

org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.

Your path through the collection lead along A DONNER, Swarms, We were a modern house, The Authenticity in the woods of the Bosque Protector de Arraiján, Thunder Afar, Traces of logging on Mount Egaleo, Tracking, Vérandah, We were a modern house, What the left hand forgot, Wheelhouse (replica), Slightly Askew (1), Roofing (6) – JEM, Waybill, Zebras, Seacat

What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, etc., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).

Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.

the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases ‘documentalist’ Suzanne Briet, stating that ‘an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance’.

The gathered files are all documents – if they weren’t before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an ‘antelope’.

As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed.

It documented your path through the website.

As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.

This document was compiled by _____ on 04.04.2024 22:23, printed on _____ and contains 16 documents on 37 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/04-04-2024-5922/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.
www.decleenedecline.be / info@decleenedecline.be
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents.* Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online.* Accessed on 13.05.2021.



Flanders
State of the Art



A snow-covered stainless steel and glass shelf has a note, written in red marker, cello-taped to one of the steel supports: 'A DONNER'.

Now a park, the Place Marie Janson – colloquially called *Carré Moscou* or *Carré Monnaies* – used to house *L'Hôtel des Monnaies/het Munthof*. For a century, the coins of some twenty-two countries were minted in this building.

Sources

- [hotel_monnaies_nl.pdf](#)



type
photograph

date
03.04.2024

filename
_44A8275.dng

size
52,46 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
card, decoration, dusk, precipitation, sign, waste

22:20:46

July. Our eight-month-old son has a fever. We have a hard time getting him to drink enough. The tally marks on the back of a tortellini-box keep track of the diapers he wets and the millilitres of milk and electrolytes he's able to hold down.

Stuck inside with worrying parents, a sticker-book about a farm is his brother's favourite pass-time.

Tired of having to go back and forth between the pastures and the sticker-filled sheets we decide to use my arm as a repository for animals that share a habitat.



type
photograph

date
23.01.2024

filename
IMG_6467.jpeg

size
1,66 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
collecting, family, hand, sticker

22:20:55

*My dream hollyday We were a football
on the beach*

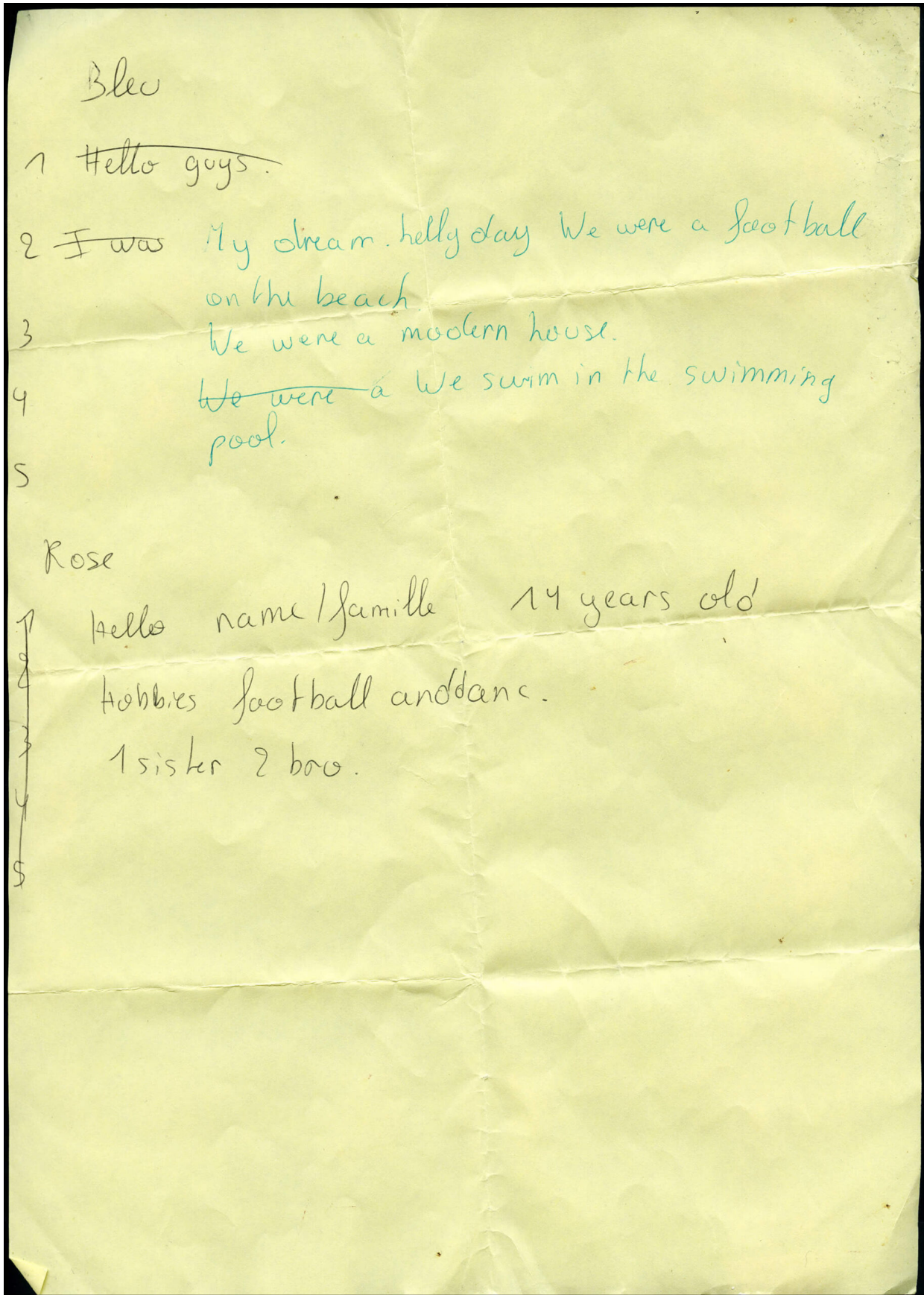
We were a modern house.

*We were a We swim in the swimming
pool.*

June 2022, Marche-en-Famenne. I arrived half an hour early. Waiting for my family to pick me up at the station, near a linden tree, I found a yellow page lying on the pebbles in front of the wooden bench I sat on. It had been a hot day. The sun was finally setting. Music playing in the distance. A white Volkswagen. Windows closed. Hard basses, trembling across the road. Folded three times, the sheet of paper had the size of a DIN A7. A white BMW pulled over. Seven glass jars in a container.

Notes





type	date	filename	size	author
scan	20.09.2023	wewereamodernhouse.pdf	10,12 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
 architecture, dusk, encounter, family, tree

The Authenticity bunkered crude fuel in the Panama Bay. She navigated back and forth between the artificial island Isla Melones and ships leaving or waiting to enter the Panama Canal. On February 14th 2015 she had been moored for a couple of days near the Centennial bridge when the AIS-transponder momentarily signalled the ship's position in the woods of the Bosque Protector de Arraiján. Afterwards no signal of the ship was received for 41 days, until she reappeared near the port of Bahia Las Minas, at the other side of the Panama Canal.

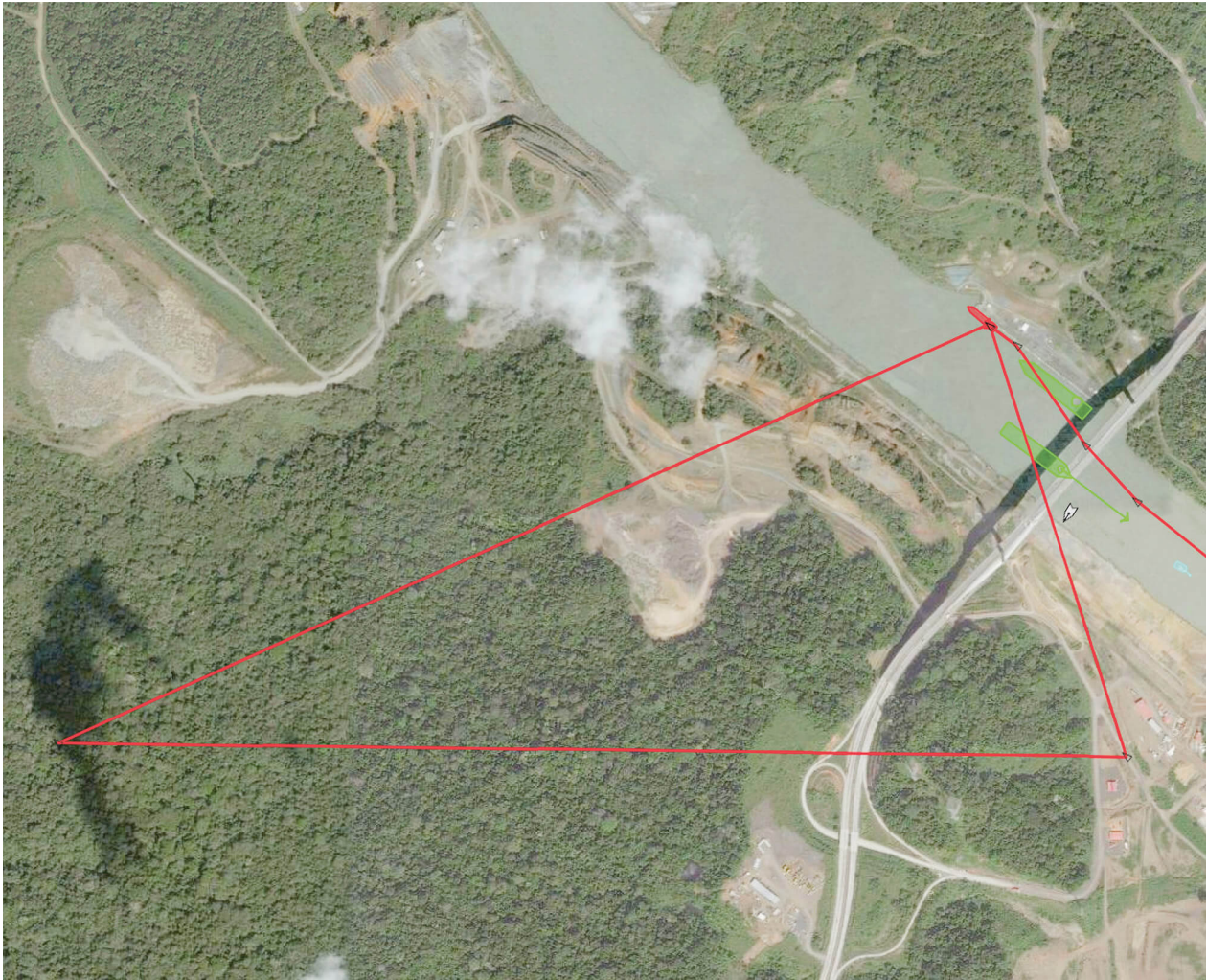
Notes

First published in: De Cleene, M. *Reference Guide*. Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2019

Sources

Marine Traffic, Authenticity (Caribe Trader, PA), latest position, 09°01'40,71" N 79°38'18,59"W, viewed 14.02.2015, <http://www.marinetraffic.com>

The Authenticity in the woods of the Bosque Protector de Arraiján



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	10.05.2021	caribe.jpg	17,33MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
economy, encyclopaedia, interference, landscape, map/plan, Reference Guide, sea, technology, tree, data storage

22:21:50

It's 21:49 on Tuesday May 4th 2021. I'm sifting through the folders of a back-up drive. When I reach Archief2A/2017/wigny donder, the subfolder contains 103 items (97 DNG-files, 1 JPEG-file and 5 PSD-files). The photographs are all very similar. They show the silhouette of the same tree and hills, the red light of the telecommunications mast on the left and the orange glow of the street's sodium lights. The thunderstorm moves from right to left. _44A3920 is the only exposure (10 seconds) that recorded lightning bolts.

I looked up *heat lightning*, also known as *silent lightning*, *summer lightning*, or *dry lightning*, which is simply cloud-to-ground lightning that occurs very far away, with thunder that dissipates before it reaches the observer. On YouTube I watched: *Top 10 Dangerous Lightning Strikes Thunder recorded on Camera (HIGH VOLTAGE!!)* followed by *Lightning Strikes at the 2019 U.S. Women's Open*. It's 22:07, I am doubtful at first but become convinced I can hear thunder afar.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	04.05.2021	_44A3920.psd	449,09MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
archive, astronomy, data storage, landscape, precipitation, technology

22:21:54

‘The saw cuts are sloppy and appear to be made in a haste.¹ The cuts are situated at a height of approximately seventy centimetres from the ground. The hill’s protected woods have seen an increase in these scattered traces of illegal logging since a rise in tax on heating fuel in October 2012. Many Greeks set about logging illegally in protected woods, mostly in the colder North of the country, but also here in Egaleo, a western suburb of Athens.’

Notes

1



- First published in: De Cleene, M. *Reference Guide*. Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2019



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	03.02.2023	mt_eg_003.tif, mt_eg_004.tif	88 MB, 86,40 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
economy, encounter, government, landscape, Reference Guide, tree

22:22:07



I drove through the neighborhood seeking evidence of the disruption using a power outage map as a compass. Winding through quiet streets, I stumbled upon a lone blue PG&E truck idling opposite a charred utility pole with fragments of wood and wire strewn across the pavement. I parked my car and walked toward the truck to ask the driver what had happened. He pointed to the top of the pole where a porcelain insulator dangled precariously from a high-voltage line. "Tracking," he said curtly. "Is that like a short circuit?" I asked. "Kind of," he replied before pausing. He finally elaborated, explaining that the problem arises when moisture from morning fog settles on power lines, creating a pathway for electricity to arc across components.

He then input something into a handheld device before driving away, leaving the repair for another service team to complete. I gathered the debris intending to collect the remaining components that comprise a utility pole, each having failed in one form or another. I shipped the fragments to Maziar the following week.

Notes

- Mathew Kneebone is an artist based in San Francisco. His interdisciplinary practices takes different forms, all in relation to an interest in electricity and technology. He teaches studio and thesis writing at California College of the Arts.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	24.02.2023	02_tracking.jpg, 03_tracking.jpg	3,51 MB, 324 KB	Mathew Kneebone

category
automobile, collecting, encounter, hand, impact, map/plan, precipitation, repair, technology

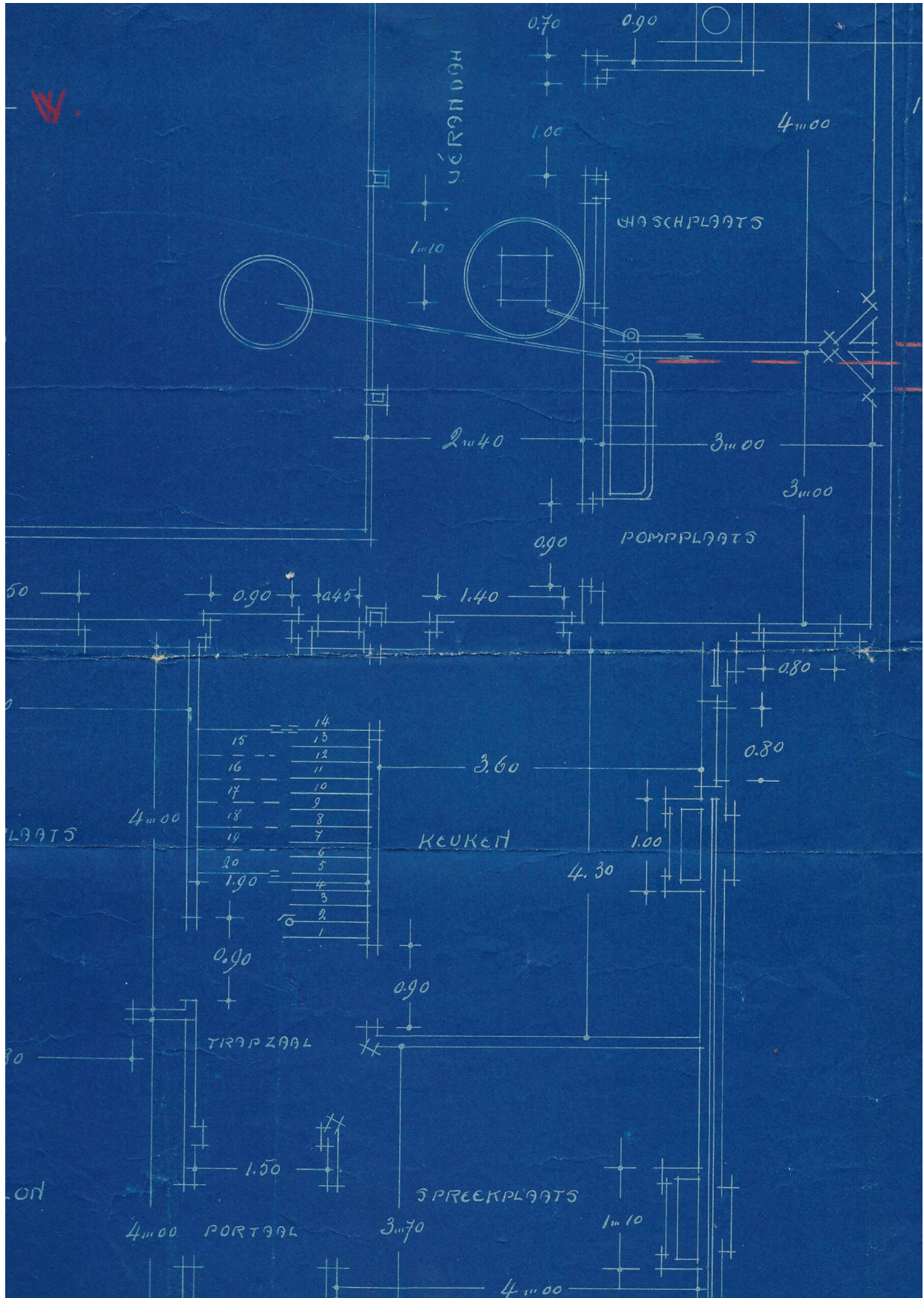
22:22:10



In the archive of the architect O. Clemminck, there is a piece of a plan of a building in a suburb in Gent. It presents the ground floor. There is a kitchen, a salon, an eating place, a meeting place. The missing part would have stated the exact address, the name, and maybe the profession of the owners. The plan of the first floor might have given an indication of the number of (anticipated) family members, based on the number and size of sleeping rooms.

At the southern edge of (the plan of) the lot, O. Clemminck has drawn a laundry room that gives out to a *vérandah*. The spelling of the Dutch word – nowadays written as *veranda* – is remarkable, as is its etymology, which is unclear and a matter of debate among scholars. The word might have Portuguese (*varanda*: railing) and Catalan roots (*baranda*: barrier), maybe also origins in the Lithuanian Žemaitan dialect (*varanda*: loop plaited from flexible wings) and might also be traced back to a Sanskrit root (*varandaka*: rampart separating two fighting elephants).

The *vérandah* O. Clemminck proposes is 2,40 meters by, at least, 2,80 meters.



type
scan

date
28.12.2021

filename
Foto_2021-12-27_194400.pdf

size
7,2MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
architecture, archive, family, house, map/plan, O. Clemminck

22:22:11

*My dream hollyday We were a football
on the beach*

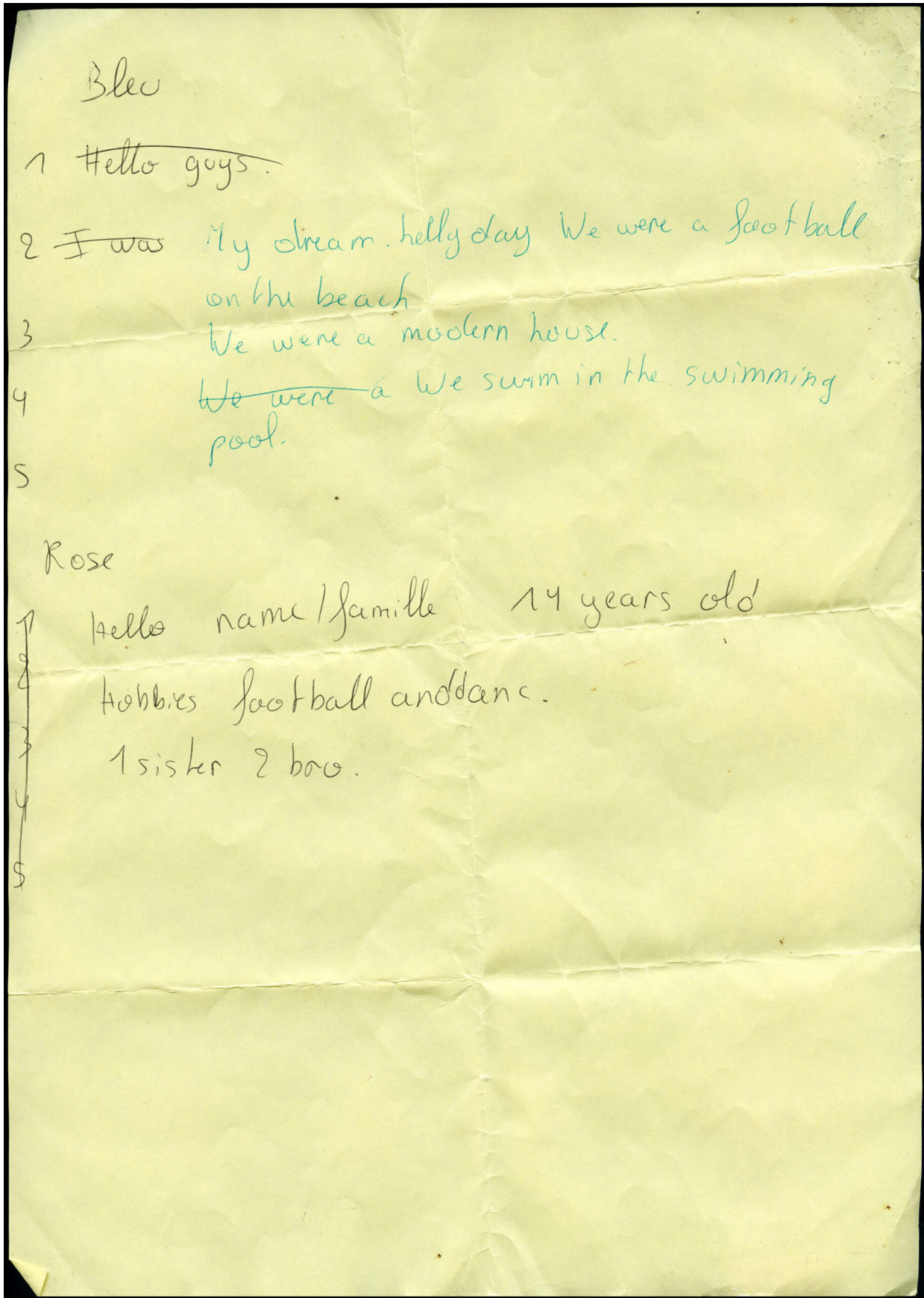
We were a modern house.

*We were a We swim in the swimming
pool.*

June 2022, Marche-en-Famenne. I arrived half an hour early. Waiting for my family to pick me up at the station, near a linden tree, I found a yellow page lying on the pebbles in front of the wooden bench I sat on. It had been a hot day. The sun was finally setting. Music playing in the distance. A white Volkswagen. Windows closed. Hard basses, trembling across the road. Folded three times, the sheet of paper had the size of a DIN A7. A white BMW pulled over. Seven glass jars in a container.

Notes





type	date	filename	size	author
scan	20.09.2023	wewereamodernhouse.pdf	10,12 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
 architecture, dusk, encounter, family, tree

At the end of the day, riding home after work, I find a text on my hand:

C
D[...]ers
Desk
K
Communication book

‘Diapers’, I recall, and stop at the shop to buy them. Sweat, dust, and manic hand rubbing have rendered parts of the writing illegible. ‘C’ is for Carl, whose newborn I need to visit as soon as possible. Sometimes, I can’t remember what the initial stands for. I don’t have any friends with names beginning with a K (who have newborns I need to visit).

The right hand writes, the left hand serves as the canvas. The back of the right hand, folded around the pen, is blank and tells the always already written on back of the left hand, whose palm never holds a pen, what to register. Right: an author. Left: a poem, sunken into the pores.

Back home, I trace ‘Desk’ again, as not to forget to clean it tomorrow.



type	date	filename	size
photograph	18.07.2022	_MG_7728.JPG, _MG_7792.JPG	5,5 MB, 5,7 MB
author	Arnout De Cleene		

category
data storage, literature, hand



The GPS-plotter displays the ship near Keyhaven Lake, indefinitely. The sea appears calm, the horizon is level from one perspective.



type
photograph

date
20.03.2022

filename
bridge_001.jpg

size
15,31 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
map/plan, Reference Guide, replica/copy, sea, sticker, trompe l'oeil

22:22:18

Until recently, for as long as I could remember, the packaging of Tabasco® Pepper Sauce had been unchanged. On the front of the packaging, there is a photograph of a bottle of Tabasco®, scale 1:1, against an orange background. As far as packaged goods go, this is a highly idiosyncratic and quirky example.

The background colour approximates the colour of the liquid inside the bottle, resulting in as good as no contrast. Moreover, as the image of the bottle is scale 1:1, the packaging becomes kind of unnecessary and superfluous, also because the life-sized image of the bottle is the only way information is given to the customer: there are no additional slogans, no repetition of the brand name, no props and no decor. The image of the bottle advertises the bottle. It seems to add nothing the bottle could not do by its own (like a bottle of wine does).

What makes the packaging truly stand out, however, is the fact that the image of the bottle is not positioned vertically, but is slightly askew. It seems to be the result of a design error, and has an amateur feel to it. The decision to keep it as such and not correct it up until today, is, however, a stroke of genius. The non-vertical positioning alters the relation of the image of the bottle to the bottle inside: as the box is standing on a shelf, the tilted image of the bottle undermines its representational superfluosity.



type
scan

date
29.03.2021

filename
Document_2021-03-29_111649.jpg

size
180KB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
economy, food, mistake, packaging, replica/copy, scale

22:22:28

In summer, the roofing gets hot and soft. In winter, it gets cold, hard and brittle. None of the gates to the garages are open. It's unsure whether the numerous texts and drawings – some dig deeper than others – have caused leakages.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	14.04.2021	IMG_6510.jpeg	6,61MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, decoration, fissure, map/plan, parking, precipitation, roofing, sign

22:22:52

‘You see?!’

[The man points at the waybill¹ on the floor behind the glass door that closes off the abandoned and dismantled hall.]

‘It used to be here, I’m sure.’

[He looks around.]

‘I’m sure.’

[He turns towards me.]

‘Are you also here for the Leen Bakker?² This used to be a Leen Bakker. I just looked it up on their website. They are open from 9 to 6 today.’

[He points at the waybill again.]

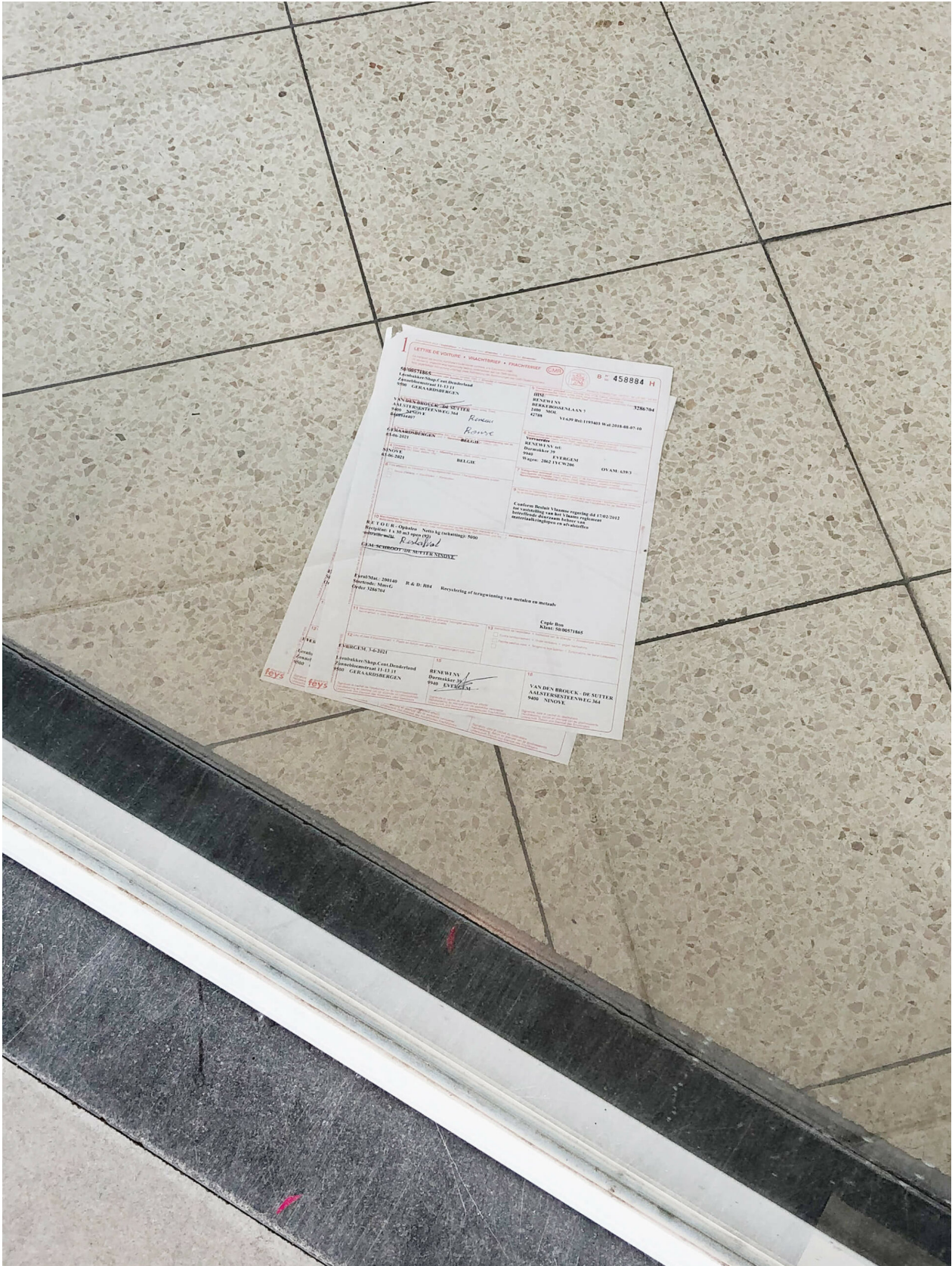
‘It was here. I remember well. It’s been years. But it’s here.’

[He walks away.]

‘I’ll look around.’

Notes

- 1 The waybill documents the transport of a 30m³ container filled with approximately 5000 kg of waste from this branch of Leen Bakker to a scrap processing company in nearby Ninove. They take care of scrap, both ferrous and non-ferrous metals. They also have a recognized depollution center for end-of-life vehicles.
- 2 A chain of furniture and interior stores with branches in the Netherlands, Belgium and the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.



type
photograph

date
28.06.2021

filename
IMG_7499.HEIC

size
1,6 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
decoration, economy, mistake, waste

On Mondays, before noon, I go to the supermarket with my two-year-old son. After passing the lasagnes, the loaves of bread and the fruit and vegetables, we make a short stop at the aquarium with the lobsters. Around New Year, there are two of them.

After we've paid for the groceries and have put them in the car, we walk into the pet shop. We look at the parrots (Jacques, Louis and Marie-José), the rabbits, the guinea pigs, the assorted caged birds and the fish and turtles. He's very fond of the *Cyphotilapia Frontosa Burundi*. He calls them zebras. They hail from Lake Tanganyika, the label says. It's the second-oldest freshwater lake, the second-largest by volume and the second-deepest. The pet shop has adorned their aquarium with a scene of ocean waste.

In an effort to avert guilt, I look for something cheap and more or less useful to buy: birdseed, a snack for the neighbour's cat, a comb for his grandparent's Labrador, etc.



type
photograph

date
05.04.2022

filename
IMG_0214.HEIC

size
1,5 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, RDC, trompe l'oeil, waste, family, replica/copy

22:23:06

Coming back from holidays, we were waiting for the ferry to take us from Ramsgate to Ostend. We were well on time. As the ship entered the harbour, I asked my parents if I could take a photograph. It's the first photograph I recall taking. I remember my dad telling me to wait long enough for the ship to get closer. I didn't. I only got one try.¹

It took a while before the film was developed. I couldn't stop imagining what the photograph would look like: some picturesque waves in the foreground, the shining white ship, the red and blue text on the side, and a cloud filled sky.

Notes

- 1 Following every holiday, when we got home, the garden and our house would be photographed with the remaining exposures on the roll of film in the camera.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	10.11.2022	48b_08.jpg	427 KB	Michiel De Cleene

category
archive, family, landscape, sea

22:23:09

