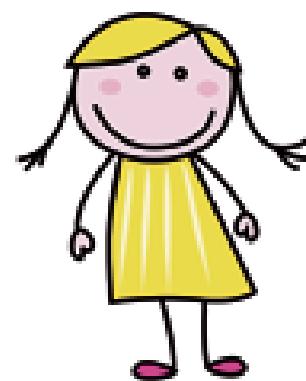


**“GOVERNMENT OF RECOVERY”**

The new centre-right federal government is announced and ministers sworn in, with Charles Michel Belgium's youngest-ever prime minister

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**DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY**

Education expert Leo Bormans says the most important job of schools is to ensure happy children

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IN YOUR FACE, FASHION WEEK

In the absence of a chic Fashion Week like those *other* capitals, Brussels unveils its first-ever Fashion Month

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© Ute Brunzel

The six faces of Rubens

Exhibition brings home works by the baroque master that Belgians have never seen



Ian Mundell

More articles by Ian \ flanderstoday.eu

It's a surprise to hear that Peter Paul Rubens, one of the defining artists of the Flemish baroque, needs help with his reputation. Yet this is one of the aims of the exhibition *Sensation and Sensuality: Rubens and His Legacy* at Bozar in Brussels.

“Rubens is not well-loved in Belgium,” explains curator Nico Van Hout of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, the city where the painter spent much of his working life. “The problem is that only a part of his work can be seen here – the religious part. I want to show other aspects.”

As the title of the exhibition suggests, these range from brash sensationalism to intimate sensuality, with many different moods in between. And in addition to presenting a broad selection of Rubens' work, the exhibition explores the

painter's considerable influence on other artists. “You can't speak about British landscape painting or French rococo without Rubens,” says Van Hout.

Sensation and Sensuality is divided into six sections: violence, power, lust, compassion, elegance and poetry. Each takes one or more pivotal works by Rubens, then follows likely lines of influence, from contemporaries in the 17th century up to the modern era.

Violence, for example, includes Rubens' monumental “Tiger, Lion and Leopard Hunt” from the Museum of Fine Arts in Rennes. Hunters, horses and prey are tangled together in a desperate struggle, from which the humans seem unlikely to emerge victorious.

This feeling of turbulent, chaotic combat is then picked up in scenes of hunting and war by artists such as French romanticist Eugène Delacroix, British painter Edwin Land-

seer and even the Swiss symbolist Arnold Böcklin. Turn to Lust, and you find the generous, fleshy bodies with which Rubens' name has become synonymous. Even here there are different moods, from the hopeful “Fortuna”, the Roman goddess of luck, on loan from the Prado in Madrid, to the crouched “Venus Frigida”, the naked goddess of love trapped in a cold and loveless world. This magnificent painting has only come from as far as Antwerp, but with the Royal Museum of Fine Arts still closed for renovation this is a good opportunity to see it again.

This section is also the place to explore Rubens' nymphs, satyrs and drunks, a very popular theme with other artists. His “Pan and Syrinx”, from the City Museum in Kassel, shows the Greek god accosting a scantily clad nymph in the rushes by a river (*pictured*).

Then there is the “Drunken Silenus” character, a rotund,

NMBS retains night trains from Brussels to Flemish cities

After protests from cultural institutions, NMBS keeps later trains on new schedule



Alan Hope

Follow Alan on Twitter \ @AlanHopeFT

National rail authority NMBS has responded to appeals from the cultural sector in Brussels and reinstated a number of late trains out of Brussels in its new timetable, due to come into effect in December. In a first draft of the new roster presented last May, the NMBS had cancelled many early and late trains to and from the capital, on the grounds that they carry fewer passengers and are therefore less economically viable.

The timetable no longer showed any stop-trains (trains with multiple stops between cities) leaving Brussels after 23.00. Theatres and concert venues argued that patrons would be less likely to travel to Brussels for events if there was an increased chance they might not make the last train back to their towns in Flanders. If an opera singer took one curtain call too many, visitors could find themselves stranded in the city overnight.



© Courtesy Het Nieuwsblad

According to the latest amendments to the timetables, the last train to Ghent now leaves Brussels Central at 00.23, only one minute earlier than at present. Late trains to Antwerp (00.10) and Bruges (00.24) remain the same, while the last train to Leuven leaves at 00.25 – 15 minutes later than at present.

The only cuts are seen in trains to Limburg; the last train to Hasselt leaves at 23.00, albeit 20 minutes later than at present.

Federal police threaten further protests

Unions representing federal police officers have threatened further action in protest at new pension rules, following a disappointing turnout last week for a boycott of the second national marathon of speed checks this year, known in Dutch as the *flitsmarathon*. According to reports, only 64 police zones from the 194 nationwide took part in the boycott, far fewer than the 100 or so expected by unions. The first marathon took place on 17 April and was considered a resounding success, with 400,000 cars checked and more than 20,000 speeding tickets issued.

That was before the Constitutional Court struck down a law allowing police officers to retire earlier (at age 62) than other workers, ruling it was discriminatory. Police have protested against the ruling by taking to the streets, staging a one-day strike last month and observing a fine-free week in which minor offences were not ticketed.

This time around, estimates are that 100,000 cars were checked and around 5,000 speeding tickets issued.

Now police unions are threatening a series of wildcat strikes, when officers will stop work without warning. Strike action could come in any section. Airport police, for instance, have already threatened to bring Brussels Airport to a standstill during the autumn school holidays by carrying out strict identity checks. \ AH

Six percent of Belgium under sea level by 2100

Belgium is in 10th place on the ranking of countries that are most threatened by rising sea levels, which is mainly caused by climate change, according to data compiled by US geological services, NASA's satellite Topex/Poseidon and the French space agency CNES. According to the study, 619,000 people in Belgium will be living under sea level by the year 2100. If the rising of the sea level accelerates, that number could increase to 660,000.

The Flemish Region, which estimates as much as a 30-centimetre rise in water levels, has developed a coast safety master plan, with measures that would cost more than €300 million. The plan includes the strengthening of dykes, raising the level of beaches and temporary protection services. About 177 million people, or 2.6% of the global population, will by the end of the century live in an area with "chronic floods", according to the study. 146



© Courtesy dewereldmorgen.be

million are in Asia, 17 million in Europe and five million in North America. \ Andy Furniere

Belgian F-16 fighters strike first IS target in Iraq

A Belgian F-16 fighter attacked a group of IS terrorists last week in Iraq, according to Pieter De Crem, speaking last week as minister of defence before taking up a new post in the federal government at the weekend (see p4).

The plane fired on a military jeep with armed fighters on board as it drove towards Iraqi government troops stationed to the west of Baghdad. The target was "positively identified as a terrorist element" and "immediately neutralised," according to a defence statement.

Two F-16 planes took part in the

mission, which lasted seven hours. De Crem stressed that the pilots followed the rules of engagement laid down for the mission in Iraq. "There was no collateral damage caused to civilians or buildings, and the target was neutralised," De Crem told Radio 1. He said he was unable to give the number of IS fighters killed in the attack.

Six Belgian fighter



planes are taking part in the international coalition force set up to defeat IS extremism in Iraq, along with 160 Belgian troops currently stationed in the north of Jordan.

The mission was originally approved for one month, but De Crem said that it would "almost certainly be extended". \ Derek Blyth

€727,000



94%



11



34%



spent by Brussels-City council on studies, lawyers and project managers in connection with the planned new national stadium, despite assurances the development would involve no public funds

of patients with eating disorders are women, aged 22 on average, and have been ill for 5.5 years, according to a study carried out by the University of Leuven for a Master's thesis

to be invested in three projects by Flanders' Child Poverty Fund, among them a pre-school language workshop in Heusden-Zolder, a crèche in Ostend and family social assistance in Vilvoorde

years old and already driving: A junior motorist was spotted driving erratically by police in Dilsen, Limburg, shortly after midnight last Sunday. His parents and two siblings were also in the car

of environmental offences in Flanders were referred to the government's environment, nature and energy department in 2013 for administrative fines, rather than being processed through the courts

WEEK IN BRIEF

Double the number of tourists visited the Westhoek area of West Flanders in August and September than in the same period last year, according to Westtoer. The Westhoek centres on the city of Ypres and is the main area for tourism related to First World War centennial commemoration in Belgium. During August, 250,000 people visited at least one of 10 major sites singled out by Westtoer. That's an increase of 114% on the normal total for August. September saw even better results, with figures up 123%.

Belgium got their **Euro 2016 qualifying campaign** off to a flying start with a resounding 6-0 thrashing of Andorra in Brussels last Friday night. Kevin De Bruyne and Dries Mertens scored two goals each, and Divock Origi and Nacer Chadli added the others as the Red Devils easily won their first competitive encounter since the World Cup quarter-final defeat to Argentina.

On 16 and 17 October, the Flemish Parliament plays host to all seven national and regional parliaments of the UK and Ireland during the **Lichtfront event in West Flanders** commemorating the First World War. The delegation includes 17 representatives from the lower and upper houses of the British and Irish parliaments, the Scottish parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Welsh Assembly.

Education minister Hilde Crevits has **revised her plans for Klasse**, the education periodical published in three editions for teachers, students and parents. The original plan was to go digital-only to save €1.8 million a year. But parents objected since not everyone has regular internet access. Crevits is now considering publishing the editions for parents and teachers four times a year, while the majority of content remains online.

OFFSIDE

Have you seen the little piggies?

There are few things in life more enjoyable than bacon, but there are at the same time few things more ethically troubling than pig farming. That's the dilemma faced by carnivores at many a breakfast. A new development announced last week by Delhaize will go some way to making life better for the little piggies.

The news is good for pig farmers, who, if you recall, are suffering from the Russian boycott on a range of EU foodstuffs. Flemish producers have already had a hard time in recent years as supermarket chains drive the prices they pay farmers through the floor.

Remember those gruesome photos of pig heads strewn around

Acquia, the software company co-founded by Flemish entrepreneur Dries Buytaert, inventor of the Drupal content management system, has been **named Belgian-American Company of the Year** by the Belgian-American Chamber of Commerce. The award is given annually to a company that has made major inroads in the American market. The open source Drupal system is used in millions of websites worldwide and is supported by a community of more than 35,000 developers. The company, launched in 2007, is based in Burlington, Massachusetts and employs more than 500 people.

An unidentified businessman from the Anderlecht district of Brussels has been **threatened with beheading** if he does not pay €50,000 towards the cost of sending fighters to Syria. The threat is being taken seriously, police in Zone South said. The lone extortionist, who has already caused the man a broken nose and an eye injury, is being sought.

The city of Halle, just outside Brussels, is investigating the possibility of **bringing the Zenne river above ground** in the city centre. The river, which flows through Brussels but was covered over between 1867 and 1871, flows through Halle via an underground pipe that passes under the Brussels-Charleroi canal. The canal is to be deepened at a cost of €20 million, and the pipe displaced.

Students at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) have taken to the new addition to the canteen menu: **burgers made with worm protein**. Produced by Damhert in the Netherlands, the burgers went on sale last Friday, and the canteen sold out the whole batch of 400. One student told *De Morgen* that the burger was "something like a veggie burger, although it makes you think more of a real hamburger".

The Flemish human rights league is challenging a **new law on how the police manage information**, including how personal details are to be stored in a General National Database. The league and its French-speaking counterpart admit the new law is an improvement on the old, but objects to the "almost unlimited ability to gather information" it allows police. The details of people tried and acquitted, for example, are not automatically removed from the database; details of everyone involved in a crime, from witnesses to bystanders, may be collected and stored for up to 30 years.

Musician and entrepreneur **Will.i.am will not after all be the keynote speaker** at the Creativity World Forum organised by Flanders DC in Kortrijk on 5-6 November, organisers said. His place will be taken by Steven Levitt, co-author of the Freakonomics blog, radio show and books.

\ www.creativityworldforum.be

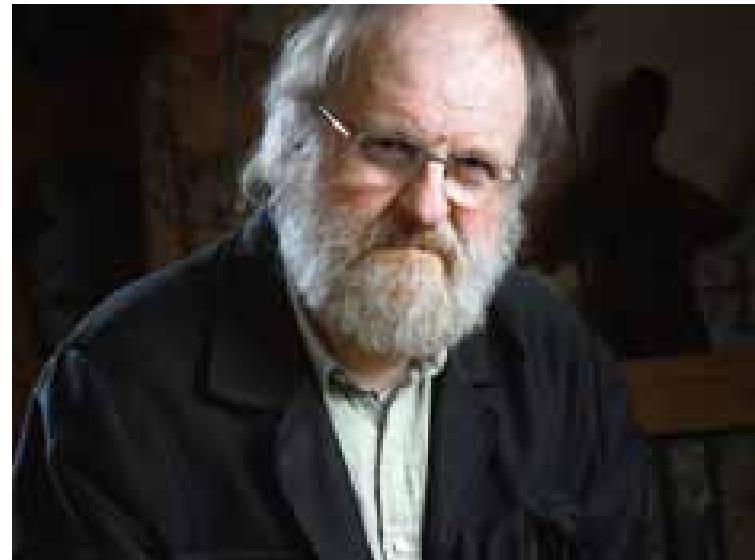


© Courtesy Delhaize

the roadway in protest outside a Delhaize distribution centre in 2011? The Russian boycott, and resulting glut of unsold pork, has only made things worse. Now Delhaize, with its new *Beter voor Iedereen* (Better for Everyone) campaign, has put its hand in its corporate pocket and is offering Belgian pig farmers a premium of

€3.59 a pig extra – it sounds like pocket change for farmers, but that's how tough things are. The money comes in two slices: new animal feed rich in Omega 3 for a better quality of meat, which costs €2.59 a pig more than what they get now, and a €1 premium for every piggy in the system. The total cost of the whole campaign comes to about €2 million. "Contributing to more balanced eating habits and a healthier lifestyle for our clients by offering sustainable and nutritious products has been a priority for several years now," commented Tim Lammens, Delhaize vice president for quality, food safety and sustainability. \ Alan Hope

FACE OF FLANDERS



© Courtesy Lannoo

Willem Vermandere

Artist, musician, poet, philosopher and sculptor Willem Vermandere took a break from his tour last week to head home to Nieuwpoort and attend the unveiling of his memorial to the First World War. The pair of statues installed at the edge of the dunes sit at the farthest point of the Western Front.

Vermandere was born in 1940 in Lauwe, part of the town of Menen in West Flanders. His father was a clarinettist, and Willem soon picked up the instrument and played with the local marching band. At the same time, he became interested in the guitar, spurred on by the folk revival. He went on to follow religious studies at Ghent University before teaching in a school in Nieuwpoort.

Vermandere describes himself primarily as a sculptor, though the broader public knows him best for his songs. In Flemish, the genre is known as *kleinkunst*, or small art, which some regard as belittling; others maintain the word points to the small-scale, intimate nature of the music. Vermandere sings almost entirely in the dialect of West Flanders, which is as impenetrable to other Flemings as it is to foreigners. He also sings of everyday life and ordinary people as well as major themes such as the church, the Great War or multicultural society. He's a writer and poet, and inevitably something of a philosopher.

Right now Vermandere is touring a show called *14-18 ... en wat nu!* about the First World War. "You can't live in the Westhoek and not sing about it," he said.

"That insane war is still very much present here, even after 100 years."

The two sculptures that make up the Nieuwpoort memorial, *De verzoening* (The Reconciliation),

are carved from Burgundy stone,

rising up out of the ground, each a tangle of limbs entwined,

symbolising the former enemies who are now friends and allies.

"I did my best, sweated a lot and swore once or twice," he said during his dedication speech.

"I think these two Burgundians will enjoy it here, with the sea and the salt and the wind and the sand, and all these fine people passing by. People of Nieuwpoort, keep this place clean. The statues are watching you." \ Alan Hope

FLANDERSTODAY

 Flanders
State of the Art

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5TH COLUMN

Who's the boss?

The new federal government is imbalanced. Observers have pointed out the gender imbalance, calling Michel a "white male government". Another imbalance is the one between the Flemish and the French speakers.

N-VA, CD&V and Open VLD hold 65 of the 87 Flemish seats in the House of Representatives – a wide majority. On the French-speaking side, MR holds 20 of their 63 seats. Prime minister Charles Michel's party does not have a majority within its own language group.

Undemocratic? Not really. To pass ordinary laws, a majority within a language group is not needed. Only some constitutional and institutional matters require a "special majority", with two thirds of the votes in total and over half of the votes in each language group. These issues are not part of the new federal government agreement, however, so the centre-right need not worry about it. Also, there are compensations for the French speakers. For one, the federal government always has the same number of Flemish and French-speaking ministers. MR then has no less than seven ministers in a "Flemish dominated" government, including the prime minister, a surprising result of the negotiations.

While Flemish parties such as CD&V and Open VLD had to disappoint hopefuls, MR could reward a number of rather inexperienced party members, like Willy Borsus, the new minister for SMEs, and Jacqueline Gallant, the new minister for mobility.

The numbers do not tell the whole story, though. Most "heavy" portfolios – finance, interior affairs, justice and social affairs – are in Flemish hands. MR has been criticised for this imbalance, but legally, there is nothing wrong with it. Politically, the French-speaking liberals can even hope to be rewarded by the electorate, provided this government proves viable.

So far, the new federal team stands united, driven by a desire for change, made possible by the absence of the French-speaking socialists for the first time in decades. There have been protests – by the unions mostly – but the biggest threat may come from inside, as another look at the number of seats reveals yet another imbalance.

With 33 seats, N-VA is much larger than its partners. So far and for tactical reasons, the nationalists have chosen not to play off their party's weight. But when push comes to shove, this federal government's real boss is not Charles Michel. It's Bart De Wever. \ Anja Otte

New ministers take up posts

Several key portfolios go to N-VA in new federal government



Derek Blyth

More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

After months of negotiations, the new Belgian government was sworn in by King Filip over the weekend. The new prime minister, Charles Michel of the French-speaking liberals, takes over from French-speaking socialist Elio Di Rupo to lead a centre-right coalition government.

Several key posts in the administration have gone to the Flemish nationalists N-VA, the party with the largest share of the votes in Belgium. The post of finance minister is now in the hands of Johan Van Overtveldt, former editor of financial magazine *Trends*, who has to grapple with the continuing fallout from the crisis in the euro-zone, while Theo Francken has been awarded asylum, migration and administrative simplification. N-VA's Jan Jambon becomes interior minister as well as being in charge of the government buildings agency, which is currently under investigation for fraud. Steven Vandeput has been put in charge of defence and the



From left: Kris Peeters, Charles Michel, Jacqueline Galant and Alexander De Croo enter the palace on Saturday to be sworn in

civil service, while Elke Sleurs is responsible for anti-poverty, anti-fraud and science policy. The post of speaker of the house goes to Siegfried Bracke. Flanders' former minister-president Kris Peeters of the Christian-democrats (CD&V), who had been tipped as the next prime minister, becomes minister for work,

economic affairs and consumer affairs.

Koen Geens of CD&V takes over as justice minister, while Pieter De Crem, the former defence minister, becomes state secretary for foreign trade.

The popular Flemish liberal Maggie De Block (Open VLD) moves from asylum policy to become minister

for public health and social affairs. Alexander De Croo takes over as minister for international development, digital society, telecoms and postal services, while Bart Tommelein will serve as secretary of state for privacy, the North Sea and combatting welfare fraud.

Meanwhile, the French-speaking liberals, MR, have secured a large number of posts in relation to their share of the votes. Didier Reynders holds on to his old post at foreign affairs, while Hervé Jamar is in charge of the budget, and Willy Borsus takes over the portfolio for SMEs, agriculture and social integration.

When the list was announced, some critics complained about the lack of women in the new government. MR altered the balance by announcing at the last minute two more women in the cabinet – Marie-Christine Marghem was given energy, environment and sustainable development while Jacqueline Galant was put in charge of mobility.

Government agreement sees new taxes, increase in retirement age

The new federal government's so-called Swedish coalition, announced early last week, will consist of nationalists N-VA, Christian-democrats CD&V and liberals Open VLD on the Flemish side and on the French-speaking side only liberals MR. At just 38, Charles Michel of MR is the youngest prime minister to ever lead the country.

"This will be a government of recovery," said Michel, referring to the delicate issue of balancing the budget. The coalition partners agreed on cuts worth nearly €8 billion.

In order to balance the budget by 2018,

some €3 billion in new taxes will be introduced. About the same amount will be given to employees and companies as a tax break. "This is a tax shift. Every euro we take, we give back," said N-VA party president Bart De Wever. The new coalition will raise the retirement age by two years, to 67. The automatic index adaption, which links wages to the cost of living, will be skipped in 2015. Workers will, however, receive a tax break of €250. The coalition also agreed on a solution for the Arco savers/shareholders, who will get 40% of their money back.

\ Anja Otte

Major cuts coming in federal civil service

The new centre-right federal government has announced big cuts in the number of civil servants, according to a report in the financial daily *De Tijd*. The Michel government hopes to book savings of €800 million in the personnel budget over the next five years by replacing only one in five of retiring civil servants.

The cuts will provide 12% of the total savings that the government hopes to achieve, according to the newspaper. The remainder of the cuts will be achieved by reducing administration costs and cancelling some investments.

Unions are worried that civil service pensions will be cut as a result of new measures. The government wants to calculate civil servant pensions in the same way as private sector pensions, which would mean that they would have to work longer to qualify for a full pension.

The government claims that the planned cuts will not have any impact on the functioning of government services. \ DB

Employers and opposition weigh in on government plans

The policies announced by the new federal government last week have come under fire from trade unions and opposition parties but have been welcomed by employers.

In an interview with VRT radio, Flemish socialist party president Bruno Tobback (*pictured*) said that families will foot the bill for measures contained in the coalition agreement. He said that the government's new tax break – an increase of €250 in the amount that can be claimed for employment-related expenses – was outweighed by increased expenses that families would have to pay.

He also criticised the decision to raise the retirement age to 67. "This will be the first measure we will revoke when the Flemish socialists are back in the government," he said.

Groen leader Kristof Calvo said that the new government had made choices that were "inequitable and unfair." He criticised the decision to

raise the pension age and said there were other ways to shore up the pension system. "The negotiators haven't necessarily made the best choices, but rather choices ... that sound good if you are a right-wing conservative politician," he told VRT.

The main Belgian unions also voiced strong opposition to the new direction of government policy. The raising of the pension age would deprive young people of jobs and prevent the creation of new jobs, said Chris Reniers of the ACOD union. It would also unfairly penalise workers who were engaged in heavy manual work, he added.

But the Belgian employers' federation VBO warmly welcomed the new policies announced by the government. "They contain all the elements needed to increase growth and create jobs," said Pieter Timmermans of the VBO. "The agreement provides a coherent narrative that



\ Courtesy VTM

will strengthen our competitive position," he added. The Flemish employers' federation Voka was equally supportive of the new measures. "Growth is our only form of social security," said Voka chair Jo Lipeer. "The decision to focus first on economic recovery is therefore the right choice." \ DB

The six faces of Rubens

The thread of Rubens' influence can be seen clear up to the present day

continued from page 1

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debauched old man usually propped up by satyrs. Rubens' painting could not travel from the Alter Pinakothek in Munich, so a version attributed to his assistant, Anthony van Dyck, has been brought over to Brussels from the National Gallery in London. A quite different kind of Rubens woman appears in the section devoted to elegance. "Maria Grimaldi and her Dwarf", owned by the National Trust in the UK, shows a thin young woman clothed from neck to foot in a heavy gown, her face framed by an implausibly wide ruff.

A work of breathtaking detail, it is just as sensual in its way as the nymphs and goddesses. Its influence is picked up with portraits by van Dyck, 18th-century British painter Joshua Reynolds and late 18th-century French painter Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun.

Of all the Rubens paintings loaned to the exhibition, perhaps the most significant is the large "Garden of Love", which usually resides in Madrid's Prado. This allegory of marital happiness makes reference to the artist's own house in Antwerp and includes a figure supposed to be his second wife, Helena.

Rubens seems to have painted the scene for himself and kept it close for much of his life. First recorded in the possession of the Spanish king, the painting has never returned to Belgium, until now.

Some of the connections between Rubens and other artists suggested in the exhibition are well established. "We've known about Rubenism in art history for a long time, but on an academic level," Van Hout explains. "The links between Rubens and Watteau, Fragonard and Reynolds have all been studied quite thoroughly. But after that, you start to discover that many other artists were also influenced by Rubens."

A common factor turns out to be colour. "When artists were taught, it was through classical antiquities," continues Van Hout. "They were taught line, and they learned how to draw, but they did not learn about colour."

This meant that when they started to work independently, young artists had to solve the colour question themselves. "Rubens was a gold mine of ideas. If you take just the Medici cycle, it was a school for generations of French artists. Even Cézanne still copied the Medici paintings."

The Medici cycle, a series of propaganda paintings recounting the life and heroic actions of Marie de' Medici, wife of Henry IV of France, is in the Louvre. Bozar has to be content with a series of colour engravings, which appear in the Power section, complemented by



© National Trust Images, Derrick E Witty



© The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Brian Merrett

Rubens' "Maria Grimaldi and her Dwarf" (left) offers a reminder that he didn't just paint nymphs and goddesses, while Honoré Daumier's "Nymphs Pursued by Satyrs" embraces and updates the colour scheme invented by Rubens

preparatory oil sketches that hint at the sophistication of the paintings.

Van Hout has also dug out some more obscure connections, known to academics but rarely demonstrated in an exhibition. One of

by Satyrs" – offers a clue. "If you don't know they are nymphs, they are simply women running. So he is updating a formula and a colour scheme that was invented by Rubens, but it is not a Rubens. It is a marvellous Daumier."

ing on Rubens for 20 years and knows the paintings by heart – and modern technology. "A fortunate effect of the internet is that you have all these databases of museums with their collections online," he explains. It is possible to look in unlikely places or at artists not usually associated with Rubens.

Van Hout is perhaps most proud of spotting "Loreley" by Austrian artist Oskar Kokoschka. The 1941 painting shows Queen Victoria riding a shark across the ocean, feeding the monster sailors. Painted while Kokoschka was a refugee in London, it is a political allegory criticising neglect of Britain's maritime power at a time when it should have been used to fight the Nazis.

But the painting is also a close reference to "Neptune Calming the Tempest," an oil sketch by Rubens that Kokoschka would have seen in London at the time, although it is now in the US. "If you know about that painting, then this allegory is completely a Rubensian joke. But if

you don't know the story, it is just a very strange Kokoschka."

This is one of a number of places where the exhibition nudges into the 20th century, and at a certain point Van Hout had thought of concluding it with a series of nudes by Dutch abstract expressionist Willem De Kooning. But instead he returns to Rubens, and a fragile sheet of paper from the British Museum covered with sketches for "Kermesse", or "The Village Fête". "Rubens is a genius of creativity. He was thinking creatively all the time, and if you see this big sheet of paper with 20 or 30 dancing peasant couples, that is the quintessence of Rubens," says Van Hout. Above it is a quote by the art critic John Ruskin, to the effect that the world is more likely to see a second Titian or Raphael before it finds another Rubens. "It think that's true," says Van Hout. "Whether you like his work or not, he was an exceptional man, with an exceptional mind."

“
Rubens was a gold mine of ideas. The Medici cycle alone was a school for generations of French artists

the most compelling involves the French painter and caricaturist Honoré Daumier. The connection is clear in his drawing of a "Drunken Silenus," which has a theme and style easily traceable to Rubens. But then there is a painting of two women running across a field.

"It feels like Rubens, but you can't pin it down," says Van Hout. "You see these two women in orange and red, very glowing colours, and a lot of movement, but he is not copying a Rubens composition." Only the title – "Nymphs Pursued

Other links are even more unexpected, and here Van Hout is breaking newer ground. One involves a painting of St Cecilia by Gustav Klimt that mirrors a Rubens very closely. Both appear in the exhibition. Then there is "Nymphs and Satyrs" by Narcisse-Virgilio Diaz De La Peña of the French Barbizon school. This small 1870 painting has a group of Rubenesque figures in an impressionist wood, almost scratched into the paint. Picking up these connections involved a combination of expertise – Van Hout has been work-

Until 1 January

Bozar
Ravensteinstraat 23, Brussels

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Aluminium \ Reynaers

The producer of aluminium profiles and building material, based in Duffel, Antwerp province, has confirmed its plans to invest €15 million to build a production unit in Phoenix, Arizona, to supply the US west coast areas.

Assembling \ Volvo

The Swedish car manufacturer has confirmed that its Ghent assembly unit will build the next model of the best-selling V40 car from next year. The decision guarantees some 5,000 jobs at the plant for the next 10 years.

Engineering \ Tractebel

The Brussels-based affiliate of the French GDF-Suez energy group has acquired the German Lahmeyer engineering company to strengthen its activities in energy-related services worldwide. The new entity will employ some 4,400 people in 34 countries.

Fraud \ Beaulieu

The textiles and floor-coverings group in Waregem, West Flanders, is once again at the heart of a tax evasion investigation that could lead to fines of up to €100 million. The company has already paid €90 million in earlier cases. Meanwhile, it has acquired a tract of land in Cartersville, Georgia, to build a vinyl floor covering unit to supply its US customers.

Furnishings \ Ikea

The Swedish furniture and home accessories group has announced plans to invest up to €150 million in its local operations, including the opening of a new store in Hasselt at the end of next year.

Petrochemicals \ ExxonMobil

The US-based petroleum products group is investing €1 billion in Antwerp to build a state-of-the-art delayed coker unit to produce "clean" diesel for the European market. The move is the final step in the major renovation of the Antwerp refinery that will have cost some €2 billion since 2008.

Supermarkets \ Colruyt

The Halle-based discount supermarket has pushed its stake in the fashion chain Zeb to 50%.

TV \ Sultan Sushi

The Mechelen-based TV production house, owned by the German Red Arrow company, has closed following a tax shelter funding shortfall. Sultan Sushi is known for its productions of award-winning Flemish programmes like *Marsman* and *Danni Lowinski*.

Kinepolis introduces surround-screen cinema in Antwerp

Panoramic view will be installed in Brussels this week



Alan Hope

More articles by Alan \ flanderstoday.eu

Flemish cinema chain Kinepolis has launched a new type of cinema, opening this week in Antwerp and Brussels. Barco Escape, a joint venture with the Kortrijk-based digital imaging company Barco, combines three projectors with three screens, one directly in front and two angled to the sides, offering an immersive, panoramic view (pictured).

The first Barco Escape film is the sci-fi drama *The Maze Runner* by American director Wes Ball about a group of boys trapped in a giant maze who have to join forces to try to escape. "This movie is perfect for Barco Escape: Thanks to the new format, the audience feels pulled

into the maze at key moments of the film, just like the boys in the story," the companies said in a joint statement.

The movie has already been in five Barco Escape cinemas in the US since September; it premiered in Antwerp at the weekend and comes to Brussels on Wednesday. In time, Barco hopes to be able to fit one cinema in each Kinepolis centre with Escape screens.

Kinepolis and Barco have a history of sharing new technologies, from 3D digital cinema in 2007 to Barco's laser-illuminated projectors, unveiled this year. "Barco and Kinepolis share a common drive to regularly offer experiences that take cinema to new heights," said Wim



© Courtesy Barco

Buyens, senior vice president for entertainment at Barco. "We are happy to be premiering Barco Escape here in Europe with this long-term customer, or rather partner."

Trial of federal building ministry officials begins in Brussels

The federal buildings agency was "corrupt through and through," according to the Brussels prosecutor, speaking last week at the start of the trial of 13 agency officials, 35 contractors and 24 companies for corruption in the granting of building contracts. On the first day, the prosecution demanded sentences of between six months and three years for the officials involved.

The court heard how the agency had a group of preferred contractors and passed them information about rival bids to allow them to adjust their own bids accordingly. "Officials accepted the finished work and the invoices without any checks, and even paid for works that were never carried out," the prosecution said.

As a result, the prisons of Vorst and Sint-Gillis, the Justice Palace and the Bozar fine arts centre, all in Brussels, all saw essential renovation works scheduled but never carried out.

"In exchange, they received all sorts of rewards, including cash and travel, while works were carried out on their own



© Jasper Jacobs/BELGA

Jan Swennen, one of several lawyers representing Belgium's federal building agency

homes for free or at a large discount." The investigation was launched after four anonymous letters were received in 2005. "Anyone who joined the agency had two choices," the prosecution said. "Play along or be transferred."

The heaviest sentence was demanded in the case of Raphaël Engels, 62, former head of the Brussels division, who is alleged to have received more than €750,000 in bribes, as well as for Paul Buysschaert, in charge of prisons in Brussels, who allegedly received more than €180,000. \ AH

Former Opel Antwerp site looking for buyers

The former site of the Opel Antwerp car manufacturing plant is ready to be taken over, the port of Antwerp has announced. The site is 96 hectares, including 34ha of buildings. According to port CEO Eddy Bruyninckx, the site – officially named the Churchill Industrial Zone because it lies adjacent to the Churchill Dock – would be most suitable for the metal works or chemicals sector. "This is a unique site," he said. "It's not every year that you're able to put something like this on offer. Even the trimodal connection possibilities are unique." Companies have until 15 January to communicate their interest. The port will give preference to a concession agreement with a single user, although an outright sale is not excluded from consideration.

That would involve the port taking a priority right to buy the land back, as happened when General Motors decided to close Opel Antwerp. The port bought the land back last year for €42 million, less than half of GM's asking price of €90 million. The site could also be broken up. "Major projects don't just fall out of the sky, although we do think the time is right," Bruyninckx said. "We are looking mainly at manufacturing industries. Our figures show that is where the most added value and employment opportunities lie."

Once project proposals are in, they will be considered by a reconversion committee chaired by industrialist Paul Buysse. The agreement could then be completed "in a matter of months," Bruyninckx said. \ AH

VRT to scrap 128 jobs over next 12 months

Unions representing staff at the Flemish public broadcaster VRT have made their first move in a battle against cost-cutting, by shutting down broadcasts last Thursday for one minute. The screen showed only the message "Staff and unions of the VRT reject the cost-cutting of the Flemish government" and the logo from the "Hart boven Hard" citizens' initiative against government cuts in general.

Unions are protesting against the government of Flanders' spending cuts of €18 million in the coming year and the 128 full-time jobs that will have to disappear as a result – a net loss of 90 jobs when planned

hires are taken into account. VRT currently employs 2,338 full-time job equivalents. Details of how the cuts will be implemented were revealed by the board last week. Unions warned the one-minute shutdown was just the beginning.

VRT already had plans to adjust its classic radio and TV output in favour of digital offerings. That involves a further €8 million in cuts on top of the €18 million imposed by the new government.

The €18 million saving concern only 2015. From 2016, the broadcaster will be expected to economise by a further €4 million a year. Among other changes, the Cobra.

be culture website will shut down, with content moving to Canvas. be and Deredactie.be. The third network OP12 will also be retired. The main prime-time offering on Eén remains relatively spared, although three slots for new fiction will go. Travel show *Vlaanderen Vakantieland* will adopt a new, cheaper format. The annual Sportgala and Night of the Television Stars awards shows will both disappear.

Daytime programming will involve more repeats and fewer bought-in programmes. The expat programme *Fans of Flanders*, which normally airs weekly on OP12 and Canvas, will no longer

be broadcast but will still be available online.

Football's Belgian Cup will only be broadcast from the semi-finals; one match will be shown each day of play in the Europa League instead of two. Wimbledon, the WTA Masters tennis championship and the Eneco cycling tour will no longer be broadcast. Radio, with its lower budgets, suffers less. Radio 2's *Avondpost* will be broadcast region-wide from Brussels instead of having five provincial editions. Studio Brussel and MNM will spend less on events. Klara will spend less on outside broadcasts. \ AH

Ten years of digital demands

iMinds' annual conference celebrates a decade of digital challenges



Andy Furniere

More articles by Andy \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.IMINDS.BE

Flanders' digital research centre iMinds, which is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, has come a long way since it was first launched in the mid-2000s. And just as the challenges it aimed to address have changed and shifted in a world of lightning-speed technological advances, so have its ambitions and its wide offer of research and support programmes to help companies and policymakers address those challenges.

When the government of Flanders established the Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology (as it was rather less snappily called back then) in 2004, the strategic research centre filled a key gap. "There was an ICT industry developing in Flanders, but it didn't have a counterpart on the research side," explains Wim De Waele, the centre's current CEO.

The iMinds head office is today situated in Ghent, but the centre pools the knowledge of 850 specialised researchers across all five Flemish universities. The centre's expertise is divided into five departments: internet technologies, security, multimedia, medical information technology and digital society. These departments co-operate to find solutions to challenges in six key domains: ICT, media, health, energy, smart cities and manufacturing.

From the get-go, iMinds saw its mission as bringing entrepreneurs, scientists and policy-makers together to generate economic impact. Over the years, it has been able to broaden its operations thanks to a substantial increase in its annual budget, from €13 million in 2005 to €50 million in 2014 – nearly 300% more. "Over the years, we have been able to expand our range of instruments to achieve our goals," says De Waele.

Initially, the centre main's responsibility lay in co-ordinating projects in the ICON programme, which stimulates collaboration between researchers and business or policy partners to create innovative products and services. ICON projects typically answer a need in one of the centre's six key domains and take a 360-degree approach, so that they not only explore the technological dimension of an issue but also the legislative and social one, for example.

The programme has resulted in more than 90 finished projects, such as innovative medical support for elderly people and advanced speed control systems.

"After two years, we also started to provide assistance in the test phase of a project, through our living lab research," says De Waele. The living labs help participants turn ideas into prototypes that can be tested in a daily environment, so that the interaction of users with a product or service can be observed and so that a business model can ultimately be designed.

By involving potential consumers and users in the early stages of the development process, the method facilitates introduction of the product to the market.

"In 2007, we took the first step towards playing a more direct role in the growth of enterprises by providing facilities, coaching and financing for start-up companies," explains De Waele. The centre established iCubes, which offered incubator facilities at the head office in Ghent.

The centre's next initiative in this strategy was the iStart business incubator programme. iStart offers start-ups support to create a business model, to develop prototypes and to complete market research. It also helps fledgling companies carry out practical tests, devise a commercial strategy and develop a financial plan.



iMinds Health directly addresses the digital needs of health-care providers

"We now help launch about 20 new start-ups per year," says De Waele. In 2012, iMinds also set up its Start-up Garage, a co-working space for start-up companies and researchers.

In that same year, the organisation's Media Innovation Centre (MiX) was also born. It helps media, like newspapers, radio stations and gaming companies, to develop answers to the challenges of quickly changing media landscapes and fierce international competition. Another new centre, iMinds Health, was launched in February of this year to help the health-care sector address today's critical social and economic issues. iMinds Health focuses on both fundamental academic research and the introduction to the market of concrete improvements to the Flemish health-care system. When asked about the big challenges that still lie ahead, De Waele says that the general ambition should be to turn a number of Flemish companies into global leaders. "But to grow that much, companies need risk capital, which is more available in the United States than in our region."

iMinds helps entrepreneurs embrace a global mindset and stimulates them to launch international activities with its "Go Global" internationalisation programme. "We have specialists in New York, San Francisco, London and Singapore who help our companies to find their way around that specific market," De Waele explains. Since it was founded in 2004, iMinds has organised an annual "brokerage event" to bring together stakeholders from the worlds of research, entrepreneurship and policymaking in the hope that this will promote increasing collaboration. The popularity of iMinds The Conference has steadily grown over the years, and it even inspired the name the centre has had since 2012.

While the first edition attracted about 200 guests, iMinds expects more than 1,000 at this year's edition, which takes place in Brussels on 23 October.

This year's conference focuses on the "internet of things" – the evolution in which objects interact with other objects through wired and wireless connections – and high-tech visualisation technologies. The day-long event will also put the spotlight on iMinds' future plans, iMinds Health and entrepreneurship programmes.

Among the scheduled speakers are researchers, executives and lawmakers from powerhouse



Along with the latest technological gadgets, iMinds offers simple digital solutions for today's business needs

corporations like Disney and high-tech imaging company Barco, the prestigious University of California, Berkeley, and from the government of Flanders and the European Commission.

Among the local speakers is Lieven Maesschalk, the renowned physiotherapist to many of Europe's top athletes, who will present his plan to bring his rehabilitation techniques to the general public. Entrepreneur Zhong Xu, a Gentenaar, will talk about Posios, the company he co-founded in 2012 with the support of iMinds.

Posios specialises in flexible tablet and mobile cash register technologies for the hospitality industry, and it has grown exponentially in two years. It today has 23 employees, offices in New York and Singapore and customers in more than 38 countries.

The conference space in Brussels will also include a floor where participants will be able to view more than 60 demos of Flemish digital innovations. Among the projects on show are NXT_SLEEP, which develops less obtrusive and more comfortable solutions than the currently existing systems for patients with sleep-related breathing disorders such as sleep apnoea.

WEEK IN INNOVATION

KU Leuven prepares "billboard in space"

Researchers from the University of Leuven are aiming to finance the development and launch of a microsatellite by providing space for company logos, according to Engineeringnet.be. The small satellite, known as a CubeSat, would examine climate change. GDF Suez and Electrabel are the first to provide financial support in exchange for the featuring of their logo on the mini-satellite. Nobody will be able to see their logos in space, but this world-first initiative should help them get media attention and show off their ecological ambitions. GDF Suez has committed to decrease its carbon dioxide emissions by 10% by 2020, and Electrabel has already reduced the carbon dioxide emissions of its electricity production park by 6.1 million tons.

Call for medical crisis centre in Brussels

The commander of the medical department of the army, major-general Geert Laires, has requested that a crisis unit be established in the military hospital in the Neder-over-Heembeek neighbourhood of Brussels in the face of the Ebola epidemic. Belgium has an infrastructure capable of transporting an Ebola patient, but it lacks a unit to care for one. "The defence department needs a special crisis centre that can be used in a chemical, radiological, biological or nuclear crisis," Laires told *Le Soir*. Such a centre, he said, could be used for potential Ebola cases.

UGent promotes tap water

To promote tap water and reduce waste, Ghent University (UGent) and Flemish water services organisation Farys are distributing 30,000 water bottles made from sugar cane to students and staff. Sugar cane absorbs a lot of carbon dioxide as it grows, and the bottles are fully recyclable. The idea is to encourage students and staff to drink more tap water and stop buying bottled water, which produces an enormous amount of plastic waste. Bottles were distributed last month during UGent's traditional Student Kick Off, and Farys set up a mobile water installation at the university last week. Students received a free bottle in all student restaurants and cafeterias. \ AF

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The bright side

Happiness expert sees key role for teachers in raising contented kids



Daan Bauwens

More articles by Daan \ flanderstoday.eu

When it comes to happiness, Flanders isn't doing all that badly. But it's not doing as well as it could, either, according to the UN's latest World Happiness Report. According to the report, Belgium is the 21st happiest country in the world. Which is pretty solid. But some of our neighbours are outperforming us. The Dutch are ranked fourth, while Denmark, Norway and Switzerland make up the top three.

Leo Bormans, the self-declared "ambassador of happiness and quality of life," is trying to help his fellow Flemings climb a bit higher up the list. Bormans undoubtedly deserves the moniker. In recent years, he has written books such as *The World Book of Love* and *Geluk: The World Book of Happiness*. Both books were based on international research into happiness and love.

According to the author, evidence shows that happiness can be dissected into three parts. "Fifty percent of our happiness is determined by genetics and the environment in which we were raised," he says. "Ten percent is a consequence of our current situation. The remaining 40% is the most interesting: It is linked to our mindset – the way we perceive reality. Therefore, it is makeable. It is the part that can be changed through positive interventions."

In close collaboration with the University of Leuven, Bormans recently conducted a research project on "happiness tips". Ten thousand Flemings were divided into three groups. One group received a happiness tip, or a "positive intervention", every day for a month. The second group received such a tip every week, and one group was told that they would receive a happiness tip at the end of the month.

"The results show that a method as simple as this works, but some are more susceptible to it than others," Bormans says. "Understandably, not everyone likes to be told how to be happier." Bormans is currently concentrating on positive interventions for children. His latest book is *Geluk voor kinderen* (Happiness for Children), a collection of children's stories. "It's not enough to hope that your children will be happy when they grow up," Bormans says. "You need to act to make that happen."

Geluk voor kinderen translates the happiness insights of more than 100 professors from more



© Yann Bertrand

Leo Bormans wants to help kids and parents talk about their dreams and fears

than 50 countries into 10 stories to be read aloud to children by parents or teachers.

"When reading the stories, you need to take your time," explains Bormans. "At the end of every story are questions and answers for both listeners and narrators. Both have to talk openly about their friends and relationships, dreams and goals, feelings and fears. Both have to show their vulnerability. It creates trust; without that, there's no happiness."

Asked why Belgian children are less happy than their peers in the Netherlands and in Scandinavian countries, the author points to the fears with which children are burdened. For instance, "children are taught to distrust every stranger. But that fear doesn't match with reality; it is disproportionate and has a lot to do with the Dutroux affair in the mid-1990s," he says, referring to the infamous child murderer.

"According to statistics, we live in the safest and healthiest of times," Bormans continues, "but with more fear than ever before. Fear is one of the emotions with the strongest negative effect on happiness."

But, according to Bormans, fear isn't the only

thing standing in our way. "Emotional loneliness is taking on the dimensions of an epidemic," he says. "Everything needs to be happy nowadays. Happiness, or its shallow, facade-version at least, is propagated everywhere. Children don't know what to do with sorrow."

Bormans headed the government of Flanders' educational publication *Klasse* for 20 years. He is concerned about the new government's plans where children and education are concerned. The passage that states that schools shouldn't be "saddled with tasks regarding societal problems or matters concerning upbringing," he says, is troubling.

“

It's not enough to hope that your children will be happy when they grow up

Teachers and schools are told to focus solely on teaching and checking the performance of pupils," Bormans says, "while the coalition agreement also mentions a new educational trajectory for entrepreneurship from nursery to higher education. Apparently, we need to move away from the 'pampering' society. What kind of world are we living in?"

For Bormans, emotion and cognition go hand in hand. "Happy children are the ones who are most eager to learn, the healthiest, the ones who will develop their talents in school and make great employees later on in life."

But even from an economic angle, he claims, "pampering" might not be such a bad idea. "Studies show that particularly happy students will earn 10% more than other students. Unhappy students will earn 30% less. Happiness is the core business of the educational system."

Geluk voor kinderen is published by Lannoo in Dutch

WEEK IN EDUCATION

Urban composter wins Ecodesign Award

Jeroen Op de Beeck, an Antwerp University graduate in product development, has received the waste management agency Ovam's Ecodesign Award. His Urban Composter is an installation for the collection and processing of vegetable, fruit and garden waste in an urban environment. Op de Beeck won in the competition's "graduation project" category. "The Urban Composter is installed at underground recycling stations, an increasingly popular trend in Europe," according to the competition statement. The stainless steel Urban Composter scored very well for materials and the manufacturing process.

Children of unskilled workers struggle

Of the 137,530 students who started studies at a Flemish university or college between 2010 and 2013, 18,667 came from a family with a mother with low job skills. Only half made it to the second year without having to retake exams. Among students with an average or highly educated mother, about two-thirds passed the first year. The statistics come from the Data Base Higher Education, and also show that these students have difficulties connecting to other students and that they suffer from the gap between academic Dutch at university and the language used at home. Students who speak little to no Dutch at home did worse in the first year than students with unskilled parents.

Students embark on tours of Brussels

Erasmus University College in Brussels has started a programme of tours for its students and those enrolled at the Free University of Brussels (VUB) to help them feel more comfortable in the capital. "We have noticed that our students – not only those who commute but also those living in student rooms in the capital – have only a limited knowledge of Brussels," co-ordinator Sofie Haegemans told brusselsnieuws.be. She said students often only knew the route from the station. The tours feature neighbourhood walks, bike rides and themed walks focusing on beer and chocolate. Students can also get to know the less popular areas of Brussels. \ AF

Q&A

Gert Jannes is the principal of the special education secondary school SBSO Zonneweide in Lommel, Limburg province, which recently launched a project to cultivate butterfly-friendly plants

Why butterflies?

The non-profit Lommelse Ondernemersclub [Lommel Entrepreneurs' Club], the city council and the Agency for Nature and Forests are co-operating to make Lommel the most butterfly-friendly city in Flanders. Butterflies were chosen as a symbol for this campaign since their presence is an excellent indicator of biodiversity and they are also just a nice feature in an environment. Several companies in Lommel have already made adjustments to their grounds by using a free plant kit and a customised greenery plan. The project is now being expanded

to reach the whole population of Lommel, and the organisers asked our help to achieve this goal.

What exactly is your role?

The 25 students in our horticulture programme are cultivating plants for 6,000 kits and for green areas in the city. Two sorts of kits are being created – one for gardens and one for terraces – which will be distributed early next year. Each kit will contain four plant species, which attract not only butterflies but also bees, for example.

Residents of Lommel can then create "butterfly bars" with the kits, spaces where insects can rest

and drink the nectar they need to survive. The students are also planting butterfly-friendly species in green areas all over the city. These plant species last longer and are easier to maintain than those that had been used until now.

What are the advantages for your school and students?

Special education doesn't have the best of reputations, so this project is a good opportunity to highlight the usefulness of our programmes. Contributing to the development of the city should boost the confidence of our students and help them acquire skills that they will need if they go on to work in garden centres, for example, or the landscape department of a city. The planting in green areas

\ WWW.LOCDEVLINDER.BE



is being carried out in co-operation with Lommel's landscaping department, so the project is also providing internship in the world of work. \ Interview by Andy Furniere

WEEK IN ACTIVITIES

Light Front

The front line as it stood during the ceasefire of autumn 1914 will be marked by 8,400 participants holding flaming torches from Nieuwpoort to Ploegsteert. Light installations in each municipality. Arno will perform near the locks in Ganzenpoot. *17 October, 17.00; concert €31.50* \ www.gonewest.be/en/lichtfront

Chrysanthemum Festival

Kiku Matsuri is a Japanese festival featuring the showy chrysanthemum in all its glory. Award-winning floral artist Philippe Bas is in charge of the stunning displays and arrangements. *18-26 October, Japanese Garden, Gouverneur Verwilghensingel 23, Hasselt, €5*

\ www.chrysantenfestival.be

Night on M.A.R.S.

Not the fourth planet, but Music, Art, Research and Science. A free evening programme on "science in the service of crime investigation" with talks on topics like "CSI Belgium" and simultaneous programme at the planetarium on "Chasing the Ghost Particle". Electronic music performances from 23.00. *18 October, 18.00-4.00, Sint-Gorikshallen, Sint-Goriksplein 23, Brussels*

\ www.belspo.be

Model Train Expo

The biggest gathering of model train enthusiasts in Belgium, with more than 30 miniature railroad displays in different scales from here and abroad. Children's activities, including rides on a mini-train. Free shuttle from Leuven station. *18-19 October, Brabanthal, Brabantlaan 1, Leuven; €14/€8*

\ www.modelspoorexpo.be

F.A.C.T.S.

The biggest comics, sci-fi and anime festival in the Benelux, with special guests including Carrie Fisher (aka Princess Leia). Gaming, cosplay, workshops, fan village, autographs and more. *18 & 19 October, Flanders Expo, Maaltekouter 1, Ghent; €15*

\ www.facts.be

Tug-Of-War Championship

Cup of Flanders

Teams from Belgium, the Netherlands and Great Britain compete on four levels. Feel free to put together a team and enter! Also individual Highland Games competition. *19 October, 12.30-18.00, Marollenplein, Dorpsstraat 29, Sijsele (West Flanders); free*

\ www.ttv-versieck.be

Trumping Fashion Week

The capital refuses to be outdone by its neighbours' fashion weeks



Katrien Lindemans

More articles by Katrien \ flanderstoday.eu\ WWW.MADBRSSELS.BE

While our neighbouring capitals are recovering from September's fashion weeks, Brussels is gearing up for an entire fashion month. From mid-October until mid-November there are plenty of events to still your fashion cravings: exhibitions, catwalk shows, pop-up stores, lectures and much more.

London, Milan and Paris have had their fashion weeks for ages, and in recent years Amsterdam, Berlin and Stockholm have joined the scene. But Brussels hasn't. "And I don't think there ever will be such a thing as Brussels Fashion Week," says Elke Timmerman, fashion co-ordinator at Brussels Mode and Design Centre (MAD). "Past initiatives have failed, probably because Brussels is a bit trapped between the hustle and bustle of big cities such as Paris, London and Berlin."

But that doesn't mean our capital lacks creative vibes, she insists. "We just go about it in a different way – the place to be, but underground," she explains. "Traditionally, Brussels has quite a few fashionable events in October. This year we decided to go bigger by promoting all the existing events at once and by urging other fashion event organisers to pick their date around the same time."

The first edition of This is Not a Fashion Week lines up about a dozen events, both artistic and commercial. A few of the usual suspects include Brussels Fashion Days (the third edition), the annual Customisez-Moi Festival

and the Mode Parcours, now in its 14th year. From 24 to 26 October, nearly 50 designers will take over part of a shop, bar or even a hairdresser on and around Dansaerstraat in the city centre.

"The Mode Parcours gives them an opportunity to go all out and show their creative sides, away from the strict rules of a regular fashion week," says Timmerman. The shop Icon, for instance, will be transformed into a fun fair of the kind typically found at the Flemish seaside. Belgian designers and labels Marc Philippe Coudeyre, Filles à Papa and Super Piece of Chic will provide the entertainment.

Like every year, there's a theme, chosen by the parcours' artistic director, Frédéric Dénis, who's a fashion teacher at Saint-Luc and stylist for choreographer Wim Vandekeybus. "He picked 'citizenship' as he wanted to know more about the emotional relationship between the designers and their city," Timmerman says. "For the accompanying exhibition at the MAD meeting centre, photographer Jimmy Kets took a series of portraits of citizens, all chosen by the participating designer."

And at milliner Christophe Coppens' former workshop, French artist Marc Turlan exhibits his interpretation of the



Designer Jana Mikesova of the Czech Republic is part of the Pop and Shop fashion market at De Markten

word "sexy". Timmerman: "It's a very rock'n'roll expo in association with the Festival for Fashion and Photography in Hyères, France."

Those who'd rather see and touch fashion will be pleased to know there are also several pop-up events and stores. Besides the catwalk shows, Brussels Fashion Days at The Egg also have a shop featuring the work of 30 designers, where your entrance ticket gets you a discount on a designer item. Until 3 November, luxury department store Smets near Meiserplein invites young Brussels designers to present and sell their new collections as well.

"There will even be a European Fashion and Design Market, organised by cultural organisation Eunic," Timmerman says. "For this first edition, which runs on the same weekend as the Mode Parcours, about 40 designers will come together at De Markten cultural centre."

The MAD fashion month ends with even more sales. On 14 and 15 November, the Brussels designer stock sales take place at Bozar. And Timmerman lets us in on a secret: MAD and Bozar are planning a major exhibition of Belgian fashion from June to September next year.

BITE

Krachtvoer, a unique food festival

\ WWW.KRACHTVOER.BE

Another festival about food, I catch myself thinking. But then I flick through the programme. Krachtvoer (Power Food) is far removed from the usual collection of stalls serving over-priced samples. It's a festival that focuses on food in all its aspects, from sustainability to creativity.

Journalists and food bloggers take part in charged panel discussions, artists find inspiration in food and chefs work magic with unusual ingredients. Of course, there will also be plenty of good food, too, with tastings, demos and a market featuring local specialities and unique products, but the films and documentaries, panels and lectures, art exhibitions and workshops are equally important.

Highlights include two of the talks in English, especially one with San Francisco baker Chad Robertson. The charismatic Robertson may have clients lining up outside his bakery, or eagerly reading his book *Tartine Bread*, but that's not what he wants to talk about during Krachtvoer. Robertson will delve into topics such as the importance of biodiversity, rediscovering old grain sorts and the fundamental world problem of scarcity.



© Olmo Peeters

Speaking of scarcity, feeding our leftovers to pigs is the idea behind The Pig Idea, a campaign for a sustainable food solution that is as simple as it is genius. Co-founder Edd Colbert will reveal the philosophy behind the campaign, followed by an engaging Q&A session with the audience. If bacteria, yeast and fungus don't sound appetising, come to the fermentation workshop (in English) and find out how these micro-organisms work to make our food more tasty (and digestible). Think sauerkraut, gueuze, yoghurt, vinegar and even chocolate. Leading the work-

shop is Rose Greene, Kobe Desramaults' sous-chef at star restaurant In De Wulf.

Wood-fired oven expert Sarah Lemke (pictured) shares her expertise in the fascinating world of sourdough baking during the workshop *Zuurdesembrood* (in English). Afterwards, you're invited to put what you've learned to the test by creating your own signature bread.

If it's good food you're after, pure and simple, come down to the Southern Style BBQ dinner (Sunday, 20.00) for rotisserie pork, lovingly prepared by American "barbecue king" Papa Joe. Or visit noodle bar Umamido, which has opened two more restaurants in Antwerp after hitting the mark in Brussels with its exotic noodle soups.

Krachtvoer hasn't forgotten about the little ones among us, and there are dozens of musicals, hands-on workshops and plenty more food-related fun for kids. \ Robyn Boyle

18-19 October

DE Studio,
M Gérardstraat 4,
Antwerp

Welcome to the Hotel Taxandria

It's called a hotel, but it's a museum, with history in every beautiful room



Catherine Kosters
More articles by Catherine \ flanderstoday.eu

\ WWW.TAXANDRIAMUSEUM.BE

Hotel Taxandria, formerly known as the Taxandriamuseum, is in Turnhout, known as the capital of the Kempen and a place that once consisted mainly of uninhabitable moors, heaths and wetlands. In Roman times, the area was called Taxandria, after the Germanic Toxandri tribe. Hence the name of the museum, which tells the tale of Turnhout as a city of culture, trade and rich history with the help of some special hotel guests.

The Taxandria Museum was founded at the beginning of the 20th century by the city's historical society and moved to its current location in 1996. The building is in fact a 16th-century patrician's residence, the oldest existing private dwelling in the city.

Locals still know it by the medieval name Huis metten Thoren (the house with the tower). It was home to visiting nobility in the days when the Dukes of Brabant ruled the surrounding Duchy.

The Huis metten Thoren's well-preserved exterior and beautifully renovated interiors are the first reason to visit, but the collection on display inside also merits attention. The museum exhibits a large mix of art, objects and archaeological findings that have something to do with the city or the Kempen region.

In most cases, anyway, because the society behind the museum as well as its curators have also added some random personal favourites over the decades. This makes for a surprising mix, which is handily compartmentalised in the new museum set-up.

“

Hotel Taxandria opened last year, and several new guests have recently checked in

The “hotel” in the Hotel Taxandria name is there for a reason: The rooms in the house are occupied by a lively gang of guests – some historical, some fictitious – who give an insight into the history of Turnhout.

The first to move in were the Ladies of Turnhout, prominent women who vacationed in the city's castle and frequented the Huis metten Thoren in the 16th and 17th centuries. Women like Mary of Hungary, for example, the wife of King Louis of Hungary and Bohemia and the sister of Emperor Charles V, who made her Governor of the Netherlands in 1507. Or Amalia of Solms, wife of Prince of Orange Frederick Henry.



The legend of the last deer of Turnhout is told to schoolchildren who visit the museum

The two rooms dedicated to these royals, their suites if you will, are filled with portraits and take visitors back to the medieval heyday of Turnhout. They give insight into the relationships between the various noble houses and illustrate the growth of the city thanks to the textile industry.

In the 15th century, Turnhout was called Little Brussels because of its prominence. Stories about the

ants free citizens.

The deer moved into the hotel with the ladies last year. His room tells of the forests and fields of the Kempen, beloved hunting grounds of old for dukes and duchesses. The region was famous for falconry, and a deer can still be seen in the city's coat of arms. Hunters, however, were not the only ones drawn to the Kempen. Even today, artists find inspiration in its beautiful nature.

Hotel Taxandria opened last year, and several new guests have recently checked in. They are seven archetypical figures, introduced to further illustrate the history of the region and help connect the museum's multifarious collection.

The archaeologist lives in a room filled with shards of ancient pottery and other remains found in the local soil. He explains that the first inhabitants were Neanderthals who lived here more than 200,000 years ago. In 57 BC, Julius Caesar invaded the territory and defeated the Eburones and Menapii tribes. Several Germanic tribes, including the Toxandri, eventually took their place.

In the attic, visitors meet the lace-maker. In the 17th century, nuns as well as secular women began making lace in Turnhout. Their work earned the city the reputation of Bruges' biggest rival, but the wages were so low that the entire industry was seen, in retrospect, as an exploitation of women.

This critical aside included on the



The prominent women of Turnhout in its royal heyday share two fashionable rooms in the Taxandria

information panels shows that Hotel Taxandria is concerned with presenting a historically correct image rather than just good PR. And that, despite the imaginative display, this is not a children's museum. Young ones who tag along, however, can explore the museum at their own pace with the troubadour in the playroom. More interesting guests and rooms include the tower guard, boarding school pupil, collector and

commoner – and the tranquil garden is an attraction in itself. It is the perfect place to rest and bring oneself back to the present day after a walk through Turnhout's past.

Hotel Taxandria may not have a Rubens or a Magritte, but it invites guests to rediscover local history on a human scale. More of a boutique hotel than an all-inclusive resort, it's worth a five-star rating.

Your new guide to life in Belgium



The Autumn issue of the Bulletin Newcomer is your guide to enjoying life and settling in Belgium. It mixes essential practical information with lifestyle features on finding a job, top cultural events, dating, keeping pets, sampling Belgian wine and spirits and joining a local theatre group. If you want to make the most of life in Belgium, this is the essential read.

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When private becomes public

Antwerp's Mestizo Arts Festival mingles personal stories with public space



Tom Peeters

More articles by Tom \ flanderstoday.eu

The multidisciplinary Mestizo Arts Festival has invited four young Antwerp artists to use their personal stories to peel back the layers of the city.

You've probably never heard of, let alone been in, the pool bar at the Billard Palace Hotel on Astridplein in Antwerp. You have to ignore a fast food place, pass the hotel reception and climb some stairs to discover that it's one of those awkward places visited by the strangest mix of people – Asian tourists, gambling businessmen and stranded locals of all origins. Thus, it's not so unusual for this square, which, let's be honest, is one of the most peculiar spots in the whole of the city.

“
You will hear this voice, but often she will tell you just the opposite of what you see

But it's this pool bar that will serve as the starting point of a free tour presented at the eighth edition of the Mestizo Arts Festival (MAF), a multidisciplinary event focusing on exactly this urban mix. The organisers of this co-production between the cultural hotspot Arenberg and the artistic platform Fiëbre asked theatre-makers Simon Allemeersch and Michiel Soete to help four local artists spread their personal messages, trying to map their impact on the

city.

"The idea is that a city consists of different layers," says Allemeersch. "This tour tries to connect all those cities and worlds. The reputation of a place is not always the same as what your own experiences tell you. We show the urban reality without confirming the prejudices or ignoring the problems."

The project started with a map of Antwerp, with the artists, selected by the organisation from a variety of disciplines and cultures, indicating the parts of the city they use or feel comfortable in. "The area around Central Station turned out to be a constant," Allemeersch says. "It's also the centre of the city, where all kind of images and impressions meet, especially on Astridplein."

For actor Nicolas Delalieux, who studied drama at the Brussels art school Rits, the choice was obvious. "I grew up in Mortsel, went to the scout youth movement in Berchem, found a place for myself in Zurenborg," he recalls. "Looking back, it became clear that my route went along the Brussels-Antwerp railway line. Central Station is the place where the line stops and shifts to other lines."

We find him in Permeke library, where he's charging the iPods he will use as an audio guide for his tour. Allemeersch told him the Berlin-based Rimini Protokoll once used audio voices reminiscent of GPS systems. Delalieux decided to make a "trash version" of it: "You will hear this voice speaking to you, but often she will just tell you the opposite of what you see."

With Astridplein as the starting point for Delalieux's audio tour, contrasts are within easy reach. "It's a real crossroads," he says. "There's this big, cheesy American-style hotel opposite the epic grandeur of the station; there's a porn



© Lucila Guichon

Rumble in da Jungle about the 1974 boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman will be performed in Antwerp and Brussels

cinema and an evangelic church, and I could go on. It's not very touristic and not romantic at all, and not so controlled as Central Station, where my part of the story will move into a dance performance by Yentl de Werdt."

Meanwhile, slam poet and organiser of the Grab the Mic events for the Zomerfabriek cultural space Elisabeth Severino Fernandes says she is not used to working with a director, referring to the fact it's still not totally clear what she will do.

"It's a challenge," she says. "They really have me out of my

comfort zone, but living near Central station I'm used to absorbing a lot of the things happening there, and I will definitely try to let people see the city in a different way. Take, for instance, the stickers pasted everywhere; they are transforming the street scenes without us being really aware of it."

Just like MC Mike De Ridder, the last artist in the MAPping project, Fernandes is singing and slaming in *Rumble in da Jungle*, a

music theatre piece by SINCOLLECTIEF about the legendary 1974 boxing match between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Congo. Especially for MAF, it will be shown in Antwerp's Arenbergschouwburg and in Brussels' KVS. These are exciting times for De Ridder, who's preparing the first play created by his hip-hop band, NoMoBS. *Wachten op Gorro* (Waiting for Gorro) is a quest for identity by the Kiel collective by means of the roots of hip hop and is premiering at MAF. But on a personal level, the presentation of a holiday video he shot in Morocco will be even more thrilling.

Last summer, De Ridder, who's half-Belgian and half-Moroccan, returned for the first time in 15 years to his family in Morocco. Just like his uncles and aunts recorded his visits on video at the end of the 1990s, he captured everything on his iPhone.

"When editing these two eras in one video I noticed how confronting it was: I had to speak out what had accumulated for 15 years and conclude a chapter in my life. I'm used to being open in my rap texts, but doing it on video was an eye-opener."

The video will be shown, as the apotheosis of the MAPping tour, in the De Klok pub on Pelikaanstraat, where a predominantly white audience is not used to seeing a film with a voiceover in Arabic. "They don't see or hear a story of someone struggling with his identity every day: Am I Belgian? Am I Moroccan?" says De Ridder.

But it only encourages him to move forward. "Someone already told me I could become a key figure in uniting communities because I have one foot in both worlds."

17-31 October

Across Antwerp

MORE PERFORMANCE THIS WEEK

Kunst (Art)

tg Stan & Dood Paard

When is art art? And who can decide whether it deserves public money? With right-wing governments cutting subsidies for art and culture all over Europe, this 1994 tragicomedy by the French writer and actor Yasmina Reza tackling these exact questions is highly relevant again. Already translated into 35 languages, now two actors from the Dutch theatre company Dood Paard and Frank Vercruyssen from Antwerp's tg STAN are taking the discussion on a tour through Flanders, premiering this week in Ghent. (In Dutch) 16-18 October, CAMPO Nieuwpoort, Ghent

\ WWW.TGAN.BE

Leni & Susan

Braakland/ZheBilding

Writer and director Stijn Devillé wrote a confronting dialogue between two (deceased) arch-enemies: the Nazi-propaganda filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl and the American writer and political activist Susan Sontag. When, in the 1970s, the former attempts a comeback with a photo-book about the Sudanese Nuba tribe, the latter calls her images in *The New York Review of Books* "fascinating fascism". It is a duel on the cutting edge, brilliantly played by Chris Lomme and Simone Milsdochter (pictured). (In Dutch) 15-18 October, across Flanders

\ WWW.BRAAKLANDZHEBILDING.BE



Ik in het blauw (Me in Blue)

Sara De Bosschere & Jan Joris Lamers

In the early 1990s, the four Antwerp actors that would become De Roovers were taught by Jan Joris Lamers of the innovative Dutch theatre group Maatschappij Discordia, forcing them to think about what they really wanted to achieve. Twenty years later, De Roovers co-founder Sara De Bosschere performs again with one of her biggest artistic inspirations. *Ik in het blauw* by the Dutch author Peter Verburgt, is a revamped version of *The Drowning of Mrs Woolf*, in which he reconstructs the last moments of Virginia Woolf's life. (in Dutch) 17-19 October, Kaaitheater, Brussels

\ WWW.KAAITHEATER.BE

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

Disney's Ice Dreams festival in Antwerp

The Disneyland Paris Ice Dreams festival, which made its Belgian debut last year in Brussels, will move to Antwerp this year. From 29 November to 11 January, the event will be located on the Gedempte Zuiderdokken site. Popular Disney characters and monolithic scenes are carved from pieces of ice for the event, which is expected to draw 150,000 visitors to the -6 Celsius enclosure. The event is not to be confused with the Ice Sculpture Festival, which takes place annually outside Bruges' train station. That event, which has a hobbit theme this year, opens on 21 November and runs until 4 January.

AB leads new European music platform

The Ancienne Belgique (AB) concert hall, a Flemish Community venue in Brussels, has announced a partnership with 12 other concert venues. The LiveEurope project will see the venues, scattered across western and eastern Europe and Scandinavia, work together on programming and promotion of emerging European music artists. The main goal of the new platform is to foster cross-border performance opportunities for emerging European bands and develop a quality label for participating concert halls. The platform, which is being co-ordinated by the AB, will focus on performers who have fewer than five years of experience, have recorded fewer than three albums and are committed to achieving success beyond their national borders. "The development of emerging artists has always been a priority for AB", said the venue's managing director Dirk de Clippeleir. "We can do more and better if we work hand-in-hand with our European colleagues."

Lena Dunham at Boekenbeurs

Lena Dunham, creator and star of the HBO series *Girls*, will make an appearance at Antwerp's Boekenbeurs, or Book Fair, on 2 November. She is promoting her new book *Not That Kind of Girl*, a collection of memoir essays. She will be appearing for one hour only, between 16.00 and 17.00, at the Lannoo publishers stand. The Boekenbeurs, Flanders' largest book fair, takes place at Antwerp Expo from 31 October to 11 November.

\ www.boekenbeurs.be

Between words and images

Exhibition of work by Marcel van Maele finds a very apt home



Bjorn Gabriels

More articles by Bjorn \ flanderstoday.eu

\ [HTTPS://BEZOEKERS.BRUGGE.BE](https://bezoekers.brugge.be)

Poetry is to create new spaces between new words," Flemish poet and artist Marcel van Maele (1931-2009) wrote in his 1963 poetry collection, *Zwarte gedichten van kannibaal naar imponderabilia* (Black Poems of Cannibal to Imponderabilia). A footnote to phrase explained: "new words = recharged words". The rest of the page remained blank. The exhibition *Genummerd & getekend: Marcel van Maele in meervoud* (Numbered & Drawn: Marcel van Maele in Multiples) at the Gezelle Museum in Bruges is an apt place for a retrospective of his work, both poetry and visual arts. In the house where the West Flemish poet and priest Guido Gezelle was born, van Maele gradually takes over.

At first, van Maele seems to be hidden among the permanent collection of Gezelle memorabilia. A crisp white sculpture with a ladder and books (no title, 1981) timidly functions as a stepping stone into van Maele's world.

A pair of his *Lokvogel* (Decoy bird, 1996) hangs from the ceiling. These corked wine bottles with bird wings contain a scroll of paper, and form a variation of van Maele's most famous work, the bottled poems, which he started to produce in the early 1970s. A documentary, made a few years before his death in 2009 and projected in the former Gezelle living room, introduces van Maele's views on life and art.

In the adjacent room, van Maele's publications are neatly arranged under glass, while a video replays a 2011 marathon homage reading in Antwerp. The walls and subsequent narrow corridor are chock-full of posters, drawings and other printed works. Small rooms to the side give more space to van Maele's poetic art objects.

"Van Maele was a writer who thought in images," co-curator Johan Pas tells me as we stroll across the freshly mown lawn outside the Gezelle Museum. "He worked in the no man's land between words and images. This show wants to offer an introduction to van Maele as a researcher who tried to bring poetry into the world with his objects – his 'word playthings'." After a fairly cautious start, *Numbered & Drawn* culminates in a room where van Maele is omnipresent. While looking at a cabinet full of his works, you hear his bellowing voice reciting poetry on the LP *Neem plechtig uw hoofd af! Dank u* (Solemnly Take off your Head! Thank you), recorded in 1986 by the Flemish literary event organisation Behoud de Begeerte, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

An avid performer of poetry, van Maele was a household name throughout Flanders from the 1960s onwards. During a time when public displays of discontent began to challenge mainstream beliefs, van Maele went beyond printed paper to have his say. Like other post-war experimental writers such as CC Krijgelmans, van Maele's critique on bourgeois society was closely intertwined with a critique on language. He set out to confront hollow phrases that masked compliance.

Although protest verses belonged to his poetic arsenal, van Maele realised the limitations of verbal resistance. "Words cannot stop bullets," he said in a 1969 interview. "But one can make a bomber pilot think, make him aware of what he is doing, so he will eventually refuse to carry out bombing missions."

And van Maele knew first-hand what he was talking about. When he turned 21, he escaped the Bruges of his tumultuous childhood to serve as a volunteer in the UN forces that had entered the Korean War. Not that van Maele was eager to



Marcel van Maele: Where objects and words meet

fight – "I was a lousy soldier," he said in that same interview – or was driven by Cold War rhetoric to eliminate the communist threat in North Korea. More than anything else, he wanted to avoid being stuck in the tediousness of mandatory military service in Belgium, and of his home town, Bruges.

After his return from Korea in 1953, van Maele roamed Europe. In 1956, he came back to Belgium and published his debut, *Soetja*, a poetry collection heavily influenced by his experiences abroad. He believed in the romantic notion of a poet-prophet, living on the fringes of society, renouncing the burgeoning consumer culture of post-war Belgium.

Infused with alliterations and wordplay, his poetry expressed his anti-conformity, aspirations of pure poetry mixed with an overt involvement in current affairs.

But after more than a decade of working and living hard – the result of which can be read in the new anthology *Vuurtaal spuwen: Poëzie van Marcel van Maele (1956-1970)*, edited by Els van Damme and co-curator Yves T'Sjoen – the public interest in van Maele's poetry waned.

Poète maudit or not, his words needed a considerable audience to have their desired effect. Like his friend and drinking companion Marcel Broodthaers, himself a writer turned visual artist, van Maele found a new audience in contemporary art circles.

Here, too, he defended a democratic art, hence his penchant for multiples rather than single pieces. He also continued to explore cross-fertilisations of open and hermetic art. In his most renowned pieces, texts are sealed off from their potential readers by incorporating them in polyester or other solid materials.

Although van Maele would eventually lose his sight in 1986 after several operations on his retinas, he continued to perform, often with a tape player in his hands. In 2009, a life wandering between art disciplines came to a halt in Antwerp.

With *Numbered & Drawn*, van Maele returns to his birth city, where his resonant voice booms in a solemn environment on the edge of a touristic hubbub that brims with slogans, menus and prices. Trying to claim a new, old space for his words.

Until 18 January

Gezelle Museum
Rolleweg 64, Bruges

A DEMIGOD OF LYRICISM

Priest and poet Guido Gezelle (1830-1899) is the father of modern Flemish poetry. Since he trusted his highly musical verses to paper, generations of local writers have praised him as a linguistic virtuoso. And until this day, he continues to thrive in poetry anthologies and devotionals.

At first, Gezelle (*pictured*) gained followers in the school of West Flemish Particularism, which tried to safeguard the Catholic tradition against any outside influence. Later, the most diverse authors would admire him. For convenience's sake, the ultraconservative views he expressed are often pushed aside in favour of seeing him as a demigod of pure lyricism.

In 1926, a museum in Gezelle's honour opened in the house where he was born, on the edge of Bruges' historical centre. In the 1970s, the city had the house restored to its 1830 state. Marcel van Maele dedicated the poem "Bevlogen



en bevangen" (Inspired and Seized) to Gezelle in his last book, *Over woorden gesproken* (Talking About Words, 2006). It embodies his double relationship with his predecessor: "I shiver when I tread on thine shadow / when thou chargest me with thine god and / in all that is sweet recognize his gesture."

Twenty years of new music

Transit Festival

24-26 October

STUK & Stadsschouwburg
\ WWW.TRANSITFESTIVAL.BE

At last week's Nuit Blanche, the Ghent-based ensemble Spectra performed a striking composition by the English singer-songwriter Tom McRae in Brussels' monumental Beurs amid a moving video installation based on the classical Calvary. At the 15th edition of the new music festival Transit, Flemish Brabant's edition of the region-wide Festival of Flanders, the musicians and soprano Elise Caluwaerts focus on Flanders' contemporary composers, performing existing work by Serge Verstockt and new work by Daan Janssens. They also perform new work by Spectra's very own

artistic director and conductor Filip Rathé, who wrote music for texts by his favourite Spanish poet, Federico Garcia Lorca. The ensemble (*pictured*), impassioned by interpreting compositions by those currently working or living in Flanders, will also breathe new life into two previous pieces: *Cardhu* by Luc Breweaerts and *Fragrances* by Annelies Van Parys. Spectra is a trusted partner for Transit, a festival with an ear for new work by contemporary composers. In the same vein, there's ChampdAction, multidisciplinary by nature and always looking for challenges. The platform for



contemporary music founded in 1988 by Antwerp composer Serge Verstockt will focus entirely on new sounds and experiments. International ensembles such as Reykjavik's Nordic Affect and the Canadian Bozzini Quartet launch their most innovative work. On the set-list of Elision, a new-music

ensemble from Australia, we notice a composition for trumpet and percussion – what a match – by compatriot Liza Lim.

The radical electric-guitar quartet Zwerm from Borgerhout, meanwhile, becomes a quintet when the multi-talented Mauro Pawlowski joins in.

And during the closing concert, also celebrating the festival's 20th year in Leuven, Anne Quirijnen's alienating four-screen video installation, inspired by texts from William Burroughs's book *Interzone*, accompanies a multimedia spectacle by the German composer Enno Poppe. \ Tom Peeters

FESTIVAL

Vrijheidsfestival

Until 25 October

Théâtre National and KVS, Brussels
\ WWW.FESTIVALDESLIBERTES.BE

Vrijheidsfestival/Festival des Libertés/Freedom Festival is an annual celebration of unity in diversity. Brussels' Royal Flemish Theatre KVS and its francophone counterpart, Théâtre National, join hands across the capital and invite artists from around the world to join them. Genres span across media from film to music to theatre but all share a spirit of political engagement. The eponymous *vrijheid* doesn't refer simply to artistic freedom but also liberty in the existential sense, the freedom to live, work and speak as one wants. Speaking of free, the festival closes with a complimentary concert by Jamaican reggae veteran



Winston McAnuff and his accordionist sidekick Fixi (*pictured*). \ Georgio Valentino

FOOD & DRINK

Jeneverfeesten

18-19 October

Across Hasselt

\ WWW.JENEVERFEESTEN.BE

Hasselt's Jenever Festival celebrates its silver anniversary. Over the past quarter-century this autumn festival has grown into one of the city's best-loved events, probably because it celebrates the locals' best-loved spirit. The juniper berry-based jenever is a staple across Flanders, and Hasselt is the traditional centre of its distillation.



So the entire city mobilises for this annual weekender. Like Jesus who turned water into wine, Hasselt's Borrelmanneke fountain will pour forth delicious jenever for all to drink. But the festival involves more than drinking. There's also street theatre, concerts, exhibitions, kids' activities and culinary workshops. \ GV

FAIR

Accessible Art Fair

16-19 October

Cercle de Lorraine, Brussels
\ WWW.ACCESSIBLEARTFAIR.COM

The sumptuous halls of the Cercle de Lorraine are the setting for this year's edition of the Accessible Art Fair. As the name suggests, this isn't the usual, insiders-only schmooze-fest. AAF's main goal is to bring art to the people. And organisers are doing it with the help of some friends: 50 artists,

designers and galleries are on board, putting not just their work but their expertise at the disposal of visitors, many of whom are browsing the arts market for the first time. The fair's Art Advisory team will even come to your home or office for a custom consultation. \ GV



CONCERT

David Guetta

18 October, 20.00

Paleis 12, Brussels

\ WWW.PALEIS12.BE

Bad music is an occupational hazard knowingly assumed by the arts critic and as such must be borne with a certain amount of philosophy, even good humour. The French celebrity DJ David Guetta is banal and aggressively corporatized but will not be ignored for all that. His latest single is so cheesy that not even the appearance of genius American actor Ray Liotta in the track's Spaghetti Western-inspired video could save the enterprise. Yet concert promoters loudly advertise that they hope to cram 17,000 people into Brussels' Paleis 12 for Guetta's performance. And why not? At least it's a sure-fire party. \ GV



CONCERT

Brussels

Musical Box: Genesis cover band performs *Selling England by the Pound* (fifth studio album from the English progressive rock band), with close attention to detail, from costumes to special effects. *16 October 20.00, Koninklijk Circus, Onderrichtstraat 81*
\ www.cirque-royal.org

Leuven

Marble Sounds: Rising Flemish band, acclaimed for their "post-rock with a mournful edge, dreamy nostalgia and wistful lullabies" (*De Morgen*). *16 October 20.00, Het Depot, Martelarenplein 12*
\ www.hetdepot.be

THEATRE

Brussels

Doubt, A Parable: The American Theatre Company performs the 2005 Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play by John Patrick Shanley and staged by Christopher Flores, an intense drama set in the Bronx in 1964, a time of great scandal in the Catholic Church (in English). *21-25 October 20.00, Théâtre de la Toison d'Or, Guldenvliesgalerij 396*
\ www.atcbrussels.com

English Comedy Night: Canadian stand-up and acclaimed actor Phil Nichol headlines, preceded by Swedish comedian Emma Wessleus (both in English). *21 October 20.00-22.00, The Black Sheep, Boondaalse Steenweg 8*
\ www.englishcomedybrussels.com

EVENT

Ghent

30 jaar Ghanezen in Gent (30 Years of Ghanaians in Ghent): Storytelling evening around Ghent's Ghanaian community, featuring a dance performance, lecture on the history of Ghanaian immigration to Flanders, presentation of the website and life stories staged by local Ghanaians. *17 October 20.00, Trefpunt Concertzaal, Bij Sint-Jacobs 18*
\ www.ghanezeningent.be

FESTIVAL

Antwerp

Spiegels van de Ziel (Mirrors of the Soul): Third edition of the festival dedicated to the International Fight Against Poverty, featuring concerts by Helmut Lotti and Den Ambrassband, among others, performances by actor and rapper Jeroen Perceval and writer Erik Vlaminck, films and more (ages 18 and up). *16-19 October, Tutti Fratelli, Lange Gasthuisstraat 26*
\ www.tutti fratelli.be

Talking Dutch

A bridge too far



Derek Blyth

More articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

It was meant to commemorate the flight of Flemish refugees in 1914. But the project to build a pontoon bridge over the Scheldt in Antwerp failed to take account of the chaos that would be caused by the selfie. *Maak mee de grote oversteek* – Join in the great crossing, locals were told. Some 90,000 people rushed to buy tickets for the unique chance to cross the Scheldt on the temporary floating bridge, built by the military as a replica of the one built during the First World War to transport supplies and, eventually, to allow residents to flee the city.

Each ticket-holder was given a time slot for the three-day event earlier this month to make the crossing from one side to the other. But the organisers didn't consider just how many selfies people would stop and take in the middle of the Scheldt.

De organisatoren hadden berekend dat bezoekers aan een snelheid van 3 kilometer per uur de oversteek zouden maken – The organisers had calculated that visitors would cross the bridge at a speed of 3 km/h, *maar hadden blijkbaar niet ingecalculeerd dat die bezoekers ook zouden blijven staan om een foto te maken* – but they clearly hadn't taken into account that people would stop on the bridge to take a photo, reported *De Standaard*. Eight time slots had to be cancelled on Saturday because people were crossing more slowly than expected. That meant 12,000 people were prevented from making the crossing they had booked.

The organisers decided to send out a message to get people moving faster on Sunday. *“Gelieve niet te treuzelen en de aanwijzingen van het militair personeel te volgen”* – “Please don't dawdle, and follow the orders of the military staff,” they said.



© Courtesy De Standaard

“We leiden u in een tempo van drie kilometer per uur over de brug. Voor de mannen: Dat staat gelijk aan het tempo van window shopping” – “We are going to lead you across the bridge at 3 km/h. For the men: That represents the speed of window shopping.” So no stopping to take a *Schelfie* (the new word coined for a selfie taken while crossing the Scheldt). *“De beste foto's neemt u van op de Boeienweide op Linkeroever”* – “You can take the best photos on the Boeienweide on the Left Bank.” *“Voor de vrouwen: daar hebben we ook onze knapste soldaten gezet”* – “For the women: That's where we have stationed our most handsome soldiers.” *“Het is een samenloop van omstandigheden, we gaan niemand met de vinger wijzen”* – “It was due to a combination of various circumstances; we aren't going to point the finger at anyone,” the organisers said. But it seems obvious that those *Schelfies* were to blame for spoiling the Great Crossing of 2014.

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VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY



In response to: Six percent of Belgium under sea level by end of century

Miranda Martin

I do feel sorry for the Bangladeshis and others who have contributed very little but will pay for the excess consumption of Americans and Europeans.



In response to: Gardening and eating meet on Ghent rooftop

Jessica Friend @Jess_Friend

I loved Ghent 2 yrs ago, @flanderstoday now we have 2 go bk, Tom check out unique gardening and eating solution! - <http://klou.tt/2us3hkfx7smg>

**Kate Phibbs @PhibbsKate**

With the @3xscreen crew broadcasting live the finals of #vanshopriot from Aalst, Belgium #lovemyjob

**Pavel Tomancak @PavelTomancak**

On my way to Bioimage Informatics conference <http://www.vibconferences.be/event/bioimage-informatics...> in Leuven. Also known as geek fest ;).



In response to: KU Leuven vice rector protests against P-Magazine

Helen Malevich

Disgusting!

**Hannah Trigwell**

The brilliant @nickhowardmusic doing his thing! The venue in Antwerp was so cute last night!

Poll

Belgium has the fifth-largest carbon footprint in the world. What would you be willing to give up to improve the situation?

a. I'd give up my company car and start using public transport

33%

b. I'd give up €5,000 to better insulate my home to cut energy consumption (and costs)

42%

c. I'd give up eating meat and buy food locally to reduce transport pollution

25%

According to the latest Living Planet Report, Belgium is now number five on the carbon footprint list of countries, taking the place that once belonged to the US. Yes, it's that bad.

Our vote this week was fairly evenly split. The order of popularity – insulate, switch to public transport, eat local and veggie – might well be the actual order of

importance in reducing Belgium's massive overuse of the Earth's resources. According to the report, Belgium has too many old buildings without adequate insulation, which means they use far too much energy. That also costs money, so there's a double benefit to this measure.

Switching to public transport could save money, too, particularly

if ditching the car means walking or cycling more. Even giving up meat could save on your grocery bill, though the price of buying mostly locally produced food could even things out.

Of course, the big question isn't really *What would you do?* but rather *When do you start?*

\ Next week's question:

A Flemish author has said that the main task of schools is to make children happy (see p9). What do you think?

Log in to the Flanders Today website at www.flanderstoday.eu and click on VOTE!



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THE LAST WORD

Food for thought

“I can say now that I’m cured, although there are still things I will never eat, like croissants or *frietjes*.”

Charlotte Lerminiaux from Ghent struggled for years with anorexia and is now a psychologist specialised in eating disorders

Generation gap

“People in their 20s saw the results of their parents’ exaggerated focus on work: demotivation, stress, burnout, depression, divorce, you name it. You can hardly blame them for wanting to go about things in a better and healthier way.”

Joeri Van den Berg of trendwatchers InSites Consulting on a study showing that 20-somethings in Flanders prefer happiness to career success

Accentuating the positive

“You always have to get by with less, and I’m convinced it can actually be done if you just show a little creativity.”

Star presenter Peter Van de Veire on cost-cutting at VRT (see p6)

Mum's the word

“It wasn’t easy, keeping quiet for so long.”

Tom Boonen and his partner, Lore Van de Weyer, are expecting twins in February