of analogue

Koelink studied documentary photography and design at the Utrecht School of Arts. As a student, he lived in a building occupied by a mix of squatters and paying tenants, a perfect subculture subject for the multimedia installation he made as his graduating thesis. The project quickly gained attention and was exhibited in London's world-renowned Saatchi & Saatchi gallery, as well as photo museums

in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Eventually, Koelink "became a bit fed up with harassing people on the street to take their picture. When you have to ask for permission, your moment is gone". Instead, he has opted to focus on the element of surprise. "I lived on 'the little island' of Antwerp from 2009 to 2010 and was always fascinated by the structures and industrial feel of the area."

He started wandering the dock area with his panoramic camera, shooting the cranes aligning the Scheldt River, the Mexico bridge at the Houtdock and the MAS

building – then still a construction site. Once when his film roll ran out, he decided to shoot the same roll a second time on a whim. Intrigued by the result, he continued the experiment, meticulously constructing each image until he was completely satisfied with the result.

"With analogue, what you get is a big surprise," Koelink says. "You could create a similar effect digitally by setting the opacity and overlaying them. But these have been made manually, which makes them more objective and incalculable."

UNTIL 30 JUNE

Gallery Louiza

Louizastraat 13, Antwerp

► www.gallerylouiza.com

Become a Miner!

Cinematek's new DVD takes viewers through the history of coal mining in Flanders

Ian Mundell

There are two ways of thinking of Flemish coal mining, as becomes clear once you dip into the new Cinematek DVD *The Mines*, made up of films devoted to the industry. First there are the mines that sprang up when coal was discovered in Limburg at the relatively late date of 1901. These thrived for a few decades, bringing work and prosperity to previously deprived communities, a story described in the 1951 propaganda film *The Black Gold of the Kempen*. Over aerial shots of the collieries, the narrator praises the achievements of the "seven pearls of the Kempen" and the difference made to a region that was only marshland before coal was discovered. In the second part of the film, an old hand takes us down to the coalface.

The other way of thinking about Flemish coal mining is through the people who went south to work in the



Walloon coalfields, a vast enterprise that was always short of willing local labour. *Become a Miner!*, a public information film from 1947, is directly addressed to the unemployed men of Flanders, the narrator emphasising the ease of travel from Flemish towns to Charleroi, Liège and the Borinage. In other films, the Flemish presence is part of the background, with signs around the Walloon mines in Dutch as well as French and Italian. For a time, Italy was the other great feeder of muscle to Walloon collieries, but

after the Marcinelle disaster of 1956 (illustrated here in a series of eerie newsreels), the Italian government stopped encouraging its citizens to migrate. Then Spain and Greece supplied the workers, and later on Eastern Europe and North Africa.

While the propaganda films here all emphasise the benefits of working down the mines and the close attention paid to health and safety, a darker view can be seen in *20,000 per Turk*, a report made for Belgian public television in 1964 about Turkish workers in Limburg's Zwartberg mine. This is remarkably frank about the economics of migrant labour and the lack of integration, with the Turkish miners keeping to themselves and the company doing little to make them feel welcome.

Dutch language lessons at the mine focused on getting the workers to follow orders and observe basic safety rules, and we see a class

MANIFESTA 9

mechanically reciting: "*Ik hef de hamer op, ik leg de hamer neer*", before repeating the phrase with another tool. At the same time, Flemish miners have to be warned to speak "correct" Dutch rather than dialect or slang, and the foremen are told not to speak their native Italian. By this time, the Belgian mining industry was already in serious trouble, and the later films on the DVD feature protests over mine closures and the fate of the communities left behind. The most recent film is an impressionistic tribute to the miners at Zolder Colliery in Limburg, broadcast in 1992 when its closure marked the end of large-scale coal mining in Belgium.

The Mines (€19) DVD and book in English, Dutch and French

► www.cinematek.be

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Nearly one in five small companies would be prepared to take part in **micro-financing of creative enterprises** or cultural projects, according to a poll carried out by Unizo, the organisation that represents small businesses. Unizo pointed out that the tax shelter system for the audiovisual sector has been a great success, but the sums involved are too high for small companies.

This week saw the **25th anniversary of the first performance** of *What the Body Does Not Remember*, the first production by now world-famous Flemish choreographer Wim Vandekeybus. His Brussels-based dance company Ultima Vez celebrated the 12 June anniversary with a move to a new studio in Molenbeek.

► www.ultimavez.com

The Antwerp Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) last week welcomed its **one millionth visitor** since opening in 2011. The special recognition went to an entire fifth-year class from the Xavieruscollege primary school in Antwerp. The class was presented with one of the metal hands that decorate the museum's façade, which are normally given to sponsors in return for a donation of €1,000.

► www.mas.be

More than 2,000 showed up for the first **PicNic the Streets** on Aanspachlaan in Brussels last Sunday. The event was organised by philosophy professor Philippe Van Parijs at protest of the lack of car-free space in the capital. "There are plans for more bike lanes, for more car-free areas, but they are never realised," he said. Closing off the busy street in front of the stock exchange, the event attracted mostly Dutch speakers, including families, barbecue enthusiasts, dancing majorettes and at least one woman on a horse. The event has no permit, but police cooperated. The plan is for the event to happen every Sunday.

► www.tinyurl.com/facebook-picnicthestreets

Ypres First World War museum **In Flanders Fields** has re-opened after being closed for a year for renovations. The museum now offers more interactive installations based around the personal stories of the soldier who fought in the war. It also allows visitors to climb the bell tower for a view from the Lakenhallen building across the West Flanders countryside, where much of the war was fought. The aim of the museum, coordinator Piet Chielens said, is to "get people thinking and bring a message of peace."

► www.inflandersfields.be

Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege has launched the **UITPAS**, a card that offers discounts on admission to a number of venues or other benefits, such as a free drink or walking map. It also allows you to earn points every time you attend an event at a participating venue. You can trade the points in for more discounts. The cards cost €5 or €2 for students and can be purchased at culture centres and libraries around the region.

► www.uitpas.be

The art of integration

The contemporary work of Wim Delvoye is intertwined with the traditional at the Louvre

Christophe Verbiest

Visitors to the Louvre may not realise it, but there is some striking modern art from Flanders in among the gallery's collections. You just have to look closely to spot it.

No one knows Wim Delvoye, or so it seems. We're standing at the top of the glass pyramid that covers the entrance hall of the Louvre. Visitors to the Paris landmark are flooding in, but no one takes notice of the artist in his conspicuously ghost-white suit, quietly sipping a Frappuccino. (There's a Starbucks in the Louvre, I kid you not.) But every single one of them will have seen at least one of his artworks.

Because in that pyramid hangs "Suppo", a steel construction that looks like two contorted gothic church towers stuck together at the base, with one peak pointing to the sky and the other towards the lower level of the intricately designed entrance hall. On entering the museum, it's impossible not to see it. Delvoye is only the second artist, after Tony Cragg, to place a sculpture in the pyramid since its completion in 1989.

"Suppo" is the harbinger for Delvoye's exhibition *Au Louvre* (At the Louvre) for which the Flemish artist placed mostly recent works amid the museum's collection. "It's part of the museum's policy to have a dialogue between contemporary and ancient art," explains curator Marie-Laure Bernadac. Four years ago, for instance, Jan Fabre, another contemporary Flemish master, placed his work among part of the Louvre collection.

Fabre, who invaded the galleries of work by painters of the northern European schools, radically chose to highlight the confrontation between his art and the paintings. This time around, with Delvoye, there's still some confrontation, but more integration. Therefore, visitors to the Louvre don't always seem to realise they're looking at contemporary art. In a showcase holding 19th-century baubles Delvoye has placed what look like four pieces of Delft pottery,

but scrutinised at close range, you discover they're actually saw blades. In another case, this time holding small china statuettes, the artist has sneaked in his own piece of china. Again, only if you look closely will you notice the awkwardly contorted bodies of the depicted man and woman. I saw lots of tourists passing, but none of them seemed to spot the odd ones out.

Most of the artworks are placed in the apartment of Napoleon III, France's last emperor. His restored gilded quarters are an integral part of the Louvre. In the *grand salon*, we see three stuffed pigs whose skin has been replaced by Persian rugs. Delvoye calls them *tapisdermie*, a play on the French words for taxidermy and rug (*tapis*).

The Anne de Bretagne room holds one of the most impressive works in the exhibition: the gothic "Chapel", made from laser-cut Corten steel. It suits the spiritual atmosphere of the room, which contains tapestries featuring religious subjects. Visitors stroll in awe around the chapel. Cameras click. Yet no one, again, seems to notice that it's a 21st-century piece – though the stained glass depicting x-rays of people copulating rather give it away.

It's proof that Delvoye has made a substantial effort at integration. If the artist had had it his way, the blending would have been even more seamless, he tells me in a whisper while we sit on a visitor's bench next to "Chapel".

"My ultimate wish was to disperse my works through the whole Louvre, so people would be forced to go through all the divisions and have a look at all the different cultures. But the Louvre has imposed some restraints. They stipulated, for instance, that the artworks form a



circuit. This way, it's possible to see the whole exhibition in half an hour." The museum also "toned down the blending," he says, by, for instance, placing artworks under glass or on a pedestal. "I had wanted the spoof to be complete, including labels like the regular ones of the Louvre, but, sadly, my works have distinct labels." But in the end, he doesn't want to complain. "It's only details, of course."

And Delvoye didn't always have to give in. The Louvre found the title "Suppo" (referring to a suppository) a bit too risqué. "Then I proposed to call it 'Döner Kebab'," he smiles. "That was considered to be even more controversial, so we stuck to the original name. By the way, it's not only referring to a suppository, but also to 'to suppose'." In any case, *Au Louvre* is an intriguing exhibition. If you notice it, that is.



► www.louvre.fr

Flemish artist Wim Delvoye's works are spread throughout the apartment of Napoleon III at the Louvre

UNTIL 17 SEPTEMBER

Wim Delvoye Au Louvre

Louvre, Paris

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JULES VERNE

In conjunction with the exhibition *Au Louvre*, Mercatorfonds is publishing two books on Wim Delvoye. The catalogue of the exhibition has only just been made available: It's a few weeks after the opening, but that couldn't be helped since the book wouldn't have been complete without site-specific photographs that show how Delvoye's art blends in with the Louvre's permanent collection.

But you can already open your moneybox for *Introspective*, a hefty – and at €69.95 also pricey – monograph that covers Delvoye's career. Of the five essays in the book, the one by French art critic Bernard Marcadé stands out, giving an insight into the artist's work.

The 350-page publication is, of course, very well illustrated, with a retrospective of Delvoye's work: The gas cylinders

painted to resemble Delft pottery, the tattooed pigs, the football goals with nets replaced by stained glass, the rabbit slippers, the Cloaca (a machine that's fed with food and produces faeces) and Delvoye's recent works that show a great fascination for the double helix, which results in twisted, stretched-out figures.

Looking back lends itself to introspection; still, the book's title has an ironic ring to it. Delvoye is the prototype of the extrovert artist – in the way he advocates his work but also in the work itself: It's loud, in your face and seeks controversy. This takes nothing away from its originality. Delvoye masterly comes up with art rooted in the mundane, yet it's highly unique. At first it often looks light-hearted, but after a while that playfulness gets toned down when you realise his view

on life is infused with despondency.

Both the catalogue and the monograph have covers that directly refer to famous covers of novels by Jules Verne, printed in the 19th-century by Pierre-Jules Hetzel. It's no surprise that Delvoye associates himself with the French science-fiction author. At times ridiculed and strongly criticised, Verne has stayed popular for more than a century; according to statistics from Unesco, he's the second-most translated author, behind only Agatha Christie. I guess Delvoye would sign up for such popularity.

► www.wimdelvoye.be

Flanders' best free music fest

Genk on stage

Katy Desmond

Next week, the city of Genk celebrates the 10th annual Genk on Stage. Some 120,000 people will descend on the city in the far east of Limburg for the three-day festival featuring an eclectic mix of 65 bands, both large and small, unknown and renowned.

Set up across six stages around the city, the festival is a bit like a mini-Gentse Feesten but with higher-profile acts – everything from rock to hip-hop to electro, and all for the low, low price of nothing.

Genk on Stage has grown in size over the years, attracting more people and bigger bands. The kick-off of Flanders' awesome summer music festival season, it offers the chance to see both local and international acts before they move on to bigger, more expensive, stages like Werchter and Dranouter.

To celebrate its 10-year anniversary, Genk on Stage has

pulled out all the stops this year: Flemish singer-songwriter Milow begins his summer festival tour here, as he continues his plan for world domination. Then, following Suzanne Vega on Saturday night, Hooverphonic (prime minister Elio Di Rupo's group of choice) will make their sole planned festival performance this year, taking to the stage with a full orchestra (*pictured*).

But even that won't be the largest contingent on stage that weekend. That title will be taken by Dutch group The Kytman Orchestra, opening for UK hip-hop artist Tricky. Kytman, also a hip-hop artist from Utrecht, will be directing 67 people on stage, including a 30-person orchestra and full choir. Guaranteed to be an assault on the senses, it is the type of live spectacle worth the trip to Limburg.

The focus is on the music, with

some international food stands thrown in. But, according to Genk on Stage spokesperson Roel Rabijs, people from all over Flanders come just for the atmosphere. Because of Genk's history as a coal mining city, it has long had a large immigrant population. "The people of Genk are used to welcoming people from other places, which is why a festival like this works here," Rabijs says. "They do a lot to create the trademark cosy atmosphere of the festival."

Of course, lying over near the Dutch border, Genk is off the radar for many Flemish festival goers, and most of its crowd still comes from the Limburg region. That is changing however, says Rabijs. "Every year we are getting more people from outside Limburg. It's really because we can offer people for free the same acts they pay to see at other festivals."



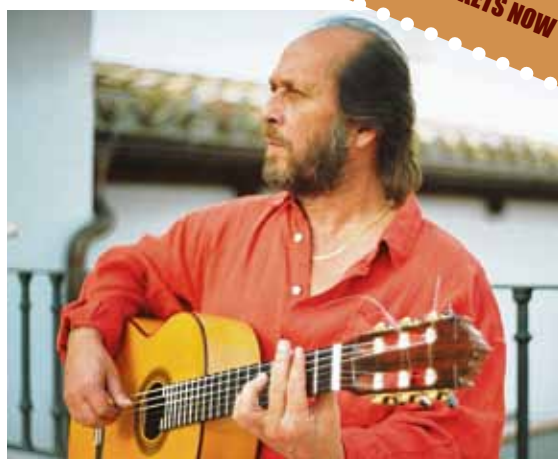
22-24 June | Across Genk | www.genkonstage.be

MUSIC FESTIVAL

Gent Jazz Festival

The Gent Jazz Festival is renowned for drawing big names considering its small, intimate setting in the courtyard of the former Bijloke abbey. This 11th edition is no different, with a line-up that includes New York experimental pop band Antony and the Johnsons & Metropole Orchestra, the wonderfully melancholic British indie group Tindersticks, minimalist Irish singer-songwriter Damien Rice, the ever-uplifting Bobby Womack and Jamaican Legends, smooth American R&B singer D'Angelo, festive Mexican musical duo

Rodrigo y Gabriela and many more. But the highlight is Spanish flamenco guitarist and composer Paco de Lucía (*pictured*) whose furious finger picking and clean, classical sound will both make him new fans as well as please old purists who have been following his illustrious career for the past half-century. **Robyn Boyle**



GET TICKETS NOW

5-14 July | De Bijloke, Godshuizenlaan, Ghent | www.gentjazz.com

MORE MUSIC FESTIVALS THIS WEEK

Buizingen (Halle)

Zap Festival: Concerts by rock, reggae, ska, Balkan and gipsy bands, plus circus acts, DJs and Thai food

JUN 16 14.00-midnight at ZAP Café, Kerkstraat 1

www.tinyurl.com/zapfestival

Arendonk (Antwerp province)

Totemtoeren: Free festival featuring Antwerp Gipsy-Ska Orkestra, belly dance workshops, flea market, international fashion show, children's entertainment and more

JUN 17 at Fedasil, Grens 77

www.fedasil.be/arendonk

FILM

Mondovino

"Wine is dead," states French wine grower Aimé Guibert with no lack of conviction, in this eye-opening documentary on the effects of globalisation on the wine industry. American director Jonathan Nossiter shows how the world is essentially shrinking with all of today's technologies and transport possibilities, so much so that small wine producers are forced to deal with increasing competition from South Africa to South America. Even North American wine producers have perfected the art of simulating the dry, full-bodied, oaky character of Bordeaux wines, until recently considered *the* standard when it came to good quality. French wine is no longer the only player on the market, as this dramatic film explains, offering a unique insider's view into the business as it really is. (In French and English with Dutch subtitles). **RB**



17 June, 20.00 | Flagey, Heilig Kruisplein, Brussels |

www.cinematek.be

MORE FILMS THIS WEEK

Borgerhout

The Searchers: The classic John Ford western in which John Wayne plays a Civil War veteran searching for his nieces, who were kidnapped by Indians. Largely considered one of the best American westerns ever made

JUN 18 14.00 at De Roma, Turnhoutsebaan 327

www.deroma.be

Brussels

Cine Club Cinema: Free outdoor film festival for the whole family featuring short films, animations and documentaries about cultural differences and nomadism

JUN 17 12.00-16.30 at Park van Vorst, Rochefortplein 9

www.facebook.com/supervliegsupermouche

CONCERT

Major Tom, a Bowie Tribute

“I know David Bowie is 65 today, but god I wish he’d come out of retirement,” tweeted comedian David Baddiel earlier this year. His plea was re-tweeted hundreds of times by more fans of the rock legend that have been waiting far too long for a Bowie tour. If you, too, are a fan, don’t hold your breath for a comeback. Instead, go see Flemish performer Tom Hannes, who does an uncanny Bowie impersonation together with a talented band and two back-up singers. The tribute includes the best Bowie numbers from the 1970s and ’80s, from Ziggy Stardust and Thin White Duke to “Fame” and “Let’s Dance”. Last year at De Roma, Hannes and his band brought down the house with a spot-on homage to Talking Heads’ singer David Byrne. **RB**



21-22 June, 20.30 |
De Roma, Turnhoutsebaan 286, Borgerhout
► www.deroma.be

MORE CONCERTS
THIS WEEK

Antwerp

The John Henry Orchestra: Jazz, blues and boogie-woogie from a two-member band that sounds incredibly like a full orchestra
JUN 17 17.30 at Café Mombasa, Moorkensplein 37
► www.cafemombasa.be

Brussels

Brussels Aires Tango Orchestra: Impassioned tango music with accordion, guitar and song
JUN 12-16 20.30 at La Samaritaine, Samaritanessestraat 16
► www.lasamaritaine.be

Ghent

Gitana Lobos: Russian, Slovak and Czech folk songs infused with Latino rhythms by Ghent Roma musicians
JUN 16 20.30 at Bij De Vizee Gasten, Haspelstraat 31
► www.deviezegasten.org

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bamako Encounters

This collection of pan-African photography and video explores the struggle for a sustainable world. Landscape shots of the environmental situation on the African continent illustrate the stark contrast between nature’s beauty and her cruelty. Piles of sand or heaps of trash appear next to breathtaking photos of exotic wildlife and peacefully sleeping babies. Besides the interesting subjects of the photos themselves, the initiative is a positive step in the right direction for the image of African photography and its deserved place on the international art scene. **RB**



14 June - 26 August | Tour & Taxis, Havenlaan 86c, Brussels | ► www.bozar.be

MORE PHOTOGRAPHY THIS WEEK

Across Flanders

Summer of photography: A celebration of landscape photography with exhibitions across Brussels and Flanders. Highlights include *Sense of Place*, featuring 40 photographers from 27 European countries, at Bozar in Brussels; *From Here On* in Antwerp’s Photo Museum and *Moments Before the Flood*, photos by Flemish master of landscape photography Carl De Keyzer, at the Maritieme Site in Ostend
► www.summerofphotography.be

Brussels

Miroslav Tichý: Retrospective of the late Czech photographer, with accompanying texts by Harald Szeemann, Marc Lenot, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev and Nick Cave
Until JUN 30 at Galerie Pascal Polar, Charleroisesteenweg 108
► www.pascalpolar.be

Ghent

Voetbal voor ’t fabriek (Football at the Factory): Photos of “factory football”, workers and the football competitions they formed in the 1970s and ’80s
Until DEC 31 at MIAT, Minnemeers 9
► www.miat.gent.be

DUSK TIL DAWN

Katrien Lindemans

Happy Birthday 22 Tracks

22 June, from 22.22, Beursschouwburg, Brussels

Last year on 22 June at exactly 22.22, music website 22tracks launched its Brussels version. The website gathers 22 tracks from 22 genres of music. Put together by an expert in each genre, the website is ever-changing but always up to date. A great idea, 22tracks has taken off: About 5,000 people connect to 22tracks to listen to what can be called “the sound of Brussels”.

The idea was first launched in Amsterdam, then came Brussels, and London has since joined the platform, too. To celebrate the buzz of one year of 22tracks in Brussels, there will be a big party, of course. The event will take place on 22 June, naturally, part of the Out Loud! festival, which takes places on the rooftop terrace of the Beursschouwburg. Out Loud!, which runs through 30 June, features a whole lot of free concerts, movies and parties on one of Brussels’ prettiest (and highest) outdoor spaces. On 22 June, you’ll be dancing to the beats of some of the 22tracks experts: Funky Bompa (tropical), Gratts (house), Nosedrip (moody), Mezzdup and Phonetics (bass), Onda Sonora (future beats), Lefto (global sounds) and Kong (house). Kong, by the way, is Koen Galle’s DJ name. He’s the man behind the 22tracks Brussels site (*pictured*) and is delighted to invite us all to this first birthday celebration. “Our experts keep on enthusiastically uploading new tracks to their genre, the very reason why our group of listeners is growing,” he tells me. “We’re happy to be part of the Out Loud! festival, exactly one year after the Brussels version of 22tracks was launched. We hope to throw a party that will be the talk of the town, every year from now on”. Tickets to the 22tracks first birthday party are €5 at the door

► www.22tracks.com



BITE

Robyn Boyle

Belgian Bites

There's no doubt about it: The Flemish love their *aperitifs*. The word comes from the Latin *aperire*, meaning "to open". Opening a meal is a pleasurable event in and of itself, and a glass of wine, beer or a multitude of other drinks can precede lunch or dinner. While this phenomenon is not uniquely Belgian, there is something special about the way it's done here. And that has to do with the scrummy appetisers that go with it. Eating and drinking go hand in hand, so why should *aperitif* time be any different?

Nobody knows this better than Brussels-based chef Nicolas Rivière and Ilse Duponcheel, head of Antwerp food advice agency Dolce Far Tutto and food magazine *Dolce*. The two chefs came to the conclusion that Belgium is unique in its custom of serving an appetiser with every drink: coffee and biscuits, beer and cheese, wine and crisps... That's why they published *Belgian Bites*, a cookbook dedicated to *aperitif* food and drink pairing.

I leafed through my copy, drooled over the lush photographs and picked out three to try. Their recipes are upscale, beautifully presented and complex in their texture and flavour combinations. But making them, as I found out, is simpler than you might think.

What first struck me was the number of ingredients that I wouldn't know where to find without going to speciality stores, such as dandelion vinegar and chestnut honey. Or the paired drinks, which include everything from Belgian bubbles to seaweed jenever. My solution was to not take the recipes too literally. Instead, try substituting the more obscure ingredients with the closest alternative you can find.

My first bite, *Mariages des deux saints*, calls for yellow turnips and nettle vinegar. I use regular white turnips and red wine vinegar; the result is still mind-blowing. This dish combines buttery scallops with turnips prepared in two ways: boiled in chicken stock, then chopped and mixed with fresh tarragon



leaves and vinegar, and sliced raw turnips mixed with olive oil and tarragon. A mixture of beef stock, tarragon and lime zest gets drizzled over the scallops after searing them ever so slightly. A few leaves of rocket and a couple of turns of the

pepper mill, and it's ready.

Normally the paired drink would be a Saint-Idesbald Blond beer but I replace it with an equally strong and heady Omer Traditional Blond. The scallops are rich and sweet, the sauce beefy and salty, and the turnips both crunchy and soft, with a hint of acidity. The beer matches perfectly, too, with its hoppy bitterness and depth of malt flavour. An extraordinary starter. Next up is a marriage of meat and wine. An earthy Belgian red is called for; I pick out a Côtes du Rhone instead, with hints of blackberry and liquorice. Angels Dark Dreams is a wonderfully simple and modern take on the traditional blood sausage with apple sauce. Instead of apple sauce, it sports a glaze of warmed apple juice and gelatine leaves. I slice the sausage into bite-size rounds and cook it briefly before dipping each piece in the glaze. The sweet and spiced flavour of the sausage is perfectly complemented by the tangy apple juice. A sprinkling of cayenne pepper not only looks nice, its spiciness comes back again in the wine, which is fruity and robust with a bit of kick. The finale is Belgian Fishy Stick. Don't be fooled by the childish name: This calls for some seriously daring flavour combinations. Barely cooked lime-marinated salmon is dipped in a glaze of reduced coffee and rolled in chocolate. It's a real indulgence for the taste buds, with mingling sweet, sour and bitter nuances. The pairing is a dram of Belgian Owl whisky, but

WIN A COOKBOOK!

Inspired to make your own Belgian Bites? We have 10 copies of the beautiful hard-bound cookbook to give away. Email editorial@flanderstoday.eu by Monday, 18 June, with "cookbook" in the subject line and your postal address in the email. Winners will be chosen at random and alerted the following day.

TALKING SPORTS

Leo Cendrowicz

Pig or bull, Wilmots fits the bill

As a footballer, Marc Wilmots was Captain Courageous. Capped 70 times by Belgium, he led the team by example, bursting down the pitch against impossible odds and blasting the ball into the back of the net against storied opponents like France and Brazil.

Now the 43-year-old former Mechelen and Sint-Truiden star has been named coach of the national side for the next two years at least, an appointment that is likely to fire up both players and fans.

Wilmots (*pictured*) stood in as caretaker coach for the team's recent 2-2 draw with Montenegro and 1-0 loss to England following the resignation last month of Georges Leekens. His priority now will be to qualify with the current promising squad for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Critics may wonder at his managerial credentials, which include only two short spells as a club coach, with Schalke 04 in Germany and Sint-Truiden. But Wilmots has a huge footballing heart.

Wilmots, who also played for Schalke, Bordeaux and Standard Liège, is Belgium's leading goal scorer in World Cup history. A robust leader on the pitch, he would dominate the play, applying his strong physical presence to marshal his teammates forward.

At Schalke he was known as Mr 1,000 Volts for his intensity



and drive. During his career, he has earned other nicknames, including das Kampfschwein (the Warrior Pig) the Dongelberg Bull and simply Willie. Whatever the name, he fits the bill. Meanwhile, **Thomas De Gendt** has forced himself into the spotlight as a Tour de France contender after a superb solo effort to win the fearsome Giro d'Italia 20th stage last month. The 25-year-old from Sint-Niklaas has been an also-ran until now, but that finish – and his overall third place in the Giro – made rivals sit up and notice. De Gendt's display of power on the 219km alpine ride

culminated in a climb up the Passo dello Stelvio that, at 2,757m is the highest finish of any tour.

And finally, spare a thought for Flemish tennis. Kim Clijsters, who is retiring at the end of the year, skipped this month's French Open as she recovers from an injury. Flanders' other tennis player, **Yanina Wickmayer**, a semi-finalist at the US Open in 2009, tumbled out in the first round in Paris, losing 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 to Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova.

The last word...

Bending, not breaking

"All the same, I won't let it get me down."

Leonie Snelinx, 83, from Hoeselt, Limburg province, whose house has been destroyed by a tornado for the third time since 1984

Kitty control

"With cats, the rule is one + one makes six, and that's three times a year."

All cats in Belgium will have to be sterilised by law from 2014

Higher power

"You ought to know my position by now. I'll keep my seat in the parliament until I die, and then I'll move to the Senate."

Herman De Croo, former speaker of the federal parliament, is giving up his position as mayor of Brakel to make way for his son, Alexander, after October's elections

Scheduling conflict

"My nightmare is for the American premiere of *The Loft* to coincide with the taping of *De slimste mens*."

Erik Van Looy, director of the film and host of the TV series, fears diary problems

NEXT WEEK
IN FLANDERS TODAY

Cover story

Many of you Queen Elisabeth Competition fans probably noticed that this year the early rounds that normally take place in Brussels' conservatory were staged in Flagey. That's because the Royal Conservatory is in bad shape. We'll tell you how the directors of the once-grand institution are trying to save it, in an exclusive interview

Business

India's annual Horasis business meeting is happening in Flanders this year, so we're taking the opportunity to tell you about Flemish-India connections, including the future of Jet Airways' hub in Brussels and the new partnership agreement between the Antwerp British School and DY Patil University in Navi Mumbai

Summer festival guide!

It's time to plan your summer in the region with more music festivals per capita than anywhere else in Europe. We'll tell you who is playing where and when