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Flanders
State of the Art

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I'LL DRINK TO THAT

Unesco has named Belgium's beer culture as intangible cultural heritage, recognising its history and variety as invaluable





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Fly away home

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A new voice for new times

Revolutionary wartime poet Paul van Ostaijen is now available in English



Bjorn Gabriels

More articles by Bjorn \ flanderstoday.eu

Paul van Ostaijen led an eventful life, with his political ideals seeing him flee from Antwerp to Germany during the First World War. Some of his poetry – and the distinctive typography that was integral to it – has now been translated into English.

hundred years ago, while Belgium was under German occupation, Antwerp city clerk Paul van Ostaijen published his debut, *Music-Hall*. With this volume of poetry, the 20-year-old wanted to be a new voice for new times. And those times were changing drastically.

The Great War not only involved a new form of industrial warfare, it also ushered in 20th-century culture, with a rapid succession of avant-garde art movements, the breakthrough of cinema as a form of popular entertainment, and the general sense that the old world was definitely – for better or for worse – on its way out.

Poet, art critic and short story writer van Ostaijen was one of the young people aching to do away with yesteryear's opinions and attitudes. He had dropped out of school and worked at Antwerp city hall.

The life of a pen-pusher didn't suit him, though, even if a few civil servants there were literature-minded. *Zot polleken* (Crazy Little Paul) or Mr 1830, as he was nicknamed, preferred the Antwerp nightlife, strolling around in dandyish attire, attending film screenings and jazz concerts by musician friends.

The whirling sensations of nightlife and love, including a broken-off relationship, were instrumental to *Music-Hall*. Van Ostaijen's subsequent poetry collection, *Het Sienjaal* (The Signal), continued the call for a young messianic artist, belonging to an idealised community.

But even as a small circle of readers got to know Van Ostaijen's new voice, he was already exploring different terrains.

After the idealism influenced by a rather romanticised Humanitarian Expressionism, Van Ostaijen aspired to de-individualisation, as seen in his poetry in the posthumously published *Feesten van angst en pijn* (The Feasts of Fear and Agony), and in his Dadaist *Bezette stad* (*Occupied City*, 1921).

A significant part of the Flemish Movement, particularly young militants such as Van Ostaijen, was involved in Flemish activism. Its activists strove for more Flemish autonomy, with the

Unesco recognises Belgian beer as cultural heritage

United Nations add beer to list of the world's intangible cultural heritage



Alan Hope

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Belgian beer in all of its aspects has been recognised by Unesco for inclusion on its list of intangible cultural heritage. "Belgium has won the world cup for beer culture," said Flemish culture minister Sven Gatz, formerly director of the Belgian Brewers federation. "This is a really fine accolade for everyone in this country who works with beer."

Unesco, the United Nation's educational, social and cultural organisation, keeps a register of invaluable and protected cultural heritage – not buildings or artefacts, but rituals and traditions such as polyphonic singing in southern Portugal, Momoeria New Year celebrations in the Kozani region of Greece and the making of kimchi in South Korea. Flanders features on the list several times, with carnival celebrations in Aalst, carillon culture, the Holy Blood Procession in Bruges, traditional games in Flanders and horseback shrimp-fishing off the coast of Oostduinkerke. Unesco's newest entry cites 1,500 types of beers produced in Belgium, as well as the growth of craft beer and beer



© milo-profi.be/Visit Flande

gastronomy and the increasing use of sustainable practices in the industry. "Making and appreciating beer is part of the living heritage of a range of communities throughout Belgium. It plays a role in daily life, as well as festive

occasions"

"We have a suitable beer for every occasion," Gatz said. "We drink beer as a thirst-quencher after an exhilarating walk, during a friendly evening in the local pub, or as part of our gastronomy. In Belgium, beer does not have to give way to wine or other drinks in terms of quality and diversity. We love our beer and appreciate its endless diversity, something that cannot be equalled anywhere else in the world."

The application for inclusion on the list of intangible heritage was made jointly by the three communities – Flemish, French-speaking and German.

"The Unesco recognition is the pinnacle of the work done by countless beer brewers, beer lovers, beer promoters and zythologists who have lifted our beer culture to such a level that it is worth protecting," said Isabelle Weykmans, culture minister for the German community. "This recognition will give Belgian beer culture even more gloss and attitude around the world."

40% rise in disability discrimination complaints

The number of complaints about discrimination against people with a disability has shot up by 40% compared to last year, according to the federal anti-discrimination agency Unia. More than 500 cases have been opened this year.

Most complaints concern services, work and education. "Reasonable adjustments like tools, an assistant or an adapted schedule are still refused far too often," Unia director Els Keytsman told *De Standaard*. "For people with a disability in this country, a lot depends on who they cross on their path; they rely on luck."

Such reasonable adjustments are often necessary because services, goods, schools, companies and public spaces are not completely accessible to everyone. "We are still miles away from an inclusive society," Keytsman said. "Policy is not ambitious enough, at all levels." According to Unia, only 3.5% of the transit stops operated by Flemish public transport authority De Lijn are completely accessible. Keytsman believes the situation is not much better on the railways, because of the difference in platform heights.

Unia has launched a campaign for and by people with a disability. This week is the 10th anniversary of the UN convention on the rights of people with a disability. \ Andy Furniere

De Lijn raises SMS ticket prices by 10%

Flemish public transport authority De Lijn will increase the cost of a ticket bought by SMS by more than 10%, the company has announced. The price will come into effect in February.

At present a ticket bought via text message costs &1.80, plus a 15c surcharge for the mobile provider. The price is now &2 for the ticket, which brings the total price to &2.15. The SMS ticket was launched to make it easier for the occasional user of public transport to take the bus or tram without having to buy a multiple-journey ticket. By sending a text message, a passenger receives a return message valid for travel over a period of one hour on any De Lijn route.

The price of tickets bought via third-party apps will not change. The M-ticket will continue to cost $\{0.80\}$, without any surcharge. By comparison, buying a ticket from a ticket machine or the driver costs $\{0.80\}$.

De Lijn also announced other price increases: An annual youth Buzzy Pazz goes up by €5, while an adult pass goes up by €7 a year. Seniors and children under 11 pay €1 more, as do buyers of a 10-trip card. \ AH

Hundreds of cyclists fined for texting while biking

More cyclists than ever before are using their smartphone while biking, which greatly increases their risk of getting into an accident, according to the Flemish Foundation for Traffic Knowledge (VSV), which plans to launch a campaign to raise awareness of the problem. It is also calling on the police to hand out more fines to cyclists.

According to VSV, the police handed out 595 fines last year in Belgium for using a phone while cycling. The amount of the

fines – now €110 – is increasing, as is the number handed out. In Ghent, a hub of commuter cycling, 165 fines were handed out in 2015. The city's police already operate a cycle brigade, which would rather raise awareness among cyclists than hand out fines, according to inspector Wim De Meester. "But if the phenomenon continues, we will get more serious."

According to Dutch research from 2010, about one-third of all cyclists send messages while biking, while about half read messages. "We assume that smartphone use since then has only increased," said VSV spokesperson Werner De Dobbeleer.

He noted that more cyclists end up in hospital because of the habit. "Typing a message takes about five seconds, during which people don't have their eyes on the road," De Dobbeleer said. "Studies show that the risk of an accident then is 23 times higher than normal." \ AF



websites blocked so far this year by customs and economy inspectors for advertising counterfeit products. Last year the number was only 411



parking spaces lost if plans for the renovation of Havenlaan next to the Tour & Taxis site in Brussels go ahead, residents' groups said. The spaces would be turned over to pedestrians and cyclists



taken in by Brussels-City from bars that allow patrons to dance, at the rate of 40c per dancer per day, a regulation dating back to 1950 and affecting 39 establishments



migrants picked up last week by the Belgian frigate Louise-Marie off the coast of Libya, as they fled in two boats. The ship has been on patrol in the Mediterranean since last month



fines handed out every day on average for speeding in Belgium in the first half of the year, 5% more than the same period last year

WEEK IN BRIEF

Theatre director and choreographer Alain Platel has been awarded the Gold Medal by the Royal Flemish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Platel was honoured with the annual award for his work in inspiring a new generation to fuse dance and theatre through his Ghent-based company Les Ballets C de la B.

\ lesballetscdela.be

The Limburg municipalities of Opglabbeek and Meeuwen-Gruitrode **have agreed to merge**, the first to do so in Flanders in 33 years. The merger is due to take place in 2018. The decision means the Flemish government will take over municipal debt on terms of $\[matheberger]$ 500 per resident, a total of $\[matheberger]$ 11.7 million for the new municipality, which must still decide on a name.

Flemish minister for mobility and public works Ben Weyts has invoked a conflict of interest against the Brussels-Capital Region over noise limits. A region may invoke a conflict of interest when another region takes action that has an effect on its living conditions. Weyts' complaint is in response to regulations that force Brussels Airport to adjust its flight plans to avoid flying over Brussels, flying them over Flanders instead. The move means the plans are frozen for 60 days, during which time the regions must meet with a federal negotiating committee.

The **most common surnames** in Flanders are Peeters, Janssens and Maes, according to figures from the economy ministry. Peeters took the lead with 31,926 people.

Six municipalities within the Brussels-Capital Region have signed an agreement with Het Huis van het Nederlands to work on making bilingualism in the capital more of a reality: Sint-Gillis, Schaarbeek, Jette, Anderlecht, Sint-Piet-

ers-Woluwe and Brussels-City. Seven others, including Etterbeek, Koekelberg and Sint-Pieters-Woluwe, have shown an interest in joining the project, financed by the region.

\ huisnederlandsbrussel.be

The prosecutor's office for East Flanders has submitted a motion to drop all criminal charges relating to the 2013 **train accident at Wetteren**, in which a freight train derailed, releasing toxic substances into the environment. One local resident died after inhaling toxic fumes. Blame for the accident has been placed on the driver, who died in June last year. Other victims may still request compensation from the rail authority NMBS, prosecutor Johan Sabbe suggested.

Following an earlier rejection of a bid by the Dutch postal service PostNL and the Dutch government, Belgian postal services **Bpost has launched its "final and improved offer"** to take over its Dutch counterpart. Bpost is now offering $\mathfrak{C}5.75$ per share in a mix of cash and Bpost shares, an offer 10% higher than what was offered in an unsuccessful bid in November

Antwerp Zoo **lion Maouli died last week** at the advanced age of 20 years. She was the eldest of the Antwerp pride, following the death of Victor in 2013. She leaves behind daughter Caitlin, born in 2001, and son Nestor, born in 2012.

The Netherlands are lucky to have a neighbour like Belgium, according to the Dutch king Willem-Alexander, speaking at the end of a three-day state visit by King Filip and Queen Mathilde. The Dutch monarch spoke of the two countries' shared history and described Belgium as "a hospitable country where the whole of

Europe comes together, north and south stretching out a hand to each other".

Federal social fraud secretary Philippe De Backer is launching a pilot project involving a **registration for workers with large-scale cleaning companies**, in order to tackle the high numbers of illegal workers in the sector. The register would oblige all 43,000 people working in the sector to sign in at the start of work and out at the end, with an evaluation of the system taking place after six months

The city of **Ghent and its pedestrian areas** have been praised by the British newspaper *The Guardian*, in an article that compared the Brussels pedestrian zone in unfavourable terms. Ghent is "blooming," the newspaper reported, while the Brussels pedestrian zone is still mired in controversy.

About one in 20 Belgians is addicted to shopping, according to a PhD study carried out at the Free University of Brussels (VUB), with some showing simple urges and others more serious compulsions. Professor Malaika Brengman said that increasing numbers of people are becoming seriously addicted "because of retail campaigns like Black Friday but also because you can now buy something at any moment with your smartphone".

Listeners of Klara radio station have once again chosen *Stabat Mater* by 18th-century Italian composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi as their **favourite piece of classical music**. More than 7,000 listeners voted, putting Avro Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* in second place, up from sixth last year, and Carl Orff's *O Fortuna* in third, up from 31st place last year.

\ klara.be/top100

FACE OF FLANDERS



© Courtesy WPBS

Wendy Jans

How does the little Limburg town of Bree continue to breed top athletes? With a population of just under 15,000, it has been the home of Red Devils and Chelsea goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, Formula One driver Max Verstappen and motocross racer Stefan Everts.

Its most famous inhabitant is Kim Clijsters, and she was born just six days before another champion: snooker player Wendy Jans. Jans hit the news again last week when she claimed her sixth world amateur snooker title in the Qatari capital, Doha.

It was also the 33-year-old's fifth International Billiards & Snooker Federation title in a row. Jans defeated India's Amee Kamani 5-0 in the final. Her crushing victory came despite allowing Kamani to take the lead in the first and third frames. Jans dominates amateur snooker. She began to play at the age of 10, won her first Belgian national title in 1998, when she was 14, and now has 14 titles to her name.

She was just 15 when she reached the final of the EBSA

European Ladies Championship, a title she went on to win 10 times. She won the first of her six world titles in 2006, holding it continuously since 2012.

She is also handy when it comes to snooker's American cousin, pool: Jans won the Ladies tour four times and claimed victories in pool championships across the United States as well as Belgium and the Netherlands.

She's not Flanders' only snooker star: Luca Brecel, 21, who won the European Under-19 title when he was 14, became the youngest-ever player to qualify for the World Snooker Championship when he was 17.

Naturally, there are some who might question whether snooker is a sport, but in the wake of golf's inclusion in this year's Olympics, snooker authorities are confident they can be part of the Games by 2024.

The way Jans is going, she could be already be thinking of the gold she'd likely win at the 2024 Games. "Snooker is a drug for me," she says. "I still want to win every game." \ Leo Cendrowicz

OFFSIDE App games with De Lijn

As you have seen on the facing page, Flemish public transport authority De Lijn has announced a price increase for its SMS ticket, from €1.95 to €2.15, starting in February. The reason, as explained by mobility minister Ben Weyts, is to encourage passengers to switch to the M-ticket, sold via De Lijn's own app. But, as daily newspaper *De Morgen* discovered, De Lijn's own app doesn't actually sell the M-ticket; it simply instructs you you to send an SMS – with the additional 15c charge. The paper contacted De Lijn and was informed that it is working with three partners, each of which has an app that can deliver the M-ticket at the €1.80 price, without the surcharge. They are BE Mobile, which was originally developed to provide SMS-paid parking services in 28 Flemish

So in fact you need two apps to travel with De Lijn – one for timetables and announcement of stops, the

developed uniquely for the purpose.

towns; Olympus Mobility, with an app developed for

companies offering flexible mobility solutions; and

Ticket Touch, the only one which appears to have been



© Ingimage

other for ticketing. So *De Morgen* asked: Could De Lijn not just integrate the M-ticket into their own app? "We've no plans to do that for the time being," spokesperson Astrid Hulhoven told the paper. "But we could link the ticket button to the three apps that provide the M-ticket at some point."

FLANDERSTODAY



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5TH COLUMN

Cordoned off

As Vlaams Belang regains some of its popularity, talk of the *cordon* has resumed, too.

Refresher: Belgium's cordon sanitaire is the agreement by the rest of the country's political parties to exclude the farright Vlaams Belang from all coalitions and councils. The 1989 decision was based on the party's platform, which was considered fundamentally racist, but the move was also later seen as strategic.

Other parties hoped to pick up votes not cast for Vlaams Belang. In fact, the opposite happened: Vlaams Belang began to attract protest votes. The *cordon* has always been a topic of debate. Was it the right and democratic thing to do? And did it work?

In recent years, the debate has died down, as Vlaams Belang has dwindled into irrelevance, but the discussions were rekindled recently, as N-VA politician Theo Francken stated that "in a virtual reality" he could see his party co-operating with Vlaams Belang. In a recent poll, a majority of N-VA voters called the cordon "undemocratic".

The N-VA did not exist when the *cordon* was signed and has not signed on to it since. It has always considered it responsible for Vlaams Belang's success.

Will the *cordon* survive after the 2018 local elections? Most believe it will. If N-VA had wanted to, it could have entered municipal coalitions with Vlaams Belang in 2012, as both parties had a majority between them in several towns, including Antwerp. Most likely, it will choose not do so in 2018 as well.

N-VA probably does not want to risk being vilified shortly before the federal and regional elections one year later. It might even end up in a *cordon* itself. The French-speaking liberals, prime minister Charles Michel's party, have already stated that they will not co-operate with anyone willing to engage with Vlaams Belang.

In any case, Vlaams Belang has not done much to clean up its act. It recently reprimanded partyleader Filip Dewinter and other members who visited the fascist and violent Golden Dawn in Greece. Dewinter, Vlaams Belang's most popular politician, will probably top its Antwerp list again.

N-VA party president Bart De Wever's personality stands in the way of a coalition with Vlaams Belang, too. He prides himself on being the man who halted the rise of Vlaams Belang by creating a party its previous voters could turn to. He hardly wants to be seen as the man who brought Vlaams Belang to power. \ Anja Otte

Flanders pledges €300 million at second Climate Summit

Future priorities include mobility and energy-efficiency of buil dings



he government of Flanders is ready to invest €300 million on measures to prevent and mitigate climate change between now and the regional elections in 2019, ministers announced at the end of the second Flemish Climate Summit, which took place last

The largest share of that sum goes to improving the sustainability of buildings, which account for 28% of emissions in Flanders. Housing minister Liesbeth Homans (N-VA) earmarked 680 million to convert 12,000 apartments and social housing units to be more energy-efficient, saving some 90,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year.

Another €25 million will be spent on vehicles, including environmentally friendly cars, charg-



© James Arthur Gekiere/BELGA

ing stations for electric cars and more green buses. Local authorities will receive €12 million for share systems for electric bicycles.

Flanders' Climate Summits – the first took place in Mechelen last April – follow last year's

climate accords signed in Paris. Flemish environment minister Joke Schauvliege and minister-president Geert Bourgeois (*pictured*) put out a call to companies, associations, academics and other government representatives to brainstorm suggestions for climate policy. The call led to 234 pledges from organisations such as the farmers union Boerenbond.

The government itself pledged to reduce its own emissions of carbon dioxide by 40% by 2030, and to consume 27% less energy.

"I'm convinced we can achieve our climate goals if we all work together, and if we have citizens and companies who can go faster than the government," Bourgeois said at the end of the summit. "This is just an intermediate step. We're not there yet."

'North Sea could be 11th province,' says state secretary

The waters off the Belgian coast should be treated as if they were the country's 11th province, according to secretary of state Philippe De Backer, responsible for North Sea matters. De Backer made the proposal in an ambitious maritime development plan presented to parliament last week. The Belgian part of the North Sea covers 3,454 square kilometres, larger than any of the Flemish provinces. "It is important to inform the public, and especially young people, about the sea in general and our North Sea in particular, and awaken their interest in the possibility of building a future in the maritime sector," De Backer said. "This is an area in full development, facing many challenges and offering a great deal of potential."

De Backer's development plan identifies priority areas, including



© Toerisme De Panne

environmental protection, renewable energy, aquaculture and "blue growth" – the strategy of supporting sustainable economic growth in the marine sector.

"The shipping fleet under the Belgian flag brings considerable added value to the economy," he said. "The merchant marine is the 25th in the world, with five million tonnes of capacity."

De Backer also aims to bring the country's maritime laws up to date and create an integrated policy with the three regions. \ AH

Funds approved to treat injured Peshmerga fighters in Flanders

Flemish minister-president Geert Bourgeois, also in charge of foreign relations, has approved a grant of €100,000 to bring Kurdish Peshmerga soldiers injured in the fight against IS to Flanders for medical treatment.

The agreement dates back to Bourgeois' visit to Iraqi Kurdistan – the autonomous region of northern Iraq bordering Iran, Turkey and Syria – earlier this year, when he met president Masoud Barzani and visited refugee camps.

"The Peshmerga are taking part in a difficult war against IS, a war which is also crucially important for our safety," a spokesperson for Bourgeois said.

The selection of which injured soldiers will be brought to Flanders will be carried out at the front line by the Peshmerga forces. According to the spokesperson, those chosen will be in need of treatment that is not currently available in the conflict zones.

Weyts supports road tolls for all vehicles

Flemish mobility minister Ben Weyts has said he is a "supporter in principle" of a system of road tolls for all vehicles, following a call from the transport sector for a universal toll. At present, road tolls only apply to commercial vehicles larger than 3.5 tonnes.

The transport sector considers tolls the only effective response to growing congestion on Flanders' roads. "We have to introduce a toll for everyone, including small commercial vehicles and private cars," said Isabelle De Maegt of sector federation Febetra, speaking to *De Tijd.* "Only then will we make an impact on mobility and traffic flow."

According to the Flemish Traffic Centre, traffic jams have grown in the region by 35% over the last five years, and by 15% in the last year alone. According to the latest figures, the average weekday total for tailbacks this year was 141km, compared to 136km in 2015.

"A general road toll is essential if we are to avoid having our roads completely jammed up," Weyts



) Jean-Luc Flémal/BELGA

agreed. "A general toll could also lead to lower taxes for Flemish people, since foreigners would also have to help pay for the upkeep of our roads."

He stressed, however, that the introduction of such a system would be a job for the next Flemish government, after the elections in 2019.

Sport minister signs EU treaty against match-fixing

Flemish sport minister Philippe Muyters has signed two EU treaties that address match-fixing and violence in football. The treaties are a result of an initiative spearheaded by the minister himself

The match-fixing treaty calls on member states to work on the problem at a global level, while each creates a national platform composed of representatives from all the sectors concerned. In Belgium, for instance, that would consist of the regions, which are responsible for sports policy, the federal police and justice system, the Gaming Commission and the

sporting sector.

'Fair play in all aspects is the core of my sports policy," Muyters said after the meeting and signing in Budapest. "Match-fixing is extremely damaging to the image of sport. As a minister who has made a point of fair and healthy sport, I want to lead this co-ordinated approach within Belgium." A similar approach is also the aim of the second treaty on supporter violence, which remains an intractable problem despite the many efforts to deal with it. "Football can only be enjoyable on the field if it is also enjoyable off the field," Muyters said. \ AH

A new voice for new times

Words and typography combine in Paul van Ostaijen's unique works

aid of the German occupier if need be, rather than opting for the "passivist" political truce, which in their view unnecessarily prolonged the authoritarian Belgian state.

With the repercussions of his "activist" stance looming over his head, Van Ostaijen fled to Berlin with his girlfriend, Emma Clément. There he hoped to forge good relationships with the local art world and experience the political revolution first-hand.

He was already very knowledgeable about the latest tendencies in literature and visual arts. As a headstrong art critic, he knew his way around modernist art, from Expressionism, Cubism and Futurism all the way to Dada.

In Berlin, the artistic and political turmoil happened right on his doorstep, and he befriended artists, particularly in the circles around the art gallery and magazine Der Sturm (The Storm). Despite these friends and acquaintances, however, Van Ostaijen never managed to assemble the various artists into a group as he had hoped.

With the killings of communist leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and hundreds of others, Van Ostaijen was disillusioned on both the artistic and the political front.

His high hopes had ended in disappointment. During his time in Berlin, though, he did write one of the most poignant works in Flemish literature.

On his return to Antwerp, the nihil-

istic poetry of Bezette stad was printed in an experimental rhythmical typography by his friend Oscar Jespers. Despite its inherently international stature, the long-form poem was never translated into English. Until now.

Publisher Andy Croft of Smokestack Books in England came across Van Ostaijen when a short translated extract from Occupied City appeared in the British magazine Modern Poetry in Translation.

"I was impressed, intrigued, and embarrassed not to have heard of the book before," Croft recalls. "To me it's one of the very great literary responses to the 1914-18 war, as important as works by Henri Barbusse, Jaroslav Hašek or Wilfred Owen. It is certainly a lot more interesting than TS Eliot's The Wasteland, which British readers imagine represents the highpoint of post-1914 European literature."

The issue of Modern Poetry in Translation with Great War poetry that editor Sasha Dugdale put together set in motion what had seemed impossible for years. "When Sasha let me know she was looking for war poetry from languages apart from French and German, it was an obvious choice to suggest some poems from Bezette stad," says David Colmer, who has also translated Hugo Claus, Dimitri Verhulst and Cees Nooteboom.

"I learned Dutch in 1992, and I first read *Bezette stad* sometime in the mid-to late 1990s," he says. "I found it stunning and intriguing, and also

a translation challenge. But more than just the language barrier, the daunting design and technical aspects of publishing the whole book were significant barriers to an earlier English production."

With the aid of book designer Katy Mawhood, a selection from Occupied City appeared in Modern Poetry in Translation. "The collaboration went very well, and there was a good response to the poems," says Colmer. "After that, Sasha suggested I should do the whole book, and I said, 'If you find me a publisher, I will!"

Three weeks later she brought Colmer and Croft together. When Mawhood agreed to design the book, the team was in place, and the idea of a full translation was suddenly more than just a dream. Occupied City is set in a very specific time and place, with myriad references to places, films, songs and advertisements that even native Dutch speakers nowadays would have difficulty grasping.

"The original Antwerp readers would have recognised and been able to picture many of the places; they would have been able to sing the songs," says Colmer. "That would enrich the reading experience, but even without these things, you still sense the kaleidoscopic character of the original

There's even an advantage in the translation, he says, as it allows them to add notes explaining many of the references, making the translation sometimes easier to understand than the original.

"At the same time, I believe it's also possible for an English reader to appreciate the poem without checking the notes, as most of the references and quotes are clearly just that: lines from songs, names of places, quotes from advertising signs and so on."

And then there's the original rhythmical typography, about which Van Ostaijen wrote extensive letters to his friends in Antwerp. "The change of type may lose some of the original's integrity: It is a tradeoff, there is no perfect translation," says Mawhood. "Ultimately, the typography aims to facilitate the articulation of meaning of an

Although he died much too young, Paul van Ostaijen still published some of the most significant Flemish poetry of the 20th century

excellent Dutch-English transla-

Occupied City is as much a translation of the design as it is of the original text. "The visual channel is often taken for granted, but there's a lot of effort, consideration and time commitment involved in design interpretation," Mawhood explains.

Van Ostaijen's correspondence with his friends in Antwerp makes it clear that he never saw the typography as a mere illustration of the text, but as a score to which the text is set. Translation, then, means a re-rendering of the original.

"Physical printed publications have

changed in language, culture and industry norms," Mawhood points out. "To imitate past technical limitation would be a distraction for the reader's interpretation, who may seek meaning by its irregularity. Ultimately, design elements do not transmit a text passively. They are rhetorically active because they affect the reader's reception of the message."

Van Ostaijen was granted amnesty after his return to Belgium in 1921, but had to fulfil his military service in Germany. His poetry continued to evolve towards what he called "pure lyricism".

He had also started to write "grotesque" short stories, a Dadaist film script - De bankroet-jazz (The Bankrupt Jazz) - and art criticism. He was very active as a writer, and remained involved in several plans relating to magazines and art galleries.

But his health failed him. On 18 March 1928, the complications of tuberculosis sent him to an early grave, aged just 32. His memorial stone - a "listening angel" was designed by his friend Oscar Jespers, who had also given Occupied City its remarkable typogra-

BOOM

KETTLEDRUM

everything

racing again violins cellos basses brass triangle

drums KETTLEDRUMS

racing running racing running racing RUNNING

STOP!

drama in full battle tarts snakes throwing themselves at honourable gentlemen the family falters the factory falters honour falters lies there all ideas go tumbling DOWN



Occupied City was printed in an experimental rhythmical typography by Van Ostaijen's friend Oscar Jespers; the translation incorporates a re-rendering of the original typography

VAN OSTAIJEN: A MUST-READ

Music-Hall (1916): Van Ostaijen's debut has recently been re-published by Antwerp publisher

Het Sienjaal (The Signal, 1918): his second volume of poetry

Bezette stad (Occupied City, 1921): the first translation into English can be bought from the Paul van Ostaijen Genootschap's website \ paulvanostaijen.be

De bankroet-jazz (The Bankrupt Jazz, 1921): Van Ostaijen's film script, arguably the first written in Flanders, was turned into a film in

\ bankroetjazz.nl/boekdvd

WEEK IN BUSINESS

Banking \ Societe Generale

The French private banking group is closing its Aalst and Leuven branches as part of a restructuring of its local operations. The bank will keep its other eight branches in the country, including in Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp.

Equipment \ TVH

The Waregem-based supplier of forklifts and aerial work platforms is bidding €400 million to take over the UK's quoted Lavendon company, a European leader in powered access equipment rentals. The deal will allow TVH to develop its activities in the Middle East and the US.

Biscuits \ Delacre

The biscuit producer of Dilbeek, Flemish Brabant, founded in 1891 and owned by the Turkish Yldiz group, has received a bid to be taken over by the Italian Ferrero chocolate group.

Insurance \ Aviabel

The Brussels-based insurance company specialised in the aviation industry has been taken over by Bermuda's Axis Capital group. Aviabel is the sector's leading specialist for the Benelux countries with offices in Brussels and Amsterdam.

Construction \ Willemen

The country's largest familyowned construction group, headquartered in Mechelen, has won a contract to build a container terminal in Tangiers.

Military \ Navy fleet

Belgium and the Netherlands are spending up to €4 billion on four new frigates and 12 minesweepers for delivery between 2024 and 2028.

Transport \ De Lijn

The €320 million contract for 146 trams ordered by Flanders' public transit authority from Spain's CAF has been suspended by the Council of State following a complaint from the Bruges competitor Bombardier.

Retail \ Vögele

The local operations of the Swiss fashion label, with more than 40 stores in Belgium, has been declared bankrupt. Some 217 employees are affected by the decision.

Hundreds of supermarket sites 'suitable for housing'

Roofs of large grocery stores could support housing units, says study



ore than 330 sites that currently support large supermarkets and car parks are suitable for housing projects, according to a study by researchers from the University of Leuven and Ghent University, who examined 1,461 supermarket sites in Flanders. According to the results, housing projects could be developed on flat supermarket roofs and in parking lots if some parking was moved underground.

The study shows a potential of some 500 hectares suitable for housing. The researchers included supermarkets with a car park of minimum half a hectare.

It is estimated that there will be 165,000 more families in Flanders 10 years from now, who



© Courtesy Bouw & Wone

would require about 680 hectares of housing space. The researchers stated that the supermarket sites can in theory fulfil this need entirely, if the housing projects include four floors.

They even foresee half of the area used for green spaces, like parks and sports fields. There are already a few "supermarket living" projects in the region today. Supermarket chain Colruyt, for example, has combined its store in Wemmel with underground parking and apartments (pictured).

"Such projects can help to re-envision the giant shoebox structures with massive parking lots from the 1970s," Olivier Carrette of real estate federation BVS told *De Tijd*. "These are totally unused during part of the week and at night." Carrette pointed out legislative changes would be necessary because it currently takes about five years before the construction of such hous-

Infrastructure not contributing enough to economy, study says

Belgium's infrastructure assets are not contributing as much as they could to the country's economy, according to the latest Global Built Asset Performance Index produced by the consultancy bureau Arcadis. The index covers 36 nations that together account for 78% of global GDP.

"Built assets" is a term that covers roads, railways, airports and ports, as well as power stations, houses and schools. The study calculates the income from such assets, putting Belgium at $\[\epsilon \]$ 70 billion for 2016, or 28% of GDP. That puts the country in 27th place out of 36.

That's far behind countries with a similar scale and economy, like the Netherlands (9), Switzerland (13) and Denmark (15). Belgium is also the lowest-placed of the eurozone countries.

Belgium's problem, according to Luc Hellemans, managing director of Arcadis in Belgium, is in large part mobility and the fragmentation of planning authorities. The country has an abnormally high rate of commuter traffic, he told *Trends* magazine, which has negative effects on productivity and on the life-span of infrastructure.

Visit Flanders sets its sights on business tourism market

The Flemish government's tourism agency Visit Flanders was in Barcelona last week attending IBTM World, the leading global event for the congress and business travel industry. The agency has a view to promoting Flanders as a destination for so-called Mice professionals – meetings, incentives, conferencing and exhibitions.

The three-day annual event attracts some 15,000 people from both sides of the industry: supply and demand. Visit Flanders is displaying its brand-new stand, inaugurated by minister-president Geert Bourgeois at the World Travel Market at the start of last month in London.

The agency gave three presentations a day on Flanders as a business and conference destination, with a focus on selling food pairing workshops to meeting and event planners, and



Bruges congress centre Oud Sint-Jan

chocolate and beer as a selling point for potential clients. They also introduced meeting planners to the renovated Elisabeth Center in Antwerp, which is now home to a new meeting and convention space.

Visit Flanders is accompanied in Barcelona by a number of industry representatives from Flanders and Brussels, including The Hotel and Hotel Amigo, congress agencies from Antwerp and Bruges and destination management companies Aim Group International Belgium and @dmire. \ AH



ing projects can get started.

Hema tests new style of stores

The Dutch-based retail chain Hema has altered three of its outlets in Flanders based on a new concept. The test stores are in Hasselt, Izegem (West Flanders) and Tienen (Flemish Brabant). A fourth has opened in Liège.

The new concept involves dividing each store into what the company calls "experience worlds", which means departments such as kitchen, baby and women. That last one, for instance, gathers all products associated with women – such as lingerie, cosmetics and

jewellery – in one place, rather than the shopper having to go all around the store.

"That makes things much clearer for the customer, and you notice right away how fresh and open the shops look," said CEO Tjeerd Jegens.

Hema opened five of the pilot stores in the Netherlands in September. The test shops will run for a trial period of three months, when the decision will be taken whether to roll out the new concept to the whole of the Benelux in 2017. A

Test-Aankoop launches class-action suit against Proximus

Belgium's consumer organisation Test-Aankoop has begun a class-action lawsuit against telecommunications company Proximus over its policy of renting new digital TV decoders to owners of older models. The suit calls for the clients concerned to be allowed one year's rental for free.

Test-Aankoop brought its complaint to Proximus last June. More than 400,000 digital TV customers – out of 1.8 million – were in possession of a V3 decoder, which will become useless next year.

According to Proximus, only one in 10 of those customers had actually bought the decoder. The custom-

ers affected were offered one year's free rental of the new generation decoder.

Three months later, however, Test-Aankoop described the offer as an empty promise. Proximus was asking customers to sign up in June, although their existing V3 decoder was still operative until the end of January 2017. Proximus was counting those six months as part of the free rental, while no switch-over was even necessary. Test-Aankoop called for the free rental to begin on 1 February but said that Proximus refused any attempt to reach a solution. The

suit alleges breach of contract

among other legal infractions. \ AH

Heal thyself

Buddy doctors offer support to fellow GPs in distress



▼rom flu to childbirth, the doctor's ┥ always there when they're needed. But on those occasions when the doctors need help themselves, they're often ashamed to ask. A Flemish support organisation wants to introduce buddy doctors to make it easier for their colleagues in mental distress to seek support.

General practitioners (GPs) have a lot of responsibilities. As well as an extremely busy schedule and difficulties in balancing life and work, there's the constant risk of making the wrong decisions.

Research shows GPs to be at risk of burnout, addiction, depression and suicide. A study by GP association Domus Medica shows that four Flemish GPs kill themselves each year and female GPs run a higher risk of killing themselves than the average Flemish woman. Other studies have shown one in 12 trainees suffers burnout and one in three GPs is at risk of alcoholism.

Still, it would be wrong to blame these troublesome statistics on the pressure that comes with the job, experts say. According to Annelies Van Linden, a GP herself and a co-ordinator at support group Doctors4Doctors, most of the cited numbers aren't that different from those of the general population.

"Increasing societal pressure is taking its toll everywhere," she says, "but the real problem GPs face is that they aren't inclined to ask other doctors for help. They feel they should be able to solve the issue themselves. Asking colleagues for help is a deeply ingrained

According to Van Linden, society at large, including physicians and specialists, mistakenly sees a doctor as someone who should know everything. "Which is impossible," she says, "but precisely because of this myth most of them think they should be able to heal

In rare cases where they do ask for help, they experience feelings of shame and powerlessness, she explains. "They couldn't heal themselves and so they must not be a good doctor. Admitting to colleagues that they can't solve it on their own, well, that's just admitting failure. It ruins their self-esteem."

While the first ideas for the prevention and



promotion of doctors' health date as far back as 2007, the first real support group, Doctors-4Doctors or D4D, was founded at the end of 2013 by physicians in the field. From the start, D4D aimed to build a network of trained counsellors - "co-doctors" - that other physicians can reach out to in times of mental distress. In 2015, a pilot project was started in Antwerp

she says, "and we're leaving out specialists in hospitals, who suffer from the same fears and doubts. In the end, we will need teams of co-doctors in all Flemish hospitals as well."

So far, 31 GPs have completed the training to become a co-doctor. Caroline Helsen from Meerhout, Antwerp province, is one of them. She took part in the 2015 pilot after seeing how many young colleagues quit because of impossible expectations.

"We cannot afford such a loss of talent," she says. "Most of them start to think it's normal to work impossible hours, to keep on achiev $ing \ and \ be \ invulnerable \ to \ anything \ that \ might$ happen. When it turns out they can't keep it up, they think they're bad doctors and quit. Remember, we're dealing with a group of very vulnerable people. If it wasn't for our empathy, we wouldn't have become doctors."

According to Helsen, very few colleagues have asked her for counselling yet. But as she sees it, this is not the right way to measure the project's success.

"We need to let this sink in," she says. "It's a large cultural change we're trying to bring about. As co-doctors, we are starting the conversation in our circles. We put these issues on the agenda, we make them discussable. The fact that we're here in the first place will make doctors think differently."

In an ideal world, she says, doctors will be

WEEK IN INNOVATION

Artificial islands proposed along coast

A group of Belgian companies and scientists represented by the international organisation Zeri has plans to build a group of artificial islands along the Flemish coastline. The islands, conceived under the working title Blue Cluster, would serve to protect the coast against storms. They would stretch from the French to the Duch border, protecting the coast and reviving the biodiversity in the North Sea. Zeri is looking to involve the food industry, energy sector and the chemical and pharmaceutical industries in the project. Businesses could, for example, cultivate mussels, algae, oysters, seaweed and scallops on the islands. Next year, the partners plan to present funding proposals to the government of Flanders.

Belgium to get its own space agency

The federal council of ministers has approved a new Interfederal Space Agency of Belgium, which will unite all federal funding and staff related to space activities. All three regions will be involved in the federal agency, which the government hopes will make decision-making processes more flexible and improve co-operation. The new agency, to become operational next year, should also prevent the Belgian space industry from losing important contracts with the European Space Agency, now that the EU has more space authority. The local space sector consists of about 60 companies employing some 2,000 people, with a total annual turnover of €350 million.

Venture fund raises €76 million

The Ghent-based venture fund V-Bio Ventures has received €76 million in capital commitments for life sciences companies, making it one of Europe's most successful new investment funds for the life sciences. The fund, which launched just last year, identifies, builds and finances promising start-ups in the sector, focusing on investments throughout Europe in pharmaceuticals, diagnostics and agriculture. It collaborates closely with the Flemish life sciences research centre VIB and has to date invested in three promising companies: the VIB spinoffs Orionis Biosciences and Confo Therapeutics and the UK-based Oxular Limited.

\ Andy Furniere

For GPs, asking colleagues for help is a deeply ingrained taboo

province, and now the Flemish government has decided to roll out the project over the whole region, starting in early 2017. Doctors-4doctors aims to have one or two co-doctors for each practitioners' circle, a group consisting of anything from 20 to 300 GPs.

According to Van Linden, rolling out the project is not the final step in the process. "Right now the project is limited to GPs,"

convinced of the need to take care of each other and to accept help. "The fact almost no GPs have their own physician says a lot. That too needs to change."

Van Linden agrees: "Paradoxically, we will only be successful when the breed of co-doctors becomes extinct. We hope we'll not need to repeat our message too many times. Solidarity between doctors has to increase."

House on stilts stands out on the floodplain

When their house in the urban Antwerp district of Hoboken became too small for them, Kristof Vaes and his wife decided to take their two young children and build a larger home in a more peaceful environment.

They started looking for a plot within driving distance of Antwerp, but their limited budget meant they had to leave the beaten track and consider a more creative option.

Vaes was helped by Flanders' town and country planning administration, which has designated several areas in the region as "sensitive to flooding". Land prices are low in these areas and this is how the couple's eye fell on a plot in Leest, near Mechelen - right in the middle of the floodplain of the river Zenne.

When Vaes was discussing the building plans with his architect and contractor, they told him to build his house on pile foundations. That's not unusual in Flanders, but what was revolutionary is when Vaes - who works in product

development at Antwerp University and so has a good nose for creative solutions - decided to leave the poles protruding out of the ground for 2.5 metres. "You could say we live on a sort of concrete table," he says.

The building of the "table" required a thorough preliminary study, as the design had to take into account the effect of the wind blowing under-

"That resulted in a complex structure with steel connecting profiles for protection," says Vaes. "Afterwards, it became clear that we could use the sheltered area underneath as a carport and as a covered terrace."

Because the ground floor of the house (pictured) is actually on the first floor, it feels a bit like living in an apartment - albeit a large, luxury flat with 125 square metres of living space.

Vaes: "And it's an apartment without neighbouring flats, which is right in the middle of the peace of the Zenne valley."



To allow this magnificent view into the living area and kitchen, they chose large windows instead of walls, and even a suspended (but windy) terrace. Together these elements almost turn the modern pile dwelling into an observation post for the surrounding natural beauty.

'We've lived here now for two years, and every day I'm still stunned by how clearly you can see all the birds flying by," Vaes says. \ Senne Starckx

The Top 20 for 2016

Welcome to the Flanders Today Gift Guide, your essential companion to finding the best gifts of the season for family and friends.

Goki wooden trucks These wooden trucks wouldn't look out of place in your granddad's toy box. Their simple design and bright colours will engage your children's imagination for hours on end. And like the hand-me-down toys of yesteryear, they're made to last a lifetime. (€27-€70)

Buy it at: Volte Face

17, Brussels

Opened two years ago, Volte Face is a nostalgic treasure trove for young and old. Wooden toys take centre stage, but in addition to the ubiquitous cars and trucks, you'll also find timeless items like board games, doll's houses, pogo sticks and balance bikes. Ververstraat

The Alle bag The Alle bag is a sophisticated yet minimalistic tote bag with a unique twist. Though it looks like leather, it is actually 100% vegan. The material is made from virgin fibre that's been cultivated, so you're not contributing to deforestation. (€95)

Buy it at: HOST This new concept store puts a sustainable spin on urban fashion and interior design. It offers a selection of decorative and lifestyle items that focus on turning your home green. Bredestraat 43, Antwerp, host-

► Het stoofvleesboek Stoofvlees is one of the ultimate Flemish dishes. This meat stew may look simple, but there are dozens of variations and traditions when it comes to making the perfect batch. This cookbook has them all, ranging from classic to wildly exotic. (€25)

Buy it at: Dille & **Kamille**

Natural materials combined functional design are the essence of this less is-more chain. In their serene, back-tobasics environment you'll find everything for your home, body, garden and spirit. Across Flanders & Brussels, dillekamille.be



.Ceramic tiles are a 16th-century **Dutch tradition** originating from the region

Miniature story tiles

around Delft. These story tiles, which tell both old and new tales, are handpainted and baked at high temperatures by Dutch craftsmen. (€25)



Buy it at: Mayenne Nelen

A newcomer to the rustic Oudburg street, Mayenne Nelen's shop features self-made jewellery and an attractive collection of leather braces, handbags and wallets. Nelen also offers objects made by other up-and-coming Dutch and Belgian designers. Sluizeken 28, Ghent, mayenne-nelen.com

■ Italian shaving cream Proraso comes in three varieties to suit the well-groomed man: refreshing eucalyptus and menthol, moisturizing sandalwood and shea butter or green tea and oatmeal for sensitive skin. The vintage-look packaging is a bonus. (€6.50)

Buy it at: Café Beauté

Besides offering a range of affordable beauty and skin-care treatments, this hip new salon-cum-eatery also carries exclusive beauty products for men and women. Maastrichterstraat 93, Hasselt, cafebeaute.be



Dandoy biscuits If you are not much of a baker yourself, here's a great alternative: the iconic Christmas cookies

by Maison Dandoy. All sweet treats are handmade in the family's Brussels atelier, and they come in gorgeously designed gift boxes. (€4.50-€75)

Buy it at: Maison Dandoy

With locations all over the capital, it won't be hard to find an outlet of this Brussels institution, founded in 1829. They are a pleasure to visit, mixing Grandma's



cosiness with a luxurious feel and a mouth-watering scent. Pro tip: You can even assemble and order a box online. Across Brussels, maisondandoy.com

Boxer shorts

A quick survey of the men in our office suggests that the boxer-brief hybrid has never been more popular. The McAlson family of East Flanders are specialists in their construction, and they have dozens of super-cute designs. (€35)

Buy it at: Knapp-Targa This family-owned

shop has been selling men's and women's clothing and accessories for 40 years in a cobblestoned street lined with shops. Loads of choices of sweaters and shirts on the preppy side, with labels like Ralph Lauren, Scotch&Soda and Burlington. Zuidzandstraat 20, Bruges



Ruby Brown slippers Comfort is the new sexy. That's the motto of Ruby Brown, the stylish slippers in neutral colours perfect for lovers of comfy chic homeware, female or male. Warm knits, contrasting textures and earthy tones are what make these handmade

slippers

(€30-€40)

such a treat.

Buy it at: Sissy Boy

Food, drink, fashion and personal grooming are the cornerstones of Sissy Boy, a shop where you can browse, relax and indulge. Dozens of gift ideas for men, women and kids are waiting to be discovered. Nationalestraat 36, Antwerp, sissy-boy.com

Crossing Europe Crossing Europe is a fascinating book by Dutch photographer Poike Stomps, who has a penchant for exploring human behaviour. Here, he aims his lens at people crossing streets, absorbed in their own worlds. Images that tell countless little stories, if you look closely. (€45)

Buy it at: Tipi

This lovely little bookshop is run by the Italian Andrea Copetti, a living encyclopaedia photography. Tipi is a paradise for admirers of the genre, especially if you're looking for hard-tofind books by independent publishers. Munthofstraat 186, Sint-Gillis (Brussels), tipibookshop.be



Arjan Ros, a second-generation clockmaker, combines functionality and design with his range of colourful handmade clocks. Made of birch wood and hand painted in the Netherlands, they are the perfect nostalgic touch for any urban home. (€199)

Buy it at: Rewind

In addition to being durable, the products sold at this Antwerp store respect the environment and the people who make them. Rewind specialises in fashion, lifestyle, design and furniture, and has a second store, Play, aimed at kids. Riemstraat 27, Antwerp, rewinddesign.be



Vintage sunglasses
Playful cattiness can be nice. These legendary sunglasses flare out near the temples and are seductive as hell. Extremely popular in the 1950s and '60s, but with a loyal following ever since, they're ideal for women with square or diamond-shaped faces. (€20)

Buy it at: Sweet P

From the knotted navy shirt to the black corsets and cherry brooches, you know immediately what this place is all about. Pin-up and retro fashion and accessories for Betty Page fans. *Vrijdagmarkt 11, Ghent, sweet-p.myshopify.com*

Handmade handbag
Have you
been saving
up to give something truly
special to your significant
other? Well, here's your
chance. These handbags are
handmade and consist of
unconventional materials like
rubber, cow hide and ostrich
leather. A unique choice. (€400)

Buy it at: Paarl Boutique

In the words of the designer Pearl-Lisa De Buck, these are "handbags with a soul". If you don't find De Buck when you enter the shop, try the backroom. Chances are she's either stitching or cutting leather in her workshop. Nieuwland 1, Ghent, paarl.be

There's nothing better than escaping cold, grey winter days than indulging in a spa. Filled with a luxurious selection from REN's multi-award winning, all-natural Moroccan Rose Otto range, this stylish gift box is great for stress-free home-pampering. (€69)

Buy it at: La Feuille

As the first and only shop in Belgium dedicated solely to green cosmetics, La Feuille is a true pioneer. Nestled into a small street just off Brugmannplein, it offers a modern selection of beauty products for him and her with a focus on natural and organic. Berkendaelstraat 199, Elsene (Brussels)

Haba doll Haba has been making eco-friendly toys for little explorers for more than 75 years. Its cloth dolls are a classic and come in a wide variety of quirky characters that will definitely charm their way into your little one's heart. (€42.50)

Buy it at: In den olifant

This shop specialises in classic and quality toys and books, offering a wide range of wooden toys, beautiful stuffed animals, exotic tales and picture-perfect dolls

that tantalise the imagination. *Leopoldstraat* 23, *Antwerp*, *indenolifant.be*

Toyoy wooden blocks

For kids with style: a set of beautiful wooden blocks that can be played with or admired. Stack them to build a tower or string the bricks together, and it will become a mobile. The blocks come in a natural wooden box. (€40)

Buy it at: Ydee

Ask for help as soon as you see a shop assistant, or you will get lost in the more than 300 square metres filled with fun gadgets. Ydee specialises in innovative and sustainable, but affordable, designs. *Oudburg 56, Ghent, ydee.be*

A deluxe, illustrated edition with a whimsically old-fashioned look and feel, courtesy of the graphic design duo behind the Harry Potter films. What's more, there are cleverly designed interactive elements inside the pages. Also available: Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book.* (€30)

Buy it at: Grim

This expertly curated independent bookstore just opened its doors last summer. It stocks Dutch- and English-language books for adults and children, as well as gifts and stationery. *Maastrichterstraat 83, Hasselt, boekhandelgrim.be*

Colonel gin
Inspired by the legend
of a First World War
colonel, three Kortrijk brothers
have created their own blend of
botanicals – dark cacao aromas mix
with hints of lavender, rosemary
and thyme. Serve it ice-cold with
a twist of fresh basil. (€42)

Buy it at: Belgomarkt

This supermarket dedicated to all things local opened in Brussels last spring, the brainchild of three young entrepreneurs. The option to buy store-cupboard staples in bulk tackles the issue of excess

packaging, and much of the produce is organic. *Dublinstraat 19, Elsene (Brussels), belgomarkt.be*

The Pastis neck warmer
The Pastis neck warmer is made in Italy
from a soft, fluffy wool-blend yarn, so it's
just the thing to keep your special someone feeling
cosy this winter. Available in two neutrals (off-white
and mastic), it adds a stylish touch to any outfit. (€89)

Buy it at: Scapa

Antwerp-based clothing and lifestyle brand Scapa is known for its classic, high-end sportswear for men, women and kids, as well as its home accessories line. *Across Flanders & Brussels, scapa.be*

Brussels XL colouring poster
With this giant colouring poster
from Happy Mappy, developed
by two fans of Brussels, your kids will finally
be able to paint the walls without damaging
the interior. The oversized map of Brussels
lets the little ones colour in the blanks while
discovering the city's major landmarks. (€25)

Buy it at: LuLu Home Interior

Over its five years, LuLu has become a local favourite with its winning combination of Scandinavian design, a lovely cafe (that makes the most yummy Oreo lattes) and 830 square metres dedicated to all things interior. Edelknaapstraat 101, Elsene (Brussels), lulu-store.eu

Adopt a rat Give a gift that saves lives by adopting a landmine detection rat for your favourite activist. Choose from specially trained rats such as Nisay, a three-yearold based in Cambodia, the second most mine-affected country in the world. (€66/yr)



Buy it at: Apopo

Based in Antwerp, this organisation trains giant pouched rats to sniff out deadly weapons hidden in the fields of Africa and south-east Asia. They also sell certificates to fund "love bombs" and TB screenings. apopo.org

This gift guide has been brought to you by Daan Bauwens, Rebecca Benoot, Lisa Bradshaw, Bartosz Brzezinski, Diana Goodwin, Sarah Schug and Sally Tipper

WEEK IN EDUCATION

Schools 'underestimate' emotional abuse

Emotional abuse of children is seriously underrated compared to physical and sexual abuse, according to a study by the Vertrouwenscentrum Kindermishandeling Brussel (Child Abuse Trust Centre Brussels) and the Free University of Brussels. The agency studied the perception of serious forms of child abuse in 16 Dutch-speaking pre-schools and primary schools across Brussels, and found that staff were able to detect and deal with sexual abuse the quickest, and physical abuse was also detected much faster than emotional abuse. One out of 10 respondents, however, couldn't recognise child abuse. The researchers emphasised that school staff need to be more aware of the seriousness of emotional abuse of children.

Flemish pupils excel in maths

Some 5,400 Flemish students took part in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, a series of maths and science tests carried out in 49 countries across the world every four years among students in the fourth year of primary education. Flemish pupils tied for 10th place with England for mathematics skills, with the list being topped by Asian countries Singapore, Hong Kong and Korea. Flemish youngsters scored less well in sciences, which included biology, natural sciences and geography, taking the 31st spot. Almost all the students who participated achieved the basic expected level of knowledge for both maths and sciences.

Schools to ban sugary snacks

Flemish education networks and the food sector have agreed to a ban on sugary drinks and snacks from primary and secondary schools. Some 65% of secondary schools still have soft drink vending machines, and primary schools have already banned soft drinks and sweets, but students still get some sugar-rich drinks like chocolate milk. The agreement between the education sector and Fevia, the umbrella organisation of the Belgian food industry, is the result of months of negotiations started at the request of education minister Hilde Crevits. Vending machine suppliers will now provide healthier alternatives such as regular milk, water, fruit, vegetables and rice cakes. Individual schools, however, can still decide for themselves whether to implement the ban.

\ Andy Furniere

Equity in education

Experts weigh the pros and cons of secondary school reform



ack in May, the government of Flanders agreed to a reform that will see an overhaul of the region's fourtrack secondary school system by September 2018. Rather than sending pupils to one of the four tracks - academic, technical, vocational or arts - as soon as they begin secondary school, the plan is to allow them a broader start and narrow their study direction at a later stage.

But negotiations between the government and stakeholders over the details of the plan have reached a sticking point. According to the education networks Go! Vlaanderen and VSKO, crucial elements, such as how many study domains there should be in the earlier years, are as yet undecided.

"There is still no clarity over the details of the study in the second



Commission says that Belgian schools in general face major equity issues. "Pupils' performance is strongly linked to their socioeconomic background, particularly for those of migrant origin," reads the report, published last month. "This is all the more serious because the disadvantaged to make an informed choice of schools and study" it says

The non-committal nature of the reforms – schools can decide for themselves whether to implement them - raises a warning flag for Go! Vlaanderen. "What we find problematic is that schools may opt out of this reform, and you end up with two different education systems," says Verdyck.

Education specialists also worry that the reforms will not counter the so-called waterfall effect, whereby students who struggle in the academic track switch to what is perceived to be a "lower" track at technical or vocational school. A transition in the other direction, say the specialists, is nearly impos-

"Too many young people make the wrong study choice," says Verdyck. Not only are they asked to make the choice too early, she continues, they often opt for academic education simply because it is seen as the most prestigious of the four

There is also a tendency for children from disadvantaged socioeconomic groups to follow in the family footsteps and choose the lower tracks.

According to professor Piet Van

Diversity and Learning at Ghent University, the current reforms do not go far enough and, as the Commission fears, could make it harder for students.

"There is a danger that in the new system, tracking will actually happen even earlier," he says. "In the fifth year, the teacher would be able to group stronger students together. It sounds like a positive, but what you are structurally doing is tracking. The question is, who will be in the weaker groups?" The current set of reforms, Van Avermaet adds, may not have a great impact on how schools deal with diversity, and they will still give children from middle-class backgrounds a higher success rate than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. "Most academics agree that the tracking scheme is the most devastating system for the weaker students." Nevertheless, most experts agree that some reform is better than none, and if it can be implemented successfully with a broad takeup by schools across Flanders, it could go some way to addressing concerns about the inequities

"A new structure cannot solve everything, but it can facilitate several things," says VSKO director Lieven Boeve. The structure, he says, should allow each child to eventually choose a study direction that matches their talents and interests and helps them fulfil their potential.

created by the present system.

According to VSKO and Go! Vlaanderen, an agreement must be reached by the end of the year if schools are to be in a position to implement the reforms. In response to their concerns about the negotiations, education minister Hilde Crevits says the talks are still on schedule.

Tracking is the most devastating system for the weaker students

and third years," says Go! Vlaanderen director Raymonda Verdyck. "The minister has proposed eight domains, education providers five. If we want to start with the first stage in 2018, we must make our schools ready for it."

Flemish education is lauded by international organisations for its excellent results - the OECD put it among its members' top three earlier this year. The praise is frequently tempered, however, with remarks concerning how the system unwittingly caters to the best students, leaving the struggling ones behind.

In its latest survey of education across the EU, the European

groups within the school population are those forecast to increase the most."

Of particular concern is the number of migrants who leave education as soon as it is no longer compulsory. In Belgium as a whole, over 10% of young adults aged between 18 and 24 abandon education or training. Of these, 9% were born in Flanders and 18% abroad.

The Commission's report warns that the on-going reforms could exacerbate the problem. "The possible risks include creating a more complex system with even greater difficulties for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

Avermaet, head of the Centre for

COLEUROPE.EU



Professor Simon Schunz teaches international relations and diplomacy at the College of Europe in Bruges. Starting next year, the school will offer a new master's programme in transatlantic affairs, run in collaboration with the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University in the US.

What will the programme cover and what kind of students are you looking for?

EU-US affairs will be at its heart, but we will also look at a broader understanding of the geographical concepts. And it will be a multidisciplinary programme, looking at the ties between the two in terms of legal studies, economics, political science, diplomatic studies and history.

We're looking for people who would like to go into either public service or the private sector, and who have high potential and lead-

ership aspirations. They should already have a master's degree, plus at least six months of professional experience relevant to transatlantic affairs.

What's the role of the collaboration with Tufts University?

You can begin either at the Fletcher School or the College of Europe, and then transfer in your second year to the other side. If students complete the programme successfully, they will become alumni of both institutions.

At Tufts, students will be looking

at transatlantic affairs from the other side, and at the EU from the outside in. European students will also be strongly encouraged to follow an internship on the other side of the Atlantic, which will give them on-the-ground experi-

A lot is changing in transatlantic affairs. Will you be able to keep up?

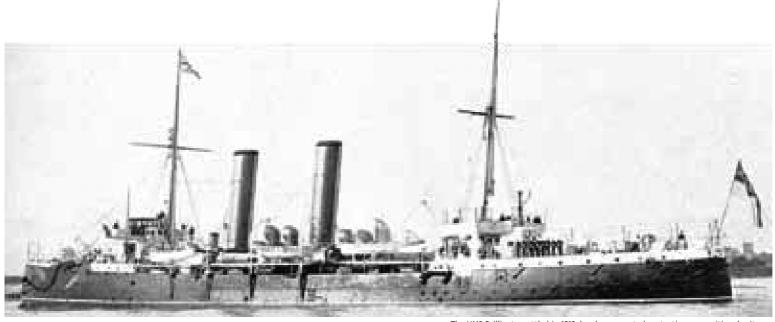
There is full flexibility to incorporate new topics in the courses as well as to create courses from one year to the next, which take up new developments. And if students are interested in particular subjects, such as the rise of populism and nationalism, they can choose one of the study tracks offering courses on these subjects.



Is Donald Trump's victory good or bad for the programme?

We think it could go either way, but Trump's victory might have the positive effect that prospective students will say there is now even more reason to study transatlantic relations and to create links.

\ Interview by Ian Mundell



The HMS Brilliant, scuttled in 1918, has been granted protection as maritime heritage

Under the sea

Wartime shipwrecks rest easy in their North Sea graves



t's 23 April, 1918. In an attempt to block the strategic port of Zeebrugge, the British Royal Navy sets sail for both Zeebrugge and Ostend. On board the HMS Brilliant, commander Alfred Godsal oversees the assault.

Not knowing that the German army had moved a buoy two kilometres from its original location as a decoy, the Brilliant steers at full speed into a sandbank, where it gets stuck. With no time to manoeuvre around it, the next British warship in line, the Sirius, runs into the helpless Brilliant.

German artillery fire finishes the iob. and the Brilliant sinks to the bottom of the North Sea. The attack has been a complete fail-

Today, the Brilliant still rests in its watery grave. And it will remain there, because with four other shipwrecks in the Belgian part of the North Sea, the British warship has been granted protection as maritime heritage.

The other craft are a Dutch sailing ship from 1741, a Dutch cargo ship from 1735, a British cargo ship from 1906 and a U-11, an early German submarine that was sunk in 1914.

It's easy to understand protection for buildings or valuable landmarks on land. But how does this status apply to things that are deep below the surface of the seas?

"Granting protection as heritage is customised," explains Lotte Van der Stockt, spokesperson for Philippe De Backer, the secretary of state responsible for North Sea affairs. "As soon as a wreck is granted the status of important heritage, we start to map out individual protection measures."

The eight shipwrecks on the list

today are marked on sea maps, and sailors are notified about where they are. In the case of certain construction works at sea, the wrecks have to be taken into account. Dragging, anchoring and certain fishing techniques are prohibited around the wrecks, though diving is still allowed, with specific permission. The recognition of the five wrecks brings the list of protected sunken ships up to eight. The procedure is made possible by a law from 2013, which regulates the protection of cultural heritage under water. The governor of West Flanders is informed of all discoveries of shipwrecks and decides whether to start a procedure of recognition as heritage.

The aim is not to retrieve important or valuable wrecks from their graves. This would often be a hard job, and it disturbs the

underwater ecology. Shipwrecks are important habitats for sea life, with both plants and animal favouring the hideouts they offer. So most of the sunken wrecks have a high ecological value, and it is better to leave them where they are.

More than 280 shipwrecks rest under the grey waters of the North Sea off the Flemish coast, bearing witness to the sea's troubled past. Most of them sank during the Second World War. Are we going to see more of them recognised as maritime heritage?

"The historical, cultural and ecological value of these wrecks differs greatly," explains Van der Stockt. "We look at individual cases. Recognition as maritime heritage will only be granted to wrecks that have a remarkable value, so we don't dilute the status of being protected."

WEEK IN ACTIVITIES

Ghent Winter Festival

For a month, the historic centre of Ghent is transformed into a winter wonderland. Explore the kids' village in the Church of Saint Nicholas, go ice-skating under the outdoor market hall, browse the Christmas market on the square in front of the cathedral, and enjoy special entertainment every weekend. 9 December to 8 January, across Ghent

\ gentsewinterfeesten.be

Terhills Trail Run

It's the first time this run is being held at Connecterra, the newest gateway to the Hoge Kempen National Park. Each running trail takes you through beautiful natural scenery over hills and around lakes. The 20km and 10km runs are already full, but you can still register for the 30km and for the 5km kids' run. 10 December 8.30-16.00, Zetellaan 54, Maas*mechelen;* €5-€22.50

\ registration.mylaps. com/terhills-trail

Lekker Genieten

A culinary festival spread out over four historic locations in the centre of Ghent, with live cooking demos, wine tasting, entertainment and more. Pay one admission fee at any of the four sites and get access to all of them: the old butcher's hall, the Marriott Hotel, NH Ghent Belfort and Novotel Ghent Center. 10-11 December 11.00-17.00, across Ghent; €5

\ lekkergenieten.com

Midwinter Festival

This annual holiday fair in Bruges is a cosy and intimate alternative to the big Christmas markets. It's just one street in a charming neighbourhood, featuring local handicrafts, hot mulled wine and other treats. Meanwhile, the nearby Adornes Museum, Lace Centre and Folklore Museum offer free admission and workshops. 11 December 11.00-18.00, Balstraat, Bruges; free

\ visitbruges.be

The Storming of Alden Biesen

The old entrance to the castle was the Apostle's Gate, at the top of a hill overlooking the surrounding land. Six roads come together there, with six climbs to challenge the toughest runners. Choose from one climb (1.7km), two (6km), four (10km) or all six (10 miles). 11 December 12.00-16.00, Kasteelstraat, *Bilzen*; €2-€15

\ debestormingvanaldenbiesen.be

BITE

\ FACEBOOK.COM/CAFFEVERGNANOBELGIUM

New coffee house is authentic Italian pit-stop in EU quarter

There's a new filling station for the caffeine-fuelled professionals of Brussels' European quarter. Belgium's first - and thus far only - Caffè Vergnano 1882 has recently opened, and the location couldn't be any handier for the city's Eurocrats.

The vintage-themed establishment, with furniture and fixtures right out of an old-country grocer, is right on Schumanplein, in the shadow of the European Commission's Berlaymont building and the Council's Justus Lipsius building.

The cafe bears the name of the Turin-based chain of shops but was brought to Brussels by two local franchisees: Belgo-Italian entrepreneur Florence Azzolina and her Italian husband,



Giuseppe. The couple previously operated a luggage service at Brussels Airport before becoming smitten with Caffè Vergnano 1882 and deciding on a change of

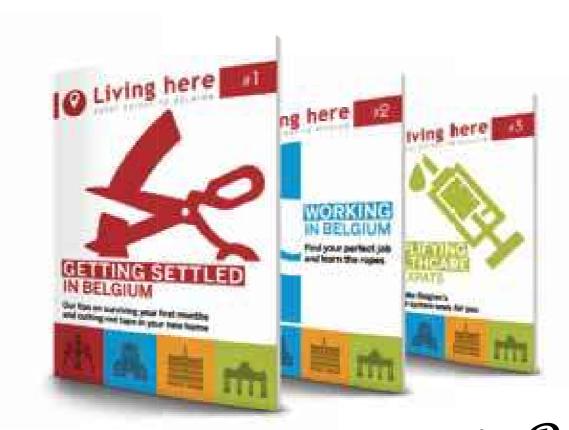
'We discovered the concept in the course of our travels, first in Italy then in New York and London," Azzolina explains. "For us, it was an obvious opportunity. There's such a large Italian community here in Brussels, but there isn't a real Italian-style bar." Azzolina's definition of "Italian-style" isn't just to do with the products or the design – the tempo is essential. In the morning, European functionaries, politicians and journalists shuffle in, belly up to the bar and slam a nice strong espresso on their way to work. (If they have more than a few seconds to spare, they might even sit down and enjoy a cappuccino and croissant.)

When these same profession-

als return for lunch, the Vergnano (pictured) serves gourmet hamburgers, sandwiches and salads. After work, the place is set for the classic Italian aperitivo: cocktails with a range of snacks, including cheese and cured meat. Thereafter, patrons can enjoy a relaxing lounge-like atmosphere into the evening. "It's important for us to showcase not just Italian products

but local specialities as well," Azzolina says. "There's the beer, of course, and we also plan to offer local dishes like stoofvlees as piatto del giorno on a regular basis."

This flagship coffee shop is just the start for Azzolina, who plans to open another Brussels branch in spring. \ Georgio Valentino



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Birds of a feather

Little-known Demeulemeester jewellery collection on display in Ghent



Clodagh Kinsella

More articles by Clodagh \ flanderstoday.eu

white feather, a jet-black claw and cock's cylinder glass with diamonds... For fashion enthusiasts there's no doubting the provenance of the darkly romantic jewels currently on display at the Casa Argentaurum gallery in

Long before she ventured into jewellery design, Ann Demeulemeester rose to fame as part of the oft-anthologised Antwerp Six, a group of graduates from the fashion department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts who stormed London Fashion Week in 1986. Her instantly recognisable aesthetic streamlined, funereal and poetic - swiftly made her a household name, gaining ambassadors like punk priestess Patti Smith. A men's line was added in 1996.

Jewellery first graced her shows 10 years ago, adding a further flourish to the gothic, androgynous fashion. A range of jewels has appeared in her collections ever since.

"She started designing jewellery for herself, but also for the shows," says Caroline Dewolf, the gallery owner and curator of De Juwelen Van Ann Demeulemeester (The Jewels of Ann Demeulemeester). "Many of the pieces on display were never actually up for sale, so for many people this is an opportunity to see them for the very first

Like the fashion, which for decades has revisited staples such as crisply tailored white shirts, asymmetrical skirts and military-style boots, the jewellery draws on a strikingly limited - mostly monochrome - palette. Silver, diamonds and leather also figure repeatedly in the exhibition, which spans necklaces,

woven rings, armbands and bracelets. Heavy silver chains, looped multiple times around the neck, bear small glass vials filled with loose precious stones or diamond pearls, and culminate in a single black or white feather - a house motif. Elsewhere, double velvet ribbons and Victorian fob watch-style pendants add to the sense of decadence. pieces, The which resemble complex formal assemblies, can be draped, wrapped or pinned in numerous ways. Dewolf was originally drawn to the jewels through her friendship with Anne Chappelle-the "fairy god mother"

of Belgian fashion, who has

been the CEO of the Ann

Demeulemeester design

house since 1994. She's

also the label's sole owner,

following Demeulemeester's resig-

nation in 2013. The exhibition, Dewolf adds, brings Casa Argentaurum full circle. The gallery's inaugural show in 1988 showcased jewellery and objects in gold and silver that were designed by architects. The show became the inspiration for the atypical name, a portmanteau of the Latin words for gold and silver. The current show, she says, is "also a bit like the collection of objects and jewellery that Andrea Branzani, the Milanese architect, made

for us. Like Branzani, Demeulemeester uses pure silver and diamonds. In her case, there's also the recurring motif of the feather. Her work is not about making people shine, but about making dream.

Dewolf, an interior architect, launched the gallery with her late husband, Eddy François. As a student she became fascinated with Venetian master Carlo Scarpa, who was known for his meticulously detailed approach to design and for resurrecting Venice's waning artisanal crafts - glass-blowing, metalwork, silver - in tandem

with local craftsmen. "In Venice, one of the craftsmen told us that he had a whole collection of objects and jewellery," Dewolf recalls. "At that time we had just renovated a house in Ghent and opened it up for architectural exhibitions. We decided to showcase the objects and the jewellery, and people would ask if they could buy it. That's how the gallery started."

Billed as an art and design gallery as well as a tearoom, the sleek three-room space has since hosted

Until 8 January

\ BEYONDARGENTAURUM.COM

exhibitions by Ettore Sotsass, the late designer for the Italian brand Olivetti and the founder of the influential Memphis collective; the late Flemish furniture designer Maarten Van Severen; and the Pritzker Prize-winning architect Toyo Ito.

In 2012, the Flemish contemporary artist Honoré d'O was invited to create a permanent room to across the canal.

Lest it be thought that the gallery only collaborates with the titans of the art and design world, Casa Argentaurum has also begun featuring up-and-coming locals. "Our last exhibition was with a newly graduated architect and a photographer," Dewolf says. "Two friends who did something special in the gallery."

In 2013, to mark its 25th anniversary, the gallery collaborated with the city's Design Museum on the exhibition Architects in Silver, which focused on how famous architects, like Scarpa and Zaha Hadid, have translated their big ideas into miniature works in

Generally, however, the gallery remains under the radar. "We're very small," says Dewolf. "When I like something I try to do something with it. We started with architects, but architecture is many things, from houses and interiors to food and clothes. Jewellery is architecture, too - just on a smaller scale."

Casa Argentaurum Brabantdam 68, Ghent

showcase his works in progress. His room overlooks Waalse Krook, Ghent's new multi-media library and cultural complex being built

Sabena exhibition resurrects glamour days of air travel

\ ATOMIUM.BE

Crammed into too-small seats on a budget airline, pestered by constant announcements before the plane deposits you at an airport 50 miles from the city you actually want to visit... It's easy to forget that flying was once the height of stylish travel.

The Atomium's new exhibition aims to recapture those glory days as it pays tribute to Belgium's former flag-carrier Sabena, the world's third oldest airline company, which met an abrupt end in 2001, after 78 years of oper-

Hosted in three of the Atomium's spheres, Sabena: Travel in Style uses scale models, archive photos and old staff uniforms to resurrect the airline, whose employees affectionately referred to themselves as Sabéniens.

Models show the evolution of air



travel, from early biplanes carrying half a dozen passengers to the contemporary giants of Airbus and Boeing. In black-and-white photos, families gaze into the window of a travel agent advertising flights to exotic destinations. Visitors follow in the footsteps of

Until 10 September 2017

those passengers from days gone by. You learn how people were weighed at the same time as their luggage, and how Sabena was a trendsetter with its canvas travel bags handed out to customers as a smart promotional tool.

The company's golden years were in the 1950s and '60s, when flying was an exclusive way of getting from A to B. A cutaway image of the plane on one of the beautifully illustrated safety cards shows a coat room and separate lounges for men and women, and there's a menu printed on silk that was a gift for first-class passengers.

Photos show passengers being served lobster in their seats, or reclining with a drink and a cigarette. In other images, a child

Atomium Atomiumsquare, Brussels peeps out from a hammock strung up above the seats, and a woman wakes fully refreshed in her bunk

Mind you, you'd want to get comfortable: the first flight from Brussels to the DRC took 75 hours, back in February 1925.

The stairwells are lined with retro posters, and though the exhibition claims to be an unsentimental look at Sabena's history, it is clearly done with affection - a number of former hostesses attended the opening in their uniforms and there's an unabashed sense of nostalgia throughout.

Curator Kristin Van Damme: "Don't expect a wide retrospective, but rather a broad and airy exhibition that will equally please the Sabéniens and people who have never heard of Sabena."

\ Sally Tipper

WEEK IN ARTS & CULTURE

STUFF. drummer wins Flemish Culture Prize

This year's Flemish Culture Prize for music has been awarded to Lander Gyselinck, a rising star on the jazz scene at home and abroad. He is a composer and a drummer with the band STUFF., known for their funky blend of hip-hop and electronic jazz. Gyselinck, 29, has developed his own style of experimental and improvisational jazz. "This drummer, composer and jackof-all-trades is a unique, creative and rigorous musician who ... has huge growth potential," the jury said. "This is an honour that I didn't see coming," said Gyselinck. "I must thank all the ambitious artists, musicians and music lovers with whom I have had the pleasure of working and exchanging ideas."

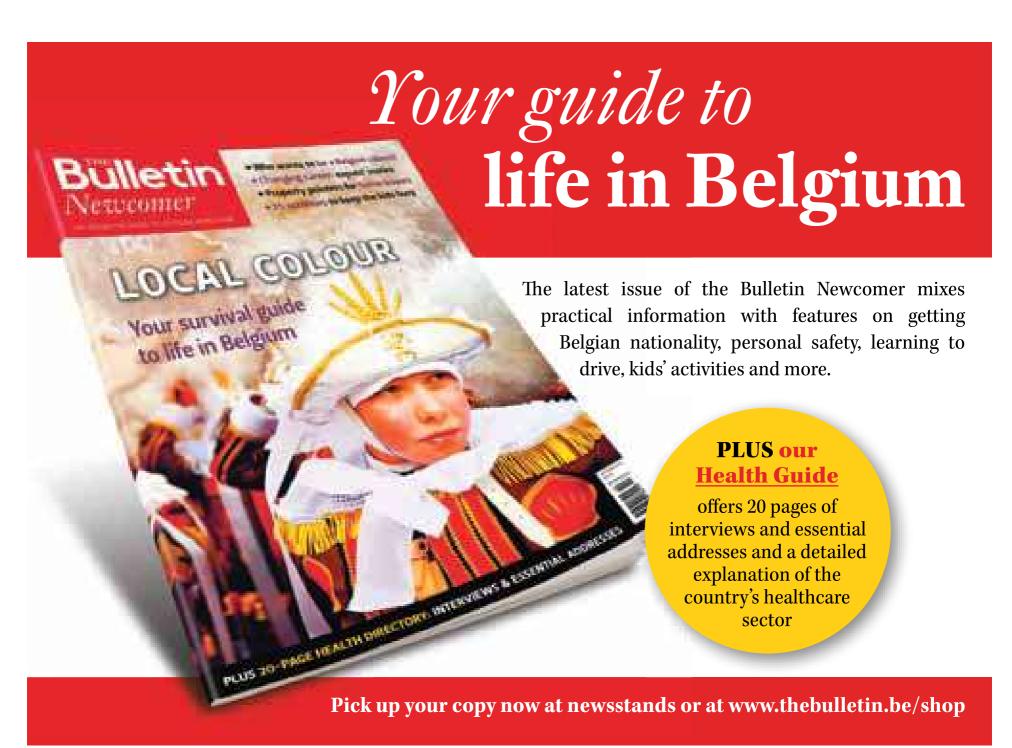
Leuven slam poet wins European championship

Carmien Michels of Leuven has won the European Championship Poetry Slam, which took place in Leuven earlier this month. The 26-year-old was the only woman of 10 finalists. Slam poetry, also called spoken word, relies as much on performance as on the text, which is usually politically charged. Michels, who is Dutch but came to Flanders some years ago to study, also took bronze earlier this year at the Poetry Slam World Cup in Paris. She said that her performance style made a big difference in the competition. "I know how to reach people," she told Metro.

\ carmienmichels.be

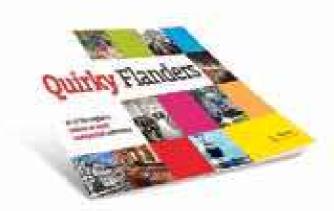
Cherkaoui wins Harvard Leadership Prize

Choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, the artistic director of the Royal Ballet of Flanders, has won the Harvard Club of Belgium's Leadership Prize, the first time the alumni organisation has given the prize to someone from the cultural sector. The prize is given to a Belgian who has created change in the country due to extraordinary leadership qualities. Previous winners of the award include polar explorer Alain Hubert and sister Jeanne Devos, who works among the poor in Mumbai. Cherkaoui, who founded the contemporary dance company Eastman, has collaborated with numerous foreign companies, particularly in Asia. He is credited with getting the Antwerpbased ballet back on track after a tumultuous period. The Harvard Club of Belgium is made up of 900 alumni of the Ivy-League American univer-



What's the weirdest thing you've ever done in Flanders?

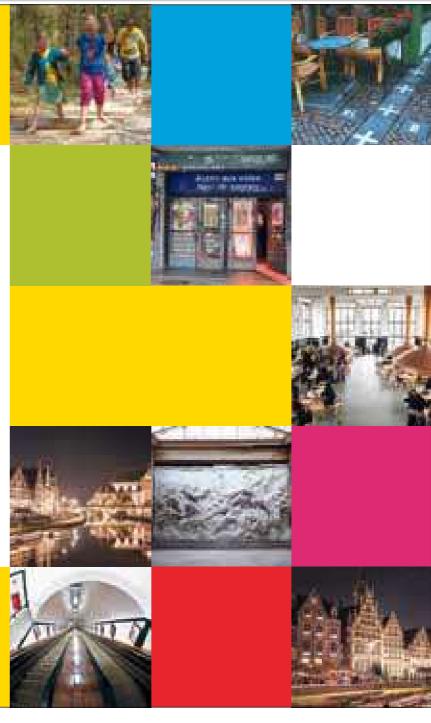
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Classic opera with a modern twist

Die zauberflöte

14 December to 21 January

Opera Antwerp & Ghent
\ OPERABALLET.BE

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart composed the immensely successful opera *Die zauberflöte* (*The Magic Flute*) in 1791 – the year of his death – as an optimistic ode to life, love and beauty.

The coming-of-age fairytale, which the musical prodigy wrote while struggling with fatigue and depression, follows the fast-paced adventures of prince Tamino, who is given the eponymous flute. The handsome royal is accompanied by Papageno, a simple-minded bird-catcher who carries a panpipe. With these instruments and characters in place, audiences through-

out the ages have been guaranteed

the aha-experience of some of the



best-known tunes ever brought to the stage.

On the quest to find his love interest, Pamino, prince Tamino (ah, those homophones) meets a wicked wizard (who proves to be not quite so wicked), a Queen of the Night and priests and women who help him in reaching the ultimate goal: everlasting love.

Four years ago, Opera Vlaanderen staged David Hermann's version of *The Magic Flute* as its New Year's spectacle. The young Franco-German director gave this hugely popular opera a far less naive and more heavy-handed twist, injecting it with rapidly shifting scenery reminiscent of Hollywood adventures à la Indiana Jones.

In this interpretation, Tamino's

magical flute has taken the form of a ... revolver. Papageno, in turn, carries a machine gun, in place of his usual glockenspiel.

Back by popular demand – even if not all audience members were convinced of Hermann's gloomy approach – *The Magic Flute* pipes away later this month in Antwerp, and in Ghent early next year.

Ante Jerkunica (Sarastro) and Josef Wagner (Papageno) reprise their roles from the previous production. Tamino will be performed by tenors Kenneth Tarver and Adam Smith. The cast also includes Belgian soprano Lore Binon as Pamino. (In German, with Dutch surrtitles) \ Bjorn Gabriels

CONCERT

Antwerp

Clouseau danst: The veteran Flemish pop/rock duo put on a special interactive performance in the country's largest venue. Thousands of fans will help determine technical aspects of the show with their own dance moves. 9-10 December 20.30, Sportpaleis, Schijnpoortweg 119

\ sportpaleis.be

STAND-UP

Antwerp

English Comedy Night: Lebowski's English Comedy Night features a politically charged act by British standup Alfie Brown and Daliso Chaponda, who was deported from Canada despite being a successful comedian – and now it's part of the show. 7 December 20.15, Lebowski's, Boomgaardstraat 350

\ lebowskis.be

CONCERT

Dans Dans

Until 16 December

Across Flanders & Brussels \ FACEBOOK.COM/DANS3DANS

Brussels jazz/rock super-group Dans Dans was formed in 2012 by guitarist Bert Dockx of Flying Horseman, bassist Frederic Jacques of Mark Lanegan's backing band and drummer Steven Cassiers. At first the trio established a reputation for improvisational interpretations of other people's songs. They covered everyone from David Bowie to Ornette Coleman to Ennio Morricone. Their fourth and latest album *Sand*, however, is a different animal. Comprised mostly of original compositions, the disc has earned the band positive reviews across northern Europe. This month finds Dans Dans returning home after touring Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

\ Georgio Valentino



Philippe Werkers

VISUAL ARTS

Dragons

Until 28 May

imagination. \ GV

Ghent's city museum invites old and young alike for a romp through the fantastical world of dragons. The legendary crea ture has fascinated humans for thousands of years. This exhibition separates fact from fiction, all the while respecting the cultural legacy of both. In the final analysis, the idea of a flying, fire-breathing critter might not be so farfetched. After all, most of the physical characteristics ascribed to the dragon through the ages do exist in the natural world in one form or another. The exhibition's centrepiece is a complete dragon skeleton, assembled with plenty of Stam, Ghent

STAMGENT.BE



THEATRE

Para

Until 14 December

Nine years ago, Flemish author David Van Reybrouck, actor Bruno Vanden Broecke and director Raven Ruëll struck gold with their stage hit *Mission*. Now the trio reunite for a sequel of sorts. While *Mission* explored the evangelical excuses for Belgian colonialism in the Congo, *Para* delves into the conscience of a soldier involved in

Belgium's intervention in Somalia in 1992. The production promises a nuanced depiction of "international peace operations," which often begin in idealism and end in confusion—or worse. Van Reybrouck spent years researching the historical background and interviewing veterans of the operation.

KVS, Brussels

KVS.BE



GET TICKETS NOW

Sportpaleis, Antwerp

SPORTPALEIS.BE

CONCERT The Weeknd

The Weeknd

3 March

With his first three mix tapes, Toronto singer Abel Tesfaye, better-known as The Weeknd, attracted a huge, cult-like following with tracks that boldly departed from prevailing conventions that R&B songs could speak only of seduction and unrequited love. In his subsequent breakout album, Beauty Behind the Madness, Tesfaye continued to chart a starkly different path, with broody, sinister confessions about emotional unavailability, meaningless sex and self-destructive drug habits. Tesfaye is no boyfriend material: He's a nihilist hedonist with a deep thirst for trouble. And boy does that make for compelling music. \ Linda A Thompson



EXHIBITION

Ghent

Made by Children: The museum dedicated to local industrial history hosts this exhibition on the controversial subject of past and contemporary child labour in Belgium and around the world. *Until 7 January, Miat, Minnemeers 10*

\ miat.gent.be

FESTIVAL

Hasselt & Genk

TradeMarks: Hasselt and Genk's 100-day triennial festival continues with exhibitions and performances that question the sometimes tense relationship between creativity and commercialism in the arts. *Until 8 January, across Genk and Hasselt*

\ stadstriennale.be

FAMILY

Brussels

Tokyo Heroes: Interactive concert by the Liège Royal Philharmonic boasts well-known manga scores and live illustration by Yuki Shirono. (In Dutch and French) *10 December 10.00, Bozar, Ravensteinstraat 23*

\ bozar.be

LITERATURE

Ghent

Reading: Free reading by Ghent city poet David Troch, whose new book *Een geweldige liefde* (A Wonderful Love) is a collection of verse inspired by the East Flemish capital. (In Dutch) *9 December 20.00, Poëziecentrum, Vrijdagmarkt*

\ poeziecentrum.be

Talking Dutch

Extremely loud and incredibly annoying



Derek BlythMore articles by Derek \ flanderstoday.eu

You can't escape the sound of sirens if you live in a big city. But an action group in Brussels would like life to be a little less noisy.

Het collectief Stop Sirènes vraagt een "redelijk" gebruik van sirenes – The collective Stop Sirens is calling for a "reasonable" use of sirens door de politie en andere hulpdiensten – by the police and other emer-

gency services, according to a recent article on the *Bruzz* newssite.

Nu worden sirenes te vaak onnodig opgezet – At present, sirens are too often used when they aren't necessary, Yvan Vandenbergh of the group says. And they are too loud. In de wegcode staat – The highway code states dat sirenes op mini-

maal 110 decibel moeten loeien – that sirens have to produce a minimum of 110 decibels, Vandenbergh explains.

Dat is ontzettend luid – That is extremely loud. In discotheken mag het geluid maximaal op 90 decibel staan – The maximum level permitted in dance clubs is 90 decibels.

Dat de sirenes zo luid moeten staan – The reason sirens have to be so loud, komt door verzekeringsclaims van bestuurders – is because of insurance claims by drivers die waren gebotst met ambulances – who have been hit by ambulances en beweerden dat ze de sirene met de radio aan niet hadden gehoord – and claimed that they couldn't hear the siren over their radios.

De politie heeft Amerikaanse sirenetoestellen – The

police use American sirens *met vijf verschillende deuntjes* – with five tones, *en wisselt die vaak af* – and often change them. *Dan schrik je elke keer weer* – It shocks you every time.

The scream of American sirens might even be chasing people out of the city, the group argues. *Studies*

tonen aan dat inwoners van de stad onder meer door geluids-

overlast beslissen te verhuizen – Studies show that city dwellers decide to move because of noise nuisance, among other things.

While politicians have listened to complaints about aircraft noise, they have not heeded protests about sirens.

But the Brussels minister in charge of the environment and quality of life, Céline Fremault, is finally taking the complaints seriously.

Ze heeft de actiegroep beloofd – She has promised the action group *om buitenlandse oplossingen te bekijken* – to look at solutions adopted in other countries.

In Peking gebruiken ambulances zeer sterke led-lichten – Ambulances in Bejing use very strong LED lights die laag op het voertuig zijn geplaatst – that are placed low on the vehicle. In Amsterdam experimenteren ze dan weer met vibraties – In Amsterdam they are experimenting with vibrations. Die zijn voelbaar voor chauffeurs tot op een afstand van vijftig meter – They can be felt by drivers up to a distance of 50 metres.

So politicians in Brussels do listen to residents' complaints – if they shout them loud enough.

VOICES OF FLANDERS TODAY



In response to Unesco approves Belgian beer culture as world heritage

William Thom: Brilliant, I come to Belgium as often as I can to drink your wonderful beers. My favourite style of beer is proper traditional Lambic.

In response to Flanders' revolutionary poet, now available in English

Geoff Lee: Pleased to hear this. But I can't quite see that, of all things, poetry will easily translate.

In response to Quirky Flanders: Walk under the river in Antwerp Steve N. Romitz: I do remember, so many times I went through it, many years ago during the Second World War. I don't know if I will ever walk through it again, I do miss all those places where I grew up.

In response to King of the jungle: New film puts Belgian monarch in precarious situation

Susanne Ivarsson: A must-see!



I really like Ghent University, my Uni has a contract with them for Latin students, it really looks tempting

Martin Koci @koci_martin

What a beautiful winter day in Leuven... I hope it will be the same next Friday...

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THE LAST WORD

Sound counsel

"Don't go over €200, my friend said."

Manuela Weyn was one of hundreds of people who showed up at the weekend to bid on luxury goods seized by the finance ministry. A Chanel scarf cost her €288 when the hammer came down

Moving on

"Women are just different from men. We're not so desperate as they are to get that star or trophy. A man wants recognition; we just want to do our thing."

When Karen Kaygnaert's A'Qi in Bruges closes in March, Flanders will lose its only Michelin-starred restaurant run by a female chef

Head start

"I grew up with beer all around me; I've wanted to be a brewer since I was little."

At age 15, Jan Panneels of Lennik, Flemish Brabant, is too young to drink beer, but not to make his own. He hopes to put Janimal on the market soon

Chump change

"They pay too little. Much too little."

Mechelen-area baker Marc Van Eeckhaut stocks honour-system vending machines with his fresh pistolets. They're priced at 50c each, but customers pay between 13c and 39c



© Kurt Desplenter/Belga

FALL AT YOUR FEET Lode Aerts, the new bishop of Bruges, is ordained in the city's Sint-Salvator cathedral on Sunday. "I want to be a bridge-builder, within my church and also with other religions," he told VRT. "We must be there for people in need: children, the elderly, lonely people, refugees."

