Neighbourhood Clockwork orange  Life Bright lights  Style New world order
Music Future sounds  Culture Tomorrow’s talent  + The start-up special

The orange album
Had you asked me some twenty years ago what the future would look like today, my guess is that fiction would have been miles away from reality. Where are the triple-breasted cyborgs? The teleportation? The daily commutes to the moon and back? The intergalactic war games? Most of all, where’s the world peace and eradication of AIDS some self-righteous hairy hippie promised us back in ’85? The future, you see, often takes on a life of its own, veering to the left when you thought it’d turn to the right. Now I’m not saying humanity hasn’t taken a huge leap forward over the last three decades, it’s just that it hasn’t turned out to be nearly as exciting as what the comic books predicted. Yes, solar panels and ethanol fuels are all great for the planet, but they aren’t exactly flying skateboards now are they?

So it is with a certain degree of caution that we tackled this edition, the orange album. Its buzzword being ‘the future’, we decided to document the trends playing out in front of us rather than make predictions for (a better) tomorrow. Now, what exactly does that mean?

Well, for starters, we immortalised the language of the future with some pointy humour (OMG I heart these new words LOL on page 19), we profiled five under 18s with particularly high IQs (The word on high potentials, page 26) and we took a close look at the latest trend that is collaborative consumption (Collaborate. Cooperate. Consume on page 30). We rounded up a team of industry players for our style section, getting the discussion going on what it takes to make it as a designer nowadays (Welcome to the jungle, page 38) whilst our music section saw us interview sci-pop siren Grimes (page 54), hip hop hero Homeboy Sandman (page 56) and the promising home-grown trio of Dalai Lama Renaissance (think Junior Boys and The XX, page 58). In our culture briefing, we aimed the spotlight on a photographer who’s captured our hearts and minds of late (Kelly De Block, page 82), handed our portfolio pages over to Pauline Miko for her on-going series on red heads (page 84) and, finally, engaged in a little celebratory burning session (Fire starter, page 90). For our special, we delved into the world of start-ups, profiling a seasoned failure, interviewing a dotcom survivor, handpicking six of the most promising Belgian start-ups and asking experts to dish out their advice to the new entrepreneurs out there.

We’ve also brought some minor changes to the magazine’s layout, hope you like it. And do pay us a visit on thewordmagazine.be, our revamped website that is looking very much like what the future of the web should look like if you ask me.

The future is bright, the future is orange.

Nicholas Lewis
THE THINNEST
RADO TRUE THINLINE JUBILÉ
ENGINEERED IN HIGH-TECH CERAMIC
THINNESS 5 mm
It’s a Word’s world

Pierre Gorzala
stylist

ABOUT
Having studied photography, advertising and then fashion design at reputed ESPMOD, Pierre’s style is as multi-faceted as his influences. After a few twists and turns, he decided to return to what speaks to him the most: the beauty of a photograph, which he knows how to skillfully uplift.

TASK
This edition’s fashion story was Pierre’s first job for The Word, and with sober but visionary shapes and silhouettes he managed to perfectly capture its futuristic theme.

QUOTE
“I turn to brands that touch me and have strong visual universes, which is something I really like to play with.”

Julie Kavanagh
writer

ABOUT
Originally from Ireland, the Brussels blow-in admits she’s slightly amused to be celebrating her fourth spring here. As for so many, Brussels was supposed to be a stop en route to someplace else — but it wasn’t long before Julie got pulled into the city’s multi-lingual cultural swirl.

TASK
Julie got all homey for her debut at The Word and uncovered the growing trend and a newfound appeal of staying at home — be it for work, dinners or education. After all, there really is no place like home.

QUOTE
“Researching the home trend, it struck me how ‘home-y’ life has become. These days find me composting daily, making soups weekly and baking... well, let’s just say more regularly than I used to!”

Esther Wouters
hair and make-up artist

ABOUT
Brussels-based make-up artist Esther knows her stuff. With her long lasting experience in the fashion world, honed amongst others in London, she’s a true rock to build on. In her free time she drops the mascara and lipstick for a brush and paints on canvases instead of faces.

TASK
The hair and make-up work Esther did for this edition’s fashion shoot hit exactly the right tone by keeping the natural beauty of the models as untouched and virgin as possible.

QUOTE
“Although I still believe in fairytales, for this shoot I got my inspiration from a Terry Gilliam movie.”

Charline Stoelzaed
intern

ABOUT
After rather short pit stops in architecture and audiovisual studies, Charline – who lives in Antwerp and studies journalism in Ghent — moved on to what her heart really beats for: writing. During her 10 week stint at The Word she quickly became a key component of our team, filing pieces for our print as well as web editions. Yes, our interns do more than just make coffee.

TASK
For this edition we sent Charline on a mission to speak to refugees who’s only identity is an orange card, their entrance ticket to Belgium — a quite disheartening task, considering their saddening stories.

QUOTE
“It’s intriguing: the same religion that forces refugees to flee their home country is what keeps them on their feet in Belgium.”
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MOTION & EMOTION
01. With advice such as ‘Emulate the drug dealers’ and ‘Meetings are toxic’, 37signals founders Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson’s Rework proved the perfect starting point for our start-up special. / 02. Heavy-rotation on Word FM these last few weeks: Pumpkinhead’s Orange moon over Brooklyn, Can’s Tago Mago and Sun Ra’s. / 03. This edition’s literary picks: John F. Szwed’s Sun Ra biography Space is the place and Aldous Huxley’s brave new world (the title of our fashion story which begins at page 46). / 04. Brussels-based artist Grégory Decock’s 100% off stickers. They actually do work in certain unvigilant supermarkets. / 05. The orange lighter, this edition’s fire starter. Turn to page 90 for proof. / 06. What set the tone for our home-bound feature (‘No place like home’, page 22) / 07. Veuve Clicquot’s signature label, the bottle we’ll pop open the minute we send this baby to print. All photography Pauline Miko.
RISE AND SHINE

Antwerp’s photography museum FoMu introduces a new series of exhibitions in a bid to put forward a carefully chosen selection of Belgium’s most talented young photographers. ‘Young Belgian photography’ kicks off with the works of up-and-comers Sarah Carlier and Lara Mennes. Carlier, based in the Netherlands, strikes a chord with her intimate portraits of a Romanian family, sketching a captivating story of life, love and death. The images of Lara Mennes from Antwerp however lack direct human presence, setting out for a search of memories left behind in abandoned buildings. Driven by her fascination for cultural history and architecture the winner of the prestigious ‘Prix de la Jeune Peinture Belge’ explores three desolate buildings with her camera, vividly capturing the leftover traces and fragments of the past. Two emerging photographers with a bright future in front of them.

Young Belgian Photographers
Until 3rd June
FoMu, Antwerp
fotomuseum.be

SUFFER FOR FASHION

History influences fashion and the opposite holds true too. By examining women’s daily wear from the 18th until the 20th century, the exhibition ‘Living fashion’ explores the impact of clothing on the everyday lives of middle class women in Western Europe. Fact is, the changing nature of peoples’ lifestyles altered what made up their wardrobes, with the rise of the middle class in the 19th century, for instance, bringing about a new way of life for many, new possibilities to spend ones leisure time and the growth of consumerism. The 90 outfits on show all stem from the 2,500 pieces-strong collection of amateur Dutch fashion historian Jacoba de Jonge, who began collecting outfits from age 16.

Living Fashion
Until 12th August
MoMu, Antwerp
momu.be
FAVORITE WORST NIGHTMARE

Waste grounds, car parks, abandoned spaces and places – these are the locations where London-based artist Danny Treacy finds the basic material for his outlandish artworks. Using these disregarded pieces of clothing that he collects during his expeditions through urban landscapes as his starting point, Treacy creates, by tearing up the collected items, eerie, nightmarish costumes with an almost sculptural approach. The final pieces are then worn by the artist himself and captured on film, with life-sized portraits as the final result, laying bare every little detail from bloodstains to rips. Treacy’s faceless creatures appear to arise from a nightmare – dark and threatening and hard to categorise. The fact that he refers to his lifeless zombies as ‘Them’ only serves to further reinforce the haunting and spooky effect of his works.

Danny Treacy
Until 5th May
Joye Gallery, Brussels
joyegallery.be

PAINT IT BLACK

Romanian artist Mircea Suciu’s exhibition ‘Black milk’ displays what he is most known for: his large scale charcoal drawings, somber both in colours and atmosphere. ‘Black milk’ refers to holocaust survivor Paul Celan’s famous poem ‘Death Fugue’ which illustrates the abhorrence and absurdity of human behavior. The theme of the beastly and paradox nature of humanity runs throughout Suciu’s oeuvre, revealing the many quirks of human kind. The characters haunting his paintings are often exposed as ignorant, desperate and hedonistic. Whilst a certain social criticism shines through, pointing to the dangers of believing in political systems or religious figures, Suciu’s work is not all pitch-black – just as in life his art shows that there’s always comedy to be found in tragedy.

Mircea Suciu
From 21st April to 2nd June
Aeroplastics contemporary, Brussels
aeroplastics.net
FUTURE CITIES

A third of the world population, regardless of geographic location or nationality, is moving from rural areas to cities – within one generation the global urban population is expected to double. Today, almost 80 percent of Europeans live and work in urban agglomerations. This, in turn, raises a great deal of social, economical and environmental issues. What, for instance, will Brussels be like in 2040? How can the increasing social divide be reduced? How will we get from one place to another? Aiming to answer some of these questions, the exhibition shows three visions for the future city cooked up by three teams of international experts ranging from architects to urban planners.

Brussel 2040
Until 15th April
Bozar, Brussels
bozar.be

HEAVY METAL

Thomas Kiesewetter, a German artist based between New York and Berlin, has made a name for himself in the art world through his abstract metal sculptures. The objects, constructed out of heavy metal sheets that are bent, folded and welded to playful effect, incorporate a certain elegance, reminiscent of architectural shapes that draw from 20th century abstraction, cubism and constructivism. The building process of each statue always starts with a three-dimensional cardboard model serving as a mock-up. Shape, however, is not the only key element. Indeed, every sculpture is coated with monochrome paint, merging its individual parts together even further. The exhibition ‘Midnight Sky’ will display a new aspect of Kiesewetter’s work with a series of wall sculptures.

Thomas Kiesewetter:
Midnight Sky
From 21st April to 25th May
Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels
alminerech.com
United Kingdom

MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

British art celeb Damien Hirst is a man of superlatives. One of the most influential artists of his generation and probably the most prominent member of the so-called ‘Young British Artists’, he is reportedly also Britain’s richest living artist, having created some of the most iconic artworks of the recent past. London’s Tate Modern now presents a comprehensive overview of Hirst’s œuvre of the last two decades, showcasing over 70 pieces from his sculptures of the early 90s to significant installations, cabinets and his famous spin and spot paintings, that are randomly created through a mechanical procedure. Hirst’s rise to fame started with a series of artworks incorporating the preserved bodies of dead animals, exploring themes of life and death, a leitmotif prevailing in his whole œuvre. Definitely worth a trip to the island.

Damien Hirst
From 4th April to 9th September
Tate Modern, London
tate.org.uk

TIMES ARE CHANGING

Buildings, objects, images, furniture, cars, ideas – design can take many faces. This exhibition looks back on the development of British Design throughout the years, from 1948 until today, showcasing the innovative and internationally acclaimed works of Britain’s most outstanding design talents. The pieces on display reflect the changes in British society, from the 1950s that saw a generation challenging the values of their parents to the ‘Swinging London’ of the 1960s, punk and nihilism in the 1970s and ‘Cool Britannia’ in the 1990s. Discover true design classics, from a model of the Concorde to Robin Day’s Polyprop chairs and works by Paul Smith or Norman Foster.

British Design 1948-2012
Until 12th August
Victoria and Albert Museum, London
vam.ac.uk
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ing.be/expat
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FRAMES FROM THE EDGE

Even though iconic German-Australian photographer Helmut Newton is probably best known for his images of supermodels Nastassja Kinski or Kristine DeBell as well as his work for Vogue and Playboy, he was much more than just a fashion photographer, something that this exhibition aims to put forward. With his mainly black and white images, at times provocative and at others outrightly shocking, he explored what would become the major themes of his oeuvre: fashion, luxury, money, power and sex. This first comprehensive retrospective in France since Newton’s unfortunate death in 2004 showcases more than 200 photographs, mostly original prints, from polaroids to monumental works. What is more: a film by June Newton, the artist’s wife of 60 years, gives you a personal glance into the life and work of one of the most defining photographers of our time.

Helmut Newton
Until 17th June
Grand Palais, Paris
grandpalais.fr

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

The life-sized photorealistic paintings of American artist Chuck Close have been shown in the world’s most renowned museums from New York’s Guggenheim to London’s Tate and catapulted Close to international stardom in the 70s. Most of his works are portraits, or ‘heads’ as he calls them, of prominent sitters such as artist colleagues Robert Rauschenberg or Alex Katz – a fascination that interestingly stems from Close’s inability to recognise people’s faces. Many paintings are created with his special hyperrealism technique, starting from a photograph that is then copied cell by cell on the canvas via a grid. Some works also require up to more than 100 printing sessions – a very time-consuming affair that can take two years to complete. This exhibition presents no less than 130 of the artist’s works, an impressive visual spectacle of modern portraiture.

Chuck Close
Until 20th May
Kunsthal, Rotterdam
kunsthal.nl
The diary

The pick of gigs to come

**Jose James**
@ AB on 7th April

This unholy matrimony of modern jazz and hip-hop, electronic music, soul and pop by multi-faceted crooner Jose James shows off his very own version of jazz singing. Through his unlikely collaborations with Japanese DJ Toshio Matsuura and techno and house musician Moodymann, this New Yorker has innovated a genre that’s used to a rather old-fashioned image, earning him names like ‘jazz singer for the hip-hop generation’, which we feel is not far off. Go see for yourself.

- Plays Amsterdam (Trix) on 22nd April
- Plays Amsterdam (L’Aéronef) on 16th April

**Hype Williams**
@ De Kreun on 9th April

Hype Williams is the mysterious lo-fi electronica duo made up of Dean Blunt and Inga Copeland (not the R&B video director).

With their latest album ‘Black is Beautiful’ they step up their wonderfully bizarre collages of pop and electronica, full of psychedelic sounds, floppy allusions and hip-hop. To maintain their cryptic aura (it’s said their names are false, and they hardly ever give interviews) the group will probably perform behind home-made masks.

- Plays Paris (Batofaro) on 5th April
- Plays Amsterdam (Bimhuis) on 14th April

**Michael Gira**
@ De Kreun on 11th April

Although best known as Angels of Light frontman and founder of recently reunited avant-garde rockers Swans, Michael Gira kept up his solo efforts throughout a multi-faceted musical career. He’s usually accompanied onstage by just a guitar and a cigarette, and his solo shows are stripped-down, minimalist affairs that emphasise his deep, sad voice.

- Plays London (Café OTO) on 7th April
- Plays Paris (Point Éphémère) on 9th April
- Plays Amsterdam (Paradiso) on 10th April

**Puppetmastaz**
@ Botanique on 11th April

After a split back in 2009, the world’s first hip-hop ensemble made up entirely of soft toys is back with their latest record ‘Revolve and step up’ released in March. These Berlin-based hip-hoppers, whose crew counts members from Germany, Canada and the US, merges rap, funk and electronica, a mix that has been described as somewhere between the Wu-Tang Clan and the Muppet show. The Puppetmastaz’ payroll includes not a single human being: onstage, expect only hand puppets. So, no. It’s not just a clever name.

- Plays Paris (Gaité Lyrique) on 14th April
- Plays Amsterdam (OT301) on 16th April
- Plays Ghent (Vooruit) on 18th April

**Mr Scruff**
@ VK on 20th April

With almost 20 years of disc-spinning under his belt, Mr Scruff (real name Andy Carlyth) is a true DJ veteran, not only known for his marathon sets that last up to six hours, but also for an eclectic musical taste that jumps from soul, funk, house and hip-hop to reggae, jazz, dubstep, ska and beyond. This Ninja Tunes-signed artist is also a cartoonist, and he regularly shows off his artwork during his live shows with cute, quirky drawings. Expect a joyful night with a strong dose of humour.

- Plays Amsterdam (Melkweg) on 27th April

**Of Montreal**
@ Botanique on 21st April

Kevin Barnes, the genius behind Of Montreal, has always used the band as a personal outlet for his cascading angst. Not much has changed for this latest album ‘Paralytic Stalks’.

With a characteristic union of upbeat melodies and dark lyrics, they prove they haven’t run out of ideas just yet. Of Montreal’s boundless creativity is equally apparent on stage and each concert is a psychedelic spectacle infused with visual artiness and outlandish costumes.

- Plays London (Koko) on 25th April

**Apparat**
@ Nosedrip @ Vooruit on 22nd April

Berlin producer and maestro of instruments Sascha Ring a.k.a Apparat is swapping the club scene for bigger venues and tracks for proper songs. This tour, replete with full band, does justice to his latest album ‘The Devil’s Walk’, leaving the glitchy dance-floor tunes behind and embracing a new sound located somewhere between melodic post-rock, dream pop and electro beats. Support by Belgian up-and-comer Nosedrip.

- Plays Amsterdam (Melkweg) on 19th April
- Plays Paris (La Machine du Moulin Rouge) on 21st April

**The Lemonheads**
@ AB on 29th April

Long hair, flannel shirts, angst-y lyrics and raw, guitar-heavy sounds – The Lemonheads and their charismatic frontman Evan Dando (the group’s only constant member) embodied the grunge era to perfection. At its height in the early 90s, this band from Boston morphed into worldwide stars with the release of their most successful album ‘It’s a Shame About Ray’. After a nine year hiatus and a reunion in 2005, they’re coming to Belgium to perform the legendary album from start to finish.

- Plays Lille (L’Aéronef) on 20th April
- Plays Paris (La Cigale) on 29th May

**De Puta Madre**
@ Botanique on 10th May

Brussels’ De Puta Madre have a special place in Belgium’s musical chronicles: with the 1995 release of ‘Une Ball Dans La Tête’, this French and Spanish-speaking motley crew of rappers was responsible for the first real hip-hop album released in Belgium, ever. Brussels’ renowned concert venue Ancienne Belgique now wants to pay tribute, with an official stone-laying (no kidding) and a gig that will see De Puta Madre perform their classic record in its entirety. A rare opportunity to catch Belgium’s hip-hop legends live.

- Plays Lille (L’Aéronef) on 20th April
- Plays Ghent (Vooruit) on 22nd April

**C2C**
@ Ghostpoet on 16th May

C2C are veritable veterans of turntablism, having been part of the scratch movement from the beginning. “We use our turntables as instruments,” they proudly proclaim, and have proven their worth through years of new sounds. They’ve won the World DJ Championships year after year, thanks to breathtaking technical skills and resourcefulness. Watch out for British hip-hop newcomer and critics’ darling Ghostpoet, who’ll also be invading the stage.

- Plays Lille (L’Aéronef) on 20th April
- Plays Paris (Gaité Lyrique) on 21st May

**King Krule**
@ Botanique on 18th May

He’s only 17 and already has a name change under his belt: King Krule, a skinny, slightly awkward-looking little redhead, formerly known as Zoo Kid, released ‘True Panther’ under his new moniker last year. The record has earned the British singer/songwriter rave reviews, using a rich, sensitive voice accompanied by echoing guitars to create a captivating, synth-noir sound that’s a bit outlandish but certainly mesmerising. Essential.

- Plays Amsterdam (Paradiso) on 14th May
- Plays Amsterdam (Paradiso) on 18th May
CY TWOMBLY
PHOTOGRAPHS 1951 - 2010
01.02 > 29.04.2012

Guest Artist: TACITA DEAN
The orange papers

Marmalade. Traffic cones. Pumpkins. Though these are all nice things, they don’t really warrant their own half-a-page tribute. That’s why, instead of dwelling on manifestations of orange itself, this edition’s papers looked to the future and found plenty to moon about. How about all these new words we use? Or the unfathomable new job titles that are being sprung on us? We’ve had a poke at snake venom salesmen and snake-oil salesmen and looked into why people are increasingly staying in the humble home, as well as the plight of orange card-holding asylum seekers in Belgium.

Writers Julie Kavanagh, Rose Kelleher, Sarah Schug and Charline Stoelzaed
Illustrator Virassamy
Omg I heart all these new words LOL

We tend to view dictionaries as the dignified, pipe-sucking grandfather of the book world. They call the shots on all the drivel that falls out of our mouths, don’t they? It’s a kind of obvious surprise to anyone who didn’t study linguistics to find that it’s very much the other way around. But of course. The salaried word-smiths of dictionaries spend their days trawling the earth for new words to add to the official glossary, rummaging through conversations in such undignified spaces as pub lounges, newspaper columns and, heaven forbid, internet forums. They make inventories of the things we say, and then wait to see if they stick. If they stick, they get added to the next edition. We recently welcomed to the annals vuvuzela, dubstep and stitch and bitch. We’ll have to wait a little bit longer to judge the staying power of 4G, conflict minerals and twirling (flirting on Twitter – groan). Last year, the Oxford English Dictionary confirmed what we have all giggled at in private, mirthful circles: the unsightly protruding flesh above a woman’s tight-waisted trousers has a name, and it’s muffin top. It’s said that a purpose of a dictionary is to act as a record of the evolution of a language. But when future historians want to know how we communicated at the beginning of the 21st century, do they really need to know about muffin top? What about OMG, LOL and (for fuck’s sake) bromance? After all, not everybody around here is 14. But while it would be ridiculous if your granny started saying “OMG” it would be equally weird if a 14 year old had never texted it, either. (FYI: the rather spacey-sounding non-word <3 officially entered the dictionary in 2011 as a verb to heart. Heavens.) So what can these new words tell us about the times we live in? The fact that carbon capture and storage survived on our lips long enough to get added says something about the current, ahem, climate. Ditto geo-engineering. Technology is the biggest driver of new vocabulary and always has been, giving us last year the Oxford-sanctioned micro-blogging and the awkward, slightly learning-difficulties sounding verb to defriend. Thanks to the financial woes of the naughties, Chambers dictionary has sanctioned quantitative easing, while credit crunch and financial meltdown are on the radar, as is toxic to describe assets. Capturing the Francophone zeitgeist, LaRousse recently added la Présidentialisation, as in “The tendency to reinforce the role of the president to the detriment of parliament,” while the Flemish word of the year according to Van Dale is stoeproken, which means smoking outside since the smoking ban. Words have to be common currency (even if it’s not yours personally) before they make it into the hallowed pages of the dictionary. The vocabulary we choose to employ is indicative of what we’re up to, but so is the vocabulary we’ve stopped using. It’s telling to see what once-popular words have fallen by the wayside. Avuncalise is a verb that was pulled in 1662. It means “to act like an uncle”. Obviously, modern uncles have assumed their roles so deftly that such a verb has been rendered unnecessary. Nor do we have any more use, for example, for brephophagist, the name given to a person who eats babies, taken out in 1875. I think we can safely file that one under WTF. (RK)
A new work order

Ask the next five year old you meet what they want to be when they grow up. If they have any sense, they won’t say “postman”. We’ve heard enough weird job titles (Twitter Correspondent, Ghost Blogger, Data Scientist…) to be privy to an elemental truth about the future of work: it ain’t what it used to be. One statistic even claims that 70 percent of the jobs that today’s kids will be doing don’t exist yet. And with the current economy in such shit, it’s almost impossible to try to predict what the jobs landscape will look like at the end of next week, never mind in 10 or 15 years time. But despite current scary-long dole queues, the economy will recover and jobs will reemerge, which presents some interesting questions: what will those jobs be? And if we haven’t figured that out yet, how are we supposed to educate kids for them? In the past, we operated on a very simple premise: if you work hard and do well, you get a degree and then you get a job. That’s not really the case anymore. It’s good to have a degree, but it’s not the guarantee it once was.

Just ask Madrid’s Indignados or the world’s Occupy Wall Street franchises how far that promise got them. They have been trained up to the gizzards by a current system of education that was conceived during the industrial revolution. “We are trying” says renowned education advisor Ken Robinson “to meet the future by doing what we did in the past.” What this means is that there is a big far gap between the kind of jobs workers are qualified to do and those that employers actually need them to do. Though unemployment is on the rise, so is the number of open positions that are looking “unfillable”. In short, we’re training for the wrong jobs; jobs that aren’t important anymore, and we don’t even know the names of the ones that are. By some estimates, workers can expect to have about 10 different jobs in their lifetime and education will have to be an ongoing commitment. The Belgian ministry for Education had little to offer in the way of reassurance. In Belgium, this is such a politically loaded question between the language communities that it is difficult to answer. Etienne Gilliard says “There is a special unit within the ministry that is in charge of the link between schools and industry and professional education programmes are made within this unit. Qualifications are the result of this link. But the main goal at the moment is to increase equality of the people.” Education, he says, must give people equal opportunities to learn “and it’s difficult for schools to meet precise objectives for specific job markets.” Further pressed on how we will educate children for the unfathomable industries that will drive the 21st century, he demurs “I don’t know.” On a European level, there have been a number of predictions: women will be more qualified than men, meaning there will have to be more focus on reconciling work and family, while demand for highly-qualified people in Europe will go up by over 16 million by 2020 and demand for low-skilled workers will drop by around 12 million. The answer still remains, though: which skills? On a much cuter level, Lana Baumann, who goes to school in Ixelles/Elsene, is five. She wants to be a hairdresser when she grows up, because she likes to do her dolls’ hair. That’s a change from last week when she wanted to be a nurse, just like her Mama. Such flexibility might prove an advantage in the world she grows up in. (RK)
Neighbourhood

Charlatans in cyberspace

Worry gives birth to fear and fear gives birth to superstition. If that’s the case, then Brussels is a worried, fearful city. As you read this, someone is shoving ads for clairvoyants, paranormal spirit mediums, astrologists and voodoo doctors through letter holes all over the city. With so many Mystic Marions to choose from, how is a heartbroken, single, science-averse female (because truth be told, that’s who’s into this stuff) supposed to choose?

 Thankfully, fiber optics make our search much easier. Many Belgian psychics have websites and YouTube videos that make comparing paranormal service providers a pure breeze. Their videos feature whooshing water noises, hazy Egyptian pyramids, floating Mayan calendars, fiberglass Buddha statuettes and other confused allegories. You can trawl a website, watch a video, sign up for live psychic tweets, and get customer reviews before handing your plastic to PayPal. Basing all your decisions on the related positions of celestial bodies has never been so consumer friendly.

“Basing all your decisions on the related positions of celestial bodies has never been so consumer friendly”

Whole twitterverse of psychics peddling daily all-seeing tweets, offering bland, broad platitudes and allusions to Mayans, moons and man problems. Some snake-oil saleswoman in Antwerp asks you to scan and send your photographs so she can locate ghostly images of dead people in them. Samples of her handiwork on her fancy website smack of photoshop. The bigger psychic sites have their own downloadable apps, while forums abound with threads like “I think I blocked my telepathy” from psychics who’ve lost their mojo. With such busy lives, who has the time for a tarot reading out in some caravan in Tubize? Now we’ve got Skype video, chat and email, along with the more “traditional” SMS and premium rate phone lines. Tarot readings can even be done without ever having to talk to anyone at all. Thanks to Flash, all you have to do is enter your name and star sign and the cards are cyber-flipped. We tried it on Belgium’s biggest clairvoyant site, the slick, bottomlessly-moneyed purevoyance.be, whose site features a stock photo of a good-looking girl breaking up a fight between two good-looking boys with the bizarre caption “Is he too jealous... or not jealous enough?” We gave the name Ed Worth (an anagram?) and chose Leo because lions are cool. We asked “Why do people believe this crap?” and the answer was resoundingly unambiguous: “There is a joining of two to produce three. The bloom of love has produced rewards, the fruit of the love between two people.” Which was sweet, but made us think that we were supposed to ask a different kind of question. “Some believe certain information to be true if it has any personal significance to them. This is a cognitive bias,” says Joris Vlaminckx, psychologist. “I think astrology is a primitive predecessor of science and superstition is our way of yielding more control over our lives. You could say that it’s in our collective unconscious (cf. Jung) to find ways to predict, to connect random dots to get patterns, until before you know it, the cruel and unpredictable things in our lives are seemingly predictable, aliens are coming to save us in 2012 and Obama is an illuminati.”
No place like home

Knitting circles and composting cooperatives flourish as the renaissance of home-living gathers momentum. Eating-in trumps dining-out. Meanwhile the more adventurous throw their doors wide open to host concerts at home. Convenient and chilled; it's not hard to see why 'chez nous' is the place to be. Is our love-affair with home a passing flirtation influenced by the economic downturn or a deepening relationship favouring cocooning over consumerism? Is it nostalgia that inspires us to embrace the humble home-made?

Annemie Nijs lives in the outskirts of Ghent with her husband and their 18-month old daughter. No hectic commute, everyday life is structured around the home. “We're really doing this full-time,” Annemie explains. Several years ago the couple established a music school in the upper floors of their house. Fifteen musicians come and go to teach a variety of instruments and styles to music enthusiasts young and old. The pace of life is productive without being frenetic. Her husband works in web-development – again from home. Annemie explains, “for a man who works, he gets to spend a lot of time with his daughter.” Home is so central to her lifestyle that she took the decision to give birth at home. “As I considered homebirth, it made more and more sense. I was raised with a natural approach and I don’t like all the checks and numbers that go with hospitals.” Despite a difficult labour, she has no regrets and is adamant she would take the same decision again. According to midwife Elke Van den Bergh, while only a minority of parents currently opt for homebirth, interest is growing. Her midwifery service ‘Zwanger in Brussel’ assisted at some 30 homebirths in Brussels over the last year. Back home in Ghent, Annemie foresees a home-based education – at least in the early years. “As a young child it’s natural to be with your parents and to become more independent with age, so I don’t feel it’s necessary to go to school so young. But I am eager to connect with others. I’m not into home-based life in an isolated sense.” Over 10 years ago, fearing a conventional classroom education would dampen her firstborn’s early zest for learning, Jennifer Landsbert-Noon also opted for home-schooling. She educates her four children from her house outside Brussels, and believes home-ed has enabled them to follow their interests and love learning for its own sake. “They don’t see learning as a chore they are coerced into. They enjoy it. I used to think that as they got older they would want to be at school but they hear about school from their friends and see how many constraints there are.” With recent decades characterised by consumption rather than self-sufficiency, is the resurgence of home part of a search for that elusive work-life balance? Technological advances may have made working from a distance feasible, but perhaps key to its popularity is the appeal of a life lived at home. Her contentment palpable, Annemie reflects, “It feels good to be around the home to make the home. I’ve even started to bake bread!” In another era, home-made implied cheaper than shop-bought. In today’s globalised world where ethical considerations often lose out to profit, ‘Made at Home’ seldom beats ‘Made in (insert dodgy regime of choice)’ for cost and affordability. For this new generation of home-makers, cutting costs is rarely the priority. These amateur seamstresses and weekend gardeners are more likely to cite concern for workers’ conditions and environmental destruction as chief motivations for their home-sewn clothes and home-grown vegetables. (JK)
What if statistics could talk? What if the 25,000 refugees who applied for asylum in Belgium in the past year all told you their life stories? The figures are undeniable: the number of asylum applications worldwide keeps growing each year and in Belgium, the bulk is taken up by Afghans. When their asylum requests are registered – usually at Zaventem airport before being passed on to the immigration service – these newcomers receive a dated-looking orange card that is the symbol of an equally archaic system, according to Jozef Hertsens who coordinates a refugee support centre called VLOS in Sint-Niklaas/Saint-Nicholas. “The card entitles newcomers to a legal three-month stay in Belgium, which can be prolonged until one is granted final status or until all legal steps have been exhausted. The orange card enables the authorities to easily monitor the asylum seeker, but since the card needs to get stamped at the commune at specific times, it’s terribly rigid.”

“Getting my asylum application approved has been like taking a chance on the lottery. I’ve been applying for over four years now during which I’ve been sent from one closed centre to the other and where I even saw heroin junkies shooting up.” Wahid seems baffled how a country, whose capital embodies the heart of political Europe and prides its self on being a hotbed for countless human rights NGO’s, maintains such a deficient system. His faded orange card is just a symbol of this grinding inefficiency. “I just can’t get my head around it, I have even shown video footage to the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, which proves my brother got murdered. Yet still, my application keeps getting denied and my life is put on hold.”

When asked if Wahid’s brothers also live in the support centre, his eyes turn even more numb. “I don’t know where they are. I lost them while crossing the Iranian border with Afghanistan and I haven’t heard of them since.” By paying a connected people smuggler 10,000 dollars, he eventually found a gateway to Belgium. But since his arrival in this country, Wahid’s life hasn’t exactly been a picnic. “I had to flee Afghanistan because of the very same ideology that has been destroying my land for ages. When my father publicly condemned the Muslim extremists and cutthroat acts of terror in our country during a meeting, the wrath of many other families was upon mine. More than half of the Afghan population still approves of the Taliban and believes their bombings to be halal, lawful.” During the night, the Taliban came over to Wahid’s house, cut of his little brother’s fingers, and killed his father. “After they returned to assassinate my already mutilated brother, my mother told me and my three brothers to escape Afghanistan.”

Nearly 70 percent of all applications are ultimately denied. During the waiting period – which can last up to several years – the card enables them to work lawfully, but it’s no guarantee that their application will be approved. For most applicants, this card represents the doubtful red line between “illegal” and “refugee.”

In the multimedia room of the VLOS welcome centre, an NGO that tries to bridge the gaps in Belgian asylum law, Wahid lays his own orange card on the table. Over four years ago, the now 32 year old Wahid arrived in Belgium for the very first time, after undertaking a mind-boggling odyssey from his Afghan hometown Herat. “I had to flee Afghanistan because of the very same ideology that has been destroying my land for ages. When my father publicly condemned the Muslim extremists and cutthroat acts of terror in our country during a meeting, the wrath of many other families was upon mine. More than half of the Afghan population still approves of the Taliban and believes their bombings to be halal, lawful.” During the night, the Taliban came over to Wahid’s house, cut of his little brother’s fingers, and killed his father. “After they returned to assassinate my already mutilated brother, my mother told me and my three brothers to escape Afghanistan.”

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vlos.be
What’s the worst thing that can happen to us office workers? Spilling coffee on the keyboard, perhaps? Others, however, work every day under an orange warning sign, and we’re not just speaking symbolically. But while we’re all familiar with nuclear power plant workers and fire fighters, some other high-risk jobs are a bit more outlandish. You’ve surely never heard of this one: snake-milker. You know, milking – happy dairy farmers and flocks of sheep on rolling green grass? But snake-milker Rudy Fourmy’s world is a different one: the man with the odd occupation works in a highly secured, walled-off building, more specifically a hangar in the small Wallonian town Montroeul-au-Bois. His strange business: extracting venom from poisonous animals, processing it and selling the final product to medical research facilities all over the world. Fourmy’s company, Alpha Biotoxine, is one of only a dozen around the globe that does this commercially, and the demand for animal venom is growing. In more and more research labs, scientists are trying to find out how to convert potentially fatal toxins into lifesaving medicines. Snake venom is a sought-after substance, needed to produce anti-venom, a crucial life-saver for animal bite victims. But its possible healing powers go even further, and some drugs based on snake venom research can be purchased in your local pharmacy. ACE inhibitors – drugs used to treat high blood pressure, blood clots or heart attacks – are just one example. And it might just be the beginning. Today, scientists are working on developing medicines to fight cancer and strokes, based on the biological processes found in snake venom. It’s a good thing, then, that there are people like Rudy Fourmy who know their way around a snake and don’t mind being surrounded by species that keep some of us from ever buying that ticket to Australia. “The key is to be attentive and highly concentrated at all times,” Fourmy explains: “Always put your hands and feet where you can see them.” Whilst snakes are milked with head massages, spiders and scorpions unleash their venom through soft electrical stimulation that makes their muscles vibrate. “When you’re well-trained, there’s very little risk,” Fourmy assures us. Still, animals are not machines, and at times they have unexpected reactions, which is why no one is ever left alone in the laboratory. Fourmy says “Sometimes a snake escapes our grip or we have to throw it on the floor to protect ourselves.” One of the most dangerous species he has in his collection is a spider from South America: “We have to wear special white suits, masks and glasses, a bit like bee keepers,” he says. “This kind of spider throws pieces of poisonous hair.” Not a pretty thought, and it doesn’t really come as a surprise that not everyone appreciates his practice. Fourmy had to wait an entire year before starting his business due to neighbourly complaints – fears that he perceives as irrational and unjustified. In four years not a single animal has escaped and no one has been bitten, the result of an impeccable security system. “If a snake wants to get out, it has to cross eight barriers,” Fourmy explains. But is he really not afraid of falling victim to a deadly snake bite one day? “I’m more afraid of being bitten by a dog. They run around freely everywhere and can attack you any time,” he answers laconically.
Jeremy Deller

JOY IN PEOPLE

01.06 – 19.08.2012

23.06 – 26.08.2012

Un-Scene II
The Emerging Belgian Art Scene
High potentials

Don’t get us wrong, these high achievers are in no way better than the average children roaming the country’s playgrounds. They’re just five ordinary kids with a tad more potential that the rest of them – and that includes us adults.

Photographer Sarah Eechaut

Vince Van der Perre - 7

Vince is in 2nd grade of the De Parel school in Mechelen. His favorite subject is arts and crafts. He likes to read books by Gerinomo Stilton, his favorite writer, playing with his friends and watching movies.

“Cars are my biggest passion. When I grow up I want to be the big boss of a car factory!”
Solal Wajnsztok – 9

Solal is in the 4th grade of the Carolus Magnus School in Brussels. Mathematics and writing are his favorite subjects, but his biggest passion is definitely rugby.

“Rugby is my favorite thing ever. When I grow up I want to be a rugby player, just like Alf Penny or John Davies. But being a fireman or cyclist, that would be great too.”
Emma Rogister - 10

Emma goes to school in Dolembreux. Her biggest passions are horse riding and theatre, but she also likes to build robots. She admires the astronauts who went on the moon and Leonardo Da Vinci.

“There are so many things I want to do. Maybe I want to be a jockey, or a comedian, or a police officer. But I’d also like to become a veterinarian to help the kangaroos in Australia.”

Martijn Dendievel - 16

Martijn, born in Ostende, is in his second year of conducting studies at the Royal Conservatory in Brussels. One day he wants to be as good as Gustavo Dudamel, the conductor of the L.A. Philharmonic.

“In December 2011 I had the chance to conduct The Musical Company, a production of the conservatory I go to. That was so much fun.”

Emma Rogister - 10

Emma goes to school in Dolembreux. Her biggest passions are horse riding and theatre, but she also likes to build robots. She admires the astronauts who went on the moon and Leonardo Da Vinci.

“There are so many things I want to do. Maybe I want to be a jockey, or a comedian, or a police officer. But I’d also like to become a veterinarian to help the kangaroos in Australia.”
Cis Oorts - 15

Cis goes to the Sint-Gummarus school in Lier. In his free time he plays guitar, computer games and likes to hang out with his friends. His dream: To play in a band, just like his idol Mick Jagger.

“The smartest person I know is my best friend. He understands everything I say, even all my jokes!”
Collaborate. Cooperate. Consume

Economic models based on sharing, swapping, bartering, and collective buying are outstripping outdated modes of shopping. Technology, peer-to-peer marketplaces and customer dissatisfaction are mixing with imagination, changing not just what we consume but how we consume it. We speak to proponents of this new paradigm: five alternative economisers, collaborative consumers and collective shoppers.

Photographer Sarah Eechaut    Interviews Rose Kelleher

“Ours is not the first collaborative community in Belgium, but it’s the first co-housing community,” says Luc, one of the founders of the project in Tubize. Co-housing is an intentional community of private homes with shared facilities (car-parks, dining rooms, gardens) and services (car-sharing and babysitting for instance). Residents get together for sport, social occasions, or to play board games. “It’s an artificial neighbourhood. The motivation to live in this kind of community is to connect to people and to know your neighbours,” says Luc, adding “though it’s not for everybody. Some people want their own garden, others don’t want to leave their house and see other people.”

He believes it’s like a pendulum. “People gained their individual territory and their property. They fought for it for a few generations, but in the process, some things got lost: solidarity, knowing people, helping each other, being able to connect. There were a few generations who wanted to master nature, to master the environment, and now its shifted and they want to be part of it.”

Dr. Luc Jonckheere
Cofounder, Cohousing La Grande Cense, Tubize
The neighbourhood of Rabot-Blaisantvest in Ghent rewards its inhabitants for commitment to clean streets with its own currency, called “Torekes”. David runs a bike shop here. “You get Torekes tokens for doing little things like planting flowers outside or cleaning the street. You can use them to buy stuff like groceries, too.” He says it’s good for the environment, for the local economy, but also for business. “People have begun to do small deeds for the environment so that they can get bike repairs that they might not otherwise.

Then I just have to call the organisers with whom I can exchange the tokens for cash. I don’t lose money on it. It’s a win-win situation.” About two or three people per month come and use the tokens in David’s shop, which they can supplement with cash. “I think it’s going to grow. Some are saving up the tokens to buy something bigger, and more people now clean the area in front of their door in exchange for tokens, which exist not really for people to question the economy, but more as a way to make our community more beautiful.”
Agricovert is one of a growing number of Belgian cooperatives that links consumers with local farmers. It’s based on the principal of collective buying power. “The idea is to get rid of the intermediaries, and to remind people that there is a human being behind the food you eat,” says Delphine, who initiated an Agricovert group in The Hub in Brussels. The platform gives the consumer a say in what’s produced and how the cooperative is run. “Agricovert is trying to get the customer to be more than just a customer – consumer activists as they’re called.” There’s also a big ecological and sustainable aspect. “It makes more sense to eat something that is locally grown and organic. It saves energy, because you don’t need to heat a greenhouse to grow tomatoes in the winter.” There’s an increasing amount of similar platforms springing up all over Belgium and Europe. “At some point people will realise it’s ridiculous to pay so much for organic products, and with the price of petrol, it doesn’t make sense to fly organic apples all the way from Chile.”

Stéphanie Verloove (pictured on the left)
Participant, Swishing.be, Ghent

Stéphanie, by her own admission, has way too many clothes. “It’s such a shame to throw them away if I’ve only worn them once or twice. It’s a ridiculous waste of money.” Swishing was born in London out of a love of retail shopping combined with a desire to reduce consumption. Participants bring old clothes to swap with each other. Stéphanie believes its popularity has a lot to do with our addiction to “disposable clothes”. “Fashion is constantly changing,” she says. “People want to wear something new every single day, and only wear it a couple of times. We get involved in swishing to find some original clothes, but it’s also to do with the crisis. We don’t want to buy expensive pieces we’ll only wear once or twice.” The organisers of swishing.be emphasise the sustainability and ethical aspect of their events, but Stéphanie’s not convinced. “Some do it for ethical reasons, but I’m not sure everybody thinks like that. For me, it’s more about finding something original.” She sees no threat to traditional clothes retailers, as some trend watchers have prophesised. “I’m not sure every woman has the time or the patience to go through piles and piles of old clothes!”

Delphine Thizy
“Consumer Activist”, Agricovert group-buying collective, Brussels
“Time banking is nothing new,” says Pieter “but it’s often in times of economic crisis that it experiences a resurgence.” Time banking is an alternative economy whereby people offer their services in return for time/bank “hours”. Services might include web development, portraits, copy editing or translations; Pieter believes we all have useful skills to offer. “The good thing about time banking is it’s always about give and take, not just to take all the time, and it’s interesting to step out of the roller-coaster of the economic system and to organise our work in an alternative way. The main thing is that it questions our logic.” The e-flux time/bank platform came out of the art world “though it’s not exclusively for artists, and it’s not an alternative way to pay artists for their work. Artists already have many difficulties to make a living, and the last thing we should do is look for alternatives to pay them. Its more to just sometimes step out of the system and do something in a different way.”
Not many designers can pretend to have had a major museum retrospective in their 20s or dressed Björk on several occasions. But Iris van Herpen, a fashion sensation and Holland’s most charming export, is not like most designers her age. Her work is ground-breaking and inspiring, combining an intricate attention to detail with cutting-edge technology. Fact is, Iris embraces the future, not the past. In this exclusive interview, she talks about her upcoming exhibition at the Groninger Museum, childhood memories and not having a Facebook profile.

Interview Philippe Pourhashemi
I’m sorry I couldn’t come to your last show. It looked amazing by the way.

Thank you. I’ve just moved into a new space in Amsterdam and still need to make it my own. There are gorgeous views over the canals and more light than in my previous space in Arnhem. I’m happy with it.

Tell me about the Groninger Museum, which is going to showcase your first retrospective from the end of March. Isn’t it a bit mad, considering you’re only 27?

I know. It’s such a big honour for me and it’s been a fascinating process putting the whole thing together, from getting my entire archive shot to supervising the catalogue. It’s been rather intense actually.

Did you have to design new pieces for the exhibition?

No, I didn’t. The show is a retrospective and I spent a lot of time going through my own archive, trying to find some coherence between older and newer pieces. Of course, I couldn’t help but notice mistakes in my previous work. It showed me how I had improved on certain aspects, which is not a bad thing.

Was it a challenging process for you?

I actually enjoyed putting the retrospective together. It was a fantastic experience for me. The only thing is that I got to a point where it felt like too much Iris van Herpen within one single space. I had a bit of an Iris overdose, to be honest.

Most of your work is handmade, which means it’s labour-intensive and time-consuming. Where do you find the energy to keep up the pace?

It’s so visceral for me that I don’t even think about it. I have this funny memory of making a dress straight after the day I graduated. I’ve never really stopped since then and can’t imagine my life any other way. This is what I’ve always wanted.

Do you follow what other designers do?

I need to force myself a bit in order to do that. It’s not my nature to know or see everything.

Is that why you don’t have a Facebook account?

Yes. People want to be informed of everything constantly now and I’m very selective with what I process. At the same time, I am part of a small world – which is fashion – and should be aware of what’s happening in it. I do look at some designers whose work I appreciate, but I get visual overload very easily. When I look at something, it stays in my head. It’s like collecting what I see. If I’ve watched a good film, it stays with me for a whole week. I don’t forget about it the minute after, the way most people seem to do now.

There’s something mysterious about your clothes and I guess what you’re saying echoes this perception. Do you think there’s not enough mystery in our lives?

I do wonder about this when I read books about history or artists. Was there more mystery in their lives before? They believed in things around themselves, which they couldn’t see. It’s like this idea of a general truth. Today, everything has a name and everything has a reason. Everything can be explained by science and rationalised, which is good of course, because we have the knowledge. It’s just that sometimes I miss the fantasy or mystery within our daily lives. It’s hard for us to resist this, as we are so used to thinking logically.

Does that make life boring in a way?

Yes, it does.

Are you saying that you also protect yourself from the outside world?

In a way. I do. I don’t want it to affect my imagination or creative process.

Is it about staying naïve, like a child?

I guess it is. I think creativity comes from within and has nothing to do with the society around you. It’s something that should be separated. You need a balance between having this and adopting some elements from the outside world. I hope I can stay innocent that way, because that’s where my joy comes from.

Were you introverted as a child?

I find this hard to answer, because I was not very aware of myself when I was little. I had my own dream world. I come from a very small Dutch village and we didn’t even have a television at that point. My parents never worked in fashion. There was no connection to that world within my background. I was always playing and learnt how to keep myself entertained. I was very much in my own world, but that’s normal for a child, right?

It’s funny, because I don’t have many memories of myself as a child. I remember my teenage years much better.

I’m the same. I do remember some moments. My sister often says she remembers everything, which is really odd for me. I’ve seen photos of myself and my family, but, without them, my memories would be even more scarce.

There are also images that you cannot link to specific moments you lived. It’s bizarre when it happens.

Definitely. I get that a lot. You can just imagine what it was, which is quite beautiful in a way, like having different lives within one.

How do you see your place within the industry?

I work with musicians, artists, curators and directors. I love collaborative work, even though this is something I never expected to do when I was younger. When I was studying, I was quite remote as an individual and didn’t have a lot of contact with other people. I lived in my own little bubble and kept some distance from fashion people. Now, I feel like stepping out of my comfort zone and work with dancers, architects or performers. I don’t want to get stuck in the fashion world either, because I’d get bored with it fairly quickly.

Your designs are very much future-oriented and you keep on working with new materials. Did you use 3D printing in your last collection, too?

Yes, I did. With this last show, I was trying to remove the prototyping feel from 3D printing, developing it further and treating it as a base. I didn’t want it to be the end result, but use it as a foundation for the hand work. I collaborated with graphic artists, imagining a two-dimensional layer that could be placed over the 3D print. The problem with 3D printing is that it takes so much time to develop. We basically ran out of time when it came to fusing it with the layer. There was just not enough time to make it happen, but I’ll keep the idea for my next collection. There was also a dress that looked like wood, but it was a 3D print. What I love about it is that it was the most technical look within the show, but ended up looking like a sculpture made out of wood.

I remember visiting .MGX’s headquarters in Leuven and spotting an oddly shaped stone bench outside in the courtyard. It was a 3D print and had actually been made with powder. It completely baffled me.

Crazy, right?

Yes. You can even print metal now, which is crazy and a bit scary at the same time. Did you know food can be printed, too?

Really?

The machines print food and you can eat it. I don’t really think you can print the same apple that you see growing on a tree though.

You’ve always embraced the future in your work and you’re one of the few designers I know who does not keep on plundering the past. How do you explain that?

The past is reassuring for some, because it’s mostly about taking something familiar and using it again. The future always appeals to me, because it is the most unknown thing that we all share. I’m not afraid of it.
Marjan faithful

If models, designers and photographers are thrust into the fashion limelight, buyers don’t normally get the same kind of attention. That’s the ultimate irony, considering that entire careers depend on their choices and decisions. A buyer’s role is, in fact, to translate a designer’s vision—however extreme or challenging—into a saleable proposition, bearing in mind the needs of demanding clients. With an increasingly varied offer coming from high-street chains and online stores, high-end boutiques have had to re-adjust and work even harder. That’s something Marjan Eggers—the striking director and buyer of designer mecca Louis in Antwerp—is very aware of. “Clients want something new all the time. You have to keep on surprising them, otherwise they get bored. I took over the store in 2002 and fashion has changed so much within 10 years. Globalisation and the Internet have had a major impact on how the industry operates. People are bombarded with images on a daily basis. My job is to be on the lookout for new talent, but there are times I feel saturated, too.”

What sets Eggers apart from other buyers is her sincerity and loyalty to the brands she stocks. Once she orders a collection, she’s in it for the long term. “Louis was Ann Demeulemeester’s very first client and we still buy her today. The context is different now, because designers have been playing musical chairs for a while. I bought Cacharel when Belgian designer Cédric Charlier was designing it, but he was no longer there last spring. The same happened to Giles Deacon at Ungaro. I bought the clothes, only to find out a few months later that Deacon had left. It’s all quite shaky and unstable.” Eggers is part of a group that nurtured and cherished a gifted generation of designers, including the likes of Martin Margiela and Raf Simons. She has fond memories of being a student in the late 80s, when she realised that she was attracted by luxury and the avant-garde, “I did an Industrial Design course in Antwerp and never thought I would work in fashion. I remember walking past Louis several times and being deeply intrigued by it. I finally found the courage to go in and met the owner, Geert Bruloot. There was a Margiela denim shirt I was obsessed with. I went back to the store several times before I finally bought it. I got to know Geert and he asked me to help him out one day. That’s how it all started. I remember Raf Simons used to come in quite often, even before he launched his own line. He didn’t understand why Geert didn’t want to buy Helmut Lang and they had heated discussions about it. I still have that Margiela shirt, you know.” Today, Eggers buys some of the most exclusive and expensive brands available in Belgium, such as Balmain, Balenciaga or Rick Owens. Catwalk pieces arrive on the shop floor, where they don’t tend to stay very long. Regulars come early in the season, making sure they secure that one-off piece. She also runs a sister store in Knokke-Heist and a successful Acne franchise. She recently refurbished the Antwerp space, making room for extra lines and accessories. Eggers’ pride comes from her independence, her determination and refusal to rely on external investment “I won’t do something if I don’t have the money for it. That’s how I run Louis and it’s not going to change. Fashion can be a farcical world, but I’m far too pragmatic for nonsense.” (PP)
There is a place where the Star always shines.

The Mercedes House is located on the prestigious Grand Sablon, in the heart of Brussels. Here, luxury and elegance set the tone: the perfect setting for “the Brand with the Star”.

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Over the past 10 years, fashion has undergone a significant process of democratisation and change. The Internet revolutionised the industry, with e-commerce on the rise, fashion shows being streamed live and bloggers playing a key role as today’s influencers. And, despite fashion being now as readily available as a bottle of shampoo, increased competition and a harsher economic reality means young designers have never had it so hard. Truth is, there may be potential for most, but only room for a few. Gathering a roster of industry insiders to our Brussels offices, we spent a recent Monday morning discussing what it takes to make it. After several hours of debate, the conclusion, as always, was that no magical formula to success existed. At the end of the day, survival of the fittest remains the only rule. You won’t make it as a young designer if you’re not talented, passionate, determined and business-minded. Some have to work harder than others and many may not have the financial backing or A-list address book to speed things up, but the best ones will eventually get there through sheer talent and perseverance.
Diane – I thought about being a designer as a kid, but didn’t draw well. I studied film and briefly went to do a course at Parsons and FIT in New York. It was a very factory-oriented environment and I didn’t want to stay there too long. I put a collection together and decided I would show it when it was ready. I didn’t want to work for anyone else. I sent a friend of mine some samples of my first collection and it sold immediately to several stores. I think the pricing was totally off, which explains why they may have bought it so quickly. It’s almost like I was paying to produce. I learnt lots of little things by experience. I designed my collection for 13 years and had a licence with Seibu in Japan for five years. I was quite successful, especially with the press. I knew were dying of AIDS and it was really depressing. It just wasn’t very inspiring for me. I realized I couldn’t live in New York any longer and decided to move to Paris.

Philippe – How many clients did you have at the peak of your career?

Diane – About 25. I stopped designing in the early 90s for several reasons. A lot of people I knew were dying of AIDS and it was really depressing. It just wasn’t very inspiring for me. I realized I couldn’t live in New York any longer and decided to move to Paris.

Philippe – You mentioned never wanting to work for anyone else. Is that something anyone relates to?

Alexandra – I do relate to that. After graduating from the Academy in Antwerp, I went to New York for an internship and that was something I had really fantasised about. It felt like a real shock when I got there and made me realise how much of a bubble Antwerp actually is. The school does not prepare you for what comes next. The disconnect between the educational system and the demands of the industry.

Marc-Philippe – I graduated from the Academy, too, but my experience is very different from Alexandra’s. I was hired by Natan straight after graduation and was given a lot of responsibility from the beginning. My boss – Edouard Vermeulen – took over the company 25 years ago and I have a lot of respect for him. Two years ago, I decided to launch my own label as I felt there was something missing for me creatively. My four years at Natan have been like a second school in many ways and I know that Mr. Vermeulen does not believe in ego at all. It’s easier working for Natan than for my own brand.

Nicholas – Can you explain why?

Marc-Philippe – With my own label, my boyfriend and I have to make all the decisions. As I split my time between Natan and Marc-Philippe Coudreye, I try to do my best and deal with what I can handle. The fashion industry can be so frustrating sometimes. Every season, we have to come up with new ideas to improve on things. We have showed in London, New York and Paris. I hate to complain, but it has not been easy.

Philippe – I guess you don’t have the luxury of having your own team either.

Marc-Philippe – Exactly. When I work for Natan, I don’t have to worry about the money. It makes a huge difference, of course, because we are self-financed. You learn something new each season.

Philippe – It sounds to me like there’s a major disconnect between the educational system and the demands of the industry.

Tony – I don’t think my job is to teach. My job is to help them develop their own style and creativity. If they want to do a business course, they can go to IFM in Paris and enrol for that. I love my work and am also a designer, but you learn so much on the job and nothing replaces that.

Alexandra – I think the industry is much bigger now and there are as many client groups as there are designers. I don’t think you should let others influence you too much. Everyone will have a different opinion and it’s not always relevant.

Diane – You have to filter when you’re a designer. Listening to yourself and having your own strength is much more important than what others may think.

You have to filter when you’re a designer. Listening to yourself and having your own strength is much more important than what others may think.

— Diane Pernet

Nicholas – We profiled you a year ago, when you were planning on launching your own brand. What has changed for you since then?

Alexandra – I feel much more confident with my decision. I know it was a big risk, but I wanted to give it a try.

— Diane Pernet

Allison – When you start your career as a designer now, there is so much pressure to get to the next level. What everyone forgets is that it takes time to build things up. Nobody succeeds overnight. I think the older generation understood that it took time to get there. I have a business background, but have always...
Stijn – We’ve always worked with young Belgian designers since setting-up PURE, our PR agency. It’s so important for us to support independent brands. We don’t ask them for a monthly fee either, because we don’t feel it makes much sense with new designers. We are selective, of course, and watch how these talents grow and develop, but I feel fashion needs them more than ever.

Emmanuel – I agree with Stijn. As a retailer, it’s also key for me to buy new brands and give young designers a chance. Even though the Internet has made things more challenging for us, I don’t think it will ever replace great service or personal contact. Our role is also to educate clients and make sure they discover something interesting each season.

Allison – Designers need to have a strong voice and listen to their hearts. The press plays a fundamental part, too, as it communicates directly with the consumer. If there is desire from the consumer, retailers will follow and buy the brand. It’s all connected and you need to see it as a whole. Having your own vision is not enough anymore.

Stijn – I think the press creates the image, too.

Philippe – So we all agree that visibility is inseparable from success.

Alexandra – I don’t know. I still don’t have a press agent and don’t feel like I need one.

Philippe – Winning Hyères gave you a lot of press though and you could use it to your advantage.

Alexandra – I guess that’s true.

Allison – If you can inspire people, then the rest will follow. Look at Raf Simons. He’s had an amazing career, because he’s so talented and influential.

Philippe – Certain designers will enjoy a cult following in the industry and there’s something almost irrational about it. It doesn’t matter where they go, people will always support them.

Nicholas – Does winning a prize make a huge difference then?

Allison – It does. I work with Anthony Vaccarello, who won the ANDAM prize last year. It gave him money and press, as well as access to certain industry circles. All these really high-profile people were on the jury and they started making calls to send the best buyers to his showroom.

Philippe – This is exactly what happened with Jean-Paul Lespagnard since Anne Chapelle decided to help him. He got the attention of major industry players because of her influence. That doesn’t take away the fact that he’s very talented and hard-working. He doesn’t come from a privileged background either.

Tony – There is no formula for success. Fashion is a nightmare industry, because I don’t know of any profession where you have to rely on so many other people. Everything can go wrong, from production to sales to shows and you have to deal with the damage when it happens. It’s a huge pressure and responsibility as well, which is why this business makes people crazy.

Allison – You have to be ambidextrous to succeed in fashion. You need that combination of creative vision and business acumen. Look at Pierre Bergé and Yves Saint Laurent. It was the perfect marriage between art and commerce. These partnerships really work.

Marc-Philippe – This is the sort of dynamics I feel I have with my partner. We complement each other and both have distinctive roles. It’s impossible managing everything on your own. Nevermind the mistakes and so-called failures, it’s all positive in the end, because you’re always learning. I love fashion and couldn’t imagine doing anything else. It’s the passion that drives you.

Diane – And hope. Let’s not forget that. (PP)
Destined to shine

With something of a futuristic tendency, this month’s selection of show-stopping goodies is guaranteed to get you hoping for a better tomorrow.

01. In the trenches

The most British of British luxury houses, Burberry essentially built its entire reputation on the back of its trench coat. Year in year out, its new takes on the classic design have, at best, been timid updates and, at worst, basic copycats of the original. It’s a whole different story this year though, with the fashion imprint taking a leap to the future with this mid-length coat. Burberry’s traditional beige is swapped for brighter and bolder colours, with a prevailing orange palette, whilst its sharp cut and angular patterns evoke cubism at its height. (NL)

Burberry trench coat (£6,000).
Available from Burberry (Brussels).
burberry.com
02. **Hoodlum high**

With roots in heavy-duty workwear and a functional design ethos, Belgian-born Bellerose has, ever since its creation in 1989, stood for authentic and timeless values, banking on personal style over throw-away trends. And, with its roomy pockets and protective hoodie, this lightweight hooded parka is no exception. Its access-all-areas demeanour speaks as much to the gap year student off to Latin America’s rain forests for a couple of months as it does to his father readying for a month of April spent on the Belgian coast. (PP)

Bellerose hooded parks (£179).
Available from Bellerose stores nationwide.
bellerose.be

03. **Lighter than water**

Just in time for the spring season, East-meets-West Japanese perfumer Kenzo just launched its new fragrance for men: Eau 2. Never too heavy on the senses, the fresh and aromatic fragrance developed by reputed nose Sonia Constant (Burberry, Escada) hits all the right chords with its manly, invigorating scent. A blend of citrus plants, woody elements and zesty accents, ranging from grapefruit to vetiver or spruce, its subtle combinations make for a vibrant and energetic mix without ever being too weighty. (SS)

Eau 2 Kenzo EDT Homme, 50 ml (£50.84), 100 ml (£71.19).
Available from Planet Parfum nationwide.
kenzo.com

04. **Ring maker**

Reputed for its playful take on jewellery, Italian jeweller Pomellato has been injecting a little bit of fun into the craft since it was founded in the late 1960s by Pino Rabiolini. Characterised by a fine balancing act that combines an intricate attention to detail with a future-friendly approach to design, its creations never fail to turn heads. And the latest addition to its collection, the Nudo ring, makes good on this reputation. The oversized rings – handmade in the company’s Milanese workshops – blends gold together with Madeira quartz, giving its shine a scintillating and rather unique glow, the vibrancy of which varies according to the surrounding light. (PP)

Pomellato Nudo Ring Quarzo Madera (£2,160).
Available from Pomellato (Antwerp).
pomellato.com
05. **A dash of splash**

Known for its minimal and, some would say, executive-style approach to design, German fashion house Jil Sander basically made grey cool when she first launched back in the late 1960s. So it comes as a little surprise to see the label embrace colour in such a whole-hearted way with its latest collection of sunglasses – especially given that its current creative director, Belgian legend of the less is more Raf Simons, is no colour-crazy designer himself. That being said, everything about these sleek and sexy sunnies’ design harks back to the brand’s deep-rooted DNA: a little bit on the square side but oh-so classy. (NL)

Jil Sander sunglasses (£174,95).
Available from Jil Sander (Antwerp).
jilsander.com

06. **Square pusher**

There are only a few items in fashion that command the kind of following you’d only expect from, say, the quintessential Bieber fan, and Hermès’ silk scarf – also known as “Le Carré” – is clearly one of them. A favourite of the down-to-earth yet none-the-less classy, the scarves’ timeless appeal and wrap-around comfort sits perfectly with the Parisian fashion house’s knack for crafting travelling tales of escapism imbued with vibrant exotic shells. Residing on the upper crust of luxury, an Hermès scarf is passed on from generation to generation, never going out of fashion. The kind of design that wouldn’t be out of place on museum walls the world over. (PP)

Hermès printed silk scarf (£310).
Available at Hermès stores nationwide.
hermes.com

07. **Heavy duty**

When it comes to that lived-in feeling, trust Italian denim behemoth Diesel to deliver the goods. These distressed, rusty-coloured baggy trousers may look like they’ve just been dug out from your country-loving granddad’s attic if it weren’t for the makeshift paint splatters (Diesel staples), loose-fitting cut and large apron belt, ideal for lugging around all your modern-day essentials. (PP)

Diesel distressed trousers (£186).
Available from Diesel stores nationwide.
diesel.com
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A brave new world

Set in a brave new world of forward-leaning dystopia, our sometimes-frontal, sometimes-camouflaged protagonists – precursors in an age of reproductive disorder – are quietly anticipating the society of the future.

Photographer Ismael Moumin  Fashion Pierre Gorzala
Opposite page: White shirt COS, Gold collar Juun.J
This page: Polo Fred Perry, Raincoat Juun.J
White shirt COS, Gold collar Juun.J, Clear plastic dress Paule Ka, Blanket Raf Simons
Leather top COS, shirt Le Mont-St-Michel, Black knitted underwear Paule Ka, Gold bracelet CK
Military Jacket Z Zegna, T-shirt Converse, Dress Lenny Leleu
White Jacket with zip detail Les Filles à Papa, Top Ambre Babzoe, Trousers Diesel Black Gold
Jacket Songzio, White shirt Fred Perry, Tie Esprit
White shirt with gold zip Juun.J, Sleeveless jacket veil top, velcro-detail trousers and leathers shoes Raf Simons archives
In the midst of her current US tour and the ever-growing media hype surrounding her, we managed to secure some cross-Atlantic talk-time with Canadian-born sci-pop siren Claire Boucher (24), otherwise known as Grimes. From her hotel room somewhere in Alabama, we talk about her latest record ‘Visions’, getting anointed by Pitchfork and being a girl in the music business.

Interview Sarah Schug
You were born in Vancouver but lived in Montreal for the last five years – what’s the music scene like over there?

It’s very party-oriented and very open. A lot happens after midnight. Montreal’s musicians are the ones who have influenced me the most. My relation to live music is completely based on them. Noise/electro is quite a big thing there. Even though I would describe my own music as pop, it has to be seen considering this background.

How did you get into making music? Did you start at an early age?

I only started a few years ago, mainly because all my friends were doing it too. Music is a confidence thing. Anyone can do music.

Anyone? I think some of our readers might find that a bit hard to believe...

I really don’t think it’s that difficult. Most people are able to do creative stuff; many are just psychologically blocked. If you think you can’t do something, then you are probably not going to be able to do it. Music is something that’s really intrinsic in humans and most people understand it really well. Even without having any training.

But how did you start out? Bedroom-production style with a computer?

Pretty much. I didn’t play an instrument and didn’t have a music education. I only had this shitty keyboard that my parents bought me for Christmas when I was in 10th grade. I had never touched it. I just started recording stuff with this and my computer, all by myself in my bedroom, yes.

It’s a long way from playing around in your room at home to getting signed by a label. How did that happen?

It was all very informal. A friend of mine started a label, Arbutus Records, and told me I should do something. It was a safety thing, before doing the records I already knew I had a label, so I didn’t have to worry about anything. But actually I thought only the people in the Montreal scene would get to hear it and no one else, but I guess I was wrong!

So what happened?

All of a sudden there was this internet buzz, completely out of the blue. I had already forgotten about my album when this huge American blog wrote about my stuff. I started getting a lot of offers for shows and then it just all built up. Last March I quit my job to concentrate fully on the music.

What were you doing before?

I worked for a radio station. But not as a presenter, I have a horrible lisp, they would never let me say anything on air. I did fundraising for them. And at the same time I was studying.

How did you get in touch with 4AD, your current label?

4AD saw me play at this festival in New York called CMJ. They wanted to talk and I got an offer directly after that.

When did you write the songs for ‘Visions’?

I think it’s the first record that I took seriously. Before I was just screwing around, but now my approach was different, with a real understanding behind it. I need to feel free, without any pressure. Usually I start with the percussions and then I add everything else. For this record I did everything in three weeks. I recorded everything in my room, I don’t like studios.

Three weeks? That’s a very short time.

Well, I didn’t really do anything else in those three weeks. And I had done a lot of thinking before, I knew what I wanted to do. I was touring a lot and in the car I would have a lot of time to think. There was a process before that led up to it and I was really ready for it. First I did everything completely alone. And then during the mastering process I had the chance to sit next to the guy and give my input. Tell him to turn the bass up a little and things like that. Not many artists get that opportunity.

‘Visions’ got a really good review on Pitchfork. How important is that to you?

It’s definitely important because they have a lot of power. I respect them a lot. But I don’t want to let that kind of thing affect me too much - they can destroy people just as quickly as they build them up. I don’t really read reviews, I prefer not to know, actually.

Your style has been labelled many things but you’ve described it as sci-fi pop...

Yeah I like science fiction. I really like Ghost in the Shell. The anime is cool, I don’t know. The classics and all, the posters...

What music do you listen to personally?

I’ve always liked R’n’B, hip-hop, mainstream pop. Outkast is cool, especially ‘Stankonia’. I had a huge hip-hop phase but that’s kind of over now. I pretty much listen to everything, except for classic rock and country music. I’m a bit biased when it comes to female artists I guess, I just prefer the sound of the female voice. Now I’m on the road all the time, I listen to what my band listens to, lots of different stuff, I don’t even know what it’s called.

You used to be completely alone on stage and now play with a band. What do you prefer?

Usually I play by myself, but on this tour I have a band. I’m not sure what I like best. It’s easier to travel when you play by yourself, and cheaper too. But it’s nice sometimes to have other people on stage. I think it doesn’t really matter. Maybe I sound better with a band, but on the other hand I think it’s really cool to play alone and show that I’m capable of doing everything on my own. I don’t want to be dependent on a band.

Do you feel like it’s harder for a girl in the music business?

It depends. Of course the business is very male. But then being a pretty girl can also make things easier, the combination of girl and pop is easy to market. Sometimes it’s a bit annoying how magazines want to spin your story, for example some presented me as some fashion person, which I am absolutely not. And when I play gigs it happens a lot that I get the question: ‘Is there a guy I can talk to?’ Especially the sound engineers don’t take girls seriously. They prefer to talk to my manager, just because he’s male. No offense, but he is not the one who has the knowledge to tell the sound guy what to do. But they just refuse to talk to me sometimes. Female sound engineers are the best, they have to be better than everyone else to be accepted.

So it’s really easier as a pretty girl? Some feminists might criticise that statement.

They can criticise that statement as long as they want, but it doesn’t change the fact. It’s totally stupid and of course I don’t see it as a good thing. But this is the way the world works. People are driven by hormones. I’m pretty sure that if you start making statistic research on this in the music business, you could prove it’s true. I don’t agree with how it works, but I’m not going to pretend that it isn’t there.

Your website describes you as a ‘cultural curator’...

I am good at music but I think I’m even better at knowing what is good at what time. For example my music would never have worked three years ago, when indie rock was everywhere. You have to learn to read culture.

This interview will appear in our orange edition - what’s orange music for you?

That’s difficult. Drum ’n’ Bass is kind of orange for me. Not a lot of things are orange actually. Rather amber. The colour hasn’t crossed my path very much.

What are you going to do for the rest of the day?

I need to get some more sleep; I was up really late last night because I didn’t know there’d be an interview in the morning. And then we’ll drive to Atlanta where I’ll have my next gig.

‘Visions’ was released on 4AD on 12th March
Grimes plays Brussels (Botanique) on 17th May
Homeboy Sandman

Whilst some might argue that hip hop is undergoing somewhat of a renaissance (you know, with the Tylers and Schoolboy Q’s bringing the ‘we don’t give a fuck’ gangster vibe back to the genre), a certain breed of MCs remain true to the game, keeping the underground alive through sheer hard work and talent. Enter Homeboy Sandman, Stone’s Throw’s latest recruit. Fresh off the back of his latest EP, we hook up with the native tongue to talk beat sessions with Large Professor, being raised by a single father and the future of rap.

Interview Nicholas Lewis
How has the response been to your latest EP, Subject: Matter?
Response has been great man. People have been listening to the records and they’re listening close, they are not looking at the records like disposable records, they are delving into the lyricism and they are tearing apart the different layers and yeah I’m really loving it.

If I had to define your style, I’d say it’s decidedly New York. And then this EP comes out on a decidedly West-Coast label like Stones Throw, how did that connection come about? It seems like a dream kind of connection.

Really it is a dream connection, because I’m a New York cat and they are a L.A. based label, but they are really a talent-based label. I have always been a fan. It’s one of the few labels left on which you can see an act or an album come out and not even be familiar with the act or with the music, but you see Stones Throw on it and you can be sure that there is going to be some individuality on the album, it’s going to be something unique.

How exactly do you hook up with a producer, is it just a question of buying a beat that he has already made or you guys construct a beat together or...

I have been lucky lately to be involved in a lot of beat construction, you know, to be sitting in with guys. I have got a beat session with Large Professor later tonight. Large Professor produced Fakin the Funk, which is like my favourite hip hop song of all time. That’s hip hop on a whole different level and you know, recently I had the opportunity of sitting with 88-Keys, Oddisee is on the full length, Exile is on the full length, Oh No is on the full length...

One of the things that came up quite a lot in the research we did is that you went to boarding school. I was sent to boarding school when I was 14 and to me it was a punishment. Was that the same thing for you?

For me there’s a really big difference, there is a program in New York city that is called Prep for Prep 9 and they kind of look to take kids who have a particular academic potential from the city and get them out of the there. Being in the city is a challenging thing, and any education in the city is a challenging thing. A lot of times the education is a joke anyway so this program takes kids from the city and gets them on boarding schools outside, expanding horizons and getting some real education, and giving them a better chance at success. So for me it wasn’t really a punishment even though I definitely wasn’t feeling it very much at the time, but looking back at it now, it really changed my life.

Could you talk to us about the household you grew up in? Was it heavy on music?
My father is a musician and a music lover. He plays the saxophone. I used to play the saxophone for seven years and when I was growing up he was always listening to music, all different types. He would listen to R&B, hip hop, funk, disco. He was a bouncer at a club so he always knew the hottest records. I actually lived with my father, I mean my father and my mother got married when I was six, but before that I lived with my father so that was kind of a unique experience too... A lot of times you have single mothers, but you hear less about single fathers. It was just me and my pop for the early part of my life, I used to hang out with him all the time.

I’m dope, I’m a one of a kind talent, like Stevie Wonder was, like Beethoven was, I am a musician for real and I make hip hop music

Why did you drop out of law school?
It was going fine but I never had any passion for it. I have done a lot of things, you know... I was a high school teacher for a couple of years, I was a bartender, I did marketing. It just so happened that I was in law school when I found out what my passion was, and once somebody finds out what their passion is, I believe you have got to follow it. I mean what are you doing in life if not following your passion?

Do you live off your passion?
Yeah absolutely. I’ve gone through a lot of stuff that comes with being an artist, but it’s all part of the journey, it’s all part of the fun and when you are sure that you are willing to sacrifice, people believe in you.

Where do you write your lyrics, when are you at your best creatively?
To be honest, I write an awful lot, I create all the time. I create on the train, in the gym on the treadmill, in the shower, ... when I am at rest, I’m writing, I’m thinking about rhymes. I’m obsessed with writing, music, rhymes and creating songs, I always have something I am working on. I hear a lot of people saying ‘yo, I haven’t got any writing done’, and I’m like, for me the writing is what I do naturally, when I take a break from writing it just doesn’t feel right.

Is there any new school of rappers that you are really into?
I’m a huge fan of Oddisee from Diamond District. And then there’s a kid from Brooklyn who is called I Am Many. He’s coming out with a joint called Strength In Numbers, this kid is crazy. I’m really a big fan of Blu, coming out of LA, he’s dope with it. Than there are these cats called The New Rap Order, coming out of Brooklyn...

In terms of the old New York kind of guys, do you feel closer to the Native Tongue scene, or to the Wu Tangs and Mobbs Deep?
I was a big fan of Mob, I was a big fan of Wu Tang, was a huge fan of Wu Tang. I was a huge fan of Tribe and De La. I had a wide range of tastes, but I got really heavy in the style later on, coming up. I was really big on Jazzy Jeff and The Fresh Prince because they was talking about kids stuff. I knew about Big Daddy Kane, I knew about Fugee rap, but it was still Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince because they was more talking about stuff I could relate to.

What is the future of hip hop to you? A lot of the purists would say hip hop is completely dead and it’s been commercialised. What’s your take on that and how do you see it evolve? You are still a very underground MC at the end of the day.

I used to carry around the label underground MC and I used to hold it high above my head. I’m dope, I’m a one of a kind talent, like Stevie Wonder was, like Beethoven was, I am a musician for real and I make hip hop music. I am speaking from the privileged position of being a member of this hip hop society, You know I bring up I Am Many, but people won’t even know who I Am Many is. I get to listen to I Am Many and see him on shows and so to me it sounds stupid to hear someone say hip hop is dead, that has always sounded stupid to me. People are talking about commercialism and I don’t look at commercial rap as rap that is commercially successful, I look at commercial rap as rap that is a commercial, you know, product placement. You listen to a rap record and it’s all like ‘yo, I bought this car while I was drinking this liquor when I was wearing this watch and these shoes’. Now that’s the stuff that most people hear because they are not looking to use hip hop as a culture, as an art, or as a craft. They’re looking to manipulate it and turn it into a money-generating thing, when actually you ain’t talking about that when you talking about hip hop. I guess my short answer to your question is that hip hop is flourishing, it’s doing better then it’s ever been doing and it’s going to continue to do that.

Homeboy Sandman's EP Subject: Matter is out now on Stone's Throw Records.
homeboysandman.com
With their debut EP ‘I Know You Will’ released in February on their own label, Brussels-based Dalai Lama Renaissance proves there’s more to home-grown talent than copycat electro-pop or hard-edged noisy nothings. Their soft and subtle soundscapes places them somewhere in between Junior Boys, The XX and Fugiya & Miyagi whilst their tendency for pared-down productions and somewhat fragile vocals demonstrates a surprising maturity for a band still at college. We invited Tom Van Roy, Jergan Callebaut and Matteo Schuer to our offices one recent Friday afternoon to talk about their upcoming album, running their own label and remaining cryptic.
I really liked your EP, but would have liked it to have more tracks. When can we hear some more?

We are working on an album right now, which will be released this summer. The EP is a reflection of our musical development over the last years. The three songs each symbolise a different phase we went through.

What kind of phases?

In the beginning we worked with basic electronics, a guitar and some vocals. It was a very basic set up with a very basic beat, you can still hear the relics in some of our songs. We weren’t aware of fancy effects. ‘Roadkill’ stands for our second phase when we were more a real band and played without PCs. People really liked our music, we came far in lots of contests and were played on the radio. That gave us more confidence.

So you played under a different name back then?

Yes, ‘Ich Bin Vobiscun’. We’d rather not talk about it though.

Why is that?

We are not that proud of it. We were only 17 at the time and everything went so fast, we felt like it was too easy. We had only three or four simple songs. One reason why we don’t like to talk about it, is that we actually might have been able to become big. But instead of going through with it we decided to do something else because we wanted more than just a simple beat and bass.

It was the time when we discovered our favourite artist, TRS-80, and we wanted to do something much more layered and evolved. So as our tastes changed we started stirring into a new direction.

Where do you write and record your music? At home? In a studio?

We have a studio in Jergan’s house which we call ‘the lab’. It’s full of synths, drumkits, guitars, bass guitars, amps,… It’s equipped with sound shields and has a real vocal booth. We record and premix everything there.

Do you do everything yourselves? Even the final mastering?

We got some professional help. Staf Verbeek from Motormusic in Mechelen gave it the final touch. We wanted a professional sound and he was the guy for it. He has a great understanding of what we want. We tried with someone else before, a guy in the US, but the communication process was too difficult.

‘Smother’ reminds me a lot of The XX. Do you agree? Is that a band you look up to?

It’s funny you say that. We saw them live and during the recording of this song Tom struggled a lot with the vocals. So when he was in the recording booth we actually gave him the advice to sing a bit like The XX. And you are not the first one to say that, we keep getting the same references. That’s cool.

How would you describe your sound?

Our song 80 BPM represents it the best. We do electronics that’s tender and fragile but dark at the same time, definitely not sunny. We like the expression ‘origami sound’, because our tracks are very multi-layered, consisting of sounds being folded and refolded.

Generally Belgian bands are always rip-offs. They are always labelled ‘the Belgian White Lies’ or ‘the Belgian Interpol’.

I actually wanted to talk to you about that track. What is it about?

We talk about life experiences. But we try to do that in a not too obvious way, we like to keep it metaphorical, cryptic. 80 BPM is about that awkward feeling when you meet somebody new. This sensation of insecurity, that’s only in your head. You shouldn’t let it rule you.

How do you write your songs?

Usually one of us lays the foundation and the others add stuff. We rehearse together once a week. Matteo recently spent six months in Berlin though, that made things a bit difficult. We are happy to have him back here.

You released your EP on your own label, Dandelion Lotus Records...

Yes, the label is Jergan’s project. The advantages of a big label are limited. In the end they are only good for marketing and booking. Jergan sometimes just has these creative outbursts all of a sudden. He basically created the label over night. So far only our EP was released on it, but other collaborations are planned.

There are several remixes of your songs on the EP, how do you choose the artists?

We have a website where we regularly publish mixtapes, putting forward artists we like. We just contacted some of those.

How do you find new music? What are your latest discoveries?

We browse the internet for hours, especially YouTube and xlr8r. We recently realised that there are actually some good Belgian acts out there. Squeaky Lobster, for example. We like anything that tickles and is well-crafted. Usually it’s electronic music. Our rule is to only publish stuff that has below 5,000 views.

You don’t seem to be very fond of music made in Belgium. Why is that?

Generally Belgian bands are always rip-offs. They are always labelled ‘the Belgian White Lies’ or ‘the Belgian Interpol’. Many bands just copy sounds and don’t innovate themselves. But there are exceptions. Joy Wellboy for example. We’d love to have them on the label!

If you could choose anyone to remix one of your songs, who would it be?

The guitarist of James Blake who also played in Brussels. In the end we sat in the car with him for one hour, just listening to songs. He’s a really nice guy and has a very similar music taste.

Is it true that you haven’t had any live gig yet as Daila Lama Renaissance?

Yes, we’re still figuring out how to play everything live. It’s rather complicated. We like the luxury of the studio, where you can control every little detail. On stage things are less predictable. We are experimenting how to translate our music into a live set. There’s just too much going on in our songs. We’d need 10 people on stage. But we are figuring it out and on the 15th May we’ll have our first gig in the SMAK museum.

A lot of bands use touring and playing lots of gigs as a means of promotion, to be seen and get their name out there. Don’t you think that’s necessary?

We don’t really think it works like that anymore. When we discover music nowadays it’s not through live sets but via the internet. We listen to a band first, and if we like it, then we go to a concert.

The theme of this edition is ‘the future’. How do you imagine the future of music?

It’s going to be much more interactive. The audience will be able to influence the music on the spot. For example there is already a technology that transforms people’s movements into music. There was this exhibition where one room was full with sensors or something, and the music would change according to how many people were inside. And the barriers between the artists and the public will probably become lower. But maybe there won’t even be real musicians anymore – in Japan they already host hologram concerts, with ten of thousands of screaming fans, it’s almost scary!

1 ‘I Know You Will’ is out now on Dandelion Lotus Records. The band’s full-length album will follow this summer.

dalailamarenaissance.co.uk
Orange amps

Some swear by Fender Stratocasters. Others might have a thing or two for the Gibson Les Paul. You have those that only use Marshall amps. These guys? It’s the down and dirty sound of Orange amps that gets them roaring.

Interview Sarah Schug  Photographer Toon Aerts
Stijn Boels
Guitar player, Bed Rugs
Pictured with an Orange Dual Terror

“Orange amps have a very distinctive, recognisable sound. I love it. You can make them sound clean or dirty, just as you like it. And considering the quality, they are quite cheap. A friend of mine owned an Orange Tiny Terror for years. I saw him play with it at a lot of concerts, and the sound was always great. I actually got my first Orange amp one week before we started recording our first album with Bed Rugs, ‘8th Cloud’. Pascal Deweze, who recorded and mixed the album for us, had told me that the amp I had at the time wouldn’t be able to do the job. I think what he actually wanted to say was that it sounded like crap. So when we went to buy some guitar strings in the music store around the corner from our rehearsal room and I saw the Orange Dual Terror, I tried it out and directly fell for its special sound. Plus, it was on sale. How could I say no to that! I also play with other amps, for example the Ranger model. And I use an old Vox cabinet, which actually urgently needs to be replaced, now that I think of it!”

Bed Rugs released their first album ‘8th Cloud’ in January 2012
“No one really introduced me to Orange. I couldn’t help but notice however that Orange amps were becoming more and more popular over the last years, both with bassists and guitar players. Several bands that we had gigs with were using them, The Devil Wears Prada for example or Memphis May Fire. Thanks to that I was able to check out how Orange amps sound in our genre of music when played live. I also read quite a bit about them, I choose my equipment very carefully. I’ve been playing on Orange for about a year now, and I haven’t looked back since.

It is very different from what I played with before, the HARTKE Ha 3500, but it did not take long to adjust to it. I really like the simplicity of the amp. You have three buttons to make your adjustments and find the sound you need. It’s simple but effective, unlike other amps where you have to mess around with the settings for a long time before you find the appropriate tone. Plus, the unique design gives it an extra touch: They are great aesthetically too.”

Now, Voyager released their first EP ‘Seas’ in January 2011
I wanted this great British crunch sound, which is special and simple at the same time. Being not only a guitar player but also a singer I am actually more into song writing and melodies than exploring different sounds. For that I need a steady workhorse, an amp that has a great sound and is good to go directly. I bought the one I am using right now about four or five years ago, I already got it fixed a few times because I really like it. A lot of American desert rock and Californian bands use Orange amps, most of the time the older ones which are ridiculously loud. Mine is a watered down version with a smoother sound. I didn’t want it blasting too loud. What really drew me in is the fact that Muse uses Orange amps for their recordings. We just finished recording our second album, actually with the producer of Muse. We’ve tried different combinations of amps and complement the Orange with VOX and Engl because the Orange one sometimes misses this sparkle of reverb. But when playing live you don’t need that.

Wallace Vanborn will release their second album ‘Lions, Liars, Guns and God’ on N.E.W.S on 23rd April 2012.
Vlek Records

Vlek Records, the upstart although none-the-less reputed Belgian imprint behind some of the country’s most subversive acts (Cupp Cave, Ssaliva, Sagat and Squeaky Lobster to name a few), has proved time and again that it knows a thing or two about discovering new talents. Only normal, then, to ask the label’s triumvirate of founders – Julien Fournier, Thomas Van de Velde and David Maurissen – to dig deep in their treasure chest of knowledge to craft an exclusive, future-friendly and orange-tinted playlist for us. Get your sunnies on and get the beers out – this one promises to be a scorcher.

Illustrator Virassamy

Actress: 'Redit 1 2 4 Redit' (Prime Numbers, 2009)
Future is present – Actress’s new album ‘R.I.P.’ will be out on Monday 20th April 2012.

Round Four / Tikiman: 'Find a Way' (Main Street Records, 1998)
When listening to this track, you want to be somewhere in the near future: Summer, 10am. After. Cool drugs. Sunrise.

Agent Orange rec.
Never liked the label but it somehow used to be big back in the days... but it's orange and as aggressive as the (unfortunately) famous agent.

Andy Stott: 'We Stay Together (part I)' (Modern Love, 2011)
This EP gives a new breath to house music.
Future Sound of London: 
Egypt 
(Brons, 1997)
Future is past – Live broadcasted all over the world using ISDN, which in 1994 was a relatively new technology.

Manuel Göttsching: 
E2-E4 
(Mantra Vibes, 2002)
The electronic music we listen to today would not have been the same without this track (even if that’s also true for other masterpieces).

Manuel Göttsching: 
E2-E4 
(Mantra Vibes, 2002)
The electronic music we listen to today would not have been the same without this track (even if that’s also true for other masterpieces).

Capricorn: 
20Hz 
(Global Cuts, 1993)
Track used on the teaser for ‘The Sound of Belgium’, a music documentary by Jozef Deville about the history of dance music in Belgium. It featured “Gilles de Binche” throwing oranges at a typical carnival party.

Coldcut and Hexstatic: 
Timber 
(Ninja Tune, 1998)
Future = nature – The music video reminds me of the quote “Our Earth Has Enough For Everyone’s Need But Not For Everyone’s Greed”

Jean Claude Vannier: 
Browning 
(WEA, 1976)
The future of sampling is right there with the Rainforest frogs.

The Books: 
The Future, wouldn’t that be nice? 
(Tonlab, 2003)
Timeless collages.

Air: All I Need 
(Source, 1998)
Perfect for a sunset in California.

Kid Baltan / Tom Dissevelt: 
Vibration 
(Philips, 1959)
Might be the first acid-house track of all time...

Konono n°1: 
Lufuala Ndonga 
(Terp, 2004)
Africa is so often in red and orange on the news map. Just dreaming of another future.

Herbie Hancock: 
Rock it 
(CBS, 1983)
Future shock! Future is change and change sometimes shocks.

Shangaan Music: 
Tshetsha 
(Honest Jon’s, 2010)
Future = Human – Happy people are dancing everywhere on earth.

Phuture: 
Acid Trax 
(Who’s That Beat? 1981)
Once upon a time, it was the music of the future... or not...

Matthew David remixing Ssaliva: 
(Who’s That Beat? 1981)
So future we didn’t get the AIFF yet.

Herbie Hancock: 
Rock it 
(CBS, 1983)
Future shock! Future is change and change sometimes shocks.

Shangaan Music: 
Tshetsha 
(Honest Jon’s, 2010)
Future = Human – Happy people are dancing everywhere on earth.

Aphex Twin: 
Selected Ambient Works I 
(Apollo, 1992)
An album to listen to in our future nursing homes. It could be Autechre - Amber too.

John Coltrane: 
Psalm 
(Island, 1965)
Future Gods – A Love Supreme is one of Coltrane’s most spiritual works.
The Word is also AVAILABLE on the iPad

Five sections documenting the best in Belgian fashion, photography, music, design and culture

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  - Intimate interviews with and social commentary on local heroes

- **Style**
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Download it for free from Apple’s AppStore (search term The Word) or go to thewordmagazine.be/ipad for more information
The start-up special

3
The number of years a start-up typically has to reach profitability

0
The number of times you're likely to see your friends, family and partner for the next three years

13,18%
The percentage of Belgian start-ups that employed staff during their first year

€60,000
The average investment needed for most start-ups’ first year

6
Your minimum daily intake of cups of coffee

100 times per day
The amount of times you’ll wonder what possibly could have driven you to become independent

54,097
The total amount of start-ups created in Belgium in 2010

34%
The amount of taxes Belgian start-ups will need to pay once they reach profitability
Closer scrutiny of entrepreneurial success stories reveals plenty of failure to go around. It’s common currency in the business that occasional setbacks are often instrumental in shaping the overall success. How? Well, success is a bad teacher. A very successful Sébastien Doyen is intensely cheerful about his defeats, something that seems a bit jarring. He wholeheartedly agreed to a request for interview on the subject, answering the phone on the first ring, throat cleared, ready to delve into the details of the misguided ventures that almost cost him everything. “I started my first company three months before I finished school. I passed the exam but… in my mind I had already left!” says Sébastien, who at the tender age of 24 had 20 people working for him. “I wanted to make internet access free, so I set up an ISP with my brother. But we had to figure out how to make money with free internet access, so we created another company to sell advertising. We were the only internet provider in the world that was making money at the time.” After three years, they sold the advertising company to France Telecom and the technology to Microsoft. “You know when your friend connects on MSN messenger and a small pop-up appears with their name? It’s our invention.” But they never received much from Microsoft, and consider the deal a bit of a rip off. “We sold it for a fee, and each year, we were supposed to get a cut for the publicity… but they never used it for publicity. We were 20, 24… too young. We should have sold the company for much more, but we were too technical.” For a year, the boys did very little, except travel and spend their money. “After selling to Microsoft and to France Telecom, we felt like gods, you know? They invite you in first class… you become crazy. But the reason we’re still here is that the deal with Microsoft was not great. After one year, we realised this, and so we said OK, we should continue to work a little bit!” In 2003, Sébastien and his brother had another go. “It was a nightmare period. We set up a publicity company in Paris, but we made two big mistakes. The first was to try to do something in a country we didn’t know, and the second was to think we were so clever that we didn’t need to research the market. When we sold to France Telecom, one of their guys said “Wow, boys if you were in France with that thing you would have 20 times more customers,” and when you hear that from the biggest guy in France Telecom, you think shit!” They decided to take their business directly to France. “We thought that because we had made two big sales, we could enter a country and achieve the same thing, and of course, you can guess what happened… ha ha! That part was less funny. It was a big, big mistake. We stopped the company in 2005 after losing many millions.” Of the 12 companies that Sébastien has been involved in, eight have succeeded. “You know, I still think money is just to create something. If you make a first company and you lose all the money, you can’t raise money anymore. But you make a small company, make a small success and sell it, give back the money to the VC. And the more you make companies and the more success and failure you have, the more people trust you.” With a shrug, he adds “If your company is not working, then you just create another one.” Spoken like a true entrepreneur. (RK)
Amélie Despot, dotcom veteran

The dotcom boom was a time of unbridled enthusiasm for online companies, when scruffy entrepreneurs lunched with deep-pocketed venture capitalists with a fetish for the next-big-thing. We know now that a lot of the great ideas that typified the era were just that – great ideas – and led to one of the most spectacular crashes trading floors have ever seen. Still, though. It must have been fun. Amélie Despot, is cofounder of Internet Attitude and a dotcom boom veteran. Her war story begins in Brussels sometime in the mid-nineties. “I studied at ICHEC, where there was a program to send young people abroad to conduct market research for Belgian companies.” Amélie was sent to the US to conduct market research on the internet, right at the beginning of everything. “When I tell people this story, they presume I was in San Francisco or Silicon Valley, but it was even before Silicon Valley, when everything was happening on the East Coast,” she laughs, “so it’s quite a while ago...” While the other program participants were researching foreign trade-related matters in places like Indonesia and Bangkok, she admits she lucked out. “I realised that this was something a lot more important. There was a real feeling that something was happening. I came back to Belgium and sold 2,000 copies of my market research.” But despite the reception, there wasn’t much else going on. “It was difficult for me because I really wanted to work in an Internet company but there was nothing here in 1996. There weren’t really any tech companies. I had a feeling the Internet would come to Europe through advertising, so I spent the summer working for an advertising agency, and I read about this guy who wanted to launch an Internet advertising agency, Arnaud Huret. So I called him up.” At the time, everything was developed in HTML and she looks back fondly at the memory, “The first advertising banners were animated gifs. It wasn’t very fancy! There were no standards so we had to define measurements for advertising performance. The hardest thing for us was that we had to educate the market. We spent so much time and energy explaining how internet advertising worked. Now, that seems ridiculous.” While the past decade has been filled with a new kind of realism about the internet economy, it was a different time. The sky was the limit. “We launched it in September 96 and in December 96, IP bought 40 percent of our shares. It was typical of the time. We created 10 startups between ’99 and 2005, totally addicted. We couldn’t really expect at that time the explosion that was to happen.” The market, she says, couldn’t keep up with the ideas. “The problem at the time was that we were too far ahead of everybody. The cloud applications you see today: we were in the cloud ten years ago!” Some of Amélie’s dotcom ventures have survived in one guise or another, like dating site Rendezvous and Contact Office. Nowadays, she spends her time scanning the Belgian horizon, looking to invest in tech based startups. “Today, it’s usually a one man show, maybe two, whereas for us it was always a group adventure. Now people want a safe job, safe salary. That was not a question for us. We took more risks. We worked days and nights and weekends and holidays, and now when I hear entrepreneurs looking for a better work-life balance, I say sorry guys that’s not compatible; you have to live with your startup, eat with it, sleep with it and that is the key to success.” (RK)
This is the end: when to call it quits

We met in Brussels’ Hotel Amigo, Roald joked that this was a hotel for rock stars not entrepreneurs. We represented much of the reality of the start up community today, Belgians for sure, but many internationals, brought here by EU jobs or trailing spouses and taking the route of entrepreneurship because it was the best, most exciting (only?) career path available to us. We discussed the Belgian start up scene and tried to get to the bottom of a major issue that all entrepreneurs have to face eventually, when to sell, quit, or shut down your start up. What came from these discussions is how difficult it is to make these decisions, but mostly that they get made for you.

A conversation moderated by Simon McDermott    Photographer Grégoire Pleynet
When the money comes, take it: Toon explained that he had worked with Roald in his first start-up experience, which started a discussion about what can happen when people come to you with money to buy your company, potentially giving you the nicest exit of them all.

Toon — Roald was my inspiring entrepreneur
Olga — Your mentor
Toon — Indeed, its a nice example of a Wallonian guy mentoring a Flemish guy... that start-up was almost sold back then, if we want to talk about when to “get out”, he was offered €30 Million.

Roald — It was more than that
Toon — One of their competitors was acquired for a lot of money and it was less advanced than Winbox
Roald — They sold for €200 Million

Toon — That’s stuff you learn, expensive lessons, the close but no cigar feeling, that we’ve all had.
Leo — Perhaps the learning of the day is when someone comes to you with a big pile of cash, take it!
Roald — At least don’t say no straight away
Toon — (joking) Who are you are, my competitor just sold for €200 Million, you are offending me, get out
Push and pull: Later we discussed the impact of outside investors, it became clear that the agenda and investment timescales of these investors also pushes the entrepreneur into making the stay/go decisions.

Toon — I co-founded Casius in 1999 and we raised €4 Million. If you stay around long enough it becomes interesting. Typically when you deal with Venture Capitalists these funds have a certain timeline. They expect to invest in a year or two so they have to fund investments and acquisitions which can in turn help to create a bubble, any company that starts is worth millions because there is money around, they become less picky.

Roald — Investors need to have “one”

Toon — We were funded by Net Fund Europe, they sold a betting company, the fund was profitable and at a certain point they shut down the fund.

Gilbert — The funds often have a 10 year maximum life anyway

Toon — Yes, but investors want the money quicker if possible. I was fortunate in a way, we spent the €4 Million and I learnt a lot. At the same time we were a small SMB company and too small to be acquired by a large industrial player, it was bad in 2005, so I did a management buy-out. I bought back my start-up and I still own 50%.

Passion Bullshit: We then discussed the importance of entrepreneurial energy and the need for passion, but that started an interesting reality check and the discussion became more about the fake nature of “passion” and the importance of basic things such as hard work and good accounting.

Toon — It’s addictive, all of us around the table know that. But one of the main dangers is getting distracted. Roald and I know this with all the projects we get involved with. Its important to concentrate on what matters, cash is more important than your mother. Where is the money coming from, where do I need to focus.”

Leo — (joking) Lets face it that’s boring

Gilbert — Yeah that’s where all this passion bullshit comes in, its a way of distracting you from what’s important. At the moment its passion, in 2000 people were telling you to “play”, play was important and in the 1980s having balls
was important and the picture on the front of the magazine was a woman in a pinstripe suit. What hasn’t changed is working hard and having a good accountant and being smart and having good ideas.

**Juggling balls with stamina:** Towards the end we became philosophical

**Gilbert** — As an old guy, as its advice for young people… advice is easy to give. You kind of have to make mistakes and advice becomes experience. What Toon has said about juggling five balls (doing too many things at once), they shouldn’t do that. You go through this cycle where you drop balls and you keep dropping them until you hit financial ruin and then re-focus your efforts to find one thing you can synthesise passion for and then you go for that.

**Olga** — The passion idea is still very strong in the USA

**Gilbert** — They can afford to be passionate because they have 10 million in their back pocket

**Roald** — It’s better to be passionate but it is no substitute for hard work. But it is being sold as dope: “passion is the only thing you need,” but it isn’t like that.

**Gilbert** — Toon, are you passionate about data and company records, really?

**Toon** — (laughs) no, but I am passionate about disrupting an industry and making the data easier to access.

**Roald** — We shouldn’t forget that passion comes from passio, the latin for suffering, entrepreneurs should know that...

**Olga Slavkina** (@funkybizbabe) was born in Latvia, and educated in the US and Spain, she is a brand and marketing strategy expert based in Brussels. She founded SCHMOOZY FOX which specialises in consumer-focused branding

**Gilbert West** (@blueclock) is Scottish and founded SearchCog that builds reporting tools helping organisations make smart decisions about how to improve their website content based on what their customers really want.

**Roald Sieberath** (@roald) is a Belgian entrepreneur, as well as founding Medianet and Winbox in the late 90s he has brought to market several innovations (some patent-pending) and is presently a program manager for the Microsoft Innovation Center and a board member of OpenERP.

**Toon Vanagt** (@toon) is a Belgian internet entrepreneur and technology consultant. In 1999 he founded Casius. Today the Casius technology platform is the leading online marketplace in Benelux to connect consumers with pre-screened residential contractors and home service professionals. Toon is also a co-founder of Data.be

**Simon McDermott** (@simonmc) is an Irish entrepreneur who co-founded Attentio in 2004. In 2011 he left and is now a non-executive director of Jam Publishing, owns a new media consultancy company and is collaborating with two entrepreneurs on new start up FashionTracer.com

**Leo Exter** (@leoeexter) is a Moscow born marketer and entrepreneur. He founded WeStartUp, a community of entrepreneurs, mentors and investors – westartup.eu and is an organiser of Start Up Weekend Brussels.
And the award goes to...

Belgium is a notoriously fickle environment for entrepreneurs and their start-ups. Red tape bureaucracy, two-party politics and an adverse perception to risk-taking means that, most often that not, a good and sound idea is flattened before even making it to business plan stage. But, underneath the rumble of an economy held back by its structural shortcomings, a new generation of entrepreneurs is marching on, unabashed and unrepentant, bringing its ideas to market in ever more innovative ways. Bringing together our in-house team of editors, designers and web developers, we handpick the most promising Belgian start-ups of the year.

Writer Nicholas Lewis
Photographer Pauline Miko
With additional research by Charline Stoelzaed

The judges
(from left to right)

Geoffroy Delobel
Founded Central Design studio to think of more efficient and easier ways to use websites and applications. Otherwise enjoys baking, cooking, playing and listening.

Nicholas Lewis
Founder and editor in chief of The Word Magazine. Not exactly a technology buff but definitely a start-up fiend.

Damien Aresta

Pierre Smeets
Co-Founder of PLMD. When it comes to glasses and typography size does matter.
Imagine you’re a fashion photographer and your girlfriend cooks a mean truffle risotto. You like what you do, right? And chances are people might be willing to pay a little to spend an evening in your studio, learning the tools of the trade. Well, Kicktable allows you to do just that. Billed as a community marketplace for unique experiences hosted by passionate people, ‘hosts’ can upload all types of experiences (recent ones have included a presentation by a duo of former bankers turned hot-dog makers, or a beer-tasting session followed by a brewing workshop), in the belief that experience-seekers will take them up on their offer. Based on what you experience and not what you own, Kicktable puts passion at the center of its platform, allowing its users to make their urban lives that much more enriching. Experiences are the future people, and Kicktable is too, trust us.

**BUSINESS TO CONSUMER**

1. **Checkthis**
   - Founded by Frédéric della Faille of web agency Bureau 3.47, Checkthis is a micro-publishing platform that allows anyone to instantly publish and share webpages, its strength lies in its open-to-all policy and its superb minimalism: no set-up or registration is required and the interface couldn’t be any simpler. The platform can be used for anything from selling items and writing open letters to sending out event invitations and posting job adverts. Having just won Seedcamp in London, at the time of going to press the team was currently making its case for world-domination in San Francisco, pitching to the likes of Apple, Microsoft and Four Square. Why is it number one? Because everything from its purpose, its technology, its name and its design spells success.

2. **Kicktable**
   - Imagine you’re a fashion photographer and your girlfriend cooks a mean truffle risotto. You like what you do, right? And chances are people might be willing to pay a little to spend an evening in your studio, learning the tools of the trade. Well, Kicktable allows you to do just that. Billed as a community marketplace for unique experiences hosted by passionate people, ‘hosts’ can upload all types of experiences (recent ones have included a presentation by a duo of former bankers turned hot-dog makers, or a beer-tasting session followed by a brewing workshop), in the belief that experience-seekers will take them up on their offer. Based on what you experience and not what you own, Kicktable puts passion at the center of its platform, allowing its users to make their urban lives that much more enriching. Experiences are the future people, and Kicktable is too, trust us.

3. **Twusic**
   - Allowing users to build their own radio station at the click of a tweet, Twusic aggregates your #nowplaying hashtag into a custom-made playlist, enabling your followers to listen to what you’re listening to and discover new music along the way. Its strength lies in its simplicity, meaning users do not need to register on multiple platforms, have their listening times limited nor put up with different restrictions per country. Although we would have probably opted for a different name and put more attention to detail in the interface’s design, the technology behind the platform (Twusic’s algorithm converts a mind-boggling 2.5 million #nowplaying Tweets a day into music videos and additional information such as artist biography and tour dates), there’s no doubt in our minds that this is a winner.

checkthis.com
twusic.com
kicktable.com
The brainchild of 23-year-old wiz-kid Davy Kestens, Twitspark’s the solution multinationals’ customer relationship managers have been waiting for. Using Twitter to efficiently coordinate companies’ customer service, the six-month old start-up allows the likes of Volkswagen to avoid missing important (read damning) Tweets whilst also enabling them to follow-up on these in order to better manage their online reputations. Twitspark’s genius lies in the real-time possibilities of reacting to a dissatisfied or disgruntled customer’s 140 character-long complaints at the click of a mouse. When most Twitter tools are mere marketing-based initiatives that are entirely devoid of any integration capability within existing structures, Twitspark doesn’t aim to add to the corporate layer, but be part of it. Expect its client list to double in size in 2012.

twitspark.com

Google Analytics and Facebook Insights are all well and fine, but they remain common denominators that don’t necessarily give you an edge over the competition. WooRank, on the other hand, goes a little bit further than mere analytics. A fully automated SEO analysis tool that whips up a basic report and scores your website out of a 100 in less than five seconds, it strengths lie in its consulting approach to analytics provision. Take for example its personalised tips to improve the website or, our favourite, the possibility to purchase a white paper, customisable at will, that can then be used as an effective sales tool. Some glitches here and there though (our location was listed as London’s glittering Islington and we apparently have over 13,000 Twitter followers – wrong Word Magazine folks) but nothing that can’t be fixed with some tweaks to the algorithm.

woorank.com

Facilitating online payment remains a huge issue for digital content providers – and a potential goldmine for whoever comes up with the right balance. And, with its system that allows users to pay casually small amounts for digital content by using their social network identity, we believe Paycento may be on to something. Enabling users to pay with Twitter, Facebook and soon even with Linkedin, the upstart (which is still currently at beta stage) combines real and virtual currencies to give control back to content providers, putting them back in charge of their pricing policies. Paypal, Visa and Mastercard are yesterday’s payment megastars. The future lies in fast and flawless payment systems, and Paycento’s upper hand on the industry is undeniable. Legal hurdles to internationalisation do exist though, but nothing a well-paid team of lawyers won’t get around.

paycento.com

Encourages office space owners to provide unused space to individuals in need of a temporary place to work.

kodesk.com

Offers help to separated parents concerning the communication and the organisation regarding their children.

2houses.com

A collaboration Mac application for small teams working on the same project.

kickoffapp.com
EXKi is the specialist in quality fast food.

We select the best seasonal ingredients, we use no additives, and we offer a range of certified organic products (bread, brownies, muffins, dairy products, vegetables, etc.). At EXKi, we believe that freshness equals flavour.

Our motto is: “Natural, Fresh, and Ready”.

All EXKi products are ready and packed in highly eco-friendly packaging. They are ready at any time for you to eat in or take away. EXKi is committed to reducing its ecological footprint (LED or energy-saving light bulbs, recycled paper, green electricity, eco-friendly packaging, sustainable furniture (FSC certified wood), etc.).

EXKi has opened a whole new concept in the heart of Brussels. Place de la Bourse. A restaurant entirely dedicated to “eco-design”.

The banquettes and stools are upholstered with fabric made from recycled plastic bottles. Our tables are made from reclaimed furniture. And one of the hanging lamps has been made from coffee stirrers and building site fencing.
Expert advice

Guidelines for start-ups roam the web, but nothing beats the first-hand advice of seasoned and experienced experts. Here, we ask a motley crew of connoisseurs – consultants, angel investors, directors and accountants – to dish out what, to them, are the do’s and don’ts of setting up on your own.

Illustrator Valentine De Cort

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1. **Roman Suarez**
   Founder and Managing Partner at BetaGroup Coworking, Founder and organiser of Startup Weekend Brussels, Consultant for New Media Business & Marketing Solutions

   **Do**
   Share and ask and you will be amazed at the quality of the feedback you will get from people with lots of experience and very little free time.

   **Don’t**
   Don’t be a pushy jerk, you will only get a bad reputation.

2. **Serge Kalitventzeff**
   Long lasting experience as NICT Business Unit Manager at the Brussels Enterprise Agency, now Management Consultant at Leyton Belgium

   **Do**
   Focus, focus, focus... on the clients who really need your product or to whom you think you bring a clear and significant advantage. On the country you think you can be the leader of taking into account your financial means. On the market where you can be really different (and better...) than your competitors.

   **Don’t**
   Don’t start your company alone. A one-man show is always somehow suspect. It is going to be very difficult to convince an investor, a bank and even a public authority if you can’t show that you were able to convince, from the beginning, one or two good professionals to join your project, being a friend or a personal contact.

3. **Simon McDermott**
   Social media marketing expert, entrepreneur and business developer with 15 years experience

   **Do**
   Even if it’s only the beginning, think about what will happen if someone will leave the business. It happens all the time and you have to be legally prepared. A bit like a marriage prenup. Do what you are good at and delegate the things that are difficult for you. For some people it might be essential to hire an accountant for example, others can easily do it themselves.

   **Don’t**
   Don’t be impatient. You don’t become super successful in a few months. Sometimes it takes years. And try to keep the fixed costs down as much as possible. That includes salaries: Don’t start hiring people too early.
4. **Steve Verbist**  
Entrepreneur, Educator and Investor,  
Founder of ESEVO

**Do**  
Imagine your goal as if you have already reached it.

**Don't**  
Don’t get too focused on making money.  
Pursue the money but use it to accomplish your dream.

5. **Lars Helsen**  
Independent legal counselor, co-founder of  
www.tafel3.be, Managing Director/Owner at Acospace, BVBAStarter and Procorim

**Do**  
Be well prepared, focus, and take one step at a time. Listen to others, team up, and network.  
Be open for changes, and above all, be passionate and perseverant!

**Don’t**  
Don’t do it alone, without mentoring, or without a strong vision. Don’t overspend. And dreaming is allowed but stay realistic.

6. **Cedric Donck**  
Business Angel, board member of service-a splr, blue2purple, Input for you, and hooox, president at Newcopark, co-founder and board member of adanso.org

**Do**  
Every entrepreneur should appoint a board of directors of experienced peers and report to them as if they were external shareholders.

**Don’t**  
When you start your company don’t distribute your shares to employees or advisors before you’re sure that they will contribute to the success of your venture over the long term.

7. **Ivan Dekeyser**  
Accountant and tax consultant

**Do**  
Think, think, think before you act. Calculate the risks, consult multiple experts, as most of them often have a very specific target audience and can’t always offer clearance on every single aspect of your start up. Believe you have what it takes.

**Don’t**  
Never start without a financial plan that you discussed with an expert but don’t always trust your bank, even though they might approve of a financial plan, that still doesn’t mean it’s viable.

8. **Leo Exter**  
Founder at westartup & HealthStartup,  
organiser at Startup Weekend Brussels & Bizcamp Belgium, coach at MIC Boostcamp

**Do**  
Ask for advice from those with more experience than you, and do take on board what they have to say, because they’ve already earned their bumps and scrapes the hard way.

**Don’t**  
When you get advice, don’t take it as scripture – just because an old way does (or doesn’t work) it doesn’t mean it can’t be improved upon.
The start-up survival kit

If you’re about to start your own business, chances are you won’t see the light of day for the next two years, your health is going to take a serious beating and the closest you’ll get to meeting up with your friends for after-work drinks is, well, Facebook chat sessions. Fear not, we’ve pieced together a range of survival kit items to get you through the start-up years.

Photographer Melika Ngombe

1. For health and nutrition:
   Health club membership & Cereal bars

The stress levels you’re about to endure driving your business forward and ensuring there’s more money coming in than coming out requires the right strategy to unwind at the end of the day (not that they’ll be such a thing as ‘the end of the day’). And, short of a masseuse giving you the mother-of-all massages before and after working hours, you’re next best option is a membership to your local gym. With its sizeable pool, gigantic work-out area as well as its steam baths and saunas, nothing beats Aspria’s health clubs. We’ve added in a health bar, for post-workout energy boosts.

aspria.be

2. For good first impressions:
   Laptop bag

Good presentation is half the battle won. And, although your investors won’t exactly be reassured to see you turning up to pitches in a Brioni suit trailed by a flashy ‘personal assistant’, they’ll be looking for details as a sign of your ability to carry your business idea from napkin to Nasdaq. And that can mean anything from the state of your hands (yes yes you Alfa-male self-starters, a manicure will make the difference between a yes and a no), to the pair of shoes you’re sporting. More pertinent still, given the amount of time you’ll be spending on the go, is your choice of laptop carriers. Trust us on this one: you do not want to go for the generic sling-on black bag, as all that says is that you’re more of a follower than a leader. This leather-clad, shockproof, carry-on pouch by Belgian leather good experts Delvaux will, however, ensure that half the battle is won.

Airees Laptop Pouch (€130).
Available from Delvaux stores nationwide.
delvaux.com
3. **For inspiration and motivation:**

**Wired**

With recent cover features such as ‘How David Karp stumbled on to Tumblr’ and ‘Why Jeff Bezos owns the internet’, Wired magazine (repeatedly voted digital magazine of the year) is the title that everyone from entrepreneurs to venture capitalists reads. That being said, the magazine, which recently ran a story on a subversive French collective (UX) restoring forgotten parts of Paris’ underground artefacts, extends its dominance of the geeky digital world by speaking to a larger audience of the curious and interested. With both UK and US editions, its blend of big money-talk, ideas, technology, culture and gadget consumerism, makes for a truly unique read.

*Wired UK (£2.4 for 12 issues).*

*wired.co.uk*

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4. **For food and facility:**

**Pot noodles**

When preparing investor presentations is the only thing on your mind, chances are cooking is, at best, seen as a necessary evil and, at worse, considered an utter waste of time. What’s more, once you’ve gone through your local pizza joint’s entire menu and your lovely neighbours make it clear they’re growing tired of you crashing their family dinners, your last resort is the pot noodle. The saviour to a generation of kitchen-useless students, Aiki Noodles’ pot noodles have graduated to the dim-lit basements of entrepreneurs. Think about it. All you need is a kettle, an electrical socket, some running water (doesn’t even need to be hot, saving you precious dough on utility bills) and you’re set. And you won’t even need to do the dishes after. *Priceless.*

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5. **For informative entertainment:**

**Start-up.com**

Ever since they were fifteen, Kaleil and Tom have had their sights set on becoming filthy rich by starting a dotcom. They’ll quickly realise though that it isn’t as simple as it sounds, as their idea – GovWorks.com, a website that allows people to do business with government – gets put to the test by uncommitted partners, demanding families, ruthless competitors and an unforgiving equity market. What’s more, with all the focus put on intellectual capital, the onus is on the founders – as opposed to technology – to make things work. The documentary, directed by Chris Hegedus, Jehane Noujaim, charts the rise and fall of this classic dotcom, and makes for incredible useful watching for budding entrepreneurs as to the pitfalls to avoid.

*Available from amazon.com*
Kelly De Block

Having first profiled her work for our website’s talent section, we got back in touch with up-and-coming photographer Kelly De Block to talk about her latest series, ‘Appearing/disappearing’. A now-you-see-me-now-you-don’t juxtaposed play of sorts which casts new face Cilou Annys in a supporting role, the series confirms the young Brussels-based talent’s knack for visionary and future-friendly visual stories.

Interview Nicholas Lewis

We interviewed you a short while ago for our website’s The talent section. At the time, you spoke to us about a project you were working on that centered around appearing and disappearing and which is now completed. What initially gave you the idea for the feature? Is there a particular message behind it?

The images originated out of a fascination for the subject. I see this series as research, which is not finished yet. It’s a small piece in a bigger whole, and this series is just the beginning. I want the viewer to almost feel the material of the print and the vague boundaries of the technique.

What technique was used for it? Was most of the ‘appearing/disappearing’ angle brought to the story after the shoot, in Photoshop?

All of it is done after the shoot, manually without any digital postproduction. For this series I worked with the printed images and made photocopies of them. By which time I have quite a clear vision of what the images should look like, but it still changes massively during the process.

Do you already have a very clear idea of the resulting images you’re seeking to achieve before beginning to shoot? Your work seems imbued by a steadfast vision...

Like I mentioned above I know more or less what I want in each image. I have a vague idea, or I get inspired by a shape or line I picked up on during the shoot. But there is still room for coincidence and experimenting afterwards.

I see this series as research, which is not finished yet. It’s a small piece in a bigger whole, and this series is just the beginning.

You spoke about the importance of the model, Cilou Annys, in it. How did you find Cilou, and what was your brief to her for the series? Was this the first time you two were working together? What, precisely, was her role in the shoot, how did you see her contributing to it, beyond just modelling for you?

Cilou was one of the new models at Dominique, she had experience but still needed some new images for her portfolio. Her look was perfect for the series! I believe a shoot is an interaction between many people, working to achieve one goal, her contribution was one of many important puzzle pieces to get this shoot to a good ending.

This edition’s fashion story was shot by Ismael Moumin, whom I believe you assisted several times if I’m not mistaken. In my mind, there’s a clear link to his style and approach in your work...

I think we are both photographers of ‘the new generation’. Fashion is an element we can use and alter to our beliefs and collage is a technique that gives a face to the society we live in today. We certainly aren’t the only photographers using collage today, but that is what I like about it, it’s a technique with a history, which we give a contemporary view upon.

The overall theme of this edition is the future, which I feel perfectly describes your work. How do you see yourself fit into the new generation of photographers? What does ‘the future’ mean to you?

We are overwhelmed by images on a daily basis. Where we used to be confronted with images only trough television and print, social media and new forms of multimedia have infiltrated our lives. I find that my generation feels the urge to look for ways to comprehend this fast moving stream of images by trying to find ways to move beyond the established visual boundaries. Concerning the future, it is a leap in the dark. It includes everything and nothing all at the same time. Which I think is a beautiful thing, especially when you are young. You challenge yourself and shift your boundaries constantly.

Although you describe yourself as a social photographer most comfortable working with people, your subjects often seem to be given more of a supporting role, with your approach and technique taking more of a central role...

It is true that I need social interaction when I’m photographing, especially as a fashion photographer when you work in a team. I have a great interest in people as a subject, but it is a fact that this interaction with the model becomes a less important piece and it isn’t something that shows in the final image.

Where does the better part of your work take place? Before, during or after the camera clicks?

Absolutely after! I love to work with my prints and really have an interaction with the paper.

Are there any upcoming photographers whose work has impressed you lately?

I know their work for quite a while now, but I am impressed with the work of Damien Blottiere and Sabrina Theissen. Blottiere because of the specific cuts and shapes that enter his work, Theissen because of the beautiful light in her images.
Pauline Miko

Red heads are divisive figures. To some, they’re intriguing and mysterious beings, with something of an inner aura about them. To others, they’re an odd bunch that aren’t to be approached too closely. Love them or hate them, there’s no denying they’re unique – it is estimated that less than 2 percent of the global population is red headed. Drawing on her on-going series, we use photographer Pauline Miko’s work to soften up their often-undeserved reputation.
The Sous-rubrique
Fire starter

The biting flames of a fire often conjure images of a nightmarish hell-threatening, destructive and deadly. But fire can also be celebratory, life-affirming and cosy (you know, the snap-crackle-and-pop type of cosiness). Here, we explore both sides of the coin...

Photographer Melika Ngombe
Kenzo
kenzoparfums.com

Rado
rado.com

Peugeot
peugeot.be

ING
ing.be/expats

Swatch
swatch.com

Bozar
bozar.be

Wiels
wiels.org
Ambre Babzoe  
(at Bleu, C'est Gris)  
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9000 Ghent  
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amrebabzoe.com

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+32 (0) 9 233 79 64  
bellerose.be

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1000 Brussels  
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2000 Antwerp  
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Rue Neuve 111-123  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 211 21 11  
calvinkleininc.com

Converse (at People)  
Rue du Lombardstraat 14-18  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 502 18 01  
converse.be

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1050 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 503 53 68  
costores.com

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Hoplant 31  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 232 02 47  
delvaux.be

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1000 Brussels  
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diesel.com

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zegna.com

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esprit.com

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2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 770 67 57  
fredperry.com

Hermès Brussels  
Boulevard de Waterloolaan 50  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 511 20 62  
hermes.com

Jil Sander  
Leopoldstraat 7  
2020 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 292 37 80  
figure.zip

Jiun.J (at RA)  
Kloosterstraat 13  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 292 37 80  
jiun.com

Kenzo (at ICI Paris XL)  
Rue Neuve 37 Nieuwstraat  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 219 22 07

Kenzo (at Planet Parfum)  
De Keyserlei 34-36  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 234 07 01  
kenzo.com

Le Mont-St-Michel  
Place Stéphanie 6 Stefaniaplein  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 207 14 80  
lemontsaintmichel.fr

Lenny Leleu  
(at Pretty Woman)  
Hoplant 57  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 336 46 47  
lennyleleu.com

Les Filles à Papa (at Kelly)  
Rue Darwinastraat 60  
1050 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 345 58 90  
fillesapapa.com

Paule Ka Brussels  
Boulevard de Waterloolaan 48  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 347 28 85

Paule Ka Antwerp  
Komedieplaats 10  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 233 42 92  
pauke.be

Pomellato  
(at A la Bonne Heure)  
Rue Bodenbroekstraat 2  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 502 42 06  
pomellato.com

Raf Simons (at Stijl)  
Rue Antoine Dansaertstraat 74  
1000 Brussels  
+32 (0) 2 512 03 13

Raf Simons (at Louis)  
Lombardenvest 2  
2000 Antwerp  
+32 (0) 3 233 98 72  
rafsimons.com

Songzio  
songzio.com
SOON AT AB

07.04 | JOSÉ JAMES
YESTERDAY I HAD THE BLUES: THE MUSIC OF BILLIE HOLIDAY

17.05 | HAUSCHKA + JÓHANN JÓHANNSSON
+ DUSTIN O’HALLORAN
1030701 TRANSCENDENTALISTS EUROPEAN TOUR 2012

31.05 | A WINGED VICTORY FOR THE SULLEN
CHAMBER ORCHESTRA + NILS FRAHM

01.04 | WALLIS BIRD + AIDAN
02.04 | A NIGHT WITH... PRIMUS SOLD OUT
02.04 | ANIMALS AS LEADERS
03.04 | THERAPY!
03.04 | THE STRANGE BOYS + JACQUI BOYS
04.04 | GM
06.04 | ANGELS & AIRWAVES + LE BLOAR
09.04 | RIVAL SONS
10.04 | IMANY + NEVADA FELLOW
10.04 | BLACK BOX REVELATION SOLD OUT
11.04 | BLACK BOX REVELATION
11.04 | MICHAEL HURLEY + PAPER WINGS
+ SCREENING OF "SHOCK, N’ ROLL ADVENTURES WITH MICHAEL HURLEY"
12.04 | ORBITAL + THE JAPANESE POPSTARS SOLD OUT
14.04 | LIZZ WRIGHT
14.04 | BARN OWL + BLANK MASS (+ 1/6 F.UCK BOTTLES) + ENSEMBLE ÉCONOMIQUE
16.04 | BEN HOWARD + EMWY THE GREAT SOLD OUT
17.04 | MARLON ROUBETTE
18.04 | SOAP & SKIN (WITH ENSEMBLE) + A THOUSAND FUELOS
19.04 | FINK + HEMETTE FINLEY
20.04 | JOOLS HOLLAND & HIS RHYTHM & BLUES ORCHESTRA
20.04 | SARAH FERRI
21.04 | MINNEAPOLIS, MON AMOUR: DARK DARK DARK + WE WERE EVERGREEN
22.04 | MADELEINE PEYRONX & BAND
23.04 | THE ANTILERS + IAMOX
24.04 | BROOKE FRASER
25.04 | GROUNDATION + BRUSSELL
25.04 | OF MONSTERS AND MEN
26.04 | ROBERTO FONSECA TO
26.04 | WALLACE VANBORN + KAPITAN KORSAKOV
27.04 | THE DANDY WARHOLS
27.04 | RACHAEL YAMAGATA
28.04 | KYTHEMAN ORCHESTRA
28.04 | 16.03 | A BRAND ‘GRAMMAR’
28.04 | 20.00 | A BRAND ‘GRAMMAR’ SOLD OUT
29.04 | MARCUS MILLER
30.04 | MICHAEL KIWANUKA SOLD OUT
30.04 | ALABAMA SHAKES SOLD OUT
01.05 | MATTHEW DEAR
07.05 | MY BEST FRIEND + FLYING HORSEMAN
08.05 | BOWEBIRDS
09.05 | AROMA DI AMORE + STAN WESSENHUS
10.05 | 4 REWIND. DE PITA MADRE 'UNE BALL DANS LA TÊTE'
11.05 | NEIL COWLEY TRIO
14.05 | STEVEN WILSON
16.05 | THOMAS DOLBY
20.05 | BASS DRUM OF DEATH
24.05 | WOLVES IN THE THRONE ROOM
25.05 | NETSKY SOLD OUT
26.05 | NETSKY
26.05 | WHITE DENIM
27.05 | CODEINE + JESUS IS MY SON
28.05 | JULIA HOLLER
30.05 | L.A. VAMPIRES + ITAL + MARIA MINARVA + MAGIC TOUCH
+ SPECIAL GUEST PEAKING LIGHTS
02.06 | CITIZEN COPE NEW DATE
03.06 | BOB MOULD Performs "COPPER BLUE"
06.06 | DIRTY THREE + PAPA M
08.06 | LIARS
10.06 | HELMUT LOTTI & ROLAND'S SUPER ALLSTAR ENLIGHTENING MUSIC MACHINE NEW DATE
11.06 | ASAP ROCKY
14.06 | PAUL WELLER
15 + 16.06 | LOU REED 'FROM VU TO VU' SOLD OUT
29.09 | HEIDERODIES - FAREWELL SHOW
23.11 | STEVE MILLER BAND

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Next on the colour chart, the **GREY** album.

*Having had to swap our greys for our greens (which should have been the colour of choice for June but got dropped due to unforeseen circumstances), we actually have a pretty good idea of where we’re heading with for this next colour of ours:*

Sarah Echaut profiles six of the country’s most infamous graffiti writers

Rose Kelleher documents the industry players proving the elders really are all right

Ulrike Biets takes to the Belgian highways and spend some time with truckers

Philippe Pourhashemi interviews Dior Homme designer Kris Van Assche

Nicholas Lewis speaks with Mute Records founders Daniel Miller

Sarah Schug sits down with Belgian up-and-coming collective UpHigh

*Plus we have our photography special in which we’ll be*

Capturing photographers and their cameras

Convincing portrait photographers to turn the camera on themselves

Revealing our pick of most promising Belgian photographers

Rounding up the key craftsmen working in and around photography

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**The Word’s GREY album**

(*the photography special*)

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THE GIFT OF TIME