

## Shooting suspect arrested

A suspect in the killing of three people at Brussels' Jewish Museum has been arrested

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## The informant

Bart De Wever has been appointed informateur in the formation of a new federal government

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## Show2014

Discover the next big thing in fashion at the Antwerp Academy's annual catwalk show

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# Intellectual hotspot

## Unesco recognises KU Leuven's archives, a veritable memoir of one of Europe's oldest institutions

Tom Peeters

Last month, the archives of the medieval and early modern University of Leuven were added to the Unesco Memory of the World Register, a list of the world's most important documentary heritage. *Flanders Today* takes a trip down memory lane to discover what secrets and scandals these 600-year-old parchments contain.

The documents contained in the archives of Leuven's university library and the repository of the State Archives in Brussels are a written history of long-gone times both exemplary and unique in the development of Western European universities.

"These bulls, charters, letters and other documents illustrate the vivid and idiosyncratic biotope the academic world was during the Ancien Régime, with all sorts of privileges for its members," according to an archive administrator. "They take us back to a time when people weren't considered equal."

These archives point to the larger backdrop of crucial developments in those times – primarily the birth and spread of humanism and the introduction of the Catholic Reformation. With trailblazing scholars, such as cartographer Gerard Mercator, anatomist Andreas Vesalius, philologist Justus Lipsius and "Prince of the Humanists" Desiderius Erasmus, all teaching in Leuven, the international appeal of the university grew steadily.

In the 16th century, Leuven became the second largest university on the European continent – only Paris had one bigger.

But in addition to illustrating the university's then vanguard intellectual role, the archives offer a crucial and sometimes surprising insight into an institution that – between the 15th and 18th centuries – was very much a world of its own.

Dr Eddy Put, head of the Leuven repository of the State Archives, where 170 metres' worth of these old university records are stored, explains that the university boasted its own beer and wine cellars, tribunals and prisons.

"It's hard to imagine, but if you wanted to have the same authority now that the rector had back then, you would have to be at least mayor, judge, priest and taxman combined," he says. "Needless to say, once enrolled, you became part of a protected community and received all kinds of privileges."

Which brings us to one of the key pieces in the archives: the "matrikel" books. "If you wanted to obtain the social, legal and tax status of the university community, you had to go to the rector in person," explains Marc Nelissen, archivist and team leader of the university archives, an independent unit of the university library, which stores the most important and valuable pieces in the old archive, good for an additional 30 metres.

"Once you paid the tax, the rector personally recorded your name in the 'matrikel' or enrolment register," Nelissen continues. "All these books, with the complete lists of students, are still intact."

To be exact, 175,000 students between 1426 and 1797.

The list's international range of names is striking, and Nelissen explains that they often receive requests from Germany, Hungary, Poland and other countries, for information about people who studied at the university.

"In the 16th century," he says, "Leuven was a hotspot for the intellectual elite."

## To write home about

The engaging exhibition *Werkplekken* in Hasselt takes you behind the closed doors of the spaces in which Flanders' writers and illustrators ply their trade

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# Jewish Museum shooting suspect arrested in south of France

Video found on Roubaix man Mehdi Nemmouche with message that he was targeting Jews

Alan Hope

A man has been arrested in the south of France for the shooting death of three people at the Jewish Museum of Belgium in Brussels last month. The suspect has been identified as 29-year-old Mehdi Nemmouche, from Roubaix, France, close to the Belgian border. He is said to have become radicalised in prison, where he served two years from 2009 for armed robbery. Prior to that, a former lawyer said, Nemmouche had not been religiously inclined. He went to Syria last year to fight on the side of radical Muslims opposed to president Bashar al-Assad. Nemmouche (*pictured*) was picked up last Friday after a routine drugs check by customs at Saint-Charles bus station in Marseilles, where he had just got off the bus from Brussels. Officers discovered a firearm in his luggage, as well as a Kalashnikov of the sort used in the

Brussels shooting, a Go Pro camera and a peaked cap similar to the one being worn by the shooter in security footage released by police. According to the prosecutor, the camera contained a video in which Nemmouche filmed his weapons while explaining that the attack was against Jews, with the intention of "setting Brussels alight". According to French president François Hollande, the suspect was arrested "the moment he set foot in France. The whole government is mobilised to pursue jihadists and prevent them from causing harm". Before the 24 May shooting in Brussels, in which an Israeli couple and a French national were killed and a Belgian seriously injured, Nemmouche had lived for a time in Kortrijk, according to federal prosecutor Frederic Van Leeuw. At the weekend, a search was carried out at the house where he was



staying, and two other occupants were questioned.

The Belgian federal prosecutor has applied to have Nemmouche extradited to stand trial for the crime.

Meanwhile, a youth who made a

false declaration of responsibility for the attack via Twitter could face criminal charges, police said. The message was addressed to Joël Rubinfeld, chair of the Belgian League Against Anti-Semitism, and included a death threat against him.

The case was turned over days after the attack to Belgium's federal prosecutor's office and classified as a terrorist attack. The move allows the prosecutor to bring in an additional magistrate specialised in terrorism. The move to the federal prosecutor's office also frees up additional resources and eases the way for international contacts.

The bodies of the Israeli couple who died were repatriated for burial. A 67-year-old French woman who worked as a museum volunteer also died in the attack, and a 25-year-old Belgian man, an employee of the museum, is in critical condition in hospital.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave Belgium's acting prime minister Elio Di Rupo an assurance of his government's co-operation in the investigation of the attack.

## Bruges killer turns himself in to police

Police have arrested a man in connection with the stabbing death of a young man on the Markt square in Bruges. The man turned himself in to police in his home town of Leuven. The attack took place in the early morning hours of Friday, 30 May. A second assailant has been identified but remains at large, police said. Mikey Peeters, 19, a student at the hotel school in Kortrijk, was attacked by two men as he walked across the Markt at about 5.00 on Friday morning. Police later said he had been stabbed six times, four times in the back. Meanwhile, the vehicle used by the suspects was found in Ostend and impounded by police. The car was missing its right front wheel, suggesting it had been involved in an accident. Following the release of artist's impressions of the two suspects, police in Bruges received about 50 tips from the public. The investigation also turned up a pair of spectacles lost by one of the attackers. The 21-year-old man in custody is being detained on suspicion of



murder, a spokesperson for the prosecutor's office said. As *Flanders Today* went to press, he was expected to appear in court to have his detention prolonged. The second assailant, also thought to be a man of about 20 from Leuven, is still at large. In Bruges, people have left bouquets of flowers and other tributes near where the attack took place. On Saturday, music and other activities at the annual May Fair were silenced for five minutes as a mark of respect. A White March is planned for Wednesday evening this week against senseless violence. Last Monday, the hotel school where Peeters was a student held a memorial for him, including a march to the scene of the attack and a visit to the city hall to sign a book of condolence. AH

## Flanders produces less unsorted waste

Flemish people last year produced 149.5 kilograms of unsorted waste each, roughly 1kg less than in 2012, according to a survey carried out by the Association of Flemish Towns and Municipalities (VVSG). The figure excludes paper, plastics and metal containers, which in most places are collected separately.

"We can't put an exact figure on the quantity, because it's a trial, but we've seen in the past that our calculations are reasonably realistic," said a spokesperson for the VVSG. The reduction in waste, though apparently small,

is considered remarkable, he said, because of certain changes in the waste situation.

Flanders gained 400,000 new residents in the year in question, while the density of population increased, with vacant plots of building land within municipalities increasingly occupied.

Municipal councils and the inter-municipal waste management agencies were happy, the VVSG report said, that their continued efforts regarding sorting and waste prevention were continuing to produce results. AH

## Flipkens and Wickmayer knocked out of French Open

Both Kirsten Flipkens and Yanina Wickmayer only made it to the second round of the French Open in Roland Garros, Paris, before both being knocked out last week. Flipkens, ranked 22 in the world, surprisingly succumbed 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 to Israel's Julia Glushko, who is currently ranked 98. Flipkens (*pictured*) had earlier beaten Danka Kovinic from Montenegro 7-6, 6-2 in the first round.

Wickmayer, currently at 64 in the Women's Tennis Association rankings, also fell to a lower-ranked player, losing 6-2, 6-4 to number 85, Silvia Soler-Espinosa from Spain. Wickmayer came into the match on the back of an impressive first-round victory over former world number one Caroline Wozniacki, the 13th-seeded Dane, 7-6, 4-6, 6-2.



Alison Van Uytvanck, from Grimbergen, taking part in only her second major, earlier lost her first-round match to Austria's Tamira Paszek 6-2, 7-6. Leo Cendrowicz

## THE WEEK IN FIGURES

2,767

voters took a selfie in the polling booth on election day, despite reports that such photos are against the law

€2,635,000

raised by the 1000 Kilometres Against Cancer cycle marathon last weekend, a record amount for the Flemish organisation Come Up Against Cancer

42

preference votes recorded for Dirk De Vis, mayor of Ham, Limburg province. The total was a mistake, and De Vis withdrew his threat of legal action to force a new election. The correct total was 1,109

837mg

of cocaine used every day per 1,000 residents of Antwerp, making it Europe's leading consumer

27%

of gynaecologists in Flanders have been involved in civil or criminal proceedings. Half of all complains were brought by medical insurers, and half by patients



WEEK IN BRIEF

SouthKoreansoprano**SumiHwang won the Queen Elisabeth Music Competition** devoted to voice last weekend at Bozar. Hwang won the €25,000 prize with a programme that included Haydn, Nicolai and Mozart. Belgium’s Jodie Devos was second with €20,000, equalling the achievement of Thomas Blondelle in the last singing competition in 2011. Chiara Skerath, who was born in Flanders and now lives in Switzerland, won the Public Prize and takes home €8,000.

The **Brussels-Vilvoorde waterbus** is back this year, with a new timetable and a faster rush-hour voyage. The service started last year, running two days a week between Brussels and Vilvoorde, but there were complaints that the trip took too long and didn’t coincide with peak travel times. The 8,500 people who used the service were mainly day-trippers coming to Brussels or visiting the Drie Fonteynen park. This year the boat leaves Vilvoorde at 8.00, with the last return leaving Brussels at 17.00, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The first and last trips have been cut from 80 to 55 minutes.

▶ [www.waterbus.eu](http://www.waterbus.eu)

**Belgacom is appealing a fine** of €403,000 imposed by the telecommunications regulator BIPT for lack of transparency in allowing access to broadband to other telecoms operators. The company claims that the regulator in its judgement admits the “lack of clarity” in certain dealings had “little effect on services provided”.

Flemish beers picked up 11 titles at the Australian **International Beer Awards** in Melbourne. Gold medals went to Brugse Zot from De Halve Maan in Bruges and Cassis from Lindemans in Vlezenbeek. Silver went to Straffe Hendrik from De Halve Maan, Lindemans Oude Gueuze Cuvée René and Kriek, Oude Kriek and Oude Gueuze from

Oud Beersel. Bronze medals were awarded to Brugse Zot Dubbel from Halve Maan, Lindemans Pecheresse and Apple and Cuvée Soeur’ise from De Leite in Ruddervoorde, West Flanders.

Herman De Croo will take the **chair of the Flemish Parliament** when it resumes on 17 June. De Croo, 77, has been a member of the federal parliament for 46 years, and while he has never sat in the Flemish Parliament – which has been directly elected only since 1995 – he was a member of its forerunners, the Dutch-speaking Culture Council and the Flemish Council, for 24 years. Taking all together, De Croo is reckoned to be the doyen of the Flemish Parliament and, according to tradition, will sit in the speaker’s chair for the inaugural session of the new legislature.

Rail authority NMBS has started the campaign Your Life is Worth a Detour to stop people **crossing the tracks**. Last year, nine people died hurrying across the tracks to avoid going out of their way to get to the other side, triple the number of the year before. The problem is particularly prevalent near secondary schools and colleges, according to NMBS, and offenders are usually males between the ages of 20 and 49.

▶ [www.tinyurl.com/nmbsieven](http://www.tinyurl.com/nmbsieven)

**Workers at Sony Europe in Zaventem** voted 97% in favour of a restructuring plan agreed by unions and management. The plan cuts the number of job losses from 101, as initially proposed by the company, to 92 from a total workforce of 294. In February the company said it would cut 5,000 jobs worldwide, reduce costs by 20% and sell off its Vaio laptop division – which employs half of the Zaventem staff – to an investment fund. The new plan includes redundancy payments, outplacement and training for laid-off workers.

The **waterway known as Molenbeek** – literally “mill stream” – which gives its name to the Brussels district, is now visible. The stream has been uncovered and opened up to the surface from Asse to the Heilige-Hartlaan in Jette, a distance of some 2.5 kilometres. The next phase of the works will open up the stream as far as the Brussels-North water treatment plant.

A possible **bomb reported in Brussels’ Justice Palace** two days after the terrorist attack on the nearby Jewish Museum turned out to be a forgotten toolbox containing electricity cables, police said. The case was found by cleaning staff who alerted police, who in turn called in Dovo, the army’s bomb disposal squad.

A court in Switzerland has declined to recognise the ruling of the Brussels court of appeal, which in 2011 placed the responsibility for the **bankruptcy of the national airline Sabena** firmly in the hands of SAirgroup, the parent company of Swissair, which owned Sabena at the time. The Brussels court ruled that Swissair failed to meet a contractual obligation, leading directly to the bankruptcy, and ordered damages of €18.3 million to be paid to the Belgian state. The Swiss court’s decision now places those damages in jeopardy.

Ghent-based filmmakers Elien Spillebeen and Martijn D’Haene have **won the Los Angeles Movie Award** for best full-length documentary for their film *Backup Butembo*. The film tells the story of women in the conflict-torn region of North Kivu, Congo, where Spillebeen lived for three months, documenting a peaceful resistance movement. The film also won an Award of Excellence at the Indie Fest in California.

▶ <http://docu.hetpeloton.be>

FACE OF FLANDERS

Alan Hope



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Els De Schepper

Last week, stand-up comedian Els De Schepper took first prize at the Festival International de Rire in Rochefort, Wallonia’s biggest comedy festival. She’s not just the first Flemish artist ever to do so but the first non-French speaker. It’s not De Schepper’s first foray into francophonie. “I’ve been working for a couple of years now on a programme in French,” she explained. “I work hard on it, and my French is now so fluent that I can even manage to improvise in French during the performance.” Els Baziel Germain De Schepper was born in 1965 in Sint-Niklaas and first took to the boards when she was 15, in amateur dramatics in Zele, halfway between her home and Ghent. She later studied at the Herman Teirlinck theatre school in Antwerp, earning a degree in cabaret, chanson and musical, graduating with the highest scores the academy had ever seen. By that time, she was already appearing in musicals with stars, including Bart Peeters and Jan Leyers. While the Flemish scene is rapidly switching from old-style cabaret

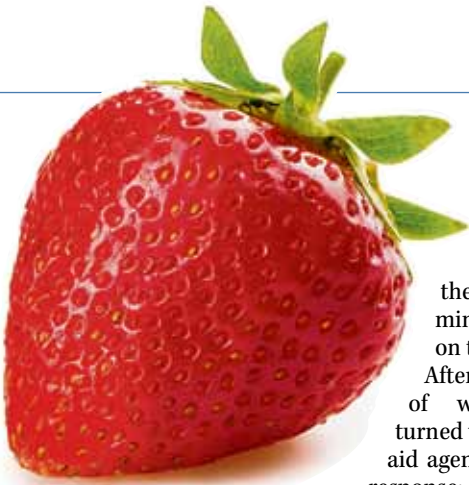
to a more Anglo-Saxon stand-up, her shows remain constructed of the essential building blocks of continental cabaret: story-telling, songs and sketch humour. Thanks to a relative dearth of women on the circuit, her personable demeanour and her flaming red hair, she stood out from the crowd, soon winning fans across the country. De Schepper has released six albums and written three books, recording two of them as audio books. She’s acted in TV series from *Aspe* to *Mega Mindy*, and even played a role in the 1993 film *Daens*, the story of Aalst’s worker priest. She took part in the pre-selections for the Eurovision Song Contest in 2006, narrowly missing out – with what would have been Belgium’s first-ever entry in Dutch – to Kate Ryan singing “Je t’adore”. Now it’s De Schepper’s turn to score in French. “I do this out of love for the job, because I love doing what I do,” she said after winning the award. “It sounds like a cliché, but this is a new challenge for me, and I never turn my back on a challenge.”

OFFSIDE

Alan Hope

A berry good idea

Frank Thevissen is 52 and lives in Lanaken, Limburg province. He’s been unemployed for more than five years but has now been offered a new job as a strawberry picker. The funny part is that Thevissen was a senior lecturer in marketing and communications at the Free University of Brussels (VUB). He lost the post in 2008, ostensibly after receiving two negative evaluations in a row. Coincidentally, Thevissen had not long before caused something of a furore after publishing a no-holds-barred critique in the press of the education policy of then minister Frank Vandenbroucke, particularly its point of view on equal opportunities for immigrant students. Thevissen was suspended by a VUB disciplinary committee in February. His dismissal came just days later but was not related, according to then rector Ben Van Camp. “With my experience, I should have been able to find a job easily,” he told *De Morgen* last week. “But apparently I was branded. Company bosses who Google my name see right away that I’m in conflict with the VUB after



a brusque sacking, and they make up their minds against me on the spot.” After five years out of work, Thevissen turned to the local social aid agency OCMW. Their response: why not turn your hand to some strawberry picking. “I couldn’t believe what I was hearing,” he said. The employment and training agency VDAB finds the suggestion perfectly reasonable. An unemployed person is only offered a job appropriate to their qualifications and experience in the first five months of unemployment, according to spokesperson Bartelijne van den Boogert, who added encouragingly: “The chance that he will find another job in the academic world after all these years is extremely small. By picking strawberries, he can leave unemployment behind.”

FLANDERS TODAY



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## 5TH COLUMN

Anja Otte

### The strategy

That Belgium's king should appoint Bart De Wever as *informateur* is logical. De Wever's party, N-VA, was after all the big winner of the elections in Flanders, the largest language group in Belgium.

De Wever's task is not an easy one, though. And it certainly isn't going according to plan.

The *informateur* had hoped for a new federal government that would focus on socio-economic issues. In 2010, this was rather different. Then, N-VA won the elections, too, but its prime aspiration was a "big bang" in institutional matters. Unprepared for the electoral victory that befell them, N-VA immediately offered the post of prime minister to the French-speaking socialists.

In the end, a compromise turned out to be impossible and, after more than 500 days of negotiations, a federal government was finally formed without N-VA.

Four years later, De Wever is more prepared for his big moment. However, he cannot use the strategy he had hoped for.

His plan was to first form the government of Flanders, a coalition, he assumed, of N-VA, the Christian Democrats (CD&V) and possibly also the liberals Open VLD. The agreement between them was to form this same coalition at the federal level. With a Flemish front thus united, the French speakers would face a *fait accompli*, as a federal government without them could not be formed.

From the start, though, CD&V stated that it would not follow suit. The party known for upholding the Belgian state wants to avoid a repeat of the 2010 stalemate and fears the N-VA scenario would lead to exactly that.

CD&V has been given a boost by the election results. With over 30%, N-VA is the clear winner, but the traditional parties – CD&V, Open VLD and SPA, or the parting federal coalition – have stood their ground and actually gained two federal seats between them.

Mathematically, this makes yet another government without N-VA possible. If the "traditional tripartite" stays on for a second term, CD&V would rather see a matching coalition, without N-VA, on the Flemish level.

Moreover, in the absence of N-VA, CD&V would be the largest Flemish party and could therefore claim the post of minister-president.

If the Flemish parties are reluctant to enter an N-VA lead government, their French-speaking counterparts are downright negative on the issue. MR and CDH, too, are aware that there is an alternative.

# De Wever made informateur

## N-VA president meets with party leaders to form federal government

Derek Blyth

N-VA party president Bart de Wever was the first politician invited to meet the king following the elections on 25 May. The invitation to the palace on the Monday following the elections came shortly after prime minister Elio Di Rupo had left the building after officially handing in his resignation.

De Wever insists that he doesn't want interminable negotiations this time around. "We don't want a long crisis," he told the party faithful in his victory speech on election day. "On the contrary, we want to take the initiative to see what is possible." But he admitted the following day that "the situation is complex".

The following Wednesday, the king officially appointed De Wever *informateur*, whose task it is to explore the possibility of a new federal coalition. De Wever began by meeting leaders of the French-speaking parties and was expected to present his findings to the king as *Flanders Today* went to press. The next stage will be for the king to appoint a *formateur* to conduct the talks necessary to form a coalition – possibly De Wever again.



Bart De Wever (left) meets with CD&V leaders Kris Peeters (centre) and Wouter Beke

Political analysts have stated that De Wever faces a very difficult task, as some parties have already said they would not serve in a government alongside the nationalist N-VA. Didier Reynders of the French-speaking liberals MR, was more cautious last week, saying simply that he would prefer not to be in a government with N-VA.

The king's rapid move in appointing De Wever *informateur* forces him to address the question of a federal

government before taking on talks to form a Flemish government.

### N-VA also top in European results

De Wever's N-VA also emerged as the biggest Flemish party in the European elections, held on the same day as the federal and regional elections. His party gained 26.9% of the votes, securing them four seats in the European Parliament, where

they previously held just one. The liberals Open VLD are the next largest party at the European level, with three seats, while the Christian Democrats CD&V now have just two MEPs. The Flemish socialists are even weaker with just one MEP, while Groen held on to one seat, despite increasing their share of the vote.

One of the big surprises of the European election was the failure of former finance minister Steven Vanackere to secure the votes needed to get him a seat in the European Parliament.

### More women take up seats

The elections saw more women voted into both the Flemish and federal parliaments, with the socialists SPA and the Christian democrats CD&V leading the way. There are now 69 men and 55 women in the Flemish parliament, with both SPA and CD&V now having more women than men. SPA also has more women than men in the federal parliament, while Open VLD has an equal number of men and women.

## Van Rompuy begins search for new Commission president

Former Belgian prime minister Herman Van Rompuy has been charged with finding a new president of the European Commission. Van Rompuy, who heads the European Council, was given a mandate at a meeting of EU leaders in Brussels last week to discuss the results of the European elections.

Van Rompuy's role is to open discussions with the leaders of the political groups in the European Parliament, as well as EU heads of state, on a successor to Commission president José Manuel Barroso.

Before the elections, Van Rompuy sent a letter to EU leaders warning them that the negotiations could take several weeks. The centre-right European People's Party gained the highest number of votes in the election, which makes their candidate, Luxembourg's Jean-Claude Juncker, a forerunner for the post. But he still needs the approval of the



Herman Van Rompuy (right) must find a successor to Commission president José Manuel Barroso (left)

EU leaders as well as having to secure a majority of votes in the new parliament.

Van Rompuy also aims to discuss the EU's main strategic priorities, which are expected to focus on

growth and jobs, economic and monetary union, climate change, the single energy market and migration.

Meanwhile, figures were released last week revealing the number of preference votes given to local politicians standing in the European elections. Former prime minister Guy Verhofstadt of Open VLD won the most votes (531,000), followed by Marianne Thyssen of CD&V, who gained 340,000. The N-VA's Johan van Overtveldt took 247,000 votes.

At home, Bart De Wever has held talks with Belgian prime minister Elio Di Rupo at the start of discussions aimed at securing a workable coalition government. De Wever, who heads the Flemish nationalist party N-VA and was appointed by King Filip as *informateur*, also met leaders of the French-speaking Christian-democrat and Liberal parties. **DB**

## 800,000 didn't vote in elections

Voting is compulsory in Belgium, but figures released by the interior ministry last week revealed that some 800,000 voters failed to turn up at the polling booth on Sunday, 25 May. The figure, which represents roughly one in 10 voters, is down slightly on previous years.

Anyone who fails to vote can be fined, although the amount is minimal, and the law is rarely enforced. Yet many foreigners choose not to register to vote because of Belgium's compulsory voting law.

In related news, an investigation has been launched in Ghent after several ballots were found in a rubbish bin outside a polling station in the district of Gentbrugge. Some of the papers were blank, but two had been used to cast votes in the European Parliament election. "We want to know exactly where these documents came from, how they ended up there and whether or not they were included in the count," said Ghent city councillor Sofie Bracke. **DB**

## New regulations come into effect this month: smartphones, passports

Several new regulations came into force on 1 June, covering areas such as smartphone use on planes, passport prices and footballers' underwear.

Passengers are now allowed to use smartphones, tablets and e-readers during flights operated by Brussels Airlines. They can use the devices during the entire flight, although laptops and notebooks still have to be turned off.

In some exceptional circumstances, the pilot can still ask passengers to turn off devices, said Brussels Airlines spokesperson Gert Sciôt. "For example, when a plane lands in thick fog, the pilot has to use very sensitive navigational equipment, and it is essential that there is no interference." Several other European airlines have already relaxed the rules, including Air

France and Lufthansa, while airlines in the US have allowed devices to be used on planes since last October.

Meanwhile, the price of a new Belgian passport has dropped slightly as of 1 June, thanks to the government signing a contract with a cheaper supplier. The price varies depending on the municipality issuing the passport, with residents of Kortenberg, for example, now paying €73 instead of €79.

The International Football Association Board has brought in a new regulation banning footballers from putting advertising, slogans or images on their underwear. The measure is intended to put an end to antics by footballers, such as Mario Balotelli, who lifted his shirt after scoring to reveal the slogan "Why always me?" **DB**



# Intellectual hotspot

## Archives contain notes on students' transgressions and Charles V's list of banned books

► continued from page 1

But also in the 17th century – when there was a big inflow of Catholic refugees from Ireland, Scotland and England to the Catholic university – the university kept its appeal, leading to the foundation of the Irish College, for instance.”

Closer inspection of the old documents reveals that there are very few references to the educational task and activities of the institution. “Supervising the property and protecting its rights was far more important for the management of the university,” says Steen.

This is where the collection of charters – the Dutch word *oorkonde* is so much nicer – comes in. These showpieces of the archives, all written on parchment and often still sealed, contain all the papal and princely privileges granted to the university. Nelissen says these charters gave the institution the legal foundation to exercise such extensive powers, leading to the university's centuries-long bloom.

“The city, as well as the diocese, had to yield jurisdiction to the rector, so police and city courts couldn't interfere with internal affairs,” he explains. “The exercise of these privileges was often contested. As you would expect, the situation created a lot of jealousy and a rather tense relationship between the academics and the local Leuven crowd.”

Nowhere in Europe were the typically medieval academic immunities developed to such an extent as in Leuven. But the charters exceeded the judicial realm. They, for instance, also granted members of the university the right to continue receiving their income from ecclesiastical benefices while studying, freeing them from liturgy during their academic careers in other Flemish towns.

An important historical turn was marked with the *Visitatio* of archdukes Albert and Isabella in 1617, by force of which the local rulers took over parts of the administration of the university, limiting its autonomy and the influence of Rome.

“At the same time their charter played a key role in the organisation of higher education in the Low



The *fructibus percipiendis in absentia*, signed by pope Martin V in 1425, granting members of the university the right to continue receiving their income from ecclesiastical benefices while studying

Countries,” says Leuven university archivist Marc Derez. “If you wanted to start a doctor's office or a law service, you needed a degree from Leuven. The charter officially registered and protected the academic professions, with a monopoly for the university.”

“If you wanted to start a doctor's office or a law service, you needed a degree from Leuven

Browsing the archives, Nelissen points to another piece with great historical significance – the first design of the index of prohibited books. “In the context of increasing religious unrest, Charles V asked Leuven theologians – this again emphasising the importance of the university – to make a list of books

that ought not to be read. This list, dated 9 May, 1546, was horrid, but, considering its implications, it's now a top piece in European cultural heritage.”

Other items in the archives provide a rather amusing small-town picture of the academic community. Leuven was one of few universities with an officer responsible for maintaining order and combatting crime. The archives of its four courts reveal that some students, for instance, failed to pay their *kotmadam* (landlady) and were involved in bar fights.

Together with the archives of the university police and prison, the court documents offer an intimate look at university life during the Ancien Régime. The university also had its own beer and wine cellar, and the accounts show the impact of tax exemptions granted to the institution.

Internationally, Leuven holds one of the most extensive and best preserved university archives. “French and Italian universities were preserved rather sloppily,” Nelissen notes. “And they lack the homogeneity, which allows us to study the reality of an early modern university from many different perspectives.”

“There's no money involved in getting the Memory of the World label,” says Put, who heads a federal archival department whose staff was recently reduced from 11 to 7. “It only means greater visibility and prestige, but that's a start. We have a yearly restoring budget of no more than a few thousand euros. The designation will probably help us initiate some crowdfunding initiatives.”

The very existence of the archives of the medieval and early modern University of Leuven may come as a surprise. Just think of the city's destruction during the two World Wars and the fires that twice burnt down the university library – a low in the history of Western European cultural heritage, which is explored



Statutes of the faculties of canon and civil law, ca 1431

in the excellent *Ravaged* exhibition currently on at M Museum.

That the university archives were *not* in Leuven at those times could be called a lucky roll of the historical dice. “It's a complex story,” says Eddy Vos from the State Archives. “We're talking about the old university, founded in 1425 and dissolved in 1797, a few years after the French troops approached the city, confiscated large parts of the archive and eventually stored it at the State Archives in Brussels.”

When a State Archives repository was set up in Leuven in 2001, the archives returned to their hometown.

“The archival fund preserved at the State Archives mainly contains administrative records,” explains Nelissen. “But during the French Revolution local professors had hidden the cherries on the cake, bringing them to safety abroad in the Netherlands, Germany and even Denmark.”

In particular, the unique collection of 375 bulls and charters, indicating the old privileges, “underwent a real odyssey,” continues Nelissen. “They were smuggled out by the last librarian and archivist of the old university, Jan Frans Van De Velde.” One part made its way to a seminary at 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands, where Van De Velde had friends. It remained hidden until about 1909. In 1983, it came into the

hands of the present-day Leuven university (KU Leuven) thanks to an exchange with the archdiocese in Mechelen.

“I remember the homecoming of the old bulls and charters in the 1980s,” says Derez. “They came in a cardboard refrigerator box. When we could finally lift the box, it was torn, and we saw pieces of a papal seal at the bottom. Everyone saw it would need a lot of restoring, but still we were thrilled because it was the first step in a long-term plan for the recuperation of the old archive – a dream of the late KU Leuven archivist Jan Roegiers.”

Another part of the collection ended up in the archives of the seminary of the diocese of Ghent and was returned to KU Leuven in 2001.

That leaves one central piece still missing, and, unfortunately, it can never return: The original bull of foundation from 1425, signed by pope Martin V. “At the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the current university, the Diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch decided to donate the bull it had preserved since 1794,” Nelissen says. “Only a few years later, when the Germans invaded Leuven in 1914, it was lost in the fire. But since notaries made copies of all the charters, we can still admire the so-called chartulary.”

► [www.bib.kuleuven.be](http://www.bib.kuleuven.be)



Belgian Unesco chair and former KU Leuven rector Marc Vervenne (back, centre) and Belgian Unesco chair Philippe Busquin (second from right) inspect charters in the Leuven repository of the State Archives in Brussels



WEEK IN  
BUSINESS**Air ▶ Hop**

The low-cost affiliate of Air France is developing its activities at Brussels Airport in a bid to compete with the high-speed train TGV. The airline will operate three flights a day to Lyon and two each to Bordeaux and Nantes. The carrier expects to break even on the routes by next year.

**Cars ▶ Volvo**

The Ghent-based assembling affiliate of the Swedish car manufacturer is investing a further €37 million next year to increase capacity and streamline production. The company invested €19 million last year and is in the process of spending €22 million this year on new production robots and the integration of some activities of its Johnson Controls sub-contractor.

**ICT ▶ RealDolmen**

The computer services company, based in Beersel, Flemish Brabant, is selling its French Airial Conseil affiliate to GFI Informatique, one of France's leading ICT firms.

**Fertiliser ▶ Rosier**

The fertiliser company, based in Wallonia, is investing €6 million to modernise its Ghent granulation production unit.

**Foam ▶ Recticel**

The Brussels-based polyurethane foam and insulation products company is believed to be in discussions with the Ireland's Kingspan over a possible takeover. Kingspan already tried to acquire Recticel's insulation division in 2010 but may be seeking to buy the whole company now. Meanwhile, the company is closing its Büron mattress production unit in Switzerland and will move production to its facility in Hulshout, Antwerp province.

**Insurance ▶ Ageas**

Belgium's largest insurance company is paying €122 million to acquire the 49% it didn't own of the non-life activities of the Portuguese Millenium insurer from the local BCP Bank. The move will strengthen Ageas' activities in the fast-growing Portuguese health insurance sector.

**Shipping ▶ Exmar**

The Antwerp-based shipping group is shortlisted for a major contract to build and operate six ethane-carrying tankers for the Indian Reliance group. The new tankers, worth up to \$140 million each, will be used to carry gas from the US to India. Meanwhile, the company has sold two of its LPG tankers, with a capital gain of \$18 million. The move is part of the company's fleet renewal policy.

# Council of State revokes Uplace environmental permit

## Flemish environment minister says there was no bias in granting permit

Alan Hope

The Council of State has overturned the environmental permit granted to the controversial shopping and leisure centre Uplace, planned for construction in Machelen, just outside of Brussels, close to the Vilvoorde viaduct. It argued that the principle of impartiality had been breached.

The government, the court ruled, had granted Uplace a permit in advance by signing a "brownfield covenant" under which Uplace would clean up a former industrial site on the land the shopping centre will occupy. The conditions contained in that promise were in breach of the brownfield decree, gave an appearance of partiality and deprived opponents of the project of the right to object, the Council of State said.

Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege granted the permit after the province of Flemish Brabant had refused to issue one. She said she had done so "without the slightest bias, in complete objectivity and on the basis of the available advice". She will now study the ruling to determine what is to be done next.

The Council of State also said it was not clear how the government of Flanders could provide the necessary mobility arrangements in time for the



construction of Uplace.

The ruling was welcomed by groups who oppose the arrival of the 32,000-square metre complex. Unizo, the organisation that represents the self-employed, said it was "pleased" with the ruling against Uplace, which it said would be "an attack on commercial centres in the areas and on the self-employed business people established there". Hans Bonte, mayor of Vilvoorde, said the ruling was "an important decision for mobility in our country and for the viability of the commercial centre of Vilvoorde in particular".

Tom Dehaene, son of the late former prime minister Jean-Luc Dehaene and a member of the provincial council that originally turned down the request for a permit, said its decision had been based on mobility. "Not only would the problems of the Ring be aggravated, but side roads all around would also suffer," said. "The Council of State has proved the province of Flemish Brabant correct in this instance."

The decision would also be good for air quality, according to Erik Grietens of the environmental organisation Bond Beter Leefmilieu. It also meant the virtual end of the brownfield covenant. "If they want to go ahead with the project, it won't be enough to simply apply for a new environmental permit," he said. "It looks as if a whole new brownfield covenant will have to be organised."

Machelen mayor Jean-Pierre De Groef was disappointed by the ruling. "It's a great pity this had to happen after six long years of procedures," he said. "I'm afraid it's becoming more and more difficult to set up anything in this country. We're talking about 3,000 jobs and an enormous amount of economy activity which has now been shut. I'm extremely disappointed."

## Google releases Play film streaming to compete with Netflix

Internet giant Google has opened up its Play streaming service for customers in Belgium, as a response to the announcement made recently that video-on-demand service Netflix will be coming to these parts by the end of the year.

The service offers films to buy and, in some cases, to rent. Most films have a choice between standard and high-definition versions, with the difference reflected in the price. Films are also given ratings and reviews by members of the public, in the same way as apps are in the Play Store.

Rental films must be watched within 30 days. Once started, the film must be completed in 48 hours. Each film may only be watched once. Purchased films are saved online to be watched at any time; customers never receive a copy of the film in any form.

Google offers a range of new releases but is limited to cinema films, whereas



Netflix also provides TV series. Google also has little in the way of archives, compared to Netflix's massive back catalogue.

Google Play Films requires a Chromecast – a device similar to a USB stick, which slots into the TV's HDMI socket, allowing films to be streamed directly to the TV set. Unlike in the Netherlands, the Chromecast is not available to buy via Google's Play Store, but it can be obtained elsewhere online. The free app that powers it is available for Android and iOS devices. **AH**

## Railway good alternative for transport to Far East

Railway transport of sensitive cargo over a long distance is a suitable alternative to air and waterway transport, according to the Transpharma Express project. The project has just wrapped up a two-year test period co-ordinated by the Flemish Institute for Logistics (Vil).

The project proves that it is technically and operationally possible to monitor and guarantee the temperature, location and security of products in containers via railway over long distances. Railway transport can thus be considered a sustainable alternative to the more risky road transport, slower maritime routes and expensive air transport.

There is already considerable transport from the Far East to Flanders, but transport in the other direction is insufficient. To create a better balance, several Flemish businesses asked Vil to explore the possibilities of transporting temperature-sensitive cargo such as medicine, chemicals or food products to the Far East.

Transpharma Express focused on the "New Silk Route", which crosses the complete Eurasian continent. In 2011, the transcontinental cargo rail connection between Antwerp and the Chinese city Chongqing was opened by a consortium made up of the Antwerp Port Authority, the Development Authority of the Province of Antwerp and the Belgian Customs Administration. **Andy Furniere**

## Electrabel appeals to win back nuclear interest

Electricity producer Electrabel will appeal a court ruling that rejected the company's request for reimbursement of the "nuclear interest" charged by the federal government between 2008 and 2011, totalling €250 million a year.

Electrabel claimed the charge on profits from energy produced by nuclear power plants was a case of double taxation, and breached the government's promise of a stable fiscal regime.

The nuclear interest was a type of compensatory mechanism imposed by the government of Yves Leterme in 2008 when it appeared that the lower electricity prices brought about by the writing off of the costs of the nuclear power stations were not being passed along to consumers. Originally, it had been planned for the plants to be amortised

over a relatively short period of 20 years from coming into service between 1975 and 1983.

After 2003, suppliers like Electrabel, a subsidiary of the French-owned GDF Suez, and to a lesser extent EDF and E.On, were making more profit. Leterme's government then imposed the €250 million extra charge.

The feeling was strong that foreign companies – Electrabel and EDF are both French-owned, while E.On is German – were profiteering at a cost to Belgian consumers and Belgian industry, which pays more pro rata for its power supply than companies in neighbouring countries, among them France and Germany.

In total, Electrabel is claiming about €1 billion, once interest is taken into account.



The tribunal of first instance rejected the claim, based on a ruling from the Constitutional Court from 2010 that the nuclear interest was a legal charge. **AH**



# The science of sex

## Jean Paul Van Bendegem's new book looks for patterns in our love lives

Senne Starckx

Anyone who's been taught by Jean Paul Van Bendegem, a professor in mathematics, philosophy and logic at the Free University of Brussels (VUB), will always remember this slightly eccentric figure. Best described as a hybrid of Rasputin (his looks), a vicar (his clothing) and some obscure ancient Greek philosopher (his thinking), Van Bendegem is surely one of the most colourful scientists in Flanders.

Two years ago his book *De vrolijke atheist* (The Merry Atheist), in which he describes his life without a god, was a bestseller. Now the latest product of his pen, *Elke drie seconden* (Every Three Seconds), might just do the same. It's about sex.

“A mathematically proven method exists to find a better partner

But beware if you detest numbers and formulas: If you open the book at a random page, the chances of finding a naked woman are equal to running up against a complex equation.

Van Bendegem takes you back and forth between maths and sex – and you can almost hear him sniggering while you read. But apart from its little facts about sex, the book also has a message: There's a strategy – a mathematically proven one – to finding the best partner. So, should you dump someone for the sake of maths?

“Statistically speaking, the optimal strategy to find the best partner goes as follows,” he explains. “First of all you set an upper limit for the total number of partners you want to have – for example, 10. Then, if you choose all your partners arbitrarily, you have a 10% chance of meeting the ‘best one’.

“But maths tells us that it's possible to raise that chance to 37%. The only thing you have to do is to drop the first four – no matter how good they

are. Then you take the first one who is as good as or even better than the best of the four you've dumped. Now you have a 37% chance that this one is the best. Of course, I'm not telling you to follow this strategy. I only want to show you that a mathematically proven method exists to find a better partner.”

I suggest that he is using sex as an “in”, a way of confronting the general public with higher mathematics. To me, few things belong together less than sex and maths.

“That's exactly the reason I wrote this book. For years people have told me that maths has nothing to do with love, sex, emotions, etc. Of course, when I'm having sex I'm not thinking about numbers and formulas. But nothing prevents us from looking for patterns, structures and regularities in the human sex life. Mathematics is one of the most convenient ways to uncover these.

“In my book I use very complex equations,” he continues. “Like in the part where I explain the ‘bean jar theory of married sex’. It says that if you put a bean in a jar every time you have sex during the first year of your marriage or relationship and from the second year you take one out every time you have sex, the jar will never become empty.”

Van Bendegem believes the moral of this story is that the first year is filled with passion, but afterwards “it's merely trouble and affliction”. And for him, the bean jar theory is the perfect opportunity to unleash a mathematical formula.

“So I've calculated the problem for different scenarios. Take a couple that has a lot of sex during the first year, and later – for the rest of their lives – they maintain a fixed pattern. In this scenario, it's very easy to empty the jar.

“Two other scenarios, in which frequency diminishes over the years, have different endings. When the frequency is below a certain value, the jar never becomes empty, and when it's above, the jar is empty after eight years. And then I show that the theory makes no sense, because this threshold is really low.”

Apparently, I say, having more sex is the best way to fight STDs. “It's not originally my idea, but I included it in my book because I love the way of reasoning: It's scientifically well-proven, but also counterintuitive,” Van Bendegem says.

“If we assume that the ‘sex market’ – the idea



VUB lecturer Jean Paul Van Bendegem's new book uses formulas to explain human desires

comes from an economist – is dominated by the so-called reckless people, then it's clear that this results in an unsafe situation. But if we urge the more cautious ones to participate more in sexual activities, then the market expands. The part occupied by the reckless ones becomes smaller. Furthermore, the cautious will persuade the reckless ones to have more safe sex. You could say that a condom used by a cautious man counts for two.”

I'm still curious about the title of the book, I tell him. Do men really think about sex every three seconds?

“Not at all,” he says. “I would say it's every 51 for men and every 96 for women – minutes, that is. But when you read my book, the frequency might be much higher.”

*Elke drie seconden* is published by Houtekiet

## Study shows the potential of wind turbines atop Brussels skyscrapers

The wind speed measured on top of Brussels' skyscrapers is similar to that found at the Flemish coast, meaning there is potential for the development of renewable energy through small wind turbines in the city.

This was the main conclusion of a study carried out for environment agency Leefmilieu Brussel by the Dutch-speaking Free University of Brussels (VUB), its French-speaking counterpart, ULB, and consultancy bureau 3E.

Over the course of a year, the project team measured the wind speed at four diverse locations in Brussels: The Hotel on Waterloolaan, a building of average height at ULB's Solbosch campus, and industrial sites of the Brussels port and energy grid manager Elia.

The researchers used anemometers, barometers, thermometers and wind vanes, with the results integrated into a model that takes into account the conditions over 20 years.

The study demonstrated that the rooftop of The Hotel would be the best location for wind turbines. The wind speed – measured at 7 metres



above the roof of the 96m high tower – amounted to an average of about 5.6m per second, which is similar to the wind speed found around 15m above sea level at the Flemish coast.

According to the team, the cost of installing the best kind of small wind turbines on top of a skyscraper would be earned back through energy production in about seven years. These “small” wind turbines have a tower that is about 15m high and a diameter of up to 10m. They have a

maximum power capacity of about 10kW and cost up to €30,000.

The research team did not just examine the wind speed but also analysed the visual impact, noise, shadow, impact on biodiversity, safety issues, the connection to the energy grid and consequences for air traffic.

“We did not find any clear reason why small wind turbines should not be installed on the rooftops of skyscrapers,” says VUB professor Mark Runacres, who co-ordinated the project.

The team just has to finish its analysis of possible vibrations transferred through a building by wind turbines on the roof. “If these last results are positive, we feel it's time to set up trial projects with small wind turbines on rooftops of Brussels skyscrapers,” Runacres says.

Well-known skyscrapers with wind turbines on their roofs include the Strata tower in London (*pictured*) and the World Trade Centre in Bahrain.

Andy Furniere

## WEEK IN INNOVATION

### Lack of organs costs two lives a week

Every week, two Belgians die because they don't receive a transplant organ in time. According to the federal public health department, the number of people who have registered as organ donors increases every year. Currently, about 193,520 people are signed up. Although Belgium has a “silent consent” law that allows medical staff to remove organs from someone who is deceased without their explicit consent, families can block this. By registering their consent, the deceased can override the family's objections. Through the new Beldonor campaign, 90,000 posters and brochures are being distributed in 200 municipalities and some cities are opening a desk where people can register on the spot.

► [www.beldonor.be](http://www.beldonor.be)

### Extra €50m for new imec cleanroom

Leuven-based nanotech research centre imec has received an extra €50 million from the government of Flanders to build a new cleanroom. The sum comes on top of the earlier subsidy of €30 million and is part of the government's promise to provide a total of €100 million for cleanroom infrastructure. Cleanrooms are dust-free labs where chips are developed under carefully controlled conditions. Imec CEO Luc Van den hove told *Het Laatste Nieuws*: “Powerful and inexpensive chips form the basis of new electronics applications in diverse industries, like health care, food distribution, automotive manufacturing, consumer electronics and energy.”

### Campaign maps algal blooms

The Flemish Institute for Technical Research (Vito) and the Flemish Marine Institute (Vliz) were part of the European team that developed a web platform to create awareness of the problem of algal blooms at sea. Research organisations from Flanders, the UK, France and the Netherlands collaborated for Iseca (Information System on the Eutrophication of our Coastal Areas) to improve the monitoring of eutrophication: the problem of nitrates and phosphates that end up in sea water and lead to algal blooms, or the rapid formation of algae. These have serious consequences for the marine ecosystem and economic activities in coastal areas in both the southern part of the North Sea and the English Channel. The chemicals come from agricultural fertilisers, industry and household sewage.

► [www.iseca.eu](http://www.iseca.eu)



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# Chess in class

## Ostend primary schools offer chess lessons as part of new pilot project

Andy Furniere

Beginning in September, two primary schools in Ostend, West Flanders, will introduce chess lessons in their curriculum as part of the pilot project Toptalent-Schaken op School (Top Talent Chess in School). The goal is for all 27 primary schools in the coastal city to embrace the board game in their classrooms by 2019. The pilot project is a joint effort of the City of Ostend and the Flemish Chess Federation, which are co-operating to supply the schools with chess materials. In the initial start-up phase of the project, an expert from the chess federation will assist the teachers of the two schools during 10 one-hour lessons. The chess lessons will be given to children in the second year of primary school, as eight or nine is considered to be the ideal age to start learning the basics of chess. The Westdiep school is one of the two pilot schools that will launch the programme in September. “We have already noticed that increasingly more students have difficulties focusing on games for an extended period while following the rules,” says the school’s care co-ordinator Christine Goddefroy. “We are already encouraging youngsters to play card games to acquire certain abilities that they will need later in life, and we feel the chess project can further help us reach this goal.”

According to experts, the benefits of chess include the development of personal skills that allow children to respect rules and to cope with both victory and defeat. By playing the game, children also learn to wait their turn, make decisions and consider the future consequences of their actions. Chess is also believed to help children playfully practise their logical-mathematical skills. They develop capabilities in problem-solving, abstract thinking and spatial awareness. “Chess is also accessible to every student regardless of their language skills, which is important in a school like ours, where many students have a mother tongue other than Dutch,” explains Goddefroy. “This way, the game can help develop social connections between students who would otherwise not come into contact with each other.” Goddefroy says that research has also shown that chess can improve the social atmosphere in schools and work to reduce bullying behaviour. After the chess lessons in the first trimester, pupils in the participating schools will be given the opportunity to play chess games during lunch breaks and as an optional activity during certain lessons. Chess tournaments may also be organised in collaboration with other schools. The chess lessons for the third and fourth-year classes will be given again at the beginning of the



Participants in the 2012 Flemish School Chess Championship in Bruges

subsequent school years. Primary school Stene in Ostend has been offering all its pupils chess lessons for four years, but this was on a purely voluntary basis during lunch breaks. Some 80 pupils participate every year. A couple of university colleges in West Flanders are also giving future teachers guidance and advice on introducing chess in primary schools. The West Flanders University College in Bruges and university college Katho-Reno in nearby Torhout have been offering an optional course in chess in their teacher-training programmes for two years.

# Pulitzer Prize-winner receives honorary doctorate

Hasselt University (UHasselt) has awarded four new honorary doctorates. Flemish Alzheimer’s expert Christine Van Broeckhoven was honoured alongside three foreign professors: Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist and author Thomas Friedman, Indian architect Bijoy Jain and American economist S Tamer Cavusgil. The awards were made as UHasselt celebrates its 41st anniversary. This year, the honorary doctorate ceremony was organised under the banner of “think global, connect local”. “What our new honorary doctorates have in common is that they keep their attention focused strongly on the world and at the same time see challenges and opportunities nearby,” said UHasselt rector Luc De Schepper during the ceremony in the Old Prison building where the law campus is situated. The honorary doctorate attributed by the institution of UHasselt in general – the *instellingsdoctoraat* or institute doctorate – went to Friedman of *The New York Times*, who has gained fame as a reporter in the Middle East

and Washington DC. He has won three Pulitzer Prizes and written six bestsellers including the influential book *The World is Flat* on the impact of globalisation and today’s hyper-connected world. The medicine and life sciences faculty chose Van Broeckhoven, who is connected to Antwerp University and Flemish life sciences institute VIB. She is a global authority on the research



From left: Bijoy Jain, Thomas Friedman, Christine Van Broeckhoven and S Tamer Cavusgil receive their honorary doctorates from UHasselt

for a genetic basis of Alzheimer’s disease, manic depressive psychosis and other nerve diseases. She is an influential voice in the debate on dementia research in Flanders. Jain was chosen by UHasselt’s architecture and art faculty. The internationally reputed architect established the architects’ collective Studio Mumbai, which set up a design process in which local crafts, building techniques and materials are brought together. In 2009 he was given the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture. The faculty of business and economical sciences has honoured Cavusgil of Georgia State University in the US for his pioneering research on the export performance of SMEs. Cavusgil was the first scientist to focus on so-called “born globals”: small, knowledge-intensive companies that become global leaders in a niche market soon after their foundation. Each recipient was given a diploma and a university medal with the caption “Knowledge in action” – UHasselt’s motto. AF

## Q&A

**Pedro De Bruyckere is a researcher in the education department of the Artevelde University College Ghent. He has analysed a study that shows that 28% of Flemish pre-schoolers suffer from stress**

**How can you determine if a small child is suffering from stress?**  
Important symptoms of stress among pre-schoolers are regular complaints of stomachaches, headaches, restlessness, anxiousness and trouble getting to sleep.

**What are the main causes of stress among pre-schoolers?**  
First of all, stress is contagious, so many children take on the feelings of stress they sense in their parents. There can sometimes already be pressure in school to perform well on tests or to carry out tasks, but a busy agenda with activities outside of school can

also cause stress. Hard-working parents often want to compensate for their absence during the week by organising several activities in the weekend, which is not always relaxing for children.

**What advice would you give to parents?**  
Parents should especially not completely fill children’s schedules with hobbies and other activities but leave them sufficient opportunities to just play spontaneously. It’s also important to make sure that children don’t spend too much time in front of the TV or computer screen, as this

can cause restlessness. In general, it’s essential that children get enough rest and sleep. Finally, parents should be aware of the fact that their own stress can also affect their children and try to avoid a tense atmosphere at home.

**How can schools help to reduce stress among their pupils?**  
Schools should limit the number of “peak moments” during which pupils are over-stimulated, for instance during tests. It’s also important to include enough variation in the activities and allow sufficient time for play. Teachers should also continually monitor the well-being of the pupils. However, we should not create the perception that Flemish schools are not taking care of their pupils. Most pre-schools do not have



a competitive atmosphere, and there is much consideration for the general happiness of the children. **interview by AF**

## WEEK IN EDUCATION

### Tongeren students win rail contest

Four third-grade students from the electro-mechanics study stream at secondary school Viio Nijverheid in Tongeren, Limburg, have won first prize at this year’s Belgian Railways Competition for Technicians. The competition is organised by rail infrastructure company Infrabel and is supported by HR-Rail, the HR agency of the Belgian railways and challenges students to find an innovative solution for a certain problem. This year, students had to find a way to ensure the permanent supply of power for train driver assistance equipment using solar panels. The Tongeren team – Ben Kenis, Raf Ernens, Stijn Milisen and Pieter Fransis – called their invention the SolarCroc system; it uses a microprocessor to reduce energy consumption.

### KU Leuven considers fixed study costs

The University of Leuven (KU Leuven) is considering introducing a maximum invoice – a fixed cost per study subject – so students know exactly how much they have to pay on top of their regular fees. This could include the cost of books, course materials, field visits and tools for practical courses. It already exists in pre-school and primary education in Flanders. The idea, part of the university’s education policy plan, is a reaction to the decreasing number of students with a grant registering at the university. The maximum invoice should, for example, make sure students don’t have to buy expensive books that are rarely used. Bram Roelant, chair of the Flemish Association of Students, told *De Morgen* that all institutions should implement such a measure.

### Researchers develop skin cancer treatment

Research from the University Hospital Brussels and the Free University of Brussels (VUB) shows that a combination of cell therapy and antibody therapy considerably improves the recovery chances of patients with advanced melanoma, an aggressive skin cancer. In a clinical study, 39 patients with advanced melanoma were treated. All had earlier tried other cancer treatments, such as chemotherapy, without positive effect. Researchers Bart Neyns and Kris Thielemans were the first to combine a therapy with the body’s own cells and an immune-stimulating antibody therapy. In 15 of the 39 patients, a considerable reduction of the melanoma was ascertained, and in eight patients the disease disappeared completely. AF



WEEK IN  
ACTIVITIESEtterbeek Medieval  
Market

This year marks the 22nd edition of this medieval-themed festival in Brussels' Jubelpark. More than 180 vendors from eight countries will participate. Costumed re-enactors, medieval combat demonstrations, musicians, craftspeople, food and drink. **6-8 June, free**

► [www.etterbeek.irisnet.be](http://www.etterbeek.irisnet.be)

## BioWeek

Want to learn more about buying, using and eating organic food? For nine days, organic food producers, shops and farmers will offer workshops, tastings, outings and other activities. **7-15 June, across Flanders**

► [www.bioweek.be](http://www.bioweek.be)

Castle Festival  
in Hingene

The Duke of Ursel welcomes Napoleon as his special guest at this year's festival. With costumed performers, folk games, music and dance, historical market, donkey rides and live entertainment. **7-8 June, 13.00-18.00, Ursel Castle, Wolfgang Urselstraat 9, Hingene (Antwerp), €6-€9, 12 and under free**

► [www.kasteeldursel.be](http://www.kasteeldursel.be)

## Taste of Limburg

Outdoor culinary festival with top chefs from all over Limburg. Sample gourmet dishes and pay a fraction of normal restaurant prices. **6-9 June, hours vary, outdoor Ethias Arena, Gouverneur Verwilghensingel 70, Hasselt. €7 (day)/€15 (weekend), free after-party with DJ**

► [www.limburgproeft.be](http://www.limburgproeft.be)

Legend of the  
Unicorn

This annual family festival at Herkenrode Abbey transports kids to a storybook world of knights and ladies, unicorns and fairies. Children's workshops, live theatre, jousting show, medieval food market, wandering minstrels. **8 June, 10.00-18.00, Herkenrode Abbey Site, Herkenrodeabdij 4, Hasselt. €5-€8, free for kids three and under**

► [www.desage.be](http://www.desage.be)

Street  
Theatrefestival

Bokrijk Open-Air Museum is the setting for a day of outdoor entertainment for young and old: magic, puppet shows, comedy, circus acts, folk music and acrobats. In all, nearly 20 groups and acts will perform. **9 June, 10.00-18.00, Domein Bokrijk, Bokrijklaan 1, Genk, €10, €1 for kids three to 12**

► [www.bokrijk.be](http://www.bokrijk.be)

## Mass appeal

## The 40-year-old Holy Family Parish is Antwerp's only English-speaking Mass

Daniel Shamaun

If you prefer to have your Sunday Mass in English, Antwerp's Holy Family Parish can provide. It's the only English-speaking Roman Catholic Parish in the Antwerp region, and its annual barbecue picnic – should the weather be forgiving – will be the perfect opportunity for newcomers to meet the congregation.

According to Father Francis Peerlinck, "the whole family should come, as the parish has a lot to offer." He explains that the congregation is made up of about 40 families, including native English-speakers and those who speak it as a second language.

Parish president Graeme Stephan adds that, out of that 40, "there's upwards of 30 nationalities, including Belgian, Hungarian, German, French, Canadian, American, Ecuadorian, South African, Thai and Australian." So that's every continent (bar Antarctica) covered. This diverse congregation welcomes expats from the entire world heartily, and, indeed, multiculturalism was a topic at a recent Mass.



The confirmation of young members of the Holy Family congregation by bishop Jan van Cauwelaert and Father Frans Peerlinck in the Don Bosco Chapel in Antwerp

parishioners has very generously donated the proceeds from a book he recently published, which they will then use to build a classroom at the school," says Stephan.

The congregation is noticeably young, and the entire flock, young and old, has an infectious vitality about it. The parish – which is

the English-speaking International Protestant Church of Antwerp, with which the parish organises activities for younger members; the two come together each year for a joint ecumenical service.

Peerlinck has presided over the Holy Family Parish since its founding, and Stephan describes him as "the stalwart, the building block of the church".

Peerlinck was ordained in Leuven and studied in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and Tübingen, Germany, where he knew Professor Josef Ratzinger, who went on to be Pope Benedict. Peerlinck gained a doctorate in systematic theology in 1969 and became pastor at the University of Antwerp.

He knows the history of the parish well and says with a smile that "everything has changed in the course of 40 years". Founded in 1972, the parish has humble origins, when it had quite a different congregation from that of today.

"We started with six American families," Peerlinck recalls. The first English Mass was celebrated in the dining room of the Our Lady of

Lourdes Institute in Ekeren. But the parish grew quickly and moved six times by 1996, finally settling at the Don Bosco Chapel in Schoten.

The size of the congregation "has fluctuated over the 40-odd years," mentions Stephan. "It depends on the economy." In times of economic trouble, many expat families go back home, whereas in times of prosperity, the parish grows as families feel freer to migrate.

Average attendance at Sunday Mass, for instance, reached 65 people at one point, but it dropped to about 20 after the economic crash of 2008. With the global economy on the rise, numbers can be expected to grow again. Those who move away often keep in contact, with some youngsters returning years later with children of their own.

On 15 June, Mass will be said at 11.00, with roughly 40 people expected to attend. The picnic costs €7.50 for adults and €5 for under-12s; babies aged two and under are free. 22 June sees the last Mass before the summer vacation, and the new parish year begins on the last Sunday of August.

► [www.holyfamilyantwerp.org](http://www.holyfamilyantwerp.org)



“Father Peerlinck is the stalwart, the building block of the church”

Unlike weekly Mass, the picnic and special Mass on 15 June will be held at one of the parishioners' houses. "Newcomers are welcome to stay for the barbecue picnic as well," says Stephan. The event is a prime example of how active the Holy Family Parish is in the Antwerp community and beyond.

Holy Family donates to local charities, has funded Father Peerlinck to work in Uganda and supports students at the Don Bosco Institute in Kabarondo, Rwanda. "One of our

looking for more people to join its choir – has swapped the typical church organ for a pair of acoustic guitars, making hymns much livelier than in a traditional church. After Mass members stay to socialise rather than going straight home.

Youth is well cared for by the parish: It celebrates Baptism and prepares children for First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation. Babysitting, children's catechism and liturgy are also provided. There is also a good relationship with

## BITE

## Splitwafels and boullie

The Flemish Marketing Centre for Agriculture and Fish (Vlam) last week endowed two more products with its quality label, recognising them as official *streekproducten*, or regional products. Aside from this recent recognition, *splitwafels* (split waffles) and *boullie* (meat from soup bones) have nothing to do with each other. One is sweet, creamy and overly indulgent, while the other is a savoury, spicy meat preparation. Three times a year, Vlam awards the official *streekproduct* label to a range of traditional Flemish products. This week, it begins a media campaign for these two somewhat forgotten products.

West Flemish *splitwafels*, called *spletwafels* or *spleters* in coastal dialect, are a true delicacy. As if the waffle wasn't good enough, this version is stuffed with butter cream. In Flanders' oldest cookbooks you'll find recipes for the waffles that are meant for *spauwen*, or splitting, even though the most common way to eat them in grandmother's day was hot off the griddle and drizzled with melted butter.



Split waffles have an oval shape and are prepared with yeast, which causes the waffles to puff up while cooking, making them easy to slice in half and stuff with filling. They are a lot softer than their regional counterparts, *lukken*, which are a sort of flat, crunchy waffle made without yeast. The traditional filling for split waffles is made with butter mixed with sugar, and possibly flavoured with rum and cinnamon. At Jannick and Els' Fresh Bakery in Ostend, they work according to an old recipe handed down to Jannick from his mentor many years ago. Split

waffles are a traditional regional product of West Flanders and French Flanders, the area around Lille.

Next up: *boullie*. Now, there are soup meats, and then there are soup meats. Normally you just toss the bones into a big pot of water when making fresh stock and forget about the meat. But in Waasland, East Flanders, and just over its border in Antwerp province, people like to eat the soup meat off the bones with a good dab of spicy mustard.

Local butchers picked up on this heavenly combination and started incorporating it into a sandwich spread called *boulliesla*. In Antwerp, they take things one step further, stuffing the de-boned chunks of beef into rolls that are then cooked and cut into slices (*pictured*).

Many Antwerp butchers sell these tasty slices with a side of mustard vinaigrette and plenty of chopped onions doused in vinegar. At Placide Butcher in Beveren-Waas, they sell as many as five boullie rolls with mustard a day.

► [www.versbakkerij-jannickenels.be](http://www.versbakkerij-jannickenels.be)

Robyn Boyle



# The church that never was

## Underground remains of the short-lived addition to Our Lady in Antwerp to be protected

Toon Lambrechts

A few weeks ago, one of Geert Bourgeois' final acts as Flanders' heritage minister was to sign a protection act for Nieuwerck, a site in the centre of Antwerp. There's not much to see at this small garden in the shadow of the Cathedral of Our Lady: It's what's under the ground that matters. The garden at the foot of Antwerp's Cathedral (*pictured*) is an oasis of calm in the hustle and bustle of the city. Beneath it are the remains of a 16th-century construction site, the result of a failed attempt to expand the present church. The completion of Antwerp's Gothic cathedral took nearly 200 years, from 1352 to 1521. Cathedrals were built for eternity, of course, so there was no need to rush. When Our Lady was nearly finished, however, the people of Antwerp felt it lacked grandeur and started to build an even bigger church right beside it. This Nieuwerck, old Dutch for "new work", was designed by the architects Domien De Waghemakere and Rombout Keldermans. Emperor Charles V, at the time the ruler of the region, laid the first stone himself. The plans were impressive: a huge choir, a subterranean crypt and no fewer than nine chapels on the outside of the building. In the first years, the building steadily progressed and a large part of the walls, pillars and chapels

were finished.

But less than a decade later, enthusiasm for Nieuwerck waned. The pace of construction slowed, and on the night of 5 October, 1533, things went really wrong. Fire broke out inside the cathedral of Our Lady and damaged the roof and the nave. Restoration took priority over new construction, and in 1537, a line was drawn under the plans. It's a pity, really, as it would have been quite a monument.

What had been erected was not demolished, however. Some clever Antwerp residents used the unfinished walls to build their houses against, a common practice at the time since it meant one less wall you had to build yourself. But in the late 19th century, some of those houses were cleared to make way for the garden.

At the request of the council of Our Lady Cathedral, the procedure of provisional protection for the Nieuwerck was recently put in motion. This was necessary because the site has never been properly protected, says Petra Broeders, spokesperson for Onroerend Erfgoed, the institution responsible for the protection of heritage. "The archaeological value of the Nieuwerck is really significant," she says. "The provisional protection will be followed by permanent protection within a year."



The protection order means the site of the Nieuwerck must remain untouched

The fact that the building was never finished makes the Nieuwerck invaluable for researchers, offering an understanding of 16th-century building techniques. It's the only site of its kind in Flanders.

Some investigation has already been done on the Nieuwerck, including drilling, sonar

research and an inventory of the surrounding houses. But for now there is no new research planned, says Broeders. As long as no interventions in the soil have to be done, the site will remain as it is today, preserved by a solid layer of earth for the next generation of archaeologists.

# From Ypres to Istanbul

## Brussels organisation Jorsala leads walkers on a 3,600-kilometre trek for peace

Kelly Hendricks

One hundred years after the First World War, 2014 has already seen a variety of memorial events. Yet on a cold, rainy Thursday in Ypres, West Flanders, a small group of walkers found themselves huddled around a banner bearing the name Jorsala, preparing to embark on the most original of commemorations: a 3,600-kilometre walk along the historic fracture lines of the Old Continent to promote intercultural dialogue. The Jorsala concept came to founder Sébastien de Fooz in 2005 when he walked for 184 days from Ghent, where he grew up, to Jerusalem ("Jorsala" is an Old Norse term meaning Jerusalem). "During my walk, I was warned at each approaching border about the next country and its people. Yet each time I was well received," says de Fooz, who runs his Jorsala project from Brussels, where he now lives.



Walkers on the 2012 Jorsala walk from Brussels to Aachen in Germany

first walk was organised in 2012, when 60 participants walked 200km from Brussels to Aachen in Germany. This year, the second Jorsala Walk extends from Ypres to Istanbul, a walk beyond Belgium and "into the unknown". "The unknown is perceived as dangerous and creates fear," says de Fooz. "Jorsala's walk along Europe's former geopolitical fault lines will allow us to meet people from all walks of life, with whom we would perhaps never cross paths otherwise. These dialogues are exactly

what we need to stop conflicts like the First World War in the future; after all, war is a result of failed dialogue."

The walkers began their historic march with ceremonies at Ypres' city hall and Menin Gate. De Fooz: "We chose Ypres as a starting point for our journey given its First World War significance and the undeniable fact that it's a real city of peace."

Ypres alderman Jef Verschoore also gave the group an authentic lantern used in the

trenches 100 years ago. This powerful symbol will travel with them until they reach Sarajevo on 18 or 19 August, the city where the Great War broke out following the death of Franz Ferdinand.

From Ypres, the walkers headed to Brussels, via former battlegrounds and a visit to Bedford House Cemetery. Rotary Club Europe, public authorities and citizens offered them food and lodging. On 15 May they reached Brussels, where they were welcomed by Peter Van Kemseke, representing Jorsala sponsor Herman Van Rompuy.

"Once past Brussels, the participants choose their own routes," explains de Fooz. They will convene every 400km "for a moment of reflection" in cities that mark cultural crossroads or an important moment in European history. These 17 intersections are points where people can join in or step out, and include Strasbourg, Trieste, Mostar, Sarajevo, Pristina, Skopje, Plovdiv and Istanbul, which they hope to reach by 17 October.

"It's up to each individual to decide how they want to participate," explains De Fooz. "They can join us for one day, one week, one month, five months."

One of Jorsala's walkers is Willem Vermeersch, a Brussels visual artist born in Poperinge, near Ypres. "This is going to be one of the greatest adventures of my life," he says. "I can't wait. I didn't bring a tent, so I'll be forced to come out of my comfort zone and meet lots of people."

De Fooz adds: "We hope to come into contact with many individuals and show that the differences between people on two sides of a conflict are not as big as one thinks."

► [www.jorsala.org](http://www.jorsala.org)

“A walk along Europe's former geopolitical fault lines will allow us to meet people from all walks of life

So he began the Jorsala Walk as a citizens' movement promoting dialogue and understanding between people of differing cultures, backgrounds and ways of life. The



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# The wonderful world of Leon Vranken

## Antwerp-based artist has created a playful, multi-faceted exhibition in Hasselt

Christophe Verbiest

In his solo exhibition in Hasselt's Z33, Flemish visual artist Leon Vranken has built a fountain. It shoots through a hole in the ceiling, and the top of the jet can be seen in the room above. Welcome to Vranken's wonderful world.

On the ground floor of Hasselt contemporary arts centre Z33, a large, otherwise empty room contains a fountain, called "Flowing Line". It's a powerful jet that goes through a hole in the ceiling, as if the fountain has made the aperture itself.

On the first floor, we just see the top of the fountain; a small, barely moving jet. Still, it's the same fountain. The playfulness of the work and the idea that things are not necessarily as they first appear are illustrative of the *Paper-Scissors-Stone* exhibition by Antwerp artist Leon Vranken.

Becoming a visual artist was a late calling, Vranken tells me. "I studied landscape architecture, but after working for a year in posh gardens, I realised it wasn't what I wanted to do with my life. So I decided to start studying again."

Not spatial planning, as most of his colleagues did, but *In Situ*<sup>3</sup>, a course at the Antwerp Academy that focuses on art in the public space. And there Vranken entered a whole new world: "I hadn't been interested in art; I never visited museums." He smiles: "I thought



Leon Vranken's indoor fountain, "Flowing Line", as seen from above and below



or even brand new, but, he explains, "I made sure to incorporate as many different aspects of my work as possible. I've been making art for a dozen years now; it was time to give an overview."

Vranken creates objects in wood, metal, glass and paper. He also takes photos of objects. He plays with exhibition conventions by altering

"First of all, I'm doing a lot of different things, including video – though I had no room for one in this exhibition – and photos. And a sculptor, for me, makes statues in plaster, ceramic, you name it."

So, how should we refer to him? "An in situ artist who sometimes decides to make a sculpture or painting, but isn't a sculptor or a painter."

*In situ* works are created for a specific location and that makes them very transient: Generally they will disappear once the exhibition is over. "That doesn't bother me," Vranken says. "I like how they arise and disappear again. Of course, I document every work thoroughly."

Sometimes a work will reappear later in a different form. "For an exhibition in Mechelen, I made a 180-metre long oak handrail that followed the walls of the different rooms," he says. "I used it again, in a different form, in a gallery in Brussels." And one of the rooms in Hasselt now also has a handrail, though made from different material.

He might see the same thing happen with

one of the most impressive works in Z33, "Horizon". The upper part of the four walls of a room is covered with bricks, supported by rusty scaffolding. If a museum is interested, I suggest, he could build a room with the same dimensions and recreate the work. "That doesn't interest me," he says firmly. "A copy-paste work? Certainly not. I would look for a space in the museum where I could create a similar work."

Visual artists make a living from selling their works. That seems to be a problem for an in situ artist. "Indeed," Vranken agrees, "I teach at two schools, and that pays the bills. Luckily, sometimes I sell one of my smaller sculptures or photos. But it's always a challenge to create the works I've designed for an exhibition with the available budget. For instance, at Z33 we needed sponsors to reach the budget, and the deal is that they will be compensated with a work of mine."

In case you were wondering... part of the budget will be used to repair the hole in the ceiling that was created for "Flowing Line".

*"I'm an in situ artist who sometimes decides to make a sculpture or painting, but isn't a sculptor or a painter"*

I knew what the training would offer me. But I was wrong."

Not that he ever regretted his choice. "In the first two years I focused on art in public spaces, but in the third year I started making works that could stand by themselves. I loved it, and I never stopped doing it."

Later, he studied at Ghent's prestigious Higher Institute for Fine Arts (Hisk).

Vranken was born in 1975 in the border town of Maaseik; *Paper-Scissors-Stone* is his first big solo exhibition in Flanders. It's not a retrospective – most of the works are recent,

the pedestal or the framework. Because of the materials he uses and the shapes he creates, his work looks familiar, but it isn't in the end, which lends it at times an uncanny undertone. Although he can't be viewed separately from art history – he names Lucio Fontana, famous for the cuts in his canvasses, and Dadaist Marcel Duchamp as some of his influences – his works have no parallel in contemporary art.

It's difficult to precisely pin down what kind of artist Vranken is, but I'd call him in the first place a sculptor. Naturally, he doesn't agree.

## Until 31 August

**Z33**

Zuivelmarkt 33, Hasselt

► [www.z33.be](http://www.z33.be)

## MORE VISUAL ARTS THIS MONTH

### Rossella Biscotti: For the Mnemonist, S.

Italian artist Rossella Biscotti's first solo exhibition shows her interest in historical processes and penal institutions (*pictured*), be it the former prison island Santo Stefano or a courtroom where radical leftist Italian intellectuals were judged in the 1980s. Don't call her just an archaeologist of 20th-century history because she always searches for the 21st-century relevance of the artefacts she discovers (found objects, footage and recordings). *Until 17 August, Wiels, Brussels*

► [www.wiels.org](http://www.wiels.org)



### Thomas Ruff: Lichten

Five series of works from the German photographer Thomas Ruff give an overview

of his artistic output from the end of the 1970s to now. The shift in focus in the spectrum between natural light and – due to the rise of digital photography – virtual light is the main theme of the exhibition. Ruff is a conceptual photographer: less interested in photographing reality than in portraying the realities of photography. *Until 24 August, SMAK, Ghent*

► [www.smak.be](http://www.smak.be)

### Ann Veronica Janssens

British-born artist Ann Veronica Janssens, who's been based in Brussels for ages, has

been called a sculptor of light and sound – she uses artificial fog or colour projections – creating elusive works that engage all the senses. This will be an important show for more than artistic reasons: It's the first exhibition in Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, following its move from Antwerp, where it was one of the main galleries, to Brussels this spring – stressing once again the growing importance of the capital as a centre for contemporary art. *11 June to 26 July, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels*

► [www.gms.be](http://www.gms.be)



WEEK IN ARTS  
& CULTUREArno exhibition  
extended to August

After a successful four-week run, *CinemArno* in Ostend has been extended to the end of the summer. The exhibition is based on the life of Flemish rock'n'roll pioneer Arno, who was born and raised in the city. Arno turned 65 last month and celebrated with special concerts and the launch of the exhibition, which is staged in an old cinema and features photos, video and soundscapes meant to immerse visitors in "the world of Arno".

"In not even four weeks, we've had 4,000 visitors," said Ostend city alderman Niko Geldhof. "We can easily, then, call it a success. We are happy to be able to extend it to 31 August so that summer tourists can also enjoy the exhibition."

Quut wins two  
Red Dot awards

Two products from the Ghent design bureau Pars Pro Toto's Quut line have won Red Dot Awards, one of the top prizes in international design, sponsored by the Red Dot institute in Germany. Pars Pro Toto launched the Quut collection of sustainable beach toys in 2012, and they are now sold in more than 25 countries. The Scoppi sand shovel and Alto sand castle building system were both recognised by Red Dot for outstanding design. Scoppi also won a Henry Van De Velde quality label this year from Design Vlaanderen.

New penguin colony  
at Antwerp Zoo

A new colony of 30 African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*) has taken up residence at Antwerp Zoo. They are housed in the quarters occupied until last year by a group of Humboldt penguins, which were transferred to the animal park Planckendael in Mechelen. The new habitat (pictured) resembles the penguins' natural environment on the south-west coast of Africa. The penguins are native to the coastline from Angola to South Africa; *S. demersus* is the only species of penguin native to the African continent. Numbers in recent years have dropped to barely 80,000; Antwerp Zoo hopes to begin a breeding programme.



## Working from home

## Exhibition in Hasselt peeks into writers' and illustrators' creative spaces

Toon Lambrechts

I sincerely hope no-one ever gets it into their head to photograph my home office, let alone exhibit it. A jumble of coffee mugs, stacks of papers and notebooks, an ashtray that needs emptying and more of those writer's clichés is what you would find there.

Eight Flemish and Dutch authors had no such qualms about laying bare their workspaces, though. Better yet, they even made a selection of things they considered to be indispensable elements in their workplace. Among them are Flemish author of young adult fiction Bart Moeyaert and Brussels illustrator and graphic novelist Judith Vanistendael.

The results are on view in the new exhibition *Werkplekken* (Workspaces) at the Hasselt Literary Museum. Later this year, a second instalment of the exhibition will open at Genk's central library.

For *Werkplekken*, each artist was given his or her own desk, which are topped with a selection of sketches, drawing materials and notes – anything that shows how their texts or drawings come to life. The artists were also asked to select items with particular meaning to them, and this sometimes leads to amusing results. Ghent illustrator Gerda Dendooven, for example, chose a stuffed boar's head that inspired her latest book *Rennen*.

Photographer Eveliene Deraedt visited every author and took portraits of them in their workspaces. The pictures reveal that all the spaces, unsurprisingly, look very different. Some stick to a charming chaos of sketches,

Find out why Ghent illustrator Gerda Dendooven surrounds herself with stuffed animals at *Werkplekken*

drawing materials and other items. Others are paragons of order and tidiness.

*"My work space is so important that it determined the house I chose to buy"*

"The aim is to show the audience how a book is created, whether it be literature or a graphic work," explains co-curator Ingrid Sleurs. "Visitors are invited to touch and

peer inside the books and bundled sketches."

The museum has also devised a special programme for schools and youth groups that allows the young visitors to also touch the items on view. "We realised in previous exhibitions that that works well," Sleurs says. "Even groups that aren't into books or normally rarely visit a museum find something for them here."

One of the participating *Werkplekken* artists, Moeyaert is best-known as a writer of novels for young people, but he is also a poet and screenwriter. He exudes calmness in Deraedt's photo of him.

Until 2  
November

How important is the right work environment to Moeyaert? "My work space is so important that it determined the house I chose to buy in Antwerp," he says. "I had seen many homes, but when I walked into that house, I knew that was it."

The writer says his workspace is vital to him. "My workplace is my life in the sense that it is where I spend most of my time. I live in the vicinity of Central Station, close to the brutal life of sex shops and gambling joints. When I look out of the window, I see an ugly hotel with something like 200 windows. There are 200 lives over there every evening – the place has atmosphere."

Yet Moeyaert denies that his workspace is what "inspires" him. "That's not the right word," he says. "I find tranquillity there. It's the place where I get fulfilled."

The photo of Moeyaert's workspace shows a large bookcase with many books and items in between, which he says are either somewhat or very dear to him.

Moeyaert says he can only write at night or in the early morning. "Then I have the feeling of being alone, which of course in reality makes no sense. The more I lose myself in the book, the more my life happens at night. The only thing that always occurs when writing is that I'm living more and more inside the book instead of in reality."

Hasselt Literary Museum  
Bampslaan 35  
► [www.literairmuseum.be](http://www.literairmuseum.be)The picture generation:  
Robert Heinecken at Wiels

The late American visual artist Robert Heinecken took the art of recycling to a whole new level when he began taking Polaroids of images of models he cut from popular magazines and mail order catalogues. He penned fictitious, pseudo-didactic captions underneath, resulting in often hilarious results.

Heinecken's series *Lessons in Posing Subjects* is both the centrepiece and title of a new exhibition at Brussels contemporary art centre Wiels. In addition to being the funniest show currently on view in a local museum, it also offers a striking comment on the hypocrisy of mass media.

Though he was the founder of the photography department of the University of California in Los Angeles, Heinecken didn't see himself as a photographer. Instead, he called himself a "paraphotographer". Only at the beginning of his artistic career

in the 1970s did he do some experimenting behind a camera – but not just any camera.

He fell for the directness of the Polaroid SX-70, the very first user-friendly instant camera on the market. "At first he just used it like everyone else," explains curator Devrim Bayar, "even as a 'bedroom camera', as the intimate opening works of the exhibition illustrate." Before long, influenced by the "picture generation", Heinecken began reworking images that had already been circulated in mass media outlets and refashioned them into new forms. "Don't forget," Bayar says, "the sensual, suggestive poses of his models are as artificial and manipulative as his own pictures. Heinecken misleads the viewer, helped by the SX-70, just like the advertisers behind his models did." The artist's satirical accompanying notes emphasise this ambiguity. At first they centred on the subtle



© courtesy Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York

power games between men and women, but later they became ironic comments on the lies disseminated by the mass media.

Not everyone understood and appreciated this "decontextualising" of art, Bayar admits. "Especially when naked body parts appeared, the arts world, and especially female artists, accused him of misogyny, while work was always about the representation of the female body." Bayar says the questions the artist raised about the truth behind the image were – and still are – much more relevant. "Is it real, or fake?" he asks. "If we see a picture on Instagram or Facebook, that is also mediated."

Tom Peeters

Until 17 August

Wiels

Van Volxemlaan 354,  
Brussels  
► [www.wiels.org](http://www.wiels.org)



## Spot the next big thing Show 2014

**12-14 June | Waagnatie, Antwerp**

► [www.antwerp-fashion.be](http://www.antwerp-fashion.be)

On 12 June, Hangar 29 in Antwerp will once again form the backdrop for the graduate show of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts' fashion department. The annual catwalk event is arguably the most exciting of its kind in the country.

Fashion students from all four years show their hard work before an international jury of experts, headed by Flanders' design *enfant terrible* Walter Van Beirendonck. About 6,000 come to experience the unique atmosphere and discover the talent of tomorrow.

To deal with visitor numbers, the show is staged on three nights and culminates nightly in the Masters section. While first-year students present just one piece – a skirt – their colleagues from the fourth year debut a fully-fledged collection of mens- or womenswear.

For many of these graduates, the annual academy show marks the end of four years of hard work

and the start of a career in fashion.

The department's most famous alumni are, of course, the Antwerp Six, including Van Beirendonck and Dries Van Noten. Behind them came Raf Simons, now creative head of Dior. But more recent graduates are working their way up fast in the business as well, a testament to both the department's high-quality education and its lasting lustre.

This year, some names to look out for are Austrian Raffaella Graspontner, with her love of bold colours and sequin embroidery; Yens Cuyvers, who hails right from Antwerp province and who dreamed up a collection for futuristic dandies; and Swedish-Chilean Clara Jungman Malmquist, who designed the purple organza dress worn by model Kim Peers on the Show 2014 poster (*pictured*).

Apart from a great night out, the show is the perfect opportunity to find out why Belgian fashion is lauded all over the world. And perhaps spot the next Simons or Van Beirendonck before anyone else. **Catherine Kusters**



© Ronald Stoops

### CONCERT

**Graham Parker & The Rumour:** Concert by the British singer-songwriter and his band, best known for their energetic performances and late 1970s-early '80s rock and New Wave sound. *10 June, 20.00, Ancienne Belgique, Anspachlaan 110, Brussels*

► [www.abconcerts.be](http://www.abconcerts.be)

### VISUAL ARTS

**75 Years of Albert Canal:**

The Albert Canal, the 130km waterway that connects Antwerp and Liège, is celebrating 75 years of service with a unique exhibition on board a boat, filled with authentic objects, photographs and film material to give a nice picture of the past, present and future of Belgium's most important canal. *10-11 June, Albertkanaal, Vossenkuilstraat, Eigenbilzen (Limburg province)*

► [www.75jaaralbertkanaal.be](http://www.75jaaralbertkanaal.be)

### FESTIVAL

**Out Loud! 2014:** Free movies, concerts and parties on the rooftop terrace (with a view) of one of the city's most outstanding multi-disciplinary arts centres. *4-28 June, Beursschouwburg, August Ortsstraat 28, Brussels*

► [www.beursschouwburg.be](http://www.beursschouwburg.be)

### FILM

**Brussels Film Festival:** Twelfth edition of the festival dedicated to European cinema, featuring more than 70 shorts and features from various genres, plus workshops, DJ sets and open-air exhibitions. *6-14 June, Flageyplein, Brussels*

► [www.brusselsfilmfestival.be](http://www.brusselsfilmfestival.be)

### DEBATE

**Intergenerational**

**Debate:** Symposium on the representation of women in media, theatre, film and performance, featuring a series of debates animated by images and movie stills. You also get live streaming of the Belgium-Algeria football match on a big screen, followed by a debate on Arts, Gender and Activism featuring Belgian peace activist Simone Susskind, politician Joëlle Milquet, professor Marleen Temmerman and members of a Russian feminist art collective. *17 June, 10.00-20.30, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels*

► [www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

### FOOD

**Eel Festival:** Annual celebration of the eel, a local delicacy in Mariekerke, a former fishing village on the Scheldt, with restaurants offering the traditional dish *paling in 't groen* (eel in green sauce), or meatballs with warm cherries for those less eel-inclined. *7-9 June, Kouterplein 1, Mariekerke (Antwerp province)*

► [www.palingfestival.be](http://www.palingfestival.be)

## VISUAL ARTS

### Johan Creten: The Storm

**Until 14 September | Middelheim Museum, Antwerp**

► [www.middelheimmuseum.be](http://www.middelheimmuseum.be)

While relatively unknown in his native Flanders, Paris-based artist Johan Creten is a big name abroad. His work can be found in collections around the world, where it tends to evoke strong reactions. His sculptures look innocent enough, perhaps even naive at first glance. But the figurative images bring up complex metaphors that mask an underlying political

comment or charged symbolic meaning. Creten combined new and existing works to piece together *The Storm*, a new exhibition scattered about the Middelheim Museum's flower garden. Creten reflects here on the emotional storms associated with personal development and the larger storms that rage within society. **Robyn Boyle**



## FILM

### Terrace Films

**4-20 June | STUK, Leuven |** ► [www.cinemazed.be](http://www.cinemazed.be)

It wouldn't be summer in Leuven without Terrace Films. This 32nd edition features free movies in the courtyard of STUK three nights a week. The programme features a fine mix of art-house, cult, short, documentary and animated films. Catch, for example, the Coen brothers' *Inside Llewyn Davis*, which follows a week in the life of a young, struggling folk singer in 1961 Greenwich Village (*pictured*). Or *Wadjda*, the first film made by a woman in Saudi Arabia. Then there's *Les géants* (*The Giants*), a moving Belgian drama, with music by young Ghent musician The Bony King Of Nowhere. The films begin around 22.30 when the sun goes down. In the unlikely event of rain (ahem), screenings move inside to the cosy STUKcafé. **RB**



## PARTY

### Pool Party Festival

**15 June, noon to 1.00 | Badboot, 't Eilandje, Antwerp**

► [www.facebook.com/poolpartyfestival](http://www.facebook.com/poolpartyfestival)



It may not be summer quite yet, but *Antwerpenaars* couldn't care less. They're throwing *the* summer party of the year on their flashy Badboot, one of the world's largest floating swimming pools. The pool on the river sets the scene for the city's first hip-hop, reggae and world music pool party, featuring New York living legends Tony Touch and Jeru the Damaja.

There is a main stage on the upper deck where artists from Trinidad, Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico and Barcelona promise to heat up the dance floor. Next to the swimming pool (don't forget your suit and towel), chill out in one of the lounge areas and enjoy complimentary cava and tapas (12.00-13.30) and free massages (all day). **RB**

## LITERATURE

### Michael Cunningham

**9 June, 20.00 | Passa Porta, Brussels |** ► [www.passaporta.be](http://www.passaporta.be)

Michael Cunningham is one of America's greatest living writers. He gained international fame for his novels *A Home at the End of the World*, *Flesh and Blood* and *The Hours* (which earned him both the Pulitzer Prize and the PEN/Faulkner Award). He's in Brussels over the holiday weekend to promote his long-awaited new novel *The Snow Queen*, a tale of two brothers who embark on a desperate search for meaning following their mother's death. Notably, it was in Brussels in 2011 that Cunningham (*pictured*) was inspired to begin writing *The Snow Queen*, when he stayed in the city for a month as writer-in-residence at Passa Porta. Don't miss this interview with radio and TV personality Lieven Vandenhaute, during which Cunningham is sure to

reveal some insight into his ability to burrow deep into the human condition and still come up with a ray of light. (in English) **RB**



© Richard Pribis



# Talking Dutch

## I do like to be beside the seaside

Derek Blyth

Oh dear. Someone has written something negative about the coast. *Westtoer is boos op Uitgeverij Lannoo omwille van enkele weinig flatterende passages in de gids '600 plekken in Vlaanderen die je echt gezien moet hebben'* – Westtoer [West Flanders' tourist authority] is angry at Lannoo Publishing because of some not very flattering sections in the guide *600 Places in Flanders You Really Have to See*, according to *De Standaard*.

Normally a tourist office doesn't have any say in the contents of a quality guide book, but *600 Places* was being heavily promoted in local tourist offices. *Die gids werd de voorbije dagen gratis meegegeven bij de diensten van Toerisme bij ophaling van de Vlaanderen Vakantieland-gids* – This guide was recently handed out free at tourist offices along with the Flanders Holiday guide.

So what did they say in the chapter on the coast that was so terrible? *Zeventig kilometer onovertroffen monotonie* – 70 kilometres of unsurpassed monotony. *Eindeloze lintbebouwing* – Endless rows of apartments. *De grenzeloze vergiftiging van de Noordzee* – The boundless poisoning of the North Sea. *De schrijnende verveling die gegarandeerd toeslaat bij slecht weer* – The ghastly boredom that inevitably descends when the weather turns bad.

Well, you might agree that a wet weekend in Ostend is not the stuff of dreams, but surely the coast isn't all that bad. It might not be the most beautiful coastline in the world, but it does have its charms. The museum in Westende filled with seaside memorabilia, the giant babies crawling up the walls of Blankenberge Casino and the fishermen's wives selling shrimps in Ostend harbour are just a few. And they're all there, rain or shine.

The mayor of Bredene was one of the first to leap to the coast's defence. *Het hoofdstuk over de kust lijkt wel te*



*zijn geschreven door iemand die hier voor het laatst twintig jaar geleden is geweest, vermoedelijk op een zonnige 21 juli* – The chapter on the coast looks as if it was written by someone who was last here 20 years ago, probably on a sunny National Day.

*Werkelijk alle negatieve clichés worden vanonder het stof gehaald om het hoofdstuk in te leiden* – Just about every negative cliché has been dusted off in the introduction to the chapter, he added.

*De kust is inderdaad zoveel meer dan zee en strand en is een blijvende topbestemming voor gans België en onze buurlanden* – The coast is really much more than sea and sand, and it remains a favourite destination for all of Belgium as well as neighbouring countries, said the head of Westtoer.

It is a pity the book has been scrapped, but then again maybe it's not. It means you can take it off the list of 600 books you have to read before you die.

## VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY

**Twyla Campbell** @wanderwoman10  
We were staying in #Brussels when shooting @JewishMuseum happened. Horrible.Senseless.Glad killer has been caught. nydailynews.com/news/world/arr...

**Kerri** @bluehair\_Be  
Half day trip to Retrorama at the Brussels Expo. Found a cute vintage skirt for myself ;)


**daisy** @daisylili1989  
Barack Obama comes in Brussels on Wednesday and Thursday. It's great. I hope to meet him one day, I think it is a great man

**Romain Persuy** @MrPersuy  
Belgium 14 makes me think of France 98. The kind of team you want to root for. #RedDevils #SweBel

**Krista** @kristasmillre  
The development of #Flanders has reached its spatial limits. How to create more welfare without space? And in #Veneto? #cittaimpresa14

**Simon Wiesenthal Center**  
In wake of the arrest of French Muslim Jihadist in Brussels Jewish Museum terror attack, Wiesenthal Center urges all European governments to increase security of Jewish institutions #SimonWiesenthalCenter #JewishMuseum #attack #antiSemitic #terrorattackBrussels

**Nana Barbakadze**  
Gotta love #Spring in #Brussels

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## Poll

Brussels' transport authority MIVB plans to spend €430 million on new automatic metros, which operate without a driver. Will you be a happy traveller?

**a. No! Passengers will not feel safe in a metro without a driver, and hundreds of drivers will be out of a job**

30%

**b. Yes! The trains will improve frequency of services, thereby attracting more people to public transport. It's a win-win**

70%

Great news for futurists: by a convincing majority, the readers of *Flanders Today* are ready to take the automatic metro, planned by Brussels public transport authority MIVB for 2019. The first driver-free trains will show up on metro lines 1 and 5 and will have drivers on board

ready to spring into action should anything go wrong. But later, the drivers will disappear altogether. But 70% of you are not concerned about that. Perhaps it's a tribute to the fact that the metro and tram network in Brussels suffers remarkably few accidents. Or

perhaps it's because no one really notices the metro driver anyway. In any case, most of you don't see a reason not to embrace our bright new metro future.

**Next week's question:**  
Campaigners want organ donors to register their decision so that donations cannot be blocked by relatives if the time comes. What do you think?  
Log-in to the Flanders Today website to vote! [www.flanderstoday.eu](http://www.flanderstoday.eu)

## THE LAST WORD

### Schoolboy hero

"I learned an unbelievable amount from him. The more I'm challenged, the better I become. And that's what I took away from this school."  
Red Devils captain Vincent Kompany called on former teacher and mentor Joost Meskens at Maria Boodschap school in Brussels

### Unpopular vote

"We pay no attention to the Tripadvisor lists. They're not representative. From our own surveys, it seems that tourists are really pleased with Brussels hotels."  
Patrick Bontinck of Visit Brussels, after several hotels in the capital were panned by visitors to the website Tripadvisor

### Zero-hit squad

"We'll be meeting several times in the coming months in London, Brussels and elsewhere in Europe to come up with concrete proposals Google and other search engines can use."  
Professor Peggy Valcke is a member of the committee charged with enforcing the European Court ruling stating that citizens have the right to opt out of internet search results

### Quality not quantity

"The murders at the Jewish Museum in Brussels and the Markt in Bruges show that we might well have security cameras everywhere, but that they'd be more useful if they could produce sharper images."  
A reader's letter in *Het Nieuwsblad*

