

**ARTS FLANDERS 08
COMPILATION BOX**

VISUAL ARTS

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VISUAL ARTS

**AGENCY, SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN, ORLA BARRY,
CHARIF BENHELIMA, MANON DE BOER,
KOEN VAN DEN BROEK, WIM CATRYSSE,
DAVID CLAERBOUT, ANNE DAEMS, LIEVEN DE BOECK,
ANOUK DE CLERCQ, STEFAAN DHEEDENE, NICO DOCKX,
CHRISTOPH FINK, VINCENT GEYSKENS, TINA GILLEN,
GEERT GOIRIS, JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS,
JAN KEMPENAERS, IVES MAES, VALÉRIE MANNAERTS,
KRIS MARTIN, SOPHIE NYS, HANS OP DE BEECK,
ELS OPSOMER, GERT ROBIJNS, PETER ROGIERS,
ANA TORFS, MICHAEL VAN DEN ABEELE,
PATRICK VANDEN EYNDE, GERT VERHOEVEN,
ANGELO VERMEULEN, HEIDI VOET**



PREFACE

This **Arts Flanders 08 - Visual Arts** publication offers a representative selection of the emerging visual artists in Flanders.

Ever since the mid 1990s, the contemporary visual arts in Flanders have been going from strength to strength, enjoying a wonderfully flourishing period. A whole host of artists from Flanders has also risen to the top of the international ladder. They have been showcased in exhibitions in major museums and been represented through galleries in trend-setting international art fairs, to great acclaim. These very many major talents include Luc Tuymans, Wim Delvoye, David Claerbout, Jan Fabre, Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, Koen van den Broek, Hans Op de Beeck, Jan De Cock and Michaël Borremans...

This prominence in the visual arts sector is primarily ascribed to the enthusiasm and entrepreneurship of both the artists and the organisations, who are completely at home in an international environment, both in thought and deed. Flanders may not be able to boast any major museums or art galleries, such as the Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern or the Museum Ludwig but as a small transit area between the large European cities it does have a dense network of highly personal small and medium-sized players, such as SMAK, MuHKA, Wiels, Extra City, PSK, Argos and many more organisations. This openness, spirit of co-operation and eagerness to experiment in Flanders is attracting an increasing number of foreign curators and artists keen to come here to work for short or long periods of time.

As the **Flemish Culture Minister** I seek to ensure my policy takes account of these assets by lending support to artists and organisations in all their diversity. On the basis of the Arts Decree, I am providing financial support to artists and the activities of contemporary arts museums, arts centres, workshops, small-scale initiatives and critical reviews. I am also extending my backing to ad hoc experimental exhibition projects, debates, biennial events, international exchanges and residencies.

The **Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art** (BAM, Instituut voor beeldende, audiovisuele en mediakunst) operates in this network as an interface between practice and policy. BAM consolidates and spreads information, offering a platform for practical research and the development of activities in the visual arts. BAM also focuses on promoting the Flemish arts sector at international level. If this publication whets your appetite, why not pay a visit to their website (www.bamart.be), where you will discover an even bigger selection of contemporary visual artists.

You are bound to marvel at these promising young talents. This may be the first time you see their names but I am certain it will not be the last one ...

Bert Anciaux
Flemish Culture Minister

BY MARC RUYTERS & EVA WITTOCX

CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ARTS IN FLANDERS

BY EVA WITTOCX

#1 HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE FLEMISH ART SCENE

Among the modern-art crowd, Belgium is known as the country with that 'surrealist' lineage: James Ensor – René Magritte – Marcel Broodthaers. While this is certainly a fine compliment for three artists of far-reaching significance, a great deal has changed in this country, which has been a crossroads of the Roman and Germanic cultures, a key logistic point between Great Britain, Germany and France, and home to the European Community.

The art scene in Flanders is just as diverse and complex as the region itself. Ever since Belgian independence was declared in 1830, the country has been made up of two language groups, the Dutch-speaking and the French-speaking, situated in its northern and southern areas respectively. During the second half of the twentieth century, Belgium became a federal state in which specific areas of policy were assigned to the two communities. Since the late 1980s, culture has consequently been subject to regional authorities, its autonomous policy being stipulated by the Flemish and the French-speaking communities. This division resulted in different policies on each side of the linguistic border. In Flanders the budget for culture has risen considerably since the 1980s, and in recent years the government has significantly professionalised its support of contemporary visual art. Both languages are represented in the capital Brussels, where cultural initiatives receive support from the Flemish or the French Community; in some cases, the two communities jointly support cultural organisations. In this publication we are limiting our scope to Flanders and Brussels. The French-speaking Community in Belgium has its own sources of information on its policy and on people and organisations active in the contemporary visual arts in French-speaking Brussels and Wallonia (Le Service des Arts plastiques du Ministère de la Communauté française de Belgique/ www.artsplastiques.cfwb.be).



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1.1. HISTORY

At the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s, an avid group of collectors, art enthusiasts and galleries in Belgium (e.g. Vereniging voor het Museum voor Hedendaagse Kunst in Ghent, and the galleries Wide White Space in Antwerp, and MTL in Brussels) actively set up projects and invited artists to participate. Not until the mid 1970s, much later than in other European countries, was the first museum for contemporary art in Flanders (today's S.M.A.K.) founded by Ghent city council. Jan Hoet became its director. The Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (MuHKA) opened during the mid

1980s, founded by the Flemish government, and initiated on the basis of developments at Antwerp's ICC. Flor Bex, from the ICC, became its director. Currently the MuHKA and the S.M.A.K. are Flanders' two most important museums of contemporary art. Almost at the same time, the Province of West Flanders set up the Museum for Modern Art (today's Kunstmuseum aan zee) in Ostend. There the collection focuses largely on modernism in Belgium and bridges the gap between that period and the art of today.

Although during this period the system of funding was by no means as extensive as it is today, the art scene was characterised by creativity and diversity. A great many organisers, artists, critics, collectors and others launched numerous remarkable exhibition projects and initiatives. This gave rise to a rich climate marked by a sense of enterprise and personal involvement. A number of motivated individuals set up their own organisations, consolidated funds and sought affiliation with an international network. In 1986 Jan Hoet produces *Chambres d'amis* in Ghent's private homes and, in 1992, is asked to head the Documenta in Kassel. Jan Debbaut, later to become director of the Van Abbemuseum and of the Tate Collection, organises major exhibitions at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels. Chris Dercon brings attention to younger artists with exhibitions such as *Doch Doch*, held during the 'Klapstuk' festival in Leuven. As quite a few of these figures move on to higher positions within the country and abroad, this enterprising mentality is passed on, resulting in new artists' initiatives, non-profit organisations, one-man organisations and ad-hoc projects during the 1990s. In Brussels, the artists Alec Debusschère, Christoph Draeger and Delphine Bedel start Etablissement d'en face in 1991. Together with the Kanaal Foundation, Cathy De Zegher organises the group exhibition *Inside the Visible* in Kortrijk in 1996. Barbara Vanderlinden founds Roomade in 1996, developing a range of international projects such as *Laboratorium*. In 1997 she becomes curator of *Manifesta 2*. Philippe Pirotte, Win Van den Abeele and Patrick Van Rossem start the initiative Objectif in 1999. Wim Peeters produces several exhibitions at the NICC and founds Extra City in 2004; both in Antwerp. In combination with an increasing number of artists on the international scene, this network constitutes a very interesting breeding ground. The creativity of the 'do-it-yourself' attitude continues to be part of the local art scene's identity to this day. Even now there are several small, special initiatives spread throughout Flanders and Brussels, all of them arising from the enthusiasm and ideas of one person or more.



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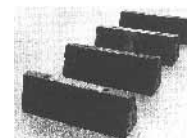
1.2. THE ART SCENE AS A COMBINED ACTION OF PARTICIPANTS

VISUAL ART ORGANISATIONS

At the end of the 1990s, the Flemish government decides to give a number of organisations recognition and structural support in the form of a 'centre for visual art'. Six highly diverse organisations scattered throughout Flanders receive, for the first time, financing for an annual programme: Kunsthallo Lophem, near Bruges; the multidisciplinary centre Netwerk, in Aalst; the archive databank on contemporary visual art Kunstonline in Ghent; the artists' collective NICC in Antwerp; Argos, which focuses on video and visual art; and Roomade, in Brussels, which sets up international projects. The diversity of these organisations and the government's visual-art policy, still in the making, has advantages and disadvantages. In Flanders, there is no structured network of places for art, such as the FRACs in France or the Kunstvereins in Germany. What *can* be found is single-mindedness, but also freedom in organising places for the display of contemporary art in all shapes and sizes.

Today, in 2008, roughly twenty organisations for visual art are structurally supported by the Flemish government. Newcomers are often smaller non-profit organisations and existing initiatives receiving limited support. These include Objectif Exhibitions in Antwerp, Etablissement d'en face, CCNOA, OKNO (the latter three based in Brussels); Voorkamer in Lier, the artists' space Croxhapox in Ghent, the exhibition programmes of Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle, Z33 in Hasselt and the cultural centre of Strombeek; and the exhibition spaces connected with educational programmes at Sint-Lucas and KASK in Ghent (Witte Zaal and KIOSK respectively) and Sint-Lukas in Brussels (Sint-Lukasgalerie). Existing along with these, and financed by other local governments, are a number of interesting places, such as Antwerp's Middelheimmuseum, BE-PART in Waregem or De Garage, affiliated with the cultural centre of Mechelen.

In addition to these smaller players, a few organisations are able to continue developing towards a larger scale: Argos, in Brussels, which recently opened a new space and expanded its exhibition programme; and Netwerk, in Aalst, which shows a wide range of young Belgian and foreign artists.



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An investment is also being made in two larger spaces for art. Wiels, in Brussels, and Extra City in Antwerp, both recently renovated are developing more ambitious and international programmes.

Aside from the centres for visual art as presentation platforms, the government has also been investing, since 2004, in a number of workplaces focusing on research, reflection and the support and guidance of artists. Organisations such as the artists' collective NICC, the international artists' residence project AIR Antwerpen, the development-and-presentation space Lokaal 01 (all three in Antwerp), workplace FLACC in Genk, the social/artistic workplace Firefly, the new media centres Constant and FoAM (all three in Brussels) support both Belgian and foreign artists in contexts where the process, the exploration or creation predominates over the ultimate presentation.

Flanders has about five specialised publications for visual art: *Openbaar Kunstbezit Vlaanderen* (OKV) which also covers older and modern visual art (ten issues annually); *De Witte Raaf*, which publishes more in-depth articles touching on cultural philosophy and sociology (six issues annually); *A Prior*, a magazine which dedicates each issue to a limited number of artists or initiatives (two issues annually); *Gagarin*, which allows the artists themselves to speak (two issues annually); and *<H>ART*, a magazine for contemporary art, which keeps a close watch on current developments in visual art (fifteen issues annually).

In 2001, the government set up a support centre for visual art: IBK, which recently merged with IAK into BAM, the Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art. This centre offers professional information to the sector, informs the outside world (nationally and internationally) about that sector, stimulates local and international networking and works together with the sector and its policymakers on further professionalisation. The artists' representative NICC and the professional consultative platform VOBK keep a critical eye on policies.

VISUAL ART IN OTHER DISCIPLINES AND FORMS OF PRESENTATION

Centres offering other disciplines such as film, new media, theatre, dance or music frequently provide the field of visual art with impulses and an interesting context. In Brussels one can hardly avoid the federal institution Centre for Fine Arts which functions like a big machine for concerts,

exhibitions, performing arts and film in countless rooms. Other centres of art have exhibition programmes of autonomous visual art but seek, through special formats, connections with other disciplines as well.

At deSingel, in Antwerp, the exhibitions organised by Moritz Küng reflect a particular concern for architecture. The arts centre STUK, in Leuven, has an exhibition space and offers a programme involving solo exhibitions of young Belgian and foreign artists. In addition to this, STUK programmes the media festival *Artefact* and the festival *Playground*, which focus on the common ground between visual art, performance art and the performing arts. The cultural centre of Bruges offers regular exhibitions. Arts centres such as Vooruit in Ghent, the Beurschouwburg and KVS in Brussels, de Warande in Turnhout, Buda in Kortrijk or the Concertgebouw in Bruges offer programmes by or involving artists on a regular basis. These are usually based on particular themes, routes, integrations or collaborations among different disciplines, often within the context of certain festivals, separate from any ongoing exhibition programme.

Flanders also has quite a number of festivals, biennials and triennials. They play an important role in the distribution and broadening of visual art, providing impulses to the local art scene and seeking connections with current international developments. For *Beaufort*, the triennial art route along the coastline, internationally recognised artists integrate work into public space. The point of departure for Hasselt's *Triennale* is to combine visual art, fashion and design. The *Poëziezomers* have been taking place in Watou, in West Flanders, for the past twenty years. There art and poetry were combined, sometimes under the direction of an internationally known guest curator. The biennial *Contour* focuses on art and the moving image – video, film and installations – situated along a route of historical locations in the centre of Mechelen. The prize for 'Young Belgian Painting', awarded in Brussels every two years, involves an exhibition for young artists who live and work in Belgium and are emerging locally and internationally. This event has been in existence for more than fifty years, but now the prizes are being awarded by an international jury and the focus goes well beyond painting. At the end of 2008, the first edition of the ambitious *Brussels Biennial* was held. Aside from having an artistic and international character, this biennial was a meeting point for various organisations and collaborations in and around Brussels.



COLLECTORS AND GALLERIES

The art scene in Flanders involves the combined activities of artists, subsidised museums and organisations, but also private collectors and commercial galleries. Just like the French-speaking half of the country, Flanders has an exceptionally large number of collectors who play an important role in supporting young artists. Along with many who collect on a smaller and moderately large scale, there are some whose private collections have museum status, such as those of Anton and Annick Herbert and Herman Daled. While a few of them, such as Lieven Declercq and Roger Matthys, occasionally show their works in exhibitions, others have recently opened spaces of their own for alternating displays of work. Among those are Walter Vanhaerents in Brussels, and Mark Vanmoerkerke in Ostend. These private initiatives, involving numerous major groups of work by internationally renowned artists, complement the collections, research and exhibitions of the museums. Some, such as Espeel's non-profit Arteconomy, also support artists in their production and research. In addition to the private collectors, a great many banks and other holding companies, such as Dexia, ING, Belgacom and Cera, own impressive international collections of art.

Our country also has a number of outstanding galleries; an extensive town-by-town description of those in Flanders and Brussels can be found in the next chapter. Quite a number of galleries are present at major art fairs, such as Art Basel and LISTE, ARCO, the Frieze Art Fair, FIAC, Artforum, The Armory Show or at the many off-site fairs. Over the past several years, the international art fair *artbrussels* has grown considerably in terms of quality and is now among the major ones on the international calendar. Every year *artbrussels* moreover offers a varied supplementary program of lectures, debates and visits to public and private collections.

ARTISTS

Flanders has many highly rated art schools situated in Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. Guidance in the studios is given by known and internationally active artists. Only a fraction of the countless artists who graduate from these art schools continue on to a postgraduate program with an international character, such as the HISK (Higher Institute for Fine Arts) in Ghent, or to 'studio' programs at, for instance, the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht or the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Aside from about

250 artists who are professionally active but chiefly exhibiting in Belgium, there are many whose work is frequently shown abroad or represented by galleries abroad. Some of them, including Luc Tuymans, Wim Delvoye, David Claerbout, Jan Fabre, Annie-Mie Van Kerckhoven, Koen van den Broek, Hans Op de Beeck, Jan De Cock and Michaël Borremans, are major figures in the art world. For such a small region, Flanders is prominently represented on the international scene with so many formidable artists. And a whole crop of young emerging artists might just arrive there as well.

Every year the Flemish government awards about a hundred grants to artists living in Flanders or Brussels; these range from smaller or development-oriented ones to others aimed at 'long-range' growth. There is also the possibility of obtaining project-based support for specific productions, exhibitions, research or presentations abroad. The Flemish community furthermore awards grants annually to young artists for a residence at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Platform Garanti in Istanbul and ISCP in New York. Many foreign artists have been based in Brussels and Flanders for years. This region's central location makes it very attractive to younger as well as better-known foreign artists. They are an important part of the local community of artists.

1.3. INTERNATIONAL SITUATION

The various urban centres of this region, namely Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent are located within a 100-kilometer radius of each other, comparable to that of different boroughs in London or New York. For that reason, one can scarcely talk about individual art scenes in Antwerp, Brussels or Ghent – more about a Belgian, French-speaking or Flemish art world. The concentration of exhibition spaces, initiatives and artists in Flanders is exceptionally high in comparison to other European regions. Brussels, the capital of Belgium (and of Europe, for that matter) lies at the centre of this triangle and is the only city that can be called a metropolis. Nonetheless, Brussels and Flanders can hardly compete with other major 'art' cities such as London, Paris or the German cities along the Ruhr.

A PERIPHERAL REGION AT THE CENTRE

The region's central location in Europe makes it possible to travel from Brussels to London, Paris, Amsterdam, Cologne or Düsseldorf in a mere two hours. Unlike these other major cities, Flanders has no large machine-



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like museums, no vast spaces for temporary exhibitions or broadly historic collections of art, such as those of the Centre Pompidou, K20-K21, Museum Ludwig or the Tate Modern. What Flanders has to offer by being situated near these major cities is a diverse network of smaller and more significant players – each having a unique profile and programme – in combination with many artists with international potential. Its central location automatically prompts players in Flanders to look beyond the country's borders. They keep a close watch on international projects and tendencies, prospect in neighbouring countries and build a network of foreign contacts. During the 1990s quite a few Belgian curators were being hired for interesting positions abroad: Chris Dercon (Witte de With and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Haus der Kunst in Munich), Dirk Snauwaert (Kunstverein München and Institut d'Art Contemporain Villeurbanne), Cathy De Zegher (The Drawing Centre, New York), Hilde Teerlinck (FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais). A younger generation, including Philippe Pirotte (Kunsthalle, Bern) and Ann Demeester (De Appel, Amsterdam), were given the opportunity to head fairly large organisations abroad. Eva González-Sancho, active as a curator in Brussels for many years, currently runs the FRAC Bourgogne in Dijon. This tendency has recently been seen in reverse as well: Anselm Franke (Extra City, Antwerp), Mai Abu ElDahab (Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp) and Katerina Gregos (Argos, Brussels and Contour, Mechelen) moved to Belgium for directors' positions aimed at greater affiliation with the international art scene.

INTERNATIONAL SCOPE

The international networking of organisations in Flanders varies considerably. Almost all of them present a programme involving both local and foreign artists. The museums maintain good contacts with other museums of their kind abroad and sometimes collaborate with foreign partners on the organisation of travelling exhibitions. Most exhibiting institutions uphold contacts and exchange information with similar ones in other countries.

It is unusual, though, that the Flemish who go abroad do keep in touch with the scene here and thereby encourage internationalisation. The potential for international growth by way of collaboration and passing on contacts often remains undeveloped, however. But as a younger generation of curators from within the country and abroad begins to take the lead heading museums and other important organisations – that now seems to be improving.

BY MARC RUYTERS

#2 GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF ORGANISATIONS AND INITIATIVES

Any foreign visitor who comes here looking for contemporary art will find a first-rate, rich, original and broad range of options. But all of them are on a relatively small scale: no mammoth museums, gigantic exposition halls, no galleries with staffs of twenty, no billionaire collectors, but a great number of artists who are internationally very well known and, at the same time, much older *and* younger artists working internationally and producing art that is highly esteemed by curators, critics, collectors and others in the field.

This informative segment of the text is primarily intended as an efficient guide to the Flanders and Brussels regions for the foreign visitor. Interesting locations where art can be seen are placed in their geographical contexts: Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent.

BRUSSELS

Brussels has various 'establishments' for contemporary art. Internationally, the best known is the Museum of Modern Art which is part of Belgium's Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, one of the bilingual federal cultural institutions. This museum collects top works by modern and contemporary Belgian artists who have acquired an international reputation: from Marcel Broodthaers and Pierre Alechinsky to Panamarenko. The nearby Centre for Fine Arts (CFA) is headed by director Paul Dujardin and is also a federal institution. The CFA organises historical and contemporary exhibitions. Their program of large-scale exhibitions frequently highlights European and other countries. An interesting newcomer is the art centre Wiels in Vorst, headed by Dirk Snauwaert; this intends to serve as a place for exhibitions having the utmost concern for well-chosen artists, both national and international. At the same time, considerable attention is being given to the effects of art education and dialogue with local neighbourhoods. Since 2008 Wiels has moreover been developing an international residency programme for artists. The experiment by Wiels is both fascinating and risky: here the government (mainly the Flemish, but also the French-speaking) and the private sector joined forces to support the project.

A great deal was also expected of the *Brussels Biennial*, an initiative supported by the Flemish Community, which began in late 2008 and involved numerous collaborations with organisations in Brussels and institutions abroad.



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Visual art and audiovisual media are the focus of arts centre Argos. Having started as a distribution centre for video in 1989, it has now developed into a place for the display, conservation and archiving of audiovisual and media art, as well as a public multimedia library. The centre moreover serves as a meeting place for creation and discussion. On a smaller scale, the art centre Etablissement d'en face experiments with various forms of visual art and mainly develops them as projects; and the Sint-Lukasgalerie regularly holds solo exhibitions of work by artists from within the country and abroad. In the past few years, smaller organisations such as Komplot and SECONDroom have also been active in Brussels. Komplot is a collective of curators who organise contemporary art activities infiltrating the public space and institutions. Every Saturday, SECONDroom holds a different presentation of an artist in an exhibition space at the arts centre Recyclart.

Brussels also has an extensive gallery scene with Dutch-speaking, French-speaking and foreign owners. A number of fairly large galleries (Xavier Hufkens, Galerie Greta Meert, Baronian_Francey) promote established Belgian and internationally known artists. Some others (Jan Mot, aliceday, Galerie Les filles du calvaire, GALERIE CATHERINE BASTIDE, Galerie Erna Hécey, CROWN GALLERY or dépendance) have more experimental programmes and present young Belgian artists.

In the vicinity of Brussels, there are also a few interesting sites for contemporary art. The cultural centre Strombeek has formed an alliance with the arts centre De Garage in Mechelen. Together they often organise thematic group and solo exhibitions of artists. In Leuven the arts centre STUK has an annual programme of visual art, involving solo exhibitions of international artists and a concern for crossovers with other genres of art, particularly the performing arts.

We shall not be examining the wide range of French-language initiatives in Brussels and Wallonia, but we would like to mention a few interesting places. In Brussels there are Atelier 340 Muzeum, Contretype, Botanique, iMAL and ISELP. In Liège there is l'Espace 251 Nord and the nadjaVilene gallery, which draws visitors from the Meuse region in the Walloon provinces, the southern part of the Netherlands and along the border with Germany. In Charleroi there is the Musée de la Photographie and the curator Pierre-Olivier Rollin is trying to develop the B.P.S.22 into a regional location for international exhibitions. Housed in the former mine site Grand-Hornu is the Musée des Arts Contemporains (MAC's) where



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director Laurent Busine is building a representative collection of mainly Walloon, but also Flemish and internationally known contemporary artists.

ANTWERP

The harbour city Antwerp, only forty kilometres north of Brussels, is mainly known as a centre for diamonds and fashion, but an interesting contemporary art scene has developed there and is becoming increasingly international. The heart of the visual arts can be found in Zuid, a beautiful older district that came about during the nineteenth century. The oldest part of the harbour used to be located here, and the many warehouses have been ideal structures for museums and galleries. Three major museums are situated in this area, all within walking distance of each other: the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, the FotoMuseum and the MuHKA. The MuHKA's collection has been built around the collection of the Gordon Matta-Clark Foundation and includes work by every great Belgian artist and many international ones. Artistic director Bart De Baere has also introduced an entire process for developing various ways of thinking about the role of contemporary art in society. Literally an outsider, due to its location in a park on the south side of Antwerp, the Middelheimmuseum is building a major collection of modern and contemporary sculpture.

Antwerp furthermore can boast of having the most active gallery scene, with Zeno X Gallery, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Stella Lohaus Gallery, TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY and KORAALBERG playing an important role in supporting their artists. Galerie Annie Gentils, Galerie Annette De Keyser, Geukens & De Vil, Kusseneers Gallery, MAES & MATTHYS GALLERY, Dagmar De Pooter Gallery and Office Baroque Gallery are among the many other galleries offering a program of young and emerging artists. And galerie De Zwarte Panter, the city's oldest gallery, is mainly known for its low threshold and its concern for local artists, including Fred Bervoets.

Other initiatives are Hessenhuis, a place for younger artists to display work, and Ruimte Morguen, a presentation site among galleries in Zuid. Two organisations focus on artists' residences: AIR Antwerpen, located in the harbour district, houses a number of studio/apartments for Belgian but especially foreign artists. Lokaal 01, affiliated with a similar type of space in Breda (in the Netherlands) invites artists to work on specific projects in their space; these are then shown for a short period.



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Two important centres for contemporary art are no longer located in *Zuid*, but in the older neighbourhoods of the city. The largest is Extra City, housed in a former bottling plant in the northern part of Antwerp and showing mainly group exhibitions that are research-oriented and well contextualised. Objectif Exhibitions, in the centre of Antwerp, is smaller and mainly aims for solo exhibitions of younger international artists. Both Extra City and Objectif Exhibitions are headed by young artistic directors from abroad: the German Anselm Franke and the Egyptian Mai Abu ElDahab, respectively.

Mechelen offers, in addition to the arts centre De Garage, two other major initiatives: the biennial for video art *Contour*, which always involves a different internationally known curator, and the gallery TRANSIT.

A number of interesting initiatives are also based in the province of Limburg; these have strong ties with the Eindhoven-Maastricht-Aachen-Cologne region. Among the more important is Z33, in Hasselt, where both solo and group exhibitions are held and consideration is given to the relationship between art and design. Another is FLACC, in Genk, a workplace for visual artists, who are given time and space to develop and realise new projects.

GHENT

Ghent is no longer the most important Flemish city for contemporary art, yet it does remain the most famous. The city largely owes this to the figure Jan Hoet who, as director of S.M.A.K. until 2003, headed this institution for roughly twenty-five years. S.M.A.K.'s collection begins with World War I and covers the entire twentieth century, from CoBRA to the most recent tendencies, and focuses on major groups of work by Marcel Broodthaers, Joseph Beuys, Arte Povera and Panamarenko. By way of several high-profile exhibitions, such as *Chambres d'amis*, and his artistic directorship of *Documenta IX* in 1992, Hoet gave his museum a worldwide reputation. Now at the helm is artistic director Philippe Van Cauteren, who has plans for expanding the museum as he implements an intensive exhibition policy that bears relevance to the times.

Also based in Ghent is the HISK, where Belgian and international artists can do a two-year postgraduate programme. Croxhapox is a small but dynamic arts centre which mainly serves as a forum for younger artists. Existentie (X=10C) is a comparable platform, where young curators, art historians and artists can collaborate on exhibitions, debates and publica-

tions. Furthermore, the Witte Zaal, an exhibition space affiliated with the art academy Sint-Lucas, offers a varied program that is often conceived by guest curators. The art school KASK in Ghent invites younger local artists for a specific presentation at KIOSK, a kind of greenhouse near the school building. The policy carried out by the organisation Zebrastraat is very broad, on the other hand, sometimes including fascinating historical and media-art exhibitions. Occasionally, the Caermersklooster provides high quality exhibitions of contemporary art.

Despite the presence of S.M.A.K. and HISK, Ghent's gallery scene is rather modest in scope. Hoet-Bekaert Gallery and Tatjana Pieters/One-Twenty are, though young, the city's leading galleries. Located in the vicinity of Ghent, in the province of East Flanders, are a few other interesting institutions. The Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens can be found in Deurle; this has developed around a private collection of primarily Flemish modern art, more specifically the first and second generations of the Latem School. This museum has moreover acquired a reputation as a place for the display of contemporary art, keeping close watch on new forms of painting, sculpture and installation art. Nearby, the Roger Raveel Museum tries to create a dialogue between the work of Roger Raveel and other artists. The centre for contemporary art Netwerk is situated in Aalst and invests in the younger generation of artists, both Belgians and emerging artists from abroad. At Netwerk they are given the opportunity to create new work, to reside there and to compile evening programmes involving other disciplines as well.

In the province of West Flanders, the new elan of the Kunstmuseum aan zee in Ostend is beginning to take shape with its new artistic director Phillip Van den Bossche, who wants to bridge the gap between modern art (with such Ostend figures as James Ensor, Léon Spilliaert and Constant Permeke) and contemporary art. The museum owns a major collection of Belgian art spanning the entire twentieth century. In Waregem BE-PART is a centre for contemporary art and an artists' residence, which works with guest curators and moreover shows concern for artists from the region. And DEWEER gallery, in Otegem, can be considered one of the most important established galleries in Belgium. To conclude, the cosmopolitan seaside town of Knokke offers dozens of commercial galleries selling the big international names. The best-known of these are the galleries of Guy Pieters, Patrick de Brock, Mulier Mulier, André Simoens and Stephane Simoens.



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#3 THE ARTISTS

From the 1960s to the 80s, a strong generation of artists emerged in Flanders and in Brussels, yet any real breakthrough to the international top remained difficult for them during that period. For many, recognition came only later, when the local and international climate became more favourable. Brilliantly unimaginable contraptions of Panamarenko, socially critical interventions by Jef Geys, fragile compositions of Guy Mees, well-considered videos and sculptures by Lili Dujourie, sculptures by Bernd Lohaus, the paintings of Fred Bervoets, Raoul de Keyser and Roger Raveel: these would not appear in biennials and/or documentas until the artists had reached a certain age.

Not until the late 1980s/early 90s, when the beginnings of a museum structure could be discerned in Flanders and the Flemish government started implementing an active art policy (e.g. by way of its presence at the Sao Paulo Biennial and Flemish 'fringe' exhibitions during the various editions of the Venice Biennial) did a number of artists gain international recognition. Aside from the artists mentioned above, from Panamarenko and Bernd Lohaus to Jef Geys, a whole succession of others acquired international reputations. Jan Fabre gave shape to an environment of his own via nearly obsessive visual and stage-oriented work. Guillaume Bijl would produce a singular blend of installation, performance, sculpture and concept art, in which reality is given a subtle twist time and again. Through sculptures, drawings and paintings Thierry De Cordier seeks his own intimate place of refuge where he cultivates his Flemish roots and subjects the organic aspect of this world to an investigation which is both artistic and 'mystical'. Jan Vercruyssen reflects on the meaning of the (self-) portrait and the position of art (and the artist) in such a pointed manner that he arrives at solitary yet extremely precise photographic works and sculptures. With his very broad interpretation of the notion 'pedestal', Didier Vermeiren would give new dimension to the very idea 'sculptural'. The paintings and installations of Philippe Van Snick, Narcisse Tordoir and Walter Swennen, which strip down and criticise the achievements of painting, later prove to be a thriving breeding ground for the next generation of artists.

For that generation combined, and still combines, greater self-awareness with a more favourable media climate, and painter Luc Tuymans has been its key figure. He would create a new and internationally influential combination of painting, concept and social/political commentary that



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gave rise to the term 'interim image', the phase between image and depiction. Tuymans began to analyse the ideology of visual language in order to approach that language with his own involvement, so as to 'manipulate the manipulator'. Several years later, painters such as Jan Van Imschoot and Michaël Borremans rose to the challenge, each in his own way, and caused the long-suppressed term 'aesthetics' to acquire a new dimension. While Tuymans resolutely dismissed any reference to a 'school' or a 'style', a group of painters nonetheless took shape around the idea of 'the pictorial'. Here painting was done from a photograph, not necessarily taken by the artist: Guy Van Bossche, Bert De Beul, Eddy De Vos, Patrick Vanden Eynde, Joris Ghekiere, Ronny Delrue and many others triggered a real boom. At times it seemed as though the Flemish contemporary art scene was also internationally dominated by this 'new painting'.



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At the same time, another group of artists began to draw attention due to their strong individualism. With the apparent decline in ideologies, ideas such as 'style' and 'genre' seemed to lose meaning as well, to the benefit of a more personal artistic realm. Ultimately, it would become evident that a sense of the universal can even lie in the personal. Berlinde De Bruyckere began to produce sculptural installations in which humanity, in its fragile and vulnerable state, undergoes abuse, death and suffocating existence. Honoré d'O makes his own world of thought visible by transforming rapid mental processes into a world of found and reworked materials. Ria Pacquée uses herself as a nameless role model in order to deconstruct the banality of her social environment. The expressive universe of Patrick Van Caeckenbergh is situated somewhere between the Milky Way and a dark little mouse hole, half-hidden behind a baseboard. Wim Delvoye deals with the make-believe world of marketing, pop culture and mediatisation by producing a treacherous copy of it. Franky DC examines, almost in an obsessive way, how the colour orange frequently crops up in advertising and design, announcing a new period of false cheer each time. Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven takes on a quest for the role of perversion, sexual oppression and the mythical image of women throughout the centuries. Dora Garcia explores situations or contexts that question the traditional relationship between the artist, the artwork and the viewer. In his video work Koen Theys comments on icons from the art world, combining images in such a way that new connotations arise.



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Even so, the formal would surface once again – not with noncommittal form, but form as a means of personal exchange. That also appeared in the work of a few artists who had close links with architecture. Luc Deleu began to conceive of utopian urban environments ('urbanism', a contraction of 'orbis' and 'urbis', world and city) based on the virtually traditional language of architectural symbols. Aglaia Konrad intervenes in human (living) spaces by introducing small, obstinate shifts. Richard Venlet leaves behind nearly invisible traces in a space, yet these are almost entirely redrawn. Christoph Fink ventures to travel in the world, and the dimensions of space and time are riveted together in a three-dimensional rendering of indicated times and geographical coordinates.

With a number of artists, the medium of photography also took on the confrontation with architecture. In the work of Niels Donckers and Bert Danckaert, for instance, traces of human presence in a domesticated world are pointed out (or obscured) to varying extents; each has his own way of doing this. The work of Dirk Braeckman is very different on the other hand: his photographs opt for the seemingly fleeting moment and for suggestiveness. Just as he himself seems to climb right into the 'skins' of his subjects, the surface (or 'skin') of his images is shrouded in a unique, recognisable, darkly matte, silver-grey haze. Once again, the idea of 'aesthetics' emerges here; after an absence of several decades, this is gradually finding its way back into visual art. After the concept, after social/political involvement, it's time for aesthetics to demand rights again. We also see it in the sculptures of Philip Aguirre y Otegui, in the images of Paul Casaer and in the miniature paintings of Robert Devriendt.

Artistic production is flourishing today in Flanders and in Brussels at an uncommonly high level. A younger generation of artists is working professionally *and* internationally. For them, the phenomenon of networking (which has, for that matter, always existed, though the 'inner circle' used to be smaller) has become a standard and indispensable way in which to establish contacts with other artists, curators, collectors, critics, museums and centres for the arts. Both nationally and internationally, those networks sometimes seem to function in subtle ways, as commercial and artistic interests intersect with ease and equivalence, to a much greater extent than in the past. Among this generation, two artists can now consider themselves internationally recognised: Jan De Cock and David Claerbout. De Cock has already exhibited in the world's largest art



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institutions (Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, Tate Modern in London, MoMA in New York). In his photographs, installations and constructions, he takes on the encounter with contemporary art's dominance by juxtaposing it with the canon of modernism. De Cock literally traps highly esteemed art institutions by, for example, building wooden constructions in and around them. David Claerbout explores the distinctions between photography and film, between static and moving images, between architecture and light, between space and time. In his work photographs are set in motion. Works are 'enacted' in architectural environments that are representative of modern culture and the present-day urban context.

In this generation, too, the Flemish 'painterly tradition' goes on, though the investigation and concept gain importance over pure expression. Koen van den Broek composes strong structures by building landscapes, highways or simply segments of sidewalks, as he increasingly opts for the no-man's land between figuration and abstraction. A tension between the image as illusion and the material treatment of the paint can be found in the work of Vincent Geyskens. Recently he has been completely undermining the notion of a recognisable image, in favour of chaos 'which organises itself by coincidence, as it were'. Tina Gillen paints rigid, measured and fragmented landscapes, in which the architectural element is reduced to basic form. Karin Hanssen's subjects revert to a narrow-minded world in which harmony seems to prevail, but where life is actually routine, stifling and dismal. Maryam Najd looks at the aggressive and pornographic visual pollution in various media (film, television), interprets them in a completely non-anecdotal manner and strives for a nearly utopian world view. Where photography is concerned, a certain documentary character has been surfacing again, along with a strong sense of aesthetics. Geert Goiris produces monumental landscape photographs in which human presence is minimal yet, at the same time, crucial. Jan Kempenaers does just the opposite, seeking landscapes that have been marked and coloured by man. Anne Daems shows, in her photographs, aspects of everyday life and of initially meaningless events. At the same time, she composes different intervals of time into one whole. The spectacular quality of such photography lies precisely with the non-spectacular. Charif Benhelima explores the limits and the challenges of various cultures as well as those of the Polaroid: the result is work that deals with and reflects on anthropology. Els Opsomer sets up urban archives, where the living environment of



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communities affected by politics and poverty nonetheless shows respect for the inhabitants and brings out their self-respect.

A great deal of art by this generation is characterised by the hybrid and combined use of installations, performances, video, Internet and other formal conveyors of art, in order to arrive at a result in which documentary and fiction become intricately entangled with each other. That also happens to be the only common trait by which these artists can be assessed, since each of them has, for the rest, set a highly individual course. Hans Op de Beeck employs various media in order to convert the veritable roller coaster of modern-day life into a scene of vacantness, contemplation and silence. Boy & Erik Stappaerts created the B. & E.S. Institute and Associations, which produces a range of objects; this can be regarded as an ironic and utopian firm 'able and willing to tailor your own preferred needs to your own life and surroundings.' As an alert observer of social reality, Koenraad Dedobbeleer translates architecture, elements from urbanisation and human organisational systems into his multimedia works. Nico Dockx expresses his fascination with archives, inventories, memory, data management and the transfer of information in and by way of various media and methods. Stefaan Dheedene reworks photographic material from his encounters with different cultures into spatial interpretations and reconstructions. Kobe Matthys is the founder of Agency, in which he examines the practice of appropriation and the public realm. Ives Maes deals with the paternalism of western society in a revealing manner and offers the civilised westerner refuge from the supposed dangers inherent in other cultures. Gert Robijns takes minimal elements from day-to-day life and, with them, creates new constructions that unravel our pattern of thought and reorient it. Lieven De Boeck is working on his own 'Dictionary on Space', which mainly involves architectural themes related to appropriation, limits, representation and identity.

Also active in this generation are artists for whom the video or DVD plays an essential role. Manon de Boer deals intensively with the notion of time in her films and thereby manipulates mass-media clichés. Orla Barry uses her own texts, music, photographs and films to raise questions about the way in which our thoughts function. Anouk De Clercq creates 'interior landscapes' in which images, music and texts lead us into an imaginary, fascinating realm. Ana Torfs gives fragments from the history of western politics and culture a new formal *and* connotative interpretation. And Sven



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Augustijnen uses the documentary as a medium by which to arrive at a new form of fiction, which often seems more credible than so-called reality. Other artists are relentlessly seeking the significance and expressiveness of the trivial detail: Valérie Mannaerts in her drawings, Sophie Nys in her video work.

In Flanders there are moreover a great many artists and collectives working in relation to and with the 'newer' media and recent scientific developments. Since the late 1990s artists, researchers and curators have been laying the basis for an active field. One need only think of artists such as Peter Beyls, Godfried-Willem Raes and Guy Van Belle. Partly owing to the qualities of recently developed media, they quickly became linked with international networks. Some of the striking artists today include Angelo Vermeulen, who works in connection with art, biology, technology and games. Johan Grimonprez explores the conventions of mass and online media. Lawrence Malstaf creates interactive spatial scenarios. The theatre group Crew produces immersive narrative environments in close collaboration with the University of Hasselt. Particularly striking is the fact that so many collectives have taken shape in the relatively small scene of 'media arts' in Flanders and Brussels. Cargo, Constant, foAM, LAB[au], OKNO and Workspace Unlimited are among the artist-run organisations that thoroughly explore the strengths of collaboration and interaction with the audience.

Meanwhile, a new generation is pushing at the door. New painters have announced themselves: Virginie Bailly, Stephan Balleux, Ellen De Meuter, Kati Heck, Helmut Stallaerts, Cindy Wright. Pieter Vermeersch combines painting with installations in order to redefine the spaces in which he works. With the new photography, Els Vanden Meersch stands out with her 'psychological portraits' of demolished architectural spaces. Nick Ervinck employs digital media in order to construct a futuristic world.

And above all: this youngest generation takes a very critical stance toward its own artistic media and toward current discussions on that subject. Vaast Colson brings the entire art world into question with actions, performances, installations and paintings. In their installations and drawings Simona Denicolai & Ivo Provoost stab at, transform and deform that which is generally accepted. Louis De Cordier produces functional, minimalist objects that have no apparent purpose. Thomas Lerooy creates stratified images in which meanings are shifted. Wesley Meuris makes

architectural constructions, in which the social codes of humans and animals are manipulated. Dennis Tyfus and Philip Metten utilise the youth culture in order to give shape to their artistic, subversive experience.

Many of these young artists have already been exhibiting abroad, particularly in German and American galleries. It shows that the level of contemporary visual art in Belgium continues to be high. Other countries (France, the Netherlands) wonder just where all that talent keeps on coming from. An explanation could be that the artist's drive to develop artistically *and* internationally has remained present, because the local situation is too limited. The supportive efforts of the government do not result in an overly protective environment. It would be best to keep on nurturing this paradox.

Translated from Dutch by Beth O'Brien



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- 01 **PANAMARENKO
AEROMODELLER** — 1969
Mixed media, 2700 x Ø 600; 200 x 600 x 300 cm
Collection SMAK, Ghent
- 02 **ROGER RAVEEL
MEMORY TO THE DEATHBED OF MY MOTHER** — 1965
Oil on canvas
Collection Rubensmuseum, Mechelen aan de Leie
- 03 **RAOUL DE KEYSER
HAL (S)** — 1985
Oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm
Collection SMAK, Ghent
- 04 **BERND LOHAUS
ZWISCHEN/ALS/GEGEN/FÜR** — 1982
Wood and chalk, 4x 28 x 90 x 25 cm
Collection SMAK, Ghent
- 05 **LILI DIJOURIE
ENJAMBEMENT** — 1976
Film still
- 06 **JEF BEYS
WOMEN'S QUESTIONS?** — 1965
Ink on paper, 140 x 60 cm
Collection MUHKA, Antwerp
- 07 **GUY MEES
IMAGINARY BALLET** — 1998
Mixed media
Collection Flemish Community
- 08 **JAN VERCRUYSSÉ
PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST BY HIMSELF (XVII)** — 1884
Photolitho on paper, 60 x 46,6 cm
- 09 **THIERRY DE CORDIER
L'OISEAU OU LE GARDIEN DE NOTRE POTAGER** — 1988
Mixed media, 230 x 170 x 40 cm
Collection SMAK, Ghent
- 10 **GUILAUME BIAL
TY-QUIZ DECOR** — 1993
Mixed media
Collection Flemish Community
- 11 **JAN FABRE
ME, DREAMING** — 1979
Mixed media
Collection MUHKA, Antwerp
Photo Angelas
- 12 **LUC TUYMANS
DER DIAGNOSTISCHE BLICK IV** — 1992
Oil on canvas
Private collection
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp
- 13 **WIM DELVOYE
CATERPILLAR #4** — 2002
Carton steel
- 14 **ANNE-MIE VAN KERCKHOVEN
RORTY, THE HEADROOM** — 2004
Mixed media
Courtesy Zeno X, Antwerp
- 15 **BERLINDE DE BRUYCKERE
SPEAKING** — 1999
Blankets, polyester, was, real-life size
Collection Flemish Community
- 16 **RIA PACQUÉE
CONFRONTING A COLONIAL PAST** — 1993
B/w photo
- 17 **AGLAJA KONRAD
ELASTICITY (YOU ARE HERE)** — 2002
Installation view Sint-Lukasziekenhuis, Brussels
- 18 **DIRK BRAECKMAN
A.D.F.-S.B.2-03** — 2003
B/w silver gelatine print on aluminium, 120 x 180 cm
- 19 **HONORÉ D'O
ALL THE DETAILS EXTENDED, EN FRACTURES
RECOMPOSÉES** — 1995-2000
Mixed media
Collection MUHKA, Antwerp
- 20 **MICHAEL BORREMANS
THE GERMAN** — 2002
Oil on canvas, 50 x 42 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp
- 21 **JAN DE COCK
DENKMAL 7, SCHIRM KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT,
RÖMERSBERG 7, FRANKFURT AM MAIN** — 2005
Installation view Kursthalle, Frankfurt
- 22 **PIETER VERMEERSCH**
Installation view Koraalberg, Antwerp



**SOPHIE NYS
HI YA CHI** — 2005
Series of 24 slides, black & white
Courtesy Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels

ADDENDUM

**USEFUL LINKS, EDUCATION, WORKPLACES,
MUSEUMS, ART CENTRES, FESTIVALS,
PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OPEN TO PUBLIC,
MAGAZINES**

USEFUL LINKS

BAM – Flemish institute for visual,
audiovisual and media art www.bamart.be
Flemish Community www.vlaanderen.be/cultuur
NICC, Antwerp www.nicc.be
VOBK, Verenigde Organisaties BeeldKunst, Ghent www.vobk.be

EDUCATION

HISK Higher Institute of Fine Arts, Ghent www.hisk.edu
KASK Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Ghent www.kask.be
Sint-Lukas University College of Art and Design,
Brussels www.sintlukas.be
Sint-Lucas Visual Arts, Ghent www.kunst.sintlucas.wenk.be
Hogeschool Antwerpen, Departement Beeldende Kunst,
Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp
academieantwerpen.ha.be
Karel de Grote Hogeschool Sint-Lukas Antwerpen,
Department of Art and Design, Antwerp www.kdg.be
Media en Designacademie, Genk www.khlim.be
PHL University College, Hasselt www.phl.be

WORKPLACES

Antwerp, AIR Antwerpen www.airantwerpen.be
Antwerp, NICC www.nicc.be
Brussels, Auguste Orts www.augusteorts.be
Brussels, Bains::Connective
Brussels, FoAM fo.am
Brussels, Constant www.constantvzw.org
Brussels, Firefly www.fireflyfilms.be
Brussels, Lab[au] www.lab-au.com
Genk, FLACC www.flacc.info
Kasterlee, Frans Masereel Centrum
www.cjsm.vlaanderen.be/fransmasereelcentrum

MUSEUMS

Antwerp, MuHKA www.muhka.be
Antwerp, FotoMuseum Provincie Antwerpen www.fotomuseum.be
Antwerp, Middelheimmuseum
museum.antwerpen.be/Middelheimopenluchtmuseum
Deurle, Museum Dhondt Dhaenens www.museumdd.be
Ghent, S.M.A.K. www.smak.be
Machelen a/d Leie, Roger Raveelmuseum www.rogerraveelmuseum.be
Ostend, Kunstmuseum aan zee www.pmmk.be

ART CENTRES

Aalst, Netwerk www.netwerk-art.org
Antwerp, deSingel www.desingel.be
Antwerp, Extra City, Antwerp www.extracity.org
Antwerp, Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp www.objectif-exhibitions.org
Antwerp, ERROR ONE www.errorone.be
Antwerp, LLS 387 users.telenet.be/lis387
Antwerp, Ruimte Morguen
Antwerp, Hessenhuis www.hessenhuis.org
Antwerp, Lokaal 01 www.lokaal01.be
Brugge, CC Brugge www.cultuurcentrumbrugge.be
Brussels, Argos www.argosarts.org
Brussels, Etablissement d'en face www.etablissementdenfaceprojects.org
Brussels, Sint-Lukasgalerie www.sintlukasgalerie.be
Brussels, Centre for Fine Arts www.bozar.be
Brussels, Initia www.initia.be
Brussels, Wiels www.wiels.org
Brussels, CCNOA www.ccnoa.org
Brussels, SECONDroom www.secondroom.be
Brussels, OKNO www.okno.be
Ghent, Existentie www.existentie.be
Ghent, Croxhapox www.croxhapox.com
Ghent, Witte Zaal www.wittezaal.be
Ghent, KIOSK www.kask.be

Ghent, Experimental Intermedia www.experimentalintermedia.be
Ghent, Vooruit www.vooruit.be
Ghent, Zebrastraat www.zebrastraat.be
Hasselt, Z33 www.z33.be
Kortrijk, Buda www.budakortrijk.be
Leuven, STUK www.stuk.be
Lier, Voorkamer www.voorkamer.be
Mechelen, De Garage www.cultuurcentrummechelen.be
Ostend, Vrijstaat O. www.vrijstaat-o.be
Strombeek, CC Strombeek www.ccstrombeek.be
Waregem, BE-PART www.west-vlaanderen.be/jahia/Jahia/site/bepart

FESTIVALS

Brussels, Brussels Biennial www.brusselsbiennial.org
Hasselt, Triennial www.superhasselt.be
Mechelen, Contour Biennial www.contourmechelen.be
Ostend, Beaufort www.2006beaufort.be

PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OPEN TO PUBLIC

Brussels, Walter Vanhaerents www.vanhaerentsartcollection.com
Ostend, Vanmoerkerke Collection www.artcollection.be

MAGAZINES

Openbaar Kunstbezit Vlaanderen (OKV) www.okv.be
De Witte Raaf www.dewitteraaf.be
A Prior Magazine www.aprior.org
Gagarin www.gagarin.be
<H>ART www.kunsthart.org
rekto:verso www.rektoverso.be
EXTRA www.fotomuseum.be
Janus www.janusonline.net

BIOGRAPHY

VISUAL ARTS

**AGENCY, SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN, ORLA BARRY,
CHARIF BENHELIMA, MANON DE BOER,
KOEN VAN DEN BROEK, WIM CATRYSSSE,
DAVID CLAERBOUT, ANNE DAEMS, LIEVEN DE BOECK,
ANOUK DE CLERCQ, STEFAAN DHEEDENE, NICO DOCKX,
CHRISTOPH FINK, VINCENT GEYSKENS, TINA GILLEN,
GEERT GOIRIS, JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS,
JAN KEMPENAERS, IVES MAES, VALÉRIE MANNAERTS,
KRIS MARTIN, SOPHIE NYS, HANS OP DE BEECK,
ELS OPSOMER, GERT ROBIJNS, PETER ROGIERS,
ANA TORFS, MICHAEL VAN DEN ABEELE,
PATRICK VANDEN EYNDE, GERT VERHOEVEN,
ANGELO VERMEULEN, HEIDI VOET**

AGENCY

Agency constitutes an ongoing list of things that fall just inside or outside the classifications of nature and culture, that move from the category of creation to the category of evolution or that don't belong to the category of objects nor the category of subjects... In short, things that bear witness to hesitation in terms of the bifurcation of nature into the categories of nature and culture. Agency presents specimens of its list in various and different assemblies. Agency is the generic name of an agency that was instaurated in 1992 by Kobe Matthys (°1970) and has its location in Brussels, Europe.

www.agentive.org



AGENCY
SPECIMEN 848 (GREAT TASTING RECIPES); SPECIMEN 847 (PREHISTORICAL PAINTING CAVE CHAUVET); SPECIMEN 843 (SPORTS TRAXX);
SPECIMEN 816 (STORY OF THE FILM REAR WINDOW); SPECIMEN 815 (CHARACTER PALADIN IN TELEVISION SERIES HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL);
SPECIMEN 785 (PHOTOS THE NUTCRACKER: A STORY & A BALLET); SPECIMEN 782 (RECORDINGS BRUITS DE LA NATURE N.2); SPECIMEN 780
(TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGES OF THE MADAGASCAR PERIWINKLE PLANT); SPECIMEN 770 (PART ZWIGHSEN ZIRKUSKUPPEL UND MANEGE);
SPECIMEN 760 (SYMBOL 'FETTE HENNE'), ONGOING ARCHIVE

Mixed media
Courtesy Agency

SVEN AUGUSTIJNEN

The artistic route of Sven Augustijnen (°1970) has Belgium and Brussels as its geographical epicentre; a theme which today, more than ever, continues to stir the political agenda. His films, photographs and texts on various subjects are not only intentionally balanced on the fine line between fact and fiction, but also have fiction as the legitimisation of reality or the construction of history or a state as their core subject matter. The work examines the various kinds of interaction and relationships that act from within the notion of 'power', driven as it is by capital and other invisible forces and intentions. This is revealed in the manipulation of words and data in which the media are and always have been entangled.

Augustijnen is not the type of artist who aspires to spectacle or sublime beauty through art. In his practice, the artist achieves a synthesis that merges journalism, political sciences, anthropology and history and evokes images and ideas that oscillate between documentary and art in forms chosen to simultaneously affirm and question its very content.

www.janmot.com

www.augusteorts.be



ORLA BARRY

Orla Barry's work is about language, both written and spoken. Her work is strongly poetic and lyrical, crossing a wide variety of media, evoking undercurrents of emotion and drawing on Irish disciplines of poetry and song. Barry (°1969) was born in Ireland and studied at the academies of Dublin, Belfast, and at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Living in Brussels has intensified Barry's relationship to her native culture and language and displaced her within it. Barry doesn't limit herself formally to one technique: she is adept at video, writing, photography, sound and performance, and she often allows these different media to flow over into one another. An interest in language stands central to her work; via frequently associative techniques she researches the semantics of her mother tongue and its cultural imbedding and implications. The rhythm of her phraseologies, the pictorial and narrative languages of her native country from which she draws, at times evokes the topography of her home country, its mental climate and its literary heritage. In this way she also applies the stream-of-consciousness tactic in her video work, without the presence of a specific storyline. This makes it strongly fragmented and makes it seem to have little structure in terms of content, although the form sometimes acts to the contrary.

www.nadjavilenne.com



ORLA BARRY
THE BASTARDTOWN BLOGGER — 2006
Film still
Courtesy the artist & Galerie nadjavilenne, Liège

CHARIF BENHELIMA

Charif Benhelima (°1967) investigates the notion of identity, memory/oblivion, document, and truth through images that explore perception, time and space, and a sense of invisibility. Besides having worked with analogue photography, he has been experimenting for almost ten years with the Polaroid 600. Embarking on a kind of countercurrent to the digital medium he developed a highly personal style, whose images have a timeless quality. Bringing the viewer back and forth to past and present or suggesting a sense of suspension and void, Benhelima's photographs create destabilisation, enhance the feeling of transition, and obscure the notion of truth.

Nominated for his complete oeuvre for the 'Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography 2008' (Harvard University/Peabody Museum), Benhelima's diverse aesthetic, formal and conceptual research composes nevertheless a coherent and singular oeuvre.

www.crowngallery.be

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/88/

berlin.aptglobel.org/SiteFiles/1/77/662.asp

[www.muha.be/verzamelt_depot_artist.php?
person_id=58&letter=B&la=nl](http://www.muha.be/verzamelt_depot_artist.php?person_id=58&letter=B&la=nl)



CHARIF BENHELIMA
NEST — 2005
Ifochrome on aluminium and polyester, 120 x 122 cm
Courtesy the artist & Crown Gallery, Brussels

MANON DE BOER

Manon de Boer (°1966) completed her artistic education at the Akademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Rotterdam and at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. She lives and works in Brussels.

Using personal narration as a method, De Boer explores the relationship between language, time and claims to truth. The narrated personal histories of iconic figures from different contexts, such as Sylvia Kristel or Suely Rolnik, allow the artist to explore concepts of memory and belief and through this to investigate correspondences between lived time and history. Manon de Boer also explores the perception of time through a conscious use of film as an artistic mediator and in analysis of its effect on the viewer. The way she divests image, sound and music in her compositions, subtly alters the classic pattern of perception of film.

www.janmot.com

www.augusteorts.be



MANON DE BOER
SYLVIA KRISTEL - PARIS — 2003
Film still
Courtesy the artist & Jan Mot, Brussels

KOEN VAN DEN BROEK

Koen van den Broek's paintings examine our experience of landscape, from close-up views of bleak urban corners to huge, empty swathes of countryside. The paintings combine sensual abstraction with precise figuration to create paintings of arresting, cinematic power. Primarily derived from tightly composed, colourful photographs, his works often feature seemingly mundane architectural motifs, such as the kerb of a road, the grid on a sidewalk or the stop barriers of a parking lot. Using his own photographs as a starting point, Van den Broek (°1973) evolves a clear, stripped down, painterly language, using sober, neutral colours punctuated by the occasional instance of midnight blue, blood red, bright orange or pitchy black.

Van den Broek frequently travels through America, and its culture of driving, as well as the expansiveness of its landscape enter into his work. Van den Broek's work invests our sense of looking with renewed energy, opening up to the viewer the experience of a small, overlooked corner of the world, or a sublime vista as if viewed from behind the windscreen of a car.

www.whitecube.com



KOEN VAN DEN BROEK
SHADOWS AND BLUE BORDER #3 — 2003
Oil on canvas, 210 x 140 cm
Photo Diane Bertrand
Courtesy the artist & Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

WIM CATRYSSE

The films of Wim Catrysse (°1973) might be considered an investigation into the way the body relates to its surroundings. The work starts from simple deeds or actions, performed in self-constructed or altered environments – often small in dimensions. Apart from the 'actors' and the spectator the camera can almost be considered a third participant, because it is involved in the scene as a constructional element.

In Catrysse's installation, for example, we are clearly seeing precisely what the camera sees and at the same time misconstruing its behaviour (the very fact that it is in motion) to the point where the 'real' begins to assume an almost sinister aspect. The tendency then – the resulting shift of levels – is unmistakably towards the 'sublime', but in a very particular way. Arriving at a 'realisation' of what is actually being pictured by the camera involves us in an intimate 'making' or 'remaking' of the mise-en-scène; in the first instance as a mental construction, in order that afterwards it can 'become' vivid to perception and to the imagination. By this means our understanding of both the mechanism and the resulting image-pattern is made part of a synoptic apprehension of something approaching a 'totality'. This is the point at which Catrysse's work draws close to and at the same time separates itself from the cut-and-paste language of cinema.

John Thompson

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/9



WIM CATRYSSE
BACKDROP — 2007
Single-channel video installation
Colour, non-spoken, 14'39"
Installation view MuHKA, Antwerp

DAVID CLAERBOUT

Although a painter by education, David Claerbout's main media are photographic installations and (interactive) video works. His artistic work deals with the transient nature of time and place on a specific moment and the incapability of any form of visual reproduction to completely capture 'reality' as it comes or exists. Claerbout (°1969) comments on the possible deconstruction of any narrative of 'the image being part of a larger whole' by transferring the context wherein his work is to be displayed in front of the spectator: images are framed within four straight borders by the artist, while the spectator eventually refocuses and reframes the image when looking at it. In doing so, the source image is thus charged with yet another content and meaning.

www.gms.be



DAVID CLAERBOUT
SHADOW PIECE — 2005
Film still
Single channel video installation
Black & white, 25'
Courtesy the artist & Galerie Micheline Swajczek, Antwerp

ANNE DAEMS

The work of Anne Daems (°1966) draws our attention to the social and physical mechanisms that facilitate the basis of our Human Condition. In her photos, videos and drawings Daems shows specific qualities of everyday life, inconspicuous actions and events which at first sight are insignificant. What seems like a snapshot or a simple drawing is in fact much more sophisticated. She succeeds in accumulating details on a particular subject – usually a person – so as to reveal an entire microcosm. The spectacular nature of this works lies precisely in the non-spectacular aspect. Nothing is of importance and yet everything is meaningful and mysterious. The work often provokes both humour and questions and shows beauty in unexpected juxtapositions, the undermining of the strictly ordered world by the ordinary muddle of humanity. In her drawings we are witness to a delicate hand rendering and re-rendering delicate lines capturing the subtle essences of a moment.

www.gms.be

www.nadjavilenne.com



ANNE DAEMS
72 GIRLS AND SOME BOYS WHO COULD BE MODELS — 2006
slide-projection
Courtesy the artist, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Antwerp & Galerie nadjavilenne, Liège

LIEVEN DE BOECK

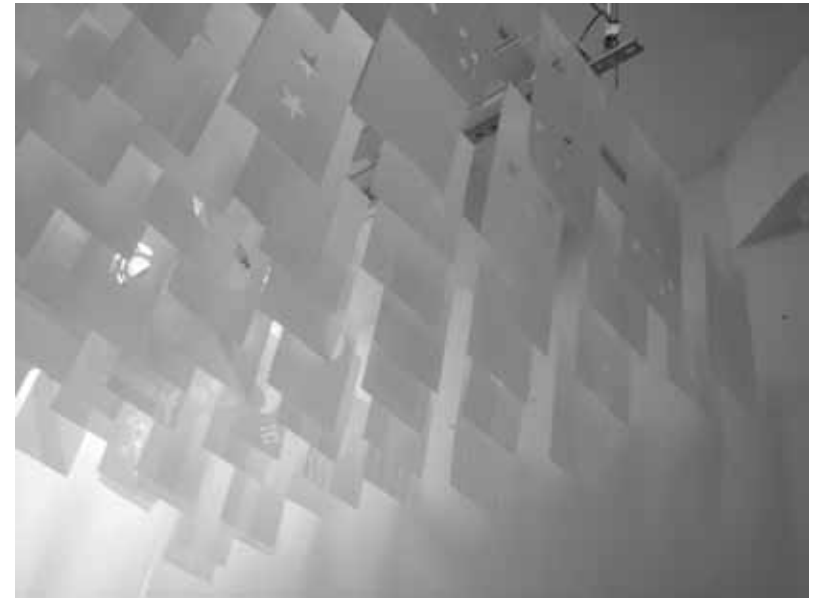
Creating typologies means creating a more or less systematic classification of the types of things according to their common characteristics. It means erasing the particular characteristics in order to keep only the most general ones. In the case of Lieven De Boeck (*1971), this search leads at one hand to a typology of Architecture (as in the seven tables of urbanism which replaces some un-adapted concepts from modern architecture with some new un-adapted ones), a typology of the Museum (based on the ideas of Ernst Neufert), a typology of Housing (which took form in a book, and in the exhibition 'making things public' at Witte de With in Rotterdam) or a typology of a flag (*The white flag(s) project*).

On the other hand De Boeck creates a typology of himself through the medium of the self-portrait. Although this portrait can be a performance, a set of drawings, a neon text or an object, it always is a personal invite to write or imagine his identity.

Lieven de Boeck's project deals with general themes as identity, borders, private and public, territory, appropriation, copy and original but in an extremely individual way.

Text partly based on text of lecture of Pieter Van Bogaert/
Being Lieven De Boeck / Maastricht 2007

www.lievendb.com



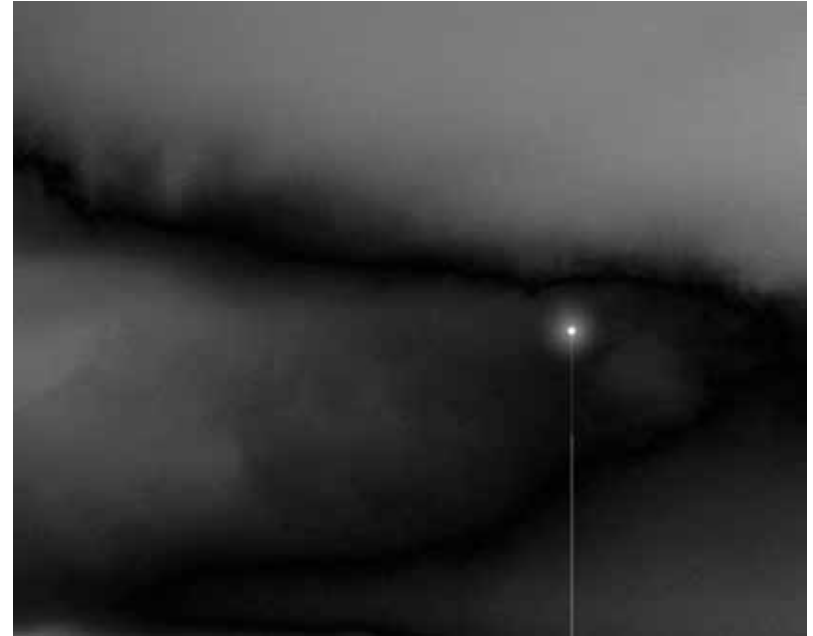
LIEVEN DE BOECK
THE WHITE FLAGS — 2006
Installation view
190 Rags of all UN members in white paper with cut-out symbols

ANOUK DE CLERCQ

Anouk De Clercq (°1971) explores possibilities for creating a virtual world with the computer. The artist has practiced various disciplines and explored a wide variety of media, such as architecture, choreography and fashion design. In her films she uses a digital pictorial language that is based on the computer and the screen: pixels, cursor, text. De Clercq creates mental images: virtual, grey landscapes that constantly transform. These are not cold 3D-spaces, but sensuous interior landscapes that belong to a world of imagination. They hesitate between a panoramic view and the intimacy of a video screen. De Clercq's work is a sort of escape from reality, though it also contains traces of that same reality. By creating a virtual world, the artist tries to acquire more insight into our daily environment.

www.portapak.be

www.augusteorts.be



ANOUK DE CLERCQ
CONDUCTOR — 2004
Video still

STEFAAN DHEEDENE

Stefaan Dheedene (°1975) graduated from the Higher Institute for Fine Arts in 2005. He makes documentaries, objects and spatial constructions – mostly based on social and architectural observations or on real-life situations – which raise questions regarding the visual language of the things. Through the reformulation of the visual and material grammar of images or objects, Dheedene holds his works in a balance between a conventional meaning – formed by the current consensus regarding their practical use, social function and spatial context – and a constructed meaning. Dheedene's objects simultaneously betray sculptural pretenses and a conceptual mentality. The video works offer early on an opportunity for fault, they are often semi-documentaries from which the content is restructured. In general, Dheedene consistently organises a problematic context whereby a language system resonates in another and creates confusion on the level of the content. He also works often with observations of socio-cultural cross-overs or with situations where different layers of cultural meaning affect each other.

Dries Verstraete

www.stefaandheedene.com



STEFAAN DHEEDENE
GATE 4 — 2007
Aluminium, H-lamps
Installation view Deweer Art Gallery, Oltgem

NICO DOCKX

Nico Dockx (°1974) works out of a fundamental preoccupation with archives and structural processes such as data, memories, information, distribution and management. Often outcome of collaboration with other artists, his installations, publications, soundscapes, texts and videos investigate the relationship between perception and remembrance, allowing multiple interpretations to emerge.

Nico Dockx has been awarded with a DAAD grant in 2005 and showed in *Utopia Station*, 50th Venice Biennial/ Haus der Kunst, Munich; *Monopolis*, Witte de With, Rotterdam; *Through Time & Today*, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, *daybyday & another day*, Centre international d'art et du paysage de l'île de Vassivière and *CRYPTICCRYSTALCLOUD* at CCA in Kitakyushu.

www.lightmachine.info



VINCENT GEYSKENS

The movement between abstract and figurative that is constantly putting photos and paintings at risk, is a constant theme in the work of Vincent Geyskens ('1971). In his incisive explorations with paint he highlights the problem of painting by combining abstract and figurative in an apparently smooth way. He switches easily from one style to another, thus putting not just his medium into question, but also subverting the way we look at things.

Geyskens' heterogeneous work comes from an uninterrupted quest into formal basics of painting and its difficult position within today's consumer society. His paintings all come over as very conscious and often have an – albeit subtle – ironic, polemic effect.

Geyskens' work thematises the problematic character of creating images in a period that suffers from image inflation and habit.

www.annettedekeyser.com



VINCENT GEYSKENS
SELF-PORTRAIT — 2001
collage on wood, 49 x 35cm
Courtesy the artist & Gallery Annette De Keyser, Antwerp

TINA GILLEN

Tina Gillen (°1972) devises her paintings and their constituent attributes – a figurative universe offset by surfacing forms – with both intensity and precision.

In the pictorial compositions that characterise her latest works, surface and space compete for the viewer's attention. From this tension arises a struggle of near-abstract forms with narrative imagery. Through the suppression and shifting of descriptive elements, which she depicts from her very close environment, the artist deprives the paintings of any certainty, shattering the notion of the painting as a representational device of the real and coherent world. Memories and desires merge: a feeling of ubiquity seizes the viewer who in turn becomes the legitimising actor of the painting's reality.

www.crowngallery.be

www.nosbaumreding.lu



TINA GILLEN
HUNTING LODGES — 2007
Acrylics on canvas, 166 x 234 cm
Courtesy the artist & Crown Gallery, Brussels

GEERT GOIRIS

The work of Geert Goiris (°1971) is not recording photography. The best way to describe it is as 'encountering photography'. Seeking out this one-off moment is impossible. At most, it happens to us. We bump into it unexpectedly, like a gift. It is like a *hapax legomenon*. This linguistic concept refers to a word that is found only once in a continuous text. The world, which we are used to experiencing, forms a kind of continuous text in space and time. There, this oneoff experience occurs, suddenly and unpredictably. For one brief moment, the world speaks to us. In this sense, each image of Geert Goiris is a hapax legomenon. Though his photography tries to capture this extraordinary moment, it can only show its disappearance. Better yet, it succeeds in showing what disappears.

Francis Smets

www.catherinebastide.com

www.galerieartconcept.com



GEERT GOIRIS
SOLITARY TREE — 2006
Lambda print, 100 x 130 cm

JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS

The collaborative work of artists Jos de Gruyter (°1966) and Harald Thys (°1965) is rooted in a folksy, tragicomic sensibility honed into an experimental dramaturgy. Their video and photographic work use simple, symbolic sets, including the paradigmatic spaces of home, battlefield, urban periphery and community hall. They have engaged a recurring cast of nonprofessional actors as well as invented or adopted personae spanning the forms of puppets, dummies, plush animals, makeshift robots and rejected toys. These characters continually rehearse power dynamics and emotional entanglements, creating worlds not unlike our own, yet more focused, bizarre and bleak. The artists seek ways to confront marginal, incapacitated, lost and alienated subjects without defining these 'others' in sociological terms. In this sense, and especially in their novel use of a ghoulish humour, De Gruyter and Thys broaden the scope of reflection on socially produced behaviour.

Monika Szewczyk

www.dependance.be



JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS
FRIGATE — 2008
Film still
Courtesy the artists & Gallery dependence, Brussels

JAN KEMPEAERS

Since 1991 Jan Kempenaers (°1968) has mainly portrayed urbanised landscapes.

He is most known for his large-scale, panoramic and detailed colour images of Japanese cities, Sarajevo, London, Paris and Berlin.

Recently, his art work focuses more strongly on scenic landscapes and on architecture. Notwithstanding this evolution regarding the content, his photographs are still characterised by the same style. His most recent project entitled *Spomenik* concerns a photographic series of abstract communist monuments in former Yugoslavia.

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/25



JAN KEMPEAERS
SPOMENIK #4 — 2007
Colour photograph, 100 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist

IVES MAES

The comprehensive multi-part project *Recyclable Refugee Camp* by Ives Maes (°1974) comprises different aspects and their respective objects which, together, address the highly-controversial ethical theme of how to appropriately deal with the increasing movements of refugees worldwide. The artist links all conceivable perspectives by making offers that would improve the physical and psychological state of the refugees themselves, such as for example tarpaulins and latrines; by opposing the causes and side-effects with the help of biodegradable anti-personnel mines; or by offering adventure holidays in a refugee camp for bored Westerners. In the spirit of the UNHCR declaration of universal human rights, Maes also confronts other global problems through his work on this project: the objects are all made of recycled materials, are completely bio-degradable and require limited transportation costs. Maes' work questions the role contemporary art can or wants to play in 'real' life, or whether it is by definition nobly condemned to have no function. The fact that Maes is nevertheless still involved in the current discourse is evident in the irony with which he investigates the objectives of a contemporary hyper-ethic.

Excerpt from the text 'P.R.I.V.A.C.Y.' by Melanie Bono, published in 'After Cage, 24 collections in motion', DuMont Literatur & Kunst Verlag, 2007

www.r-r-c.org

www.koraalberg.be

www.likeyou.com/brigitte weiss



IVES MAES
HAZARD MARKING SYSTEM — 2006
Email, steel, 220 x 45 cm
Installation view The Greenery Line, S.M.A.K, Ghent

VALÉRIE MANNAERTS

Valérie Mannaerts (°1974) currently lives and works in Brussels and New York. Her sculptures and drawings present blanks and confound us with juxtapositions and zones of indistinction between human and some other life — monster, rare organ or ghost. The artist shows us her research of a graspable, open, sometimes even friendly or beautiful monstrosity as an aid to an experimental knowledge. Valérie Mannaerts' work seems concerned with presenting physical forms that are a living entity of sorts. Something that will remain blank and almost breathing, thus fundamentally challenging the 'liveliness' in the viewer. Her recent drawings and sculptures represent objects on pedestals and screens that are rooted in our domestic surroundings but remain ungraspable in their meaning and form.

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/27



VALÉRIE MANNAERTS
EXHIBITION VIEW ETABLISSEMENT D'EN FACE — 2007
Photo: Michael De Lucaney

KRIS MARTIN

Whether working on the scale of monumental sculpture or dematerialised gesture Kris Martin's practice positions itself at the extreme brink of cognition – how knowledge and wisdom is gained at the close of experience or how life is recognised only at the edge of death. *Vase* is a seven-foot high reproduction of a ceramic Ming vase. Its conditions of existence require that it be broken and reassembled each time it is exhibited. The work *100 Years* by Martin (°1972) offers a similar play on entropy and the irreversibility of time's arrow. A self-degrading sculpture, the golden orb will be eventually tarnished by oxidation. Whether its eventual degradation marks the commemoration of great talent now passed away, or, is merely the damp squib of an artist consigned to insignificance remains to be seen. It is only known that all things, art and reputation alike, come to an end.

after Neville Wakefield

www.sieshoeke.com



KRIS MARTIN
100 YEARS — 2004
Mixed media
Courtesy the artist & Sies + Hoke Galerie, Düsseldorf

SOPHIE NYS

Sophie Nys (°1974) studied visual arts at the Sint-Lucas Institute in Ghent. She also followed post-graduate studies at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht.

The work of Sophie Nys is characterised by a minimalist aesthetic of rudimentary graphics (and by preference for 'poor' materials such as paper and 'simple' techniques such as photocopies) that break through the fetish surrounding unique artefacts. In her incisive and humorous works, current art practices that form the contemporary art scene are often confronted.

www.galeriegretameert.com



SOPHIE NYS
HI TA GI! — 2006
Series of 24 slides, black & white
Courtesy Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels

HANS OP DE BEECK

The multidisciplinary oeuvre of Hans Op de Beeck (°1969) consists of sculptures, sculptural installations, multimedia works, videos, animation movies, drawings, photography, text works and stage design.

Op de Beeck builds and stages contemporary, fictive urban and household locations, situations and characters that seem very familiar to the viewer. These include both lonely spots for reflection and crowded spaces, populated at times by bungling characters who tell us something about the way we live today, the paths we follow and how we attempt – with great ineptitude – to deal with time, space and each other.

www.hansopdebeeck.com



HANS OP DE BEECK
LOCATION (6) — 2008
Sculptural installation, mixed media (18m diameter, 4m in height)
Courtesy the artist, Xavier Huÿens, Brussels; Galleria Continua, San Gimignano-Beijing;
Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna; Ron Mandos, Amsterdam-Rotterdam
Coproduced by Holland Festival
Photo: Studio Hans Op de Beeck

ELS OPSOMER

Els Opsomer (°1968), video artist, photographer and graphic designer, lives and works in Brussels. Her constantly expanding archive of urban images, together with textual commentary, is a reinterpretation of our globalised reality, exposing and challenging the notion of personal integrity within it. Opsomer travels around the world, creating an expanding 'urban archive' of images. She photographs ordinary fragments of urban reality, elements we no longer notice, snapshots in the margin of an ever-changing world. Many of her observations bear on the phenomena defined by anthropologist Marc Augé as 'non-lieux': anonymous and interchangeable places like parking lots, highways, motels, skyscrapers, airports, and so on. At other times, this generic character is inflected by a distinctly person touch: the anonymity of the metropolis acquires an unexpected intimate dimension.

Recent solo shows include *10th Istanbul Biennial*, Istanbul (2007); *Loop videoart*, Barcelona, (2007); *Shadows and Snow*, Erna Hécey Gallery, Brussels; '_imovie [1-2-3]_', MACs Grand Hornu; *Time Suspended*, Kunsthall, Bergen; Witte de With, Rotterdam [2005-2004]; *Signals in the Dark : Art in the shadow of War*, Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montréal, Canada - Model Arts & Niland Gallery, Sligo, Ireland - *Masarat*, Les Halles en Palestine, Brussels, Belgium (2008). Opsomer has participated at the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008), Gwangju, South - Korea and showed *Building Stories #002 LOVE SUFFERING MECHANICAL DISORDER* at the 1st Brussels Biennial (2008), Belgium. She lectures at ENSAV La Cambre, Brussels.

www.elsopsomer.net



ELS OPSOMER
SHADES OF SURVIVAL/ AROUND ME # FOR AKM — 2007
Installation views Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, 2007

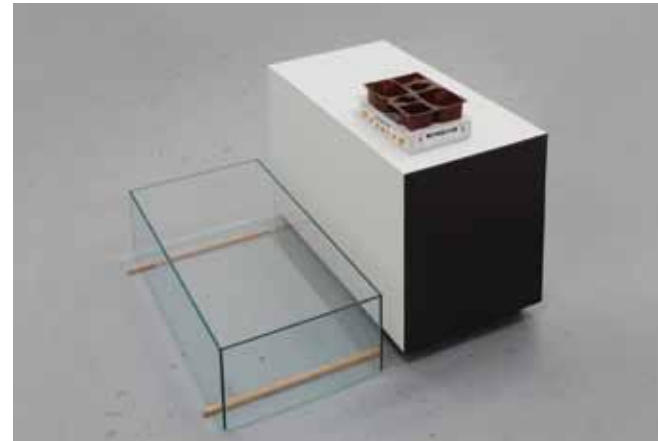
GERT ROBIJNS

Rather than mirroring or representing reality, Gert Robijns' works are conceived as extensions of it. Robijns (°1972) operates with a minimum of signals that can be sounds but equally a change in temperature, a gust of wind or a flickering light bulb, to generate a peripheral snippet of our attention. Robijns transposes these signals, with a minimal enunciative potential, into extensive installations.

Robijns is focussing and scattering our perceptions by adding sounds or images to a space like interpolating pixels in the digital realm. In that enhanced space a network of triggers unfolds like an index of space, time and subjectivity.

after Wim Peeters

www.stellalohausgallery.com



GERT ROBIJNS
HAPPY NEW YEAR — 2008
Details from installation
Installation view Stella Lohaus Gallery, Antwerp

PETER ROGIERS

The sculptures of Peter Rogiers (°1967) are often seen through their position regarding art history. These interpretations come about, however, mostly through third parties and by the artist after the realisation process. In this respect, he emphasises his interest in subculture and rough art and causes one to recall some of the caricatured sculptures of Caius Gabriel Cibber in the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London, a distant inspiration source for the artist. The implacable 'error' of these marginal sculptures offers many more opportunities for Rogiers than the official history. Likewise, among others, the painters Mikhail Vrubel, Lovis Corinth, James Ensor, Louis Soutter, Georg Baselitz, Philip Guston, Gary Panter, Peter Saul and B-films are relatively firm benchmarks as well. Rogiers sees himself as a traditional artist: 'to break things up, first you must have a clear standard, sometimes you win by putting them back in their original context, and sometimes you break them up again, in a certain way it is something like collage assembly'.

In his new sculptures there is a clear link to film and motion, by the use of repetition of parts and by placing these on other sculptures in another context, as if the sculptures are one and the same person moving as an actor, dancer through the exhibition space. Rogiers calls the repetition of these elements 'hybrid sculptures'. Everything is ironic and playful, never objectified, a clash, or conflict between opposing interests.

www.timvanlaeregallery.com



PETER ROGIERS
A MOBSULPTURE — 2007
Epoxy, polyester, iron, polyurethane-varnish and paint, 192 x 182 x 180 cm
Courtesy the artist & Tim Van Laere Gallery, Antwerp

ANA TORFS

Ana Torfs (°1963) made various installations with slide projections, photo series, a web project, a feature film, several publications etc. In her work she has dealt, among others, with questions such as perception, representation and the construction of images and identity. She has also focussed on the tension between text and image, between reading and visualising and — in a larger sense — between fiction and reality. Above all her fascinating work offers a strong visual experience. But texts are often used as a starting point: the conversation books of a composer turned deaf in *Zyklus von Kleinigkeiten* (*Cycle of Trifles*, 1998); the records of a trial in *Du mentir-faux*, (*About Lying Falsehood*, 2000) or *ANATOMY* (2006); a theatre piece from 1890 in *The Intruder* (2004); songs about exile from the 1940s in *Approximations|Contradictions* (2004) etc.

Torfs was awarded with a DAAD artist-in-residency in 2005/2006. She's preparing a major solo exhibition in K21 in Düsseldorf (2009).

www.anatorfs.com

www.diaart.org/torfs

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/35



ANA TORFS
ANATOMY — 2006
Slide photograph
© photo Ana Torfs

MICHAEL VAN DEN ABEELE

There is hardly any stylistic continuity or mannerism in the diverse parallel activities of Michael Van den Abeele (°1974), going from post-surrealist drawing over animation-video to commodity objects and song-performances. But instead of being separated out from one another, they should be seen as embracing or instigating each other in an almost hysterical way.

The animation-videos deal with sex & sci-fi nostalgia, religion, the sublime of cigarettes, the travelling romance of contemporary courier-companies and regression as constitutive for social cohesion.

The drawings and paintings on the other hand seem puzzled about a certain paradox in the appearance of a ghost; the transparent appearance of a dead person, bound to return. Although transparent, we never get to see the inside – the guts – of the ghost, we merely look through its outer appearance. 'It is very hard to keep both the illusion and the plane simultaneously', the painter Malcolm Morley once stated.

Michael Van den Abeele also works as co-curator of the Brussels based art centre Etablissement d'en face.

www.pilotlondon.org

www.etablissementdenfaceprojects.com

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wXzrjVHj_M



MICHAEL VAN DEN ABEELE
SMOKING — 2005
Video still

PATRICK VANDEN EYNDE

The pictorial space of Patrick Vanden Eynde (°1964) arises from collages, compositions with collected images of objects (objects which function like props in a virtual scenography) of contrasting scale and nature, cut out of specialised magazines. This imaginary space, a mixture of hyper-reality and fiction, is an experimental universe created to explore the relations and interactions between reality, the image of reality, and the memory of the image.

Patrick Vanden Eynde is creating a new peculiar version of 'Still Life' and you have to discover the integrated layers of meaning and references. This world of him, like any fictitious universe, needs to be acknowledged bit by bit, work by work.

www.crowngallery.be



PATRICK VANDEN EYNDE
UNTITLED — 2007
Oil on canvas, 55 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist & Crown Gallery, Brussels

GERT VERHOEVEN

Whether it involves hands, feet, greens, beans, pumpkins, copy-balls, dishes or sardines, Gert Verhoeven's works almost always gives the impression of staging: a table becomes a podium, a series of drawings is introduced by a sheet with 'dramatis personae'. We constantly encounter metaphors from theatre/staging. Yet the work is not theatrical in the usual sense of that word...

Recently Verhoeven (*1964) has created a new series of prints: *Coca*. They consist of pictures taken from an old cooking book. *Timbale à l'ambassadeur*, *Langouste Mozart*, *Coquille de foie gras à la gelée*, are some examples of a highly sophisticated tradition. The images are completed by texts and formulas, playing with notions of today's mass culture such as pink coca or black ketchup. Not without humour the encounter of the traditional dishes and the contemporary recipes determine new positions within the field of cultural identity.

www.galerie-nelson.com

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/45

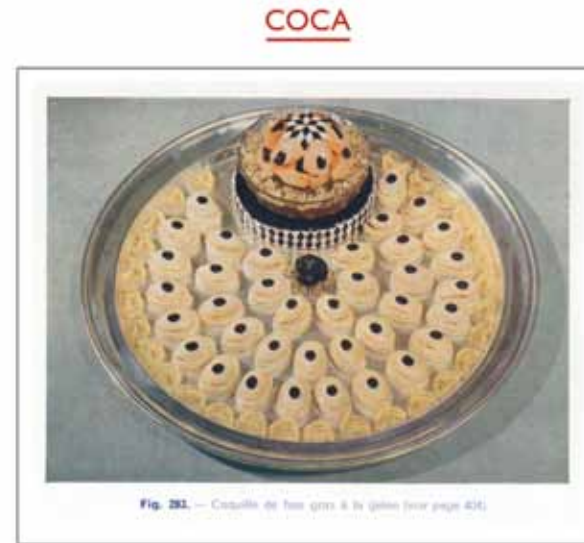


Fig. 283. — Coquille de foie gras à la gelée (voir page 436)

$$P(k=N/r=n) = \frac{P(k=N) P(r=a/k=N)}{\sum_{M=1}^{\infty} P(k=M) P(r=a/k=M)}$$

$$\text{Hot}(\text{coca} = \text{FETO-KUP} / \text{coca} = \text{ketchup}) = \frac{\text{Hot}(\text{coca} = \text{FETO-KUP}) \cdot \text{Hot}(\text{coca} = \text{ketchup} / \text{coca} = \text{FETO-KUP})}{\sum_{\text{HAMBURGER} = \text{HAMBURGER}} \text{Hot}(\text{coca} = \text{HAMBURGER}) \cdot \text{Hot}(\text{coca} = \text{ketchup} / \text{coca} = \text{HAMBURGER})}$$

ANGELO VERMEULEN

Angelo Vermeulen (°1971) works with photography, video, new media and installations. He obtained a PhD in biology in 1998 at the University of Leuven, together with a degree in photography at the Academy of Fine Arts of Leuven. After his studies, he moved to London to collaborate with Nick Waplington. Back in Belgium he became an artist in residence at HISK in Antwerp. His bio installations, experimental set-ups incorporating living cells, organisms and sci-fi references are his most well-known works. Up until 2005 he has been working on the experimental film project *SKANNER*, an inquiry into human fear in co-operation with Tamuraj, electronic musician and mathematics researcher. In 2005 he founded *Drumlander*, a creative platform on game culture in collaboration with Canadian gamer and artist Louis Blackburn. *Drumlander* has been creating audio performances with game music and installations with underground games. Currently, Vermeulen develops *Biomodd*, a worldwide series of installations fusing game culture, ecology and social interaction. He is regularly invited to give lectures on art, science and new technologies. He is also writing a dialogue book on the relation between art, technology and spirituality in partnership with art philosopher Antoon Van den Braembussche.

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/en/197/

www.we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2007/02/interview-with-10.php



ANGELO VERMEULEN
BIOMODD [ATH1] — 2007-2008
Mixed media
Installation view Union Arts, Athens, Ohio, US, 2008

HEIDI VOET

The vague line between reality and fantasy is omnipresent in the work of Heidi Voet (°1972). Through using the existing conditions of a space and adding new elements to it, she orchestrates a collision between the rational and the implausible. Voet imagines settings and translates them into physical form, resulting in a vivid language where the impulsive wonder of our fantasies is set at odds with order and predictability. The new layers on the existing architecture stress the possibilities that are incorporated in a concrete place and time, and emphasise the arbitrariness of the present situation.

www.heidivoet.net



HEIDI VOET
THE EARTH IS FLAT — 2007
Poster on ceiling, 1200 x 1200 cm
Installation view
Photo Kristien Daem



Arts Flanders is an initiative of the four main supporting organisations for the arts in Flanders. With this two-monthly e-zine we want to keep you up to date on the Flemish arts scene in Belgium and abroad. Feel free to copy content for your local media or to forward this newsletter to arts aficionados around the globe!

The Arts Flanders e-zine covers all arts: from architecture to music, visual, audiovisual or performing arts. We offer a selective event calendar of Flemish arts abroad as well. You can find the full list of events on our website or download it as an excel-sheet flexible enough to integrate in your local media.

The content of Arts Flanders is edited by the Flanders Music Centre, the Vlaams Theater Instituut (Platform for the Performing Arts), the Flemish Architecture Institute, and the Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art (BAM). More about these organisations can be found on www.artsflanders.be.

You can subscribe to Arts Flanders via www.artsflanders.be. If you have any questions or need information about a specific event: do not hesitate to contact us! Suggestions or reactions can be sent to info@artsflanders.be.

CONTACT/
INFORMATION



**FLEMISH INSTITUTE FOR
VISUAL, AUDIOVISUAL AND
MEDIA ART**

Bijlokekaai 7d
9000 Ghent - Belgium
T +32 (0)9 267 90 40
info@bamart.be
www.bamart.be

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COORDINATION Adinda Van Geystelen, Advisor on the Arts, Flemish Minister of Culture

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EDITORS Dirk De Wit, Anne Judong

COORDINATION Anne Judong, An Seurinck

FINAL EDITING Anne Judong

AUTHORS Mark Ruyters, Eva Wittocx (thanks to Liesbeth Huybrechts)

GRAPHIC DESIGN Geoffrey Brusatto

TRANSLATOR Beth O'Brien

PRINTER Drukkerij Leën, Hasselt

RESPONSIBLE EDITOR Christine Claus, Arenbergstraat 9, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

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