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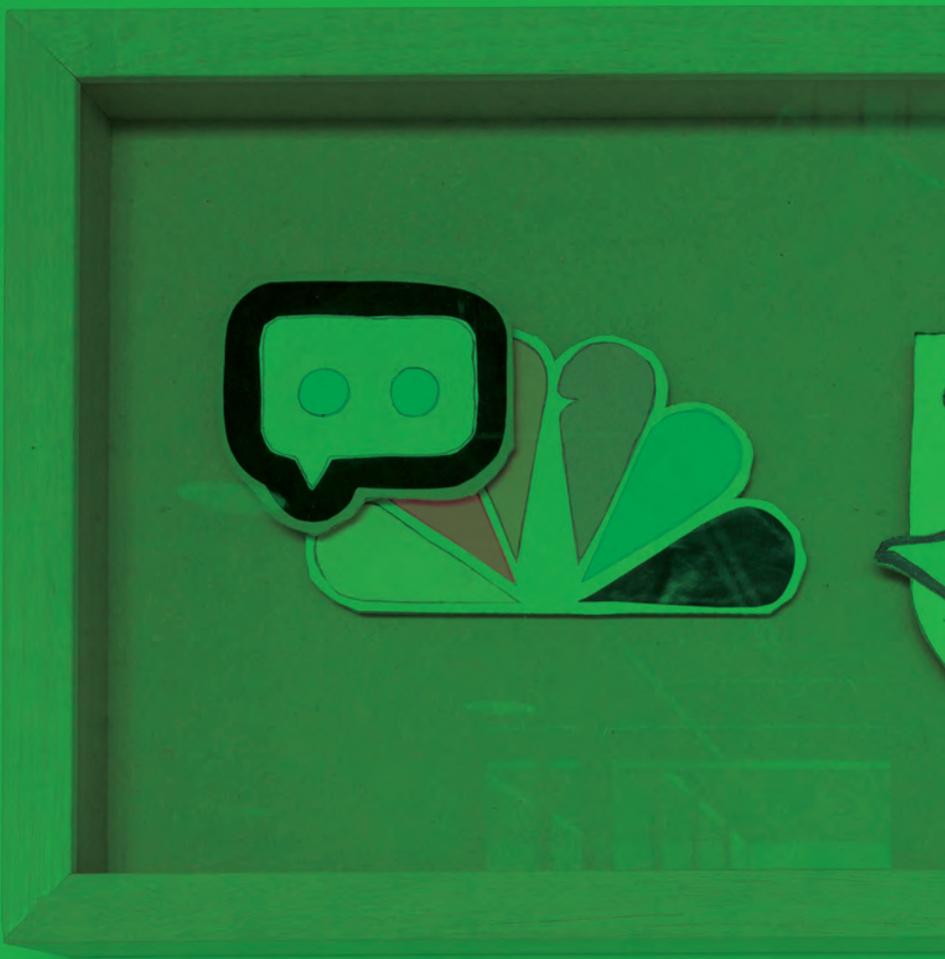


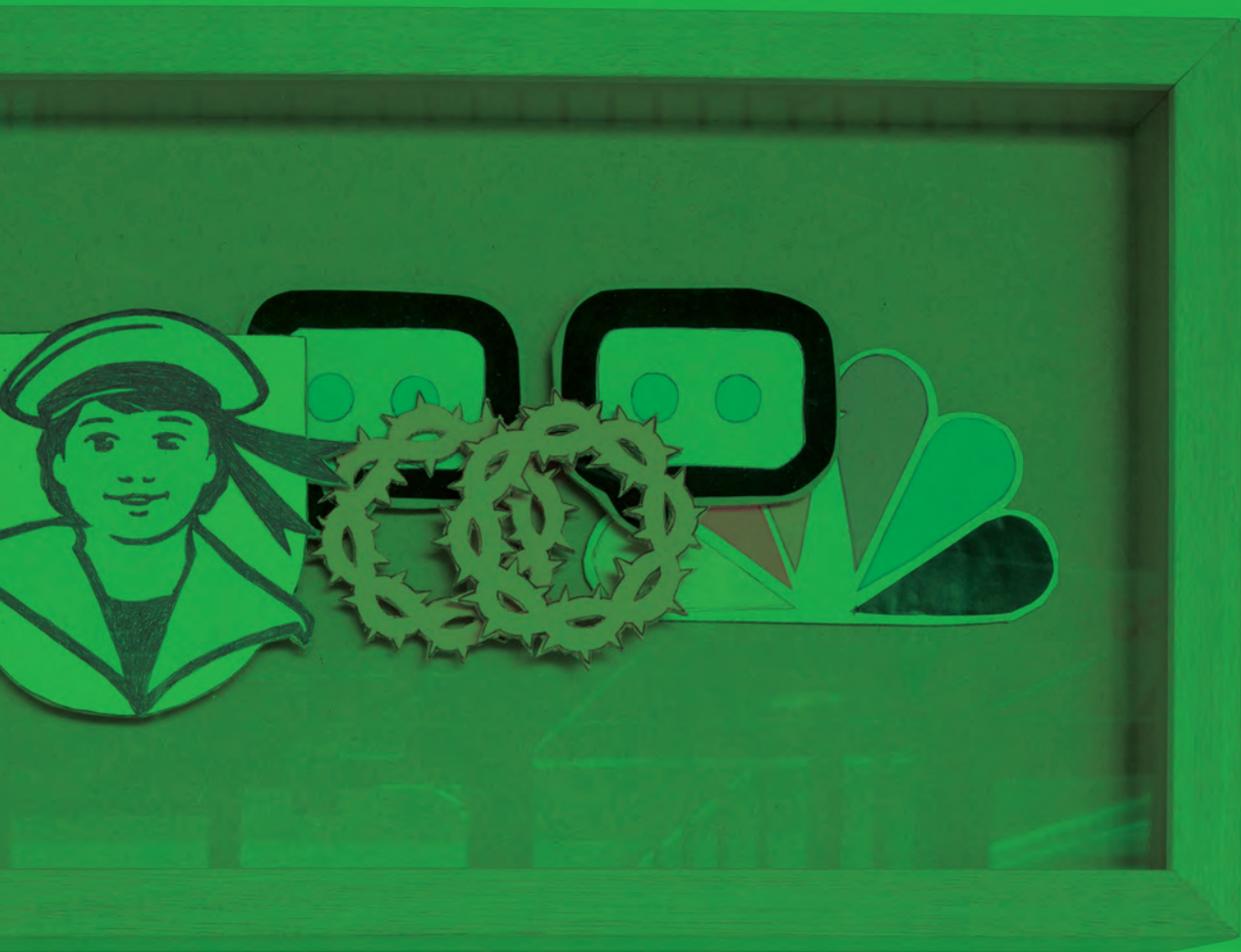






















CINOC



Art by Commission

2006–2013

VLAAMS BOUWMEESTER

ART TEAM

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Stripped bare

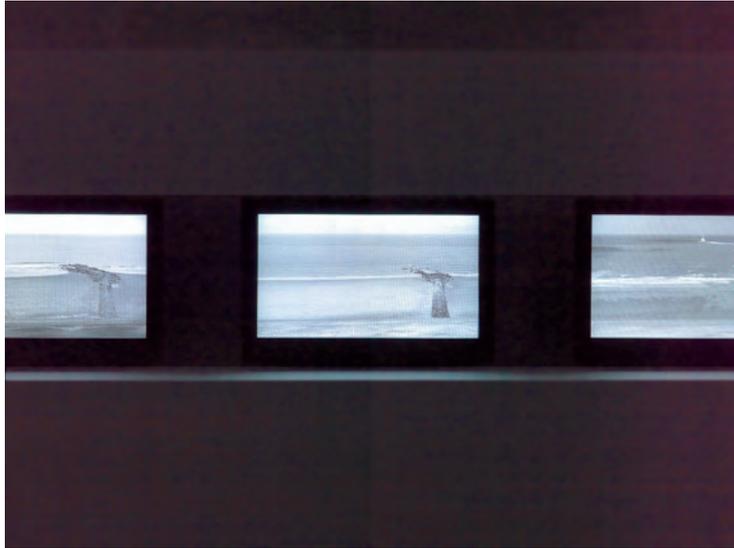
Art and architecture have very little to do with one another in terms of motivation, conception or realization. Architecture is something that fundamentally serves, shelters and – at its best – reassures; it is never disconcerting. Art, by contrast, is the epitome of questioning – no matter how negative, far-reaching, surreal or disturbing the result may turn out to be. Questioning is the primary purpose, regardless of the consequences. Art is about testing that freedom.

If there were such a thing as a relevant link between art and architecture, it might be the challenging of the spatial, whether material or immaterial. Either way, art and architecture (finally) prised themselves apart over the past century. Before that, the two disciplines had existed within a symbiosis of functionality and symbolism. The *Gesamtkunstwerk*, Art Deco and the International Style (the worldwide fusion of art and science) represented the final convulsions of their formal and substantive overlap, since when the two have gone their separate ways.

Although commissioned art might seem in the first instance to be an assault on this liberation; in reality, it implies precisely the opposite. Many of history's most intriguing works of art were, after all, produced to order, in response to a specific request. All the same, commissioned art might well be the ultimate challenge for art and its artist: a stripping bare or *mise à nu*. The possibility of a radical new beginning? At its worst, commissioned art can result in 'integrated art' – a fig-leaf for instilling meaning in architecture, or an alibi for the artist not having to try too hard. At its best, though, commissioned art is straightforwardly relevant to society, to the collective space, to policy. No rules, just possibilities.

The Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team has worked consistently and steadily since 1999 on the policy-based development of commissioned art, in the process of which we have guided both public-sector principals and policy makers, while also formulating and issuing commissions ourselves. There has been a good deal of trial and error, but it is this very trial and error we want to communicate, warts and all, and even to instigate. *Art by Commission 2006–13*, like *Art by Commission 1999–2005*, has turned into an exhaustive work of reference, in which we intend to critically scrutinize the impact of enthusiastic and engaged principals and of the art they help bring into being. It is a book without certainties, a priori positions or dogmas, which seeks to question and explore.

Peter Swinnen
Vlaams Bouwmeester



Artistic adviser Piet Coessens proposed a number of artists, including the Belgian Lili Dujourie, for a 2005 commission on behalf of the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre in Ostend. The commissioner did not accept his recommendation to select her concept. The video installation *Il fait dimanche sur la mer* was nevertheless realized in 2009 as part of the Beaufort Triennial and was subsequently purchased by Mu.ZEE in Ostend.



Jimmie Durham's *Thinking of you*, published as a concept in *Cahier #1*, later featured in two different presentations, at the Biennale de Lyon (2009) – shown here – and in the solo exhibition 'Pierres rejetées' at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009).

Art as social mission

Katrien Laenen

The end of b0b Van Reeth's term as first Vlaams Bouwmeester ('Flemish Government Architect') marked the end of a period of experiment for the art team. A detailed account of its quest for the right approach and interaction between policy and projects can be found in *Kunst in opdracht 1999–2005*. The successor to that book, which you now have before you, explores a phase during which coordination and mediation in the commissioning of art took shape. Thanks to the foundations laid by the first artistic adviser, Ulrike Lindmayr (2001–04), the art team came to be recognized by public bodies and artists as a professional player, sparking a boom in advisory requests. The art team developed procedures and instruments that safeguard the integrity and uniqueness of the artwork, while facilitating dialogue between artists and public-sector principals. The comprehensive project approach also led to the widening of the team's mandate, to take in themed artistic research and policy-preparing initiatives. The interaction between the policy emphases of the second and third Bouwmeesters, Marcel Smets and Peter Swinnen, and the insight and approach of the artistic advisers served as an important guide in this process. We describe below how Lindmayr's successors, Piet Coessens, Rolf Quaghebeur and Ronald Van de Sompel, directed the further professionalization of commissioned art from within the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team at both project and policy level.

ART TEAM FOCUSES ON PRODUCTION, MEDIATION AND RESEARCH

Piet Coessens (2005–07) added an important facet to the functioning of the art team by acting himself as the producer of an art commission. 'In the case of projects with the potential to break new ground,' he stated, 'it seems important to be able to place the commission with the artist from within the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team itself'.¹ Coessens found various points of

¹ See *Team Vlaams Bouwmeester. Annual Report 2007*, Brussels, pp. 41–47.

connection, including Marcel Smets' decision to focus on school building. He invited the artist Franciska Lambrechts to reflect on the school as a cultural, social and political fact, to help create a critical frame of reference and to deliver an artistic contribution to the preliminary study. The result was the 16mm film *Ideaaahhh!*, which did not focus so much on the school as an institution, as on the learning process and how it relates to questions such as identity, inclusion and exclusion. The film was distributed in DVD format via a publication² and was given several public screenings (e.g. Flagey 2008, Cinema Arenberg 2009).

KU 0727

Piet Coessens wanted to contribute to the development of a special community collection via a patrimony of public buildings. In so doing, he intended to illustrate that artistic mediation has a role to play in the relationship between art and architecture and between art and the commissioner of a building, and how that mediation can substantively nourish and influence the process. The artistic adviser closely tracks the contemporary art scene and ensures that a commission for the artist 'can be a step toward a new medium, a different scale and an unexpected realization'.³

The *Cahiers* series was launched in 2006 to fulfil the ambitions of the second Vlaams Bouwmeester and the need for more artistic research. In these publications, the art team used essays and artists' interventions to explore aspects of visual arts in the public space, from a general social and cultural angle. The first of the series – *Rond punt. Over verkeersrotonde als context voor kunst* ('Roundabouts. Traffic Roundabouts as a Context for Art') – reflected Bouwmeester Marcel Smets' focus on infrastructure and concentrated on an aspect of the public space that is also perceived as problematic in the field of contemporary visual art. The publication was presented in December 2007 to mark the opening of the accompanying exhibition at the LLS 387 art space, and featured an introduction by Kasper König.

The launch of the *Cahiers* series also encouraged the art team to extend its functioning to include art commissions for the public space. In 2006, Piet Coessens advised the Province of Limburg on what was referred to at the

² See *Cahier #2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders.*, Vlaams Bouwmeester, Brussels, 2009.

³ See *Team Vlaams Bouwmeester. Annual Report 2007*, Brussels, pp. 41–47.



In launching the *Cahiers* initiative, the art team indicated its desire to assume a role within the debate regarding the quality of art in the public space. *Cahier#1* was presented in December 2007 at LLS387 – a new space for contemporary arts under the artistic leadership of Ulrike Lindmayr. The accompanying exhibition was introduced by Kasper König, the man who helped set up *Skulptur Projekte Münster* in 1977 and who organized the fourth edition of the event in 2007, in collaboration with Brigitte Franzen and Carina Plath.



An artistic master plan was drawn up for the Province of Limburg based on regional research into physical-geographical and sociopolitical phenomena that might form an interesting seedbed for an artistic project. Four areas were marked out. A number of interventions took place in Haspengouw under the name Pit, in which cultural heritage and the regional landscape featured centrally. Gijs Van Vaerenbergh's *Reading Between the Lines* in Borgloon responded perfectly to these principles, both thematically and in terms of location.



As part of the 2010 Masterclass, the artist Roberta Gigante collaborated with the architect Sarah Melsens on a project for the gravel bins at the old docks in Ghent. (KU 1022)



An ambitious proposal by Joëlle Tuerlinckx for the Muntpunt in Brussels was selected, but ultimately failed to receive the necessary backing to be realized. The concept was later reflected in the work *Grande Chute Rose*, which could be seen at Tuerlinckx' exhibition 'Wor(l)d in progress' at Wiels in Brussels (2012).

time as the 'cycle path project', developed with the financial support of the Fund for Cultural Infrastructure (FoCI). Jan Debbaut drew up a preliminary artistic master plan, which formed the point of departure for a special initiative for art in the public space, implemented in stages by 'Z33 Huis voor Actuele Kunst'. The art team continues to play an advisory role in the steering committee overseeing the permanent and temporary commissions for the landscapes and regions of Borgloon-Heers (Pit, 2011 et seq.), the Hasselt-Genk Bipole (De Unie, 2014), the Maasland and the Zuid-Willemsvaart.

ART AND THE MASTERCLASS

Piet Coessens selected Richard Venlet as the artistic supervisor for the first fully fledged edition of the Masterclass, in which young designers and artists joined forces to reflect on public design commissions. Venlet worked with b0b Van Reeth to determine which project represented the right challenge for each participant. The intense interaction between art and architecture generated some fascinating results, including the canal utility building in Ghent by Freek Wambacq in collaboration with Aurélie De Smet and social housing in Haacht designed by the artist duo Simona Denicolai and Ivo Provoost in collaboration with Stijn Thomas and Marjan Michels.

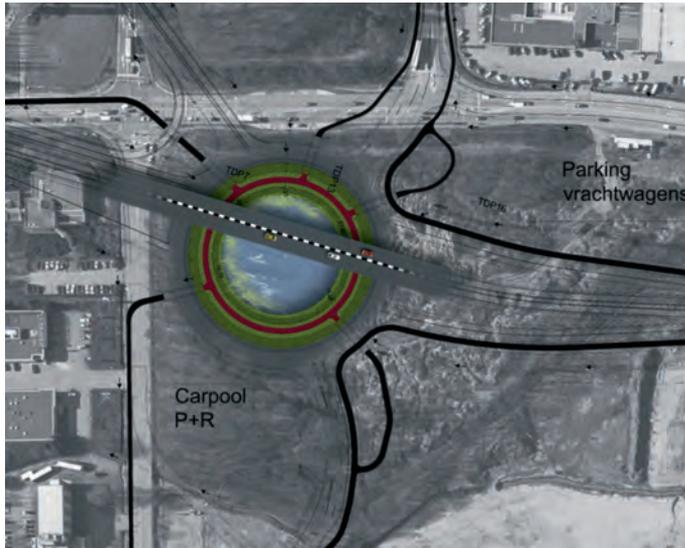
KU 0515

KU 0514

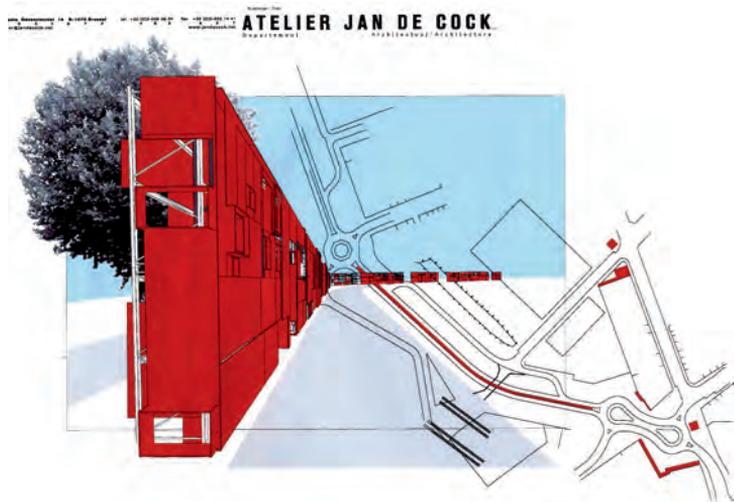
Incorporating art in a Masterclass is particularly challenging. The public design commission is already a big challenge for a young architect, and so integrating an additional artistic focus requires intensive support. Openness, time and a professional framework are the keys to innovative results. The laboratory atmosphere appeals to young architects and artists. The Masterclass ought to focus particularly, perhaps, on long-term educational added value – preparing young people to be able to sit with an open mind around a table with (public-sector) commissioners of construction projects who expect a forward-looking answer to the issues of tomorrow. Challenging principals to test new models of collaboration and to opt, for instance, for an art commission as a preliminary process, could give the Masterclass fresh impetus.

MORE PROJECTS AND MORE INTERACTION

During Rolf Quaghebeur's term (2007–10), the art team launched a total of 111 new art commissions (an average of 28 a year), 66 of which were



The design and content of the Kempen South (Geel) master plan were overseen by the Vlaams Bouwmeester's infrastructure team. In the context of this plan, the art team recommended a landscaped design for several roundabouts, rather than an artistic intervention.



An interesting proposal by Jan De Cock for the 'Appel' roundabout in Kortrijk, which reflected on the overall impact of the public domain at the site in question, could not be realized. (KU0701)

realized. Quaghebeur paid particular attention to the Open Call procedure and focused on the potential interaction with contemporary art from the very beginning of an architectural project. He managed to persuade numerous principals of the value added by an artistic intervention. Cities and municipalities, social services and non-profit organizations in the care sector in particular found their way to the art team in search of professional support and guidance.

The appointment of Marcel Smets also led to a substantial expansion in the Vlaams Bouwmeester's field of operations. The art team took advantage of the focus on school-building, infrastructure and the public space, and also collaborated on existing instruments, such as the Masterclass and the Principal Award. The Masterclass held in Kortrijk (2007) and Ghent (2010) featured artistic supervision by Guillaume Bijl and Emilio López-Menchero respectively. The focused urban context introduced with Marcel Smets' new formula for the Master Trial, gave young artists opportunities to realize projects in the public space.

The relationship between commissioner, architect and artist took on a new perspective in each of these projects. Principal and designer need one another to arrive at a result in what can be an intense interaction, while the addition of art creates a further area of tension. In some cases, the artist is called on by the principal to satisfy a number of social expectations, and in others by the architect to lend weight to the project's spatial and architectural ambitions. The discussion about art is frequently dominated by the vision of one or the other of the two, with the consequence that artistically challenging projects are sometimes not recognized as such.

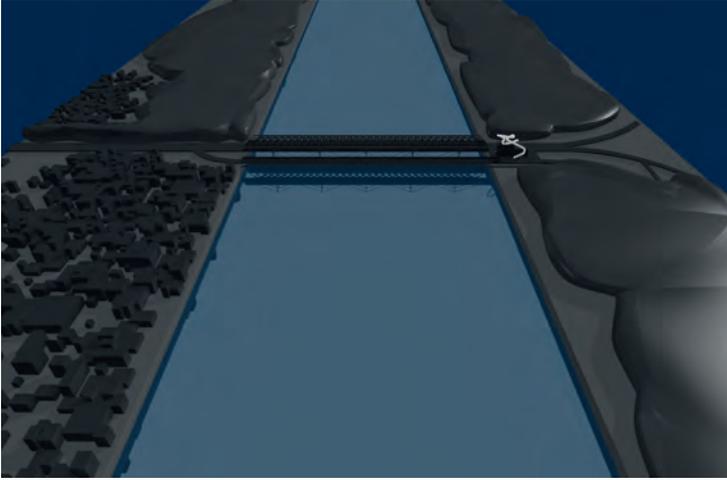
The construction process and the commissioned art process are two related, yet fundamentally different procedures. The construction project is necessary and fulfils a project definition. Art, by contrast, has no practical use and is not required to meet specific expectations. By separating the two processes, we reduce the pressure on the principal while still utilizing the dynamics of a construction project to realize a socially and artistically relevant artwork. An independent mediator can help incorporate the necessary distance in that regard. The surprise that sometimes arises in an open relationship with the principal as commissioner and architect results in the most valuable achievements.

ART AND INFRASTRUCTURE

In addition to improving its general functioning, the art team has also looked for ways of further expanding policy with regard to commissioned art. It seeks to influence regulation through artistic research and by initiating projects that can serve as an example. The launch of *Cahier #1* by Piet Coessens and Ulrike Lindmayr was a first step in this direction, while Rolf Quaghebeur focused on policy goals. A new approach to the (artistic) design of roundabouts was set out in a service order of the Roads and Traffic Agency, which came into force in June 2007. The aim, with the advice of the art team, was to determine proactively and from a broad perspective where art might offer added value during the design stage of road infrastructure. Local authorities, for instance, were encouraged to develop a view at an early stage regarding the design of the public space and to work on this synergy with the Flemish Government.

A number of qualifications should be made, however. *Cahier #1* set out to raise awareness of the lasting cultural impact – transcending the specific locality – of art on roundabouts. However, in the case of most of the requests for advice received by the art team in response to the service order, the roundabout was viewed as an isolated site, which served all too frequently to ‘glorify’ the economic activity of local businesses. An amendment to the service order in 2013 partially responded to this by calling for greater quality and diversity in the layout. An artistic approach is not necessarily the best solution here. The amendment was also intended to address the art team’s advisory capacity: since the consultative function began in 2007, some seventy requests for advice were submitted, less than 10% of which showed evidence of a high-quality approach and result. Nevertheless, without realizing it, the Flemish Region has come to manage one of the largest open-air collections of art. There is increased attention for art on roundabouts, therefore, but work still needs to be done on the professional coordination of the commissioner. A broad-based framework for art and infrastructure on the part of the Flemish Government could go some way toward meeting that need.

By means of a collaboration agreement between infrastructure departments and the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team on the one hand and the development of an infrastructure team on the other, Marcel Smets made



There was too little structural purchase once again for an art commission linked to a supra-local infrastructure project – Tobias Rehberger's proposal for the new Scheldt Bridge in Temse, designed by Ney & Partners. It proved impossible to take a final decision and go ahead with the realization of the project. (KU 0801)



The master plan for the station area in Aalst includes an extensive artistic section, in which the architect, Christian Kieckens, drew on the proposals of various artists to valorize the site. The first artwork to be realized was that of the Swiss artist Maya Roos. The art team mediated, on the designer's request, between the author of the master plan and the city, to ensure that the approach and methodology of an artistic plan would be incorporated. The designer appointed both an international art expert, Hilde Teerlinck, and a local artistic partner, Netwerk, for the art selection. The result was a feasible plan for linking public space, art and local context, which clearly illustrates the importance of mediation. (KU 0612)

a clear commitment to the creation of new infrastructure with a special landscape character. Rolf Quaghebeur followed on from this by addressing the ad hoc approach toward artistic interventions in infrastructure projects. The multidisciplinary nature of the Team created a framework in which space was created for the question of the role of art and artists in the design and construction process. The art team also sought to create an Art and Infrastructure Fund, but faced the difficulty of defending an integrated policy for art in the public space in terms of purely artistic arguments. While art might be able to deliver an interesting added value to a project on an ad hoc basis, without a policy framework it risks always having to yield to the primacy of the infrastructure or politics.

When creating a new policy instrument, there also has to be room for the generosity, engagement and imagination of public-sector principals and architect. What is important here is not so much the framing of an art commission in a public context, as genuine openness and respect for the artistic imagination. Mediation at central level in the Public Works policy domain could promote this. The fact that the policy instrument of an Art and Infrastructure Fund failed to get off the ground confirms the need for strong pilot projects to foster cultural awareness within the 'hard' policy domains, just as the challenge presented by the decree on the integration of art in government buildings proved to be a lever for art in architectural projects. The art team therefore viewed the growing demand for the support of art in the public space as a prompt to assume a pioneering role.

ART IN THE SCHOOL AND GOING PUBLIC

The *Cahiers* were also deployed during Rolf Quaghebeur's term as artistic adviser to drive initiatives relating to urgent policy themes. *Cahier #2 Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders* addressed a theme that had been on the agenda ever since the inception of the Flemish Government Architect function, but which has thus far been approached rather gingerly: little contemporary art can be found in schools. Marcel Smets lent his weight in 2005 to a decision of the Flemish Government to embark on a large-scale school-building catch-up operation, committing himself to advise the public-private partners in their search for design teams. The art team seized this opportunity to focus attention on the decree on the integration of art in public buildings. It also worked with

a number of schools on the realization of three pilot projects: Benjamin Verdonck's at the Koninklijk Technisch Atheneum 2 in Hasselt, Sarah & Charles's at Heemschool 2 in Neder-over-Heembeek, and Marie-Ange Guilleminot's at the Sint-Ursula primary school in Laeken.

KU 0718

KU 0719

KU 0723

The new generation of schools is in the starting blocks. The funding authority and the private partner have committed themselves to making art possible within the tight financial and legal structures. The pilot projects have shown, however, that enthusiastic teachers are essential if the social significance of an artistic intervention is to be inscribed within a school's educational and pedagogical practice.

In the case of *Cahier #3*, the art team wanted to involve artists in thinking about 'urbanity'. The revision of the Spatial Structure Plan for Flanders provided an ideal opportunity to consider the multiple ways of thinking about the urban space. For the *Cahier on Going Public*, Rolf Quaghebeur selected eight artists to scrutinize the 'holes' that exist in the public space. The *Cahier* was presented in January 2012 on the opening of the Atelier Bouwmeester in Galerie Ravenstein in Brussels – a pivotal moment in the vision-formation and policy ambitions of the two Bouwmeesters with respect to the public space.

COMMON GROUND FOR BROADLY BASED ADVICE AND PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

The pilot projects, the development of a professional framework and the policy-preparing role also encouraged a number of cities to approach the art team to help formulate an artistic vision for the public domain, based on their pursuit of quality. Working groups for art in the public space have been set up and advised, for instance, in Bonheiden, Genk, Ghent, Leuven, Mechelen and Roeselare, and for the Brussels Regional Housing Association. Several major artistic mediation projects, including the Turnova public-private urban project in Turnhout, illustrate that demand for project support is substantial. The art team helped channel the questions of these public-sector principals in terms of vision, project supervision and mediation, artistic selection, production supervision and conservation and management, with an eye to the local context.

Following a multiplicity of policy and project initiatives and the artistic interaction with the instruments of the Vlaams Bouwmeester, the added

value of a professional framework for commissioned art is no longer doubted. So far, however, the art team is the only point of contact in this respect, although all sorts of separate initiatives were launched in the past decade, from both the contemporary art field and the various departments of the Flemish and local governments. During Rolf Quaghebeur's term, moreover, the outlines were sketched of a broadly framed art commissioning policy. The time was also ripe in the domain of Culture policy to map out and study needs and requirements in terms of art in the public space. The Arts and Heritage Agency, in collaboration with BAM, the Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art, commissioned a report to this end from the IXIA think tank, which carried out a survey of art in the public space in Flanders (2009–10). The art team collaborated on the substantive definition of the framework for this study.

IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF COMMISSIONED ART

Ronald Van de Sompel succeeded Rolf Quaghebeur as artistic adviser in March 2011. One of the *Seven Memos for an Enlightened Building Culture* – Peter Swinnen's ambition document, which also appeared in March 2011 – was explicitly devoted incidentally to commissioned art and its ability to 'charge our collective space'.⁴ Ronald Van de Sompel wanted the art team to focus on the social engagement of the contemporary generation of artists, especially with regard to ecological issues, convinced as he was that it is precisely these issues that generate important conflicts today in the field of public space. Van de Sompel gave concrete shape to his ambition by selecting Johan Grimonprez and his *Radical Ecology* project, the first of five pilot projects he wanted to launch spread over the course of his term and to use this artistic research to provide an instrument for policymakers. KU 1113

Another theme, namely regional identity, was addressed through the pilot project *Drawing for Vlassenbroek* by the Dutch artist Wapke Feenstra, on behalf of the Waterways Agency. Feenstra mediated between the site on the River Scheldt in Vlassenbroek and its users – a process that will culminate in the production of a book and a digital presentation. KU 1202

⁴ *Seven Memos for an Enlightened Building Culture*, Vlaams Bouwmeester, Brussels, 2011, p. 33.

The art team's profile gradually changed during Peter Swinnen's term from project management to expertise. The decline in the number of directly supervised projects created time for reflection on a general 'commissioned art policy'. Together with the policy partner, the Arts and Heritage Agency, and BAM, the Flemish institute for visual, audiovisual and media art, new instruments are in preparation, including the commissioned art pilot projects and an art and public space platform. Requests for advice and guidance for the regular projects are screened according to social relevance, the principal's level of ambition, architectural approach, timing and budget. It is sought to honour all requests, either directly by the artistic adviser, or indirectly via a pool of artistic experts. The fact that commissioned art continues to represent a fundamental added value for the Bouwmeester's general functioning, instruments and field of operation, is illustrated by Suchan Kinoshita's project at the Bouwmeester Studio. The building of expertise and sharing of knowledge on behalf of policy-preparing initiatives are rooted in practice.

KU 1115

TOWARD A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COMMISSIONED ART

Demand for a new policy framework and the need for project support remained substantial, however, and indicated that there is a task here not only for the art team. There is a need for a practicable set of objectives and policy actions, framed within a long-term vision on commissioned art in Flanders. The art team evaluated its functioning based on round-table discussions with its stakeholders, which revealed – by analogy with the IXIA report – that coordinated policy actions are needed at Flemish level in terms of sharing information, expertise and visibility in the field of commissioned art. In March 2013, the art team formulated two recommendations within a summary memorandum for policymakers: creation of an umbrella structure for the professional framing of commissioned art/art in the public space, coupled to the revision of the 1986 decree on the integration of art in public buildings. The major challenge for a renewed policy lies in the creation of a transparent, overarching structure as information and contact point, to which principals and visual art practitioners can turn for collaboration and professional guidance. The Arts and Heritage Agency, BAM, the Flemish institute for visual arts, audiovisual and media art and the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team have taken the first steps toward working on this in a coordinated manner. Under the



Wim Cuyvers intervened in the margin of the opening of the Atelier Bouwmeester with an artistic action on his own initiative: several 'actors' – including Cuyvers himself – spent the opening reception lying in sleeping bags, on which a number of words were painted (Generous, Border, Care, Space, Collective, Unadapted, Open, Public). Those were borrowed from the preliminary statement of Vlaams Bouwmeester Peter Swinnen's *Seven Memos for an Enlightened Building Culture*. Cuyvers homed in on the pinch points in planning policy and the impact of architecture and urbanism on human existence, and in so doing literally illustrated the approach of *Cahier #3*, namely to make a different voice heard in plans for the public space. The Ravenstein Gallery is frequently used as a refuge, especially in winter, by homeless people in Brussels. The idea was for the sleeping bags to find their way around the city after the action, ending up with people who might be able to use them. Through his action, Cuyvers also wanted to point out to the Vlaams Bouwmeester – and by extension, the Flemish and other governments – not only that their function must be visible in the city, but above all that they themselves should not be blind to what is going on there.

working title 'art and public space platform', provision of services in terms of commissioning and public space will be professionalized and expanded in various stages for both commissioners and artistic actors.

Commissioned art has evolved at the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team from project management by means of pilot projects, artistic research and strategic advice for all public-sector principals, toward the provision of advice and sharing of expertise for policymakers. The Flemish Government now faces the challenge of offering a broader framework in which public-sector commissioning is a link within a larger chain. The 'percentage rule' established under the decree was intended to inscribe culture and art within a broader social context. Consequently, it does not wish to define culture purely as a separate, autonomous domain, but via its embedding in other



During the establishment of the Atelier Bouwmeester in the Galerie Ravenstein (2011–12), Suchan Kinoshita carried out a number of interventions on behalf of the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team under the title *En passant. Scenario for a Passage*. (KU 1115)



A Masterclass was also organized during Ronald Van de Sompel's term (2011–13). It was decided in 2011 to work with the HISK to this end. The artist Els Vanden Meersch was selected as artistic supervisor. Her work has testified for some years to an intensive vision toward and focus on the public space. 'Without the public space,' she stated during a round-table discussion with artists, 'my work would not exist; it forms the medium through which I have been able to develop my visual idiom.' The 2011 Masterclass took place in Genk, with the Cultural Department as art commissioner. The Latvian artist Ieva Epnere formulated a proposal in response to a planning issue.

policy domains. This ambition remains current, while the substantive and financial approach in the decree do not. Public-sector building practice in Flanders has altered tremendously since the decree was published in 1986. A number of parliamentarians submitted a revised version of the decree in the spring of 2014, but the amendments were not approved. The proposal only related to the percentages and budgetary threshold. A substantive reflection and expansion of the professional framing and the backing for commissioned art are, however, preconditions for any meaningful revision or application of the decree.

Using its own budget and those of public-sector principals, the art team has sought systematically to promote pilot projects that respond to contemporary art practice. Principals are encouraged in this regard to take their social responsibility in the public domain. The pilot projects aim to achieve a higher level of ambition and commitment than the regular project support for art commissions by the Flemish Government and local entities. They also represent an important link in the translation of tactical experience into policy-preparing initiatives. The project with Ellen Harvey in Bossuit is a recent example – particularly with regard to the public space – in which different policy areas were involved (public domain, heritage, tourism and culture) and where the Vlaams Bouwmeester's multidisciplinary framework was able to prove its value. KU 0920

Since 2012, Pilot Projects have been a strategic instrument at the Vlaams Bouwmeester to support the realization of five ground-breaking projects within a specific policy domain. Peter Swinnen initiated Pilot Projects with the relevant policymakers in the area of care, housing, productive landscape and polluted sites. The commissioned art pilot projects intend – based on concrete interventions – to raise the legislative and policy-making framework by testing new commissioning models and forms of collaboration. Through the commissioned art pilot projects, the Arts and Heritage Agency, BAM, the Flemish institute for visual arts, audiovisual and media arts and the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team have joined forces since 2014 to challenge principals to realize ambitious projects. To explore the boundaries of traditional commissioned art practice and to do full justice to the diversity of contemporary art, the pilot project set out to examine the interaction between visual art and commission in connection with the theme 'More than Object'. The exploration of the commission situation from this focus can emphasize the importance of freedom and lack of compulsion

for people and the public space they use. The coordination process for the commissioned art pilot projects is due to run until June 2015, following which policy recommendations will be formulated with the relevant partners with the aim of optimizing existing instruments, adapting the legislative framework and further renewing the policy framework.

CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE

Steps have been taken to place commissioned art at the Flemish Government in a broader cultural perspective. The challenge will be to develop a policy framework capable of addressing the diversity, specificity and sensitivity to context of commissioned art. There is a need for an initiative capable of connecting the widely spread questions surrounding this matter, and for a commitment to the linkage and strengthening of existing expertise, so that commissioned art can play its full social role. The place of art in the functioning of the Vlaams Bouwmeester as an institution will be redefined in response to the transition it will undergo in the light of the coalition agreement in 2015 and according to a new overarching structure and the position of this new policy instrument in the broad spectrum of commissioner, art and public space. This publication illustrates how architecture, urban planning and the public space benefit in general from expertise that continues to scrutinize the interaction and cross-fertilization that exists between art and the built environment. The question of art's significance can stimulate the collective pursuit of a project's cultural added value and broaden the social mission of every commissioner.

Art by commission 2006-2013

Inventory



Note to the reader

This inventory provides an overview of all 144 commissions supervised by the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2013. Commissions are only included if they have already been assigned to one or more artists, and one or more approved concepts therefore exist, regardless of whether the planned interventions have actually been realized at this stage. In other words, the inventory includes existing artworks and designs/preliminary studies, whereas projects still at the initial stage, or for which the selection procedure has yet to be completed, do not feature.

The inventory is a follow-up to what was published in the book *Kunst in opdracht 1999–2005* (Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2006). There are some ten overlaps between the two, namely works that were still in the preliminary design stage when the first inventory was published and which are included here in their realized form.

The works are arranged chronologically by the date on which they were initiated. Each has a serial number, which can also be used to locate the work on the Vlaams Bouwmeester website (www.vlaamsbouwmeester.be). The number

consists of the letters KU (to distinguish the art ('kunst') commissions in the Vlaams Bouwmeester archives from the similarly numbered Open Call architecture projects) followed by a four-digit number. The first two digits indicate the year in which the art commission was initiated, while the second two give the project's sequential number within the year in question.

Each item in the inventory is accompanied by an illustration and, in addition to the name of the artist and the title of the work, includes the realization date, the location, the commissioner and the construction project that prompted it. A short, descriptive explanation of the work is then provided.

Some of the works included here were carried out in the context of the decree on the integration of artworks in public-sector buildings (see also appendix 1 p. 219), while others were not. Where this is the case, it is indicated by an asterisk after the serial number (e.g. KU 1005*).

KU 0002*

Johan Grimonprez

Untitled

Realized in 2008

Location: Lanaken, PVT (Public Psychiatric Nursing Home), Residentie Rado, Koning Albertlaan 102

Commissioner: Flemish Government – Vlaams Infrastructuurfonds voor Persoonsgebonden Aangelegenheden (VIPA) on behalf of the Openbaar Psychiatrisch Ziekenhuis Rekem

Building project: master plan and new-build designed by architects De Vloed, Van Kerckhove and Verstraeten

The principal drew up an art commission taking the network concept as its starting point.

Two concepts were central: people and the environment. The psychiatric care centre was eager to open itself up to the outside world and to incorporate new thinking about treatment by drawing on patients' own networks.

Johan Grimonprez responded by designing a social space near the small, enclosed residents' gardens. The meeting place is structured around a tree and offers a range of seating. A sound system creates a restful effect and lends the site its identity. The artist refers in his design to the 'natural' meeting point in the atrium of the residents' previous home, which comprised a number of benches under the crown of a monumental tree.

KU 0005

Sven 't Jolle

Global Playfield

Realized in 2008

Location: Weelde, 't Molenslop Sports Hall, Straatakkers 1

Commissioner: Municipality of Ravels

Building project: new-build designed by Groep Infrabo

The principal was looking for an artistic intervention capable of visually emphasizing the sports hall as a dynamic meeting place. An open-air art work in this municipal context could also encourage reflection on the impact of this kind of sports infrastructure, where we spend a significant portion of our leisure time.

Sven 't Jolle decided to place *Global Playfield* on the grassy area by the entrance to the sports hall. The art work refers to a table football game and consists of a horizontal, stainless steel tube on which five polyester figures are mounted, their heads resting on the ground. The figures have been made in the colours of the Ravels, Weelde and Poppel football teams, and their shirts also refer to teams from Africa, Asia and South America. Each player has a different skin colour. The title *Global Playfield* is borrowed from marketing terminology. While this suggests an anti-globalist commentary or critique, it can equally be read as an appreciation of team sport as a focus of multicultural encounter and friendship.

KU 0111

Perry Roberts

Between Here and There



Realized in 2004

Location: Oudenaarde, lock complex on the River Scheldt

Commissioner: Flemish Government – Waterways and Sea Canal – Upper Scheldt Division

Building project: infrastructure designed by research engineer Ivar Hermans of MVG – Administratie Ondersteunende Studies en Opdrachten, afdeling Metaalstructuren

Although the artist was intrigued by the historical background and significance of the site, he wanted to translate the commission in a more poetic way. He took the line of text *tussenhierendaar* ('betweenhereandthere') and placed it in black, reversed letters on the outlet of the fish passage – a white surface 13 metres long by 1 metre high – linking the two banks. The intervention is only really visible and legible from close-by, and can also be read as an abstract element. Legibility depends on the reflecting water: the element that defines the site physically.

KU 0112*

Jan Kempnaers

Untitled



Realized in September 2008

Location: Sint-Niklaas, local customer care centre of the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB), Noordlaan 4

Commissioner: VDAB

Building project: new-build designed by BOB 361

The VDAB is the Flemish government's employment service. As such, the organization believes that its offices have an important social role, and that they should have their own identity for the benefit both of their staff and their visitors. Jan Kempnaers installed a transparent image on the large expanse of glass on one side of the building. In this way, users inside the centre feel a connection with the outside world, while passers-by can glimpse the activities going on in the building. The panoramic image chosen by the artist – a detail from his photograph *View* (2004) – transcends local reference points and invites us to expand our view.

KU 0123*

Fiona Tan

A Fool's Paradise

Realized in 2010

Location: Kasterlee, De Hoge Rielen Nature Reserve, Molenstraat 62**Commissioner:** Flemish fund for cultural infrastructure (FoCI)**Building project:** master plan implemented by Studio Associato Secchi-Viganò

The Hoge Rielen nature reserve is mainly visited by youngsters, and so any artistic intervention had to be oriented primarily to this target group. Fiona Tan came up with an audio tour for the site. Her story, 'A Fool's Paradise', guides walkers or cyclists from one location to another using an audio-player and headphones, enabling the artist to add a number of imaginary architectural and sculptural interventions to the reserve. An eccentric 'architect', played by the actor Johan Leysen, acts as guide, proudly telling the visitor tales of the follies he has designed. In this way, an already multi-layered landscape is given an extra dimension and the imagination is stimulated. Fiona Tan also created a poster to accompany the inauguration of her work.

[→ pp. 122-127]

KU 0124*

Philippe Van Isacker

Moved (two ellipses)

Realized in 2010

Location: Oudenaarde, Heilig Hart Residential Care Centre, Grachtschelde 2**Commissioner:** Vzw Heilig Hart**Building project:** new-build by noAarchitecten

Philippe Van Isacker installed two similar sculptures in the enclosed inner garden and the open outer garden. What differentiates the two works is the way they are positioned and the material from which they are made. Both consist of an elliptical surface 320 centimetres long and 200 centimetres wide, the upper side of which features a fanciful, irregular relief. In the version in the enclosed garden, the relief is located in the middle of a centrally positioned water basin and is executed in a cement mixture. The one in the outer garden is made of bronze and is supported on twelve cylindrical bronze legs.

Van Isacker's interventions derive from his exploration via a number of autonomous sculptures in the 1990s of the function of drapery as a supplement to and support for the representation of the human body. In the reliefs for the two gardens, the sculptor was able to let go of that body entirely, so that the drapery takes on a life almost of its own as an abstract narrative. The suggestion of movement no longer takes the form of a vertically suspended relief: the latter is now positioned in space horizontally. The far-reaching abstraction results in forms which, configured as tables in a garden, suggest recumbent drapery or a model landscape, as well as a rippled water surface.

KU 0201

Jozef Legrand

A bridge as a living narrative line through the landscape and history



Realized in 2011

Location: Vroenhoven, bridge over the Albert Canal

Commissioner: Flemish Government – Waterways and Sea Canal – Meuse and Albert Canal Division

Building project: bridge over the Albert Canal, designed by Ney & Partners Decree applied:

An artistic vision was sought for this project, the starting point for which would be the historical significance of the site itself, with its bunker – a protected monument – recalling the Second World War, and the existing bridge, with its own specific cultural-historical value. The integration of this vision was expected to help clarify and raise awareness of the site's complexity and importance.

The artist had a text sandblasted into the glass parapet level with the bunker – a war-time relic, which imposes its presence on the bridge. The text reads: 'The Second World War began for Belgium at this place on the Albert Canal'. A second text can also be read further along the parapet, in Dutch for those on the left crossing the bridge toward the Netherlands and Germany, and in German for those crossing on the other side toward Belgium. It is a poetic evocation, the meaning of which varies, depending on how you choose to associate it with the history and future of the site.

KU 0203

Dirk Braeckman

S.N.-N.M.-0.8.



Realized in 2008

Location: Menen, Town Hall, Grote Markt 1

Commissioner: Menen Town Council

Building project: renovation, restoration and new-build by noAarchitecten

The spatial organization of the town hall is translated into and associated with a number of structuring concepts: reception, service, orientation and flexibility. Dirk Braeckman explored various opportunities for an intervention* before eventually presenting a proposal for the new circulation gallery. He produced a monumental black-and-white photograph, printed on Japanese silk paper, showing a marbled wall with a mirror, which in turn reflects an interior with marbled walls. The trompe l'oeil functions as an abstract reminiscence, echoing the historical and cultural stratification of the renovated town hall complex.

KU 0204

Benoît Van Innis

untitled



Realized in 2008

Location: Menen, Town Hall, Grote Markt 1

Commissioner: Menen Town Council

Building project: renovation, restoration and new-build
by noAarchitecten

The architects commissioned Benoît Van Innis to create five types of wallpaper, which were hung in all the original, more 'homely' parts of the building. This choice of new and unique wallpaper is characteristic of the way the architects approach monuments: they follow in the footsteps of the building's designers to evoke the original atmosphere and quality of the spaces, but using contemporary means and forms.

KU 0313*

Koen Theys

Hotel MIN Stop



Realized in 2009

Location: Antwerp, MIN Psychiatric Care Home
(sub-unit of the Openbaar Psychiatrisch
Zorgcentrum Rekem), Lange Scholierstraat 98

Commissioner: Flemish Government – Vlaams
Infrastructuurfonds voor Persoonsgebonden
Aangelegenheden (VIPA) on behalf of the
Openbaar Psychiatrisch Ziekenhuis Rekem

Building project: new-build designed by TV Mys & Bomans
/ Ars Horti

The MIN psychiatric care home in Antwerp – also known as 'Hotel MIN' (MIN is short for 'Mannen In Nood' or 'Men In Need') – receives and supervises offenders with psychiatric problems who are considered sufficiently stable for rehabilitation in society. The art commission set out to confirm Hotel MIN as an established element in the neighbourhood and to foster communication with local people. This required sensitivity toward the local social context and the MIN residents. The art project was expected to lend character to the home, while simultaneously respecting the individual residents' privacy. Koen Theys' work, titled Hotel MIN Stop, is an intervention on the new building's flat roof. It consists of three elements: a street light and a concrete bus or tram shelter with a wooden bench, and a litter bin. Residents can access the work via a staircase and it is positioned to offer an attractive view of the surrounding area to anyone sitting in the shelter. It can also be seen from the street. The work can be read as a metaphor for the residents' temporary stay at the care home.

KU 0318*

Christophe Terlinden

Orange



Realized in 2012

Location: Leuven, Flemish Administrative Centre (VAC), Dirk Bouts building, Diestsepoort 6

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: New-build designed by Jaspers-Eyers & Partners in collaboration with Gigantes-Zengelis Architects

The idea of 'modesty' is the key to Christophe Terlinden's proposal. The artist installed two painted bronze sculptures on the fifteenth floor of the tower section of the Flemish Administrative Centre in Leuven. The objects – a female and a male figure – complement one another. The design is based on the shape created by cutting the skins of two oranges. The sculptures are only slightly larger than a real orange, which means they contrast sharply with the scale of the building. The bronze original was produced industrially in serial form and was presented to the users of the building as a gift from the community on 17 January 2012 – the date the French artist Robert Filliou proclaimed in 1963 to be 'Art's Birthday'. The artist had postcards of the multiple printed as part of the commission, so it could be distributed even more widely.

KU 0401

Anne Daems

A Day On The North Sea



Realized in 2006

Location: Ostend, Transithuis (temporary accommodation), Timmermanstraat 54

Commissioner: City of Ostend and the West-Vlaamse Investeringsmaatschappij

Building project: new-build designed by Jonas Beckers and Matthias Verhulst

The basic element underlying the art commission was the careful separation of the private and public zones of this building, which provides accommodation to people with temporary housing problems. Anne Daems placed a series of photographs in the variously sized flats in the 'transit house' taken during two days on the ferry crossing between Ostend and England. For the duration of a North Sea crossing like this, one is literally 'in transit'. Placing the photographs in the eighteen units making up the private part of the house serves to 'personalize' these temporary homes. The work has also been given a second, public dimension by printing the photographs

KU 0402

Patrick Vanden Eynde

Untitled

Realized in 2006

Location: Ostend, Transithuis (temporary accommodation), Timmermanstraat 54**Commissioner:** City of Ostend and the West-Vlaamse Investeringsmaatschappij**Building project:** new-build designed by Jonas Beckers and Matthias Verhulst

Patrick Vanden Eynde mounted a trellis in sustainable padauk wood on the elongated wall of the courtyard, where it can be seen from the street. The design evolved from a strictly geometric pattern to a Mondrianesque discontinuous grid. Vanden Eynde also applied transparent film to the staircase windows on the second and third storeys, which look out over the yard to the rear of the building. The film incorporates photographic images of hanging branches and blossoms, which likewise form a kind of pattern. The interplay between figurative and abstract, or between purely rational and less controlled organizational principles, can be read as a metaphor for the experience of the residents of the transit house, in which people in crisis find a temporary home.

KU 0407

Christophe Terlinden and Eric Vanhaegenborgh

Universe

Realized in 2008

Location: Sint-Gillis-Dendermonde, multipurpose sports hall and surroundings, Van Langenhovestraat 203a**Commissioner:** City of Dendermonde**Building project:** new-build designed by De Schepper & Meers architecten

Christophe Terlinden and Eric Vanhaegenborgh's project explores the tension between sport and game. The work is located on the sports hall's patio and features a life-sized version of 'Universe' – a board game devised by the artists. Players can give their sculptural imagination free rein by creating a composition together using spherical, conical, cylindrical and rod-shaped pieces. The 'board' is a large circle surrounded by twelve evenly spaced points. The players take it in turns to position a piece on the board until one declares the universe to be complete.

KU 0408*

Christoph Fink

Two sun lines and circle for a Claus and Kaan architectural design



Realized in 2007–08

Location: Sint-Niklaas, Heimolen Crematorium, Waasmunstersteenweg 13

Commissioner: Intercommunale Westlede (Vereniging voor Crematoriumbeheer in de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen)

Building project: new-build by Claus en Kaan Architecten

Christoph Fink's work is an intensive interrogation of space and time, through which he explores the relationship between human beings and our environment and the connection between the different elements that surround us. Fink produces minutely detailed travel reports, the content of which he processes in cartographic and acoustic constructions, with drawings, diagrams, tables and sonic layers.

For the crematorium complex in Sint-Niklaas, the artist incorporated a number of astronomical diagrams/measuring instruments – a circle element and two worked-out sun lines – in various places in the floor. The circle element (three metres in diameter) was worked into the terrace around the crematory building, the sun lines are in the ceremonial building. The drawings relate to the position of the sun and hence to the passage of time, registered from the single, real and concrete position: 51°08' N, 04°08' E. The circle is the starting point for the two sun lines, which indicate the places in the ceremonial building where the sunlight is most likely to enter. Using two symbolic beams of light, the artist not only links two architectural components (crematory and ceremonial building), but in doing so links life and death as well.

KU 0409*

Pieter Vermeersch

Untitled



Realized in 2009

Location: Sint-Niklaas, Heimolen Crematorium, Waasmunstersteenweg 13

Commissioner: Intercommunale Westlede (Vereniging voor Crematoriumbeheer in de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen)

Building project: new-build by Claus en Kaan Architecten

The art work realized by Pieter Vermeersch takes the form of a double mural running the length of the elongated side walls of the ceremonial area. The artist uses grey-brown gradations that discreetly echo the visitor's spatial experience and subtly suggest gradual concentration and intensification in the direction of the place where the 'word' is spoken in remembrance of the deceased.

KU 0410*

Els Vanden Meersch*Rest Pavilion*

Realized in 2008

Location: Duffel, Sint-Norbertus Psychiatric Centre, Stationsstraat 22c**Commissioner:** vzw Emmaüs**Building project:** new-build by bvba architectenbureau Marc Verstraeten

The principal wanted an art work for installation inside or outside the new building's public zones that would connect with the psychiatric centre's general mission. Els Vanden Meersch constructed a sculptural installation in the grounds of the institution: a semi-transparent module measuring 2 x 3 x 3 metres, inspired by the interior of an earlier building on the campus (the 'R Building'), which was demolished as part of the new-build and the remodelling of the grounds. The pavilion embodies the memory of the site and interrogates the historical link between psychiatric care and repressive discipline.

Bibliography: *Disturbed Silence | Stille Gestoord*, exhibition catalogue Psychiatrisch Centrum Duffel, 2010, pp. 136-139

[→ pp. 146-151]

KU 0411*

Orla Barry*The Stone Garden*

Realized in 2010

Location: Duffel, Sint-Norbertus Psychiatric Centre, Stationsstraat 22c**Commissioner:** vzw Emmaüs**Building project:** new-build by bvba architectenbureau Marc Verstraeten

The Irish artist Orla Barry created a stone mosaic in the campus grounds based on her own text. The piece refers to other, more ephemeral installations that can be seen in her film and video works. This permanent variation – a conversation pit in a garden – offers a point of rest or orientation on the path through the psychiatric centre's campus. The artist uses stones of two different colours, collected in her native Ireland, to incorporate her text in the floor of the round, slate-edged pit. The sentences read: 'it's nearly spring', 'it's nearly summer', 'it's nearly autumn' and 'it's nearly winter'.

Bibliography: *Disturbed Silence | Stille Gestoord*, exhibition catalogue Psychiatrisch Centrum Duffel, 2010, pp. 74-77

[→ pp. 146-151]

KU 0414*

Michel François

Frigolite

Realized in 2011

Location: Antwerp, Pulcinella Youth Hostel,
Bogaardeplein 1

Commissioner: Toerisme Vlaanderen

Building project: new-build by Vincent Van Duysen
Architects

Michel François' work is a response to the rigid pattern of the youth hostel's architecture. The three large windows overlooking the square, behind which are located communal areas such as sitting rooms and corridors, are transformed at dusk into translucent projection screens, onto which video images by the artist are projected: a camera searches for a way through a bath filled with polystyrene balls.

[→ pp. 128-133]

KU 0415

Gert Verhoeven

Revolution

Realized in 2008

Location: Ruddervoorde, main square

Commissioner: Municipality of Oostkamp

Building project: remodelling of marketplace by Infrabo

It was decided during the remodelling of the centre of Ruddervoorde – a sub-municipality of Oostkamp – that the market square should once again be able to function as a meeting place. The art work was to express a certain playfulness, reflecting the perceived character of people in Ruddervoorde. The municipal council opted for a water feature, because of a rich local tradition in that respect.

Assuming that Ruddervoorde wanted a real, classical fountain, Gert Verhoeven drew a goblet-shaped version, in which water flows from a basin at eye level into a larger one below. Bearing in mind the limited scope for monumentality at this location, however, the artist light-heartedly manipulated the piece. Ruddervoorde may be a small village, but the artist did not want to ignore its ambitions either. So rather than design a small fountain, he produced a wedge cut from a larger one. His 'fountain fragment' is positioned so that the thin end of the wedge points toward the church and engages with it formally.

[→ pp. 134-139]

KU 0417

Thierry De Cordier

Chapel of the Big Naught



Realized in 2007

Location: Duffel, Sint-Norbertus Psychiatric Centre,
Stationsstraat 22c

Commissioner: vzw Emmaüs

What was originally conceived as a building project ultimately became an architectural art commission: the design of a small building that functions as a 'quiet area' on the campus of the psychiatric centre in Duffel, to which patients and visitors can retreat for a while. The programme as initially formulated, in which water, for instance, played a key role, evolved toward religious architecture, in which aspects like functionality and comfort were increasingly foregrounded.

Thierry De Cordier designed a chapel, the proportions of which are determined by the golden ratio. The constructed volume comprises a black, block-shaped container 12.5 metres long, 5.5 metres wide and 5.5 metres high. This is completely covered on the outside by a double layer of roofing felt coated with pitch. A white interior wall – the 'Wall of Naught' – rises up out of this black body through an opening in the roof. The building stands in the green area of the campus.

Bibliography: *Disturbed Silence | Stille Gestoord*, exhibition catalogue Psychiatrisch Centrum Duffel, 2010, pp. 94-97

[→ pp. 140-145]

KU 0501*

Katrien Vermeire

On Selecting Vibrations



Realized in 2008

Location: Ostend, Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre, Kantinestraat – Schutsluisplein

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Maritime Services and Coast, Shipping Assistance Division

Building project: new-build designed by Architectenburo Ro Berteloot

The maritime rescue and coordination centre MRCC is the central contact point for accidents at sea and ensures smooth and safe shipping around the mouth of the river Scheldt. Katrien Vermeire photographed a series of seascapes from the *Zeearend*, a vessel of the Flemish Fleet Division. The series includes 26 photographs, taken in varying weather conditions, in which the horizon is always at the same height. It is displayed in the MRCC's atrium and central reception area.

KU 0504*

Anne Daems

(In Morse code) 'Stan Georges Jan etc.'



Realized in 2006

Location: Antwerp, De Passant Reception Centre, Clementinastraat 26

Commissioner: Centrum Algemeen Welzijnswerk De Terp vzw

Building project: remodelling by Inge Sleutel

De Passant is a reception centre that provides shelter to homeless adult males in crisis. It is located in a former Salvation Army building. The principal chose two blank areas in the U-shaped building's double Art Deco facade as the support for an art project.

Photography, video, drawing and text are the media Anne Daems uses most frequently. She approaches everyday events and situations in a very simple and direct way, represents and 'translates' them. The artist installed two neon lights on the facade of De Passant, which display a sentence in Morse code: 'Home of Christian Juan Mohamed Gustaaf Bertje Aristide Marcel Sisse Wojyc Boris, etc.' The Morse message is printed in postcards available from the reception centre, along with a version in the Latin alphabet.

KU 0505*

Aglaia Konrad

Wanderer



Realized in 2007

Location: Lanaken, Sint-Barbara Hospital, Bessemerstraat 478

Commissioner: Ziekenhuis Oost-Limburg (ZOL)

Building project: new-build designed by TV Archiduk – AR-TE-STABO

Aglaia Konrad's intervention is two-fold. She added two poles to the roundabout at the entrance to the hospital, which is dominated by a high lamppost. One has mirrors, which reflect the wooded surroundings and the visitors entering and leaving the hospital, the other has a digital display. In this way, Konrad transforms the entrance area into an 'orientation point' in several respects. Meanwhile, she installed a metal grille around the technical facilities on the roof, on which a text has been added in acrylic letters. The work, which can only be seen from the patients' rooms, is conceived so that the viewer's attention is drawn away from the pipes and other technical installations, without them being wholly concealed. The sentence on the grille is a quotation from Eduard Geismar, biographer of the Danish theologian and philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855): 'So the flaneur goes for a walk in his room; reality to him is merely a reflection of a purely inner world.'

KU 0508

Gerda Dendooven

Untitled

Realized in 2008

Location: Beveren, Public Library, Gravenplein 3**Commissioner:** Municipality of Beveren**Building project:** new-build designed by De Smet Vermeulen architecten

Gerda Dendooven is an illustrator and writer of children's books and a playwright who also acts. She drew on this professional background to create two stained-glass windows for the library, with figurative motifs reminiscent of the *papiers collés* of artists like Henri Matisse. The depicted scenes refer to the pleasure of reading. One window, done in bright colours, relates to the outside surroundings, while the other creates a through-view to another interior space.

KU 0509

Ana Torfs

Cinoc

Realized in 2008

Location: Beveren, Public Library, Gravenplein 3**Commissioner:** Municipality of Beveren**Building project:** new-build designed by De Smet Vermeulen architecten

In a narrow concrete groove covered with weight-bearing glass Ana Torfs installed an LED display in the path leading to the library's new entrance. She uses the display to (re)animate 'forgotten words' in a variety of ways, taking her inspiration from the book *La vie, mode d'emploi* by the French author Georges Perec (1936–1982). One character, Cinoc, is employed as a 'word exterminator' ('tueur de mots') for the Larousse encyclopaedia: his job is to scrap obsolete words to make space for new ones. Cinoc dreams, however, of compiling a dictionary of lost words after he retires. Inside the library, Ana Torfs placed a hand-bound book with the title *Cinoc*. It is a 'dictionary of forgotten words' – a slimmed-down version of the one with 8,000 entries that Cinoc dreamed of – in which all the words selected for the LED display are printed, together with their definitions. The artist also produced a series of bookmarks with a selection from the entries, which are available free of charge to library visitors.

[→ pp. 152–157]

KU 0510*

Koen van den Broek

Bad Water | Rock Face



Realized in 2006

Location: Ghent, Sint-Lucas General Hospital,
Groenebriel 1

Commissioner: Vzw Algemeen Ziekenhuis Sint-Lucas &
Volkskliniek

Building project: new-build by Architectenburo De Vloed

Koen van den Broek made two oil paintings on canvas for the high, cube-shaped hall of the new building on the site of the hospital AZ Sint-Lucas. Each is a landscape showing Death Valley, the desert near Las Vegas, in the artist's characteristic manner. Koen van den Broek's paintings always have a clearly figurative, even photographic point of departure, but his characteristic, pale palette lends them a high degree of abstraction. The smaller painting is a specific extract from the large landscape, which further intensifies the sense of alienation.

KU 0511*

Dan Van Severen

Untitled (4 drawings)



Realized in 2006

Location: Ghent, Sint-Lucas General Hospital,
Groenebriel 1

Commissioner: Vzw Algemeen Ziekenhuis Sint-Lucas &
Volkskliniek

Building project: new-build by Architectenburo De Vloed

Dan Van Severen's (1927–2009) work is characterized by his use of the same elementary forms and motifs. He worked almost obsessively with basic geometric shapes like the square, rectangle, diamond, circle and ellipse, using them as timeless signs and symbols. Van Severen's aim in distilling these essential forms was to achieve maximum expression with minimal means. He chose his materials on a similar principle. He initially painted in oils, but gradually switched to tempera – a thinner, water-based paint – and then to ink. For him, the art work was increasingly liberated in this way from the material.

His drawings for AZ Sint-Lucas, which are relatively modest in size, convey a similar simplicity and soberness. Van Severen himself carefully selected locations in the interior capable of supporting this sense of restraint and where his drawings would not immediately grab the attention. The triptych was hung in a corridor and the individual drawing was discreetly placed in a publicly accessible meeting room. Both the drawings themselves and the way they are hung reflect the artist's philosophy.

KU 0513*

Aglaia Konrad and Willem Oorebeek
(in collaboration with architect Pieter d'Haeseleer and
Metaatelier Moker)

Cloud-Catcher – Eye-Catcher



Realized in 2012

Location: Lommel, Kapittelhof Residential Care Centre,
Kapittelhof 1

Commissioner: OCMW Lommel

Building project: new-build project by 360 Architects

The new residential care centre is located on the Hertog-Jan site in Lommel. The design by 360 Architects responds intelligently to the spatial structure of this new district by visually extending the public space deep into the residential block in a number of places. The result is a fascinating interaction between the public and more private zones. The two interventions by Aglaia Konrad and Willem Oorebeek are expressed in different ways in the complex's open areas, and respond metaphorically to the care centre's social programme. The *Cloud-Catcher* in the garden of the service flats and the *Eye-Catcher* as fencing for the patio below the residential block are made of specially woven steel nets of the kind used in the mountains to protect against avalanches.

The first intervention is installed as an autonomous object in the middle of the garden, visually attracting the attention of residents and passers-by. The second – the fencing – functions more as a medium offering a view of a private area. The interior and exterior worlds are separated, without losing visual contact between them. A third, unrealized work – *Rock-Catcher* – would have functioned as a kind of safety-net linking the block formed by the service flats with the residential section. It would have been placed over the rockery laid out there.

(with sponsorship by Geobruugg Benelux)

KU 0514*

Simona Denicolai & Ivo Provoost

Social de luxe



Realized in 2012

Location: Tildonk, Postweg 23

Commissioner: OCMW Haacht

Building project: new-build of four social housing units by
Stijn Thomas and Marjan Michels in collaboration
with RAUM architecten

The principal, which took part in the 2005 Masterclass, opted for a process in which art and architecture pursue interesting modes of cross-fertilization in the context of a building project. The contribution of the artist duo Denicolai & Provoost was intended to help break away from the stereotypical patterns of social housing. The units do not follow the building line, but seem to be placed criss-cross like little Monopoly houses. The gutters run at an angle, accentuating the view of the church tower, while the hedges delineate both the private and the public space. Streetlights are placed in the private gardens, and can actually be operated from inside the individual homes. The driveway leading to the private homes looks like a public highway and also serves as a communal playing area for the children. In this way, the boundaries between the individual, communal and public domains are playfully explored.

KU 0515

Freek Wambacq (in collaboration with the architect **Aurélie De Smet**)

untitled



Realized in 2012

Location: Ghent, Scaldis Lock House, Oude Beestenmarkt

Commissioner: Waterways and Sea Canal SA – Upper Scheldt Division

Building project: new-build designed by Aurélie De Smet and Freek Wambacq

As part of the Meesterproef (Masterclass) 2005, the waterways agency nv Waterwegen en Zeekanaal called for designs for a simple utility building next to the newly constructed canal lock near the Oude Beestenmarkt in Ghent. The surroundings are busy and segmented, so the selected design duo opted for a building with an elementary form and the purest possible volume, featuring a membrane facade supported by a steel skeleton structure. Templates were used to apply a motif to the exterior walls and roof. The motif was workshopped with students from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KASK, Department of Textile Design) and is based on irregular, non-geometrical fabrics made with ropes twelve millimetres thick. The ropes refer to the world of shipping and the fabrics to Ghent's history as an important centre of textiles and lace. The building also has a beacon function, thanks to the greenish-grey translucent film placed on the innermost sheet of glass in the double glazing.

KU 0517*

Louis De Cordier

Roro



Realized in 2010

Location: Sint-Denijs-Westrem, Sint-Camillus Psychiatric Hospital, Beukenlaan 20

Commissioner: PZ Sint-Camillus vzw

Building project: new-build for the treatment of addicts (Kasteelplus), designed by Patrick Lefebure

The principal invited De Cordier to take the four elements as his starting point, prompting him to design a sculptural construction comprising a wind turbine/tower, a battery and a series of lights. The installation was placed on the edge of the woods. Each evening, just before sunset, the lights come on and accentuate the tree line for ninety minutes. The work guides the viewer through the transition from the familiarity of the daytime to the unknown of the night.

KU 0520*

Pascale Marthine Tayou*Tayouken Pis*

Not realised

Location: Geel, OPZ (Public Psychiatric Care Centre), Pas 200**Commissioner:** OPZ Geel**Building project:** renovation of rehabilitation building by Omgeving

Pascale Marthine Tayou's proposal was for a life-sized statue of a naked man, cast in bronze or concrete, and in the pose of the famous Manneken Pis figure in Brussels. The statue would also be a fully-functioning fountain. Tayou conceived the piece as a self-portrait. Rather than its familiar cherub form, the Brussels landmark would therefore have been recreated as an adult male of African origin. The idea was to install the statue as a drinking fountain in the publicly accessible park. The subject touches on themes like the search for identity and self-exposure, tying it in with the therapeutic context of the psychiatric care centre.

KU 0521*

Vaast Colson*OPZ sessions*

Realized in 2009–12

Location: Geel, OPZ (Public Psychiatric Care Centre), Pas 200**Commissioner:** OPZ Geel**Building project:** renovation of rehabilitation building by Omgeving

Vaast Colson worked with residents from the public psychiatric care centre (OPZ) in Geel between June 2009 and September 2010. He produced a series of recordings of improvised music sessions on a number of occasions at locations in and around Kunsthuis Yellow Art. Several listening and drawing events were then organized in 2011 to make a selection from among the forty hours of recordings. The interactive art work also produced a visible and tangible result: the workshops culminated in six music CDs and a book of drawings by the participants.

Music and text: Willy Casier, Steven Crauwels, Alain Elsen, Elle Godar, Maarten Mangelschots, Danny Smolders, Jef Verachtert, Luc Zwijsen, Marijke Gils, Francis Dierckx, Sam Clee, Janina Bax, Nelly Beraerts, Renild Broeckx, Marianne Gevers, Josee Haesendonckx, Jan Heerkens, Jef Kluppels, Karel Laenen, Ria Pacquée, Anita Peeters, Annemie Staes, Maxim Steveler, Bea Van Proeyen, Peter Weckx, Kris Delacourt, Joshua Burkett, Ralph White and Vaast Colson.

Visuals: Nelly Beraerts, Willy Casier, Tanja Cools, Steven Crauwels, Andrea de Meyere, August De Puysseleir, Pierre Dillen, Alain Elsen, Elle Godar, Jan Heerkens, Joske Keustermans, Karel Laenen, Lûkas, Danny Smolders, Dirk Vandecruys, Bea Van Proeyen and Luc Zwijsen.

KU 0522*

Jan Van Imschoot*Abundance of Cows in Weird Times*

Realized in 2010

Location: Geel, OPZ (Public Psychiatric Care Centre), Pas 200**Commissioner:** OPZ Geel**Building project:** renovation of rehabilitation building by Omgeving

Jan Van Imschoot plays here with the idea of the 'patronage', which he seeks to shift from the managers and trustees to the residents and patients of the rehabilitation centre. He held several conversations with interested patients to discuss what the artist should paint and/or draw, on what supports and where the work should be placed in the building. The result is a large painting on canvas that has been hung in the cafeteria, and which features a somewhat absurd and jolly scene. Based on a traditional Flemish landscape, Van Imschoot developed a story featuring cows, men in historical costumes, picknicking ladies under a parasol, a thatched farmhouse, a hot-air balloonist (who aims a jet of water at the big wheel in the background), a Maypole, a windmill, a churchtower, a crucifix, a cyclist, a horse and a haycart. The following words can be read in the sky: watermill, Kempen landscape; *treadmill; birds; purple heath; short skirt; shooting gallery; second-hand market; coffee; no black!!!; apple-blue-sea-green*. The title – *Abundance of Cows in Weird Times* – was suggested by Karel Laenen, a regular visitor to the OPZ's Yellow Art workshop.

KU 0523

Wim Cuyvers*Abris sous noms*

Realized in 2008

Location: Antwerp, Koninklijk Atheneum, Franklin Rooseveltplaats 11**Commissioner:** Vlaams Bouwmeester**Building project:** Restoration of the ceremonial hall at the Koninklijk Atheneum

The old ceremonial hall of the Koninklijk Atheneum in Antwerp was completely restored to mark the school's two-hundredth anniversary. Wim Cuyvers' artistic exploration took as its starting point the relationship between the Atheneum and its immediate surroundings. In so doing, he focused on the school's policy vision, which is committed to living in diversity through dialogue, mutual respect and active pluralism: a message that Cuyvers literally projects to the outside world. The artist installed awnings on the two side walls of the monumental school building above the area where passengers wait for their international buses. The awnings are made of aluminium, in which the names have been cut out of all the pupils who attended the Atheneum in its bicentennial year 2007–08. The cut-outs mean the awning does not offer complete shelter from the elements, but creates an attractive pattern of shadows on the pavement.

KU 0524*

Bernd Lohaus

Gits



Realized in 2007

Location: Gits, VDAB competence centre for building site machines, Ajoy Van Deurenstraat 18

Commissioner: VDAB

Building project: new-build by architecten- en ingenieursburo D'Hondt

Bernd Lohaus was born in Düsseldorf in 1940. He worked in Antwerp from the 1960s until his death in 2010. Lohaus was an early pupil of Joseph Beuys and his artistic roots lay in the Fluxus movement, which remained a key influence in his monumental wood, stone and later bronze sculptures, and in his poems. Lohaus took found wood – mostly used in the construction of jetties – from the banks of the River Scheldt and made minor changes to them, such as adding words. The way the beams relate to one another and to space plays an important role in how they are positioned. It highlights Lohaus' ongoing search for the relationship between artist, viewer and art work. Bernd Lohaus installed four heavy, tilted azobe wood beams at the front of the training centre for building site machines (fork-lifts, cranes and hydraulic lifts). They are balanced on one another in a special way, which may also be perceived as a snapshot of a movement.

KU 0601*

Emilio López-Menchero

Zilvermeer



Realized in 2009

Location: Mol, Social Services Employment & Social Centre, Jakob Smitslaan 22

Commissioner: OCMW Mol

Building project: extension of the existing building by Infrabo

Emilio López-Menchero's intervention is situated in the hall linking the two OCMW (Social Services) buildings in such a way that it is oriented to the visitors and users of the building, as well as to passers-by in the street. The old and new wings of the OCMW building are linked by two passageways: one on the ground floor, the windows of which look out onto the street, and one on the first floor, with windows onto the rear of the site, which is chiefly used by personnel. The artist installed a single, gigantic photograph over the two storeys showing the beach at the nearby recreational area, Zilvermeer. The image can never be viewed in its entirety, however. On the ground floor, the most public part of the building, all the passer-by or visitor can see across the entire rear wall is the lower part of the photograph: women, men and children sunbathing on the beach and enjoying the tranquillity. The top part of the photograph is visible on the wall of the first-floor corridor: an intense blue sky with a few clouds.

KU 0603*

Peter De Bruyne

Sets (1)

Sets (2)



Realized in 2008

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

The series of photographs in the restaurant of the Ellipse Building in Brussels was taken by the Belgian Peter De Bruyne. Having started out as a freelance photographer for newspapers and magazines like *De Morgen*, *De Standaard Magazine* and *Knack Weekend*, De Bruyne has built up his own body of artistic work over the past ten years, which has gradually found its way into the artistic circuit too. His technique of unfocused photographic registration results in visual compositions, in which the image is defined through colour contrasts and structuring through zones and forms. But the images tell a story too. Although he does not stage his photos in any way, they refer, as it were, to empty sets. In this way, he challenges the viewer to consider a registration of the built environment that has been stripped back to its essence.

Peter De Bruyne produced a selection for the Ellipse Building from a series of photographs of detached houses along Flemish roads: homes with their blinds down, symmetrically hung drapes, strategically positioned conifers and all manner of blind walls. He captures Flemish planning stereotypes with a certain distance, though without any kind of value judgement.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 13-17.

KU 0604*

Marcel Berlanger*C.de F. – Hector – Mars – GEK*

Realized in 2009

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

The Belgian artist Marcel Berlanger integrated four works in the lobby of the Ellipse Building. He deliberately opted not to introduce any 'obstacles' to the space, to leave the ambience of the lobby intact and to respond to the movements of visitors and the mechanisms of their visual perception. Berlanger placed a trompe-l'oeil above the revolving door, recessed into a thin sheet of painted plywood, which recalls the visual language of cartoon strips and accentuates the movement of the door. Two paintings were hung on the walls on either side of the reception desk, while a third is angled above the stairs. Marcel Berlanger paints on a self-made ground layer of fibre-glass and resin, taking a photograph or reproduction as his point of departure in each case. The fabric structure of the support is reminiscent of painter's canvas, but now highly enlarged. The coarse structure creates an initial impression of pixellated digital images or highly enlarged photocopies. On closer examination, however, the physicality of the paintwork becomes powerfully tangible.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 7-11.

KU 0605*

Willem Oorebeek

Memory Trail

Realized in 2010

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

Successive technical advances have meant that images have increasingly been reduced in our society to disposable consumer goods. The invention of photography, the photocopy, the computer and digital processes are all placing the integrity and authenticity of images under greater pressure than ever. Willem Oorebeek's work may be read as an exploration into how images behave under those conditions: their vulnerability, their resilience.

He created a cycle of nine tapestries for the Ellipse Building in Brussels. The choice of this medium for a building belonging to the Flemish government is no coincidence: Flanders was famed for centuries for its production of prestigious tapestries, which were traditionally used to emphasize the political and economic power of those in authority. Oorebeek did not place the whole series of tapestries in one prestigious space, but used them to create a 'trail' through different meeting rooms on the first floor and in the basement. The artist largely drew on found images as his source. They come from a variety of origins, including calendars, a page from a book and magazine covers.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 47-50.

[→ pp. 158-163]

KU 0606*

Valérie Mannaerts

Fine, Boisterous Somethings 1 – 8

Realized in 2011

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

Valérie Mannaerts created a series of eight bronze sculptures distributed around the public areas of the building. The works are a discreet presence and seem familiar at first sight: they are often immediately recognizable as a decorative object and are variations on the established 'sculpture on a pedestal' theme. All the same, there is something unexpected about them: their position (mostly very low and not at eye level, to which we are accustomed in a museum context, for instance), their form, and perhaps most of all, their use of material – Valérie Mannaerts has painted virtually all her bronze sculptures with oil paint. Not only does she wrong-foot the viewer in this way, she also pokes fun at established conventions and value judgements in the art world and beyond. The 'pedestal' turns out not to be a modest support or base: it is an integral part of the bronze sculpture, and whereas it is normally preferred to give more humble materials a 'precious' finishing layer (veneer, marbling, silver-plating or gilding), Mannaerts – her tongue somewhat in her cheek – does precisely the opposite, carefully 'disguising' the bronze and turning it into imitation wood, stone, cardboard or steel.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 19-27.

KU 0607*

Mitja Tušek

Why, What, Where, Who, When, How



Realized in 2011

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

Mitja Tušek often works in series. He has been experimenting as a painter since the 1980s with different materials and techniques, the common thread being an exploration of colour and the way it is perceived by the beholder. He is also fascinated by the possibilities of manipulated chance. Mitja Tušek produced a new series of six paintings for the auditorium and ground floor of the Ellipse Building. They are based on a kind of Rorschach test: Tušek painted a word sideways across one side of the canvas, which he then folded over, transferring a mirror image of it to the other side. The result is an at first sight abstract, reflected motif, in which the complex interplay of the colour pigments is what most stands out against the specific background. Only on closer inspection is it apparent that these are legible words. Tušek chose six basic words from project management (who, where, when, why, how, what).

Bibliography: Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids, Brussels, 2011, pp. 38-45.

KU 0608*

Richard Venlet (in collaboration with Macken & Macken Architecten)

Untitled



Realized in 2008

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Boudewijn Building, Boudewijnlaan 30, former offices of the Vlaams Bouwmeester (floor 1C) and offices of the Administrator General of the Department of Administrative Affairs (floor 7B)

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Building project: office remodelling

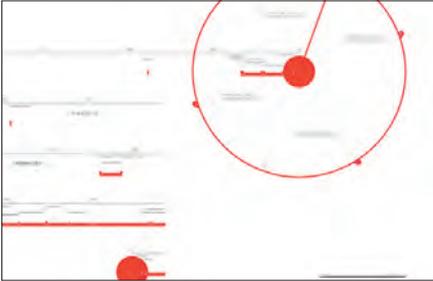
Notions like transparency, reflection, and mental and physical appropriation lay at the basis of this collaboration between the artist Richard Venlet and the architects Macken & Macken. The new offices were remodelled and transformed into a workplace in which both transparency (glass walls) and reflection (mirrored walls) play off each other visually to create unexpected, light volumes. The overall design is conceived as a platform, the substance of which is 'framed' subtly but precisely by the users.

The artist and the architects worked together closely from the very beginning to achieve unity between the pragmatic requirements of the programme and the aesthetic requirements in terms of image formation and spatial perception. All elements – wall solutions, circulation, ceiling, lighting, detailing, floor coverings, etc. – are incorporated in the overall image. The goal of the close collaboration was to develop a space in which architecture and integrated art are woven into a unity: not art as an add-on to the architecture programme, but an inextricably linked whole, following the example of the Renaissance.

KU 0610

Christoph Fink

Homage to Louis Paul Boon



Target date 2019

Location: Aalst, station zone

Commissioner: City of Aalst, De Lijn, NMBS

Building project: Aalst station district master plan by Christian Kieckens architects, with artistic interventions co-curated by Paul Lagring and Hilde Teerlinck

As part of his brief as supervisor of the Aalst station district, the architect Christian Kieckens was asked by the city to incorporate a cultural concept in the urbanist alterations to the public domain. Together with Hilde Teerlinck (director of FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais) and Paul Lagring (director of Netwerk Aalst), he presented a design to the city council in 2009, comprising five artistic interventions* along the banks of the river Dender in the centre of Aalst. The aim was a contemporary interrogation, expansion and reinforcement of the cultural significance of a site defined by its infrastructure. Artefacts are strung together within an area roughly one kilometre long. Transcending the purely functional, they are intended to give the city a distinctive identity once more. They are situated at strategic spots, including the place where the town was first established, plazas and squares of collective importance, promenades along the river, bridges and subways.

Christoph Fink takes as his starting point the landscape as living organism, and the world of the Flemish writer Louis Paul Boon, in which people have a powerful bond with their environment. He wants to place a drawing, fired onto ceramic tiles, on the wall of the pedestrian tunnel under the railway, which extends into the exterior walls and, more specifically, the wall behind the station. Fink intends this intervention to create harmony and balance.

* Realization of one of the five selected artistic proposals, Scott King's, ultimately did not go ahead.

KU 0612

Maya Roos

Portrait in Speed Disk: On Louis Paul Boon



Realized in 2013

Location: Aalst, station zone

Commissioner: City of Aalst, De Lijn, NMBS

Building project: Aalst station district master plan by Christian Kieckens architects, with artistic interventions co-curated by Paul Lagring and Hilde Teerlinck

Maya Roos was one of the five artists Christian Kieckens, Hilde Teerlinck and Paul Lagring asked to present an artistic proposal for the area around Aalst railway station (see KU0610). The Swiss artist came up with a 28-metre-long permanent artwork on the railway embankment next to the bus station. Inspired by the colourful, almost sculptural language of Louis Paul Boon in his 1953 novel *De Kapellekensbaan* ('Chapel Road'), the artwork is based on data from the computer program Speed Disk, part of the Norton Utilities suite of software maintenance tools for PCs. The utility locates files and data spread around the computer's hard drive and brings them together to speed up performance. Speed Disk uses coloured lines to display how fragmented the hard drive has become. In this case, the computer registered and organized all the information about Louis Paul Boon. Roos then re-ordered the lines to create a new image. The coloured lines refer not only to Boon's literary work, but also to his collection of erotic photos, sketches, photos of Aalst and more besides.

KU 0613

Florian Slotawa

Untitled



Target date 2019

Location: Aalst, station zone

Commissioner: City of Aalst, De Lijn, NMBS

Building project: Aalst station district master plan by Christian Kieckens architects, with artistic interventions co-curated by Paul Lagring and Hilde Teerlinck

Florian Slotawa was one of five artists Christian Kieckens, Hilde Teerlinck and Paul Lagring asked to present an artistic proposal for the area around Aalst railway station (see KU0610). Slotawa prepared a proposal based on a study of the different types of street lighting in the city centre. Most of the lampposts have the classic, curved shape, but there is also a more rectangular type, one cross-shaped model at the station, and a whole series of derivatives. The artist wants to place a group of existing lampposts in a circle in the public space to create a meeting place, complete with several benches and tables. Slotawa has numbered the lampposts, so they can be programmed to light up alternately at dusk, never illuminating the spot all at once.

KU 0614

Freek Wambacq

Stone Door



Target date 2019

Location: Aalst, station zone

Commissioner: City of Aalst, De Lijn, NMBS

Building project: Aalst station district master plan by Christian Kieckens architects, with artistic interventions co-curated by Paul Lagring and Hilde Teerlinck

Freek Wambacq was one of five artists Christian Kieckens, Hilde Teerlinck and Paul Lagring asked to present an artistic proposal for the area around Aalst railway station (see KU0610).

Freek Wambacq's proposal consists of the integration of a stone door in the retaining wall of a stretch of railway embankment near the bridge over the river Dender. The intention is to suggest the existence of a space beyond the door – some kind of utility area for railway personnel. However, the form of the door refers more to the neoclassical style of buildings like museums and palaces, as well as to the use of false doors in tombs and temples in ancient Egypt. These functioned as portals and points of connection between the world of mortals and that of the gods. In this contemporary, trompe-l'oeil version, the door seems like a metaphor for some kind of 'public' treasure chamber...

KU 0615*

Ward Zwart

Untitled

Realized in 2009

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

The young artist Ward Zwart, pseudonym of Ward Kuyper, is active in the Antwerp and Ghent underground scene. With his edgy and individual style, he has infiltrated contemporary youth culture via graphic designs for posters, self-produced limited edition magazines, blogs and all sorts of publications. Characteristic works are portraits of punky figures that are powerful in their authenticity and expressiveness.

Ward Zwart created a giant piece of graffiti for the entrance to the government building's car park. In sharp, black strokes, filled with faded shades of green, blue and red, he painted a collection of cars and people that seem to be waiting for something or someone. In this mural, Zwart humorously defuses the daily commuter misery experienced by many users of the car park. The large, black figure with the chequered flag ready for the latest arrivals seems to heighten this interpretation.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 51-53.

KU 0616*

Jan Van Imschoot

Interior with a Kiss, 2010*Belgian Truffelbird*, 2009

Realized in 2009, 2010

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Economics, Science and Innovation, Ellipse Building, Koning Albert II laan 35

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: interior works

Alongside its immense virtuosity, Jan Van Imschoot's work displays a thorough knowledge of and interest in the medium's conditions and history. He cheerfully acknowledges his debt to the sixteenth-century Venetian painter Tintoretto, and is intrigued by Christian iconography. His work also expresses a fascination for film and literature.

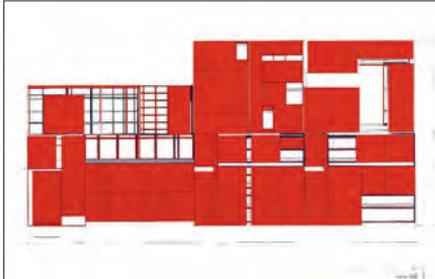
The two vivid and colourful works acquired for the Ellipse Building were placed in two meeting rooms on the twenty-first floor. One canvas, *Interior with a Kiss*, is part of a series of paintings inspired by the work of Spanish-Mexican film director Luis Buñuel. We see a modern, middle-class interior, with a striking image on the far wall of two kissing figures in profile, a direct quote from a scene featuring Catherine Deneuve and Geneviève Page in the movie *Belle de jour* (1967). The second canvas shows a blow-up of a little bird used as a chocolate box decoration. The strangely 'layered' foreground and background seem to be an abstract allusion to this.

Bibliography: *Kunst in het Ellipsgebouw. Bezoekersgids*, Brussels, 2011, pp. 47-50

KU 0701

Jan De Cock

Apple



Started in 2007, not executed

Location: Kortrijk, 'De Appel' elongated roundabout

Commissioner: City of Kortrijk

Building project: Infrastructure works after the course of the River Lys was adjusted to improve navigation

The invitation to the artist was prompted by the fragmented streetscape caused by the infrastructure works. The compulsory purchases required for the works resulted, for instance, in a series of blank walls. Jan De Cock responded with a proposal that not only offered a solution for the anonymous blank walls, but which also responded to the need to link the elongated roundabout with the new bridge over the river. He created a frame as a visual precondition, in which both commercial messages and selected artistic photographs could be 'framed'. The sculptural frame would have taken the form of a modular steel skeleton, covered with rigid panels.

KU 0702*

Thomas Huyghe

Verapaz



Realized in 2009

Location: Sint-Niklaas, Waasland Welfare Centre (CAW), Collegestraat 7

Commissioner: CAW Waasland

Building project: new-build by Volt architecten

There are two parts to Thomas Huyghe's work: a spatial construction on which a painting is mounted and which forms part of the welfare centre's information desk; and a mirrored ceiling in the front part of the reception area. The action and movement in the painted scene are intensified by the reversal of the image and its reflection in the ceiling. What's more, the inside of the construction is lined with reflective material, so that viewers see themselves reflected in the art work. The title *Verapaz* refers to an unsavoury episode in Belgian history: it was the name given to the Guatemalan district of Santo Tomás, where the Belgian government tried to establish a colony in the 1840s. *Verapaz* was hyped as the promised land, yet a tragic end awaited the poor and unemployed people who were enticed there. Huyghe contrasts the saga with the service offered nowadays by the CAW's social workers.

KU 0703*

Pieter Vermeersch

Untitled



Realized in 2008

Location: Antwerp, Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB), Somersstraat 22

Commissioner: Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training

Building project: refurbishment of existing building by ABETEC

Pieter Vermeersch's intention with this project was a painterly 'infiltration' of the VDAB (Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training) building. The proposal was part of a wider artistic exploration, geared toward bringing abstract painting back to reality and reactivating it by deploying it in the public space. In the context of the VDAB building, Vermeersch focused his attention on spaces with the character of a passageway: halls, corridors, landings, etc. Three spaces of this kind were painted in a primary colour (blue), a secondary one (purple) and a fluorescent one (yellow). Painting the walls, ceiling, floor, doors, doorframes, ornaments, and so forth, creates a kind of trompe-l'oeil effect: visitors experience a physical and mental immersion in pure colour, which contrasts powerfully with the structure and visual identity of the building.

KU 0704

Honoré δ'O

(h)m-ur-ba-ni-sation

Pied à terre (title of the superobject)



Realized in 2009

Location: Antwerp, Autonomous Municipal Enterprise AG VESPA, Generaal Lemanstraat 55

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester

In 2007 the Vlaams Bouwmeester presented the Principal Award (Prijs Bouwheer) for the third time. The aim is to lend weight to the policy of promoting the architectural quality of public architectural commissions on the principals' side too. The artist was asked to design one or more works for all the winners and nominees.

Honoré δ'O looks in his work for forms that mediate between the viewer and the physicality of the piece. His point of departure in this case was a kind of primeval image that can manifest itself in different formats. There are thirteen parts to the art work titled (h)m-ur-ba-ni-sation: eight parts for the nominees; four art works for the winners of the different categories; and one superobject (with the title *Pied à terre*) for the winner of the overall Principal Award. The superobject only assumed its final form during the installation by the artist at the actual location of the winning principal – the autonomous municipal enterprise VESPA in Antwerp. Honoré δ'O created an installation in a conference room at the latter's head office consisting of various characteristic objects from his visual vocabulary: polystyrene camera, airplane window, dust-mask, etc.

KU 0705*

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

Ballard Garden

Realized in 2014

Location: Antwerp, deSingel International Art Campus, Desguinlei 25

Commissioner: Flemish Fund for Cultural Infrastructure (FoCI) in collaboration with the Flemish Government, Agency for Facility Management

Building project: Expansion of deSingel International Arts Center by Stéphane Beel Architects to create an International Art Campus

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster built a sculpture garden in honour of the British science-fiction writer J.G. Ballard (1930–2009). It is a 'psychogeography' – an ensemble of elements intended to evoke a melancholy mood, a *nuit noire*, for the distinctive site of the former water basin at deSingel. Key themes in Ballard's work, such as flooding, drought and apocalyptic states of emergency, are expressed visually through sculptural interventions. In the pool, designed by Léon Stynen in the 1960s, Gonzalez-Foerster placed a 'dried-out' empty swimming pool. She then had full-size copies made of the six encircling pedestals and put them as an ensemble in the middle of the existing pool, like an abstract skyline that is dramatically lit at night. A separate entrance was also cut out of the weathered 68-metre-long outer wall.

The intervention links in with Gonzalez-Foerster's earlier, permanent work around deSingel: a small water basin, a monolith from Anatolia and a streetlamp, located since 2004 in the main courtyard. All these interventions came about as part of the 'Curating the Campus' project (2004–14).

KU 0706*

Stief Desmet

Elf Garden

Realized in 2008

Location: Tielt-Winge, Social Services, 'Het Elfenhuisje' Children's Day Care Centre, Glabbeeksesteenweg 13-15

Commissioner: OCMW Tielt-Winge

Building project: new-build by architectenbureau AR-TE

The principal presented the re-laying of the garden, prompted by the new building of a crèche as the starting point for an art commission. The association of the age-group that uses Het Elfenhuisje ('Elf House') with elves and fairies inspired the artist to create a 'parallel world' in the garden of the crèche. He placed a jumble of five toadstools varying in height between 1 and 1.7 metres on the lawn behind the building.

KU 0708*

Wesley Meuris

A perfect Garden



Realized in 2010

Location: Mol, Ten Hove Residential Care Centre, Jakob Smitslaan 26

Commissioner: OCMW Mol

Building project: new-build by Infrabo

Wesley Meuris was invited to propose an intervention for a patio, which serves as the only outdoor space accessible to elderly dementia patients. The artist suggested that the space itself is the art work and created a biotope for the 'hydro-opportunist' – a new 'water type' for the elderly residents, alongside the 'hydrophiles' and 'hydrophobes' in the categorization the artist also uses for his autonomous work. The swimming pool Meuris designed for the residential care centre has a lyrical form and is intended for 'hanging around' and looking at so as to promote social contact. The curled shape of the two-part water feature, with tiles in typical swimming pool style and surrounded by green bushes, adds a cheerful, exotic touch to the clean, uniform presence of the architecture. What the water feature represents most of all to the principal is an upgrade in living quality and a mental escape route for the residents.

KU 0709

Leon Vranken

Untitled



Realized in 2011

Location: Kooigem (Kortrijk), Kooigemplein

Commissioner: City of Kortrijk

Building project: Re-laying of main plaza (Kooigemplein) in collaboration with the designer Stefanie De Vos

Leon Vranken designed a multipurpose plinth – the form of which is in keeping with all the many other classical plinths for statues – for the main square in Kooigem, a sub-municipality of Kortrijk. The project was part of the Meesterproef (Master Trial) in 2007. What makes this plinth different is that it is not used to support a statue, but combines several functions of street furniture: it is a postbox and a cycle rack (three grooves on two of the sides), and also has a water tap. Leon Vranken playfully inscribes his design in the discourse of traditional sculpture, most notably by making the relationship between sculpture and plinth the subject of his artwork.

Bibliography: *Meesterproef 2007*, Brussels, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 42-49

Bouwmeester Rapport 2010-2011. Brussels, 2012, pp. 138-139

KU 0710

Honoré δ'O

Airquake



Realized in 2010

Location: Mechelen, Hof van Egmont Residential Care Centre, Hendrik Speecqvest 5

Commissioner: OCMW Mechelen

Building project: Not applicable (funded by a bequest from a former resident).

Honoré δ'O's installations are composed from everyday materials and objects that are utterly lacking in technical pretension. He constantly introduces new objects, discovered by chance, which he uses to explore the boundary between the everyday and the work of art. The random appearance of the viewer and his or her interaction with the work adds the finishing touch.

Honoré δ'O intends this interactive installation to intensify relationships between the site, residents and visitors. Drawing on the idea behind a temporary installation he designed a few years ago for the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp, he uses bundles of nylon thread driven by a motor, which produce dynamic wave movements. Residents, visitors or passers-by can use the manual controls to set the cables – fastened to different points on the building – in motion, creating a poetic wave pattern.

KU 0711

Lode Geens

Untitled



Realized in 2007 as part of that year's Meesterproef (Masterclass)

Location: City of Kortrijk

Commissioner: Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training

Building project: Master plan by designer Michiel Van Balen

During the Meesterproef work week in 2007, Lode Geens produced a photo reportage highlighting the diversity of the Venning area of Kortrijk. The work was done in parallel with the master plan for the Venning site. The Venning district suffers from a clear lack of social cohesion: the 260 social housing units change tenant on average every two years, but the area also has several luxury lofts, a scrapyard, a half-finished overhead bridge, a house with a swimming pool and a stately home. The artist talked to local residents and took snapshots of them and their living environment. Michiel Van Balen used this documentation as an aid during the design process, following which Geens selected thirty of the photographs and combined them in a single large print. The montage was printed on the back of Van Balen's master plan, helping to place it in context.

Bibliography: *Meesterproef 2007*, Brussels, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 98-103

KU 0712*

Richard Venlet

Untitled



Realized in 2012

Location: Brussels, Sint-Lukas Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst, Rue des Palais / Paleizenstraat 70

Commissioner: LUCA School of Arts, Dexia Real Estate

Building project: Renovation and new-build of Schaerbeek campus designed by TV Polo architects – Greisch – Coppee

Sint-Lukas Brussels University College of Art and Design is a place of creativity, learning and research. Young people go there to study sectors in which image formation plays a key part. Richard Venlet designed an illuminated arrow, five metres in length and made of lacquered steel, for its main building. The arrow rotates at a constant speed, so that it never points in any single direction. The form and movement of the arrow make it a metaphor for pointing out and looking at images in the world around us, while simultaneously designating a place where reflecting on that information and processing it are crucial.

KU 0713

Kris Vleeschouwer

Blind Date



Design for Meesterproef (Masterclass) 2007

Location: Kortrijk, Ramen

Commissioner: City of Kortrijk

Building project: Remodelling of public space by designer Tom Haelvoet

Ramen's past as a red-light district inspired Kris Vleeschouwer's proposal, which reflects the history of the site. It comprises the installation of two benches – one on Ramen square and one at another location in Kortrijk. Red LEDs incorporated in the seat gradually light up when both benches are occupied at the same time. In this way, the design refers subtly to a potential 'blind date', with the intention of energizing the public site as a place of social encounter.

Bibliography: *Meesterproef 2007*, Brussels, Team Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 152-157

KU 0714

Peter Rogiers

Wibo

Realized in 2010

Location: Mechelen, Hof van Egmont Residential Care Centre, Hendrik Speecqvest 5

Commissioner: OCMW Mechelen

Building project: Not applicable (funded by a bequest from a former resident).

The twisted and distorted sculpture placed between the residential care centre and the main road represents a man with a walking stick, a top hat and a beard. The piece functions as a landmark and lends identity not only to the somewhat anonymous building itself, next to the ring road, but also to the site as a whole, for which the sculpture is a focal point or binding element. The title, *Wibo*, was chosen in consultation with the centre's residents and staff.

KU 0715*

Ria Pacquéé

Untitled

Realized in 2009

Location: Brussels, Flemish Representation to the European Union, Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 61–63

Commissioner: Internationaal Vlaanderen

Building project: Interior works

A general feature of Ria Pacquéé's work is the focus on the everyday, combined with those things that transcend all cultural differences. She creates mental bridges between western and eastern culture, using media like photography, video and installations. Pacquéé placed several photographic compositions in the Flemish Representation's offices, showing children from different parts of the world. The phrase 'Flanders fits you' – a slogan used by the 'International Flanders' department in a worldwide campaign – was written on a wall. Along with the four European languages the Flemish government uses officially, the artist introduced several other major languages, such as Arabic, Hindi, Hebrew, and Chinese. A second series of photographs shows people of different religions, identifiable from their clothing and poses. There is a photograph in the Flemish Representative's office of a magician, probably originally from Nigeria, but pictured on Sint-Jansplein in Antwerp.

KU 0716*

Carlo Mistiaen*Untitled*

Realized in 2009

Location: Brussels, Flemish Representation to the European Union, Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 61–63**Commissioner:** Internationaal Vlaanderen**Building project:** Interior works

Carlo Mistiaen placed twelve open sketchbooks in display cases positioned around the fifth floor of the Permanent Representation. The books rest on a wooden frame and have large wooden beads, coloured with calligraphic ink, inserted in their pages. They are presented as the artist's sketchbooks, but have not been used. The books can be read as a metaphor for communication and diplomacy. Carlo Mistiaen also refers through his chosen materials and form to the rich Flemish tradition of book illumination: the books are 'illuminated' by holding them open with a playful pattern of painted beads.

KU 0717*

Bren Heymans*Untitled*

On hold

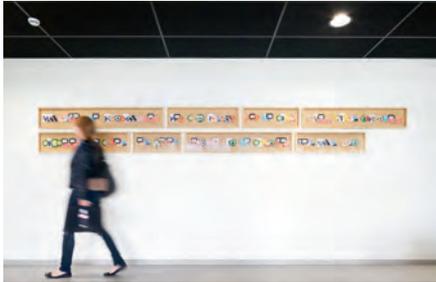
Location: Sint-Niklaas, SBSO 'Baken' (Secondary School for Special Needs), Bellestraat 89**Commissioner:** Vlaams Bouwmeester**Building project:** New-build by ABSCIS architecten

Bren Heymans' proposal is not linked directly with the new building for this secondary school for physically and mentally handicapped youngsters. It relates instead to a small, existing brick gazebo in the grounds, which is currently used for storage. The artist wants to turn the little building into a covered rest area. It will have six round openings of varying diameter and two functional sculptures will be placed in the interior: a sphere with a hollow sitting area, which can be used as an isolation space, and a donkey/sitting sculpture, intended primarily for the pupils to touch.

The installation is also a nod to an etching by Pieter van der Heyden after Bruegel's *The Donkey at School*. Whoever goes to school a donkey, will not come out a horse.

Bibliography: *Cahier #2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 102-110

KU 0718*

Benjamin Verdonck*ABC Hasselt*

Realized in 2013

Location: Hasselt, Koninklijk Technisch Atheneum 2, Vildersstraat 3**Commissioner:** Koninklijk Technisch Atheneum 2 / Vlaams Bouwmeester Team**Building project:** new-build by TV Libost-groep/ a2o architecten

Benjamin Verdonck's project initially comprised a series of workshops with fifth-year commercial printing and display students. The 'product' they came up with was an elongated, frieze-shaped low relief (9.4 m x 15 cm), which was installed in the multi-purpose patio of the new school building.

Brainstorming on the 'potency' of the advertising logos with which we are constantly surrounded, the way in which we read them, appropriate them, store them in our memories and are able or not to reproduce them, resulted in an 'alphabet' in which each letter has been replaced with the logo of a brand with that letter as its initial: Adidas for A, BMW for B, and so on. The pupils drew the logos and carved them in wood. Verdonck then assembled them to form the Dutch sentence: 'When the woodcutter enters the forest with the axe over his shoulder, the trees quake and say, at least the shaft of the axe is one of us.' The sentence is illegible on first viewing, but the key to deciphering it soon turns out to be as universal as our familiar ABC.

Bibliography: Cahier 2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 117-127 and 203-205

KU 0719*

Sarah & Charles*The Sensory Room*

Realized in 2010

Location: Neder-Over-Heembeek, Heemschool 2 Secondary School for Special Needs, Koning Albertlaan 181**Commissioner:** Heemschool 2 in collaboration with Vlaams Bouwmeester**Building project:** New-build by B-architects (project postponed)

The artist duo Sarah & Charles proposed a 'sensory room' – a place where severely mentally and physically handicapped youngsters can relax while their senses are stimulated. They based their proposal on conversations with the teachers who work with the children. The result is a 'sensory room' with two parts: one zone geared to active use, the other more contemplative. For the latter, the artists designed a series of twelve large lightboxes with accompanying soundtrack. The lightboxes evoke the four seasons, day and night, city and nature in four different landscapes. The sensory room, where the children can play with a ball pool, a rocking chair and other toys.

Bibliography: Cahier 2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 71-80 and 192-194

KU 0723*

Marie-Ange Guilleminot*Livre de seuil*

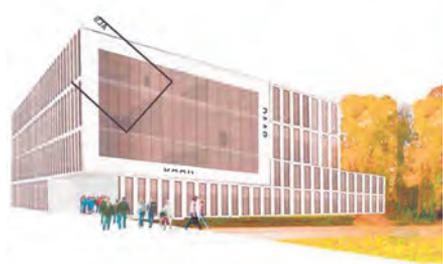
Realized in 2011

Location: Laken, Sint-Ursula Primary School, Dieudonné Lefèvrestraat 41**Commissioner:** Sint-Ursula primary school in collaboration with the Vlaams Bouwmeester**Building project:** New-build by Tom Thys en Adinda Van Geystelen architecten

The architects interpreted the school as a city on a small scale, where the children feel part of a larger community. Accommodation is not only provided for the running of the school, but also for the local community. Marie-Ange Guilleminot makes objects that are intended to promote just this kind of dialogue between people, in which process and transfer are more important than the object itself. Her proposal for the building's 'attic storey' – a multipurpose space for the school – takes the form of a series of 'books' in grey felt, with the dimensions of concrete blocks. There are pre-cut soles in the 'pages' of each book, which can be turned into flip-flops via a simple knot-system. The children can also use the books as building blocks to construct a stage, a partition, a maze, a chair, and so on. The teachers, meanwhile, are all free to use the artwork in their lessons in whichever way they

Bibliography: *Cahier #2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 95-101

KU 0724*

Peter Downsbrough*THERE – TIME | IF, AND, ON*

Target date 2014

Location: Genk, Kunstschool en Instituut Regina Mundi, Collegelaan 9 / Grotestraat 27 (Campus 'de Bret')**Commissioner:** vzw KASOG**Building project:** Design by a2o architecten

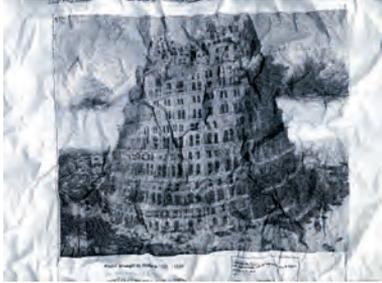
Peter Downsbrough's work consistently reflects on the importance of the adopted position: that of the sculpture in context, the beholder toward the work, and the artist to the world around. The position of each element is crucial in these complex structures, in terms of both language and architecture. Downsbrough's proposal relates to the shared exterior space at the campus. The lines and words used to mark out or emphasize the architecture or passage open a dialogue. Some of the words are cut through, so that they offer an opening to the surroundings: an invitation to interpret: 'THERE – TIME | IF, AND, ON'. We are invited to look differently, to read the place, the context, the work, in a different way.

Bibliography: *Cahier #2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 81-94

KU 0726

Willem Oorebeek

2008 New Year Card, Vlaams Bouwmeester Team



Realized in 2008

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Willem Oorebeek captured the Vlaams Bouwmeester's function in a single image: the larger version of *The Tower of Babel* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, painted in 1563 and now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The painting depicts the Bible story from Genesis 11:4 and symbolizes human beings' unbridled megalomania. The image still functions today as a metaphor for architecture and for linguistic confusion. To design the New Year card for the Vlaams Bouwmeester, Oorebeek downloaded a copy of the image from the internet. He took a simple black-and-white print, scrunched it up, smoothed it out again and then photographed and printed it. As in earlier works, Willem Oorebeek makes a thorough exploration here of the manipulation and (serial) reproduction of existing images.

KU 0727

Franciska Lambrechts*Ideaaahhh!*

Realized in 2008

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team**Building project:** School-building catch-up operation in Flanders

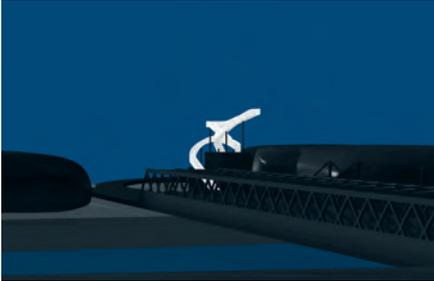
The art team commissioned a work from Franciska Lambrechts in 2006, as part of the ongoing school-building catch-up operation, which the Vlaams Bouwmeester supported. The resultant film is not linked to a specific school building, but reflects at a more abstract level on how we think, learn and gather knowledge. Starting from the opposition between consciousness and matter, and more specifically from the primacy of thinking over matter, the viewer is drawn into a web of dichotomies – the linkage of pairs of contradictory concepts that prove unhelpful when seeking to relate to the world. The film was not only shown at various festivals and cultural events, it was also released as a DVD. The latter, together with the artist's visual essay, was included in the publication *Cahier #2 Art in the School*.

Bibliography: *Cahier #2. Art in the School. Exploratory Interventions in Flanders*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2009, pp. 153-163 + dvd

KU 0801

Tobias Rehberger

The Banks Emerge as Banks Not Only as the Bridge Crosses the Stream



Not realized

Location: Bornem/Temse, second Scheldt bridge

Commissioner: Municipality of Bornem

Building project: Construction of a new Scheldt bridge by Ney & Partners

The brief was to create an artwork that would function as a landmark for people entering the province and relate to the new and the old bridge, without competing with them. The commission also called for the artist to explore the contrast between the two banks of the river Scheldt: the more urban, Temse side, and the Bornem side, with its more rural character. The decision was taken to work on this commission with the German artist Tobias Rehberger, whose work is situated on the interface between the gallery and the functional. Not only does his art possess immense aesthetic qualities, Rehberger also has the ability to unlock the complexity of a site and its specific context for the viewer.

The utility building serves in Tobias Rehberger's proposal as a plinth for a 'panorama path', developed by means of an expressive movement between the old and the new bridge and linking the two together. To heighten the building's plinth character, the principals followed the artist's instructions and applied a layer of black plaster to the exterior walls to contrast with the white, shinily painted metal of the twisting construction Rehberger intended to install. The proposal could not ultimately go ahead for financial reasons.

[→ pp. 164-169]

KU 0801B

Lawrence Weiner

*ABOVE BELOW WATER LEVEL
WITH A LIKELIHOOD OF FLOODING
[I.E. A DYKE]*



Realized in 2012

Location: Bornem/Temse, second Scheldt bridge

Commissioner: Municipality of Bornem

Building project: Construction of a new Scheldt bridge by Ney & Partners

Lawrence Weiner is regarded as a central figure in the evolution of conceptual art. He works primarily with philosophical and poetic texts, which are applied to walls and glass in both private and public spaces. Language to Weiner is a plastic material; each linguistic construction can be regarded as a mental sculpture. Viewers are at liberty to interpret the 'message' as they see fit. Weiner's works are suggestions or proposals.

This work, which was realized for the first time at the Wide White Space gallery in Antwerp in 1977, was shown again in 1990 as part of the 'Ponton Temse' exhibition, in which the sentence was placed on one of the pillars of the old bridge over the Scheldt at Bornem. It currently belongs to the SMAK museum collection in Ghent. With the artist's permission, the piece was loaned for an indefinite period to the Municipality of Bornem, where it has been displayed on the bridge support since 2012.

Another proposal for an artwork by Tobias Rehberger was also selected for the construction of the new bridge over the Scheldt. For financial reasons, however, this could not go ahead (see KU 0801).

KU 0805*

Niko Van Stichel

Observatory

51°04'00,00"N-04°01'33,00"O



Realized in 2012

Location: Zele, 'De Bron' Old People's Residential and Care Centre, Koevliet 3

Commissioner: OCMW Zele, Dexia Bank

Building project: new-build by ABETEC

Van Stichel's proposal is based on the idea that everything you can study in the macrocosmos is also found under the microscope. The artist designed an observatory – a synthesis of various observatories around the world and of the history of astronomy and the local social context. The observatory is constructed around a steel skeleton, the exterior dressed with anodized aluminium and the interior with birch plywood. The dome is accessed by a spiral stairway in the tower, and the lower storey has furniture to sit on.

The work is intended as a meeting place for the occupants of the old people's residential and care centre and their visitors: the observatory is a vantage point, lookout post and window on the world.

KU 0808*

Frank Halmans

Immaculata Bench



Realized in 2011

Location: Edegem, Immaculata Residential Care and Service Centre, Oude-Godstraat 110

Commissioner: OCMW Edegem, Dexia Bank

Building project: New-build by FDA architecten & ingenieurs nv

Frank Halmans' artwork is a bench four metres long and 1.5 metres wide, with a standard lamp on either side. It was installed in the exterior space in front of the entrance to the main building. The bench looks like an upholstered sofa. A white crochet 'coverlet' incorporating different patterns and motifs is draped over it. Five medallions with images on the theme of 'happy old age' are visible across the backrest. The lamp shades are similarly decorated.

KU 0809*

Joëlle Tuerlinckx

Untitled

Not realized

Location: Brussels, Muntpunt, Place de la Monnaie / Muntplein

Commissioner: Flemish Government

Building project: Conversion of the former municipal library into the Muntpunt communication/information centre and 'experience library', by B-architecten.

Joëlle Tuerlinckx's proposal for Muntpunt was based on the idea that the building, like the books kept there, functions as an information carrier and a medium for the transmission of knowledge. The artist wanted to connect these elements, to interrogate them and to anchor them in a metropolitan context. The proposal consisted of piercing the building vertically and suspending a subtle ensemble of strips of fibre-glass paper in the 30 cm-diameter opening, which would be visible on each storey. The work would act as a 'bookmark' for the building, inviting visitors to think about their position and the place and function of the building in the city. The dynamism of the aperture would be guaranteed in part by a pendant, provided at the information desk on the first floor. Tuerlinckx also wanted to place a magnetic surface on the large wall, also visible from Place de la Monnaie, on which an open book would be seen. The aim was to charge the building as a whole – without being present in it in a monumental or imposing way – and to enable it to function as a metaphorical generator of different, layered meanings. The proposal was selected by the jury and the artist was asked to develop her technical proposal further. When the process had been completed, however, sufficient support for its realization was no longer forthcoming.

KU 0810*

Anno Dijkstra

UNTITLED # 1

Realized in 2009

Location: Hallaar (Heist-op-den-Berg), Ten Kerselaere Residential and Care Home, Boonmarkt 26

Commissioner: vzw Emmaüs

Building project: New-build and renovation by Osar Architects

Anno Dijkstra sets out to capture human memories, such as famous media photos or fragments from everyday reality, in sculptures or images. The artist made fourteen sculptures for Ten Kerselaere residential care home. The choice of depicted objects was made after conversations with the residents about their own memories: a Flemish home with an outbuilding, a diamond cutter's tweezers, a farmer's plough, the chapel at Scherpenheuvel, working gloves and so on. Dijkstra placed the bronze sculptures in the central exterior spaces (the access routes to the central plaza) side by side on two low, elongated concrete plinths. A small step allows people to climb onto the concrete slabs and walk around the sculptures. Each one is roughly the same size, to remove any sense of hierarchy between the objects. The sculptures are actually quite small – we look down on them, which creates a reflective atmosphere. Just as old people themselves look back reflectively on their own lives as a succession of anecdotes.

KU 0811

Stief Desmet

Monument for R35



Realized in 2010

Location: Road junction between R35 Zuiderlaan and N382b Verbindingsweg

Commissioner: City of Waregem

Building project: Construction of a traffic roundabout

Desmet designed a free-standing sculpture for the middle of the roundabout. The piece features a multiplicity of figures, the design of which was inspired by front gardens in Waregem itself. The artist conceived the roundabout as a front garden for the town, installing on it an assemblage of the kind of garden sculptures you find in Waregem and, by extension, throughout Flanders. At the bottom is a garden gnome holding a large bowl, from which all sorts of figures seem to pop up, including a deer, a horse, a lion and a little angel. The overall piece is painted black, but here and there the artist has added reflective grey paint, so that the sculpture remains visible at night too. In the run-up to its inauguration, Desmet also organized a poster campaign via inserts in the local newspaper, to get local people actively involved in the process.

KU 0812

Simona Denicolai & Ivo Provoost

www.eeeell.com



Not realized

Location: Asse, Huinegem roundabout

Commissioner: Municipality of Asse

Building project: Construction of a traffic roundabout

The best way to describe Simona Denicolai & Ivo Provoost's proposal is as a contemporary city gate. A monumental digital gateway with a clearly identifiable front and back is positioned so that everyone driving into the town is warmly welcomed and simultaneously invited to visit a website. There they can watch a film, featuring conversations with the workers who installed the gateway on the roundabout. The artistic proposal thus responds to the public space at two levels: firstly through an intervention readable as a sculpture in the physical public space of a town in Flanders, and secondly by embedding it intangibly in the virtual public space of the World Wide Web. The proposal was unanimously mandated by the selection committee, but was rejected by the town council.

KU 0813*

Joris Ghekiere

Untitled

Realized in 2009

Location: Aalst, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis
(Our Lady's Hospital), Moorselbaan 164

Commissioner: Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis Aalst
Building project: Hospital new-build by VK Studio

This artwork was created as part of an artistic vision for the public spaces at the new Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), developed by Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of the contemporary art museum SMAK in Ghent. The work by Joris Ghekiere – a metal construction – is located in the open-air physiotherapy area of the Physical Medicine department and is also visible from the cafeteria. The artist himself describes the work as a 'mental life trail'. It visualizes a number of routes that converge and then continue on their way. Different spiral movements are suggested around a central core. The idea is that, when the weather is fine, patients can do their rehabilitation exercises under the artwork.

Joris Ghekiere is best known for his paintings, but he has also produced a number of open-air sculptures. His sensitivity to relational contexts and social relevance is a common thread running through this work.

KU 0814*

Guillaume Bijl

Souvenirs of the Twentieth Century

Realized in 2009

Location: Aalst, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis
(Our Lady's Hospital), Moorselbaan 164

Commissioner: Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis Aalst
Building project: Hospital new-build by VK Studio

This artwork was created as part of an artistic vision for the public spaces at the new Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), developed by Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of the contemporary art museum SMAK in Ghent (see also KU0813). Guillaume Bijl's installation, *Souvenirs of the Twentieth Century*, was placed on the ground floor. By contrast with the hospital setting, Bijl created a museum atmosphere using display cases filled with so-called historical objects, supposedly once owned by celebrities. The objects are carefully exhibited and identified, and provided with a concise biography of the relevant celebrities. Guillaume Bijl uses installations of this kind to reflect on western cultural values. In more specific terms, he questions – with considerable humour – our fetishistic relationship with physical relics.

KU 0815*

Peter Rogiers*Ballroom Dancer*

Realized in 2009

Location: Aalst, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), Moorselbaan 164**Commissioner:** Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis Aalst**Building project:** Hospital new-build by VK Studio

This artwork was created as part of an artistic vision for the public spaces at the new Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), developed by Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of the contemporary art museum SMAK in Ghent. Peter Rogiers hung a sculpture from one of the white pillars in the monumental entrance hall. The piece – made of red plastic – derives from Rogiers' contribution to a 1999 open-air exhibition in a park in Zoersel. It represents a kind of jester figure performing acrobatics in space. The red colour draws the attention and makes the work linger on the retina. With this sculpture, the artist brings a light-hearted touch to the typical hospital atmosphere.

KU 0816*

Pieter Vermeersch*Untitled*

Realized in 2009

Location: Aalst, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), Moorselbaan 164**Commissioner:** Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis Aalst**Building project:** Hospital new-build by VK Studio

This series of works was created as part of an artistic vision for the public spaces at the new Onze-Lieve-Vrouwziekenhuis (Our Lady's Hospital), developed by Philippe Van Cauteren, artistic director of the contemporary art museum SMAK in Ghent. Pieter Vermeersch placed photographic prints on aluminium by all the visitor lifts in X block. The photos show the lift entrances themselves. On some floors, they consist of direct photographic representations, on others you see a photo within a photo. In this way, the artist creates a depth effect and plays with the visitors' sense of orientation.

Time, space and colour are key concepts in Pieter Vermeersch's work – the building blocks from which he constructs his universe. Precisely how these elements are used and how they interact, differs from work to work.

KU 0818*

Katrien Vermeire

Something To Tell You



Realized in 2011

Location: Hallaar (Heist-op-den-Berg), Ten Kerselaere Residential and Care Home, Boonmarkt 26

Commissioner: vzw Emmaüs

Building project: New-build and renovation by Osar Architects

Katrien Vermeire drew on the stories and memories of residents at the care home to take a unique photograph for each elderly person's living unit: a black-and-white image of a starry sky, a bird cage, a tightrope-walker, a blackbird in the crown of a deciduous tree, a night view of the city, and so on. The photos hang in the hallways of the fourteen individual dwellings, giving them an identity of their own, and providing a point of recognition for residents and their visitors. The photographs have also been printed at postcard size, so that each resident can use them to inform relatives and friends that they have moved in.

KU 0819*

Tim Volckaert

Valerius Erectalius



Realized in 2011

Location: Etikhove – Maarkedal, Ter Gauwen Residential Care Centre, Puttene 36

Commissioner: OCMW Maarkedal, Dexia Bank

Building project: New-build of residential care centre by AMV architecten

The principals wanted to incorporate an artwork in the garden laid out as part of the new-build. Tim Volckaert's work is a six-metre high tower with a window on which different photographs of the landscape are printed. The tower is positioned at the edge of the site, where it engages in a dialogue with the beautiful landscape of the Flemish Ardennes. The title *Valerius Erectalius* is a direct reference and homage to the landscape painter Valerius De Saedeleer who, after prolonged wanderings, settled in this region.

KU 0820*

Sophie Nys

Untitled

Realized in 2008

Location: Brussels, Flemish Government, Department of Administrative Affairs, Boudewijnggebouw, Boudewijnlaan 30 Floor 1 Tower C and Floor 7 Tower B

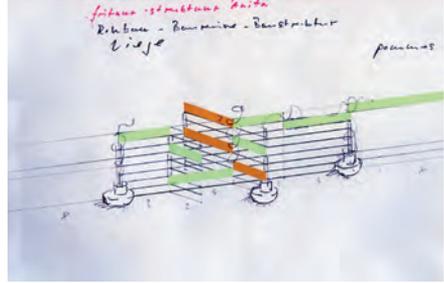
Commissioner: Flemish Government

Building project: Refurbishment by Macken & Macken architects in collaboration with Richard Venlet

The refurbishment brief for the offices of the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team and the Administrator General of the Department of Administrative Affairs at the Boudewijnggebouw, to create a mixed form between an open-plan and cubicle office system, was allocated to the Macken & Macken design agency in collaboration with the artist Richard Venlet (see also KU0608). They opted in the first instance to open up the available space and to strip out all unnecessary walls. The artist Sophie Nys was called on for the signage. She combined text-based signs with a palette of coloured orbs. These not only enhance safety and orientation in these spaces, which are divided up by glass and mirrored partitions, but also add a playful touch to the clean architecture.

KU 0823

Manfred Pernice

Liege

Not realized

Location: Sint-Lievens-Houtem, main square

Commissioner: Municipality of Sint-Lievens-Houtem

Building project: Remodelling of marketplace by Christian Kieckens Architects

In consultation with the developer, the architect looked for an artist able to respond in an individual way to the spatial and urban structure of the plaza, and to the different functional transitions and mental boundaries at play. Manfred Pernice chose to focus on the spot where the architect will first 'clear' the marketplace before very deliberately rebuilding it. The artist based his proposal on the question of what you can do with a construction project that is incomplete. He drew inspiration from three visual elements: a fast-food kiosk and a disused bus-shelter, which currently stand on the edge of the marketplace, stubbornly laying claim to their spot like weeds in a well-tended flowerbed, and an industrial site, visible from one of the nearby motorways. Pernice took these three images and designed a sculpture – a kind of pergola that is intended to evolve and be overgrown with plants. Despite the monumental dimensions (12 x 15 x 4 metres), this is first and foremost a transparent and open structure.

KU 0824

Franky D.C

Macula Lutea



[MACULA LUTEA]

Realized in 2008

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

The Vlaams Bouwmeester Team's New Year card for 2009 was designed by the artist Franky D.C. *Macula Lutea* is a photographic image of an orange-yellow paint spot, random or otherwise, at an unidentified place in the open space. The photo is taken from above and shows an indeterminate form, which stimulates the imagination and can evoke all sorts of connotations. At the bottom of the picture, we see the tips of the artist's shoes, highlighting his position as a keen-eyed observer on the margin of reality. The title in gold letters refers to the yellow patch, a tiny area in our eye that enables us to focus. The allusion is no coincidence: all Franky D.C's work is a reflection on the mechanisms of looking. His photographs, paintings and assemblages aim to show us what we normally pass by without thinking.

KU 0901*

Fabian Luyten

't Pleintje



Realized in 2011

Location: Diest, 't Kevertje Nursery,
Kloosterbergstraat 15

Commissioner: OCMW Diest

Building project: New-build by AMV architecten

Fabian Luyten created a play sculpture in stainless steel – a sofa construction with a lamp – for the toddlers at 't Kevertje nursery. The elements are scaled to match a child one metre tall and the dimensions of the little square on which the play sculpture is installed. The sofa construction is made up of equilateral triangles and polygons and the same figures are also found in the shape and finish of the square. Because of the 'shrunken' impression it creates, the overall design has a sculptural feel for adults viewing it.

KU 0902*

Kelly Schacht

Tour Detour | The guide



Realized in 2011/2012

Location: Munsterbilzen, Flemish Centre for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB), Competence Centre for Mobility and Mechanised Building Trades, Calvarieberg 6

Commissioner: VDAB

Building project: New-build by Architectenbureau Jan Van Baelen

Kelly Schacht placed 'one-liners' in large black capitals on walls throughout the new VDAB (Flemish Centre for Employment and Vocational Training) complex in Munsterbilzen. She wants these 'speech bubbles' to coach passers-by from the sidelines, to comment on and question them, and playfully encourage them to interact. This alternative 'signage' extends out into the exterior space. We discover phrases like 'DOWN UNDER' and 'LET'S PLAY HIDE AND SEEK' on sewer pipes and other concrete training materials. A large canvas, stretched on a frame, with the text 'STAY FOCUSED' has been mounted at the top of a site container. The work helps integrate the various training courses and movements that occur on the VDAB site.

KU 0903

Johan De Wilde

Culture Guide for the Blind



Realized in 2009

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

In 2009 the Vlaams Bouwmeester presented the Principal Award for the fourth time, with the goal of promoting the architectural quality of public building commissions. The prize was awarded in four categories: new-build, remodelling or reuse, public space and commissioned art. Each nominee and winner received a diptych by Johan De Wilde. For each category, the artist created a set consisting of a photographic image of the city of Oslo on one side and a drawing inspired by photographs from an English-language travel guide for Norway from the early twentieth century. Winners received a set with an original drawing, while the nominees were presented with a high-quality reproduction. The originals and reproductions are, however, almost identical. In this way, De Wilde emphasizes not only that the work of art has arrived 'in the age of technical ultra-reproduction', but also that there is no hierarchy at play in his work.

KU 0904*

Ilke De Vries
Evolution



Realized in 2012

Location: Hoeilaart, Hof ten Doenberghe Residential Care Centre, Groenendaalsesteenweg 32

Commissioner: OCMW Hoeilaart

Building project: new-build by RDBM architecten & adviseurs

Fifty years ago, Hoeilaart was a 'glass village', full of greenhouses in which table grapes were grown. Many of the residential care centre's elderly residents remember those structures very clearly and the position of the new sheltered flats offers them a beautiful view of a valley with just such a restored greenhouse. There are two parts to Ilke De Vries' art work *Evolution*: a light installation and a film.

The artist turned the greenhouse into a light installation, the intensity of which varies with the weather and the seasons. Nature and events inside and around the structure play a central role. The artist then asked one of the residents to film the scene from a fixed spot in her room, twice a day for a year. De Vries drew from this huge body of material to make a film that is shown in the day areas of the residential care centre. The screens function as living paintings, showing life in and around the greenhouse.

[→ pp. 176-181]

KU 0906A

Alberto Garutti
Untitled



On hold

Location: Turnhout, Turnova Site interior zone

Commissioner: City of Turnhout in collaboration with Armada Projectontwikkeling

Building project: Redevelopment of the Turnova Site based on WIT architecten's master plan

The development of the Turnova Site (former Brepols printing works) has created a whole new district in the centre of Turnhout. In addition to the architectural, social, commercial and functional added value the project will generate, the city council is keen for the site to have a special artistic appeal. Alberto Garutti was invited to develop an experiential project. Garutti's work combines monumentality with a strong urban and social interdependence. These characteristics matched the principal's ambitions to highlight the large scale of the project by developing a landmark for Turnhout, while remaining sensitive to the social and demographic reality of the site and the city. In his concept, Garutti concentrates on the new plaza and the relationship it will form with its surroundings and users. Not only is the plaza the site's central point, it also functions as a counterpart to the historical Grote Markt – Turnhout's main square, which lies just beyond Turnova. Water will play a defining role in the final design, reflecting the fact that the municipal swimming pool where many people from Turnhout and the surrounding area learned to swim was once located here.

KU 0906B

Jef Geys

Untitled



On hold

Location: Turnhout, Turnova Site interior zone

Commissioner: City of Turnhout in collaboration with Armada Projectontwikkeling

Building project: Redevelopment of the Turnova Site based on WIT architecten's master plan

The common theme underlying the art commission to be incorporated in the master plan for the Turnova Site was an exploration of the notion of 'experience'. The artists were asked to respond to the future social, economic and demographic reality of the site and the city, and to intensify Turnova's landmark function. Jef Geys views the world from the Kempen region, where he reflects on art and society. He is convinced that art is part of life and does not have to be shut up in museums and art galleries. His proposal is to take photographs from a mini-helicopter flying high above the site. The photographs would be shot in each of the four main compass directions, and the four intermediate ones. Geys then wants to install eight black and white prints on the site, each with a small, coloured compass rose. The frame of each photo will be coloured to match the one on the compass.

Turnova will be completed in phases, and so Geys wants the works to be introduced to the site one by one. The work will form a panorama on the ground floor, encouraging future visitors and users of the site to set off in exploration.

KU 0908A *

Philip Aguirre y Otegui

15 August 1942, Lange Kievitstraat Antwerp



Realized in 2012

Location: Mechelen, Kazerne Dossin (Memorial, Museum and Documentation Centre on Holocaust and Human Rights), Goswin de Stassartstraat 153

Commissioner: Flemish Government, Department of the Services for the General Government Policy

Building project: Restoration, renovation and refurbishment of Dossin Barracks to create a memorial and new-build for a museum and documentation centre on holocaust and human rights by AWG Architects

In July 1942, the German occupation authorities set up an SS assembly camp at the former Dossin Barracks in Mechelen. In the years that followed 25,484 Jews and 351 Roma were deported from there on 28 rail convoys to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Less than 5% of them – 1,240, including 32 Roma – would survive the war. This tragic episode makes Kazerne Dossin an important *lieu de mémoire*. In their design, AWG Architecten set out to achieve an architecture free of show, neither narrative nor seductive.

Aguirre y Otegui created two works of art in the context of this project. The piece on the ground floor of the Memorial, with the title *15 August 1942, Lange Kievitstraat Antwerp*, was inspired by police reports of the first large-scale round-up of Jews in Antwerp by the German occupiers. Families were seized from around the dinner table to be deported to Auschwitz a few days later from the Dossin Barracks. The artwork shows three figures lying beneath a table on which three plates and three spoons are laid. A bare light bulb hangs over the table. The windows are whitewashed.

KU 0908B*

Philip Aguirre y Otegui

The Wall



Realized in 2012

Location: Mechelen, Kazerne Dossin (Memorial, Museum and Documentation Centre on Holocaust and Human Rights), Goswin de Stassartstraat 153
Commissioner: Flemish Government, Department of the Services for the General Government Policy

Building project: Restoration, renovation and refurbishment of Dossin Barracks to create a memorial and new-build for a museum and documentation centre on holocaust and human rights by AWG Architects

Philip Aguirre y Otegui created two works as part of the restoration, renovation and refurbishment of Kazerne Dossin, one of which is on the ground floor of the memorial (see KU0908). Inside the museum, he placed the installation *The Wall* at the end of the long reception desk. It consists of a male figure about 185 cm high, with its face turned to the bare wall of the museum. The wall is part of the work. The installation refers to a photograph from the archives of the fort at Breendonk – also used by the Nazis during the war – in which a group of men in civilian clothes are shown standing in one of the courtyards, evenly spaced, their faces to a wall.

KU 0911*

Art & Language

Homes from Homes X



Realized in 2011

Location: Herentals, Sint-Elisabeth General Hospital, Nederrij 133

Commissioner: AZ St.-Elisabeth

Building project: Extension and conversion by Architects in Motion

Art & Language is an evolving collaboration between a group of conceptual artists, which has undergone a great many changes since it was founded in the late 1960s. Art & Language's early work, such as their magazine *Art-Language* – first published in 1969 – is seen as an influential contributor to the development of conceptual art in both Britain and America.

The work Art & Language proposed for St Elisabeth hospital in Herentals is not intended as an addition to the architecture, but as a 'barbed suggestion'. A frame hangs by the central lift in the ground floor lobby, in which 216 badges are placed – one half with a text, the others with pictures of trees. Each of the text badges begins with a greeting followed by a name: 'Hello John!' Being addressed this way obviously means more in a hospital than it does elsewhere. The tree pictures – which also refer to the Herentals coat of arms – form a kind of contrast with the text, suggesting a connection with the outside world, with nature.

Details on a human scale are important to Art & Language in a monumental building like a hospital. The word functions as something that brings the viewer into another world outside the institution.

KU 0912*

Guy Van Bossche*The Collector*

Target date for realization 2015/16

Location: Herentals, Sint-Elisabeth General Hospital, Nederrij 133**Commissioner:** AZ St.-Elisabeth**Building project:** Extension and conversion by Architects in Motion

Guy Van Bossche's proposal is based on a photograph the artist took in Switzerland, showing children building a tree-house just above the tree line. The photograph had already served in the past as the starting point for a number of paintings. For this commission, Van Bossche wants to enlarge one of those paintings and to transfer it to tiles. Turning it into a tile-scene is a way for him, as painter, to genuinely integrate his work in the architecture. The work will be installed near the lifts. The tree-house refers to our need for shelter and everything associated with it: play, fear, hope and so on.

KU 0913

David Claerbout*Street Cat. A Pet for the City*

Not realized

Location: Poperinge, main square (Grote Markt)**Commissioner:** City of Poperinge**Building project:** Remodelling of the main square by Christian Kieckens Architects

The architect approached the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team in connection with the remodelling of the main square in Poperinge to help explore ideas for an artistic intervention in the public space. They made a joint recommendation to the city council to permanently install the video piece *Street Cat. A Pet for the City* by David Claerbout. The interactive artwork takes the form of a television screen, on which you can see a living room with a cat. The animal responds to the behaviour of passers-by like a real cat: sometimes friendly and responsive, sometimes keeping itself aloof from the bustle of the main square. The artwork would have the lifespan of a real cat – 15–20 years. *Street Cat* is deliberately intended not to be an artwork that in any way hinders the development or functionality of the site. It is a symbolic and metaphorical addition, with a substantial interactive and social-artistic element.

KU 0914

Tinka Pittoors

Brakel Hen



Realized in 2012

Location: N8 highway between Brakel and Ninove

Commissioner: Municipality of Brakel

Building project: Village centre remodelling by BRUT

The 'Brakel Hen' is an established part of the community's cultural heritage, even though it has not (yet) been recognized officially. Right through to the First World War, the local breed of chicken was not only extremely important to the local food supply, it was also a regional economic asset. An association was even set up in the late nineteenth century to promote the Brakel Hen. The municipal council was therefore keen to install a monument to the hen on a busy road leading to the village centre. In consultation with the local village society, the council chose a representation of its living heritage by the artist Tinka Pittoors. She has brought the Brakel Hen to life in an abstract yet recognizable way in a four-metre-high sculpture with a spiral support that generates authentic 'pecking' movements.

KU 0915*

Bren Heymans (in collaboration with landscape architect Steve Annaert and the residents)

Untitled



Realized in 2012

Location: Boom, De Klinkaard Care Home, Jan Frans

Willemsstraat 26

Commissioner: KOCA Volwassenenzorg vzw

Building project: New-build by ba-p

Bren Heymans' brief was to lay out the garden. In dialogue with the residents – 24 deaf or hearing-impaired people, who live here permanently – and a landscape architect, the idea arose of modelling the garden next to the new building not only for the benefit of residents but also to open it up at certain times as a semi-public space for the neighbourhood. The old recreation unit was given a rocky make-over and now serves as a clubhouse. The artist installed a water feature at the residents' request both inside and outside this unit, in which loudspeakers are used to visualize ambient sounds as circles in the water.

Bren Heymans' artistic contribution is an invitation to communicate addressed to the residents of De Klinkaard and local people. The artist has focused very deliberately on the care home team's emphasis on inclusion. He emphasizes their constant search for interaction between the residents and their surroundings, making it clear in a non-intrusive and inviting way that the people who live here are neighbours of the other residents of Boom-Noord.

Because the garden has been made partially accessible to the neighbourhood, the community has also been involved in the realization of the project.

KU 0916A*

Job Koelewijn

Audio billboard (working title)



Will not be realized

Location: Lo-Reninge, Hof ten IJzer and Het Havenhuis Residential Care Centres, Dorpplaats 14 and Lostraat 3K

Commissioner: vzw C.O.D. Sint-Vincentius

Building project: New-build Het Havenhuis-Hof ten IJzer / village centre refurbishment

Job Koelewijn came up with a proposal to involve all the residents at the site by recording them reciting a poem: *Waar het op aan komt* ('What it comes down to') by Willem M. Roggeman, which the artist himself has been reading out loud and recording every day for the past few years.

The residents' voices would be relayed fairly soberly via loudspeakers incorporated in a billboard. Koelewijn wanted to play back the recited verses according to a set rhythm, once or several times a day, just as a church bell or carillon marks the daily rhythm of a town. The billboard would stand on the edge of the site of Het Havenhuis/Hof ten IJzer. Although the content of the proposal focuses on the residential care centre and is not directly connected with the remodelling of the village centre as such, the artwork would still connect with the rest of the community. It would be an occasional intervention, which could nevertheless help shape the perception of the village.

KU 0916B*

Richard Venlet

On Walls and Bricks as Metaphors of an Embedded Past and New Perspectives (working title)



Will not be realized

Location: Lo-Reninge, Hof ten IJzer and Het Havenhuis Residential Care Centres, Dorpplaats 14 and Lostraat 3K

Commissioner: vzw C.O.D. Sint-Vincentius

Building project: New-build Het Havenhuis-Hof ten IJzer / village centre refurbishment

Venlet's proposals are based on a wider analysis of the sites and the village, with the aim of intensifying their coherence and attractiveness. The church has a cemetery surrounded by a wall, which is more recent than the church and has a number of functional and symbolic shortcomings. As a result of these, the cemetery seems present in the village in the wrong way. Richard Venlet wants to retain all these elements, while enhancing the visual attractiveness and openness of the village by building a new wall, incorporating functional and symbolic elements. The result would be an open ensemble that does greater justice to the beauty and monumentality of the church.

The proposal to build a wall at strategic points around Hof ten IJzer was prompted by the desire to extend this typology and to engage the residential care centre more effectively with the rest of the village. The artist also proposed providing a semi-circular niche next to Het Havenhuis, in matching brick and fitted with a bench looking out over the landscape of the IJzer river valley. The final part of Venlet's proposal was to use the wood from one of the three monumental beeches in the cemetery (the tree itself is dead) to furnish or panel the two centres.

KU 0917*

**Jan Kempenaers in collaboration with
Kasper Andreasen**

Untitled



Realized in 2014

Location: Nieuwpoort, De Zathe Residential Care Centre, Astridlaan 103

Commissioner: OCMW Nieuwpoort in collaboration with Belfius

Building project: New-build by Osar architects

Jan Kempenaers selected photos from the picture archives of Nieuwpoort and the surrounding area, which were then reproduced in halftone like a newspaper photograph and milled into white resin sheets. These were installed as a sunshade for the glazing of the residential care centre's long north facade. The panels provide diffuse illumination, but the openings between the panels play with the incoming light too. Views of the outside are also created for residents in the large living area. In combination with the glass and the curtains, a layered image arises, together with a fascinating interaction between interior and exterior. The power of the artistic intervention also lies in the value it adds to the new square on the north side of the building, one side of which is delineated by the panels with their old and new images of Nieuwpoort. The building enables residents and passers-by to look at a specific selection of familiar and abstract details from their familiar surroundings. This blend of old and new fragments also alludes to the presence of different generations: young families are housed in the immediate surroundings of the residential care centre.

KU 0918

Koen Vanmechelen
Cosmogolem



Realized in 2014

Location: Kruikebeke-Bazel-Rupelmonde, controlled flood zone

Commissioner: Waterways and Sea Canal SA and the Municipality of Kruikebeke

Building project: Sigma Plan

Tij, the local sociocultural organization, campaigns for a permanent dialogue with residents of Rupelmonde, Basel and Kruikebeke, and by extension, all interested parties in Flanders and beyond. The ambition is to realise a project that can stimulate and innovate, not only in the artistic and cultural sphere, but that of ecology and tourism too. An intensive dialogue between nature and culture via an art project can focus attention on the efforts needed to safeguard life on earth for future generations.

Koen Vanmechelen's *Cosmogolem* – a kind of wooden giant – will be installed in the reception area of the Kruikebeke-Bazel-Rupelmonde flood zone. The *Cosmogolem* symbolizes universal children's rights and the trap of believing in the perfectibility of human beings. The original idea dates back to 1986, when Vanmechelen designed the sculpture as a symbol of a helper, a rescuer for anyone in need of support. Since then, *Cosmogolem* has been rebuilt by local young people in various places around the world. Versions can be found, for instance, in India, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Poland and Pakistan. Young people from the local community will help build the artwork in Kruikebeke too.

KU 0919

Jacques Charlier

Dites-le toujours avec des fleurs



Realized in 2009

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Jacques Charlier was invited to design the 2010 New Year card for the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team. Charlier describes himself as a 'wholesaler in Belgian humour, all categories'. His favourite theme is the sociocultural and economic problems of art and the art world. The image he made for the card radiates luxury and warmth, but also a touch of the absurd: a kitsch floral still life in a moulded gilt frame floats oddly against a backdrop of dark red velvet curtains. The painting has also been rotated 90 degrees, making it even more grotesque. Charlier presents a clearly legible and familiar image, which nevertheless invites us to question our gaze, our experience and our relationship with images.

KU 0920

Ellen Harvey

Repeat



Realized in 2013

Location: Bossuit, Doorniksesteenweg

Commissioner: Municipality of Avelgem

Building project: study for the repurposing of a church building

Sint-Amelbergakerk in Bossuit was no longer used for worship and was suffering from structural problems. An appropriate response to this situation and to the site itself was sought through dialogue between the different partners. Having decided to repurpose the church, they turned to the artist Ellen Harvey, who proposed transforming the building into a 'controlled ruin'. Noting that Bossuit lacks quality public space and that the church occupies a central place in the fabric of the village, she responded by stripping the church building and allowing the skeleton to be overgrown with wild plants. The new terrazzo floor follows the footprint of the old church and refers visually to its history through a 'shadow' recalling the silhouette of the ruin after its bombardment in the First World War.

The art work can be viewed as a project that creates an added social and cultural value while preserving the *genius loci*.

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KU 1001*

Vadim Vosters & Pieter Walraet
Grotto



Realized in 2012

Location: Hofstade, Ambroos Residential Care Home,
Muizenstraat 66

Commissioner: vzw Emmaüs

Building project: new-build by architectenbureau
Archides nv

Vadim Vosters and Pieter Walraet's construction follows the formal idiom of a grotto: rocky walls, creeping undergrowth and informal pathways drawn by informal use. Bare walls, stalactites and stalagmites form a complex drawing in the interior. Through its position in the residential care home's semi-public space, the grotto offers a retreat, a quiet spot for residents, carers, volunteers, neighbours, and so on. As soon as dusk falls, the architectural art work takes on an extra dimension, both literally and figuratively, through the inventive projection in the interior: a shadow-play develops on a glass wall, resulting in an interactive exchange with a new living environment. The grotto is also used as a space for therapeutic conversations.

KU 1002

Frederic Geurts
Spiral



Realized in 2011

Location: Peer, roundabout N747-N748 – Kleine Brogel

Commissioner: Municipality of Peer

Building project: relaying of roundabout, designed by
the Municipality of Peer

Two ring-shaped red and white tubes, the design of which refers to traffic signals, encircle the roundabout in a double movement. Enhanced visibility and road safety coincide here with the creation of a kind of optical illusion, a suggestion of movement. It can seem from a distance as though a single ring is endlessly jumping up and down. Only as the driver approaches and enters the roundabout is the illusion broken.

KU 1003*

Koen van den Broek

Sampled



Target date for realization 2018

Location: Mechelen, Sint-Maarten General Hospital, at the R6-Liersesesteenweg highway (Roosendaelveld), Mechelen North

Commissioner: Emmaüs vzw

Building project: New-build designed by VK STUDIO Architects, Planners & Designers

Koen van den Broek customarily focuses as a painter on architectural elements from our surroundings and on rhythm. It was this that persuaded the principals to invite him to develop a concept for the glass sections in the facade of the new hospital building, which were identified as potential supports for a monumental work. Van den Broek designed a print for the glass surfaces based on elements from his paintings, which he combined to form a new ensemble relating to the architecture. He is also interested here in the relationship between inside and outside, and between the hospital as a larger entity and the individual detail on which each person can focus.

[→ pp. 188-193]

KU 1004*

Ruben Bellinkx

Hands through the Roof (working title)



Target date for realization unknown

Location: Laken, 't Mutske Youth Centre, Schapenweg 2

Commissioner: Jeugdhuis 't Mutske vzw

Building project: remodelling of youth centre by Plan A

Ruben Bellinkx wants to place fifteen concrete casts of hands on the youth centre's green roof. The poses and gestures of the hands are inspired by those of fans reaching out to their idols at concerts or festivals. Along with familiar gestures like the peace sign, flipped middle finger and devil horns, the artist reproduces hand gestures without a clear meaning or which come from another culture. The hands seem to break through the youth club roof: they express adoration, rebellion and the cry of freedom, but also helplessness.

KU 1005*

Mekhitar Garabedian

Library (Barthes, 2011)



Realized in 2011

Location: Antwerp, GZA Hospitals, Campus Sint-Vincentius, Sint-Vincentiusstraat 20

Commissioner: GZA Ziekenhuizen

Building project: extension of Sint-Vincentius Hospital by Architectenbureau De Vloed

The artist made two interventions. The first was to place the words (in Dutch) 'My body is not the same as yours' in neon letters on the blank wall in the Admissions area. The second was an invitation to staff and visitors to complete the following sentences on A4 pages: 'I like: / I don't like:' The completed pages are then scanned and displayed on monitors in the reception area. Both interventions refer to a passage in the book *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*: 'I like, I don't like: this is of no importance to anyone; this, apparently, has no meaning. And yet all this means: my body is not the same as yours.'

KU 1006*

Guy Rombouts

untitled



Target date for realization 2014

Location: Wilrijk, Sint-Bavo Residential Care Centre, Sint-Bavostraat 29

Commissioner: GZA Ziekenhuizen

Building project: New-build designed by Wim Dens and Barent Bulcke

Guy Rombouts came up with a proposal consisting of three sub-projects. The first embraces the numbering of the rooms and apartments using old, recovered dinner plates. The room number will be indicated on the plates using the AZART alphabet developed by the artist.

For his second intervention, the artist wants to create a bird-feeding place, in which a sundial will also be installed. He plans to enrich the bird life around the Sint-Bavo residential care centre by also placing 26 nesting and feed-boxes all around the complex. Each little house is constructed in the form of a letter or bird name, and has the colour of the relevant letter of the AZART alphabet. The nesting boxes will be hand-made in clay.

For his third project, lastly, Guy Rombouts wants to present live webcam images from elsewhere in the world via a number of monitors in the care centre's cafeteria: an aquarium, the market in Beijing, St Mark's Square in Venice, a falcon's nest or the beach in Yucatán.

KU 1007*

Henk Visch

A Vase in the Street



Realized in 2012

Location: Wilrijk, Sint-Augustinus Hospital,
Oosterveldlaan 24

Commissioner: GZA Ziekenhuizen

Building project: Enlargement by SVR-Architects

Henk Visch placed a 2.75-metre-high aluminium vase in the landscaping between the public highway, with its bus stop, and the car park in front of the entrance to the Sint-Augustinus hospital. It is a light grey vase with a matte sheen and a red band around the neck: a simple form with a minimum of decoration.

The vase can be linked to a whole range of meanings, going far back in history. In archaeological terms, for instance, vases are the first indication of the existence of a social community. Every city rests on a thick layer of shards, which testify down to the tiniest detail to the socially formative power and extremely slow development of a connecting cultural awareness. Vases frequently display, moreover, a serene, meditative symmetry, and may be viewed as a stylized anthropomorphic form.

The artist does not want to present the sculpture as part of the street furniture, and so has installed it as an autonomous object with the hospital as its backdrop.

KU 1008*

Ann Veronica Janssens

Children's Psychiatric Centre, Genk



Realized in 2013

Location: Genk, Children's Psychiatric Centre,
Schiepse Bos 8

Commissioner: Vzw Kinderpsychiatrisch Centrum
Genk (KPC)

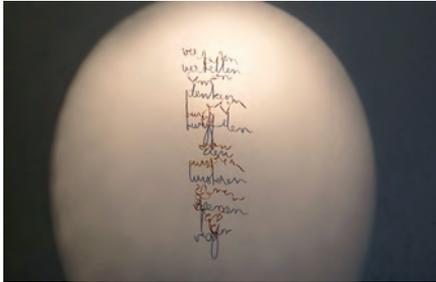
Building project: New-build by Osar Architecten

Ann Veronica Janssens has integrated colours, lenses, prisms and texts in the windows throughout the building. Together, they affect the appearance of the building from the outside. On the inside, the various interventions create all sorts of optical and lighting effects. A lens enlarges or reduces the surroundings; two colour surfaces slide over one another in a frame so that a new colour is formed; strips of mirrored glass reflect light and the surroundings; two line drawings slide over one another, creating a moiré pattern. This play of light, colour, form and distortion is intended to challenge and wrong-foot the observer. In this way, the artist refers in a subtle, non-confrontational way to the reason why children and parents have to visit the psychiatric centre. The world is constantly changing and little account is taken of the time each person needs to adapt to it. At the same time, Ann Veronica Janssens offers the visitor a certain distraction, allowing the attention to wander from the psychiatric to the visual.

KU 1009*

Fred Eerdekens

Seven Words That Can Change Your Life



Realized in 2011

Location: Tienen, Broeders Alexianen Psychiatric Clinic, Liefdestraat 10

Commissioner: Vzw Provinciaal der Broeders van Liefde

Building project: New-build by Osar Architecten

There are two parts to Fred Eerdekens' work. The following sentence can be read on the wall of the reception area in the new building, which is intended for temporary admissions: 'Seven words that can change your life.' Eerdekens picked out seven ideas/actions from an analysis of the site and conversations with the people involved with it: words that seem crucial in the process that patient and attendant go through during an admission. The seven words were then subtly placed in one of the reception rooms: *tell – think – doubt – see – listen – open – ask*. These words, and the ones in reception, are formed using copper wire. As usual in Fred Eerdekens' work, they are not immediately identifiable: a legible image is only formed by the shadows cast on the wall with artificial light.

KU 1011*

Frank Bragigand

The Kitchen – The Terrace



Realized in 2011

Location: Balen, De Schakel Residential Centre, Schakelveld 20

Commissioner: vzw De Schakel

Building project: Extension of the residential centre by Architects Unplugged

De Schakel ('The Link') is an association that provides day and/or night accommodation and support for adults with a mild to serious mental handicap. Frank Bragigand added an extra dimension to the furniture and decorations in the cafeteria and terrace of the residential centre's shared interior and exterior space. As in his earlier work, *Painted Objects*, everyday items were painted. The principal wanted the commission to have a social and artistic dimension, and so the artist proposed painting the chairs, tables and coloured panels as part of a workshop with the residents.

KU 1012

Pedro Cabrita Reis

Looking at Silence



Realized in 2012

Location: Kortrijk, Crematorium Uitzicht, Ambassadeur Baertlaan 5

Commissioner: Intergemeentelijke Vereniging voor Crematoriumbeheer in Zuid-West-Vlaanderen 'Ppsilon'

Building project: new-build by Souto de Moura Arquitectos Lda & SumProject

Pedro Cabrita Reis' intervention consists of a brick interior wall, which was built and then distressed. Cabrita Reis works here, as he always does, with materials that refer to construction – to a universe of technology. The smashing of the wall surface represents a decision, an action, but also the passage of time, erosion and transience. The proposal's visual power lies in its simplicity and its potential to enrich the identity of the place. The way it plays with colour and texture in this serene context forms a valuable addition to the architectural surroundings.

[→ pp. 194-199]

KU 1013

Kris Vleeschouwer in collaboration with Sophie Van Noten

Telescopic Column (working title)



Target date for realization 2015

Location: Geel, main square

Commissioner: Municipality of Geel

Building project: Remodelling of Markt and Werft by Infrabo/VHP

The art commission for the main square (Markt) in Geel has a specific prehistory. Kris Vleeschouwer initially developed an artwork for a roundabout near the psychiatric hospital in Geel: a moving arrow would respond metaphorically to the commission, which focused particularly on the local tradition of family-based care. The idea of commissioning an artist was to highlight this collective and unique engagement of local people. When the roundabout on the nearby main road was cancelled, it was suggested that Geel municipal council should invite Kris Vleeschouwer to develop a concept for the main square, where the specific efforts of the local community could be showcased even more effectively.

The *Telescopic Column* is an extendable mast integrated subtly in the Markt in Geel. The column is linked to motion sensors in the care wards at the town's psychiatric hospital. As the patients and staff move around the hospital, the column on the square rises or falls very slowly. The more people move around the hospital, the higher the mast rises. Sometimes the column is emphatically present – up to 25 metres high – at others it disappears into the ground and becomes as good as invisible.

KU 1019*

Aeneas Wilder

Untitled #151



Realized in 2010

Location: Duffel, Van Arenberg Residential Care Home, Rooienberg 1

Commissioner: Emmaüs vzw

Building project: Extension by Architectenburo Jef Van Oevelen

Aeneas Wilder's artwork, a spherical wooden sitting sculpture eight metres in diameter, was installed in the semi-public outdoor area of the residential care home, next to a footpath to the village. The piece, consisting of stacked wooden beams, simultaneously creates a sense of security and openness. The work serves as a meeting place for the elderly, but also for young people from a nearby school and patients from the psychiatric hospital. Wilder has created a sociable, accessible space, in which the boundaries between intimacy and openness, the sacred and the everyday are subtly explored.

KU 1020

Roberta Gigante

Blow Out



Realized in 2014

Location: Ghent, Visserijpark, Visserij

Commissioner: City of Ghent

Building project: Remodelling of green space by Hans Druart and Roberta Gigante

The City of Ghent wants to create green spaces that offer respite in the heavily built-up residential areas inside the nineteenth-century ring boulevard. Landscape architect Hans Druart and artist Roberta Gigante collaborated on designs as part of the 2010 Master Trial for the Visserijpark and the park on Willem de Beersteeg (see also KU1021). The proposals explore the boundary between land and water.

Visserijpark was remodelled in close consultation with local residents to create a 'neighbourhood garden' that is peaceful but can also be used for a neighbourhood barbecue or party. Roberta Gigante conceived an installation consisting of seven tubes of varying diameter and length, leading into the water of the Lower Scheldt river. It refers to the watermill that once stood here, earning the site its name 'Rommelwater' ('Rumble Water'). When users of the park step on certain 'sensitive' stones, air-bubbles form in the river water.

KU 1021

Roberta Gigante

Still Drop



Realized in 2014

Location: Ghent, Willem de Beersteeg Park

Commissioner: City of Ghent

Building project: Remodelling of green space by Hans Druart and Roberta Gigante

An opening in the wall of the adjacent schoolyard increases access to the park, without depriving the spot – which the designers describe as a 'hidden garden' – of its intimacy. A cylindrical mass of soil up to 2.50 metres deep was drilled out and removed between the shore and a paved courtyard in the middle of the site. This negative 'anti-monument' is covered with Corten steel. A condensation process is created below, in which the sound of the falling droplets is amplified by the funnel shape of the pit. With this sound piece, inspired by the *suikinkutsu*, a Japanese garden ornament, Roberta Gigante evokes the potential discoveries that await under the surface of a city.

KU 1022

Roberta Gigante & Sarah Melsens

USE ME



Realized in 2012

Location: Ghent, Dok Noord gravel bins (Old Docks)

Commissioner: Stadsontwikkelingsbedrijf Gent (SOB)

Building project: Old Docks Project: refurbishing of gravel bins

Ghent City Council wants to redevelop the Old Docks just east of the city centre as a residential and mixed economic zone, linking up with the mid-town area. Where possible, it will be sought to preserve existing features of the old dock complex. Elements like the cement plant, the yellow and blue crane and the concrete gravel bins (Dok Noord) are a key part of that. The project was developed as part of the Master Trial 2010, which was held in Ghent. (see also KU1020 and KU1021)

The gravel bins, seen as an intermediary between past, present and future, have been rehabilitated by the designer and artist as an instrument by which to register and valorize the transformation of the old docks. Accessibility and multifunctionality are crucial elements of the project. A simple gesture – a layer of reflecting white paint over the concrete – enabled them to make the location more visible. Roberta Gigante and Sarah Melsens provided an example of how the gravel bins could be used by calling on the ROTOR design collective for the opening. Reflections on materials and the history of the site inspired ROTOR to play with negative and positive use of the existing structure.

KU 1023

Paul Van Haegenbergh*Untitled*

Unrealized

Location: Ghent, Rabot – Blaisantvest**Commissioner:** City of Ghent**Building project:** Recreational sculpture concept

The urban renewal project 'Bridges to Rabot' is intended to raise living quality in the Rabot-Blaisantvest district of Ghent. One strategy is to develop a recreational structure of distributed public and green spaces connected by soft linking routes. The art commission – part of the Meesterproef (Master Trial) 2010 – issued by the City of Ghent, was intended to act as a thread running through this recreational structure.

Paul Van Haegenbergh conceived a wooden module that can function as a herb garden, a bench and a meeting place. A hinge and folding system allows different modules to be connected, which can ensure more intensive use of the social space.

KU 1026

Maarten Van den Abeele

Realized in 2010

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team
New Year card

Maarten Van den Abeele was invited in 2010 to continue the tradition of an artist-designed New Year card for the Vlaams Bouwmeester by creating a portrait of the Team. The photograph was taken on the steps of the Victor Horta Hall in the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels – a masterpiece of the Belgian architect Victor Horta.

KU 1027*

Leen Voet*Backyards and Fences* (working title)

Target date for realization 2015

Location: Sint-Joost-ten-Node, Haachtsesteenweg 76 & 80**Commissioner:** CGG Brussels**Building project:** Remodelling of a building as a mental health care centre by the architect Guido Picalausa

The architectural concept focuses on linking the centre's different buildings and its future users. This principle is primarily visualized by the elongated glass corridor between the front and rear buildings, which also creates a spacious inner garden in the middle of the site. Although not publicly accessible, the garden functions as a mental resting point.

Leen Voet combined these principles in a two-dimensional intervention in the windows of the children's waiting room, located centrally in the connecting corridor. Inspired by the gardens of the typical 19th-century townhouses in the district, Voet etched and sandblasted the glass in a series of stylized drawings – a procedure similar to that used to decorate the same well-to-do homes. The artist's depictions of private gardens play on the urge of householders to distinguish themselves from their neighbours. The remainder of the passageway is left transparent, creating a restful interplay of looking and experiencing between the drawings and the centre's own private garden. This serves to heighten the relationship between inside and outside. The texture and structure of the plant world are translated into the rhythm and lines of the soft pencil drawing. Leen Voet will also be involved in laying out the inner garden.

KU 1028*

Henri Jacobs (in collaboration with Arnaud Hendrickx)
Hill

Target date for realization June 2015

Location: Brasschaat, Miksebaan 264**Commissioner:** Openluchtvoeding vzw**Building project:** New-build of four residential units for children and young people at the Remi Quadens Medical and Pedagogical Institute, designed by Sam Bellengé and Wim Dens

Four new buildings have been added over the past eight years to this outdoor education centre for three to twenty-one year-olds with behavioural and emotional disorders, autistic spectrum disorders and/or slight to moderate learning difficulties.

The residential units are located in a large, green campus, and are linked by paths, creating space for recreation, play and social contact. The artist was invited to emphasize the importance of the outdoor space to the living environment of the youngsters themselves, their carers and their families.

Henri Jacobs proposed a sculptural intervention at the heart of the green campus. He hopes that *Hill* will function as a meeting place and hang-out for residents and visitors alike, and as a place where creativity can arise. To achieve this, he designed a double grandstand next to the new sports field. One side is convex and allows spectators to watch the games, while the other is concave, forming a kind of amphitheatre. The artwork evokes an atmosphere that is more secure and intimate on one side, and open and airy on the other. *Mountain* is surrounded by a path – blue on the concave and yellow on the convex side – which links seamlessly with the existing network of footpaths and roads. The artwork is both an aesthetic object and a metaphor for the connecting power of the campus's outdoor space.

KU 1101

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven

In Tune

Realized in 2012

Location: Wevelgem, Porseleinhallen, Cultuurpad 1**Commissioner:** Municipality of Wevelgem**Building project:** New-build designed by Bernard Decaestecker

The principal was looking for an artistic intervention to emphasize the building's presence and visual power (as a landmark). Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven placed a large lightbox on the exterior side wall of the Porseleinhallen, composed using recovered images from the Yugoslavian pavilion at Expo 58. Designed by Vjenceslav Richter, the pavilion was rebuilt after the World Exhibition in Wevelgem, near the Porseleinhallen. Van Kerckhoven refers in this way to the history of modernity, while her 'cut-up' and collage methods, bright colours and use of digital techniques relate closely to youth culture. The latter aspect was prompted in part by the proximity of the local youth association's premises.

KU 1102

Katrien Vermeire & Peter Verhelst

Green Ribbon

Realized in 2012

Commissioner: City of Ostend**Building project:** Ostend Green Ribbon Master Plan

Although Ostend has looked out towards the North Sea for centuries, it still has a great deal of greenery to offer around its outskirts. The city council is keen to strengthen this aspect, and so it drew up its 'Green Ribbon' master plan with the idea of linking up a series of sites on the periphery. A thirty kilometre cycle and footpath functions as a necklace stringing together fifteen different landscapes. The council invited photographer Katrien Vermeire and writer Peter Verhelst to help get this landscape and urban planning project going.

Katrien Vermeire created photographic images of fifteen orientation points along the city's 'string of beads': Raversijde, Duinenkerkje, Nieuwe Koers, De Schorre, Geuzenbos, Krekegebied, Zwaanhoek, Plassendale, 't Paddegat, Parkbos, 't Eilandje, Groenedijk, Oosteroeverduinen and the North Sea. Peter Verhelst then wrote a short text for each one, which together create a 'mind fitness circuit'. He concluded with an ode to the city of Ostend, the 'Queen of Resorts'. The art project was echoed in the widely distributed information brochure *Groen Lint*.

[→ pp. 200-205]

KU 1105*

Richard Venlet

Untitled



Target date 2015

Location: Leuven, De Wijnpers Secondary School, Mechelsevest 72**Commissioner:** Province of Flemish Brabant**Building project:** new-build by Office

The architects provided the new class block for the secondary school De Wijnpers with a viewing gallery that forms the central circulation point: a nexus for landscape, architecture and users. The space, with its trapezium floor plan is oriented primarily to the impressive view over the fields toward the city of Leuven. The access zone turns away from the facade, the entrance and the playground.

Venlet took this spatial analysis and made the following proposal: the viewing gallery is divided in two by a virtual diagonal, in which one part of the covering planned by the architects is replaced with reflective stainless steel. The geometry this creates offers the trapezium a new vanishing point and orients the space back toward the building entrance. The artist will also place a stripped tree-trunk around eighty centimetres in diameter in the middle of this meeting space, on which students will be free to scratch their identity or messages.

KU 1106*

Philippe Van Snick*Passage of Time and Space in Ten Coloured Phases*

Realized in 2012

Location: Huizingen, Social Centre, Torleylaan 13**Commissioner:** Municipality of Beersel**Building project:** New-build and renovation by architect Dirk Hendrickx

Philippe Van Snick drew on his own visual vocabulary to mark out the route to the entrance of the social centre in coloured accents on a brick wall. Each of the ten compositions has a black and a blue part, referring to night and day, above a multicoloured strip with primary and complementary colours, gold and silver. The ceramic tiles are integrated in the brick wall, so that the tableau is flush with its surface. Collaborating with the ceramist Hugo Meert enabled the artist to expand his colour vocabulary via a medium and process he had not used before.

The artwork was integrated in a traditional way and serves no immediate practical purpose, becoming instead an element of contemplation and restfulness on the site. In an ingenious play of associations, it enters a subtle relationship, both physical and metaphorical, with its surroundings.

KU 1107*

Gabriel Lester

Oasis



Target date 2013

Location: Bilzen, Demerhof Residential Care Centre,
Eikenlaan 20

Commissioner: OCMW Bilzen, Belfius

Building project: extension by RDBM architecten

Gabriel Lester's proposal was inspired by the form of the mineral pyrite. Special powers are attributed to pyrite, as they are to all minerals and crystals. It is supposed to alleviate fear and counter depression and frustration, and to offer hope and help people find their own path in life.

A sequence of volumes is placed on a kind of platform in the residential care centre's enclosed garden, their form based on the structure of pyrite. The garden borders the cafeteria, which is open to both residents and visitors. The integration of a functional sculpture – children can play on it and adults sit – creates a social energy in the garden.

KU 1109

Patrick Van Caekenbergh

The Nose



Realized in 2013

Location: Aalst, Verbrandhofstraat roundabout

Commissioner: City of Aalst

Building project: Infrastructure works, roundabout
remodelling

Patrick Van Caekenbergh drew on a spatial analysis of Aalst and his familiarity with local folklore in his proposal to place a large, red party nose on the roundabout on Verbrandhofstraat. The monumental object (complete with elastic) is displayed on a raised, octagonal bluestone plinth surrounded by a wrought-iron fence. The area around it was deliberately left empty to focus attention on the 'Bandstand with the Nose'. In addition to the centuries-old carnival tradition, the work does indeed refer to the municipal bandstand – and hence once again to a sense of festivity – thanks to the construction on which the oversized red nose is placed.

The Nose is an accessible, festive and playful marker on one of the main roads leading into the town. The roundabout itself may well come to be associated locally with the name of the artwork, adding to its function as a landmark and a point of reference.

KU 1113

Johan Grimonprez

Radical ecology

Started in 2013, ongoing

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

This research project explores the overlaps between ecology, architecture and art and takes the form of a *vlog* or video blog, split into six categories, including 'biotechture', 'guerrilla gardening' and 'transition towns'. Grimonprez uses these themes to develop a heterogeneous way of thinking, a media-archaeology fuelled by what's happening on the internet. The research will culminate in a 'WeTube-o-tecque' – a steadily growing collection of podcasts, online TV, blogs and YouTube films accessible to everyone online. The archive will in turn become a research tool for architects and artists, policy-makers and principals, and for all those who will be confronted with ecological issues more and more in the future.

[→ pp. 206–211]

KU 1115*

Susan Kinoshita

En passant. Scenario for a Passage

Realized in 2011/2012

Location: Brussels, Atelier Bouwmeester, Galerie Ravenstein 54–59**Commissioner:** Vlaams Bouwmeester Team**Building project:** Interior design by NU architectuurstudio

The Vlaams Bouwmeester Studio in the Ravenstein Gallery in Brussels is a place where thinking about architecture and building culture is tested and displayed through workshops, seminars, juries, exhibitions and lectures. The Studio forms an active part of the urban fabric and sets out to be an 'open house in the city' – a shop window in and on Brussels. The Vlaams Bouwmeester Team marked the opening with a collaboration with the visual artist Suchan Kinoshita. *En passant. Scenario for a Passage* is a multilayered project consisting of four interventions, each inspired by the character of the location as a passageway. They play with presence and absence, with the passage of time and the shifting function of the site: the alternation between day and night, between activity and then silence.

Two of Kinoshita's proposals were realised for the opening: a composition for two voices and a lightbulb draws the passer-by's attention to the interior of the Studio, while a glass sculpture/'clock' refers to our individualized, subjective perception of time. The third element – an installation that brings voices, footsteps and other sounds from the Ravenstein Gallery inside the Studio – allows public life to infiltrate the interior at regular intervals. The fourth and last act in Kinoshita's 'scenario' consists of a film projected on the auditorium wall: theatre hands prepare a stage for the forthcoming performance.

[→ pp. 212–217]

KU 1116A

John Körmeling

FIRST PRIZE, Standard Detached Home Model



Realized in 2011

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Project: Bouwmeester Prize 2011

This multiple was designed as a trophy for the 2011 edition of the Bouwmeester Prize, with which the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team pays tribute to exemplary public-sector principals. The piece is made of translucent plastic in a festive, bright red colour and was made by 3D printing. The trophy's form harks back to existing houses from the years 1959–69, and in particular to the type with two blank side-walls, ready to be turned into a semi or a terrace, but which ended up staying detached. The replica is complete with several floors, a staircase and a chimney. Although this kind of *doorzonwoning* is typically Dutch, John Körmeling associates this rather absurd product of 'failed planning' with Belgium too. The slightly ironic undertone does not alter the fact that, above all, the artist is charmed by the unmistakable qualities of the little house: the open, unpretentious design with plentiful glass and light, testifies in his view to a freer and more cheerful time.

Bibliography: *Bouwmeester Rapport 2010-11*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2012, p. 26.

KU 1117

Ieva Epnere

A Shy Bird for Genk



Realized in 2014

Location: Genk, Urban Axis

Commissioner: City of Genk

Project: Genk 'Urban Axis' Project, Meesterproef (Master Trial) 2011

The Genk 'Urban Axis' project is designed to strengthen the connection between the main plaza, the town hall, the events park behind it and the future Xentro service complex. An artistic intervention in the public domain could encourage walkers to use this route more often. Ieva Epnere based her research for the Master Trial 2011 on the history of the town centre, which was once a green and marshy area. The bittern – a typical bird from the Genk marshes, timid and withdrawn by nature – became the main character in the story that the artist wants to tell. By introducing the silhouette and call of the bittern into the public domain of the town centre, Epnere aims to charge the trail with the story of Genk's genius loci.

Bibliography: *Bouwmeester Rapport 2010-2011*, Brussels, Vlaams Bouwmeester, 2012, p. 85.

KU 1201

Gert Robijns

Present



Realized in 2012

Commissioner: Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Project: Bouwmeester Prize 2012

Robijns' design for the Bouwmeester Prize 2012 refers to the communication and interaction between the supplier and the principal. What does it mean for a designer to carry out a brief? What does it mean for a principal to be presented with an idea?

Awards are associated with surprise and appreciation, which gave the artist the idea of designing a present: the series of objects recalls standard gift packaging in various sizes. The interplay of weight and volume, colour and scale, meanwhile, alludes to the world of architecture: not only do the 'packages' resemble building blocks, they refer to the relationship between naked structures and covering surfaces, and to the importance of the choice of materials in the finishing of the building. The little boxes are left deliberately unfinished on one side, to create a contrast between the robust look and colourful accents. The overall design was finished, like any self-respecting gift-wrap, with a silk ribbon printed with the text 'BWMSTR Prize'.

KU 1202

Wapke Feenstra

'Drawing'. A story about the 'Broek' in drawings. Broekkant and Vlassenbroek on the Scheldt.



Target date for realization 2016

Location: Dendermonde, Vlassenbroek controlled floodplain

Commissioner: Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV in collaboration with the City of Dendermonde and the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

Building project: Creation of a controlled floodplain as part of the Sigma Plan to improve flood protection

Wapke Feenstra is preparing a landscape intervention in the controlled floodplain at Vlassenbroek – a village in the province of East Flanders, where the Sigma Plan is in operation. Sigma is intended to protect Flanders more effectively against floods, while also restoring fragile ecosystems and providing facilities for recreational users. Creating a floodplain like this occurs over a number of years and in stages and has a far-reaching impact on the daily life of local people. The art commission was initiated as a pilot project by the art team. Feenstra views landscape as a source of cultural production. She began with a series of interviews with local residents as part of the preliminary studies for a project that will develop over three years. Drawing is the thread running through it all. Engineers, for instance, have drawn up the region's future with their plans. And in the summer of 2014, Feenstra will draw memories of the disappearing landscape and the area's new look with artists and residents. The geological composition of the ground is drawn too. Lastly, the design of a new viewing platform will be set out in the form of sketches in consultation with nature organizations. All these drawings will be brought together in a book and a digital presentation, which will be ceremonially presented at the end of 2015.

KU 1204*

Michaël Borremans*Dark Matter* (working title)

Target date for realization 2015

Location: Ghent, Waalse Krook: site bounded by Lammerstraat, Walpoortstraat and the river Scheldt**Commissioner:** CVBA Waalse Krook**Building project:** New-build by RCR Aranda Pigem Vilalta arquitectes/Coussée & Goris architecten

Waalse Krook is a neighbourhood in central Ghent, named after the nearby bend in the river Scheldt. A library and centre for new media is due to be built there. The animation and involvement of Waalse Krook as a district with considerable potential for the future is the shared goal of the principals and the design team. Michaël Borremans has given visual form to their ambition and vision in a quirky but stimulating way. On the one hand, he confronts the new building and the new public space with an enigmatic image that raises numerous questions, while on the other, he explicitly seeks proximity with future users and passers-by.

Borremans' proposal comprises the realization of a sculpture in polychromed bronze, which will be installed on the square in front of the building's entrance. Four human figures, both men and women, and each with a different skin colour, stand in the middle of the square, leaning their heads together. Although the figures are only slightly larger than life-size, they have a powerful impact on the perception of the public space. They represent both the exchange of knowledge and the encounter between people – central elements in the ambition for the new building. On the other hand, they fit seamlessly with the mysterious and sometimes ironic visual language that characterizes this artist's painted work.

KU 1205*

Ante Timmermans

()



Target date for realization 2015

Location: Erpe-Mere, 'De Brug' Secondary School for Special Needs, Koebrugstraat 7**Commissioner:** School Invest for GO**Building project:** New-build by the architects Bart Dehaene and Sileghems & Partners

The school previously consisted of a sequence of pavilions, yards and passages in a very green area. This created a domestic atmosphere, with all sorts of activities taking place in the intermediate spaces. For the new-build, the programme has been incorporated in two new volumes with two building layers, again including spaces of that kind. The school requested these intermediate zones because of the regular need of some of these children to 'let off steam'.

Ante Timmermans' proposal consists of keeping one of the old pavilions on the street side and using it himself as a working space. He wants to enable the children to follow his artistic evolution by arousing their curiosity, challenging them constantly to explore their potential and opportunities, and stimulating their creativity. By preserving one pavilion, which is approached architecturally in a very sober and elementary way, Timmermans also gives concrete shape to his vision of architecture and use of space. He considers every space as a nexus of possibilities. His collaboration with the architect duo Bart Dehaene and Pol Sileghems – already included in the design team at the competition stage – has been crucial to his approach to the building as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The building as a work of art is not something static but a work in progress, which will culminate after several decades in a kind of self-portrait.

KU 1301

Erika Hock

Pepper Mill



Target date for realization 2015

Location: Oppuurs, Verbruggen grain mills

Commissioner: Igemo in collaboration with the Municipality of Sint-Amands

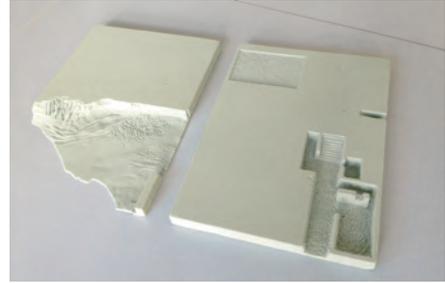
Building project: Renovation and construction of dwellings

The Verbruggen mills are a familiar feature in the municipality of Oppuurs. As part of the redevelopment of the site for housing, the idea is to restore this function as a social and physical landmark through a new, visual art accent. Erika Hock's intervention involves the placement of a ten-metre-high monumental sculpture in the form of a pepper mill. In this way, Hock intends to make the link between the history of the site and its new purpose as a residential development. Where the mills used to function as a community meeting place, the pepper mill can be a symbol of the recreational function that will be developed there. The colourful, transparent structure refers in a playful way both to our daily food culture and to the history of the site.

KU 1302*

Adrien Tirtiaux

Plan de carrière



Target date for realization 2015

Location: Antwerp, Flemish Centre for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB), Competence centre, Provinciestraat 211-215

Commissioner: VDAB

Building project: New-build by Nero

The architectural concept focuses on the boundary between public and private, given physical shape by a plinth set into the facade and continued into the hall. The plinth will be executed in classic bluestone as a traditional urban element.

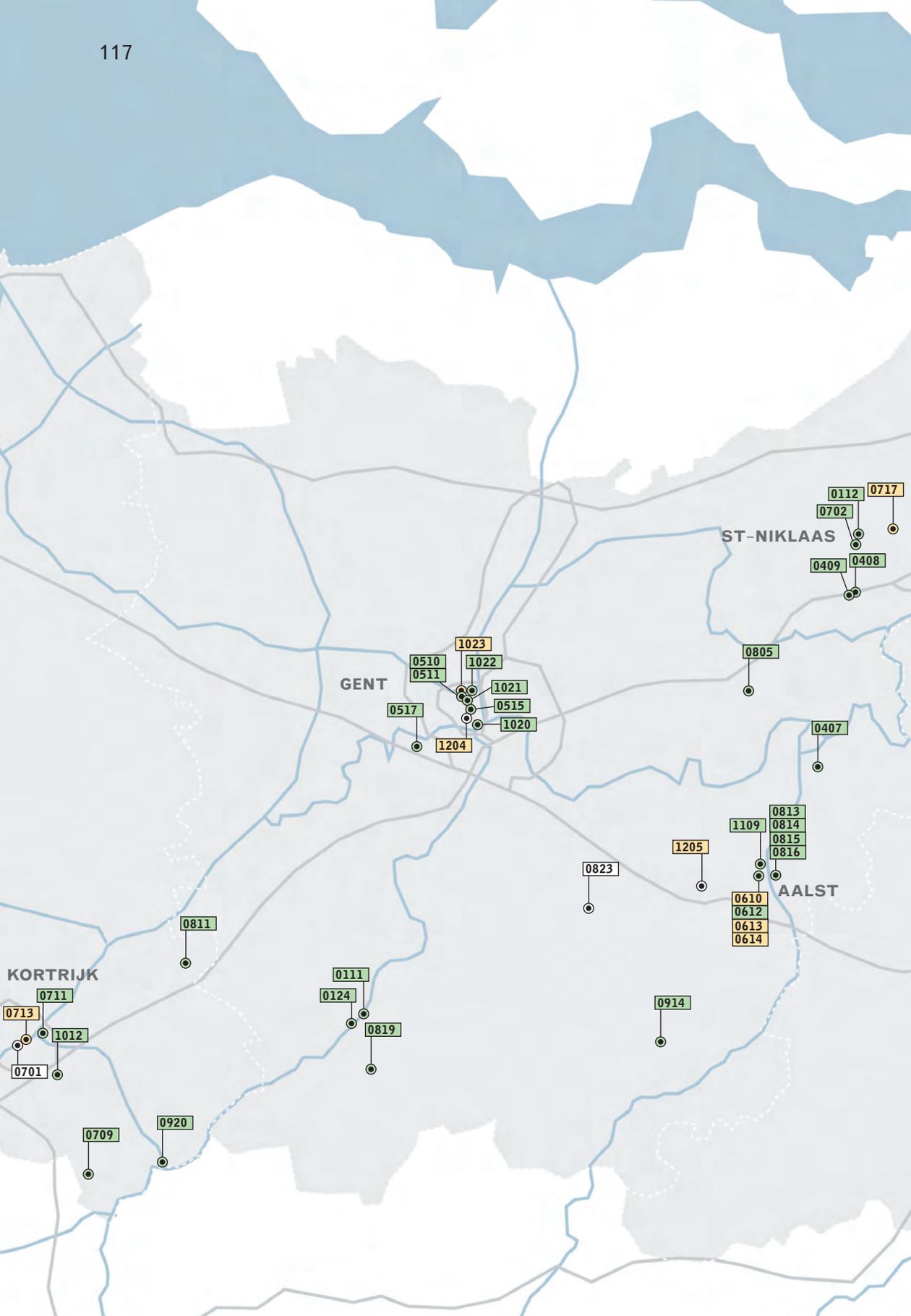
Adrien Tirtiaux responds in an unexpected way to the use of this old typology. He leaves the plinth alone on the outside, but inside the hall he provides an inverted interpretation of the height difference of the site: rather than presenting the building on a 'pedestal', he 'digs' it 'out' from the inside, so that it returns – in a manner of speaking – to street level. Tirtiaux proposes placing a number of thicker blocks of bluestone in the entrance area, which he will then work with the assistance of a mason to obtain different textures. In this way, the artist wants to give the hall a rougher, 'unfinished' feel, referring to the fact that the people using the VDAB building are trainees. This also creates a contrast between the outside space and the interior.

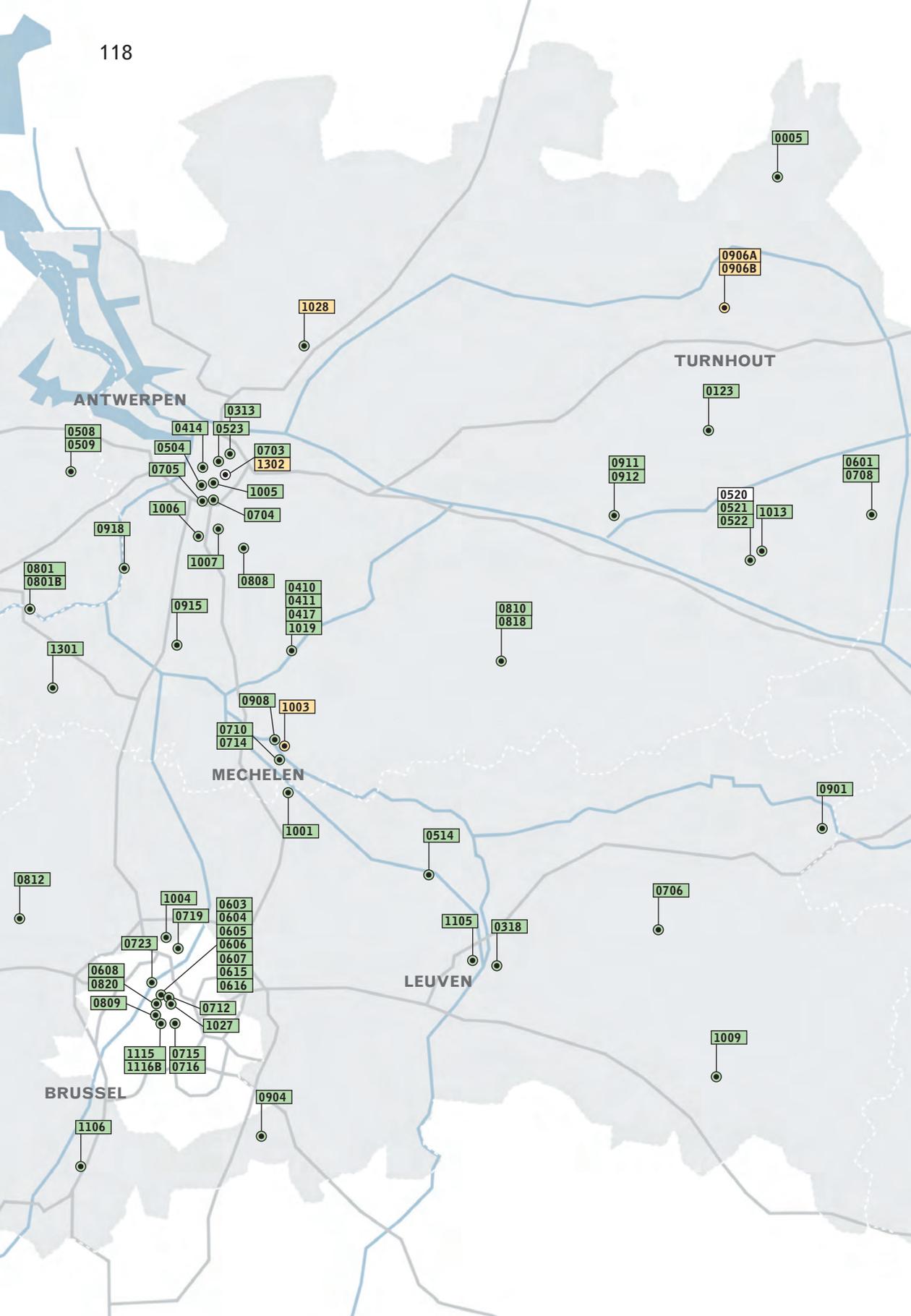
The intervention has another metaphorical dimension too: it refers to the efforts the VDAB makes as an institution to lower the threshold for unemployed people, but also to the efforts the trainees have to make to find a job. The title of the work is a play on the different meanings of the French word *carrière* ('career', but also 'quarry'), which Tirtiaux uses to emphasize the site-specific dimension.

- REALIZED
- CONCEPT PHASE
- NOT REALIZED

DEC. 2014







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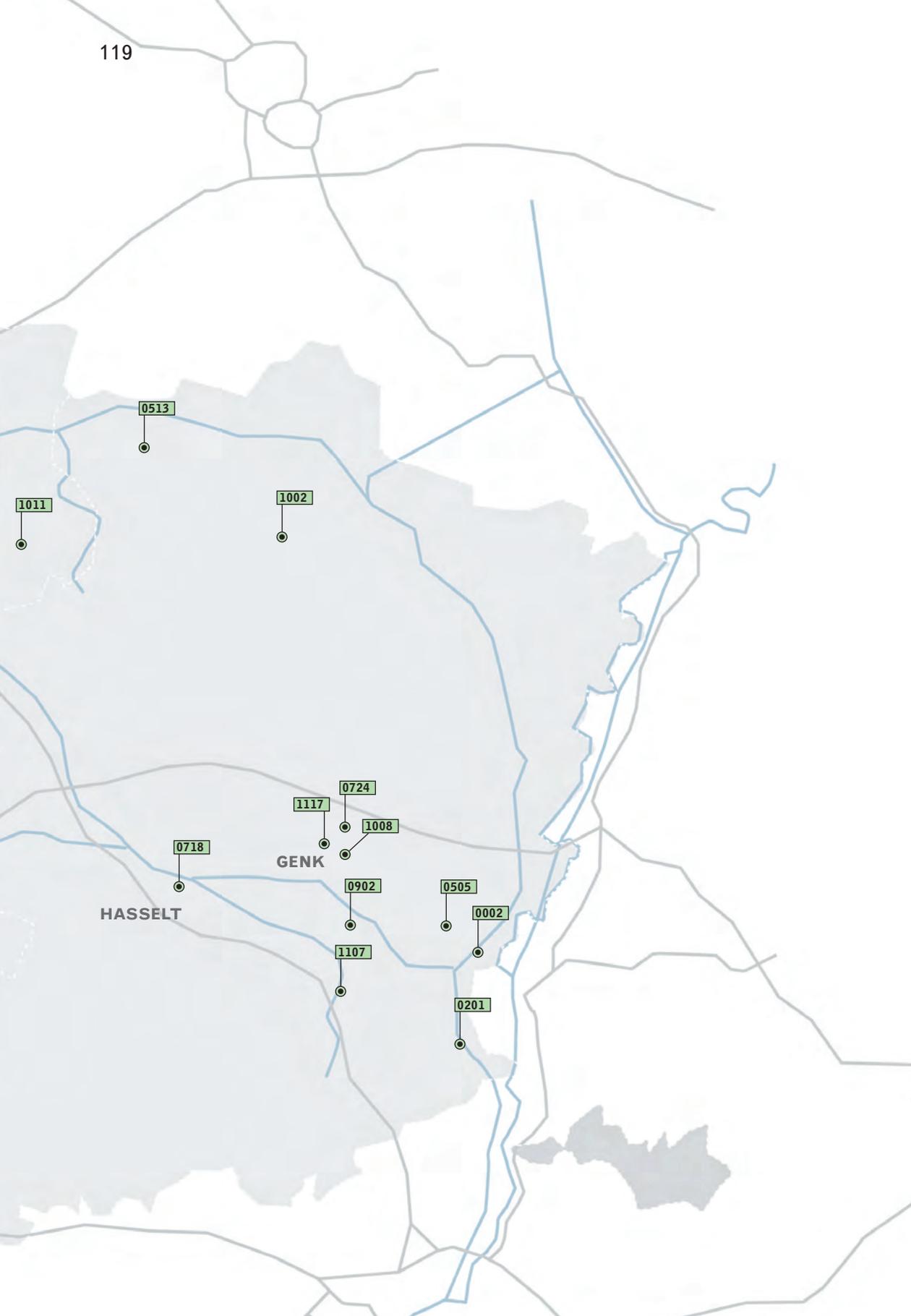
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Art by commission 2006-2013

An anthology

A Fool's Paradise

A sound installation by Fiona Tan

– JORINDE SEIJDEL –

The Hoge Rielen is an attractive, 230-hectare nature reserve at Kasterlee in the Antwerp region. Surviving munitions sheds and fire-fighting ponds recall that this was once a British military base, though it nowadays serves chiefly as an education and outdoor activity centre for schoolchildren. In 2004 the Italian design agency Studio Associato Secchi-Viganò came up with a new landscaping plan, which sought to articulate the site through subtle interventions and transformations that link the existing military, natural and educational 'landscapes'.

Somewhat surprisingly, this lush domain 'for youngsters and others' incorporates an artwork by Fiona Tan: *A Fool's Paradise* was produced on behalf of the Fonds Culturele Infrastructuur (FoCI), with the new master plan for the site in mind. The Hoge Rielen does not exactly feature in the established art circuit, and it is anyway such a rich and distinctive zone that you might not expect a piece of art to add much to it. Tan's work does not consist of a physical object or visual image, however, but an audio tour. It does not occupy any space and only manifests itself when the sound is turned on and the visitor focuses on the surroundings. What you then see was already there, but takes on new, intangible dimensions.

The audio tour sets out an itinerary on foot or by bike around four locations in the Hoge Rielen, each of which has different natural features: the Frog Zone, the Goorkens (lake), the Dunes and the Heath. You are addressed at each location via an iPod and headphones and told what to look at and what to pay attention to. There are several voices, of which that of a fictitious architect (voiced by the Flemish actor Johan Leysen) is the most directing and suggestive.

As the circuit continues, several narratives and perspectives unfold in space and time, all of which relate either directly or indirectly to the physical surroundings. Each of the four areas is not only experienced in a different season, it also manifests a particular phase in the creative process, on which the architect expounds at some length. Each also evokes a virtual folly – a purposeless edifice intended to emphasize



a natural landscape, of a type that was common in the landscape architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The history and fate are explored of the 18th-century aristocrat, architect and landscape designer François Racine de Monville, best known for his garden Le Désert de Retz (in France, near Chambourcy), who was persecuted during the French Revolution and came to a miserable end. The garden incorporated follies including 'the ruins of a Gothic church, a Tartar tent, a Chinese tea house, a pyramid, a Greek





temple [and] a broken Doric column'. The tour also features an impassioned speech about the *Amorphophallus titanum* – the largest and most evil-smelling flower on earth, and Latin for 'huge, bent penis'. Different types of desert and sea wind are explored too, conjuring up distant, exotic places.

The audio tour uses voices, natural sounds and historical and geographical references to unfurl an extra, non-linear space-time, in which the real and virtual, tangible and intangible, current and historical, fictional and real are interwoven to form a network of experimental relationships. The voices conjure reflections and resonances on nature, culture, history, place and perception. The direct way in which visitors are addressed makes them participants and invites them to add their inner voice to the stories and reflections, from within their unique presentation in the here-and-now.

Although nature and education are not a familiar context for Fiona Tan's work, *A Fool's Paradise* sits firmly within her oeuvre in terms of its themes and conceptual principles. Representation, image-formation, perception, time, memory, and history are all central to this, as is the way the individual/viewer relates to them. Tan exposes how the 'foreign' – whether a period in the past or the exotic – and the 'other' are ideological and political constructs, which express power relations at different levels. Not for nothing does Tan refer to herself as a 'professional foreigner'. Based in Amsterdam, she was born in Indonesia to Chinese and Australian parents.

Previous works in which Tan's preoccupation with the other and the foreign are succinctly expressed include *Facing Forward* (1999) and *Disorient* (2009), both of which featured on different occasions at the Venice Biennale. *Facing Forward* shows found historical ethnographic footage of representatives of 'exotic peoples' posing for the camera. The viewer inevitably wonders who is observing whom. *Disorient* is based on the memoirs of Marco Polo and his ties with Venice, and scrutinizes the Western conception of the Orient.

Tan frequently uses history, anthropology and ethnography as instruments with which to confront different worlds and perspectives, based on the premise that neither these disciplines

nor the act of looking are ever neutral. Her work offers alternative frameworks with which to look afresh and to see things as new. The same applies in the Hoge Rielen, where *A Fool's Paradise* simultaneously presents concrete reality as daydreams and fantasy, and where voices invite you to look further.

Modern Isolation

Frigolite by Michel François

– CHRISTOPHE VAN GERREWEY –

Expanded polystyrene comes in lots of forms and under lots of names. It is known as *piepschuim* in Dutch; *Styropor* and *Styrofoam* are American brand names; the noun *isomo* (short for *isolation moderne* in French and 'easy modelling' in English) is considered Belgian-Dutch; *frigolite* is seen as Belgian-French for polystyrene used as packing material.

The material is also present in a variety of ways in the work of the Belgian artist Michel François (1956), although it is always reduced to the smallest physical building blocks: white polystyrene balls. In 1988, for instance, he made the piece *Ex-fenêtre*: a curved wall with twelve wooden frames, blocked up with little balls of this type. *Une expiration dans le plâtre* (1989) is a block of white plaster mixed with the same material, in which a hemisphere has been hollowed out – a technique he used again in *Deux expirations dans le plâtre* (1991). François made beds out of polystyrene in 1996 (*Deux lits*), and in 1998 he covered the leaves of a house plant with honey and stuck crumbled polystyrene onto them. The video *Casse Frigolite* dates from 1997. In it, a sheet of polystyrene is broken up into progressively smaller pieces. And in 1992 François made the video *Frigolite*, his most explicit application of the material: a large amount of polystyrene presses against a glass wall and is filmed from beneath, so that about fifty little balls at a time – in the first layer of the image – are visible as black, circular silhouettes, while other balls pile up above them and the stack is invisibly illuminated. In the meantime, the material moves: it is pressed down or subjected to an air current. There is a constant commotion running through the image, which scrapes and grinds. The frame of the screen remains motionless: it is never clear how big this mass of polystyrene is or what kind of receptacle contains it.

Frigolite has been shown as a video at, among others, the Festival International du Film de la Rochelle in 2004. Since 2011, however, it has also been part of the public space in Antwerp – not once but







three times. *Frigolite* is projected from the inside onto the exterior of the first, second and third floors of the Pulcinella youth hostel on Bogaardeplein, in the historic city centre, near the Police Tower. This plaza was once a disused, slightly dilapidated small park, popular with local people. In its remodelled form it is dominated on one side by the youth hostel designed by Vincent Van Duysen Architecten. Van Duysen's approach is often criticized as tasteful in a sterile, formal and exaggerated way – something that can be partially applied to the interior of the youth hostel. The exterior on Bogaardeplein likewise comprises a sober and neutral concrete grid, aestheticized by a number of design decisions and deviations.

François has taken familiar images or obvious phenomena in other works too and twisted them so that they no longer fit. With this reprise of an earlier film, he similarly aims to break through and disrupt the screen erected by architecture. This is not even a direct response to the youth hostel. Urban renewal – a necessary and unavoidable process, which constantly replaces the original self-evidence and anonymity of a place with artificiality and somewhat unreal newness – is much more significant. No matter how well Bogaardeplein has turned out, perhaps better even than many other urban renewal projects, this remodelled and until recently forgotten place, still exudes a certain artificiality, especially for those familiar with how it used to be. The three-fold presence of *Frigolite* might focus that presence but also counteracts it.

The work is an enigma, even before we seek to interpret it. A passing shopper taking a short-cut from the Meir to Nationalestraat cannot tell what he or she is looking at: a video of wriggling cigarette filters; a room filled with balloons; a flawed decorative pattern? And most of all, what is it doing here in this place? It is precisely this lack of clarity and this contesting of self-evidence that makes a city a city. And then there is the pleasure of the initiate and the art-lover, who can deepen his or her immediate experience of *Frigolite* with a layered and ironic play of meanings. Because polystyrene is both a packaging and an insulating material: as if some of the windows of the youth hostel have not yet been unpacked, or the building is so well insulated that it has become isolated. The most important operation in the film is, however, the zoom – the polystyrene is not only pulverized, the little balls are also

enlarged to monstrous proportions. In this way, a synthetic material – along with its immediate surroundings – is not only reduced to a nucleus, that nucleus exists an infinitely large number of times and remains as intriguing as it is incomprehensible.

Village square with fountain

Interview with Jan Comperol and Gert Verhoeven

The artist Gert Verhoeven was commissioned to contribute to the remodelling of the village square in Ruddervoorde – a sub-municipality of Oostkamp in the province of West Flanders. His fountain, titled *Revolution*, was installed on the square in 2008. Interview with the artist and Jan Comperol, Municipal Secretary for Oostkamp.

Katrien Laenen (KL): Jan, what is the significance of art to the municipal council when it comes to the kind of public projects you're involved with? How was art placed on the agenda in the municipality?

Jan Comperol (JC): It's never easy to get an artistic project off the ground in a less-than-obvious public space – in our case a small village. For my own part, I already had experience with an art commission for the 4AD music club in Diksmuide, where I was active as a volunteer. So I didn't need persuading about the value of this kind of project. There has to be a broadly-based local debate about it, though, because people often tend to think automatically of an artist 'from round here'. I think you need the courage in a public context to set the bar higher and to create more openness.

The Vlaams Bouwmeester art team can play an important part in that, by providing a kind of quality assurance for both the procedure and the selection.

KL. Does that mean local politicians are under pressure because they are approached by local artists? Or do they also feel they can use art as a tool for town marketing?

JC. Local politicians want to do something for the local community. There's nothing inherently wrong with that: they live and work locally, and they obviously want to create opportunities for their own residents. I don't actually live in Ruddervoorde, which made it a lot easier for me in this case. There's another aspect too. When the local branch of the Davidsfonds [*Flemish cultural association, ed.*] organizes a trip to the coast to view the Beaufort sculpture exhibition, people get excited about going to see the 'great art'. But when you try to bring work of the same kind to the village, you suddenly run into resistance – sometimes from the same people.

KL. It was precisely for that reason that we organized a kind of preliminary process with local societies and clubs.

Gert Verhoeven (GV): Did you? I didn't know that.

JC. Yes, we held an evening to discuss what's special about Rudderveorde. What do we want an artwork for the public space to achieve?

KL. It's a way of generating input and of jointly working out a commission.

JC. It is indeed. But it immediately took an odd turn, because someone turned up with a concrete design for a fountain! It turned out to be a difficult exercise to attempt at an abstract level.

KL. Some people were a bit sceptical and didn't get it, while others wanted to do something themselves. But you also had people who understood straight away what the added value could be.

JC. Absolutely, and they were enthusiastic about the fact they were being consulted. Several areas of attention emerged from the talks, which were later incorporated in the commission: the element of water, for instance, referring to the place name [*'Rudderveorde' is said to be a combination of 'ride' and 'voorde', i.e. a ford in the river for horseriders to cross – ed*]; a playful element; and so on.

GV. What exactly do you mean, though, by 'local societies and clubs'?

JC. They were sociocultural groups like the Davidsfonds, the drawing class, the music society, the drama club, the local history association – local cultural life in the broadest sense.

KL. Gert, this was one of your first experiences with art in the public space. How did you find the dialogue with the principal?

GV. I had quite a few questions. You don't know exactly what they want of you: it all felt a bit schizophrenic. I couldn't find any kind of discursive context – there's a lack of critical texts on art in the public space. As an artist, you often function as a kind of decorator with commissions like this: you have to drop your critical vision, so you end up producing a watered-down product. You see it even with the most respected artists, although things can be different: the project for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, for instance. Anyway, I racked my brains but didn't come up with a good idea straight away; meanwhile, the presentation was getting closer and closer. I eventually decided to be pragmatic: I'd just go along and at least earn my money for the proposal. And all of a sudden, a strong concept popped out after all.

KL. You approached the commission critically, but with a humorous touch. Because this is a small square in a small





village, you 'cut' a piece out of a traditional fountain design.

JC. Which is when the technical and budgetary issues began. No clear parameters had been set, and none of us had any idea about the technical implications of a fountain like that or what it would cost. I think that element is crucial: the need for professional, technical support for artists.

KL. Your project has also been a learning process for the art team: we didn't know what a realistic budget would be either, and we didn't have a technical adviser who could oversee the production side.

GV. Principals would be much more inclined to follow up on the art team's recommendations if you could offer those services.

JC. You should be able to approach things like this in the same way as road works, for instance: a contractor is assigned, but as a council you normally have your own technical department, which prepares the works and draws up the specifications.

GV. If it was up to me, an architect would be involved in certain projects from the beginning.

KL. That does happen. Take the work Hotel MIN Stop by Koen Theys in Antwerp (see inventory KU 0313): that

really was incorporated in the building process right from the beginning. It's clearly an autonomous piece by Theys, but it also took on a functional dimension as a smoking area on the roof of the building. But each story is different: it's all individually tailored.

JC. At the end of the day, the most important thing is commitment, certainly in a local context like this: you have the council, the mayor, the residents and the various cultural associations, and all these elements have to be aligned with each other.

KL. I still detect a general need on the part of the principals and the artists for professional support from artistic experts, technical advisers and architects.

JC. We have to make sure the pendulum doesn't swing too far in the other direction: overregulation can also have a deadening effect.

GV. But I do think all the parties need to be aware of what is at stake. Certain points could be agreed in advance in a kind of declaration of intent.

KL. Could you tell us a bit more about the public life of the artwork? The fountain is still working. Has it inscribed itself in the collective memory? Are you still organizing public activities around it?

JC. Not specifically. The fountain is mentioned when a brochure is published, for instance. Otherwise it remains controversial, although I don't have any problem with that as such. It can even be a good thing: it's when everyone thinks something is good that you should start worrying...

KL. Gert, do you consider the design to be a fully-fledged part of your oeuvre? Or do you think about it differently because it's in the public space?

GV. The oeuvre... I'm involved with a project on that very concept right now.¹ It turns out to be a twentieth-century invention. So it's a good question to ask. I'm certainly not ashamed of the piece: I'm actually proud of it. But I still don't know quite how to place it. I'm really happy that my critical attitude helped bring something about and I hope that the piece lives up to its name – *Revolution* – in terms of art in the public space.

Oostkamp, February 2013

1. Verhoeven is referring to the exhibition 'Youth Sins. About Opus One and Opus Minus One', Antwerp LLS 387 / Hedah Maastricht, 2009

Monumental paradox

Thierry De Cordier's *Chapel of the Naught*.

– WIM VAN MULDER –

The *Chapel of the Naught* incorporates an elongated blue stone from a demolished building belonging to the Sisters of the Convent of Bethlehem. Members of the order began to treat mentally ill women in 1790, and later extended their care to psychiatric patients in general.

The blue stone forms an eloquent foundation for an eight-metre white wall that rises above the Chapel. A robust, black structure has been erected around it, with a black door on the side of the existing, white statue of the Madonna. If you swing the door shut from inside, the Chapel reverberates like a cathedral. We are embedded in sounds so that we pick them up like messages. There is a silent presence in the solid walls, while the high white wall – the equivalent of a spire – reflects the non-worldly. The idea of a strict architectural order, the way in which building and surroundings belong together, and the monolithic form of the Chapel avoid any form of spectacle. The white-black contrast alludes to good and evil, life and death. Christian tradition projects moral and spiritual purity onto the colour white, yet the artist maintains a healthy scepticism toward dogmatic programmes, devoting himself instead to transformations of a soul that is the soul of the space. He wonders whether we are not involuntarily trapped in inexhaustible delusions.

A bandaged pillar stands before the white wall and below the gaping opening in the roof. The pillar alludes to the cross and refers to the 1988 sculpture *A.S. Attrape-Souffrance, Lijdensvanger*, also known as 'Painstick': a life-sized black figure with a cross beam above its bent head.¹ Thierry De Cordier wrote below an illustration of it, 'On aurait dit une chose pour se cogner la tête contre.' ('It was like something to bang your head against'). The design of the Chapel refers back to a drawing

1. The sculpture, which featured in the 1988 summer group exhibition 'Images et Mages', drew an impassioned response from the local people in the southern French village of Puycelis, where it stood.

It was destroyed by persons unknown during the night of 10–11 July. See *Thierry De Cordier. De Wijnjaren (1982–2002)*, Ludion, Ghent/Amsterdam, 2002, p. 81–100.







with a rectangular, black, closed volume lying horizontally in the grisaille landscape. Red letters read in English: 'The house of my dreams as imagined, in a snow landscape.'

The Chapel glistened with pitch when it was presented to the public in 2007, since when wind and rain have weathered that skin, leaving it matt, crusty and bleached like a tarmac road. The pure, white interior space – conceived as a home, hiding place and refuge – is simultaneously an exterior space because of the brutal opening in the roof. The building breathes between the trees; it is subject to the seasons; it defies the elements; it is resigned to the cycle of day and night; and it visualizes the slipping away of finite time. There are rusty puddles on the floor and the mercilessly penetrating rain has spread brown-grey stains on the snow-white walls. The building is simple in its complexity.

It recalls nomads and gods, both of whom majestically seek out empty distances and distant emptinesses. The dearth of stimuli within encourages meditation and contemplation; this is the ultimate place for a hermit, a seeking pilgrim; a lost wanderer; a troubled patient. The opening in the roof reminds us that life was once created in buildings with painted ceilings, in which messengers of higher powers, swirling descents into hell and cascades of naked women fought for our attention. The open roof offers the sky's undulating sea of colour and refers to the hospitality inherent to a religious building.

To make a statement about Naught or nothingness is to enter the boundless realm of theology, metaphysics, mysticism or total nihilism. The poetic theology of Naught says of human beings – those creatures who engage in poetry and theology – that they are open in mind and soul to absolutely anything. There is nothing that human beings do not place, immediately and without even being aware of it, in connection with everything else. The Naught transcends experience and in that sense is an experience of totality. Is this a Chapel of or for Naught? The Naught could actually be Everything. The Naught approaches the sublimity of the absence. The likelihood of nihilism grows with this monumental paradox, as we always fall short in our approximations. The Chapel is a synthesis of a multiplicity of worlds: in this case the actual world – the hyperconcrete building in a garden – juxtaposed with possible worlds of non-contemporary rituals of feeling, thinking, dreaming, praying and meditation.

Doubt as to the traditional, metaphysical view of human beings is expressed in an insatiable human longing; reaching one goal is the first step in an ever-renewing desire for a different goal. Systematic shifts therefore arise in our expectations of the one truth. What's more, the one true faith is different in many places, the nuances never the same. No text proves as polysemic, dark and impenetrable as the revealed will and wisdom of our possible deities.

Thierry De Cordier is not afraid of his own wisdom and decides rightly and straight out, to be his own prophet. The modern magus recognizes the potential of all the gifts that fall into our lap. He does not doubt what can be done with them. He paints, draws, writes and builds.

Thierry De Cordier's work is an archipelago, the islands of which afford a view of one another, with ever more distant horizons. *First Flemish Mountain Cabin*; *Villa pour une personne*; *Chantoir (Prototype for a Mountain Cabin)*; the house in Schorisse – *La Cuisine* – and *Cloister for a Single Family* synthesize types of living: refuge, house (the air-conditioned waiting room); the cabin (for the philosopher) and the monastery. The models for *La Cuisine* and the Chapel are imaginary ones. The working document with preliminary studies is labelled: 'KAPEL VAN HET GROTE NIETS' (CHAPEL OF THE BIG NAUGHT). This statement of intent alludes to the loss of remembering. If the building has a relationship with remembering, then it is of the unknown variety – a remembering of something that was never stored in the hypermemory. We have never experienced the unthinkable, yet it never leaves us. Every artistic gesture is intent on bursting its seams and coming closer to whatever offers itself.

Art and psychiatry

Conversation with Luc Pelgrims

The psychiatric hospital in Duffel has issued several art commissions in recent decades in connection with a variety of building and renovation projects at the site. Some of the resultant artworks, namely those by Orla Barry, Thierry De Cordier, Els Vanden Meersch and Aeneas Wilder, were produced in collaboration with the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team. A conversation with Luc Pelgrims, technical director at Duffel psychiatric hospital.

Katrien Laenen (KL): What does art mean to you and your organization when it comes to the public projects with which you are involved? Is it just a chance combination of circumstances, a legal obligation, or did you put the question of the added value of art on the agenda out of a personal affinity with and interest in contemporary art?

Luc Pelgrims (LP): I think it's fair to say that the psychiatric hospital in Duffel enjoys a privileged relationship with contemporary art. Our commitment to art is based on three objectives. In the first place, art helps break down the taboo around psychiatry: the art projects have an image-forming role and are intended

to destigmatize psychiatry and psychiatric conditions. By integrating exceptional artworks here, we hope to symbolically demolish the campus walls, to counter the isolated character of the psychiatric centre, and to invite the village and society in general to enter the campus. Art attracts walkers and visitors, so there is actually a kind of reverse integration. Secondly, I see art as an element of the healing environment that the hospital wants to offer. We've drawn up a master plan for the campus, one of the main goals of which is to create that healing environment. That means paying attention to things like opening the site up to the surrounding village and maintaining the green areas, which offer psychiatric patients a natural complement to their therapeutic recovery process. The master plan also reflects our desire for a distinctive and legible architecture. Infrastructure, public space and artworks can contribute to the therapeutic process, in our view, by promoting contact, dialogue and integration for our patients. And we also use art, lastly, as a language in which to talk about psychiatric and psychological problems.



Orla Barry — KU 0411

KL: What part does the decree on the integration of art in public buildings play in the decision-making process for selecting artists?

LP: The financial support the decree provides was obviously an important stimulus to integrating art on our campus and realizing the goals I just mentioned.

KL: What do you think the added value is of professional artistic guidance? Does it need to be tightly framed, or is it more helpful for you simply to have outlines for a direct dialogue with the artist?

LP: We've taken professional advice in all our art projects. In our case, that mostly meant the Vlaams

Bouwmeester's art team. We're a psychiatric hospital, so art isn't our core business. Our strength lies in treating patients with mental health issues, and we naturally have less expertise when it comes to selecting artists or setting up art projects. So it seems obvious to me that you would call on specialized know how. In that sense, the art team's contribution and advice have always added value. I would advise every principal to seek professional support when selecting artists. I can imagine that organizations confronted with the decree for the first time need stricter guidance and solid support during both the preparatory and realization process. Organizations with more experience in this area can limit the artistic





guidance they need to assistance with the actual selection.

KL: When you approach an artist with a request, what line do you take as principal in terms of the artist's autonomy?

LP: I think you have to respect the artist's autonomy to the maximum possible extent. The principal must be fully committed to realizing the artist's initial ideas. There are obviously some preconditions, such as the formulation of the commission, the context of the project, the budget, and so forth. Thierry De Cordier's *Chapel of Naught* is a good example in that regard. The original intention was to create a quiet space on the campus, for which we were looking for a high-quality architectural firm. Partly on the advice of the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team, the project was eventually realized by an artist and not by an architect. De Cordier, acting as designer and artist, fundamentally reworked the original project definition in consultation with the architect Patrick Lefebure and the principal. Functional requirements like a toilet, a cloakroom and a small office space were all dropped one by one during the process of the Chapel's creation. We were able to accept that stripping-down of the project definition from an artist in a way we never could have with an architect.

KL: How did you experience the creative process and your collaboration with an artist?

LP: The creation of a work of art is an exceptionally fascinating process. It can be quite complex, because the various partners often operate in isolation from one another: the selection committee; the team that actually executes the project with the artist; the financial administrator; the project architect; and so on. In my experience, it's best for the project to be managed by one person, from the selection of the artist to the delivery of the artwork. You also have a duty as principal to provide the artist with all the opportunities, resources and support he or she needs to realize the art project under the best conditions. Els Vanden Meersch's *Rest Pavilion*, for instance, succeeded because the hospital's own technical team worked out the entire architectural and technical side – in close collaboration, obviously, with the artist.

KL: How do you work internally in your organization or board to create the necessary buy-in for contemporary art? You've now built up a significant collection of art in the public space. How do patients and local people respond to it? Do you organize any specific public initiatives? And with what purpose?

LP: I'm very conscious of the fact that the base of support for contemporary art in the psychiatric centre was initially very small. The question was certainly asked whether we wouldn't do better to use the funds for 'real', social objectives. It occasionally took some persuasion and patience to foster the awareness that high-quality art can add value. The way patients and the public respond to the artworks obviously varies widely. The most important thing is that they stimulate conversation and discussion. What's more, several of our art projects, such as *The Stone Garden* by Orla Barry, *Untitled # 151* by Aeneas Wilder and the *Chapel of Naught* by Thierry De Cordier invite tranquillity and contact. We can see

KU 1019

that patients and the public both make use of that.

The art projects realized already – including the ones I just mentioned, plus *Arkhive* by Christian Ch'an – formed the basis of a fully fledged contemporary art exhibition in 2010, which was partly curated by Rolf Quaghebeur, the then artistic adviser of the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team, with the title 'disturbed SILENCE – STILTE gestoord'. A new project is currently in preparation.¹ Professionals are also brought in as sparring partners during the formulation of these projects, to help us avoid any major mistakes.

Conversation held in Duffel on 13 February 2013

1. The second contemporary art triennial, 'What Matters – Waar het op aan komt', also realized in collaboration with Rolf Quaghebeur.

The exhibition was held at Duffel Psychiatric Hospital from 4 September to 10 November 2013 (ed.).

Open books
AnaTorfs' *Cinoc*

– PAUL VERMEULEN –

We know from Wim Wenders' *Wings of Desire* that angels move among human beings but are invisible to them. Wenders' film – possibly the most recent iconography of the angel – confirms the idea that angels look like people, yet have different senses: they cannot see colours, but thoughts are audible to them, giving them considerable empathy. They hear so much that they understand everything. They place an invisible arm around a shoulder; their invisible gaze rests gravely and sympathetically on the desperate. Sometimes – though not always – that is enough to ease the despair.

The film suggests that some artists are former angels. That would explain their odd behaviour, in direct dialogue with others. But what struck me most is the home Wenders gives the angels of Berlin: Hans Scharoun's Staatsbibliothek on the Kulturforum. We see the angels leaning back, dangling their feet over the parapets of the mezzanines, or turning their closed eyes upwards into the large, light-filled space. Their togetherness with the people reading at the library tables is entirely natural. Readers are used to being surrounded by characters who, despite their invisibility, are involved with them. Silently absorbed in their reading, they are not alone. By giving the angels a home in the library, Wenders suggests an explanation for their existence: they are people from another time and space; they are the characters from books and films who pick up our unspoken thoughts and offer us their silent support.

Even after it has closed and the readers have gone home, the library is still occupied. The angels remain. A room filled with books is never deserted. But you can take this idea further: no space at all in which people have once been is empty. The traces are more trivial and less ordered, yet just as unmistakable to a person with empathy. Wenders shows an artist – the actor Peter Falk, in this instance – who sits and talks one night, smiling, his hand outstretched, on the off-chance that he is invisibly greeting someone. Falk trusts his empathy, which he has retained from his former life as an angel. There are other examples too.

I have in mind writers like W.G. Sebald or Georges Perec, who are unmatched in their ability to detect the signals of human life in an abandoned space.

Take Perec, author of *Life A User's Manual* (*La vie mode d'emploi*) – a hefty book in which he catalogues stories in and around an apartment block in Paris. The material spans the generations and is not ordered chronologically but by room and floor, as if old and new stories were present simultaneously. Calendars and lists are needed to keep track of names and facts in this obstinate unity of space, beneath which lies another layer, thick as humus, of stories broken down into impersonal elements. They form the biotope in which the many characters flourish. Voices sound out around them, from a rug, a poster on the wall, a newspaper behind the wallpaper, the arrangement of the chairs. Like a Wenders angel, Perec hears all the voices at once.

The first person I got to know from *Life A User's Manual* was Cinoc (seventh floor, chapters 55 and 84). Ana Torfs introduced me to him when she explained her concept for an artwork in the library we had designed in Beveren. It follows from the above that art in the library is found on the shelves. The artists, or their creations, live in the library, invisibly among their readers. All an artist has to do on the visible side of the world – somewhat after the image of Peter Falk's extended hand – is to facilitate the encounter with the Invisible Ones who are present in such numbers. Make a move. Have books fall open on the ground. Torfs' proposal captured that intuition in a fundamental and surprising way, and gave acute, rich and generous shape to a vague expectation.

There are twenty ways, Perec notes, to pronounce Cinoc's name, leaving his neighbours with a headache. That's typical of Perec. Collections, permutations, matrices, lists, procedures, nervously precise rules: not to cramp the creative process but precisely to stimulate it. It is obvious from all his writing: Perec – a well-known exponent of *Oulipo* (*Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*) – is a man of games. Who else would write a novel with an alphabet of just twenty-five letters? *A Void* (*La Disparition*) – the only book ever written without a single letter 'e' – is hilarious and linguistically delicious, as plot and grammar veer recklessly around the forbidden letter. It is also philosophically affecting, with the gulf between language and the world praised in lyrical, handicapped French, yet sinister too, as this is a comedy about arbitrary exclusion and mutilation. I realized that





Ana Torfs' choice of Perec was no mere fluke: they are kindred spirits. His playful discipline, the virtuosity it requires, the humour that springs from it and its subversive undertone all resemble hers. Take the immaculate fancy-dress of her *Elective Affinities/The Truth of Masks* (2002), in which the same man and woman dissolve into their constantly changing costumes in a game that is both delightful and unsettling. Or her *Ecran I/Ecran II* (2002), in which actors hide their faces behind a book.

Perec is like a photographer as he captures a portrait of Cinoc in his kitchen: a thin, faded old man drowned out by the banal colour calendars hanging over the water-pipe connected to his tap. Would this man, reluctant even to push a drawing pin into the wall, leave any trace? In fact it is his job to remove such traces: Cinoc works as an editor at a publishing house, where he scraps dictionary entries to make way for new ones. 'Word killer' – *tueur de mots* – is how he describes himself. Yet his life's work, his oeuvre, is at odds with his day job. He collects the unusable words he remembers. And 'collect' is the right word for this. Cinoc is not a historian or some kind of reactionary, hung up on the past, but a collector, driven by an individual penchant that is manifested in his collection. He does not bother with most of the entries and is happy to see them go. The sole purpose of his *Grand dictionnaire des mots oubliés* is to 'save those single words that continue to speak to him'. Each word is a story. And that is exactly how Ana Torfs worked.

The rules may be fixed, but every time the game is played, it is new. By doing precisely what Cinoc did, Ana Torfs created an original work. Her Cinoc is different to Perec's, just as two collections or two rounds of the same game differ from one another. Apart from your own effort and skill, what makes a game exciting and determines how it unfolds are chance and the strength of the opponent. Torfs' opponent was the Dutch language and she gave it a good game.

Torfs took a nineteenth-century dictionary and selected a list of 999 obsolete nouns. But the work did not finish there. Cinoc – a vague corruption of a Central-European, Jewish name, the colourless remnant of a history destined for effacement – is barely a shade. Perec omitted to mention what form his life's work took or was to take. So Ana did it for him in Beveren. There is a fine, linen-bound dictionary there (I believe one other copy exists) with the letters CINOC embossed

on the cover. Unlike other, crammed, dictionaries, it is horizontal in format and has just one headword and explanation per page. There are 999 pages in all: a landscape around a narrative word, respectful white behind a collector's item.

Kameelpardel: giraffe

Onderzieltje: onderrokje

Pavadette: brieveduif, postduif; geleerde duif

*Wolkvanger: soort overkleed van de zeelieden
(tot bescherming tegen boos weer)*

...

The word-list – without the explanations – also appears digitally, in letters made up of white dots, lighting up blue, on two LED displays as you enter the library. A computer program shuffles the cards; word after word is selected imperturbably. The LED display is recessed into the ground in front of the library threshold, covered with a sheet of glass. Children watch as the letters dissolve beneath their feet, like the letters on a departures board, before reappearing to form another word they do not recognize. The digital spectacle, as fleeting as time, sets the imagination to work; the word printed on paper and bound in linen provides the explanation. The written word remains: that's why we have libraries. The written explanation does not silence the imagination, far from it: it is a flywheel that amplifies the activated imagination. But it is Ana Torfs' use of space that so activates it. Like Wenders, she gives the Invisible Ones a place in the library. We pick up living voices from the loquacious tomb by the door. We see the space there behind our own. Our foot on the glass is like Falk's hand in the night.

Grids and wires
Memory Trail by Willem Oorebeek

– CATHERINE ROBBERECHTS –

Willem Oorebeek created *Memory Trail*, a series of nine tapestries, for the Ellipse Building on Koning Albert II laan in Brussels. The building is the newest office complex in the Noordwijk district, where the greater part of the Flemish Administration is based. The pieces were woven on the artist's instruction by Flanders Tapestries in Wielsbeke. The tapestry medium immediately evokes a series of associations in the context of a government commission, especially in Flanders. The Low Countries developed a rich tapestry-making tradition from the thirteenth century onwards, with world-famous workshops in towns like Tournai, Bruges and Oudenaarde, and later in Brussels, Mechelen and Antwerp. The costly and prestigious tapestries were commonly produced on behalf of prominent officials and authorities, who hung them in ceremonial spaces to emphasize their power and prestige.¹ Oorebeek might have had references like this in the back of his mind, but he has otherwise done his own thing with them: his tapestry cycle deviates in several respects from any 'tradition', while his choice of this medium takes on a specific meaning in the light of his oeuvre as a whole.

Oorebeek's series is not a narrative ensemble – the tapestries have no clear sequence, and the artist also opted not to place them in explicitly formal or public zones of the building. Only one of them leads something of a 'public' existence: the *Tower of Babel* hangs in a ground-floor conference room, with windows opening onto Albert II laan, making the piece potentially visible to passers-by. We recognize Bruegel's masterpiece and the way Oorebeek once used it as part of an earlier commission – the New Year card he designed at the end of 2007 for the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team. This featured a

1. Jacquard tapestry-making has seemingly been rediscovered in Belgium in recent years, also by contemporary artists. Henri Jacobs, for instance, has made various

tapestries of this type since 2000 in collaboration with Flanders Tapestries, followed more recently by Craigie Horsfield and Ana Torfs.



Room 0.02; Tower of Babel



Room 0.11; Gemstones



Room 0.23; Tea Towel



Room 1.9; Tibet



Room 0.08; dots, Red/Green



Room 0.09; Public

black-and-white print of the famous painting, downloaded from the internet, crumpled up, smoothed out and then rephotographed (see inventory KU 0726). That same image, now enlarged, has been incorporated here in a textile work: a machine-woven reproduction of a printed reproduction of a print of a digital version of a painting... There are other reasons, apart from its position and its background history, for viewing this tapestry as the first of the cycle: the scene refers not only to a masterpiece of Flemish painting, which is firmly engraved on the collective memory, but also to a Bible story in which pride, including political and architectural hubris, results in linguistic chaos – themes with an undoubted resonance in the context of a government building. The Tower of Babel has also become something of a leitmotif in Oorebeek's work.²

Let us assume then that the tapestry cycle begins at the street, before wending its way deeper into the building, from one meeting room to another, and from the ground floor to the basement. Oorebeek has designed the trail in such a way that the viewer/visitor never has more than one tapestry in his or her field of view at once. Like the *Tower of Babel*, most of the tapestries visibly refer to a printed photographic source, such as torn-out calendar pages, book illustrations and magazine covers. Printed matter is Oorebeek's favourite raw material: his entire body of work can be read as an exploration and testing of the image as a mass-produced consumer product. By investigating how images behave within a regime of endless reproducibility – how they wear out, stubbornly survive or metamorphose – he interrogates concepts like authorship and originality, and hence our conception of art itself. It is not surprising, in this light, that Oorebeek should be interested in textile techniques. By translating his printed matter into textiles (or having them so translated), he is not only experimenting with a new type of reproduction: the act of translation also expands the range of associations and paradoxes that he unfurls in his research. To begin with, historical tapestry-making itself – of which Flanders Tapestries likes to view itself as the heir – already entailed a multi-layered process of image production and reproduction: the visual

² See also the exhibition 'Monolith/Life' by Aglaia Konrad and Willem Oorebeek at Sint-Lukasgalerie, Brussels, 2012.

content was first sketched using different techniques and formats; a full-sized cartoon was then produced in colour, though mostly in reverse; and so on. The structuring of the image occurs very differently with modern techniques (computer-controlled loom), in which the digitally delivered image is transformed directly into a weaving pattern. However, the 'raw material' Oorebeek uses adds another, modern prehistory to the imaging process. What's more, both printed images and textile products are constructed from a grid or frame. In the case of textiles, the grid comprises warp and weft threads that cross one another at right angles; in printing, it is the grid of regularly placed halftone dots. Both processes – weaving and printing – are linked linguistically in French, in which the same word, 'trame', means 'weft' in textile-making, 'grid' or 'frame' in printing and 'raster' in a cathode ray tube. The halftone grid is a leitmotif in Oorebeek's work: he regularly zooms in so closely on printed images that the dots become an abstract 'motif' taking up entire walls and even rooms. By laying the two grids on top of one another, this game is taken even further: explicitly so, in those tapestries in which the photographic raw material is blurred (*Room 0.09; Public*) or abstract (*Room 0.08; dots, Red/Green*); or in a more ironic way, when a photograph of a piece of textile or something that resembles it is used as a source (*Room 1.9; Tibet*) (*Room 0.23; Tea Towel*).

And there is one more dimension of the 'reproduction' mechanism that Oorebeek incorporates in this work: When asked whether he would be interested in the idea of exhibiting the cycle all together in an exhibition space, he responded quite reluctantly. Each tapestry is linked in the minds of the building's users to one of the generic workspaces and can evoke the 'mental reproduction' of one or more others: that's how *Memory Trail* works.

One river, two banks, three bridges An artistic proposal by Tobias Rehberger

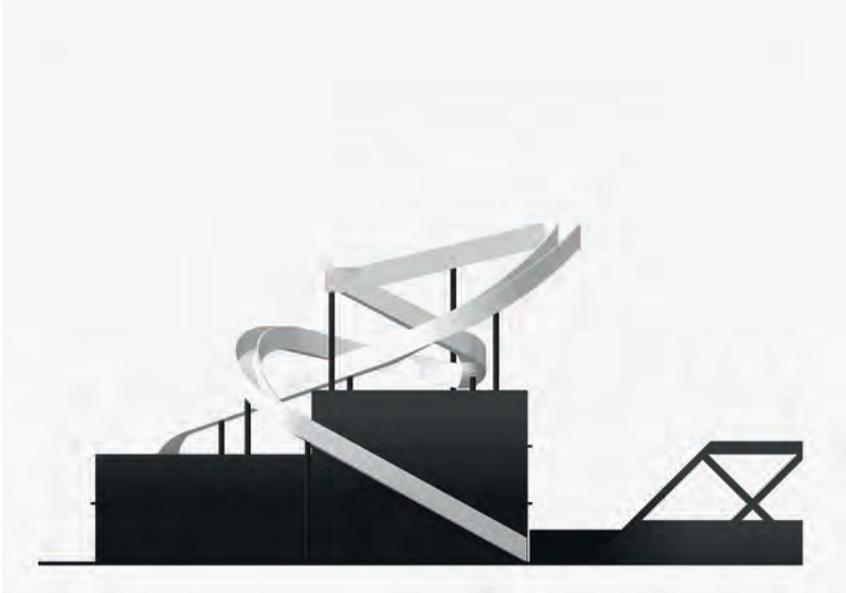
– ROLF QUAGHEBEUR –

Gustave Eiffel built a railway bridge across the river Scheldt in 1870, linking Temse with Bornem. Belgian troops blew up that original bridge in 1940 in an attempt to slow down the German invasion. Work on a replacement began in 1949, and the new crossing was finally opened in 1955. The bridge on the N16 highway between Temse and Bornem was important not only strategically and militarily, but above all to the economic development of the province of East Flanders. Its significance is symbolized on the Temse side by two sculptures done in the 1950s by Karel Aubroeck.

Although the location's economic importance declined over the years, particularly after the closure of the Boel shipyard, the N16 remains a major traffic artery. The 1955 bridge is now a listed monument and forms part of Flanders' industrial heritage. A solution was needed, however, to enable it to cope with the steadily growing volume of traffic. An answer was found in Laurent Ney's proposal to build a second bridge alongside the first, which resulted in a contemporary design whose architectural and planning qualities equal those of the first bridge.

The twin crossings over the Scheldt link the two different worlds of the Waasland and Klein-Brabant. The Temse side bears the clear traces of a traditional industry that has now largely disappeared. The bridge leads here into a heavily urbanized zone. On the opposite riverbank, Bornem is a green, seemingly unspoiled area, used chiefly for nature tourism and low-impact leisure activities.

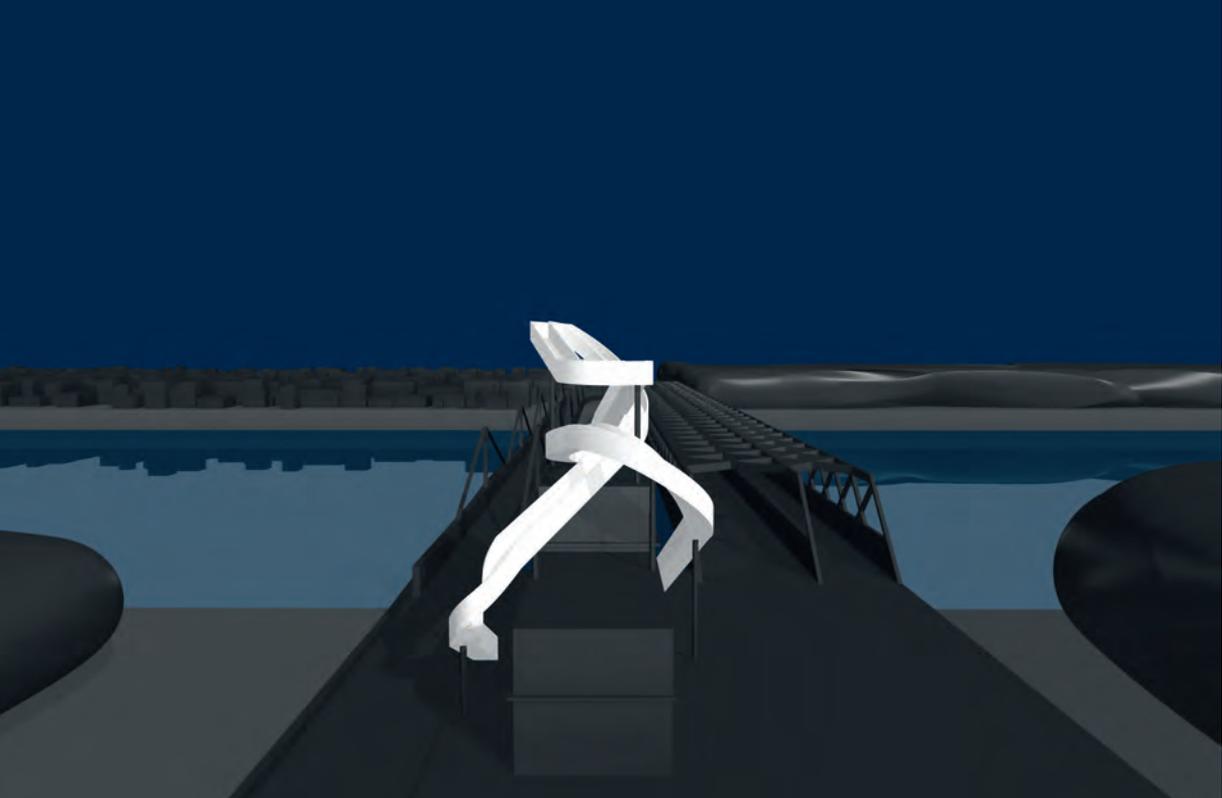
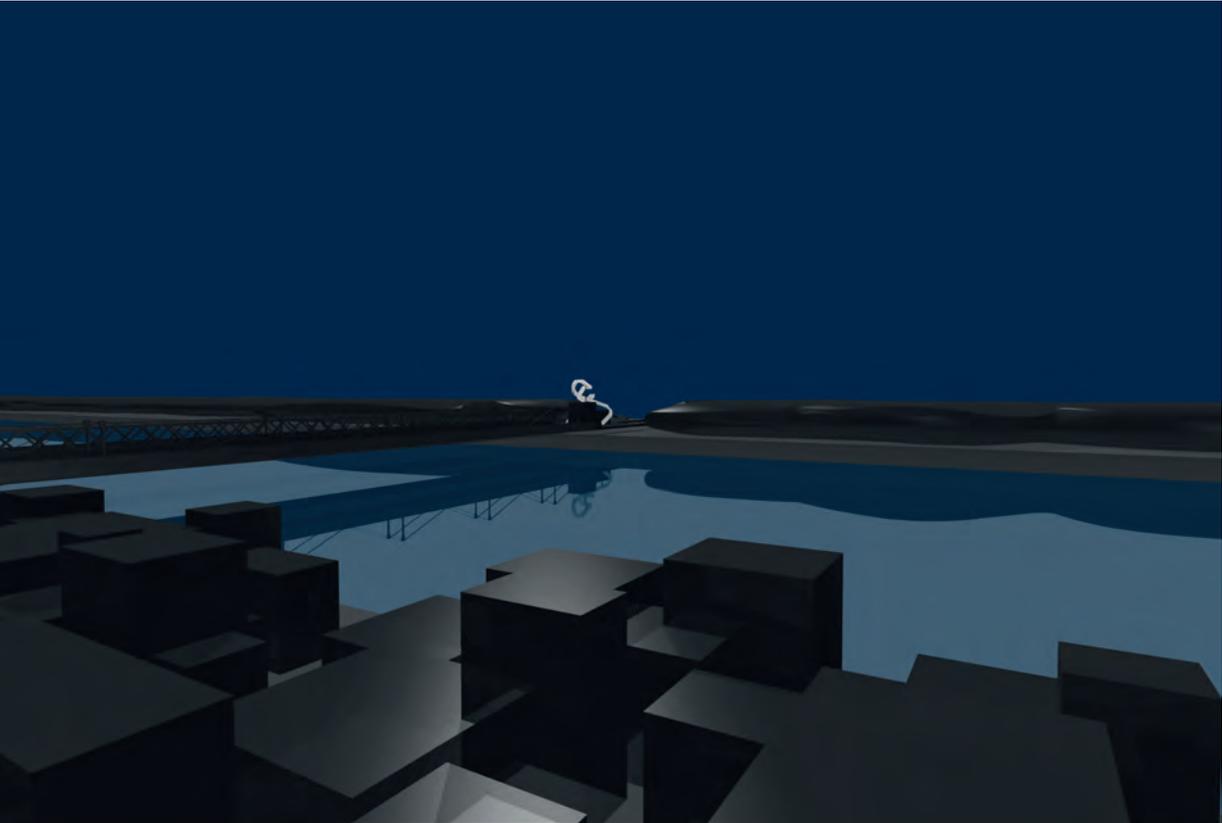
The local council in Bornem contacted the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team in 2008 to help it commission an artwork to accompany the construction of the second bridge over the Scheldt. The project was to be funded by the council, the Province of Antwerp and the Flemish Region (through the agency Waterwegen & Zeekanaal NV). A brief was drawn up and the German artist Tobias Rehberger was invited to present an artistic proposal. His task was to design a work for the site between the two bridges, which is also the location of a utility building.

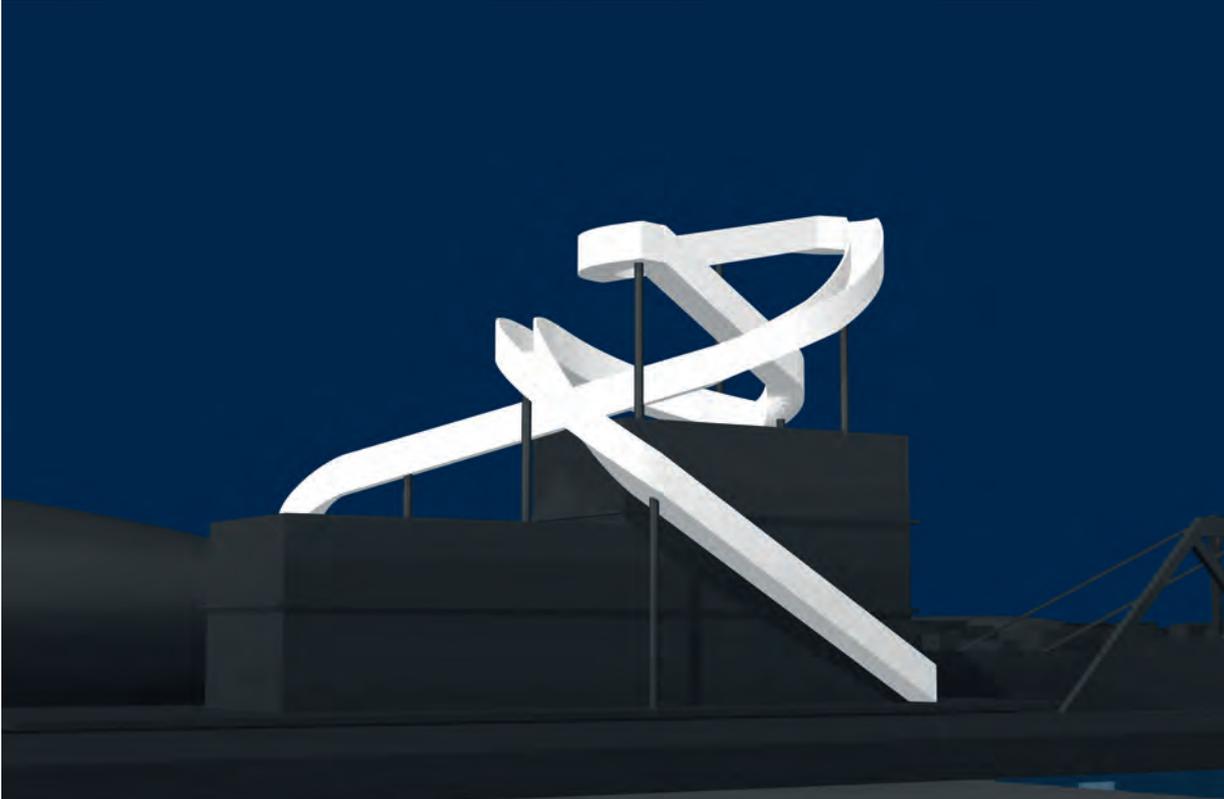


The idea was to explore the contrasts described above and to heighten the symbolic power of the site.

A key characteristic of Rehberger's sculptures, quite a few of which refer to architecture and design of the 1960s and 70s, is the way they focus on interacting with the visitor and interrogating the specific context. In 1999, for instance, Rehberger embarked on an ongoing project in which he draws from memory construction plans for iconic cars like the Porsche 911 and McLaren F1. These sketches – lacking any measurements or technological details – are then sent to a workshop in Thailand to be built. The only stipulation is that the cars have to be constructed on a human scale and must be drivable. In other cases, such as his 'Renault Alpino', Rehberger does not even provide any drawings but simply phones his instructions through to the carmakers. The result is a series of vehicles that function as autonomous, unique sculptures while simultaneously raising all sorts of questions about modern production processes, authenticity and unicity.

Rehberger's proposal *The banks emerge as banks not only as the bridge crosses the stream* is a compelling response to the challenges posed in Bornem/Temse. His plan to build a 'third bridge' linking the other two does not set out to establish a physical and functional link so much as to create a visual anchor. The verticality of his sculpture – a bridge that





winds around the little utility building – not only contrasts with the horizontality of the two bridges over the river, it also forms a beacon in the landscape, which functions as a symbolic frontier between the two contrasting banks, and as a visual metaphor for the dynamism of the point of connection. The playful, non-utilitarian character of the sculpture contrasts, moreover, with the functionality and economic value of the Scheldt bridges. The sculpture – the highest point of which affords a panoramic view of the river and its banks – is accessible to visitors, and so offers a variety of perspectives.

By proposing a third bridge in addition to the duplication of the Scheldt crossing – one that is not functional and which makes a monumental yet inherently superfluous connection between the two others – Rehberger also seems to focus ironically on the absurdity of the situation. Perhaps he wishes to invite the beholder to question, whether or not from a modernist bird's-eye view, the way in which two riverbanks have been connected in response to imperatives of economics, productivity and efficiency. The title of the proposal displays a similar irony. *The banks emerge as banks not only as the bridge crosses the stream* is, at any rate, not only a landmark – a characteristic reinforced by its finishing in phosphorescent paint – but also a vehicle through which to offer the beholder a different perspective on the landscape and the surroundings.

Postscript: politics between dream and reality

The project was initiated in 2008 with a budget of 150,000 euros. It soon became apparent, however, that the level of ambition extended beyond this and negotiations duly began with the different partners with a view to increasing the budget. At the same time, the project was further elaborated technically and financially. At the time of writing, *The banks emerge as banks not only as the bridge crosses the stream* has yet to be executed.

In the case of one of the most important, symbolic and high-profile infrastructure projects in recent years, the half-hearted attitude of the Flemish government – ambitious but with limited resources – has prevented a firm choice being made for an artistic proposal that is sound; matches the ambition of the

KU 0701

infrastructure project and the importance of the site; that all the partners and experts involved consider an absolute asset; and that meets the highest artistic and quality standards. Nor is this an isolated case, as witnessed by the ten-year struggle to realize Cristina Iglesias' *Deep Fountain* at Leopold De Waelplaats in Antwerp, for instance, or the inability to execute Jan De Cock's proposal for the De Appel roundabout in Kortrijk. Cases like this almost always involve projects to which the local authority is willingly and enthusiastically committed, but which cannot be realized – or else only with immense difficulty – because the Flemish government lacks the necessary strategy, vision and mechanisms to deal with major public art projects that transcend the level of local ambition, while adding value to the quality of the public space in Flanders.

Mein Dorf, eine Baustelle!¹

A proposal by Manfred Pernice

– ULRIKE LINDMAYR –

We have no problem with the idea that a city in which we live is the embodiment of an ongoing project, its face changing constantly. Plazas are remodelled; buildings are constructed, refurbished and restored; roads are improved and underground car parks added; a house is demolished here and greenery planted there: we see it happening all around us – the city is one big building site. When it comes to 'our village', we take a very different view: the seasons may come and go, but everything else is timeless and unchanging. This is not, of course, the reality: the village is constantly moving too, albeit at a slower pace than the city. Yet the image we have of it is extremely static.

Sint-Lievens-Houtem arose on a narrow, elongated zone of farmland bounded by several streams: the Molenbeek-Kottembeek and the Kousmakersbeek. It is to this position that the village owes its large and unique marketplace: 359 metres long and 80 metres wide, and roughly triangular in shape. The central buildings cluster around it: shops (baker, newsagent, butcher, florist, grocer), a school, a retirement home, and not to forget the church, a listed monument. Plentiful parking makes it easy to access these businesses and services by car. The weekly market and two-day annual fair take on a special character in the spatial setting of this unique, elongated marketplace.

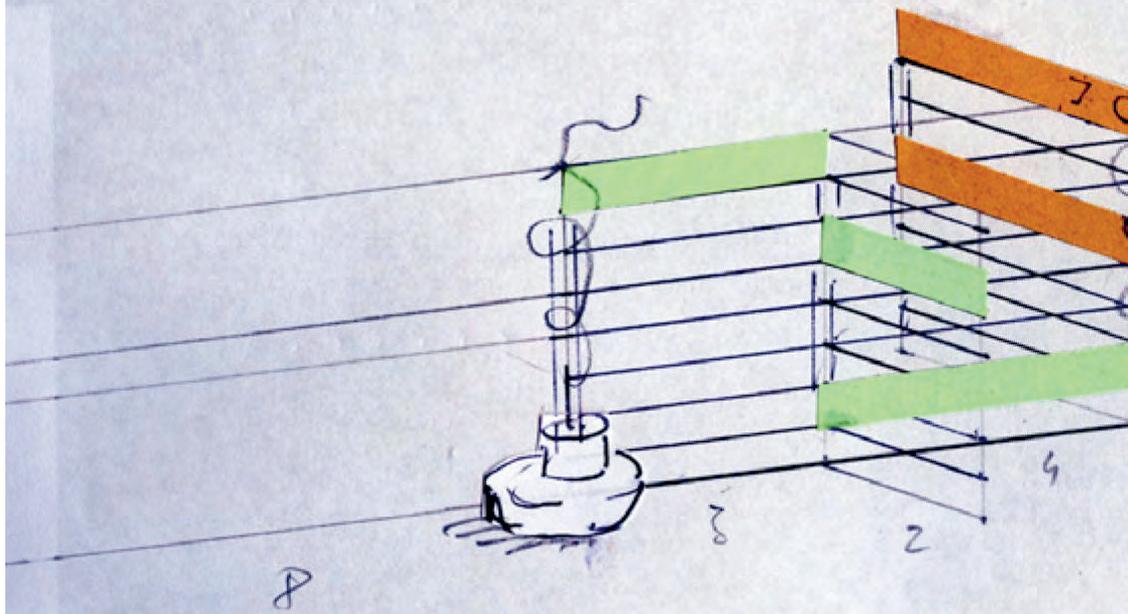
In 2005 the upgrading of the drainage system and the poor condition of the road surfaces prompted the local authority to refurbish the site, taking the opportunity to reinforce and refocus the different functions the marketplace fulfils within the village community. The project was entrusted to the architect Christian Kieckens, who in turn invited the sculptor Manfred Pernice to conceive an artwork for the main square. Work is scheduled to begin on the marketplace in Sint-Lievens-Houtem in 2015; Manfred Pernice's artwork will not be executed.

Kieckens' design sets out to preserve the open space. He uses greenery to articulate the marketplace and allows the drains to play a

1. My village, a building site



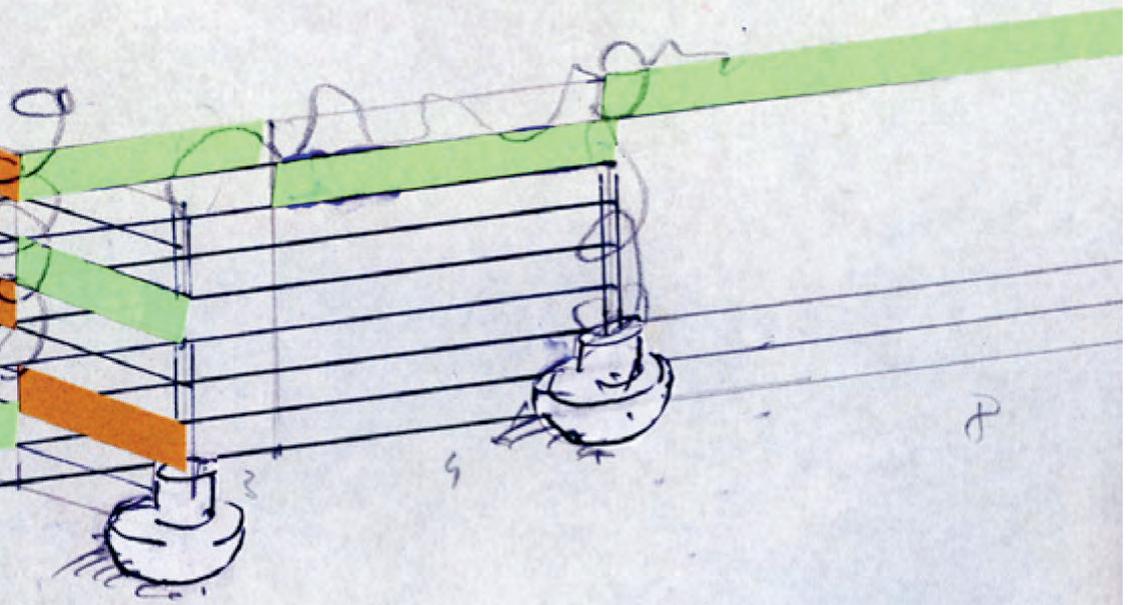
fritant-Struktur
Rohbau - Bauweise
Nische



Anita

e - Baanstruktuur

poorten



(metaphorically) visible role in the shape of a discrete water feature. The only addition will be an open architectonic structure (18 x 24 metres and 9 metres high at its peak). This will function as a kind of mini-town hall, which the community can use for a variety of purposes. Where the architect will first clear the marketplace and then systematically rebuild it, Manfred Pernice's response to this art commission focuses on the question of what might happen with a construction project that is incomplete. Or, to put it another way, how can a ruin transform and take on a new function?

Pernice's eye was caught on his first visit to the site by the fast-food kiosk 'Frituur Anita' and by a disused bus shelter, which currently stand near the end of the marketplace. The improvised architecture of the kiosk – typically Belgian in its appearance – and the 'forgotten' bus shelter (the entrance and seats of which face 'Frituur Anita' rather than the road) lay claim to their spot on the marketplace like a couple of wild plants defying the gardener in an otherwise well-tended flowerbed. Organic. Driving into Sint-Lievens-Houtem, the artist also spotted an industrial unit in the process of construction: a building site.

Manfred Pernice belongs to a generation of German sculptors, whose work departs from a traditional, sculptural language, while leaving a prominent place for the incomplete and for the process itself. Pernice's constructions are assembled from simple materials like wood and chipboard, covered with newspaper and magazine clippings, photographs, and found objects or ready-mades. The artist limits himself to rearranging and contextualizing existing 'things', building for these 'things' and their history a platform, a display, a container and so forth. Architecture – including its historical freight – is likewise a reference point in Pernice's work. The expansion of the sculpture to an architectural setting allows some works to manifest themselves as fully-fledged spatial constructions, while other, smaller ones strongly resemble preliminary studies for larger-scale projects.

Manfred Pernice's proposal for the marketplace at Sint-Lievens-Houtem is titled *Liege* (German for 'chaise longue') and was inspired by the three architectonic elements mentioned earlier: 'Frituur Anita', the bus shelter and an industrial building site. The temporary and open nature of these structures inspired Pernice to design a sculpture measuring some 4 metres in height and 12–15 in length. The piece as a whole is supported by ten red T-beams, 4 metres long, fixed to the

ground. Several concrete circles, 2 metres in diameter, hold the beams rigid, while also functioning as seats. Prefabricated concrete slabs (wall elements) are installed between the beams at certain places, while other intermediate spaces are left free.

Despite the monumentality that these dimensions suggest, this is first and foremost a transparent and open structure. The proposed sculpture has the air of an unfinished building site, a ruin transformed at some point into an improvised – and gradually overgrown – pergola and place to sit for a future generation of inhabitants. The sculpture was to have been installed on the marketplace later, in consultation with the architect and client.

As elsewhere in Pernice's work, the viewer – and in this case, the user too – is invited here to constantly shift his or her focus while contemplating the aesthetic module, and scrutinize the reliability of its supposed functionality. More than this, however, and despite the use of 'hard' construction materials, the proposal expresses a poetry bound up with the possibility of transformation, and with a search for the moment at which things are not yet defined; at which the normal/organic state of affairs can be captured in an image. Because the truth is: **NOTHING IS PERMANENT**, not even in our village.

Die Welt, eine Baustelle!

A new background
Ilke DeVries' *Evolution*

– KOEN SELS –

Just as certain animals only spot their prey when it moves, certain things only become visible or significant to human beings when they change. The monotone background of normality suddenly turns out to consist of living, moving elements – things that stand out against a new background and to which we can give meaning. That is clearly the case with the 'big' moments we say change 'everything'. But it can also happen unexpectedly, when we are caught unawares by a wordless and crystal-clear visible reality. At risk of sounding sentimental or pseudo-philosophical, is it truly self-evident that the sun comes up, it starts to rain, or that the light is so gratingly harsh or dull grey? Is something still self-evident if we really look at how things simultaneously change and do not change?

Time and change are essential to the video artist Ilke DeVries, if only because her medium is that of the moving image. Change, time and movement are, after all, the distinguishing features of cinema, its baseline, you might say. Even the most silent and immobile film is still in motion; it plays out in time. But it can be less metaphysical too. Change is also the narrative driver of cinema in the more everyday meaning of the word: stories are based on tipping-points, on drama in the broadest sense. In her videos, most of which take a documentary form, DeVries deliberately deploys both elements – the visual component of change on the one hand, and the narrative, dramatic and human element on the other.

This is also the case for her project *Evolution* – her response to an artistic commission for the newly constructed Hof ten Doenberghe residential care home in Hoeilaart – although unlike most of DeVries' other work, it is not a 'real' video installation. The brief was to integrate a work in the garden of the new building, in which there is a restored greenhouse. Rather than utilizing the public space to project a video, DeVries uses the glass as surface on which to project what is happening on the inside. The greenhouse lights up when the daylight grows darker, so that the shapes of the growing plants inside are visible









on the outside. The artist asked a resident of the care home to record these changes at the greenhouse from a fixed spot twice a day – in the morning and in the evening – for a year. De Vries then distilled a film out of that material, which is shown inside the centre as a 'living painting'.

It is tempting to read *Evolution* symbolically: the succession of the seasons, day and night, and the shifting weather reflect the cycles of life and death, of things that end and regenerate, in the context of a care centre at which people spend the final part of their lives. The centre's picturesque setting then becomes a poetic mirror of transient, human life at 'the rhythm of nature'. Yet such a traditional interpretation wholly ignores the medium-specific, cinematographic, mechanical and entirely non-epic character of the work, which soberly visualizes the apparently self-evident dynamic of repetition and difference, and renders it strange.

Although the projection in the greenhouse is not video art as strictly defined, it is cinema in the metaphorical sense. Yet it is a form of cinema stripped back to its foundations: a play of light, rhythm, repetition and change that sets things in motion. The projection may

be viewed, moreover, as an extreme, filmic slowing down, in which every moment of darkness becomes an individual still of the growing plants. The powerful contrasts between light and dark, inside and outside, ensure moreover that what is happening in the surroundings is also delineated more clearly: that day changes to night, for instance, or that it can be uncomfortably dark during the daylight hours. In other words, the filmic approach transforms things that would not normally qualify as 'events' into meaningful and dramatic moments, no matter how small and everyday.

The living painting, by contrast, speeds up the projections in the greenhouse, turning them into a rhythmic film that resembles a single long take. It testifies to the different speeds at which this specific place 'exists': the greenhouse responds to the light and nature, to the weather conditions, while clouds, shadows, cars, animals and people move through the image according to their own rhythm. What the image shows the residents of the care centre is, possibly, that the still surroundings in which they live are not a predictable, sterile background, but a living, filmic reality.

How do you replace a church?
Ellen Harvey's *Repeat* in Bossuit

– FRANK MAES –

How do you replace a church? That was the dilemma facing the local council in Avelgem, owner of Sint-Amelbergakerk in Bossuit. The little church, set in a small yard, was in such poor condition that in 2007 the council had to ban people from entering it. The danger that gravity would win out over divine providence had simply become too great. The move also meant that mass could no longer be celebrated in the village. The possibility of restoring the dilapidated building and bringing it back into use as a church was rapidly dismissed: the council could not justify that kind of investment for a village with fewer than five hundred souls. Bossuit's plight is by no means unique: all over Western Europe ongoing secularization has pushed the repurposing of empty churches up the agenda in recent decades.

Partial dismantling of the decayed church seemed the most logical option, but that did not answer the pressing question of how the site ought to be used in the future. The local council took the noteworthy decision to involve artists in the process: not in spite of the complexity and sensitivity of the situation, but precisely because of it. Could art bring some consolation, where politicians had wisely chosen to step aside?

Ellen Harvey's proposal does indeed embrace the partial dismantling of the church. The tower is stripped of its 'hat' and the nave of its roof; the columns are demolished and the existing floor replaced by a beautiful terrazzo design. The latter incorporates schematic traces of former architectural structures and ritual furniture, such as the columns, the cross-vault, the pulpit and the confessionals. The grey patterns in the floor simultaneously evoke the shadows of the church as seen in a photograph (of the church) following its bombardment in the First World War. The result is a more or less stabilized ruin, which the artist views as a site at which local people can organize all manner of gatherings and celebrations.

The way Harvey's proposal relates to the visitor's gaze is intriguing: although the architecture has been emphatically opened up, the visitor

cannot look outside. This specific characteristic of a church is retained: nowhere does the window function as a frame through which to view the surrounding landscape. It serves purely to admit the light. Traffic here occurs mostly vertically, beneath the open sky, in sharp contrast with the busy road that passes nearby. When the eye loses its supremacy, other senses gain in importance. Even more strikingly, the images that the artist adds cannot be viewed in their entirety, as they are executed in the form of a floor motif. It is often more important for images in a ritually charged setting simply to *be* there than to be consumed as an object of the gaze. Sculptures high up a tower, for instance; the masterpiece in a darkened chapel; or the labyrinth in the cathedral floor over which people carelessly step. In this scintillating, beautiful floor Harvey integrates the traces – like so many shadows from the past – of how this place came about: inaugurated, blasted, reconstructed, dismantled. Nowhere, however, is this expressed in ‘image-bites’ that tourists can consume in a tiny instant of their precious time. We hope that no press photographer manages to climb the tower during the inauguration of *Repeat*.

The project fits seamlessly into Harvey’s artistic journey. Her point of departure comprises the clichés about art that exist among the general public; she draws frequently on traditional genres that relate closely with the everyday, such as landscape, portrait and still life. She is fascinated by what art is capable of in the popular imagination. In many cultures, for instance, the artwork functions as a substitute for something (irrevocably) absent. It is capable in that guise of consoling people, bringing them together and mobilizing them. Ellen Harvey understands that this faith in the power of the image is not necessarily naive, but is related to the image’s inherent characteristics. No matter how charged a theme or context may be, Harvey uses an astute, mild irony – reflecting her British origins – to explore the way images function at the cusp between reality and illusion, seriousness and play.

The avant-garde logic that dominated the modern art world for most of the twentieth century led artists to distance themselves radically from the village and its fossilized clichés. According to this logic, poetry and the commonplace are mutually exclusive. In her analysis of the historical avant-garde dynamic, the architecture theorist Hilde Heynen states that ‘Banality and mediocrity are the supposed allies of the commonplace: the whole mass of ossified and imposed external forms, the weight of which crushes any inner perception and which is hence intrinsically false. The







genuine, the authentic, the real are presumed to exist behind this screen.¹ Ellen Harvey is the archetypal example of an artist who is convinced that such black-and-white contrasts are too simplistic. As Heynen too argues, the possibility of poetry need not lie in the destruction of the commonplace, but rather in a constant pendulum movement. This oscillation between the familiar and the strange, the particular and the universal, the personal and the communal, can give rise to forms 'that do not ossify so readily. Forms which, through the intelligence of their approach and the grace of their interplay, achieve a moment of contact with this variant reality and – even if only briefly – allow us to sense something that transcends the everyday: an intensity of emotion, a fleeting insight, of which the image takes root in the memory'.*

What is it that makes a ruin beautiful to us? There can be a whole variety of reasons, depending on our individual frame of reference and aesthetic sensibility. Classicists enjoy reconstructing a mental image or plan of the original edifice, based on its remains. To the Romantic, the ruin is a vehicle that can transport them back to a lost past. Modernists enjoy the transparency created when the decoration is gone and the bare construction beneath is revealed. The ruin becomes picturesque when it appears as the momentary result of shifting processes, with which first human beings, and then the elements have had their way. Ellen Harvey creates a zone in which these aesthetic forces are present in a balanced, restrained yet at once generous manner. A chance meeting, a family ritual, a personal reflection, a collective remembrance or a celebration are all possible here. And hopefully more than once, with that extra spark of intensity which – if only for an instant – allows something to be sensed that transcends the everyday.

1. Hilde Heynen, *In New Babylon kan je niet wonen. Over het omgaan met poëzie en gemeenplaats*, in: Hilde Heynen, ed., *Wonen*

tussen gemeenplaats en poëzie. Opstellen over stad en architectuur, Rotterdam: 010, 1993, pp. 11–17.

A painting on the R6 road

Conversation with Rein Barrie and Jan Claesen

The new-build project for the Sint-Maarten General Hospital in Mechelen, designed by VK Studio Architects, Planners & Designers, included the commission of an artwork from the painter Koen van den Broek. His piece, *Sampled*, is currently being realized. A conversation with Jan Claesen and Rein Barrie, the hospital's technical manager and former facilities manager respectively.

Katrien Laenen (KL): *What does art mean to you and your organization in relation to the public construction project with which you are involved? Is the commission purely a reflection of a particular combination of circumstances, or did the decree¹ act as an inspiration?*

Rein Barrie (RB): We've known about the decree at the Emmaus association for decades now. It was totally natural to me that there should be an artistic element. It made sense for me to be asked to join the selection committee, because I had already been through a similar

process before the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team was set up. We had to work things out for ourselves a lot more back then. I believe that art definitely adds value to business premises, which is how I would define a hospital too: it's not just about the patients, but also the people who work there.

Jan Claesen (JC): I think it's OK for principals to be required to invest in art. The scale of this particular project meant, however, that a very large sum had to be allocated. You have two options in that situation: either you choose a top, stand-alone piece of art or you fully integrate the art in the building, in a way that can stand the test of time. We chose to do the latter.

KL: *So you really approached it in the spirit of the decree. How did the process get started?*

RB: We began by setting up a small working group: the two of us, someone from the project team, the architect and one or two other interested managers. It was indeed a very large art budget for us, which is not something we're used to.

1. The Decree of 23 December 1986 on the integration of artworks in public-sector buildings.

KL: *Neither are we.*

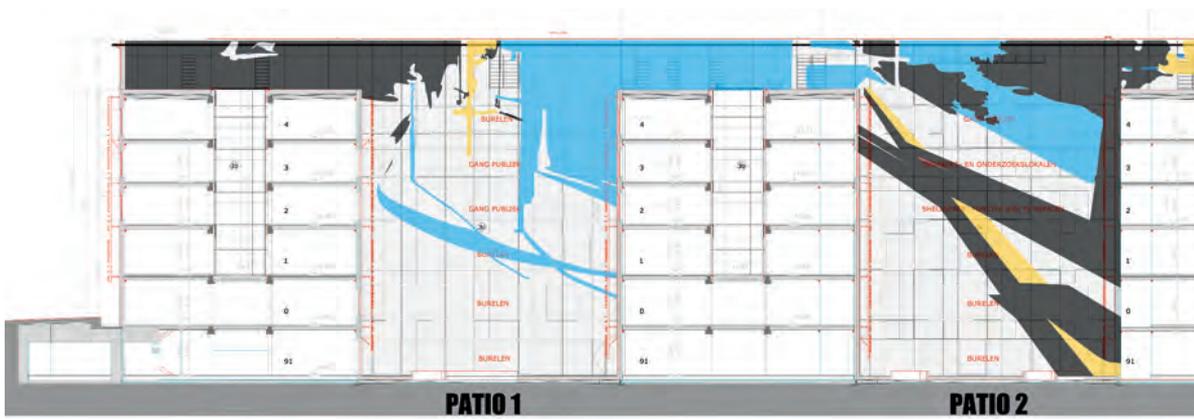
RB: We immediately received all sorts of offers, from both inside and outside the hospital. Everyone thinks they can come up with an artwork. So there were calls straight away to start splitting up the budget. We quickly came to the conclusion that we didn't want to do that. Given that we had such a large budget, we wanted to link it to the architecture. So we explored a number of opportunities. We could ask an artist to do something with the lifts and the orientation, for instance. Another idea was to do something with the main hall – an intervention involving the whole space, including the floor and the walls. We also thought for a while about the chapel and the quiet room.

JC: But the key was already there in the architects' design, with those large expanses of glass in the facade. The architects themselves had already suggested printing something on them. It seemed like a great idea straight away, because the facade is otherwise quite sober in its design. That was the starting point. The fact that an intervention like that would be visible not only to the users of the hospital, but also to the taxpayers outside was another benefit. You'll be able to see the hospital from the main road, the R6.

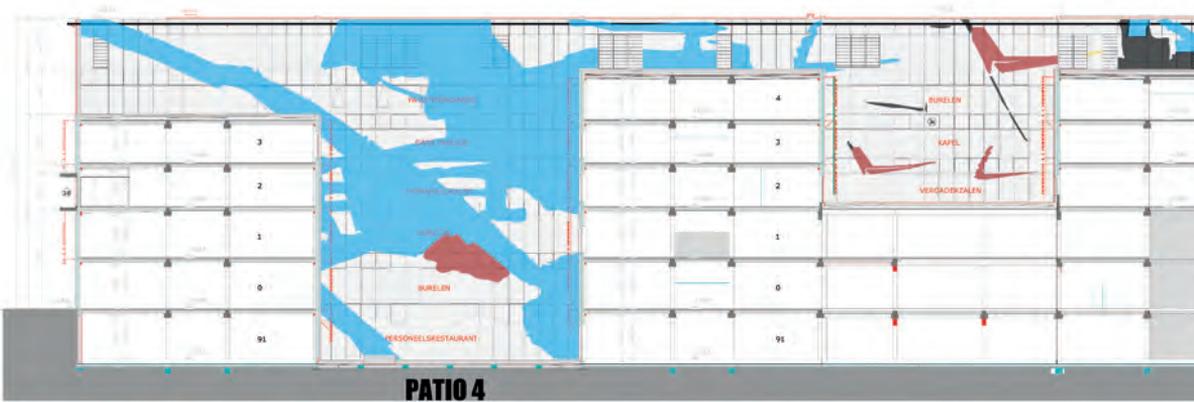
RB: And because the idea was already there in the building design, the architects were on board straight away. There was a financial consideration too: printing like that – artistic or otherwise – would have meant a considerable extra expense that we would have struggled to justify. Incorporating it in an artistic process also added financial value. It wasn't the decisive consideration, but it was a factor.

KL: *Could we focus for a moment on the professional artistic guidance? By which I mean the art team, but by extension other players too. Do you think that guidance like this needs to be tightly framed, or is it more helpful for you simply to have outlines that facilitate your dialogue with the artist?*

JC: Well, we had something in mind, but we didn't know what the next step would be. How were we going to approach the art market? We needed a framework, as it was all still rather abstract for us. The art team provided us with more guidance. Without your input, we might have acted a lot more directly: we'd have picked a particular artist and he or she would then have had to come up with something. You really guided us through the decision-making process. And once the artist had been selected, you acted as go-between between the artist and the principal.



AANZICHT RUGGEGRAAT NOORDZIJDE



AANZICHT RUGGEGRAAT ZUIDZIJDE

RB: We're used to dealing with suppliers, which I mean in a pretty wide sense – not just bandages and plasters. But negotiating with an artist is something else again. People like that have their own sensibilities: their approach isn't necessarily down-to-earth. The memorandum you wrote for our report to the Board of

Directors has been very important too: it means I don't have to feel cornered when someone asks why we chose this particular artist.

KL: *You made sure yourselves that the artist was asked the right questions in terms of your vision and concerns.*

RB: I think your team also had a lot to do with that. It's useful in that kind of dialogue with an artist to have a third voice that both parties trust.

JC: The designers also had an input. They kept looking, for instance, for glassmakers and procedures that would keep the whole thing on budget. At the same time, the artist showed a lot of willingness to engage with the technical aspects.

RB: This is actually an architectural project. So it helped that the artist has a solid architectural background and that our architect has a strong interest in art. I think we were just really lucky with the choice of people.

JC: You also get the maximum out of that approach: you create a frame of reference in which the contractor who has to do the actual work knows precisely where it's all leading.

KL: *Could we talk about buy-in, for a moment, both internal and external? Do you also hope to appeal to a wider audience with this project?*

JC: One of the aims was indeed to contribute something, not just for the users of the hospital, but also the community as a whole. I think we will certainly succeed in that. Drivers on the R6 won't be able to miss the building or the artwork. It would be

good in that regard to have a kind of 'preview opening' – with the emphasis on the art – when the structural work is finished in 2015 or so. Only a few interior walls will have been installed at that point, so the artwork will be visible in its entirety from the inside. Once the building is complete, the image will be more fragmented. We've discussed it with the artist and we also want to involve the City of Mechelen. That way, you make the art a lot more accessible.

RB: You also have to focus attention on an artwork like this repeatedly. As far as internal buy-in is concerned, a certain tradition already exists at Sint-Maarten and within the Emmaus association in general for the purchase and display of art.

KL: *Could you tell me a little more about how you went about creating internal buy-in?*

JC: We also drew on that in-house tradition when putting together the artistic selection committee. The regular project group was represented, but the core members were also supplemented at each decisive step by other members of the Management Board. The administrative manager and nursing manager, for instance, were actively involved in the decision-making process. These different viewpoints

on the artistic proposal led to a complementary approach, which has resulted in a balanced and considered choice we can all get behind.

RB: We opted for an artist who has already achieved a certain maturity. Given the spirit of the decree, it might have seemed more logical to go with an up-and-coming artist, but with hindsight, I'm glad we didn't. It's great to encourage young artists, but you also need to keep a balance between the end result and the allocated budget.

KL: I agree that you need an artist with a certain maturity and professionalism.

RB: It's not so much a question of age: we needed someone who wouldn't react emotionally if any of us made a comment: someone who wouldn't cling to their own idea for dear life.

JC: One last thing I'd like to mention: we thought it was extremely valuable to have the art team involved in the project from an early stage.

RB: Even earlier would have been great too...

JC: That's right, we should really have had you on board when the architect

was appointed. You ought to be called in as soon as a strategic care plan has been approved. Architecture and art should be addressed in the subsidy application to the Flemish government. That's perfectly feasible, and it means budget considerations can be attached to them in good time.

RB: Fortunately, we focused on that in time. It means that the contractor who is currently tendering for the project knows there will be art on the windows, and that the architects have had time to think it all through.

Mechelen, February 2013

Broken silence
Pedro Cabrita Reis's *Looking at Silence*

– EVA GONZALEZ SANCHO –

*I would like my work to be referred to as an inner space
of silence, introspection, serenity. Most of all it's
about the inevitable quest for beauty, as a form
of absolute intelligence.*

Pedro Cabrita Reis¹

*Art is a perfect tool for broadening the mind because art
merely asks questions without ever answering them.*

Pedro Cabrita Reis²

When you go to see Pedro Cabrita Reis's work *Looking at Silence* (2012) at the Uitzicht Crematorium in Kortrijk, you first notice that, in spite of being an area open to the public, it is a highly intimate space, separated from any walking path or tourist itinerary. It is a visit one makes out of desire, or perhaps even obligation; in any event, it is planned and thought out in advance. The work will not be seen by the casual passerby, but rather by a guest, a user; and this in itself gives it meaning: it is a visit of necessity.³

The crematorium designed by Eduardo Souto de Moura is all the more private in the way that it appears to the casual observer: secretly buried deep inside a structure that blends into the landscape on the

1. Adrian Searle, 'Conversation with Pedro Cabrita Reis' in *Pedro Cabrita Reis*, ed. Hatje Cantz, 2003, p. 70.
2. Definition of art given by the artist in answer to a listener during a conversation in Brussels in December 2012 (SmallTalk 11/12/12, Atelier Bouwmeester, Brussels).

3. *Looking for Silence* came about in 2012 through a commission from Ppsilon, an inter-communal association for crematorium management in South West Flanders. The Vlaams Bouwmeester art team also supported art commissions at the Sint-Niklaas crematorium.



outskirts of Kortrijk. To get to it, you must walk down a slope, gradually moving into this all-concrete structure until you come to a square space - a courtyard - containing a ring of stones around a tree. Finally, you see a wall of broken bricks that has been raised at the bottom of the slope, partly concealing one of the walls of the original building. *Looking at Silence* is this brick wall. It is the entirety of this area's components, though, and its layout – visitors included – that form the work. Facing the wall, we return to our own presence and to the unavoidable thought of a possibility, all the while surrounded by a gentle, flowing, pacifying silence. I see it as a door, not a wall.

Cabrita Reis's work often addresses issues related to construction, at times to shelter, or to the act of building itself, living spaces, territory or memory. The same is true for *Looking at Silence*, except that this work indisputably immerses us into a kind of ontological reflection that cannot be disregarded. The work, without a doubt, suggests silence, but also lines and channels, energy, landscape, mysticism, speech... Wouldn't we be tempted, for that matter, to question the relationship of this work to Words, Speech and Poetry in order to better approach the idea of a Passage, of life or death; in any event, of a transition? How do we talk about the transition of this artwork's physical reality to speech, its symbolic meaning, and thus to the question of immateriality? In one of his poems, the Portuguese poet Herberto Helder writes:





Death, I can see, is like breaking a word and passing
 - death is passing as if breaking,
 through the door,
 towards a new word (...)⁴

Looking at Silence also suggests the opening of an interior entrance and a dialogue with oneself, thus installing this silence – so present in the artist's work – both in the experience of the artwork as well as in the many titles of his pieces that include the same word.

Moreover, the brick wall at the entrance/courtyard of the Crematorium refers beyond this silence to the question of isolation. We are facing the wall and, even if we have company, we are alone; the wall is for the individual. Because once again, Cabrita Reis reaffirms that each one of us is the sole viewer through metaphorical approaches using very basic structures. Here, the experience of silence and its relationship to death are, henceforth, not only defined by the site's purpose, but also by confrontation to this wall, together with an invitation to a Passage towards some place. *Looking at Silence* is the line that invites us to imagine this crossing. It is a line that the artist wanted to superimpose only partially on the wall parallel to the building, thereby allowing us to slide inside the crack and come to a different interpretation of the proposal as a whole. Indeed, Souto de Moura has marked the architecture of the building with a line, another line, shoulder high, carved all along the length of the building, inside and out. *Looking at Silence* interrupts and enhances this physical line. The silence declared by the artist is shaken: by the line marked on the structure that he tries to break at the same time, just as with the tree that he has gently shifted, a gesture that also softens the geometry in its spatial and sensorial eurhythmy.

Move the walls is something painful,
 it makes you sick but it is indispensable.
 The world is one. As for walls...
 And walls are a part of you -

4. Herberto Helder, *Le poème continu: somme anthologique* - Issue 20, p. 61.

You may or may not know it, but it is so for everyone,
except small children. For them, no walls.

The bright sky leans up against the wall.
It is like a prayer made to the void.
And the void turns its face towards us
and murmurs:
'I am not empty, I am open'⁵

The architecture of the Crematorium will have defined a space, harnessed a part of nature in order to present the most basic of structures, one that draws only from nature itself to produce a surface: a wall of bricks cemented together (the same basic material used in the layout of Souto de Moura's architectural complex), a line of earth, water and fire. The wall will continue to deteriorate, creating - with the tree facing it - the topology of a new garden: a consciousness within reality to think about death.

5. Tomas Tranströmer, 'Vermeer', taken from his *Complete Works* (1954, 1994), Le Castor Astral, 1996.

Art and master planning

Conversation with Eli Devriendt

The commission to draw up the master plan for the ‘Green Ribbon’ around Ostend was awarded to TV Technum – ADR/Georges Descombes following an Open Call. The brief also included an art commission, in which photographer Katrien Vermeire and writer Peter Verhelst helped get the landscape and urban planning project under way. A conversation with the landscape architect Eli Devriendt, who works for the City of Ostend.

Katrien Laenen (KL): What does art mean to you and to the city when it comes to the public projects with which you are involved? Did the art projects come about by chance, or did you and your colleagues place art on the agenda based on your own interests?

Eli Devriendt (ED): Art and architecture can sometimes flow together in the public space to form a single whole. There are some striking examples of that in Ostend: the Kursaal, for instance, and the wonderful, recently renovated post office by Gaston Eysseleinck. Each of those buildings incorporates a group of sculptures, one by Jespers, the other by Cantré, which help define their identity; it would be hard to imagine them without their sculpture.

Architecture alone is not enough to express the spirit of a site. If you want to give a building an extra dimension, you automatically turn to artists. That goes for the design of public space, too – plazas, streets, parks and so forth.

So the fact that art is on our agenda is partly a question of tradition, but it also reflects our own interests; and sometimes it does come about more by chance. An example is Johan Tahon’s sculpture, *ZON Anima/ Animus*, which was recently installed in the Maria-Hendrikapark. The artist has lived in Ostend and has a strong interest in astronomy, which is shared by the mayor. The idea grew during the renovation process of making a contemporary addition to the park by installing a sculpture there. The Maria-Hendrikapark is beautiful. It was designed in the late nineteenth century by Elie Lainé and the German architect Friedrich Eduard Keilig. The English landscaping style focused heavily on scenography: art works and architectural elements were used to add a narrative dimension to a walk through the park. By incorporating Tahon’s work in the Maria-Hendrikapark, we were going back to the origin – the basic idea underlying the English landscape style. We

Duizenden jaren geleden, toen licht en donker, en land en water nog om de heerschappij over de wereld vochten, viel uit de hemel een meteoriet die een krater sloeg in de grond, een gat dat onmiddellijk met water werd opgevuld. Nu zeilen we op het water, niet in de hoop (zoals in verhalen wordt verteld) om te vliegen, maar (zoals in de enige echte verhalen rond het vuur wordt verteld) omdat we nooit de hoop op willen geven ooit over water te kunnen lopen (en we tegelijk niet kunnen vergeten dat we ooit, zoals die vissen, uit het slijk aan land kropen).

provided a contemporary addition: a universal story about space, the deeper human character, archetype and myth.

There is a second sculpture in the park, incidentally, by Michael Ray Charles: *Three Graces*, which is a condemnation of racism. The two art projects help determine the identity of the place.

KL: Some nature-lovers object to a landscape being designed or having art objects inserted in it. Is that tension between nature and culture something that exercises you?

ED: Everything here is a cultural landscape, no? The Maria-Hendrikapark, for instance, looks very natural, but it is the product of a refined design intended to evoke an idyllic nature.

KL: I mention it because the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team was involved with the plans for an art commission for the Scheldt flood plain, in which entirely new nature areas will be created by the Sigma Plan to improve flood protection. Some felt that art had a place there, others were convinced it did not.

ED: You have to analyze the context. I do not take the view that any intervention in a valuable natural landscape has to be ruled out in advance. But I do think you have to define the commission precisely – that you need to think about it very carefully. And doing nothing is sometimes the best option.

KL: Could you tell us something about the process you went through at the beginning of the Open Call for the





Green Ribbon project and your decision to go for a professionally guided preliminary artistic process?

ED: The Green Ribbon is a very complex brief. It relates to a greenbelt around Ostend, but also to the search for a development vision and strategy. Fifteen different landscapes are affected. I doubt if any other brief has ever been issued in Flanders in which landscape is considered on such a large scale near to a major city. It was far from easy to draw up a project definition. It was your team that suggested a preliminary artistic process. It helped us get more of a handle on the assignment.

We began with a number of meetings with cultural players in Ostend: individuals who know the context and the city well. They included Philip Van den Bossche (mu.ZEE director), Hendrik Tratsaert (artistic director of Kunstencentrum Vrijstaat O), the people at the AGSO (Autonom Gemeentebedrijf Stadsvernieuwing Oostende) and the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team. A large number of possibilities were considered during those meetings.

KL: They were also people with very different backgrounds.

ED: Definitely. And I think it was important that we had those conversations. We eventually

agreed on Peter Verhelst and Katrien Vermeire, who had captured the essence of that landscape in a series of strong images. Their contribution also culminated in a little book.

KL: Was the booklet finished when the selection of designers was announced for the Open Call?

ED: It all happened more or less in parallel, but the text and the images were ready and were included in the project definition. One of the reasons we chose Peter Verhelst and Katrien Vermeire was the accessibility of their work. It meant we could not only enrich the project definition for ourselves and for the Open Call participants, but also generate something we could use throughout the communication process. Killing two birds with one stone. We had 55,000 copies of the booklet and a walking map printed.

KL: How did you go about working with Katrien Vermeire and Peter Verhelst?

ED: We had Katrien Vermeire's pictures first. We then asked Peter Verhelst for a kind of pamphlet on the importance of the Green Ribbon. We gave him a little tour and told him about the historical background and what we wanted the Ribbon to achieve. That we wanted more of an open landscape again, a better

relationship with heritage, and so on. He took that knowledge and came up with a 'mental workout'. For each photograph there is a text that takes you into the locale, into the future, in a way that stimulates the mind and your desire... He also wrote an imaginary speech. The result was unbelievably stimulating – for the principal too, and for the five design teams who worked on the brief: they got a better feeling of where the project was supposed to lead.

KL: How far advanced is the project now?

ED: Because it is such a large-scale project, what we needed first and foremost was a development vision and strategy: is a recycling facility necessary? A crematorium? Somewhere to hold events? If so, where should they be? The commission went to Technum –ADR / Georges Descombes in July 2012, since when the master plan has been finalized. The aim is to realize subsidiary projects in the next phase.

KL: Was Mayor Vandecasteele similarly enthusiastic about the preliminary artistic process? Did you sense any buy-in?

ED: Yes, he was really into it and put a lot of weight behind the communication. He acted as guide in

the spring for 1,600 people who visited the Green Ribbon on cycle and bus tours. In the meantime, a lot of people in Ostend have apparently taken to walking or cycling the route on a Sunday, because it is so varied. You have to take a ferry to cross the mouth of the harbour, so it is a bit like being on holiday in your own city. But a lot of work still has to be done to finish the various subsidiary areas, so that they can be embraced by the residents of the adjoining districts. That will take an ongoing communication effort. In the meantime, there was an open-air exhibition in March–April 2013 in the Koninklijke Gaanderijen, which included Katrien Vermeire's photographs, Peter Verhelst's texts and a synthesis of Descombes and Technum's master plan.

KL: So, keeping up the communication is an important focus – particularly for a project on this scale?

ED: It is. Interestingly, Kunstencentrum Vrijstaat O – which also suggested collaborating with Katrien Vermeire and Peter Verhelst on this assignment – is now planning to stage 'Dansand', its biennial dance festival, at special locations along the Green Ribbon. So the tone has been well and truly set!

Ostend, February 2013

'Il faut cultiver notre jardin'
Conversation with Johan Grimonprez about
his web project 'On Radical Ecology'

– PIETERJAN GIJS –

Johan Grimonprez' recent project *On Radical Ecology* started in 2012 with the support of the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team. The work approaches the themes of ecology and sustainability from a broader, societal angle. The result is a vlog, (video blog), featuring a selection of videos the artist has gathered from the web and from various archives. These present innovative solutions to ecological problems, which Grimonprez has broken down into six categories, including biotecture, guerrilla gardening and transition towns. The vlog is a useful tool for a variety of interested parties, who are increasingly obliged to deal with ecological issues. Architect Pieterjan Gijs talked to Johan Grimonprez about this work and his earlier projects.

Pieterjan Gijs (PG): I was struck by the meaningful titles you give your works. Tell me about the title On Radical Ecology.

Johan Grimonprez (JG): I'm actually considering a longer title – *On Radical Ecology and Tender Gardening* – because the short version feels a bit one-dimensional. Richard Reynolds wrote in his book *Guerrilla Gardening*: 'While there was a guerrilla spirit about it, there was not much of a gardener's love.' It's a fair point. The fundamental question is about how we belong together as people. That's closely related to the idea of a garden as a meeting place with a direct relationship with the public space, and as a biosphere we all share. Garden or place (*topos*) refers etymologically to the idea behind Thomas More's *Utopia*; or to the origin of the word 'paradise', which derives from the Persian *pairideiza*, meaning 'walled' or 'enclosed'. That also entails a danger of exclusion – the opposite of encircling and bringing together. What's essential to me in all this is the dimension of the garden as public space, in which a dialogue can occur. A garden, just like a community, is also something you need

to nurture. You have to give it the necessary time and attention to grow. 'Il faut cultiver notre jardin', as Voltaire says in *Candide*. With the emphasis on 'notre' – the 'we' who share the same world. The garden likewise functions as a metaphor for the vlog itself: it's made up of different areas, with little hideaways, or a shady tree that invites you to stick around for a while.

PG. Where does the term 'radical' fit in? The videos and the solutions they present aren't especially radical in themselves. Although they're certainly inventive, creative and often strikingly simple.

JG. The term 'radical' has multiple layers too. It refers to the fact that overconsumption and the pursuit of profits have brought our biotope to a radically advanced state. Things are completely back-to-front. Look at how policy toward seeds is dominated by companies like Monsanto and by the lobbying industry; and how they're making it almost illegal to grow your own vegetable garden. Or the way Barbara Van Dyck was sacked from her research job at a Belgian university for criticizing BASF's illegal practices in the Flemish potato sector. Critical dialogue is precisely what a university should be offering, yet faculties are increasingly acting like an adjunct to big business. 'Radical' also alludes to the work of Barbara Nemitz, who refers to plants in her essay 'Affinities' [in: *TransPlant: Living Vegetation in Contemporary Art*, Hatje Cantz, 1999] as 'radical operators'. She uses the term in its etymological sense 'radicalis', which basically means 'rooted' and refers to belonging to a particular place. But that place or *topos* risks being appropriated by economic privatization. The very building blocks of life – our own DNA – are being patented as corporate property.

PG. The concept of the garden is clearly very important to you: not necessarily in landscape terms, but above all for its ability to build social structure. Would it be right to say that this social dimension is an important thread running through the vlog? Could you give some examples to illustrate this?

JG. I'm less interested in the discoveries presented in the videos than in what they reveal about the structure of society and the way

they suggest a paradigm shift. That's a theme in my earlier work too. A previous vlog, *Maybe the Sky is Really Green, and We're Just Colour Blind*, for instance, explores the impact TV has had on society through the phenomenon of channel-hopping. It also traces the history of the commercial break, which so dominates our visual language. An interesting example in *On Radical Ecology* is the idea of 'time banking', the first version of which Edgar Cahn devised in the context of the prison system. It's a system in which hours of work are exchanged rather than money. Cahn stressed the fact that it arose from a social structure rather than exclusively from economic necessity. The seed banks Vandana Shiva set up in India are another example. They don't operate based on commercial rules but on the infrastructure of a local community. And there's Britta Riley too: rather than patenting 'Windowfarming', she shared her project as open source via social media. In the meantime, she's built an online family with 18,000 members worldwide, who contribute ideas and help optimize the project.

PG. I'd also like to ask about your work process. I'm fascinated by the way a long-term project can generate various interim products, which are an end-result in themselves. Interim drawings and models are very important in our work as architects. It's through them that a project gradually begins to branch off in different directions and new ideas and projects arise. That strikes me as a theme in your work too. What products and offshoots has this project generated? Are you planning to make a film, for instance, based on the video material you've assembled?

JG. Not necessarily. *Maybe the Sky is Really Green* started out as research for a documentary, but it ended up as a vlog. The main thing is to address a theme, which can belong to a variety of contexts. At the end of the day, it's all about social embedding again. It's more of a praxis, which could equally well consist of a lecture, a workshop or this interview. The vlog is also a teaching instrument, or it could be used as a research tool for architects, artists, policymakers, clients, and so forth.

PG. Tell me more about the way you choose the videos: how selective

are you about your categories and whether or not to include something in the vlog?

JG. It has a lot to do with conceiving an ecology around the 'information dystopia' that dominates the net. You have so much information that you end up right back in that pattern of overconsumption. A lot of thought goes into selecting videos for the vlog. For each one that's picked, ten or twenty are considered. Things tend to surface at a given moment, but the vlog is just the tip of the iceberg.

PG. How did you arrive at the theme of this vlog exactly? What motivated you to make it?

JG. A lot of my work uses media archaeology to unpick a familiar historical phenomenon. I often start out with a predetermined theme, but the material I find somehow resists, so that the theme begins to evolve. *Prends garde! A jouer au fantôme on le devient*, on which I worked with Herman Asselberghs, was my first video archive. It was conceived for Documenta X. That research ultimately led to the film *Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y*. I'm currently working on a new film about corruption and the arms trade – another heavy theme, after the one on terrorism. I didn't want to limit myself to critiquing social evils, so I began to explore alternatives. That's how *On Radical Ecology* came about.

PG. What's your take on this alternative? You mentioned a paradigm shift: is it something political?

JG. I drew a lot of inspiration from recent research into empathy in disciplines like economics, psychology and cognitive science. In *The Age of Empathy*, the primatologist Frans de Waal argues that society has been ruined by the ideology of unfettered competition and greed glorified by Thatcher and Reagan in the 1980s. You hear a lot about 'survival of the fittest' in social Darwinism; but that's actually a distortion of Darwin dating back to Herbert Spencer, who used it to justify British imperialism. Darwin himself argued that cooperative behaviour is also essential to evolution: survival goes hand in hand



with cooperation. A new paradigm is emerging, which focuses on empathy and conflict resolution rather than greed and selfishness. Empathy in the sense of solidarity: how can we work together? What is it that unites us? Who is the 'we' in our society? We have to dig deeper – hence 'radicalis' – if we're going to be able to reformulate the current paradigm.

PG. Many of the videos in the vlog present concrete solutions that really could bring about immediate change. How come so few innovative ideas find their way into practice?

JG. They often don't work in a climate driven by profit-seeking. Or else they clash with the interests of big corporations. A typical example is Paul Stamets, who uses fungi to break down radioactivity and oil. His technique could have been deployed to tackle the spill in the Gulf of Mexico. But the Halliburton lobby cornered the clean-up rights and made extra money spraying the oil slick with chemicals. Stamets'

technique could also have been applied following the nuclear disaster at Fukushima. Or there's Akinori Ito's recycling machine, which turns waste plastic into oil. If it were produced on a large scale, the unit price would fall enough to make it economically viable. The small-scale character of permaculture is at odds with the commercial imperatives of agribusiness, which is fixated on monoculture. One-dimensional solutions aren't enough. Perhaps we should follow Bhutan's example and adopt Gross National Happiness as our yardstick, instead of GNP, which was grafted onto an economic model.

This interview was first published as a Vlaams Bouwmeester Team's guest contribution in A+ Architecture in Belgium magazine, nr. 240, February-March 2013. Johan Grimonprez' WeTube-o-theek, can be viewed online at www.johangrimonprez.com/main/web_radical_ecology_01_01.html.

En passant
Suchan Kinoshita's 'Scenario for a Passage'
at the Atelier Bouwmeester

– RONALD VAN DE SOMPEL –

The Vlaams Bouwmeester Team worked with visual artist Suchan Kinoshita on the interior design of the Atelier Bouwmeester. The Atelier sets out to be an active part of the urban fabric and it was precisely this relationship with the urban context that attracted Kinoshita to formulate her proposal. As the title suggests, her contribution was inspired by the site's character as a passageway.

Suchan Kinoshita was raised in Japan, which she left in 1981 to study with Mauricio Kagel at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne. She was subsequently associated for several years with the TAM Theater-am-Marienplatz in Krefeld. Her visual work can be understood in terms of this musical and theatrical background, but also of the Japanese concept of *ma*: an intermediate space that is *not* filled in, but is preserved as it is in order to stimulate our thinking and awareness.

Suchan Kinoshita developed an exclusive new commission for the Atelier Bouwmeester, based on the panoramic glazing that separates it from the space outside, and on the way casual passers-by relate to the 'scenes' taking place inside. The Atelier is a place of work rather than a traditional exhibition space in which all the attention is on the artworks. The focus of the commission thus lies elsewhere, in the day-to-day activities that take place nearby. The design alludes subtly to the passage of time and to the shifting functions of the site. It takes account of differences between day and night, between moments of activity and moments of silence.

En passant. Scenario for a Passage is a multi-layered project made up of different elements, three of which had been realized when the Atelier Bouwmeester opened on 20 January 2012. A fourth element – an installation that subtly brings in sounds from the Ravenstein Gallery – was inaugurated a few months later. The Atelier as a space and the leitmotif of time link the separate elements, each of which still nonetheless leads a life of its own.







The first act of Kinoshita's 'scenario' draws the passer-by's attention to the interior of the Atelier, through a 'composition for two voices and a light bulb'. A text by the Russian, absurdist writer Daniil Charms was first passed along in 'Chinese whispers', creating new meanings through the mishearings and interpretations that arise when a message is whispered from one speaker to another. Having been 'edited' in this way, the text was then simultaneously translated into Dutch by two interpreters. As a result, each of the two voices the visitor hears delivers its own simultaneous translation of the same fragment, in which minimal shifts occur in terms of rhythm and choice of words.

The second part is a film production, screened in the run-up to the programme of lectures, workshops and other public events held at the Atelier. The scenes shown in the auditorium as a kind of 'test transmission' between presentations and meetings create a stage set in which movements take on a life of their own. Visitors to the Atelier find themselves briefly in limbo, in a different time and a different story. Kinoshita also plays on the spatial separation between the 'stage' and the 'audience'.

The perception of time, meanwhile, played an important part in the third element of the scenario, a so-called 'clock'. The sense of time standing still, which we find in many of Kinoshita's works, takes on a very different charge in this hourglass-shaped bottle, filled with an orange, viscous substance. When the glass vessel is inverted, the contents flow downwards, slowly foaming, from the uppermost chamber. The dimensions and shape of the bottle, combined with the properties of the liquid, create the possibility of an individualized, subjective perception of time.

Lastly, Suchan Kinoshita created an installation in which sounds from the Ravenstein Gallery are piped into the Atelier. The acoustics of the Atelier Bouwmeester and the space outside are very different. Sensitive recording techniques mean that voices, footsteps and other ambient sounds slip in through the windows at certain moments, forming a direct link between the activities in the Atelier and the city beyond.

What unites or connects us, is often what divides us too. Suchan Kinoshita's approach in *En passant. Scenario for a Passage* is characterized by a diffuse, casual exploration of the limits and

possibilities of architecture, *mise-en-scène* and language. These are probed by means of processes, in constructed situations and in temporary transformations that generate new meanings and temporary experiences for the users of the Atelier Bouwmeester and the Ravenstein Gallery. *They*, after all, are the real protagonists in Kinoshita's scenario.



Appendix 1

Flemish Parliament Act of 23 December 1986 on the integration of works of art in buildings housing public services and services similar to public services and in publicly subsidized establishments, associations and institutions coming under the authority of the Flemish Community (publication in the Belgian Official Gazette of 13 February 1987)

Art. 1. This Flemish Parliament Act pertains to a matter as specified in article 59 bis of the Constitution (read: the articles 127, 128 and 129¹ of the coordinated version of the Constitution).

Art. 2. Every legal person under public law who erects or renovates a building entirely or in part at the expense of the Flemish Community budget, every legal person under private law who erects or renovates a building subsidized to the extent of at least 30% at the expense of the Flemish Community budget as well as every legal person under private or public law with whom the Flemish Community concludes a hire purchase contract, a leasing contract or hire agreement, the duration of which is 25 years or longer, must spend a certain percentage of the building expenses on the integration of works of art in the building, according to the hereinafter mentioned scheme :

2 % of the first expenses bracket totalling less than or up to 10 million Belgian francs² ;

1.5% of the second expenses bracket, totalling more than 10 million Belgian francs and less than 50 million Belgian francs ;

1% of the third expenses bracket, totalling more than 50 million Belgian francs and less than 100 million Belgian francs ;

0.5% of the expenses bracket higher than 100 million Belgian francs

(revised article 2 through the Flemish Parliament Act of 12 May 1998, in effect as from 22 June 1998)

1. Meant are the person-related matters such as culture, education, the use of language which have been devolved from the Belgian federal government to the Communities (Flemish

Community, French-speaking Community and German-speaking Community) through the 1980 institutional reform.

2. approximately 250,000 euros

Art. 3. Article 2 does not apply in the case of building expenses of less than 5 million Belgian francs. It does not apply either to building works affecting buildings which are classified as monuments or involving the construction of purely technical installations.

Art. 4. No subsidies for the erection of public utility buildings shall be granted by the Flemish government unless the building plans and the specifications provide for the integration of works of art in the construction at the percentage rate of the total building expenses prescribed in article 2.

Art. 5. Every form of creative work, irrespective of the artistic discipline, which has been executed by a living artist, shall be considered a work of art. The work of art may be realized in a studio or at the building site.

The work of art must be incorporated into the building, the infrastructure or the environment *sensu stricto*, thereby granting it the character of an immovable good or of a movable good made immovable through its setting.

Art. 6. The present Flemish Parliament Act shall come into force on 1 July 1987. However, it does not apply to building works for which a planning permission has been granted prior to its coming into force.

Appendix 2

STEP-BY-STEP PLAN FOR AN ART COMMISSION

When the art team is approached to supervise an art commission as part of a construction project, a process is triggered that consists of several stages. This applies both to projects covered by the decree of 23 December 1986 on the integration of artworks in public-sector buildings, and those which are not subject to regulations. Requests for advice are first of all screened by relevance to the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team's internal programmes, and then by a number of specific criteria: societal relevance, level of commissioner's ambition, architectural approach, timing and budget. The art team can then take on supervision directly or entrust it to an external expert. Since September 2013, the team has been able to call on a pool of such experts, categorized according to three profiles: project management, artistic selection and production supervision. Experts can apply to join the art team's pool. The following step-by-step plan is proposed, whether supervision is to be performed by the art team or by experts from the pool.

Preparatory phase

An essential preliminary element for the selection procedure is the drafting of a document in which the commissioner's points of departure for the art commission are set out. This commission statement then serves as the basis for a presentation by one or more artists, who are invited to develop a basic concept. The focus at this stage is on the architectural, landscape, urban and/or spatial context on the one hand, and the commissioner's substantive wishes on the other. These, together with artistic principles and ambitions, provide the starting point from which to formulate a commission capable of appealing to artists and challenging them to accept the invitation.

The document is drawn up before the first meeting of the artistic selection committee, which the commissioner assembles in response to its art commission. The selection committee is made up of representatives of the commissioner, the architect

team, the users and/or other relevant actors, the artistic adviser from the Vlaams Bouwmeester's art team and/or one or more external professional art experts.

The draft commission statement, the composition of the selection committee, the budget and the procedure are submitted for the approval of the commissioner's decision-making body. This approval is the trigger for the next stage.

Selection phase

The selection committee proposes a preliminary selection of artists based on the draft commission. The art experts prepare this step and, based on an in-depth presentation, run through potential artistic approaches with the members of the selection committee. The selection committee jointly arrives at a preliminary selection of one or more artists (depending on the available budget) following consultation, and having tested the artistic arguments against the draft commission and considered the documentation on the artists under consideration. The draft commission is also finalized at this stage. The process leading to the preliminary selection of the artist(s) to be invited is set out in a written report and the final choice is made. The artist(s) in question is/are then invited by the commissioner's representative to draw up a basic proposal by a fixed date. A fee is paid for this proposal (in accordance with the available budget).

Before formally inviting the artist(s), the experts approach them informally to gauge their availability and interest. The commissioner then receives all the necessary practical information to enable it to commence the official commissioning of a basic artistic proposal. The artist(s) confirm their interest and are guided into the project via the commission statement, a site visit and information provided by the commissioner, users and/or architect team.

Three months after the invitation, the artist(s) present their basic concept to the selection committee via the medium of their choice. The presentation must entail a clear and accessible proposal of the artistic concept, as this will then be incorporated in communication on the interventions in the (semi-)public domain. Once the

proposals have been presented, the members of the selection committee screen them against the initial principles, the commissioner's representatives against their ambition and vision, the architect team against the architectural and spatial context, and the art experts against their artistic quality. A final selection is then justified and ratified in the selection report.

Implementation phase

Following the selection of a basic proposal, the artist is invited as part of the drafting of a contract to work up his or her concept into an executable proposal with an accompanying budget. The latter should take account of the artist's fee, the material, production and installation costs, and all organisational, technical and logistical costs required for the work to be executed. Public-sector commissioners generally entrust the entire budget to the artist, as this gives the artist the flexibility to choose how to implement his or her concept. In this case, the artist takes care of the production costs and manages the coordination of the various work to be performed in the manner of a main contractor. It is advisable here to break the production process down into phases and to transfer the budget in several tranches. The phased structure ought to be specified contractually.

The art team can also offer the commissioner the necessary support during this stage. When all the elements are in place, the two parties sign a contract, as part of which a schedule for the realisation of the art commission will be drawn up in consultation with the commissioner and the architect team. Mediation between the commissioner and the artist, and/or the artist and the architect might be necessary during the realisation process to help monitor the artistic quality.

The contract also sets out agreements regarding author's rights. In placing the commission, the commissioner acquires the author's rights set out below in respect of non-commercial publications: (a) reproduction rights; (b) public communication rights; and (c) publishing rights. Publications on the realized project by the commissioner or third parties are possible subject to attribution and statement of 'courtesy of artist's name and the title of the artistic project'.

Communication before, during and after the realization process – regarding the commissioner’s initial principles, the relationship with the public and the artist’s ambitions – is important in terms of promoting the accessibility of the contemporary art project. Public meetings or information sessions are often worth considering. Information and communication form an integral part of processes of a more participatory nature.

Conservation and management

Following realization, the commissioner acquires ownership of the artwork and undertakes to take proper care of it in accordance with its underlying conceptual principles. Once the project has been realized, the artist will therefore furnish all the necessary technical and artistic data so that the commissioner can fulfil this duty to the best of its ability. In the event of damage to the artwork, the commissioner will, having consulted the artist, take the necessary steps to correct the damage while respecting the original artistic concept.

In the event that alterations or construction work are carried out on the building or the site, the commissioner will always seek in the first instance to find a respectful solution with the artist. Mediation can help in this respect to reconcile the ostensibly conflicting expectations of the commissioner and the artist.

Artistic advisers to the Vlaams Bouwmeester Team

2001-2004

Ulrike Lindmayr

Ulrike Lindmayr (b. 1962) worked in Vienna as an editor on international art journals and newspapers. She has curated exhibitions in several European countries and worked as a coordinator for several institutions. She later co-founded the artists' initiative NICC in Antwerp. In 2007, Ulrike Lindmayr was the prime mover behind the creation of the non-profit LLS 387 centre for contemporary art in Antwerp, and became its artistic director. LLS 387 is a small-scale exhibition space on the periphery, where the structural and intrinsic homogenization of the art world is challenged and a key role is played by the artist's input. Ulrike Lindmayr was also co-founder in 2011 of Escautville, an organization for the promotion, production and distribution of audio-visual arts.

2004-2007

Piet Coessens

Piet Coessens (b. 1954) trained as a criminologist before working from 1982 to 1992 for the Flemish Commissariat General for International Cultural Cooperation (later the Foreign Affairs Administration) on the organization of international exhibition projects. He was commissioner in 1991 for the Flemish submission to the São Paulo Biennale (Jef Geys). From 1992 to 2002, he served as Director General of the Exhibitions Association for the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, where he developed – often in co-production with large foreign institutions – a highly varied programme of monographic and group exhibitions devoted to historical and contemporary art. The focus was on non-Western art production and the latest developments on the contemporary art scene. Piet Coessens has sat on various bodies, including the Flemish Art Assessment Committee and the Foreign Committee of the Mondrian Foundation (Amsterdam). He has been the director and curator of the Roger Raveel Museum in Machelen-Zulte since 2005.

2007-2011**Rolf Quaghebeur**

Rolf Quaghebeur (b. 1976) is a medievalist and studied art history at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. He worked as an exhibition-maker and researcher from 1999 to 2004 at the S.M.A.K. in Ghent, where he collaborated on group exhibitions like *Epiphany. Contemporary Art and Religion* (Park Abbey, 2001), *The Way Life Is* (2003) and numerous monographic exhibitions. He then became artistic director of the Ghent exhibition space De Witte Zaal and worked as a freelance exhibition-maker and author on a variety of publications, including *Mankind: Story of a Wound* around Leuven city centre (2006) and *Disturbed Silence*, on art and psychiatry in Duffel (2010). He was also guest lecturer between 2007 and 2010 at the Sint-Lucas Campus of Ghent College of Science and Art. Rolf Quaghebeur has been director of the Argos art centre in Brussels since 2011. He has also been a member since 2011 of the Flemish Art Assessment Committee and has sat on the boards of various cultural institutions, including M HKA in Antwerp.

2011-2013**Ronald Van de Sompel**

After completing his Masters in Philosophy (Ethics) at the University of Ghent, Ronald Van de Sompel went on to attend the Curatorial Training Programme of the École du Magasin in Grenoble (France), the first school of its kind in Europe. He worked as curator at the M HKA in Antwerp until 2004. Later positions included Senior Curator at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead (UK) and Artistic Director of FLACC Workplace for Visual Artists in Genk. In addition he conducted research projects on contemporary visual arts in Asia for Europalia Nippon Kinen Foundation in Tokyo and the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. Ronald Van de Sompel also curated the exhibition 'Hareng Saur: Ensor and Contemporary Art' (2010–11) at the Museum of Fine Arts and S.M.A.K. in Ghent, and the contemporary strand of the exhibition 'Ravaged: Art and Culture in Times of Conflict' at M Museum in Leuven (2014).

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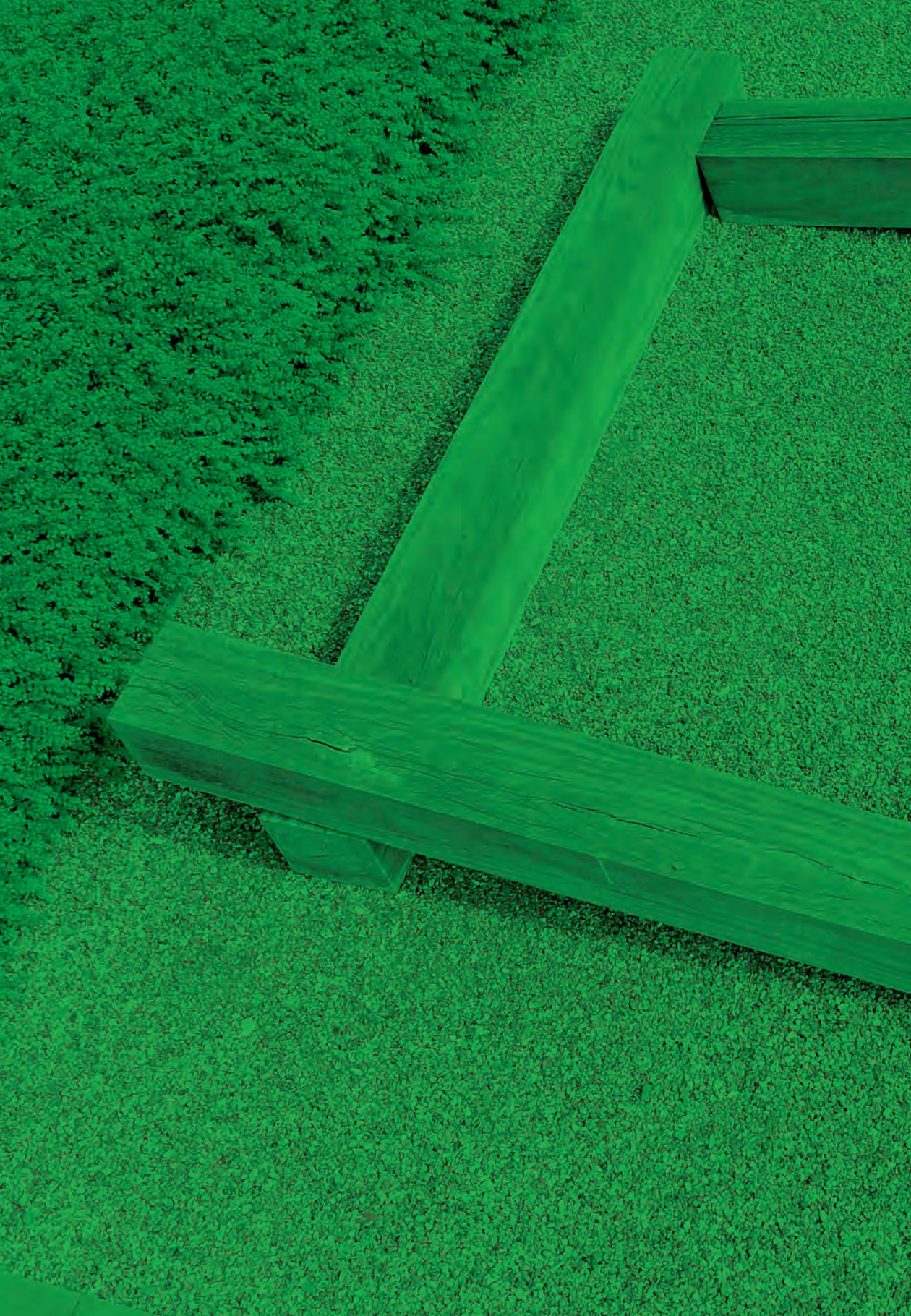
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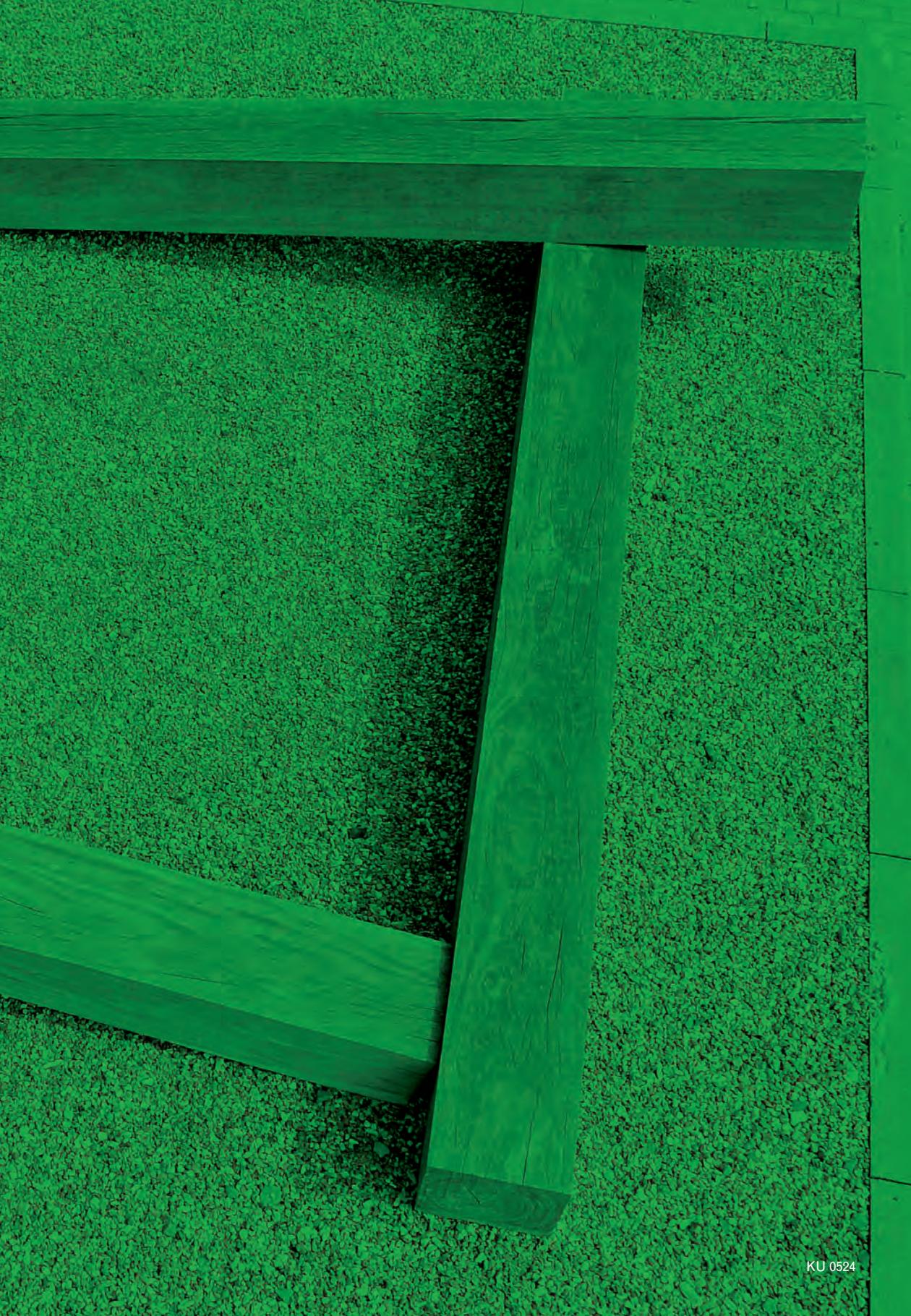
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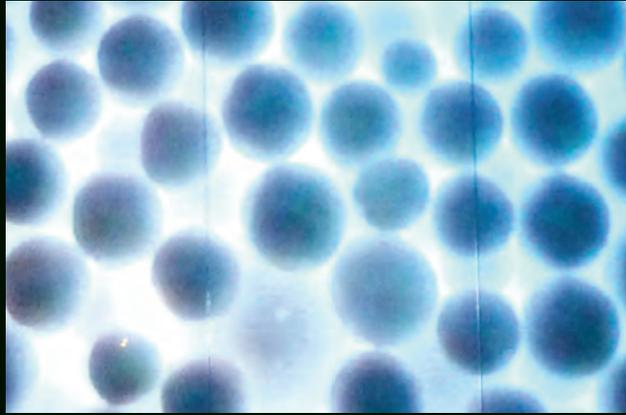












The office of the Flemish Government Architect (*Vlaams Bouwmeester*) has had a dedicated art team since 1999, tasked with supporting public-sector bodies involved in the commissioning of contemporary artworks. Many – though not all – of these commissions are required by a Flemish decree on the integration of art in government buildings. The team’s artistic research and the commissions it places itself are intended to set an example, to advise policymakers, and also to contribute to the debate surrounding art in the public space. By maintaining a dialogue with all the parties involved, the art team helps align the commissioner’s expectations with the artist’s imagination.

The heart of this publication is a concise but comprehensive inventory of all the projects in which the art team was involved between 2006 and 2013. Several guest authors, together with current and past team members, focus in more detail on a varied selection of these projects, while the introductory text sketches possible scenarios for a revitalized policy on art by commission.