

Breach of contract?

The Flemish government considers taking legal action against the Ford Motor Company

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Slick science

Find out what's bubbling in the labs of Flanders during Science Week

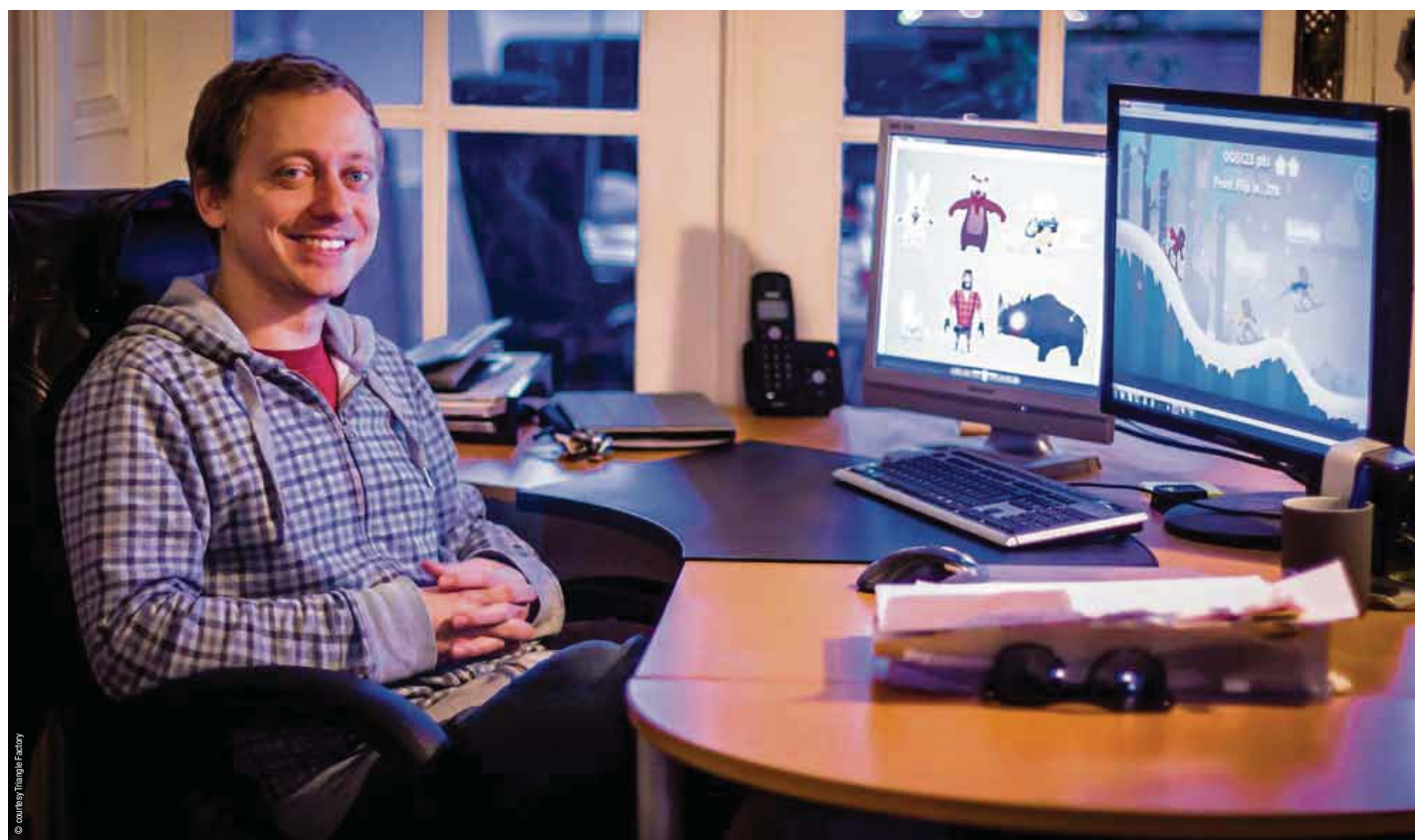
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Getting to work

A new restaurant in Ghent only hires neighbourhood residents and accepts a special kind of currency

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Fun and games

The Game Fund plays to the needs of the computer gaming industry in Flanders

Andy Furniere

With the new Game Fund, the Flemish government is hoping to push the Flemish computer gaming industry to higher levels. It was launched in cooperation with Flanders' first organisation for game development, the Flemish Games Association, founded last spring to support producers of both entertaining role-playing games and those geared towards education.

To give the growing games sector a boost, Flemish media minister Ingrid Lieten and education minister Pascal Smet have set aside an annual budget of €750,000 for the Game Fund. Managed by the Flemish Audiovisual Fund (VAF), it will support three types of games: entertainment, educational and non-educational but "serious". That last category includes games that are a mix of entertainment and education, teaching users something through simulations of real-world events.

"The Game Fund will invest €200,000 annually in games for the education system," says project manager Karen Van Hellemond of the VAF, "while €550,000 is available for both entertainment games with a cultural or artistic value and serious games meant for, among others, the care, medical and heritage sectors."

The committee doesn't take into consideration so-called advergaming, or those with commercial goals. The entries may not contain pornographic elements, violence, violation of human rights or discrimination. The first deadline for applications for subsidies was last week.

Looking to the film industry

"Local game developers have been asking for support for years, but until now the sector never spoke with one voice," says Wim Wouters, spokesman of the Flemish Games Association (FLEGA) and CEO of Antwerp game studio GriN.

On the initiative of minister Lieten, the games sector united early this year to negotiate measures that will further professionalise its activities. Wouters is grateful that these meetings quickly resulted in financial contributions from the government. "Now it's up to the creativity of the companies," he says.

He stresses the need, however, for the federal government to improve the business climate for the games industry, pointing to the recent success of the Flemish film industry. "To achieve a similar standard, we also require a Belgian tax shelter for game productions," he states. Since 2003, companies have been able to benefit from a tax exemption for their investment in Belgian audiovisual works.

FLEGA further hopes for a reduction of employment costs, which would enable them to expand their teams. In Canada, for instance, such arrangements have created a flourishing games industry. "But we don't just look to the government for help,"

FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope

Bart Vandaele



Bart Vandaele is the owner and executive chef of Belga Café in Washington DC, and he's now the first ever Flemish chef to take part in the American TV reality show *Top Chef*.

In last week's season opener, Vandaele had to make a salad for tough guy judge Hugh Acheson to avoid summary elimination. When Acheson told the chef that "there's a lot going on there", Vandaele took it as a compliment, something Acheson's expression told us was not at all his intention. Since the series may end up on one of the Flemish TV channels at some point, we'll spare you the spoiler of how that encounter turned out.

Vandaele was born in 1970 in Roeselare, West Flanders, and from the age of 12 attended the prestigious Ter Groene Poorte culinary school in Bruges. After graduating, he was a line cook at the naval base at Zeebrugge before going to work for chefs like future TV star Piet Huysentruyt in Wortegem and Roger Souvereys (considered by many to be the godfather of Flemish chefs) at the ill-fated Scholtsehof in Stevoort, near Hasselt, where Vandaele rose to sous chef at about the time the restaurant won its second

Michelin star.

Vandaele moved across the Atlantic when he was appointed executive chef of the EU delegation to the US in Washington; he then took up the same post at the Dutch embassy. As the story has it, he was strolling in Washington's Eastern Market in 2003 when he spotted an empty building he thought would be perfect for his dream restaurant. So Belga Café was born, just as Americans were coming to realise that there was more to Belgium than waffles and "French" fries.

Not that he's strayed far from his roots. The names of the dishes on the Belga Café menu are mainly in Dutch – *Vlaamse stoverij*, *Hoeve kippetje uit Brabant*, *Koude jonge erwten soep*. The restaurant has a list of more than 135 Belgian beers, and beers are used in the kitchen. The sommelier, Jens Piferoen, is a beer expert.

Vandaele is also the partner of Greet De Keyser, the VRT's Washington correspondent, who hands over the reins in the new year to Tom Van de Weghe. Last week she told *De Morgen* she had no plans to return to Belgium.

► www.belgacafe.com

News in brief

Belgium could be heading towards a **diabetes epidemic** unless people switch to a healthier lifestyle, the chairman of the Christian Mutual health insurer, Marc Justaert, has warned. Some 500,000 people in the country currently have diabetes, or one person in 20. If the current trend continues, that figure will double within 20 years. In particular, the growth has been greatest among children aged seven to 12. "We have to exercise more and eat more healthy foods," said Justaert. "Every euro the government invests in prevention is worth two saved later on."

A man was arrested in Sint-Niklaas after **attacking the driver of another vehicle** with a string trimmer, the gardening tool also known as a weedwacker. The suspect was the passenger in a truck when another vehicle braked suddenly, and an accident was narrowly avoided. The victim was seriously injured in the leg, and it was later reported that his leg had to be amputated.

The governor of West Flanders province, Carl Decaluwé, has criticised the **pay-off for departing Club Brugge coach** Georges Leekens, reported to be between €2.5 and €3 million. "If they can pay so much, let them pay more for police support for high-risk matches," Decaluwé said. Leekens was sacked after the team suffered a string of defeats. Police presence at matches costs the city of Bruges €600,000 a year.

Belgacom rolled out its new **high-power 4G mobile network** in the main cities in Belgium last week, except Brussels. The new network allows download speeds up to 10 times faster than the 3G system, but radiation limits in the capital prohibited its immediate introduction. Belgacom said it had not yet decided on a price for 4G connection, which will be limited

for the time being to only the most advanced smartphones and laptops.

The Antwerp Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) has won second place in the **European Tourism Award** given out by the British Guild of Travel Writers. The city museum, which opened last year, was narrowly beaten by the cycle routes in the Loire Valley in France.

The MIVB last week warned passengers against the use of **earphones while in the street** after a man of 18 was killed when he walked in front of a bus in Sint-Pieters-Woluwe last week. "In Leuven you hardly ever see a cyclist or pedestrian without those things in their ears," commented Professor Jan Pauwels of the university, "and yet it's deadly dangerous".

Thirty of **Flanders' independent bookshops** have joined together in a union under the name Confituur (Jam). The booksellers aim to pool resources in order to negotiate better with publishers and government bodies. "We chose the name Confituur because jam contains all kinds of fruit and is a melting pot of colours, sizes and tastes," said Paul Luyten of the Walry bookshop in Ghent.

The **quality of rivers and streams** in Flanders has improved over the last 10 years, but they have become more vulnerable to accidental industrial discharges as a result, according to a report from the Flemish Environment Agency. The improvements are a result of investments in water treatment and efforts by companies and farmers, the report says. However, since biodiversity is also improving, any accidental release of pollutants into the water, as happened in the Scheldt in September, can have more serious consequences now.

According to the Flemish Environment Agency, fruit growers in Limburg are using **too many pesticides**, including some illegal products. The report is based on samples take of ground water, which revealed traces of Endosulfan, an insecticide banned five years ago. The farmers' union Boerenbond said the problem was limited to a few isolated cases.

Bianca Debaets, a member of the Brussels city council for CD&V, has criticised a decision not to install the **traditional giant Christmas tree** this year on the Grote Markt. The decision to replace the tree with a light installation, Debaets said, was taken to avoid offending other religions and follows the change of the name of the traditional Christmas market to "Winterpret". The ski piste on the Kunstberg will also not reappear this year, the city said.

Miet Smet, who 20 years ago as federal equal opportunities minister introduced a quota for women being admitted to the then-gendarmerie, was last week awarded the **Police Gender Prize** by Womenpol, the national organisation for women in the police. "We've come a long way since then," she said on receiving the award, "but there's still a great deal of work to do."

Museums in Flanders are no longer required to **offer entry to youth for €1**, Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege has decided. The rule was introduced four years ago by her predecessor, Bert Anciaux, to encourage young people to visit museums. According to a study carried out by Schauvliege's department, the measure has had little effect on the numbers of youth visitors. The report revealed that the content of a museum's collection or specific exhibition is a more important factor influencing numbers than the entry price.

FLANDERS TODAY

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EDITOR Lisa Bradshaw

DEPUTY EDITOR Sally Tipper

NEWS EDITOR Alan Hope

AGENDA EDITOR Robyn Boyle

ART DIRECTOR Paul Van Dooren

PREPRESS Corelio AdPro

CONTRIBUTORS Daan Bauwens, Rebecca

Benoot, Robyn Boyle, Leo Cendrowicz,

Bjorn Gabriels, Sarah Crew, Katy Desmond,

Marie Dumont, Andy Furniere, Nicholas

Hirst, Tamara Gausi, Toon Lambrechts, Mark

Latham, Katrien Lindemans, Marc Maes,

Ian Mundell, Anja Otte, Tom Peeters, Senne

Starckx, Georgio Valentino, Christophe

Verbiest, Denzil Walton

GENERAL MANAGER Hans De Loore

PUBLISHER Corelio Publishing NV

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

Gossetlaan 30 - 1702 Groot-Bijgaarden

tel 02 373 99 09 - fax 02 375 98 22

editorial@flanderstoday.eu

FREE SUBSCRIPTIONS

subscriptions@flanderstoday.eu

or sign up online at www.flanderstoday.eu

ADVERTISING

Evelyn Fregonese

02 373 83 57

advertising@flanderstoday.eu

VERANTWOORDELIJKE UITGEVER

Hans De Loore



OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

Word of mouth

A butcher, a baker and a young man who delivers honeycomb to hotels for breakfast guests. They were among the 10 food artisans celebrated last week in the demonstration kitchen at Brussels' Tour & Taxis, which hosted the Brussels artisan of the year event.

The ArtisanArt prizes are now in their eighth edition, and this year, in keeping with the city's ongoing celebration of food, Brusselsicious, the categories were restricted to food and drink. The jury, chaired by Yves Mattagne, chef of the two-Michelin-star Sea Grill restaurant, whittled it down to a shortlist of 10, among whom four received prizes.

Winners Brasserie de la Senne (pictured), light and hoppy but fruity and perfumed. They also produce beers called Taras Boulba,



Stouterik and Equinox, and by the end of the year will produce an eagerly awaited Christmas beer. Xavier Renotte, in second place, keeps beehives around the city and in Meise. The honey is not processed: Renotte simply lifts the trays of honeycomb and delivers

them to the hotels that are his clients. Honey from city bees, he assured us, has a more complex flavour than honey from country bees, ripe with the flavours of acacia, chestnut, linden and all the other plants that grow in the city.

The *foie gras* of André Slabbinck in third place has been described as the best in the world, and he's been bringing poultry and preparations like pates and terrines to the foodies of the capital for 35 years. That's probably longer than Julien Hazard, who shared third place, has been alive. His speciality is the refining of cheese, an extremely complicated art, and one that's disappearing.

Over the coming months *Flanders Today* will be visiting some of the top food artisans of Brussels in our Streekproduct series.

► www.artisanart.be

Fun and games

Game industry incubators founded in 2009 have already produced new businesses

continued from page 1

emphasises Wouters. "We have to increase our exchange of expertise and improve our image abroad through collaboration."

Digital as the new standard

The majority of Flemish game developers are already members of FLEGA, including major players, such as Larian Studios in Ghent, famous for its role-playing games like the Divinity series, and developer Visual Impact in Aalst. Most of the Flemish enterprises, though, are younger and smaller, trying to find a niche in the sector.

Playlane, for example, has been specialising in serious games, mostly for educational purposes, for five years. The company sprung from the collaboration between two friends but now has a team of 19 in Drogen, a district of Ghent. "We realised the potential that serious games offer, especially in teaching toddlers and primary school students essential skills," explains co-founder Jelle Van De Velde.

Their largest project to date is the Fundels application, a digital addition to picture books, which helps children aged three to seven acquire language, maths, writing and listening skills. Playlane designed several games now used in classes, such as geography. "The children complete a course that goes all over the world and encounter environments such as the tundra," says Van De Velde. "They also learn about the climate and sustainability." Playlane's co-founder is convinced that school lessons will become ever more digital, and quickly. "Digital is evolving into the new standard," he notes. "Children who grow up with tablets and e-readers – games are a logical part of their life."

Growing up in the incubator

In recent years, Flemish start-ups in game development have been supported through business incubators, or support programmes. In 2009, the then Flemish minister for innovation, Patricia Ceyssens, invested €750,000 in three programmes: the Gaming Incubator Creative Minds in Leuven, the GameHUB at C-mine in Genk and The Studios at the University College West Flanders (Howest) in Kortrijk.

Next year the incubator at Howest will be incorporated into the ambitious 3D Competence Centre, a high-tech centre for the school's unique Bachelor's in Digital Arts & Entertainment.



© Courtesy Triangle Factory



© Courtesy GRIN

Games can put young people through the motions of running their own businesses, such as Triangle Factory's Facebook app *MyClub* (above); GRIN makes a number of games that aid in spatial skills for hobbies or even jobs, like operating a forklift (top)

The first company to come out of The Studios at Howest was Triangle Factory. After graduating, three classmates entered the incubator in 2010. One of them was Timothy Vanherberghen, now Triangle's managing director (pictured on cover).

"At The Studios, our business plan was polished into a realistic project," explains the 28-year-old. "We established a network with other companies that later evolved into partnerships. Furthermore, we could count on the financial and judicial advice of people with experience in the business world. The access to the high-tech material of the school was also an advantage."

Vanherberghen was part of a team that reached second place at the Microsoft Imagine Cup, an international student technology competition. The

prize money, worth \$15,000 (€11,800), provided the start-up capital for the company now established in the centre of Ghent. Triangle Factory mostly focuses on games for mobile platforms and social networks.

MyClub

One of Triangle's success stories is *MyClub*, a social game on Facebook that allows players to build and manage a nightclub and organise parties on the social networks of Facebook and Hi5. For students in secondary education, Triangle's team of five employees developed a serious game that teaches users how to perform CPR with automated external defibrillators (AEDs). "They learn as they play, with a game that has fun graphics and trendy music, indicating the rhythm of the heart massage," says Vanherberghen. "They can improve their scores and

post them on Facebook." The journey for Triangle, though, has not always been "fun and games".

"In the beginning, we did not devote enough time to attracting new clients," says Vanherberghen. "Eventually, I worked full time on marketing and sales, searching for new projects." Until now, Triangle primarily produced advergames for clients, to keep the business running. "Next year, we want to finish some of our own concepts," says Vanherberghen. "The Game Fund will be a considerable support for this goal."

"Find the fun, and the job's a game"

With FLEGA, the games industry is following the example of the Flemish academic world. At the end of 2008, academics specialised in research

on games formed a Flemish chapter of the international Digital Games Research Association. The chair is Bob De Schutter, currently voluntary research associate at the University of Leuven.

"Approximately every month, we hold a meeting at a different university or university college, where researchers present their work," he explains. Collaboration is encouraged, but marketing speeches are not allowed. The presentations are in English in order to involve researchers from all over the world.

Sometimes researchers present a very concrete project, such as *Dysl-X*, a game that detects dyslexia through a test in which children have to recognise high-pitched sounds. But the group also discusses theoretical issues, such as the moral influence of games in terms of violence and sexuality, as well as technical problems like algorithms. "Because it's so interdisciplinary, everybody is both student and teacher at our forum," says De Schutter.

De Schutter is also a game developer himself. One of his projects is *Crème de la crème*, created at the GameHUB in Genk. Developed in cooperation with Unizo, the organisation that represents the self-employed, the game stimulates entrepreneurship among young people by letting them run an ice cream business. "They learn to be creative by combining different flavours, to predict the fluctuations of the market and to be friendly towards customers and employees," he explains.

It's not realistic, however, to teach users the details of, say, accountancy or legislation. "Games are not magical instruments that make everything easy." Serious games have to remain fun, says De Schutter, or they don't work. "They are only effective if students want to play them also in their free time, without obligation. To summarise our goal in Mary Poppins' words: In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and the job's a game!"

Games aren't only for the benefit of children and students. At the Group T e-Media Lab in Leuven, De Schutter assisted in the creation of *Blast from the Past*, a game that grandparents can enjoy with their grandchildren, while both players learn about each other's culture. "By answering quiz questions, each teaches the other facts relevant to them. This proves again that, contrary to a common misunderstanding, games can have a special social value."

► www.flega.be

GAMING FOR A LIVING

Apart from being entertaining or "serious", gaming is also a professional sport. In his Master's thesis at the University of Antwerp, Bram Heylen concludes that the world of competitive gaming resembles that of top-level sport.

Analysing surveys of professional athletes, like football players, and of professional gamers, he found that both groups attach similar importance to competition, status and income, while sharing the same commitment to their goals. But competitive

gamers nearly always appreciate the entertainment value and social interaction, while this is rarely true for athletes.

For his research, Heylen immersed himself in the Flemish world of competitive gaming. He questioned about 20 professional gamers, among whom only two are making a living at it. "Professionals – mostly men – devote an average of 50 hours a week to gaming," he found.

To participate in tournaments, gamers mostly have to go

abroad, where they earn larger sums of prize money. "In Flanders, there are a few big tournaments, but in Asia there is a huge cult around gaming. The best gamers are considered real stars in the media, like celebrity athletes are here," says Heylen. It's not a coincidence that the World Cyber Games, with several parallels to the Olympic Games, take place in China this year.

Region could introduce two-year Master's

Flemish education ministry talks Master's, internships and computer games

Alan Hope

Education minister Pascal Smet said last week that reports that he will not implement a two-year Master's degrees in Flemish universities due to a lack of funds are premature. "The discussion is ongoing," he said in response to press reports. "The decision will only be taken in December." According to Smet, the discussions currently taking place with academic institutions and student representatives concern the practical application of the new two-year degree. "Naturally, when we make a decision, we have to take account of the cost and the potential consequences for parents, institutions and the students themselves," he said. "That is all part of the exercise that's now going on." The two-year Master's degree is a request from the universities, which consider the one year currently dedicated to obtaining a Master's degree too short. As students are required to obtain 60 class points in one year, the quality of theses is not



An additional year of graduate school could help students write better theses, say Flemish universities

as academically high as it should be. The one-year Master's also allows no time for international exchange and lowers the worth of a degree in the eyes of countries where a Master's typically takes two years. Meanwhile, employers' organisations welcomed a call by Smet for students in technical

their curriculum. Graduates, the organisation said, were leaving school with no realistic idea of what the world of work is really like and even less knowledge about the sort of salary and benefits they might receive.

Internships at school are included in the government's new education decree, which is due to be discussed in the parliament in the spring and could come into force as early as the 2013-2014 academic year.

Educational computer games, meanwhile, could be the answer to the problem of a lack of basic financial knowledge among young people, Smet told the Flemish parliament's education committee. Asked how the question could be approached, he said that his department is planning talks with educators and the financial sector in the near future. "It could be that the games could be played outside of school so that they do not get in the way of other lessons," he suggested. (See related story, p1)

New ideas sought to reduce emissions

The government of Flanders last week introduced a package of ideas for measures aimed at helping the region reach the goal of a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. The 15% target is imposed by the EU, and no agreement has yet been reached on how the three regions in Belgium will divide the load. However, Flanders is going ahead with its own measures, minister-president Kris Peeters told the Flemish parliament, without waiting for an agreement at the federal level.

According to a recent report by the Flemish Institute for Technological Research (Vito), existing policies would bring about a small increase (0.3%) in emissions rather than a 15% decrease. Last month, the various ministers were asked to come up with additional ideas.



The plan includes further measures from mobility minister Hilde Crevits to limit emissions by improving transport infrastructure, control the growth in traffic volume and make vehicles more efficient. Housing and energy minister Freya Van den Bossch announced new energy efficiency agreements with the construction industry. And Peeters has suggestions for improvements to be made in agriculture.

Remembrance Day commemorated across Flanders

War veterans laid wreaths at the Menin Gate in Ypres on Remembrance Day last Sunday, commemorating the end of the First World War in 1918. Prince Filip took part in the ceremony in Ypres, together with Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters. In Brussels, the king and prime minister Elio di Rupo laid wreaths at the eternal flame by the Congress column.

Meanwhile, on the same day in Ostend, about 1,000 took part in Belgium's National Women's Day. Those present heard a speech from the Spanish sociologist and activist Sandra Ezquerro on the effects of the crisis on Spanish women.



Gay affection provokes violent reactions

Gay men who walk the streets of Brussels hand in hand are likely to be verbally harassed or physically assaulted, according to a film made by the VRT that followed a gay couple with a hidden camera.

Reminiscent of the recent *Femme de la rue* by film student Sofie Peeters, the VRT film showed the couple,

radio personality Sven Pichal and Michiel Vanackere, being insulted and greeted with expressions of distaste, with one man even making a throat-cutting gesture for the camera.

"The Flemish gave us dirty looks, but the verbal reactions came solely from the immigrant community," said

Pichal, who was previously the victim of homophobic violence. The film can still be viewed online at www.deredactie.be/permalink/1.1476267. Pichal is grateful to the VRT, he wrote in *De Standaard*, "for addressing what I have been hearing about for years. Colleagues, friends and family almost don't believe me anymore when I tell

them about these experiences. Now they've seen it with their own eyes." Yves Aerts, coordinator of the gay rights organisation Cavaria, said: "The street belongs to everyone, including gays and transgendered people. They also have the right to be themselves; otherwise, there's something seriously wrong."

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

€150,000

in aid approved by the Flemish government for the Red Cross in Syria to provide water and purchase an ambulance for refugees from fighting between government forces and rebels

70

speed cameras damaged in Flanders in the first eight months of this year, compared to 54 in the whole of last year. Antwerp province saw the number rise from five to 28

12 months

sentence for a 28-year-old Chinese man who used a forged diploma from the University of Leuven to try to enrol in the Catholic University College Bruges-Ostend

€0.08

price increase on a litre of beer, announced by market leader InBev, to take effect on 1 February. A crate of beer will cost about 50c more, and a *pinjtje* 2c more

112

applicants for every open vacancy for low-skilled jobs in Brussels, according to research by the University of Leuven

FIFTH COLUMN

Anja Otte

Janssens' exit

When Patrick Janssens became president of the socialist party in 1999, it was a party no-one much cared for. Years in government had left the socialists without much popular support. In the 1999 elections, they hit an all time low, with only 13%.

Janssens transformed the party, beginning with its name, which he turned into SPA, the A standing for *Anders* – different. Janssens, along with Johan Vande Lanotte, Frank Vandenbroucke and Steve Stevaert – a foursome known as the Teletubbies – turned out to be surprisingly successful, putting issues such as mobility and road safety on the agenda. By the next election in 2003, SPA attracted 24% of the vote. Shortly before, Janssens had left the role of party president to become mayor of Antwerp, where he put an end to a long era of political imbroglia. His almost non-political style hit the right note, and by 2006, Janssens succeeded in another feat: In the Antwerp elections, he halted the Vlaams Belang, deemed impossible until then. Janssens became a hero of the left.

Few people doubt his merits as the mayor of the port city, but by 2012 he had lost much of his appeal. Many considered his managerial style to be cold. Leftist and immigrant voters deserted him, turning to Groen and PvdA instead. Joining forces with the Christian-democrats was not enough to stop the tsunami caused by N-VA and its popular leader Bart De Wever last month. Janssens' Stadsljst was left with 28% of the Antwerp vote, compared to 36% for N-VA.

After the election, Janssens announced his departure but stayed on board for the city council coalition negotiations, presenting De Wever with a dual demand: The Stadsljst is to remain undivided, including both SPA and CD&V, and it will not enter a coalition without the greens. The Antwerp vote was split evenly between left and right, Janssens argued, hence both sides should be equally strong in the city government.

To De Wever, Janssens' dual demand is impossible to swallow. Not only would he prefer to leave Groen aside, if possible, he wants to get rid of SPA, too. As a result, Antwerp finds itself in a political entanglement once again.

This week, Janssens left the talks. After his attitude was described as vengeful, he did not want to become an obstacle in the formation of the city council. With him disappears a remarkable figure from Flemish politics.

Smart thinking

The innovations of young Flemish entrepreneurs have the power to change our lives

Alan Hope

Flanders is becoming a hotbed of technological innovation, from billboards that light up and replacement jawbones to smart advertising that knows where you're looking. We run down the top 10 techies to watch.

"Everybody wants to be an entrepreneur," was the headline of an article in *De Standaard* recently, reporting on a Top 10 of Flemish technology drawn up by the jobs newspaper *Vacature*, with the help of a panel of experts. The 10 companies in question were all relatively new, mainly headed by young people, and in one way or another showed innovative use of new technology that was changing, or about to change, their industry.

The companies ranged from unmanned drones used for peaceful purposes to online videos that can sell you products or send you gifts and, without exception, took something that seems commonplace – daylight, for example – and did something surprising with it. It's a paradox of innovative ideas that they immediately seem self-evident; the first thought they inspire is: "Why hasn't anyone thought of that before?"

"It gives me hope," says Pascal Cools, general manager of Flanders DC, which supports entrepreneurial activities. Cools was a member of the *Vacature* panel. "There seems to be more and more of an entrepreneurial spirit among young people. Five years ago, things were quite different. Now everyone wants to be an entrepreneur."

Ready, steady, go

A record 41,654 new businesses were started in Flanders last year, and 14.6% of the working population is now made up of business owners. "In recent times, the respect given to entrepreneurs in our society has gone up a great deal," said minister-president Kris Peeters earlier this year. "More people are coming to believe that starting your own business is a way towards a great career."

That's also the view of another of the *Vacature* panel, Professor Koen Debackere of the University of Leuven: "There is now in Flanders, much more than 10 years ago, a dynamic for innovation and technology", helped by support for entrepreneurship in universities and research centres – a fact reflected by many of the companies selected for the Top 10.

Last year, the Flemish government launched its Entrepreneurship Plan Competition, one part of which was Bizidee, offering a cash prize and mentorship to the winning start-up, which then went on to feature on the list.

The Top 10

According to the *Vacature* survey, these are Flanders' technological movers and shakers.

Gatewing, based in Ghent, designs and manufactures Unmanned Aircraft Systems for terrain mapping, using the X100 lightweight unmanned aircraft – commonly known as a drone – to gather and process digital images from the air. The X100 has been used to fly over Easter Island gathering high-resolution footage for archaeological investigations, to monitor oil spills off the island of Curaçao and to carry out quarry and mine site surveying in South Africa, Australia and Alaska.

► www.gatewing.com

Ontoforce in Brussels uses the semantic web – defined by its inventor Tim Berners-Lee as "a web of data that can be processed directly and indirectly by machines" – to process the ever-growing amounts of data on the internet. They utilise their disQover "knowledge discovery engine" to make it easier to find what you're looking for.

► www.ontoforce.com

Econation in Ghent produces LightCatcher, an intelligent light dome installed in buildings that captures and expands natural daylight into interiors, making artificial lighting largely unnecessary and saving on energy costs. It's being used at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, in sports halls in Sint-Niklaas, De Panne, Genk and Sint-Truiden, a nuclear power station in Sweden and the packing room of the Vondelmolen *peperkoek* (gingerbread) factory in Lebbeke, East Flanders.

► www.econation.be



Clockwise from top left: This jawbone created by Layerwise in Leuven was part of the first-ever implantation of its kind; EyeSee's eye tracking reveals the "hot spots" in an image or ad that a viewer pays more attention to; thanks to Lumoza's technology, billboards can emit their own light and become touch-sensitive

EyeSee in Brussels has developed eye-tracking testing that can measure exactly which parts of, say, a magazine advert you look at first and for longest, allowing designers to make ads that will get the most of your attention. The technique also works for online ads, videos, websites, brochures and direct mailings. EyeSee won €25,000 in the enterprise competition Bizidee, all of which goes back into the company.

"We reinvest all our income in our products," says Olivier Tilleuil, the 26-year-old co-founder. "The only thing is, our income fluctuates while the expenses are constant. That's why we're now looking for external capital from certain business angels."

► www.eyesees.be

Diagnostics company **Biocartis** was founded in 2007 by pharmacologist Rudi Pauwels, a board member of the Flemish Institute for Biotechnology, and has so far raised €100 million in funding. Based in Lausanne in Switzerland, Biocartis last year installed its research and production centre in Mechelen, where Pauwels previously set up Tibotec and where it plans to invest €30 million in the first three years. Biocartis is developing tools to detect multiple biomarkers for a wide range of minimal-intervention diagnostic situations, to help provide treatment tailored to the individual patient.

► www.biocartis.com

Layerwise in Leuven is a spin-off from the university founded in 2008 and specialises in metal additive manufacturing – everything from dental bridges to customised medical implants. It was involved in the recent world-first implantation of a complete new jawbone, carried out on an 83-year-old woman.

"The use of such implants yields excellent form and function, speeds up surgery and patient recovery and reduces the risk of medical complications," said the company's managing director, Dr Peter Mercelis.

► www.layerwise.com

Be-Mobile, based in Zwijnaarde, near Ghent, provides real-time traffic information for in-car and smartphone navigation systems, radio, TV, road signs and websites. It uses technology that includes travelling times, road sensors and driver feedback. Information is fed into the SmartMove Mobility Database and filtered back out to the various applications. The platform has



now aroused interest in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America as well as Europe.

► www.be-mobile.be

In the Pocket in Ghent creates mobile phone software and technology, as well as strategy and marketing, for local TV stations, brewer AB InBev, Samsonite and Corelio, publishers of *Flanders Today*. "If it is mobile, we can create it," the company website boasts, and their products include a football supporters' app for Sporza and apps for the VRT's online Videozone, food programme *Dagelijkse Kost* and cinema chain Kinepolis.

► www.inthepocket.mobi

Zentrick, based in Lochristi, East Flanders, is making a lot of noise worldwide over its development of interactive video, where viewers can click or touch areas of the video they're watching to get more information, share with social media, react or even buy the product shown without being redirected to a conventional website.

According to co-founder Frederik Neus, the technology allows for just about any interactive button to be added to a video, and the time is coming when companies will be able to customise their videos for themselves. And it's not only an advance for commercial applications. "Marketeers just said: Wow!" he told *Whiteboard* magazine. "It's so much more fun for a consumer to interact with onscreen advertising instead of being forced to just watch it. But beyond advertising, it would also be a great improvement to all kinds of e-learning."

► www.zentrick.com

Lumoza in Genk is a spin-off from the University of Hasselt and the technology institute imec in Leuven. It provides the technology for interactive advertising and packaging, including light-emitting paper, outdoor posters with their own power supply and advertising that incorporates touch and motion sensors.

"Apart from lighting, Lumoza will also concentrate on solar cells, which formed a large part of my doctoral work," says managing director Wouter Moons. "We expect within five years to have a commercial solar cell product ready that's both printable and flexible."

► www.lumoza.be

THE WEEK
IN BUSINESS**Cinema equipment**
► Barco

The Kortrijk-based video and cinema equipment producer has been selected by Hollywood's DreamWorks to supply 3D film and sound equipment for the studio's next 15 3D films.

Online media
► Immoweb

Leading Brussels-based real estate classifieds website Immoweb has been bought by the German Axel Springer media group in partnership with the General Atlantic investment fund for €127 million. The founding Rousseau family will keep a 20% interest in the business.

Second hand ► Troc

The French second-hand retail group Troc, with four locations in Brussels, has opened an outlet in Lier. The company has plans to open another outlet in West Flanders early next year.

Supermarkets
► O'Cool

The ailing O'Cool retail outlet of deep-freeze products has sold 13 of its more than 100 stores to the Carrefour supermarket group. Another 12 are said to have found new operators while a court appointed lawyer is seeking a solution for the rest of the outlets.

Transmissions
► Punch Powertrain

The Sint Truiden-based transmission equipment producer for the auto industry is said to be negotiating with General Motors to take over its Strassburg gear boxes unit, which employs some 1,000 workers. Punch Powertrain produced about 280,000 automatic gear boxes last year, exported throughout the world.

Transport
► Bombardier

The Bruges-based trains and trams production affiliate of Canada's Bombardier company will not be affected by the company's sweeping restructuring of its European operations, thanks to the multi-million euro contract signed in September to supply new trams for public transport authority De Lijn in Ghent and Antwerp.

Transport ► Norbert Dentressangle

The French road transport and logistics company has inaugurated a €20 million deep-freeze products distribution centre in Zellik, near Brussels. The new operation will provide work for some 100 employees.

Peeters accuses Ford of breach of contract

Legal options being considered, while 20,000 marched in Genk at the weekend

Alan Hope

The management of Ford Europe breached a 2010 contract with their decision to close Ford Genk, said Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters last week. According to his legal advisors, the closure is a breach of the so-called *Toekomstcontract* (Contract for the Future) signed by Ford management and unions two years ago. The contract states that, in return for a pay cut of 12%, the Genk plant was assured of the production of the successor models to the Mondeo, Galaxy and S-Max, providing work security until 2020. "It appears that the Contract for the Future is legally binding, and Ford is apparently no longer respecting the agreement," said Peeters. "We will now examine, together with the unions, what further steps we might take."

ABVV union spokesman Rhonny Champagne was less than enthusiastic about legal action against Ford. "We've said from the beginning that this is breach of contract, so the advice doesn't

surprise me," he commented. But "we are not interested in a procedure that might drag on for 10 years. We're interested in saving jobs – at Ford, if possible, otherwise elsewhere."

The ACW union stated that, while judicial steps should be explored, they offer little promise for the workers who are now losing their jobs.

Last weekend some 20,000 people travelled from across the country to march in Genk in solidarity with the Ford workforce, at an event organised by Ford unions, the city of Genk and the province of Limburg. The crowd included workers from Ford Turkey, as well as earlier victims of redundancies at Renault Vilvoorde and Opel Antwerp.

Unions said they would continue to press for workers aged 50 and over to be given a bridging pension. This week, as *Flanders Today* went to press, work was due to resume on production at Genk following a period of down-time planned months ago. At the same time,



union representatives were due to sit with management at the plant for the first time since the closure announcement to start working out a social plan for the redundancies. Last week the Flemish government, meanwhile, announced its strategic action plan for Limburg. A task force is to be headed by Herman Daems, chairman of BNP Paribas Fortis

and former director of the Flemish investment agency GIMV. Daems will head a panel of 12, whose job is to hammer out a relaunch strategy by January. The agreed strategy will then pass to the Flemish government for approval and execution, with representatives from the federal and provincial authorities, unions and employers.

World premiere for Brussels Philharmonic and Samsung

The musicians of the Brussels Philharmonic last week threw away their printed scores, perhaps for the last time, as the orchestra announced a world premiere for its cooperation with telecommunications giant Samsung. Members of the orchestra have been issued the company's Galaxy Note tablet computer, which holds up to 1,000 scores. They can annotate their own copies and receive automatic updates, including notes made by the conductor and section leaders. The launch took place amid the utmost secrecy, with members of the press being given places on the stage of Flagey amid the musicians in front of conductor Michel Tabachnik. On cue, they threw their printed scores in the air to reveal a Galaxy Note tablet on every music stand. They then proceeded to play two pieces by Wagner and Ravel, to show that the tablets not only look chic, they



Oscar winners Brussels Philharmonic switch from paper scores to tablet computers

also perform.

The software for the translation of scores from paper to screen was developed by one of

the orchestra's own players, bassoonist Jonas Coomans, and his start-up NeoScores. At present, the orchestra maintains a staff of librarians who archive paper scores, remove old annotations and copy new ones for all the various sections. In future, that sort of work will not be required. The BP estimates the savings on paper alone at about €25,000 a year.

"Brussels Philharmonic is constantly reinventing itself, both in its artistic projects and in the way it functions," said orchestra manager Gunther Broucke. "The orchestra wishes to be a pioneer on every level. And if in our hearts we cherish the past, we are looking towards the future. Culture and small business go hand in hand with technology, and we are convinced that, in the long term, this new partnership will enable our orchestra to function sustainably and more efficiently."

Flanders among most innovative

Flanders is one of the most innovative regions in Europe, according to the new Regional Innovation Scoreboard, published by the EU's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry last week. The report compared 190 regions in the EU as well as Croatia, Norway and Switzerland on a range of criteria, grouped into Enablers (percentage of the population with education to tertiary level, lifelong learning and public sector R&D expenditure), Firm Activities (private sector R&D spending, small business cooperation and patents per million population) and Outputs (technological and resource innovators, sales of new-to-market products). Flanders, together with the Brussels-Capital Region, scored high or medium-high in all categories, and both regions were among the leaders in Europe for broadband access, private sector R&D spending, patents and small businesses innovating in-house or in collaboration with others. (See related story, p5)

► www.tinyurl.com/reginnscore

Anger at Belfius redundancy plans

The federal ministers for labour, Monica De Coninck, and finance, Steven Vanackere, have demanded an explanation "as soon as possible" from the directors of Belfius, formerly known as Dexia, following an announcement last week that the bank will cut 920 jobs and replace older workers with younger staff. Unions representing workers in the banking industry warned that the announcement could herald a new wave of job losses at banks across the board, following the



catastrophic redundancies at the height of the financial crisis in 2008-2009. All of the main banks are preparing restructuring plans that involve cuts in salary costs.

Belfius argues the measures are necessary to reform the age distribution of the company's workforce, which is currently weighted towards the older demographic. That will present problems, Belfius said, when large-scale retirements leave too many vacancies to be filled. The plan only involves voluntary redundancies, the bank said.

Belfius is now owned by the government, but it is not clear what steps ministers can take if they are

not happy with the board's plans. De Coninck has already made it clear that she intends to take steps under age discrimination laws if it should emerge that an "unreasonable" number of over-50s are selected for redundancy. Pensions minister Alexander De Croo said that the plan "clashes with the plans of the government" to encourage people to work longer. "Society has done a lot for the banks," he said. "It's time the banks did something in return."

Science is cool

Young people learn about the innovations bubbling inside Flemish labs during the hands-on Science Week

Andy Furniere

Next week is the biennial Flemish Science Week, when primary and secondary students invade the region's universities, colleges and knowledge centres to get an interactive look at their research. Sunday, 25 November, meanwhile, is Science Day, which is open to the public. The whole family can watch over the shoulders of the best researchers and try a broad array of experiments. And for the first time, companies and research institutions will also be participating, to further emphasise the importance of scientific efforts. This is the 10th time the government of Flanders has organised Flemish Science Week, to stir up interest in scientific research and technological innovations among young people. Students in the last two years of primary school and last four years of secondary education can take part in activities in areas that vary from biology and chemistry to psychology and economy.

The week culminates in Science Day, when everybody of all ages is invited. A new addition this time is the chance to visit enterprises such as telecommunication company Alcatel-Lucent Bell and research institutions. Cultural centres such as museums and libraries will also be organising special activities. The event is coordinated by Technopolis, the hands-on science and technology centre in Mechelen. You can choose from 250 tours, workshops, interactive events, demonstrations, lectures and exhibitions at 75 locations in Flanders. We picked a few of our favourites to make your selection a little easier.

Ghent

At music centre **De Bijloke**, the I-Brain & Ageing festival deals with dementia through debates, theatre



The public can get up close and personal with the latest innovations on Science Day

and exhibitions. There are workshops on movement exercises that help to prevent dementia, such as Bothmer gymnastics. It may not sound too appealing, but a live brain dissection will show how the ageing process changes our brain. It's organised by Breinwijzer, an independent organisation working on the social impact of neurosciences.

During the festival **Waar of niet waar?** (True or False?) at Vooruit cultural centre researchers from Ghent's universities and colleges answer questions such as: Is a DNA analysis always reliable? Is humour scientifically understandable? Special guests are philosopher Johan Braeckman, playwright Chokri Ben Chikha and a group of musical robots. Comedy group The Lunatics closes the festival.

Antwerp

During Science Week, the **MAS city museum** becomes a laboratory for experimental activities in Antwerp. Rockets are launched on water

and air, while a submarine in an aquarium demonstrates Archimedes' principle of buoyancy. Close by, at **Alcatel-Lucent Bell** near Central Station, you can immerse yourself in both the past and future of telecommunication: from Alexander Bell's first invention to innovations such as 4G mobile communication and "clouds".

Brussels

In the spheres of the **Atomium** in Brussels, you can introduce your toddler to Probogotchi, the hugging robot, and then let him or her play on the interactive dance floor. Try out the Dancewall and Kickers games, which you control with your own body; specialists from developer SoftKinetic will explain how it works. Workshops and a science show also demonstrate the wonders of photonics, or light technology.

Leuven

At **HistarUZ**, the museum housing the archive of the University Hospital Leuven, youngsters can develop

their own medicines while you go back in time with a tour of historical medical devices. The innovative biopharmaceutical company **ThromboGenics** shows how medicines are created and prepared for use.

Don't forget to stop by the University of Leuven's engineering science faculty for a badminton game against Jada, the Flanders Mechatronics Technology Centre's **sporty robot**. Apart from a sparring partner, Jada is also a test platform for the newest robot technology.

West Flanders

Katho, the University College of South-West Flanders, explains on its Roeselare campus complex concepts such as the Higgs particle, "data mining" and hydrogen fuel cells, but there also is a **"cookies test"** and the opportunity to create your own ice cream in the game Frutti Frisco. Learn how iPads can improve both the care sector and gym lessons at school.

In Bruges, visit the high-tech research vessel of the **Flemish Marine Institute**.

Limburg

In Diepenbeek, the Xios university college hosts the XChange Xperience: a day full of science with an X-factor. You can **print your own head** in 3D and programme your own app for a smartphone. Also in Diepenbeek, the University of Hasselt sets up a **"heart track"**, where simple tests and experienced health coaches determine your risk of heart and vascular diseases.

At the **Cosmodrome**, a planetarium and observatory in Genk, attend the new show **Astronaut**, where kids can earn their astronaut diploma with workshops such as ISS-fitness.

► www.wetenschapswEEK.be

THE WEEK IN SCI & ED

Ten nominees for this year's **Flemish Dissertation Award** have been selected from 297 entries. Among them are industrial engineers, jurists, an economic scientist and communication scientist. On 28 November, the jury will decide on the shortlist of five nominees, and the winner of the €2,500 prize will be announced on 18 December at a ceremony in Ghent.

Three Flemish companies that **specialise in clean technology** – Waterleu, Ducatt and Emrol – are finalists for the Global Top 30 Later Stage Award 2012 organised by the Global Cleantech Cluster Association. Thirty companies were chosen from a list of about 4,000 international enterprises. Finalists are being examined by a jury of 28 investors and entrepreneurs, and the winner will be announced this week.

More than half of Flemish graduates accept a **job for which they are overqualified**, and it takes up to a decade before they reach a position matching the level of their diploma. Those are the conclusions of research by Ghent University and Brussels University College. The principal reason is the nine-month waiting period before graduates are entitled to unemployment benefits and the stigma attached to unemployment. The researchers advise graduates to be more patient, as simulations show that half of all graduates who participated in the project would have found a much better job in about three more months' time.

In the Brussels commune of Etterbeek, the new nursery school of the Flemish Community education network GO! is the **first passive school** in a pilot project. Twenty-three more energy-efficient schools will be built in the region through this project, which was launched by the government of Flanders in 2007. In Etterbeek, 10 classrooms were built on the former castle domain of the well-known Anspach family.

Flemish education minister Pascal Smet is organising a programme that helps students from the fifth year of secondary education to **choose what to study in higher education**. A more conscious study choice should improve the pass rate in the first year of university, which is currently about 40%. Before finishing secondary education, students should also take a non-binding orientation test. The minister hopes to introduce the programme in the next academic year. **AF**

Q&A

Sophie Van Meerbeek is director of the Dutch department at the British School of Brussels (BSB) in Tervuren, which last year launched compulsory Dutch lessons for primary school students

Are you specifically a language teacher?

I am a language teacher and started at BSB with French and Spanish. Later, I added German, but now I mainly teach Dutch. Last year we launched the primary school lessons, and I became the coordinator of the Dutch department in both the primary and secondary schools.

Are you a native Dutch speaker?

Yes, I was born and raised in Antwerp. But my father is a German speaker, so I was raised bilingual Dutch-German.

Secondary students can take Dutch classes at BSB if they want. Why did you make Dutch lessons for primary school

students compulsory?

French was, and still is, compulsory, and we thought they should also have the opportunity to learn Dutch. We are in Tervuren, a Dutch-speaking city. We thought it was very important to teach them the local language and to make them interested in the local community. That's our goal, to be integrated into the community and not function as an international island. We take them to the local market, for example, and we do projects with local Flemish schools. Language is a very important bridge to integration.

Is Dutch compulsory for secondary school students?

No, but because they now have it in primary school, they will be



more inclined to continue it later in secondary school.

How does teaching the younger kids compare with teaching the older kids?

It's a big difference! In primary school, I use a lot of songs, rhymes and games. We do some drama. It's much livelier. They love the subject. It is based on communication, so the grammar is not important at this point. But we also have a section for native or near-native speakers of Dutch. If the language is spoken at home by one or both parents, but the children have never been in the Flemish school system, they are not familiar with reading or writing the language. So they get extra lessons, and we teach them grammar. **Interview by Lisa Bradshaw**

► www.britishschool.be

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Taste the difference

Sustainability and community are at the heart of Ghent's new Eetcafé Toreke

Marijke Maes

When you enter Eetcafé Toreke, your attention is immediately drawn to the large cupboards at the back. They seem to come straight from an expensive shop, but in fact the whole interior of Eetcafé Toreke is made from recycled materials. It's called *recupdesign* and is just one example of the philosophy of sustainability to which Toreke adheres.

“Eetcafé Toreke is a cafe and restaurant with a social aspect,” says its manager Ann Homblé. “This doesn't only mean that we keep our prices low, but also that people from the lowest income group can eat here at a reduced rate.”



Necati and his colleagues whip up a healthy meal at Eetcafé Toreke in Ghent's Rabot district

Toreke is in the Rabot neighbourhood of Ghent, and this location is no coincidence. It's one of the city's poorest neighbourhoods – densely populated, very multicultural and not well known to the general public.

That's why Ghent City Council launched a city development project here called Bruggen naar Rabot (Bridges to Rabot), of which Toreke is one aspect. “To make sure Toreke was a place

“I made sure I had a very diverse group, with men and women, and many different cultures”

everyone was comfortable with, we involved the inhabitants of Rabot,” Homblé continues. “We learned that many groups, like Turkish women, or young Flemish people, didn't feel they have a place to gather here or somewhere to have a healthy and affordable meal.”

Jobs for the neighbours

With financial assistance from the city and the Flemish Community, Toreke opened a few weeks ago. At the start of the year, Homblé began looking right in the neighbourhood for staff. Again, this fulfilled a need in the neighbourhood, which has higher than average numbers of unemployed and unskilled



Inside Eetcafé Toreke, salvaged wooden cupboards and dressers are functional as well as eye-catching

residents.

“There are 10 people on the team now and three volunteers, all locals,” Homblé says. “That was very important for us. Besides that, I made sure I had a very diverse group, with men and women, and many different cultures. But the most important thing was that they had to have a sense of humour. A restaurant can be very stressful, and, in my experience, someone who

this job,” he tells me. “I get the chance to work in a real restaurant. I assist the chef here, and I have already learned a lot; later I want to be a chef myself. The colleagues here are great; we are a good team.”

A healthy alternative

So Eetcafé Toreke provides a meeting place for the people of Rabot and gives locals much-needed employment experience. But, this being Flanders, the most important aspect of a restaurant – food – is not forgotten. Here also, Toreke plays the sustainability card, serving healthy, locally grown produce, often organic or Fair Trade. The menu changes every week and always consists of three dishes: meat, fish and a vegetarian option.

“The short chain is very important to us,” Homblé confirms. “We buy from local farmers. We also work with the urban farm at the Gasmetersite, another city development project. This way we also give another stimulus to the neighbourhood.”

Two months after opening, Eetcafé is immensely popular, both with the locals for whom it was intended and other *Gentenaars* who are venturing in from other parts of the city, curious to see this new initiative. The airy, open interior and original furnishings are appealing to the hipster soul of the city and might just succeed in bringing these divergent sides together.

Eetcafé Toreke is open for lunch from Tuesday to Friday and dinner on Friday and Saturday. A special tearoom is open on Tuesdays in the afternoon. It also has meeting rooms for hire

► www.eetcafetoreke.be

JAMMING

As part of Week van de Smaak, or Week of Taste, Toreke is holding a Jam Contest on 17 November from 14.00 to 17.00. Bring along your homemade jam to be judged by experts, including Karen Depoorter of jam maker Callas.



MONEY TALKS



Toreke is Rabot's own currency. It was introduced in 2010 and takes its name, as does the restaurant, from the Rabot Towers (Rabottorens), which used to be one of Ghent's fortified gates, defending it from external threats in the middle ages. Pretty remnants of the gate remain on the Lieve canal, and the name was retained for the neighbourhood that developed here beyond the borders of Ghent during the Industrial Revolution. Residents earn *torekes* by doing something for the community, such as cleaning the streets, putting flowers on their windowsill or volunteering for one of the social projects in the neighbourhood. For this, they are paid in

torekes, which they can use to pay for household goods, food or services at local shops and suppliers, including meals at Eetcafé Toreke.

One of the projects that hands out *torekes* is the city farm at the Gasmetersite. On an old industrial site, the non-profit group Samenlevingsopbouw (Community Development) started a city farm where inhabitants work together growing vegetables. They can earn *torekes* to eat at Eetcafé Toreke, which in its turn buys its vegetables from the farm with *torekes*. The project is working remarkably well for many low-income residents of the area.

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Christian Hornbostel

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Big in Japan

A Flemish cultural wind is blowing through Japan, thanks to the Flanders Centre in Osaka

Daan Bauwens

Osaka, Japan is at the other end of the world, and yet billboards of the Flemish movie *Hasta la vista* adorn virtually every subway station in this bustling metropolis. Who is behind this? The Flanders Centre is, led by Bernard Catrysse.



Fostering interaction: Bernard Catrysse has been running Flanders Centre for nearly 20 years

ever to be sent out by Flanders. But he said goodbye to diplomacy in 1993 to become the director of the centre, which had been operating at that point for 18 years. With a current team of only three, Catrysse is investing all his energy in the fruitful cultural exchange between Japan and Flanders.

"It is not our intention to merely exhibit or promote the culture," says Catrysse. "We don't want to put our artists on a stage, ask for applause and put them back on the plane. No, we want to foster interaction, in the same way the Japanese do. We see ourselves as an organisation embedded between the other Japanese organisations."

The centre, for example, co-founded the Osaka European Film Festival in 1994. Flemish director Stijn Coninx cut the ribbon, and his Oscar-nominated *Daens* was the opening

film. "At that time, there were six bigger film festivals in Kansai, a region that comprises about 25 million people. We are the only one that survived the economic woes of the past two decades," says Catrysse. On the first day of this year's festival, the Osaka audience will be treated to *Hasta la vista* – hence all those posters. Flemish director Geoffrey Enthoven's award-winning film is about being disabled and longing to have sex. "A movie like this will generate discussion among the audience," says Catrysse. "In Japan, it's not common for people to easily engage in a discussion and express their personal opinions. But Japan is evolving and has to connect with the outside world. It's our mission to make that possible through culture."

Capturing Europe's diversity

At the same time, the film festival aims to represent Europe's diversity through its choice of movies. "Even though Japan is evolving rapidly, its culture remains one of the most homogeneous in the world," explains Catrysse. "By showing European movies that raise social issues, the Japanese public sees that the answer to those problems can be very nuanced. By presenting the cultural patchwork in Europe, we can show that a Norwegian reacts differently to a certain problem than an Italian does. That is the richness of Europe, and it's very captivating for the Japanese."

While the film festival is preparing to get started on 22 November, Tokyo's Somp Museum of Art is showcasing a large exhibition of work by Flemish surrealist James Ensor. Next year, Rubens' work will travel from Kitakyushu to Niigata. At the same time, the centre has its own exhibition space at the International House in Osaka focusing entirely on contemporary Flemish photography. Currently



The Japanese learn about Flemish arts, culture and even sport at Osaka's Flanders Centre

it is showing the group exhibition *Imagine* by four young photographers from Ghent's arts academy.

Next up will be an exhibition by Limburg-born, Osaka-based photographer Rob Walbers, while earlier this year, photographer Michiel Hendryckx was artist-in-residence for six weeks. Posters show previous Japanese collaborations with Rosas, Jan Fabre, Alain Platel, Fumiyo Ikeda and Benjamin Verdonck.

Catrysse: "There are Japanese dancers now at the Ghent-based Les Ballets C de la B; there's a fresh generation of Japanese fashion designers who graduated from Antwerp's Fine Arts Academy and now are among the top designers in Japan; there are Japanese conductors leading Flemish orchestras. The situation has evolved quite a lot; there is a true cultural interaction

between equal partners. That's where an organisation such as ours can be meaningful: facilitating communication, bringing parties together, co-organising and even fundraising for the really interesting proposals."

Taking culture where it's needed

What's more, the Flanders Centre is the only place in Japan where exams for obtaining an official Dutch language certificate can be taken, where Dutch is taught to advanced speakers and Japanese-Dutch translators are trained.

After the tsunami and earthquake hit the Tohoku region last year, the centre decided to focus on the north, a region where it had hardly been active in its 37 years. Mainly as a cultural relief effort, it organised a tour involving Aalst's men and

boys choir Cantate Domino, took classical guitarist Jan Depreter to halls and schools and invited people to come out of their houses to dance with Brussels-based UNIK.

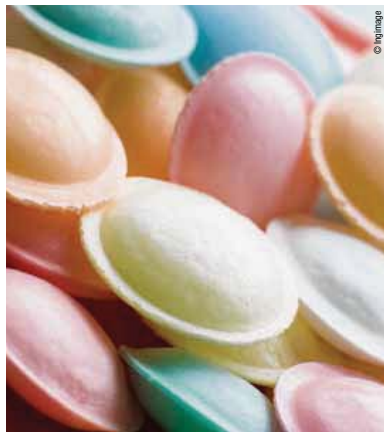
"We immediately adjusted our programme after the disaster," says Catrysse. "Of course there was a material shortage, but more than this, there was a moral and cultural shortage. People were living in shacks, community life was gone, they were locked inside their houses. Even though it is a drop in the ocean, we decided to send cultural projects to the affected areas."

Charmed by the simple beauty of Japan and still bewildered by its natural politeness, Catrysse married, set up home, had children and will probably stay here, he says, forever.

► www.creativeflanders.com

STREEKPRODUCT SERIES

Alan Hope



Zure ouwels

What's the difference between a flying saucer and a communion wafer? No, it's not a joke, it's the question that was facing the Belgica company of Antwerp in the late 1940s. As church attendances were dwindling, so was the demand for their communion wafers.

In 1951, they came up with a solution even more fantastical than the doctrine of transubstantiation: *zure ouwels*, a product which just recently was given the seal of approval by the Flemish government's agricultural marketing agency Vlam as a streekproduct, or authentic regional product.

Ouwel is an old word meaning "edible paper". It's made of potato starch, or sometimes rice starch, and is widely used as a base for cakes and other products. Belgica

used it to produce communion wafers. To save the company, some innovative employee came up with the idea of sticking two circles together and injecting a sour sherbet inside. Thus was created the sweet sometimes known irreverently as "hosts", and better known in the English-speaking world as flying saucers.

Confectionery in Belgium is a huge industry, worth about €1.56 billion a year in sales, producing 65,500 tonnes a year of sweets of all sorts and employing 6,600 people.

The twinning of sherbet and edible paper is a perfect match, as it happens. The *ouwel* is small enough to eat whole (just like a communion host), and the paper dissolves, giving a delayed release to the fizzy sherbet – made of the crystalline tartaric acid, a

compound occurring naturally in bananas, grapes and wine.

In 1992, Belgica and the other producer of *zure ouwels*, Confiserie Servais, were taken over by Astra Sweets, based in Turnhout, which also makes marshmallows, gums and liquorice. They're now the sole Flemish producer of the sweet, which they sell to the world. You'll find them anywhere sweets are sold – often sold in bulk but also in packages in supermarkets. They'll probably never be taken up by the world of gastronomy in the way that *cuberdons* have been in recent times, but the look on a child's face when they try one will provide a wow-factor of which most chefs can only dream.

► www.streekproduct.be



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ING 

Mother courage

The real Ellen Schoenaerts stands up with the release of an extraordinary debut album

Christophe Verbiest

I first got to know Ellen Schoenaerts (30) at the end of the previous decade, when she was writing the lyrics for her then boyfriend Tom Pintens. The latter, a veteran of the Antwerp music scene, with credentials that include a long stint in Zita Swoon, had always had sung in English. After accepting a gig where he needed to sing in Dutch, he panicked. But Schoenaerts helped him out, and in the end, wrote the lyrics for three of his albums.

At that point, Schoenaerts had mainly worked as an actress – like her famous grandfather, the late Julien Schoenaerts, and her uncle, the now famous Matthias Schoenaerts. She also had a project with Marianne Loots, a combination of comedy and music. But now Schoenaerts has brushed all those things aside. “It’s been a long quest, and very interesting for that matter, but I never had the feeling: This is what I want to do for the rest of my life,” she says. “Three, four years ago I felt I had to fully commit to music, because doing all the other things had made me unhappy. Finally the real Ellen is coming to the surface.”

That seems to be the right decision



The Ellen Schoenaerts Kwartet are (from left): Ephraim Cielens, Liesa Van der Aa, Ellen Schoenaerts and Tijs Delbeke

if you listen to her amazing debut album *Feiten* (Facts). Her lyrics are extremely frank without being exhibitionistic. It’s not difficult to find traces of her break-up with Pintens; she muses about her six-year-old son Oliver. Musically, she draws heavily on both chanson (Jacques Brel clearly springs to mind) and adventurous rock. Folk, chamber music and avant-garde have also influenced the songs.

No woman is an island

Schoenaerts, who plays a CD release concert in Antwerp on 2 December, worked on the album for two years. “I’m hysterically perfectionist,” she confides. “Some songs have been reworked five times.” She has no

difficulty pointing out the reason for this endless labour. “The songs started out live. We have been playing them live a lot, but it wasn’t simple to come up with versions that worked well on record.”

Three years ago, when she started playing live under her own name, Schoenaerts told me that playing concerts was far more important than making an album. “I discovered that I do like recording. It’s a very stressful, fierce and intense process. But playing live is still extremely important: It makes me happy.” Surprisingly, the album is released under the name of the Ellen Schoenaerts Kwartet. “I haven’t done it alone,” she points out. “I wanted

to honour the great musicians with whom I work. They lift me up, and I respect them very deeply.” Those other musicians are the multi-instrumentalists Liesa Van der Aa, Tijs Delbeke and Ephraim Cielens. Together with producer Simon Lenski, they are responsible for the adventurous arrangements.

Many other musicians also passed by the studio. Bass player Hannes d’Hoine has even become a permanent member of Schoenaerts’ band. “Live, the line-up often alters, since the musicians have other obligations. In the past, I adapted the name to the line-up of each concert: septet, trio, etc. But I’ve decided to stick to quartet. It’s a beautiful and stylish name.”

Singing in Dutch

Schoenaerts sings in Dutch, still exceptional for a Flemish artist. “It’s

certainly no statement,” she confides. “I sing in Dutch because that’s my mother tongue. I don’t have to think about it. It happens spontaneously. But I feel more inspired by French chanson or other international artists. My heroes are Jacques Brel, Serge Gainsbourg, Rufus Wainwright and PJ Harvey. In Flanders, I love Zita Swoon, Gregory Frateur and DAAU.” The album is called *Feiten..*, with a full stop at the end. “It’s a sign of vigour and determination. I’m quite assertive,” she laughs. “Well, I do change my mind a lot, but always very assertively.”

She pauses. “I hate false modesty. It’s important for an artist to take risks and to be, in life as well as in art, courageous. And if you fail, so be it. It’s better to fail courageously than to succeed moderately. There’s a streak of megalomania in me.”

2 DECEMBER, 20.30

Monty

Montignystraat 3, Antwerpen

► www.radicalduke.com

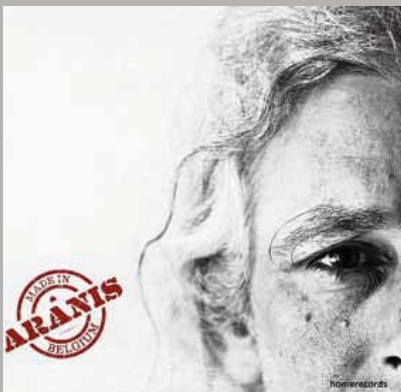
MUSIC REVIEWS

Aranis

Made in Belgium • Home

For a decade now, Aranis have been combining chamber music with elements from rock, jazz and avant-garde. For their sixth album, *Made in Belgium*, they asked 10 Belgian composers (and their own Joris Van Vinckenroye) to write a new composition. Playful or absorbing, compelling or touching, the 12 tracks are quite diverse, but the intense performance of the six members (violin, accordion, guitar, piano, double bass, flute) binds them together to a beautiful album. Wim Mertens, Jan Kuijken, Geert Waegeman and Daniel Denis from Univers Zero are among the contributing composers.

► www.aranis.be



The Bony King of Nowhere

The Bony King of Nowhere • [PIAS]

“I am a travelling man on the road,” sings The Bony King of Nowhere on his third, eponymously titled album.

Some of the tunes were written when The Bony King (otherwise known as Bram Vanparys) was making a long trip through Italy. Unsurprisingly, wandering as a metaphor for soul searching is an important theme. With the exception of a few unobtrusive guest contributions, Vanparys recorded the album on his own in the Walloon hamlet of Mirwart with only an acoustic guitar. The young Bob Dylan clearly is a point of reference for *The Bony King of Nowhere*, as is Townes Van Zandt. It’s a nice collection of songs, though not quite as impressive as his previous album *Eleonore*.

► www.thebonykingofnowhere.be

Blackie & The Oohos

Song for the Two Sisters • Unday Sessions

This is the second album by the fivesome centred around the sisters Loesje and Martha Maieu. Earlier this year, the band made a new soundtrack for *Repulsion*, the spooky 1965 thriller by Roman Polanski. Blackie & The Oohos are, in any case, masters at creating a slightly sinister atmosphere. Their pop noir with folksy tinges is soberly arranged, the proverbial exception “When Light Falls in” also being less interesting. The rest, though, is a must if you like dreamy, fragile pop songs with a dark edge.

► www.myspace.com/blackietheoohos

Dez Mona

A Gentleman’s Agreement • 62TV

After a sober debut album, Antwerp sextet Dez Mona opted for baroque melodrama and sinister jazz on their next two records. Last year they released a contemporary opera. Now on their fifth album, *A Gentleman’s Agreement*, they’re trying to rock and have added a guitarist to the line-up. Still, they stay immediately recognisable, thanks to the torch-song voice of Gregory Frateur. They again exhibit a penchant for melodrama, but the most intimate song (“Fools’ Day”) is the highlight of the album. cv

► www.dezmona.com

Family concert by Bruocsella Symphony Orchestra

Experience the fun in a toymaker’s cottage when a young boy and girl encounter the notorious winter sprite, Frost, and the Winter Queen in the Bruocsella Symphony Orchestra’s Musical Winter Wonderland on 24 and 25 November. The concert will weave together a magical winter tale with lively orchestral music, songs and dance.

You will even learn a few things about a symphony orchestra. During the interval is an opportunity to meet members of the orchestra and to try out their instruments. Three performances are presented in three different languages: English, Dutch and French.

This annual event at the Sint-Pieters-Woluwe culture centre is very popular, so booking now is highly recommended. Anna Jenkinson

► www.bso-orchestra.be



KVS takes on anti-urban sentiments

Tok Toc Knock

Tom Peeters

Where we live is who we are. The physical environment, particularly in our own neighbourhoods, has an unmistakable influence on our daily routines and mood. By taking a closer look at three Brussels City quarters, the new Tok Toc Knock festival focuses on urban architecture.

In close cooperation with local partners and residents, the capital's Flemish theatre KVS presents performances, concerts, exhibits, and art installations on location. Next year they will visit Saint-Josse-ten-Noode and the European district, but the festival kicks off this weekend in the social housing blocks of Cité Modèle in Laeken.

Right now at Cité Modèle, which was built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, only 15% of residents have a job. "It's important to understand that at the time Cité Modèle was built that term didn't have the meaning it has today," says Willy

Thomas, coordinator of the festival. "Unemployment was negligible at the time. Social housing was for low-income workers."

But due to the demographic boom and the growing gap between rich and poor, affordable housing has become a major challenge. "In Brussels alone, 38,000 families are waiting for housing."

At the same time, an anti-urban sentiment resonates, particularly in outlying areas, as the latest local elections can testify. "Brussels always emerges as the prime culprit," says Thomas. "Tok Toc Knock allows us to immerse ourselves in the city and get to grips with its complex reality, like curious travellers who, armed with an open mind and a sense of nuance, go against the current of the anti-urban movement."

To reach a better understanding between the city and the suburbs, KVS has arranged debates with renowned experts, such as Dr Eric Coryn of the Department of



geography at the Free University of Brussels (VUB).

But the artists and architects, put in the heart of the quarters they research, will also provoke discussion. Take, for instance, actors Nico Sturm and David Dermez in *Skieven*, a new comedy about a visionary architect and a resident.

Written by Thomas Gunzig, the same Brussels author who gave us the monologue about the legendary football trainer Raymond Goethals, it perfectly suits the location.

Or check out the *All Problems Can Never Be Solved* garage exhibition, the result of a thorough cooperation between artists, architects and

residents, which started last April after scenographer Jozef Wouters was given the use of apartment 7E in Block 8 of Cité Modèle. From there, he could first personally experience how impersonal his new "home" was.

Wouters decided to establish himself as an "architect" on the estate, setting up a "Bureau des Architectes" in his apartment. At the same time, a large information board was installed showing an original plan by the area's real architect, Renaat Braem. The never-executed project for a 1,600 square-metre square that was intended as a meeting and discussion place was inspired by the Arabic *souq* and Greek *agora*.

It turned out to be a strong metaphor for what could have been, and maybe should have been, but it also triggered the imagination of the residents – exactly what KVS is trying to reach with this extraordinary residency.

17 November to 2 December | Cité Modèle, Robijndreef, Laeken | www.kvs.be

CONCERT

Ian Anderson

Scotsman Ian Anderson is often credited as progressive rock's first flautist, although a teenaged Peter Gabriel was also fronting Genesis with flute in hand at the same time that Anderson's Jethro Tull rose to prominence. Genesis, of course, eventually went pop, and Gabriel went into the stratosphere with a string of experimental solo albums. Jethro Tull remained eternally faithful to "prog". The Tull sound is a theatrical hybrid of blues rock, classical and Celtic music. The band's breakthrough 1972 concept album *Thick as a Brick* is one of those that increases its stature with time. These are the albums that audiences like to revisit after certain round intervals. So Anderson announced a 40th anniversary tour, during which he and a new band of musicians will perform *Brick* from start to finish, a logical proposition since the album consists – in true prog rock style – of a single track lasting 45 minutes. Anderson's recently composed sequel suite *Thick as a Brick 2* fills out the evening. **Georgio Valentino**



16 November, 20.00 | Cirque Royal, Brussels | www.cirque-royal.org

MORE CONCERTS THIS WEEK

Across Flanders

The Bony King of Nowhere: Young *Gentenaar* Bram Vanparys – otherwise known as The Bony King of Nowhere – is touring Flanders in support of his new eponymously titled album

Until MAR 21 2013 at venues across Flanders

www.thebonykingofnowhere.be

Antwerp

Don McLean: Forty years after the release of one of the most iconic albums in American folk history, the now 67-year-old Don McLean is back on tour with his renowned classics

NOV 16 20.30 at De Roma, Turnhoutsebaan 286

www.deroma.be

PERFORMANCE

Les SlovaKs

"New traditional dance" is how this group of Slovakian dancers describes its individual brand of choreography. The five dancers, who live and work in Belgium, formed their own company after meeting up at Brussels dance school P.A.R.T.S. Following on previous productions *Opening Night* and *Journey Home*, they now launch their latest work, which more than ever uses music by long-time collaborator Simon Thierée as a starting point. The musician wrote a new composition for a 40-member string orchestra from which *Fragments* was created. Retro-pop music by 1950s Slovak singer Melania Ollaryova was added to extend the work and deliver the company's trademark fusion of folklore and modernity. The resulting tragi-comedy is energetic, expressive and not without a touch of humour. **Sarah Crew**



16-18 November | Kaaitheater, Brussels | www.kaaitheater.be

MORE PERFORMANCES THIS WEEK

Antwerp

Graphicology: Illustrator and jazz-lover Philip Paquet had six composers write a soundtrack to his drawings, resulting in a visual jazz score. For this unique event, his artwork will be projected onto a large screen while the Brussels Jazz Orchestra (Oscar winner, best original soundtrack for *The Artist*) performs live on stage

NOV 17 20.30 at CC Luchtbalchouwburg, Columbiestraat 8A

www.ccluchtbal.be

Ranst

Onpaardans (Un-Partner Dance): Linda and Peter have been separated for several months. When they meet at their old flat to tie up some loose ends, their innocent conversation quickly turns into a cat-and-mouse game in this new production by EWT Theater (in Dutch)

Until NOV 24 at Ambelhuis, Ambelweg 2

www.kabatoen.be

FOOD & DRINK

Brussels Chocolate Week

Belgium has long been recognized as Europe's pre-eminent chocolatier. Brussels alone accommodates 32 producers and more than 250 retail shops. This year the city and its chocolate industry have joined forces to host the inaugural edition of Brussels Chocolate Week. All the big names are on board: Neuhaus, Godiva, Galler, Leonidas, Marcolini, the list goes on. The Chocolate Pass is your ticket to tastings at iconic shops across the city. Several Brussels eateries, including chef Alexandre Masson's restaurant atop the Atomium, have also risen to the challenge, offering chocolate-themed cuisine. The Cocoa and Chocolate Museum offers several themed walks and a weekend "chocolate rally". There are also workshops where kids and adults can learn how chocolate (and artisanal ice cream!) is made. Other events include the Afterwork Choco Late Night, a sort of happy hour for the sweet of tooth. **6V**



19-25 November | Across Brussels

► www.brusselicious.be

MORE FOOD & DRINK THIS WEEK

Brussels

Fritkot Festival: VisitBrussels is busy distributing empty french fry cones at various locations across the city. Take yours to a participating *frituur* and have it filled for the sum of €1 (sauces are extra). See website for the list of cone-filling sites

Until DEC 4 across Brussels

► www.tinyurl.com/fritkotfestival

JetteSetFoodies: The idea behind JetteSetFoodies is to use the widely popular secret restaurant concept as a way of bring working professionals together. This second networking event is a unique new way to meet like-minded people over an authentic Mexican menu

NOV 15 20.00-23.00 at JetteSetFoodies, Paul Michielsstraat 71, Brussels

► www.cnfconsulting.com

VISUAL ARTS

Unexposed

The government of Iran is as bellicose as ever, but it's clear by now that the ayatollahs don't speak for the people. Iranians at home are ever-more outspoken about their desire for change, including a much-needed reset of foreign relations. They've been building cultural bridges here in Europe, too, and in the process have given us glimpses of a vibrant culture that has been obscured by geo-political friction since 1979. The Belgian non-profit Art Cantara has chosen 40 artists, with an emphasis on women artists, who live and work in Iran, and asked them to contribute two pieces from their oeuvre. The free exhibition shows off the stylistic breadth of contemporary Iranian art. After its inauguration in Brussels, *Unexposed* is bound for Athens, Warsaw and beyond. **6V**



Until 25 December

Tour and Taxis, Brussels

► www.tour-taxis.com

MORE VISUAL ARTS THIS WEEK

Bruges

Snapshot 4: Sint-Sebastiaan Through the Lens of Jimmy Kets: The celebrated Flemish photographer gives a surprising glimpse of the people behind Bruges' oldest bow-and-arrow shooting community

Until JAN 13 at Gezellemuseum, Rolweg 64

► www.tinyurl.com/jimmykets

Brussels

BU Culture Night: Annual Boston University event highlighting the work of six visual artists working with watercolours and oils, photographs, glass, bronze sculpture, engraving, drawings and mixed media. Also includes live music, a magician, food and drink

NOV 17 20.00 at BU Campus, Triomflaan 1748

► Register at brussels@bu.edu

Ghent

3x Collection: Three exhibitions highlighting specific aspects of the collection of the city's Fine Arts Museum: 17th-century Antwerp artist Grapheus, who went down in history as the model for paintings by Jacob Jordaens, Ghent-born artist Théo Van Rysselberghe's many paintings, drawings, graphic works and books, plus "The Art of Donating", a look at the role gifts and legacies have played in the museum's collection over the years

Until DEC 16 at MSK Gent, Citadelpark

► www.mskgent.be

DUSK TIL DAWN

Katrien Lindemans

Kissinger

24 November, from 21.00

No, not the political scientist and former National Security Advisor, but Kissinger in Antwerp, a unique clubbing experience. On Saturday, 24 November, the party night takes over Antwerp's Museum of Contemporary Art (M HKA) to celebrate its third birthday.

Spread over different rooms with mysterious-sounding names, Kissinger features beats, new wave, disco, soul and more. It's a recipe for success, created by promoter Gregorio Willems (or Gory, as people tend to call him). Kissinger was born in Antwerp, where it moves around to different venues. This year, Gory also took his party concept to New York and Berlin, and he'd love to introduce Kissinger to other cities such as Paris and Dresden.

But this month, Antwerp is the place to be. In the '80s/Club Modorer Room, Leuven new wave band The Neon Judgment will take you back to 30 years ago. DJ Dikke Ronny, an icon of Brussels' rock hall Ancienne Belgique will be there, too. Dutch television station Avro is sending their Toppop VJs for an unseen disco DJ show, and Monica Electronica, the Dutch elektro queen completes the line-up.

Soul lovers need to be at the Your Hip Soul Will Be Funked room for Groove Merchant and Chubby Bee. At the On Beat Stage, you'll be treated to some German and local beats provided by Nick Höppner (pictured), Berghain, Jan Van Biesen, Rim K and many more. Wear your best blue velvet, meanwhile, to the David Lynch room, which hosts, among others, Eppo Janssen, Luc Van Acker, Katia Vlerick and Stefke Funk.

Also on the agenda – special dance acts by The Kiss Ballet and Kika Da Silva.

Sound like a party of which you, too, want to be a part? Get your tickets at the website for €20, or €100 for VIP treatment. At the door, you'll pay €30.

► www.kissinger.be



BITE

Robyn Boyle

Julie's House ★★★★★

Just a stone's throw from Ghent's castle is this exceptionally charming dollhouse, er, bakery. Behind cottage pane glass, colourful cupcakes on tiered platters adorn the window display. I almost expect to see elves busily baking away inside and pretty little dolls sipping from teacups. Instead, our party of three enters to find a humming business, abuzz with the clatter of dishes and customer chitchat.

We're warmly greeted and seated by the owner, Julie Stampaert. The young entrepreneur opened her bakery and dessert house four years ago, after tastefully renovating the 19th-century house, which in the past has served as everything from art gallery to candy shop.

Now it's a baked goods fantasy world, its cases filled with cheesecake, brownies, cakes, cupcakes, scones and dozens of other sweet surprises. And in fact, Julie's House is named after Julie's first dollhouse, made for her by her father when she was six years old. (The original wooden façade now has an honorary place in the interior.)

But Julie inherited her love for desserts from her mother. "We would often bake cakes together when I was little," she says. "I think that later inspired me to attend the Spermalie cooking school, but the truth is I didn't really like cooking; I wanted to bake. So I followed a specialised pâtisserie course at Bruges' Ter Groene Poorte."

My friends and I are glad she did, we decide, as we tuck into brunch. Because it's not all cakes and cookies: Julie's House serves up several different breakfast combinations as well. We order a Sweet & Salty, a Salty Breakfast and a



Julie's Breakfast. All include tea or coffee and fresh-squeezed orange juice.

The plates arrive at our table at record speed. First, we each get an egg with toast, one soft-boiled and two sunny side up.

Then there's a basket of fresh whole-grain bread, croissants with jam and butter and a selection of organic smoked ham and cheese. My friends are enjoying *gestreken mastellen*, a Ghent speciality that is essentially a flat-ironed bread roll with a layer of brown sugar.

No sooner than that's been devoured do the plates of French toast and pancakes show up, requiring some plate-stacking to make room at our tiny table. The pancakes are very thick and doughy, but we like it that way. The French toast is similarly undercooked, almost pudding-like, but absolutely scrumptious with a touch of maple syrup. We finish off with individual pots of rooibos and Darjeeling tea and one last coffee, a blend from Flemish coffee roasters OR.

As we approach the pastry case to settle the painless €38 bill, we predictably end up buying a large cake to take away: a luscious creamy white chocolate cake with a crumbly *speculoos* crust, to be precise (€19.90 for eight to 10 people).

► www.julieshouse.be

📍 Kraanlei 13, Ghent; 09.233.33.90

🕒 Wed-Sun, 9.00-18.30 (breakfast until 14.00)

💶 Mains: €4-€14

📖 Adorable coffeehouse and bakery serving up brunch and a range of lush homemade cakes, pies and cupcakes

TALKING SPORTS

Leo Cendrowicz

Flemish football moves on

A fortnight ago, this column was waxing about the Belgian football team and their promising start to the 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign. But football in Flanders is, of course, mostly about clubs, and here, too, the signs are that the game is evolving.

With their victory last week over Zenit St Petersburg, Anderlecht celebrated their first home Champions League win since 2003. This is the Brussels side's ninth appearance in Europe's top club competition, and, although they are currently third in their group – with only a modest chance of reaching the second round – they are historically doing far better than most Belgian clubs in the Champions League.

John van den Brom, who took over as Anderlecht coach this summer, has urged his side to play "attractive football" as they go in search of a 32nd Belgian title. They are already the favourites this year, but the character they showed in defeating their Russian visitors (which counts Fleming Nicolas Lombaerts among their players) was particularly inspiring, most visibly with scorer Dieudonné Mbokani, who played despite having to wear a face mask to protect a broken nose.

Last season's runners-up Club Brugge also changed coach this summer, with Georges Leekens replacing Christoph Daum. Readers will know that Talking Sports is no fan of Leekens and considers it a scandal that he should have returned to Belgian football after his dreary second stint as coach of the Red Devils. However, he has once again been rumbled. After Brugge failed to pick up a single point in four matches and won just one of their four Europa League



Former Club Brugge defender Philippe Clement takes over as coach of the team

games, Leekens was fired and replaced by Philippe Clement. Doing better in both the Jupiler League and the Europa League are Genk: Mario Been is once again helping the Limburg side rise above their supposedly limited resources to challenge for the top prizes. They might never survive winter in the Champions League, but they could well provide a shock in the Europa. Worth noting is that one of

Genk's Europa League opponents, Portuguese side Sporting Lisbon, have just named former Belgium, Anderlecht and Genk boss Franky Vercauteren as their new coach. We are still in the early stages of this season, but Flemish footballers have already shown – in club performances and for the national team – that this could be a memorable one.

The last word...

Food fight

"Every year there's a fight to see who gets to go to Hof Van Cleve."

A Gault & Millau inspector on the restaurant of Peter Goossens, which they named Restaurant of the Year for the 10th time in a row

Fifty shades of bleh

"By the time Grey finally got around to some SM, I was already sick of the man. What a humourless, predictable mess."

Het Nieuwsblad columnist Fleur Van Groningen takes a switch to *Fifty Shades of Grey*

Class warfare

"Today is Armistice Day, but the war of those who have everything on those who have nothing has never been more harder fought than now."

Comedian and former auto worker Nigel Williams at the Ford Genk solidarity march

Silent majority

"I only miss one thing: the applause when I score."

Sven Verstraete of Ingelmuinster is the only deaf player in the national football league

NEXT WEEK
IN FLANDERS TODAY

Cover story

Would you like to see, hear and, yes, smell the middle ages? Has Bruges got an attraction for you. Next weekend, the city's new Historium opens, smack dab on the Markt. In development for years, the Historium will offer visitors impressions of the Bruges of 600 years ago, culturally, politically and socially. Check out our sneak preview

Business

New York's hurricane has dominated headlines of late, but in fact the city that never sleeps always seems to have story that grabs people's attention. Our New York correspondent discovered the city's Belgian Chamber of Commerce at its annual awards dinner, where Flemish professor Emile Boulpaep earned this year's Lifetime Achievement Award

Tourism

More Bruges in this issue, as our trepid reporter visits the city's crossbowmen's club and attends a medieval banquet. Do they eat chicken legs? Are the women called "wenches"? Stay tuned