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Setting the record straight

Exhibition in Leuven restores the reputation of a crucial figure in Flemish art history

Ian Mundell

A new show at Museum M makes a compelling case for re-examining Michiel Coxcie, a Flemish painter usually dismissed as a copycat. In the process, *Michiel Coxcie, the Flemish Raphael* tells a fascinating story about the role of art and the movement of ideas throughout the turbulent 16th century.

Some artists live in poverty and obscurity, then find fame long after they're dead. For Michiel Coxcie, it was the other way around. The Flemish painter was one of the most successful and influential of the 16th century, but to posterity he became a minor artist best known for copying the work of others.

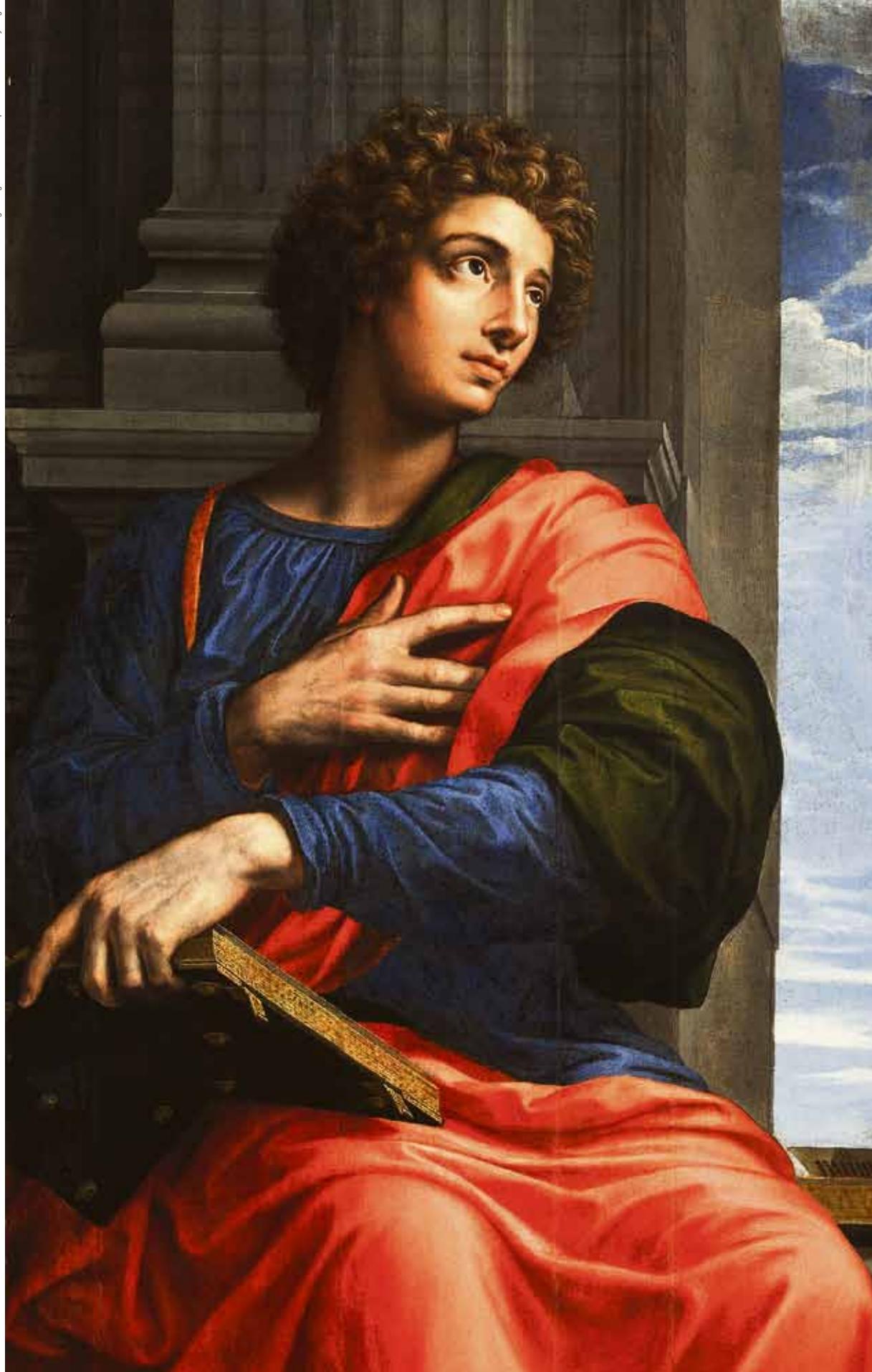
Museum M in Leuven is bent on putting the record straight with *Michiel Coxcie, the Flemish Raphael*. "With this exhibition, we want to show the public that he is a first-rate painter, a painter of quality and of European standing," says Peter Carpreau, who oversees the museum's Old Masters' department and co-curated the show with Koenraad Jonckheere of Ghent University.

The fruit of four years of research, the project is also intended to focus attention on a neglected era in Flanders' art history, between the Flemish Primitives who flourished in the 15th century and the Baroque period ushered in by Rubens in the 17th century.

"We want to convince the public and professionals alike to re-evaluate Coxcie and to again think about the whole of the 16th century," Carpreau explains.

Coxcie was probably born in Mechelen around 1499 and trained in the workshop of Bernard van Orley in Brussels during the 1520s. There, he gained a thorough grounding in the style of the Flemish Primitives, characterised by meticulous detail, a strong sense of landscape and expressive portraiture.

Through van Orley, the young painter also gained connections that allowed him to travel to Italy, where he would remain for about a decade, studying the art of antiquity and the



► continued on page 5

Government launches special network for victims of trauma

New network will assist regions worldwide involved in war or natural disasters

Alan Hope

Flemish minister-president Kris Peeters announced the creation of an International Trauma and Transformation Network last week during an international peace symposium. The symposium was held in Brussels the day after Peeters led a delegation that included three former Nobel Peace Prize winners on a tour of war sites in Flanders.

Nobel Peace Prize winners Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee, Betty Williams from Northern Ireland and former South African president Frederik Willem De Klerk also attended the symposium, together with about 200 policymakers, academics and other experts.

The network will have two functions: the handling of different kinds of trauma associated with conflict areas or affected by natural disasters, and later the transformation of societies affected by war through reconstruction and reconciliation. Funding for the launch of the network was set at €150,000.

"With this network we want to group together our local expertise and scientific knowledge of trauma treatment and social transformation," Peeters said. "In the longer term, the network will be able to be called upon in particular areas and situations worldwide, allowing Flanders' expertise to be put into action. That could be at



Kris Peeters (second from right), joined by Nobel Peace Prize winners (from left) Leymah Gbowee, Frederick Willem De Klerk and Betty Williams, launched the International Trauma and Transformation Network

the request of an overseas partner or at the Flemish government's own initiative."

The peace symposium also issued a declaration calling for "a spirit of tolerance, solidarity and international understanding and reconciliation" and emphasising "the importance of science and scholarship in the world's efforts towards sustainable peace".

The symposium was part of the Flemish government's commemorations of the centenary of the First World War.

Measures proposed to ease Antwerp traffic

The government of Flanders and Antwerp city council have agreed to 33 "quick win" ideas to tackle the problem of traffic congestion in Antwerp while awaiting a final outcome of the Oosterweel link project.

The measures include the use of rush-hour lanes, better road signs, safety improvements at entry and exit from the Kennedy tunnel, increased use of the Thijssman tunnel and

improvements to crossroads, bus lanes, ramps and cycle paths. The measures, if implemented, would cost "tens of millions of euros," according to minister-president Kris Peeters, presenting the measures together with Antwerp mayor Bart De Wever.

The proposal led to heated debate in the Flemish parliament, with the opposition criticising the government for not going far enough. The Oosterweel link

is intended to complete the Antwerp Ring, easing congestion all round, but that is still years away.

Suggestions not yet taken up by the government include making the Liefkenshoek tunnel wholly or partially toll-free, building emergency bridges over the Singel and improving traffic flows on connecting roads around the city. AH

Last Post leads to traffic chaos in Ypres

Municipal authorities in Ypres, West Flanders, are looking into a solution to the major traffic disruption caused every evening as a result of the Last Post ceremony held under the Menin Gate in remembrance of the unidentified dead of the First World War.

According to city council member Philip Bolle, visitor numbers have already increased significantly this year, in the lead-up to the beginning of centenary commemorations, making it essential to take measures now.

The Gate is a major access point to the centre of Ypres, as it stands at the top of Menenstraat, which continues to the Grote Markt. Every evening at 20.00 the road under the Gate is closed while ceremony takes place. Depending on the numbers of guests, that can be a closure of an hour or more.

Apart from the occupation during the Second World War, the Last Post ceremony has taken place under the Gate every evening without fail since 1928. On peak days, visitors number up to 1,000, with as many as 10 coaches parked on the main square. "We now see that not only are drivers unable to access Menenstraat but



pedestrians are also unable to get through," Bolle said. Suggestions for tackling the problem include police monitoring the passageway from 19.30 to 20.30 every night or Menenstraat between the Gate and the Grote Markt becoming a pedestrian zone permanently. AH

Poisonous American saddleback caterpillar found in Flanders

A poisonous caterpillar native to the south-eastern United States has been found on a house plant bought by a woman from Kortenaken, Flemish Brabant. The green-and-brown coloured caterpillar is the saddleback (*Acharia stimulea*), the larva of an innocuous brown moth. The caterpillar was found in a plant bought at the Midi Market in Brussels two months ago but discovered only last week. The effects of coming in contact with the creature's hairs is similar to that of the processionary species of caterpillars that plague parts of Flanders annually: a painful, swollen skin irritation, with the

addition in this case of nausea, dizziness and possible respiratory difficulties.

Hendrik Moermans, spokesperson for nature conservancy organisation Natuurpunt, said that they believe it is "the first time this dangerous caterpillar has been spotted in Flanders. It has, however, shown up several times in the Netherlands. Each time it arrived in the country on an exotic plant."

The likelihood now is, Natuurpunt said, that other plants from the same seller may have been infested with caterpillar eggs, so the creature may now make another appearance. AH

Flemish 10-year-old is named Digital Girl of the Year

Ten-year-old Lune Victoria van Ewijk from Sint-Katelijne-Waver in Antwerp province has been named Digital Girl of the Year in a European contest to encourage girls to take part in science and technology. This year is the first time the awards have had a category for children aged 10 and under.

The awards are handed out by a consortium of ICT companies and organisations, including the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies and the European Centre for Women and Technology. They were given out by Neelie Kroes, the EU commissioner for the digital agenda.

Lune designs her own video games and interactive movies "At 10 years of age, she is already a true digital visionary," noted the consortium in a statement, "and already has a track record of getting girls her age excited about digital endeavour." In a video, Lune explained that her dream is to design and build robots "to make the world a better place".

Seven million people are employed in the ICT sector in the EU, but only one in three is female – despite a growing shortage of skilled personnel and increasing job vacancies. AH

THE WEEK IN FIGURES

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minutes longer and 8% more expensive – the Benelux train from mid-December. Dutch rail authority NS said the increase was a return to the fare charged prior to the introduction of the Fyra train

3

flights a week between Brussels and Tel Aviv will be introduced next summer by Jetairfly. The company will also start operating flights between Brussels and Istanbul next year

21%

of the Brussels-Capital Region's civil service is made up of people of immigrant origin, according to Bruno De Lille, secretary of state for administrative affairs

3c

increase in the price of a normal stamp from 1 January, from 67c to 70c when bought in packs of 10. The price of a single stamp remains the same at 77c

€55

fine in future for drivers who refuse to merge lanes when one lane is closed, a manoeuvre known as *ritsen* because it resembles the teeth of a zipper

WEEK IN BRIEF

Flemish culture minister Joke Schauvliege has approved a subsidy of €8,518 for **restoration work on a 16th-century triptych** by the Master of Frankfurt, who, despite the name, was a leading Flemish artist of the period. The triptych, known as the "Nood Godsdieluijk", is an altarpiece showing the Passion of Christ and is considered one of the most important artworks in Flanders after the Mystic Lamb altarpiece by the Van Eyck brothers. The work stands in the OLV Hemelvaart Church in Waterhiet, East Flanders.

Plans by the government of Flanders to **increase lanes on the Brussels Ring** to ease the flow of traffic have been severely criticised by inspectors from the federal finance ministry. The report says that the government plans lack a "total vision" of the congestion problem, without which planned infrastructure solutions will not suffice. The report also says that no account has been taken of the arrival of a new national stadium at Heizel and the new shopping centre Uplace at Machelen. "This project could simply displace traffic black spots to other parts of the roads network," the inspectors concluded.

Belgacom has denied allegations made by a CD&V member of parliament that the company **snooped in the email inboxes of journalists** and politicians, describing the charges as "completely pulled out of thin air". According to MP Roel Desyn, Belgacom CEO Didier Bellens even keeps an email address with Yahoo in France "because he knows how leaky his own system is".

Two of the main suppliers of Ford Genk, IAC and Lear, companies affected by the planned closure of Ford in December next year, have decided to **move house to Valencia in Spain**, where they will deliver parts for the Galaxy, Mondeo and S-Max cars produced

there. The announcement was made by the director of human resources of Ford Spain in a local newspaper. According to the paper, existing suppliers will be replaced by two of the companies from Genk. The other two Genk-based suppliers, Syncron and SML, will not be relocating.

A member of the Belgian military whose **baby died when he accidentally left her in his car** on the warmest day of 2012 will stand trial in Brussels, a court has decided. The man, who worked at the base in the Evere district of Brussels, faces charges of unintentional homicide by negligence, which carries a possible sentence of two years.

Unizo, the Flemish organisation that represents the self-employed, will offer advice to members on **how to avoid a new government tax**, director-general Karel Van Eetvelt said. The tax on the so-called liquidation bonus – money a self-employed person has left in the business that he or she then decides to liquidate at the end of a career – is to be increased from 10% to 25%, something Unizo described as "absolutely unacceptable". Entrepreneurs who give up working before 1 January can avoid the increase, which Van Eetvelt said could see 15,000 businesses close. "Taxation is so high that business people have no alternative than to look for escape routes," Van Eetvelt said.

Brussels Airport will be fitted next summer with six **"e-gates" that can check passengers' identity** cards electronically, the federal police said. Last week an investigation by VRT consumer series *Volt* revealed that journalists were able to pass through security checks using each other's ID cards. The e-gates are able to check electronic cards at the same time as scanning the physical appearance of the passenger to see if the two match up.

Animal rights activists demonstrated in front of Janssen Pharmaceutica in Beerse, Antwerp province, last week in **opposition to the use of animals** in drugs experiments. The protesters claim polling shows that 81% of Belgians oppose animal testing. A company spokesperson said that Janssen was sympathetic to the argument but that animal tests are mandatory by law and suitable alternatives are not always easy to find.

Communications provider **Telenet has reacted to strong criticism** from the public of its latest advertising campaign, which offers attractive gifts to new subscribers. The campaign has been attacked by existing Telenet customers, who argue that their loyalty deserves to be rewarded. A page on the issue on Facebook received 100,000 likes before the company replied. "It was never our intention to provoke such reactions," a spokesperson said. "We are thinking hard about how to tackle this in the future."

Listminut, a web platform that pairs up those who can perform small repair jobs around the house with those who need them done, will launch in Flanders after a successful trial in Brussels. Listminut is the brainchild of four former entrepreneur students. The platform already has 8,500 users in Brussels, evenly divided between supply and demand. The sudden increase in Dutch-speaking users convinced the company to offer the service in Flanders.

▶ www.listminut.com

A man was seriously injured at a former industrial laundry in Deurne, near Antwerp, after he was **electrocuted while trying to steal** copper cable. Homes in the area were hit by a power cut, and residents eventually found the man, who had received a current of 15,000 volts. The man was taken to hospital suffering from severe burns.

FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope



© Katoen Natie

Fernand Huts

Fernand Huts was in the news again this week, leaving one city aghast and another delighted, as he announced he was calling a halt to all new investments in Antwerp to concentrate on his holdings in Ghent, and a future in Marseilles (see p6). Huts not only took over the job of CEO, he bought out remaining shareholders and is now sole owner.

That's allowed him to run the place according to his own will and that of his ever-present wife Karine. One thing many people may not suspect is Huts' aesthetic side. His company, its roots in textiles, maintains a museum of antique textiles in Antwerp. Just last week it hosted the world congress on antique textiles from the Nile Valley, attended by representatives of some of the world's most prestigious museums, including the Louvre and New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. "At the end of the 1980s, I went to the doctor," Huts once told *Humo* magazine. "He told me, if you go on working this hard, you won't be able to work at all any longer. So I decided to spend more time on the things that give me pleasure."

law in Leuven before setting up his own company growing organic produce.

When he was 31, he went to work for Katoen Natie, by then being run by his father. Huts not only took over the job of CEO, he bought out remaining shareholders and is now sole owner.

Huts weighs in with strong opinions, including that he should be allowed to employ whomever he pleases and not only those designated by the law in Belgium as a bone fide dockworker. That's led to clashes with unions, the port authority and the government and, while his threat was minimised by the unions last week, the idea that he might pick up his ball and go play somewhere else is not negligible. Huts' father moved to Antwerp in the 1930s and worked his way up to boss of Trouwnatie, one of the many historical dock and logistics companies in Antwerp, known as *natiés* (nations).

Fernand, born in 1950, went to the Sint-Jan Berckmans Jesuit college in Antwerp, then studied

OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

Taking sides

Sam Smolders was born in Diest, Flemish Brabant, but when he was five, his mother took him to live in Arizona. "That's where I grew up," he told *Het Nieuwsblad*. "My friends and the people I regard as family live there. Only on my passport am I Belgian." And there, as they say, is the rub. In 2006, Smolders came on a trip to his native land to see where he was from. Trip over, he returned to the US. But he was held up at the border. When he had entered as a child, it was on a holiday visa, which was now long expired. Under US law, if you have ever overstayed your visa, you are not allowed to re-enter the country.

That was six years ago, and Smolders is understandably angry. He's even tried to enter the US illegally. He flew to Windsor in Ontario, Canada, which looks out across the mighty Detroit River (*pictured*) to the United States. His laptop and other belongings in a waterproof bag, he entered the murky waters at around midnight. "It was harder than I thought," he said. After 40 minutes, he stopped swimming and drifted.

Then he spotted a pleasure boat and climbed aboard. "All I could do was lie on the deck. My muscles had turned to jelly." The only other person on board, a



© Mike Russell/Wikimedia Commons

janitor, eventually found him and called border patrol. Smolders spent five weeks in jail, and now he's back in Belgium. He's trying to arrange the necessary documents to go back home. "But if that doesn't work ... I'll try to cross the border again. I absolutely want to celebrate Christmas in the US. I have to. My life has been taken from me."

FLANDERS TODAY

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Oosterweel Link decision on hold

European Commission waiting for environmental report related to Antwerp Ring link

Derek Blyth

Flanders' minister-president Kris Peeters held a meeting last week with Michel Barnier, the European Commissioner for the internal market, in an attempt to break the deadlock over the long-running Oosterweel Link plan.

The government of Flanders has been trying for many years to solve traffic congestion in the Antwerp area by completing the Antwerp Ring. The original plan was to build a bridge – called the Lange Wapper after a local folklore figure. A public works bid for the project was won by Noriant contractors.

But the bridge had to be abandoned in 2010 after local protest led to a



An architectural drawing of the bridge that will eventually link the Antwerp Ring

referendum, which was rejected by voters. The government then decided to replace the bridge with a tunnel under the Scheldt.

It approached the European Commission to allow Noriant to go ahead with the part of the project that had not been changed – construction work on the left bank and the Scheldt tunnel – without the need for a new public procurement.

Barnier said he couldn't give the project the green light until the environmental impact report had been completed. "More information is required before the European Commission can give a definitive answer," he said. The report is expected by January.

Barnier did, however, approve the government's decision to grant the tunnel concession

for toll collecting and future maintenance of the tunnel to Tunnel Liefkenshoek (TLH), arguing that it did not breach EU rules on government procurement. In a press release issued jointly by the Flemish government and the European Commission, Barnier said: "We have taken a significant step forward today in this project." Peeters said that the government was pleased with the decision to allow it to award the concession to TLH. "This is about a project that desperately needs to be carried out, as it affects both the Flemish and European economies as well as traffic flow around Antwerp."

Belgium moves one step closer to extending euthanasia to minors

The Belgian parliament is close to an agreement to extend the right to euthanasia to those under the age of 18. The ruling socialists have put forward new legislation to allow minors the right to euthanasia under certain well-defined conditions.

The change in the law has the support of many local doctors in cases where a minor is suffering from severe pain as a result of a terminal illness. But there is still disagreement among the parties as to whether "psychological suffering" should be expressly excluded from the provisions.

Els Van Hoof of the Flemish Christian Democrats said there was a risk of "unstable teenagers" being given the right to euthanasia. She argued that the law should only be extended to minors suffering unbearably due to terminal illness. The parties still have to reach an agreement on whether parental consent is required in the case of minors.

Belgium was the second country in the world to legalise euthanasia for adults (after the Netherlands) when it passed a law in 2002.



Some 1,500 "doctor-assisted deaths" were carried out in Belgium in 2012 compared to 235 in 2003.

If a new law is passed, Belgium will be the first country in the world to grant the right of euthanasia to minors. But it remains a controversial step, with the Catholic Church opposed to the new legislation. "It is strange that minors are considered legally incompetent in certain areas, such as getting married, but might be able to decide to die," said Archbishop Léonard. **DB**

Kris Peeters to stand for election in Antwerp in 2014

With federal and regional elections scheduled for next May, the political parties are beginning to draw up their candidate lists, which, along with the personal results of the candidates, determine who takes up which seats after the election.

First off the mark was the Flemish Christian Democrats (CD&V), which has published a list of its key players. Flanders' minister president Kris Peeters (*pictured*) will head the party list in Antwerp in the regional elections, while in East Flanders Joke Schauvliege takes the number one position at the regional level and defence minister Pieter De Crem heads the federal list.

Peeters is currently riding high in the opinion polls and is the undisputed leader of the CD&V party. He was expected by most political analysts to anchor himself in the regional elections rather than look for a seat in the federal government. Meanwhile, analysts are expecting Bart



De Wever of the Flemish nationalists N-VA to put himself forward for the federal government, rather than standing for the regional level. "The future of the party is federal," he said. This means that there is little chance of a clash between Peeters and De Wever. But the N-VA has also shown in the past that it likes the element of surprise. **DB**

New cannabis campaign aimed at young people emphasises health risks

Flemish health minister Jo Vandeurzen has launched a new government campaign to warn young people about the health risks of cannabis, or marijuana. The campaign targets a relatively small percentage of young people, since government figures show that only 18% of those aged 12 to 18 have experimented with cannabis while 2.5% are classified as regular users.

But cannabis still remains the most popular recreational drug taken by young people, and Vandeurzen is convinced that the government needs to act. "The figures have remained stable since 2005, so it is necessary to inject new life into the prevention campaign," he said.

The campaign uses posters and an interactive website to challenge some "urban myths" about the health risks and to demonstrate to young people that cannabis is "not harmless and that it is not normal among their contemporaries".

The website includes amusing quotes to make young people think about the stories they hear. It quotes thinkers such as Charles



Spurgeon who said: "A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes".

The website also has some "hard facts about soft drugs" as well as an online questionnaire with statements like "cannabis is found in one in 10 trouser pockets" (false). There are also links to organisations that can offer help and advice. **DB**

▶ www.laatjenietvangen.be

Lieten launches campaign to promote science and technology

Flanders' innovation minister Ingrid Lieten (*pictured*) launched a new campaign last week called Richting Morgen (Direction Tomorrow) to encourage more students to enrol for degrees in the STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The number is already rising steadily, with 18,419 students enrolled in STEM courses in the academic year 2012-2013 compared to 16,405 in 2008-2009. But Lieten says there is still more progress to be made, especially for women who currently represent only 29% of STEM students. "It is really important for a small knowledge region like Flanders to focus on science and technology," Lieten said. "We need all the talent we can get. We face a lot of challenges such as climate change, mobility and providing care for older people. So we need people who can meet these challenges with scientific and technological innovations."

Lieten aims to develop strategies that



make science seem like a cool option for young people. "Science has to break away from its stereotypical image," she said. "Young people don't realise that they can help to make great breakthroughs in science. Just think about research into the use of algae as an alternative to petrol. Or the possibilities of 3D printing." The campaign also introduces four successful Flemish scientists – two men and two women – as role models. **DB**

▶ www.dagvandewetenschap.be

Setting the record straight

Coxcie bridged Primitive and Baroque style in monumental paintings

► continued from page 1

more recent work of Renaissance artists like Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. His acquaintances in Rome included Michelangelo and the art historian Giorgio Vasari, who recorded both his presence in the city and some of his commissions, including works in the church of Santa Maria dell'Anima and Saint Peter's Basilica. In 1539, Coxcie returned to the Low Countries, bringing with him an extensive knowledge of the Italian Renaissance style and methods. This included a dynamism in posing and grouping figures, gained from a study of classical sculpture, and a more liberated way of working with colour and form.

Even at this point in the century, these approaches to painting were relatively unknown in Flanders. Raphael's work had briefly been on view in Brussels in 1516, when his patterns for tapestries commissioned for the Sistine Chapel arrived in the city. But only those people with access to the tapestry workshops would have seen these "cartoons" before they were cut up for use in the weaving process.

With a bang

Other Flemish painters visited Italy after that, but none for as long as Coxcie. So, when his altarpiece depicting "The Holy Kinship" (right) was placed in the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp, it made quite a splash. "This was the first painting in the style of the High Renaissance that was accessible to all," Carpreau explains. "It must have caused an enormous shock in artistic circles."

At the beginning of the 17th century, the altarpiece was added to the collection of Emperor Rudolf II in Austria and later travelled to Kremunster monastery, where it has remained since. So securing "The Holy Kinship" for the exhibition was something of a coup for the museum.

Coxcie's ability to paint monumental work of this sort quickly built his reputation. But he was more than a simple imitator of the Italian style, since his approach also incorporated elements from the style of the Flemish Primitives, adding to the visual power of his works.

He quickly became a favourite of the Habsburgs, earning the patronage of Charles V and Mary of Hungary, which helped him win commissions for church paintings, stained glass and tapestries, all of which are explored in the exhibition. Later he became



Michiel Coxcie's "The Holy Kinship"

court painter to Philip II, which gave him unprecedented freedom to work across the region.

It was Philip II who asked Coxcie to produce a copy of Jan van Eyck's immense "Lamb of God" altarpiece in the Sint-Baafs Cathedral in Ghent, having failed to convince the church to sell him the original. Coxcie installed himself in the cathedral from 1556 to 1558, producing a full-scale replica that matched van Eyck's style but also introduced some Italian touches, along with likenesses of his patron and himself in the outer panels.

Museum M is particularly proud to bring together all the surviving elements of this copy for the first time, thanks to loans from museums in Brussels, Berlin and Munich. Only the panels depicting Adam and Eve, believed to be lost, are missing.

The wave of iconoclasm that swept the Low Countries in 1566 came as a blow to Coxcie. Much of his finest work was destroyed or removed from churches and subsequently lost. He threw himself into the religious conflict with a vengeance, placing himself firmly on the side of the Catholic Counter-Reformation and becoming one of its chief propagandists.

His political feelings are on view in an altarpiece painting of Saint George, which is essentially a self-portrait. Coxcie presents himself standing before the slain dragon, broken lance in hand, wearing ornate armour recalling that of the Duke of Alba, sent by Philip II to restore order in the Low

Countries.

"He is saying: I'm for the Habsburgs, I'm for the Duke of Alba, and I'm also a Saint George who defends the Catholic Church against the Protestants," Carpreau explains.

This self-confidence, even arrogance, was backed up by real influence. Coxcie, for instance, called on his patrons for help when his house in Mechelen was sacked and when his son fell afoul of the inquisition. And when he needed a particular shade of blue for his "Lamb of God", he simply wrote to Titian in Venice to have some sent over.

Coxcie also wielded considerable artistic influence. The exhibition presents evidence that Rubens studied his work and argues that Coxcie forms a bridge between the Flemish Primitives and the Baroque. According to Carpreau, his influence in the 16th and even 17th century can't be underestimated.

"Artists saw him as a great painter, a painter from whom it was still possible to learn something," he says. "You could even say that Rubens would be unthinkable without Coxcie."

So what went wrong? What led Coxcie's reputation to decline so much? Part of the

blame falls on the iconoclasts, who destroyed much of his best work. True, Coxcie had the last laugh, winning commissions to replace many lost altarpieces later in the 16th century, but by this time he was old, and his powers were waning. The works are good, but not great.

He continued painting well into his 90s, finally falling to his death from a scaffold in 1592, while restoring one of his paintings in Antwerp's town hall.

His reputation also took a knock from Protestant critic Karel van Mander, who suggested in his influential *Book of Painters*, published in 1604, that Coxcie was a mere Raphael imitator – a slight that stuck and is still heard today. It also can't help that Coxcie's best-known pieces over the centuries have been copies of other painters' work, with "The Lamb of God" and a fine version of Rogier van der Weyden's "Descent from the Cross" cases in point.

“
You could even
say that Rubens
would be
unthinkable
without Coxcie

Finally, the nationalist discourse of the 19th century condemned Coxcie for contaminating the purity of Flemish Primitivism with ideas borrowed from the Italian Renaissance.

And the damage has been hard to undo. "Even texts written in the past 20 years still depict Coxcie as a cold copyist who contributed nothing to Flemish art," says Carpreau.

The exhibition makes a powerful case for Coxcie's rehabilitation, in the process telling a fascinating story about the role of art and the movement of ideas throughout the turbulent 16th century. It's hard to dispute Coxcie's ability to produce monumental paintings with real "wall power", as Carpreau puts it, or to argue with the skill it took for an artist to adopt the language of van Eyck in one painting, of Raphael in another and of Titian in a third.

Yet the mixing of Flemish and Italian styles that makes Coxcie unique is still sometimes elusive and perhaps only truly becomes clear in the final room of the exhibition. Through "The Lamb of God" on the one hand and vast panels depicting Saint Luke and John the Evangelist on the other (detail on p1), it brings Coxcie the copyist face-to-face with Coxcie the innovator. Here, the powerful combination of Flemish detail and Italian feeling finally becomes undeniable. Standing between the two massive works, it is the original rather than the copy that exerts the strongest pull.

Until 23
February

Museum M
L Vanderkelenstraat 28, Leuven
► www.mleuven.be



Coxcie's "Saint Cecilia"

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Air ▶ Vueling

Spain's low-cost carrier will launch seven new routes from Brussels Airport next May. The new destinations include daily flights to Lisbon and Rome and services to Venice, Porto, Ibiza, Palma and Santiago de Compostela up to five times a week.

Call centres ▶ IPG

The Brussels-based call centre operator, an affiliate of the Kortrijk-based Koramic Investment group, has acquired SNT Belgium, the local subsidiary of the Dutch SNT company. The move will significantly strengthen IPG's local operations, will boost its workforce by 950 – to a total of 2,500 – and will allow the company to develop its activities in the Netherlands, France and Morocco.

Casinos ▶ Knokke

French gaming group Partouche has sold its interest in the Knokke Casino to Napoleon Games, based in Haaltert, East Flanders, for €16.5 million. The move is part of Partouche's restructuring of its loss-making European operations. It will continue operating the Ostend Casino.

Mining ▶ Sibelco

The Antwerp-based sand and materials mining group is investing €50 million to develop its operations in Chile and Argentina. The company derives some 5% of its revenues in South America from china clay, lime, silicon and zirconium.

Property ▶ McArthurGlen

The shopping centre developer plans to build a €180 million outlet shopping plaza in Ghent in partnership with local property developer Banimmo. The 53,000 square-metre complex is expected to open in 2016.

Retail ▶ Olivier Streli

Local fashion brand Olivier Streli will relaunch with a summer menswear collection, two years after filing for bankruptcy. Plans include the initial opening of two stores in Brussels and Ghent in February, with 10 more expected over the next four years.

Transport ▶ Noordzee Helikopters

Ostend-based Noordzee Helikopters, specialised in salvage, shipping and offshore operations support, is seeking major investors. Among those interested are Axa Private Equity and Ergon Capital, controlled by Belgian businessman Albert Frère.

Mediahuis cuts one in five jobs

Merger sees Het Nieuwsblad editorial team moving to Antwerp

Alan Hope

The new media enterprise Mediahuis – a joint venture between Corelio and Concentra newspaper publishers – will cut 205 jobs, about 20% of the joint workforce, the company announced last week. At the same time, the entire editorial department of *Het Nieuwsblad* will move from the Corelio headquarters in Groot-Bijgaarden, just outside of Brussels, to Antwerp. Sixty-seven journalists will be let go.

"This plan is necessary to keep each title strong and viable," said CEO Gert Ysebaert, announcing the decision to staff. The creation of Mediahuis brings together Corelio's *De Standaard* and *Het Nieuwsblad* for a 62% stake in the new venture, and *Gazet van Antwerpen* and *Het Belang van Limburg* from Concentra for the rest.

Ysebaert stressed that each of the titles would continue to have its own specific character and voice – one of the conditions imposed by the Competition Council before allowing the venture to go ahead. However, the papers will also work together as



De Standaard and the marketing department of Corelio will remain in Groot-Bijgaarden, where the papers are printed, while *Het Nieuwsblad*'s editorial team moves to Antwerp

much as possible, he said.

The move of *Het Nieuwsblad* to Antwerp will bring it closer to *Gazet van Antwerpen* to permit more synergy. *De Standaard* will remain in Groot-Bijgaarden to maintain close ties with Brussels. And *Belang van Limburg* will remain in Hasselt to ensure the continuation of its regional coverage – another condition

imposed by the Competition Council. The immediate effects of the changes will be the loss of 205 full-time jobs, 67 of them from editorial on the four titles. Jobs will also go in IT, finance and human resources. Although not yet confirmed, the number of freelance journalists and photographers who help provide the papers' regional coverage is also

likely to be cut.

Unions within the two companies said the plan was "a severe blow" and held open the possibility of industrial action should talks with management on the mechanisms for redundancies not prove satisfactory. Pol Deltour, secretary-general of the Flemish Federation of Journalists (VVJ), said that the number of redundancies was "hallucinatory. Every redundancy of a journalist is one too many. But the damage will likely turn out to be worse than they are saying."

Flemish media minister Ingrid Lieten said she was "shocked" at the announcement. "This is no small matter for 205 breadwinners," she said. She also reminded members that Mediahuis was obliged to keep all four titles going for a minimum of five years. "However, I share the concerns over the way that promise is to be put into practice. I also have concerns about the independence of editorial departments and the importance of diversity in the media landscape."

▶ www.mediaduis.be

Flanders opens new exhibition space in World Travel Market



"We're very proud to be guest region and an official partner of this important professional

fair," Bourgeois said. "Given that the Anglo-Saxon world is the biggest overseas target group for the commemoration of the First World War, it is of strategic interest for Toerisme Vlaanderen to introduce new promotional instruments this year and next. The stand can introduce the commemoration activities of the centenary of the Great War to the travel world and promote Flanders and Brussels as tourist destinations."

After London, the new stand will be put through its paces at major tourism fairs in Barcelona, Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne. AH

▶ www.wtmLondon.com

Katoen Natie boss moves expansion to Marseilles

The CEO and owner of Katoen Natie, the Antwerp-based logistics company, has cancelled all further expansion plans in the port of Antwerp, with a view to extending his company's activities in the south of France, he announced last week.

The threat is the latest stage of an on-going conflict between Fernand Huts and the port trade unions and social inspectors, caused by his decision to employ workers in his subsidiary Logisport who are not registered dock workers. The latter have a special status under a 1972 law, known as the Major Law, which governs working relations in Flemish ports.

Logisport employs 800 people, with the prospect of hundreds of new jobs being created from the expansion. Huts has already acquired land in Kallo on the left bank of the Scheldt and, he says, has already obtained the necessary building permits. That is at risk, as the company now plans to build a logistics centre in Saint-Martin-de-Crau, close to the container terminal in Marseilles.

"We won't be making any new investments" in the port of Antwerp, said Huts. "And if working here becomes impossible for me, then I shall have to look again at my existing activities."

Katoen Natie employs 3,000 people in Belgium and more than 9,000 worldwide. The company's origins are in textiles, but it is now active in the movement of goods across the industrial spectrum, from petrochemicals to consumer goods to automobile parts. AH

Port of Antwerp wins European heritage award

The port of Antwerp has won this year's ESPO Award by the European Sea Ports Association. The award, given for the community integration of ports, was handed over in the city hall of Brussels to port COO Christiaan De Block by EU transport commissioner Siim Kallas.

This is the fifth time the ESPO award has been given. The prize was inaugurated in 2009 to promote innovative projects for the social integration of ports within the cities and communities where they are located. The theme of this year's awards was Heritage.

"The public interest in heritage has increased considerably in recent years and has gained strong tourist potential," an ESPO spokesperson said. "Most ports boast rich collections of industrial and other heritage, including equipment, buildings and monuments. This can be used in an innovative manner not just to explain a port's history but also to make the connection with present and future development."

Among the achievements listed in Antwerp's nomination are the establishment of a port archive in the Felix Archive close to the MAS



museum, which is situated on the Bonaparte Dock and itself forms an important link between the port and the city. The renovation of quays at the Bonaparte and Willem docks was also noted, as was the restoration and donation of old dock cranes to the site. The jury also noted the creation of a historic replica of the Nassau bridge. According to the Port Authority, the port's heritage forms a trail through the port area, from the Felix Archive to the Dry Dock Park and new Port House and including the new Red Star Line Museum. Antwerp was on a shortlist that also included Cartagena (Colombia), Dover (England), Livorno (Italy) and Oslo (Norway). AH

On the sustainable path

A Flemish forest gardening project is prepping young people for careers in the sustainability sector

Jacqueline Fletcher

When crossing the village of Nokere in the gently undulating landscape of the Flemish Ardennes, you might easily pass by Het Voedselbos (The Food Forest) without much thought. Modestly nested into the surrounding woodlands, this edible forest garden seamlessly blends into its green surroundings. Make no mistake, though, Het Voedselbos is a hive of activity throughout the year.

In addition to producing organic food in abundance, Voedselbos offers practical training and courses in permaculture, ecological designs modelled after natural ecosystems. "Permaculture is not merely about gardening," says founder Bert Dhondt. "It's a design system that can be applied to create lifestyles, communities and any project to render them sustainable."

Het Voedselbos attracts young people who aim to make sustainability their life's work. Here they can begin with short courses in anything from cultivating mushrooms to building an energy-efficient rocket stove. "Permaculture is based on the most efficient ecosystem – the natural forest, a vast support network of interlinked, multifunctional elements," Dhondt says, adding that learning permaculture produces creative and innovative mind-sets based on observation.

In the official Permaculture Design Certificate course, Dhondt explains, students acquire skills through hands-on learning, blending theory with practice. "It's a science, really, but it's fun too."

"People can just come and muck in, satisfy their inclinations, help cook an organic meal"

Het Voedselbos receives subsidies from the Leader Flemish Ardennes chapter – a mix of funding from the EU, the province of East Flanders and the Flemish government – to organise its open



Students learn to harvest rainwater and build energy-efficient stoves in the Voedselbos

workdays. Voedselbos also secured a grant from the Leader funding scheme to set up educational picnics with a local produce box company and to build a straw bale building as a teaching space.

During open workdays, "people can just come and muck in, satisfy their inclinations, help cook an organic meal for up to 25 people, strip bark, learn about seed saving, harvesting, planting – you name it," Dhondt says. Even the organisation's cob roundhouse – made of tree trunks, old windows and earth – was built with the help of volunteers. "Getting the wood and straw roof in place was really hands-on learning for all of us," says Dhondt.

With 13 natural top-bar beehives, a polytunnel greenhouse, chickens, fruit, berries, vegetables and flowers, Voedselbos offers a compelling example of just how much permaculture can stimulate biodiversity.

The permaculture design course runs over six weekends from April through October and tackles

topics like harvesting rainwater, a natural water-filtering process known as phyto-purification, building with natural materials, renewable energy and food production. It also offers evenings training sessions on leadership skills.

After those six training weekends, some participants choose to take additional courses with a view to landing a job in the rapidly changing sustainability sector or setting up their own green projects. Others, Dhondt says, use the course knowledge to simplify their lifestyles or try to convert their back yards into natural habitats for endangered species. Before setting up het Voedselbos project, Dhondt worked at a Steiner school, using gardening as a learning tool for adults with disabilities. Giving that job up to dedicate himself to realising his Voedselbos dream was a challenge, he says, but it made him well-equipped to teach others how to design and implement successful sustainable projects.

▶ www.hetvoedselbos.be

Bruges earns nomination for international liveable communities award

In a few weeks, representatives from Bruges will make the long trek to Xiamen, China, to present their pitch to a jury. Their goal? To nab the prestigious International Award for Liveable Communities (LivCom) for the entire city of Bruges. The LivCom Awards were launched in 1997 with the objective to develop and share international best practices and create liveable communities to improve the quality of life for citizens. Since 2007, LivCom Awards has partnered with the United Nations Environment Programme.

Participating in an international competition like LivCom is a first for Bruges. Mayor Renaat Landuyt (SP.A) says that a change in leadership brought about the idea to participate, in the process achieving more international recognition for the medieval city.

Bruges receives four million visitors every year. But making the city



According to Landuyt, one of Bruges' strong suits is its respect for the environment. "We have regulations that keep construction out of the city centre and do everything we can to keep it green, historical and liveable."

In addition to the Whole City Awards, there is also an awards section for projects in three categories: built projects, natural projects and socio-economic projects. The Campus Coppens industrial park in Brasschaat, Antwerp province, entered a project in the socio-economic category.

Bruges is the fourth Flemish city to make it to the finals of the LivCom Awards. Lochristi (East Flanders), Nieuwpoort (West Flanders) and Brasschaat have all won awards in previous years. "We are the only city in our category from Europe," says Landuyt. "If it's a good jury, I'm sure we will win." **Brittany Flatté**

▶ www.livcomawards.com

WEEK IN INNOVATION

Nearly one in five hospital doctors risks burnout

Five percent of doctors working in hospitals across Belgium suffer from burnout, while an additional 18% are at serious risk of having one, according to a survey commissioned by the federal public health ministry. The data will be used to develop a policy that deals with and prevents burnout. Nearly 1,200 doctors in 37 Belgian hospitals were questioned. The defining factors for burnout are work pressure, emotional exhaustion and conflicts in roles and responsibilities. Consequences include increases in absenteeism and the use of medication. Doctors and nurses are also less willing or able to work until the retirement age of 65; however, 60% say they are very passionate about their jobs.

Flanders vanishes if all ice melts

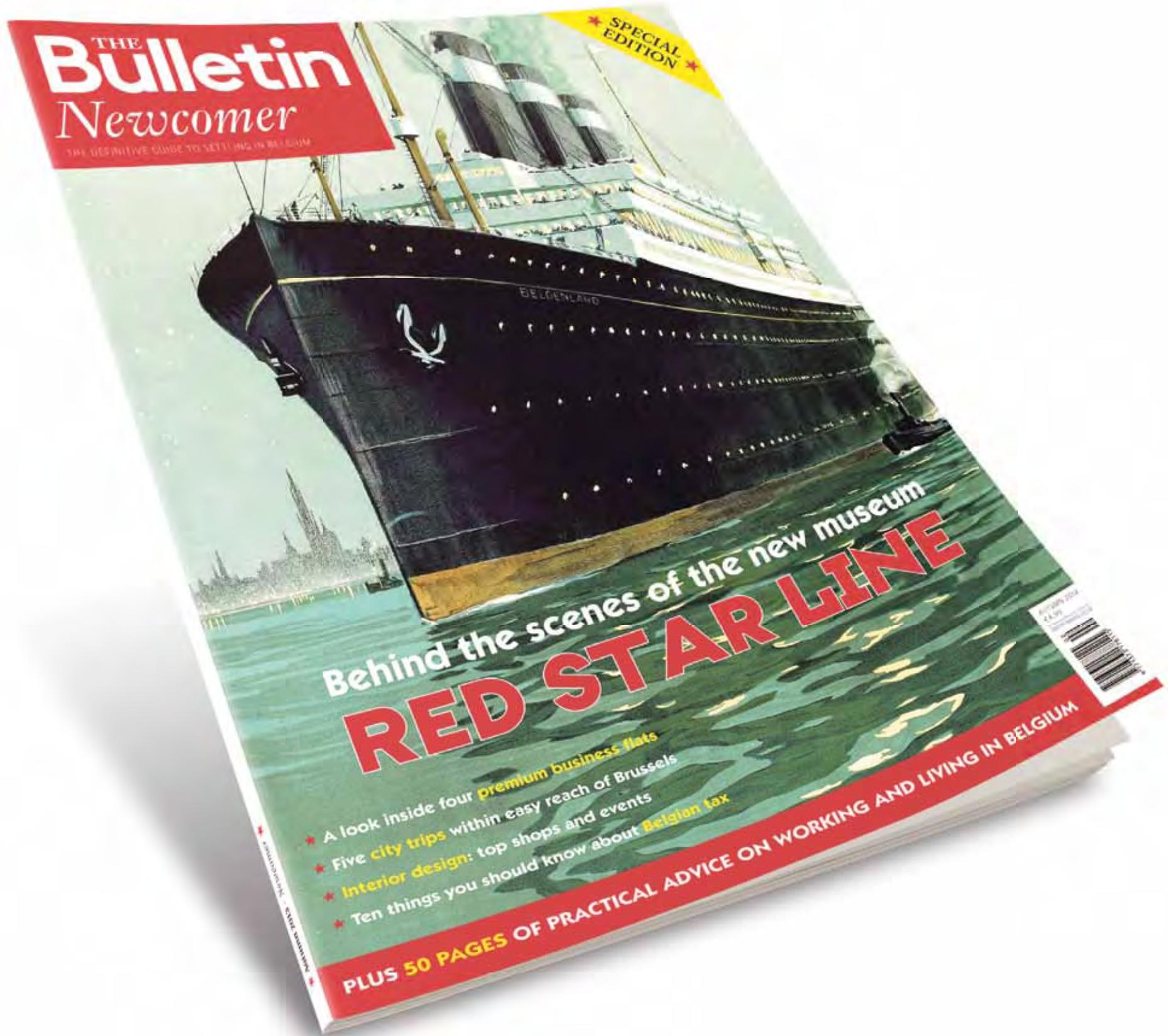
If all the planet's ice were to melt, causing the sea level to rise by about 66 metres, large parts of Flanders would be flooded and Brussels would lie at the coast. This was demonstrated last week by National Geographic through an interactive map that simulates one of the worst global warming scenarios. Among the other European countries flooded would be the Netherlands, Denmark and the north of Germany. London and Venice would be similarly inundated. Outside Europe, the biggest crisis would be in Asia, while the US state of Florida would also disappear. According to National Geographic, it could take more than 5,000 years before this scenario becomes reality. There is now about 24 million cubic kilometres of ice sheets, glaciers and "permanent" snow left on the planet.

Surgeons discover unknown ligament

Surgeons at Leuven's University Hospital have identified a previously unknown ligament in the knee, which plays an important role in patients with anterior cruciate ligament injuries. These are common among athletes in sports like basketball, skiing and football. Despite successful surgery and rehabilitation, many patients' knees still give way when strained. Flemish surgeons Johan Bellemans and Steven Claes were inspired by a French article from 1879, which suggested the existence of an additional ligament on the anterior of the knee. After four years of research, the pair are the first to provide a full anatomical description of this ligament, and they hope to develop a surgical technique to correct injuries to it. **Andy Furniere**

welcoming to tourists is only half his job, says Landuyt. "If you want your city to be good for visitors, you have to first make sure it is good for residents, and that is what we are doing." A panel of judges reviewed the initial award submission last May and selected Bruges and 49 other cities and communities to move on to the finals, which will conclude with an awards ceremony next month. In the Whole City Awards finals, the nominated communities are divided into population categories and evaluated on six criteria, including urban landscape, arts, culture and heritage management, environmental best practices, community participation and empowerment, healthy lifestyle and strategic planning.

All new All yours



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The power of playtime

Bodymap promotes fun activities that get kids moving and help them develop

Andy Furniere

“Kids don’t play anymore these days.” Like many clichés, the statement contains some truth. This phenomenon has the grave consequence that toddlers don’t adequately develop their motor, equilibrium and concentration skills. “More and more healthy children in primary school regularly fall off their chairs, just because they can’t sit still,” says Liesbeth Verhoeven, co-founder of Bodymap, an organisation that educates teachers and parents about the importance of playful moving for young children. Bodymap was founded as a non-profit four years ago by Verhoeven, an expert in motor skills, and her friend Ann De Wilde, a physical education teacher. To begin with, they wanted to provide an answer to the questions of primary school teachers, who are increasingly confronted with children who have problems focusing in class, suffer from difficulty balancing or lack the motor skills to hold a pen the right way. “A growing number of children also panic when they have to read in class,” says Verhoeven.

According to Verhoeven, many children are mistakenly diagnosed with disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity or dyslexia and need to take medication or undergo therapy that does more harm than good. “The medication can lead to drug addiction later in life, and the failure in therapy can lead to behavioural issues,” says Verhoeven. “But the children can often be helped with simple and playful movement exercises.

“Many children don’t have a disorder, but the problem is that their nervous system has not been stimulated enough in their first years of life,” she explains. “They have spent too much time in front of a TV or computer, instead of for example building forts outdoors. Although playing such games may seem banal to adults, these activities are essential in acquiring the basic skills for



Liesbeth Verhoeven and Ann De Wilde believe that encouraging physical activity among young children can have huge benefits in and out of the classroom

complex activities later in life.” The first target group of Bodymap is teachers in day-care centres, nursery schools and primary schools. Five coaches travel all over Flanders to inform teachers about the importance of integrating movement exercises in the general programme, not just devoting separate courses to it. “After 45 minutes, you need to let children move around or play a game, because that is their maximum attention span,” says Verhoeven.

The coaches also show teachers how to recognise the signs that betray a deficit that can be due to a lack of movement. If a child always sticks out their tongue when writing, this

can mean they are not ready for the usual learning rhythm. “Sometimes, teachers push the children to catch up, which causes even more counterproductive stress,” explains Verhoeven.

To help the children, Bodymap gets the parents involved. “Many parents are overprotective or feel they don’t have the time or space to play a lot with their children,” says Verhoeven. “They just don’t realise that they are restricting their children’s development.”

Bodymap gives them simple tips and tricks to play at home. The coaches encourage children to do things like occasionally brushing their teeth while standing on one leg or pulling

a towel with some objects on it across the table. Parents don’t need to buy expensive materials, because children can easily be creative with simple objects like cardboard boxes. During the school holidays, Bodymap organises boost camps, intense days full of movement games involving, for example, a track children have to complete by rolling, crawling and jumping. Next summer, Bodymap will organise a training day for young parents, with an extensive course on how to stimulate kids’ development.

Bodymap has already set up projects with other organisations.

For the Flemish Foundation for Traffic Knowledge, it has provided expertise

to create a kit called Horen, zien en rijden (Hearing, seeing and riding).

The kit includes practical advice to

help develop equilibrium, motor

skills and other competences.

Other partners include the Christian

Mutuality and the city of Antwerp.

Recently, Bodymap became a

company instead of a non-profit.

Although Bodymap can provide

solutions, many problems could be

prevented if teachers had gained

the necessary knowledge during

their studies. “There has, however,

been progress in recent years,”

says Verhoeven, who teaches a

related course at the Karel De Grote

University College in Antwerp.

“By starting to bridge the gap

to the education system, we are

fairly unique in our region,” she

says. “In most countries, the

expertise remains with specialised

therapists.” She points out, though,

that Scandinavian countries and

Australia are ahead of Flanders in

this respect.

At the end of our talk, I ask Verhoeven

about her personal motivation. “I

am a mother myself,” she says, “and

just like every mother I want my kids

to be sociable and carefree. Let’s

be clear: Bodymap doesn’t want to

help develop top athletes, just happy

children.”

▶ www.bodymap.be

WEEK IN EDUCATION

Foreign doctors must do extra training

Only 6% of doctors from abroad who have applied to work in Flanders in the past decade has the right to start without obligatory extra education, according to figures released last week by the Flemish education ministry. The other 94% had to register at a university for additional classes; two in three of these had to follow a four-year Master’s programme. The Flemish branch of the National Academic Recognition Information Centre determines whether a doctor’s diploma is equivalent to the Flemish standard. Doctors also have to take an exam in Dutch conducted by the Flemish Interuniversity Council, which will determine which extra studies the applicant has to follow. Between 2003 and 2013, 189 doctors took the exam.

Leuven students win award at iGem

Students from the University of Leuven have won the award for Best Model at the annual international iGem competition for synthetic biology, which took place last week in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the US. The team of 16 students from different faculties genetically modified an *E. coli* bacteria into the new *E. colig* bacteria, with the name referring to its importance in ecology. The bacteria produces fragrant pheromones that chase aphids away from plants and attract their natural enemies, such as ladybirds. The jury noted the way the students’ computer simulations could predict how the innovation would work.

▶ www.igem.org

Classes can be taught in foreign language

The government of Flanders has approved a decree that allows secondary schools to teach up to 20% of courses in a language other than Dutch. The Content and Language Integrated Learning project has been launched to better prepare pupils for the “multilingual future”. Every school has the choice of whether to participate, and pupils are not obliged to take part, so all courses also remain available in Dutch. According to Mieke Van Hecke, director-general of the Catholic schools network, about 50 of the 600 Catholic schools have already shown an interest. The Flemish initiative is similar to the Walloon system of “language immersion education”, in which up to 75% of non-language courses are taught in Dutch or English and it is mostly used in primary schools. AF

Q&A

Engineer Kurt Vandelanotte of renewable energy platform Power-Link leads a “bridging” project that familiarises technical students with the electrical grid

What is the purpose of your “bridging” project?

We are one of the 15 projects that recently received funding from the Flemish government to promote the STEM subjects – science, technology, engineering and mathematics. With our West Flemish partner organisations, RTC West-Vlaanderen and Horizon Educatief, we present the applications of an electrical grid to students in the third grade of technical education. We hope to bridge the gap between their classrooms and the workplaces of energy companies, many of which are represented at our headquarters, the Greenbridge science park in Ostend. These companies often have difficulty finding staff with the necessary skills.



How will you make the complexities of the electrical grid accessible?

This school year, we will create a scale model of about four square metres to show the composition and

working of a grid. It will demonstrate how electricity is transported via the distribution net from producers such as nuclear plants and wind farms to consumers in their homes. During interactive workshops next year, the students will learn about the advantages and disadvantages of different producers. We will teach them the methods of balancing the supply and demand of energy and how to deal with blackouts.

Where will the model be set up?

At the Greenbridge demonstrator, where we already showcase eco-friendly innovations of enterprises in Flanders. During the bridging project workshops, we will also focus on renewable energy,

mainly the growing influence of solar and wind energy. We will also show the impact of, for example, electric vehicles on the grid.

What is the budget of your project?

About €100,000 for two years. The Flemish government provides around €84,000 in funding and the rest comes from Power-Link and Horizon Educatief. Horizon Educatief and RTC West-Vlaanderen will inform West Flemish schools about the workshops, but students from all over Flanders are welcome to take part. We will also prepare a programme for students from general humanities, which would be less technical and more playful.

▶ www.power-link.be

WEEK IN
ACTIVITIES

De Kotroute

The Kotroute is an annual art walk through student houses (*kot* in Dutch) that have been temporarily transformed into gallery spaces where residents display their own work. It takes place across five cities on different nights between 14 and 27 November. Each walk kicks off at a cultural hotspot, such as Museum M in Leuven and SMAK in Gent, which then serves as a central information point for the whole evening. Get the map provided and create your own route. All locations are within walking distance (or a quick bike ride) from each other.

14-27 November, 19.00-23.00
► www.amuseevoos.be/projects/de-kotroute

Cocoon

Another big home interior fair comes to Brussels for nine days. More than 300 exhibitors introduce you to the latest trends in interior design for every room in the house.

16-24 November, 11.00 to 19.00
► www.cocoon.be

Swimming Pool Days

The fifth annual edition of this free fun-and-fitness event aims to get the whole family wet. Swimming pools across Flanders host special activities throughout the weekend. There will be a swim marathon with a contest for the pool with the most kilometres swum.

15-17 November, across Flanders
► www.zwembaddagen.be

Euro Dog Show

For animal lovers and most particularly canine enthusiasts, it's the 50th edition of this international dog show. More than 3,000 dogs will compete for various prizes, including the coveted Best In Show.

16-17 November, Kortrijk Xpo
► www.eurodogshow.be

Winterland Hasselt

Limburg's Capital of Taste gets a head start on the holiday season with the opening of its annual winter carnival. Attractions include an outdoor ice-skating rink, Santa's house (based on his official residence in Finland), indoor Christmas market, a big wheel and other carnival rides and the Winterland Café.

16 November to 5 January, 10.00-22.00
► www.winterland.be



Like beer for chocolate

Producers go in search of the perfect pairing of two local favourites

Alan Hope

Beer pairing is all the rage these days, with everyone from home cooks to three-star chefs keen to bring together the best beer with the best matching food. Beer paired with chocolate, has been something of a Holy Grail: Chocolate not only has its own pronounced flavour profiles, it's also a fatty substance that depends for the release of its taste on the temperature of the mouth being just a smidgeon lower than body temperature – two factors that militate against cold drinks.

The Grail, though, may now have been discovered, in the view of Valentino Chocolatier of Schepdaal in Flemish Brabant. They've come out with an innovation: a beer brewed specifically to go with chocolate, which they already make. That wasn't the original intention, according to Rob Roelandts, son of the founder.

"We had a chocolate here, a regional chocolate made with cherries, which needed a bit of a revamp. I suggested to one of our chocolatiers, why don't we make a beer chocolate? He's a chocolatier but he's also a beer sommelier, and he said, why don't we make our own beer?"

The next step was to determine what the beer ought to taste like, which involved tasting "hundreds of beers" with chocolate to see

what characteristics go and which don't. The new beer, he stresses, is not a chocolate-flavoured beer. "That's exactly the point," Roelandts says. "We didn't want beer chocolates and we didn't want a chocolate beer. No way we can beat Guinness, anyway. Chocolate beer says dark stout, and there are only one or two of those that rule."

The idea is to taste the Brasser beer (the name looks like the French for "to brew" but was actually the pen-name of Paul De Valck, who drew cartoons for *De Standaard* and *Het Nieuwsblad* until his death in 2011, and designed the drawing on the beer's label) alongside Valentino chocolate. The company was good enough to provide me with two options:

some plain chocolate drops and pralines of milk and plain, both filled with a dark chocolate ganache.

About the chocolate there's nothing to say: Valentino has earned its spurs in that business since it was set up by Willy Roelandts and Leen De Leener in Koekelberg, Brussels, in 1978. The pralines are rich and unctuous, while the plain chocolate drops have just the right balance of bitterness and something floral that complements the beer.

The beer is not one I would care to drink on its own. It's perfectly well-made technically, as one would expect from the Anders brewery that made it, but it lacks that certain something that makes a beer special. It complements the chocolates perfectly, though – the drops rather than the pralines, which are themselves so rich and full of taste that they make the beer seem comparatively flat.

It could be in fact that Brasser beer is a solution to a problem that doesn't really exist. There are plenty of beers out there that can be served to complement chocolate. Another chocolatier, Laurent Gerbaud, who has a shop opposite

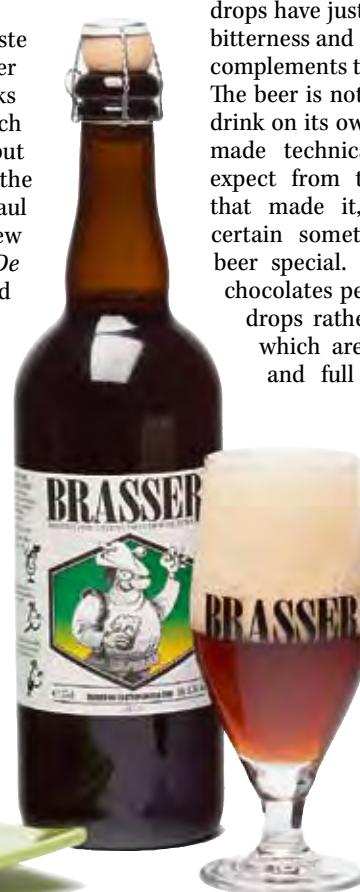
arts centre Bozar in Brussels, has elected to go with ready-made beers selected to go with some of his wide range of chocolates, many of which involve exotic fruits.

For example, there's the bitter but fruity Zinnebir by the Brussels-based Brasserie de la Senne, which matches with a chocolate-covered crystallised ginger. From the other Brussels brewery, Cantillon, there's a wonderfully sour but spirited Kriek that combines with a chocolate disc topped with dried Iranian cranberries – tiny bombs of intense fruit flavour.

Then there's the Noir de Dottignies, a deep, dark stout brewed by the Wevelgem-based brewery De Ranke, which partners with a disc of his secret recipe – a blend specially made by the Italian company Domodor of origin chocolate from Madagascar, Peru and Ecuador – topped with trinitario nibs, tiny shards of pure chocolate bean, also from Madagascar.

That selection perhaps suggests something Valentino might think about next: There may be as many chocolate-friendly beers as there are chocolates. Belgian chocolate comes in infinite varieties, and one beer can't be expected to match them all. Brasser beer is a good place to start, however. It may just be the first step on a long road. Retail outlets for Brasser beer can be found on the Valentino website. They are also available from specialist drinks outlets and the *streekproduct* shop in Halle.

► www.valentino.be
► www.chocolatsgerbaud.be



Valentino of Schepdaal in Flemish Brabant has created a beer specially designed to complement its own chocolates

BITE

The C Experience

I'm not sure how they do it in other major cities, but Brussels might very well be leading the way when it comes to unusual (sometimes off-the-wall) dining experiences. This means you can enjoy a three-course meal while cruising around town in a flashy tram (visitbrussels.be). Or tuck into a dinner prepared by Michelin-starred chefs while dangling above the city at a spectacular suspended table (dinnerinthesky.be). The most recent addition to the list is The C Experience, your chance to dine on a lofty Brussels rooftop.

This temporary, or "pop-up", restaurant is delicately perched on the roof of the 122m IT Tower on Louizalaan. In an astounding feat of design ingenuity and technology, the restaurant offers panoramic views over the sparkling capital city thanks to a specially built glass structure. The interior, as one would expect, is pristine and trendy, with a red and black theme. After its stint in Brussels, the restaurant will

pop up in other world cities, from Istanbul to Shanghai.

In Brussels, Belgian and international chefs alternate from week to week, cooking up inventive menus based on the chef's own inspiration, what's available at market and according to the season. Real foodies will love the element of surprise, and can expect to be catered to from the moment they set foot in the lift. There will even be tablets on site, inviting guests to get online and share their experience.

Reservations for individuals

are done via the website, while

companies are invited to book by

phone, so they can communicate

any special needs or wishes. Under

the motto "Cooking around the

world", the following chefs have

been invited to pamper guests in

Brussels:

French chef Claude Bosi, of the

two-Michelin-starred Hibiscus in

London (until 24 November)

British chef Anthony Demetre, of

London's Arbutus, also carrying



two Michelin stars (25 November-1 December)

British chef Sat Bains, of Nottingham's two-starred restaurant of the same name (2-8 December)

While the chefs are not giving away any clues as to what's on

the menu, we can deduct from

their style of restaurants that the offer will most certainly be

European and artisanal, while at

the same time refined, daring and

innovative. The all-inclusive lunch

costs €267 per person, with dinner at €297.

Until
12 February

IT Tower

Louizalaan 480, Brussels

02.648.59.17

► www.the-c-experience.com

Stop the clocks

Unlikely museum honours the golden age of pigeon racing in Flanders

Toon Lambrechts

Behind the doors of this ordinary-looking house in East Flanders is a lovingly maintained museum honouring the craftsmen and women who created something crucial to a much-loved Flemish pastime.

Once upon a time, pigeon racing was immensely popular in Flanders. Almost everyone had a grandfather who "played with the pigeons". The equipment used to time the pigeons' flight was a Flemish product, and the factory where the counters were made is now a museum where time seems to have stood still. Nothing about the facade of this normal-looking house in Lede, East Flanders, suggests that a small but unique museum is contained within. Christiane Nijs opens the door that gives on to a spacious workshop, and, once inside, you feel like you are stepping into another era, a time of handicrafts when people took pride in their labour.

There are manually driven metal-working machines, endless rows of wooden cupboards, jars filled with spare copper parts, all neatly arranged and numbered. On the second floor stands a long workbench, the drawers still full of tools. On the wall are old photos of men in overalls with impressive moustaches. There are also piles of machines that resemble wooden clocks. But they are not. For those unfamiliar with Flemish folk culture, pigeon racing might



The unobtrusive La Lédoise museum in Lede

about the weather at the place of departure. All the pigeons would wear a ring around their leg; when

forgotten machines, the *constateurs* used to time the pigeons' flight, were made here in Lede at La Lédoise. Nijs

The 1950s and '60s were golden decades for La Lédoise, which remained in the family until it closed in 1973. The

everything meticulously. Now we can find any spare part in no time."

Nijs and her husband, Frans Fransen, have maintained the factory as a sacred

place, making it a unique piece of industrial archaeology.

It's not just the buildings and machinery that have been preserved:

Everything is still in place as it was left. Nijs and Fransen are the last witnesses who can tell you first-hand how it all worked at La Lédoise. It's something unique, and more than worth a visit.

La Lédoise is at Kerkevijverstraat 13 in Lede. For groups, reservations can be made through the Lede Tourism Department on 053.60.68.00. More info about pigeon clocks can be found at www.duivenklokken.com

"Nijs still recalls the sounds of the machines, the movements the workers repeated all day, who worked where in the workshops"

seem a bizarre phenomenon. The principle, however, is simple. You breed pigeons, usually in a hutch at the back of the garden and usually to the annoyance of your wife. On Friday or Saturday, you bring your pigeons to the village pigeon club. The birds then go by train or lorry to destinations in France or Spain, from where they are released, and the one that gets home first is the winner.

On Sundays, before each radio news bulletin, there would be a short message for pigeon fanciers

the bird returned, that ring had to be taken to the club and put in a machine known as a *constateur*, or assessor. Then competitors would know who won. And drink a pint, of course. These

repeated all day, who worked where in the workshops...

Full of nostalgia, she speaks about how time goes by, how the women of La Lédoise folded control papers, numbered them and provided a rubber ring; how much noise the metal presses made... One thing is certain: A lot of hard work took place here.

The story of La Lédoise begins in 1898, when Jef Van Nerum, a watchmaker from Lede, took out a patent on the first type of flight time recorder. In 1904, La Compagnie Lédoise was founded, and one of the founders was Nijs' grandfather Emile Daelmans.

craftsmanship could not compete with industrial production, and new investments would have cost too much. It was the end of an era. For 30 years, the workshops remained silent. Then the building was opened to the public on Heritage Day in 2003; and it feels like at any moment the workers could walk in, sit down and start their shift. No machine shows a speck of rust. The drawers are still full of tools. The smell of fresh machine oil lingers; dust is nowhere to be seen. The stocks are updated and organised. The production could be resumed tomorrow, says Nijs. "My mother was particularly keen on order," she says. "She numbered



The forgotten constateurs were used to time pigeon flights



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Mater Dolorosa

Ghent twosome Madensuyu swear by a DIY approach

Christophe Verbiest

Since they first started playing together 21 years ago, Ghent duo Madensuyu have gone on to produce manic yet occasionally intimate albums with a personal touch that mark them out as one of Flanders' finest. Their latest is something of a tribute to women.

I don't often get served sparkling water when I visit musicians, but in the case of Madensuyu, it's no coincidence. Their name means sparkling water in Turkish, and indeed, it says so on the bottle. The duo from Afsnee, a hamlet in southwest Ghent, have just released their third album, *Stabat Mater*, filled with their characteristic hard-hitting, noisy music in which a manic guitar, hyperkinetic drums and primal screams are firmly intertwined. They also cover new ground: Some tracks are really intimate and in almost half the songs they have integrated young voices from the Sint-Niklaas boys' choir In Dulci Jubilo. This album confirms Madensuyu's status as one of the best and most uncompromising Flemish bands.

"It's possible that we know each other better than our partners," admits Pieterjan Vervondel, the 36-year-old who formed the band with Stijn De Gezelle, 35. The two started playing together 21 years ago, and it's been 21 intense years. The two met at school. Vervondel recalls: "Stijn had bought a guitar and I told him I'd like to drum. Afterwards, he literally asked me *every day* if I had bought a drum kit. The day I finally did he immediately came over with his guitar and we've been playing together ever since." They never played in other bands; they tried



© Christina Vandenbroucke

on one song." De Gezelle adds: "We want our music to sound very spontaneous, but we need to labour a lot to achieve that."

It took Madensuyu a dozen years of playing together before they entered the public eye. In 2004 they grabbed the bronze medal in Humo's Rock Rally, Flanders' most important rock competition. Before that, they almost hadn't played live. But the urge to play live must have been huge, surely?

"Not at all," says De Gezelle. "At that time I preferred making songs to climbing on a stage." Vervondel, though, says: "It was different with me. I was convinced we were creating something worthwhile and wanted to show that to other people. Since we got hardly any concerts, we organised a festival by ourselves, Rock Andre." With a broad grin he adds: "With Madensuyu as opener and headliner." De Gezelle says: "We played for 20 people. But the second edition was more successful and we weren't the only band on the line-up anymore." Madensuyu released their first EP, *Adjust We*, in 2005. It immediately became clear that this was an exceptional band, and not just in terms of the music. The CD came in a self-constructed jewel case containing a piece of steel bar in the spine. Their three full-length albums got a similar treatment: *A Field Between* (2006) contained a palm branch, and 2008's *D Is Done* a mirror instead of a CD booklet and an

electrical fuse.

Stabat Mater has a small wooden board instead of a CD booklet and its back cover is also made from wood. De Gezelle explains: "It's the most personal way to turn a mass product into something unique." They assemble their CDs themselves and self-release them, on their own Suyu Makinesi label, named after the Turkish word for juice maker. Much to my surprise, Vervondel mentions that they now have "a sort of manager". The phrasing shows he has difficulty believing it himself. As the title suggests, the new album draws its inspiration from "Stabat Mater", a 13th-century hymn about the pain of the Virgin Mary during the crucifixion of Jesus. In the classical world, it has been put to music often, most famously by Italian composer Pergolesi. It's almost uncharted territory in the rock field, though. And Madensuyu didn't use the original Latin text. Lyricist De Gezelle wrote his own words and doesn't refer literally to the Holy Mother of the Catholics. He explains: "I was mostly intrigued by the *stabat*: The fact that a mother who has to bear

the most gruesome pain imaginable – losing her child – refuses to break under all this strain and stays standing. It's not an album about the Virgin Mary, but a tribute to women. It's born out of the desire to honour my mother. Meanwhile, my girlfriend got pregnant, so it's also dedicated to her."

Since all the work on the CD is done, Madensuyu are preparing for their upcoming shows and they do it with as much dedication as they make their albums. You might even use the word manic, if you know that on stage the position of the instruments has to be, to the centimetre, exactly as in their rehearsal space.

Vervondel, without irony, says: "I feel it if Stijn's amplifier is standing one centimetre too much to the left. Really!" De Gezelle adds: "Details are important. If I don't warm up my guitar strings two days before a show, the instrument doesn't sound as I want it to." Vervondel: "He's not lying! And the night before a show I sleep with my cymbals." They laugh, and Vervondel says: "Just kidding. That last remark was a joke." But only that last one.

Until
14 February

Across Flanders

► www.madensuyu.be

"
We want our music
to sound very
spontaneous, but we
need to labour a lot to
achieve that

out some bass players in the beginning, but that never lasted long. "One of them left after one day," smiles Vervondel. "We made him extremely nervous. He was used to a situation of coming up with three new songs every rehearsal, whereas we spend three months

NEW ALBUM REVIEWS

Guy Van Nueten

Pacman • Dunk!

Though Guy Van Nueten made two interesting albums with the guitar pop combo The Sands, in the 1990s, his biggest claim to fame might be his 2003 album with dEUS singer Tom Barman. For the past decade he's focused on instrumental music, working for film and theatre. Sporadically, he releases an album like *Pacman* on which he only plays classical piano. The album opens with Bach's "Inventio 13". The rest are Van Nueten's compositions: impressionistic



piano melodies, sometimes manic. Inconspicuously beautiful.

► www.guyvannueten.be

De Piepkes

De Piepkes • Rough Trade

Three years after De Piepkes (The Fledglings) saw the light of day for a track on a compilation, they have made their first album. This time the original Piepkes – Pieter-Jan De Smet and Frederik Sioen – joined forces with Roland Van Campenhout, one of the godfathers of roots music in Flanders. They sing in Dutch, unusual for all of them, and this is first and foremost a children's project. It's a musically varied album, ranging from angular

blues to endearing folk. It's always nice, yet the music lacks the cutting-edge quality of the three Piepkes' best solo work. But the music functions well as the conveyor for the stories and fairytales they sing.

► www.depiepkes.be

Mintzkov

Sky Hits Ground • Gentle Recordings

They're rare, bands that get better with every album, but Mintzkov certainly do. On their fourth CD, they stay true to their noisy pop

style, but the songs are even more intense than we're used to from them. And more melancholic, too. It might be related to the death of Bert Van den Roye, to whom the album is dedicated. He played in the band for seven years, but he had to leave after the release of their debut, because his addiction troubled the group's relationship. His death hit them hard, though the record isn't exclusively marinated in grief. At the end of the album dawns a glimmer of hope and optimism.

► www.mintzkov.be

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Best dance album ever to 2 Many DJs

The Red Bull Elektropedia Awards has chosen 2 Many DJs' 2002 album *As Heard on Radio Soulwax pt2* as the best Belgian dance album of all time, which they handed over to the electronica duo last weekend, just before the start of Ghent's annual I Love Techno. *The New York Times* knew this much earlier, as they placed *As Heard* in their list of top 10 albums of 2002: "If this record doesn't get your party going, you're at the wrong party," the paper wrote.

► www.2manydjs.com

Vandekeybus wins Evens Arts Prize

Flemish choreographer Wim Vandekeybus, founder and artistic director of the Brussels-based dance troupe Ultima Vez, has won this year's Evens Arts Prize. The pan-European organisation awards the prize every two years to an artist who encourages audiences to look at the contemporary European reality from another angle and provides a vision of living in a global society. "Wim Vandekeybus receives the prize," noted the jury, "for his important contribution to European contemporary dance, for his multidisciplinary work and for his social and cultural commitment at both local and international levels." The prize will be handed over on 4 December in Bruges as part of the December Dance festival, which Vandekeybus is curating.

► www.evensfoundation.be

New pademelon pair at zoo

The Antwerp Zoo is now in possession of two Brown's pademelons (*pictured*), a marsupial that resembles the kangaroo but is smaller. The male and female pair arrived a few days ago and are getting used to their new home in the park's Egyptian Temple. Brown's pademelons originate in New Guinea, and Antwerp is only the third zoo in Europe to have a pair; there are only seven in total on the continent.

► www.zooantwerpen.be



Power to the viewers

Flemish broadcaster introduces reality show for Eurovision selection

Els Mertens

Every year, Flemish public station Eén and the Walloon TV channel RTBF take turns selecting a candidate to represent Belgium at Eurovision. This year, Eén has decided to shake things up. In February, the channel will premiere the brand-new *Eurosong 2014*, the Flemish Eurovision preselections show. Over seven Sunday evenings, four experts with solid music biz credentials will look for the best candidates and songs. But much like in reality talent shows like *The Voice van Vlaanderen* and *Belgium's Got Talent*, viewers at home will get the final say. Together with a European jury, they'll decide which candidate gets to go to Copenhagen, where the Eurovision final is being held this year. Singer-songwriters participating in the Flemish preselections can also expect more restrictions. For the first time in the history of the

"The magic of a beautiful voice plus a great song doesn't come along that often"

programme, the contestants won't be allowed to choose the song with which they'll try to convince judges and viewers. Instead, the four industry experts will choose the songs and match them to the contestants.

The largest book fair in the low countries, Boekenbeurs in Antwerp, was the location for the setting of the world record yesterday for the largest number of books ever toppled in a domino chain. Organisers stood the books on end in elaborate patterns, spelling out the words *boek, beurs* and *lees*, winding the chain around the stands of the fair, which is currently running at Antwerp Expo.

Boek.be, Flanders' promotions agency for books, organised the event and pulverised the previous Guinness World Record held by the Seattle Public Library in the United States. That record was 2,131; boek.be clocked in at 4,845 books. The first book in the line was Flemish photographer Lieve Blancquaert's *Birth Day*, based on her travels across the world to be present at births in different cultures. That was symbolic,



and viewers selected Witloof Bay as the Belgian entry to Eurovision. This year, They sent Roberto Bellarosa from Liège to the finals in Sweden. Two castings next February will see the artists competing before the jury for one of eight tickets to go on to the semi-finals. During the casting, the candidates will be asked to perform a song of their own choosing from the contest's 58-year history. For the candidates who don't make it, there will be one last chance to win over judges and viewers in the "The Call Back". In this third show of the programme, which will be broadcast live, the remaining contestants will compete for the four last tickets to the semi-finals.

Over the three semi-finals, four artists will present their songs to viewers. In the meantime, the candidates will work to perfect their entries, which Goddaer and the other experts will choose. In the semi-finals, the experts and viewers decide who makes it to the Grand Final on 16 March.

Martens, for his part, doesn't think that just talent will be enough for a ticket to Copenhagen. "I think people overestimate talent," he says. "Work ethic, perseverance and discipline are equally important." 2 Fabiola, a Flemish dance band popular in the 1990s, and Flemish boy band and teenage-favourite 3M8S (pronounced "Three mates"), have already announced they'll participate in the preselections. In 2010 and 2012, Eén sent singer-songwriter Tom Dice and teenage singer Iris to the Eurovision finals respectively. Dice impressed his fellow Belgians by coming in sixth with his easy-going guitar solo "Me and My Guitar". In 2011, RTBF judges

The Eurovision Song Contest 2014 marks the 59th edition of the music festival. Two semi-finals will be organised in May. Which of the two semi-finals Belgium will participate in hasn't yet been announced.

► www.eurovision.tv

Boek.be breaks book domino chain world record at Boekenbeurs

according to boek.be, to give birth to the domino chain.

The entire event was a symbol, in fact, of the chain of production of books, from author, to printer, to distributor, to retailer. We believe in the importance of the book and in the future of the book," said Boek.be director André Vandorp, "and we wanted to say that in a way that would be creative and noticeable."

The event made news around the world, and a video can be seen on the boek.be website.

Another successful activity of Boekenbeurs, which finished up last Monday, was the programme for schoolchildren, which saw 4,800 nine- to 12-year-olds coming through the doors to take part in workshops with illustrators and hear readings by authors. The children received materials to take home, which encourages them to read a book and



Boek.be toppled nearly 5,000 books to break the book domino world record

invite authors to talk to their class. More than 70 local illustrators and authors took part in the project. "It's a wonderful initiative," said Rob Baetens, author of fiction for

young adults. "It's always exciting to meet readers in the book Mecca and infect them with the virus to read!"

Lisa Bradshaw

► www.boek.be

What have they ever done for us?

High Tech Romans

Until 31 August, 2014 | Technopolis, Mechelen

► www.technopolis.be

Technopolis, the hands-on science and technology museum in Mechelen, is bringing visitors up to date with some cutting-edge technology developed 2,000 years ago. The interactive exhibition *High Tech Romans* introduces visitors to innovations developed during the time of the Roman Empire.

Via the various creations of the Romans, Technopolis gives a historical background to many of our current basic methods in areas such as engineering. The Romans constructed complex bridges and aqueducts that still impress professionals today, and they could only build these

because they had also developed state-of-the-art mechanical installations like cranes.

Two thousand years ago, the Romans already had plumbing systems and sewers, the floors in many houses were heated, and doors could be locked with a key. *High Tech Romans* covers nine themes: water, architecture, military, crafts, communication, arithmetic, roads, luxury and machines. For every theme there are interactive installations, complemented with showcases full of archaeological finds from the northern part of the Roman Empire.

At the military installation,

visitors can shoot with a mini ballista, a Roman siege weapon designed like a huge crossbow. Next to the installation, original Roman spears are on display. The architecture installation challenges visitors to place tiles on a roof according to the Roman method, while real Roman roof tiles are on show. The artefacts are part of the collections of the LVR-LandesMuseum in Bonn and the Museum Het Valkhof in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, while Museon in The Hague is also a partner in the project. Technopolis has also created an educational kit for students in the first level of secondary education, a thematic science show, demo and workshops. **Andy Furniere**



CONCERT

Karim Baggili

15 November, 20.00 | Molière, Brussels

► www.muziekpublieke.be

Karim Baggili is no stranger to world music. The young Brussels-born singer/guitarist made his name fusing influences from his family's ancestral Jordan and Yugoslavia as well as the contemporary western European sounds of his native Belgium. On his latest CD, *Kali City*, Baggili gets even closer to his Arabic roots, aiming above all to evoke the festive atmosphere of family gatherings from North Africa to the Near East. He is joined on stage by his five-



piece band, comprised of Moroccan, Lebanese and Belgian musicians who play loads of traditional instruments like the oud, the ney and the kawala (not to be confused with its Australian homophone). **Georgio Valentino**

FESTIVAL

Crossing Border

17 November | Arenberg, Antwerp

► www.crossingborder.be

For two full decades, The Hague's Crossing Border Festival has been blending literature and music into one harmonious whole. True to its name, the Dutch festival crossed the border into Flanders some years ago to establish an Antwerp edition. Writers, poets, musicians, artists and filmmakers from around the world are invited to participate in this all-day celebration of artistic cross-pollination. This year's music headliner is Aidan Moffat, singer of '90s-era Scottish indie group Arab Strap. London-based



experimental rock group These New Puritans are also on the bill (*pictured*). Among the 16 international literary invitees are Australian novelist Deborah Levy, Spanish writer Jesús Carrasco and Pulitzer prize-winning American author Richard Russo. **GV**

VISUAL ARTS

Kaat Marchau

Until 23 November | Galerie Ludwig Trossaert, Antwerp | ► www.galerieludwigtrossaert.com

Flemish painter Kaat Marchau doesn't subscribe to the cliché that the eyes are windows to the soul. Her exhibition *Silent Eyes, Speaking Language* meditates on the monotony of that most romanticised of organs. The eyes of the women in her Cubist-inspired portraits are flat, black and standardised. It's a challenge for both artist and viewer; the emotive power of these canvases must come from elsewhere. Different gestures, contexts, techniques and colours produce the range of effects that another artist might elicit through tried-and-tested signs: a tear in the eye or a bat of the eyelash. The result is an art that straddles the line between figurative and abstract, with the familiar image of the human face made alien then humanised again through gestalt. **GV**



LITERATURE

Three Indian Writers

20 November, 20.00 | Bozar, Brussels | ► www.bozar.be



The biennale Europalia India rolls on with an evening dedicated to contemporary literature from the subcontinent, represented in the flesh by three distinguished writers. Vikas Swarup's 2005 novel *Q&A* was adapted for the silver screen under the title *Slumdog Millionaire*, earning him a heap of awards and a worldwide audience. Joining him are Delhi journalist Manu Joseph (currently writer-in-residence at Brussels' Passa Porta) and poet, songwriter and novelist Jeet Thayil (*pictured*), whose recent work *Narcopolis* has been compared to William Burroughs' strung-out odyssey *Naked Lunch*. The trio read from and discuss their work in English with a panel of Flemish journalists. **GV**

VISUAL ARTS

Veurne (West Flanders)

Heiligen op de broodplank (Saints on the Breadboard):

An exhibition on the remarkable stories of various saints, each with their own special bond with bread or pastries. Think of Saint Aubert, the patron saint of bakers, Saint Nicholas and his *speculoos* and Saint Hubertus bread

Until 21 March at

Bakkerijmuseum, Albert I-laan 2

► www.bakkerijmuseum.be

CONCERT

Antwerp

Night of the Proms: One of Europe's biggest indoor music events combining classical music and pop, this year featuring Haitian-American rapper Wyclef Jean, Cuban-American singer Gloria Estefan, Scottish singer-songwriter Amy Macdonald and English rock musician John Miles, among others

Until 16 November at Sportpaleis, Schijnpoortweg 119

► www.notp.com/belgie

FAMILY

Mechelen

Libelle Winterfair: Cosy Christmas fair hosted by Flemish magazine *Libelle*, featuring stands with holiday décor and party items, plus cooking demonstrations by top chefs, creative workshops and entertainment for all ages

14-17 November at Nekkerhal, Nekkerspoel-Borcht

► www.tinyurl.com/libellefair

FOOD & DRINK

Week van de Smaak (Week of Taste): Annual gastronomic festival with a plethora of activities centred around fine food and drink, this year with a Water and Fire theme that features the Smaakboot, a culinary cruise through Flanders' channels, a Brussels barbecue competition and numerous brewery visits, chocolate tastings and special menus at restaurants across the region

14-24 November across Brussels and Flanders

► www.weekvandesmaak.be

Brussels

Adegga Wine Market: First-ever event of its kind, featuring top wine producers from across Europe and a unique opportunity to taste rare and old Port wines

16 November 11.00-18.00 at The Hotel, Waterloose Steenweg 38

► www.adegga.com

FILM

Antwerp

Latin American Film Festival of Flanders: Fifth edition of the festival featuring a selection of features, documentaries, animation and short films, plus concerts, DJ party and more

Until 25 November at UGC Cinema, Van Ertbornstraat 17

► www.latinofilmfestival.be

Talking Dutch

The Gas is always greener

Derek Blyth

The Flemish singer Fred Di Bono likes to listen to good music while he's driving in his car. But he was recently shocked to discover that he had broken the law while innocently cruising around Antwerp. A police officer on the beat had filed a report that said the music *duidelijk herkenbaar te horen was vanop 30 meter afstand van de voertuig* – it was clearly audible at a distance of 30 metres from the car. That meant a fine on the grounds that the driver *de openbare rust hebben verstoord* – he had disturbed the peace. Di Bono was furious. He vented his anger on his Facebook page, resorting to a choice English curse word.

The Dutch language is rich, but sometimes, when you are really furious, you have to use old-fashioned Anglo-Saxon. *"Vette middenvinger"* – extended middle finger, he added. Di Bono had fallen foul of a *GAS* or *gemeentelijke administratieve sanctie* – a municipal administrative

fine that can be imposed for anti-social behaviour. The mayor of Kortrijk, Vincent Van Quickenborne, thinks some of these fines could be abolished. He has launched an online referendum to find out what people think about one such trespass. *Burgers kunnen laten weten of grasmaaien voor hen voortaan ook op zondag mag* – Citizens

months of persistent rain. The law is the law. Van Quickenborne used to be a minister in the federal government. He became famous for abolishing Kafkaesque laws that served no useful purpose. Now he's considering some local laws. *Wie op een speelplein rondhangt zonder te spelen, riskeert bijvoorbeeld geen Gas-boete meer* – a person who hangs around a playground without playing, for example, would no longer risk a GAS fine. *Ook confetti strooien op trouwfeesten en op carnaval is niet langer strafbaar* – throwing confetti at a wedding or during Carnival would also no longer be punished.

But he isn't rushing things. He has simply launched an online referendum to gauge the public's reaction. It's not binding, but the mayor says he will listen to the people.

It of course will not make any difference unless you live in Kortrijk. So my advice is to turn down the volume when you are driving through Antwerp, keep away from playgrounds and let the grass grow under your feet on a Sunday.

are asked to say whether mowing lawns on a Sunday should be made legal.

At present, the law is clear. Anyone who gets out their lawnmower on a Sunday risks a €175 fine. It is no defence to argue that it was the first dry day in Flanders after three

VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY

SilentThunder @SilentThunder_

A trip through Flanders by train <http://wonderfulwanderings.com/a-trip-through-flanders-by-train/> ... via @wondwand #travel #Belgium #Flanders #tips #rtw #ttot

Brian Seaman @BrianMSeaman

Well done to #Flanders who picked up the @Amadeus_UK award for #accessibletourism yesterday @WTM_WRTD: <http://tinyurl.com/q88mubr>

Beer Tourism @Beer_Tourism

Oud Bruin (6% ABV) brewed by Het Verzet at Het Gulden Spoor is a typical #Flemish sour #ale <http://bit.ly/15c0OVx>

Visit Flanders @VisitFlanders

Hurray! Bruges made the list of "10 Irresistibly Charming World Heritage Cities" <http://bit.ly/1f6si2p> cc/ @Visit_Bruges #VisitFlanders

Fans of Flanders

Can't fault Flemish cooking! Kobe Desramaults is voted 'Best Foreign Chef'! <http://tinyurl.com/nncwd6n>

Flanders Image

ALLEZ, EDDY! Gert Embrechts' feature film debut has won the prize for Best International Children's Film at the Mostra Internacional de Cinema in Sao Paulo.

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Poll

Arne Quinze says he's delighted when people protest against his works, like "Rock Strangers" in Ostend. What's your view?

a. Public money shouldn't be spent on art that the same public hates

0%

b. He's right. Art doesn't need to be beautiful, it needs to be confrontational

38%

c. Artists like to shock in order to get attention, but that doesn't mean their work is worthwhile

63%

Many of you clearly saw Quinze's point but had one of your own: that shock value may be a necessary condition of an artist's work, but it isn't a sufficient one. All of the best artists have been considered shocking in their time, but not all shocking art is "good". It would be hard to argue that Quinze's

work is not imposing and striking. His piece "The Sequence" next to the Flemish parliament in Brussels will be sorely missed when it goes, and "Rock Strangers" in Ostend certainly cheers up a rather dull stretch of pavement. A sizeable minority of you agree that art needs to be confrontational, and

in fact you're not in dispute with the rest – it needs to be confrontational and it needs to be worthwhile. Nobody – not a single voter – thought that there's no place for public funding for confrontational works. And for that, we salute you.

THE LAST WORD

Where there's a Will

"The Red Devils are going to Rio" A refrain from a new anthem written by Flemish crooner Will Tura for the World Cup may not be going to Rio, if the football union opts for Stromae instead

Dam dangerous

"We were surrounded by men with machetes. I saw hate in the eyes of some of them. They wanted to see blood shed."

Flemish photographer Michel De Ruyck was detained temporarily in a Peruvian jungle, accused of being a spy by opponents of a new dam

Money talks

"People still think I'm a nutcase, but they're fascinated by the fact that I earn so much money, so they always address me as Mr Tuymans."

Flanders' most successful living painter Luc Tuymans, interviewed in *Knack*

Alarm Bellens

"There are worse things in life than being fired." Belgacom boss Didier Bellens is in the headlines again, this time for insulting comments about the prime minister



Next week's question:
Last week, the federal government took one step closer to allowing euthanasia for minors, under strict conditions (see p4). What do you think?

Log on to the *Flanders Today* website and vote under the article at this link: www.tinyurl.com/euthanasiapoll