

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

Your path through the collection lead along Firing tool, Aggressive mimicry, Learning broom-making again, Owls and cats, Mary, Last night I dreamt of Juan Pedro, What the left hand forgot, Stopwatch, Zebras, View, A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter, Backpack, Mirror, Straight in the morning, curvy in the afternoon, Vérandah, 12M m3 [7/8] A Fissure

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 05.09.2022 21:20, printed on _____ and contains 16 documents on 35 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/05-09-2022-4303/>)

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



Jolimont, December 2021. The place is in ruins. We occupy the domain with students of La Cambre in an attempt to practice ceramics with what is there. In the former ceramic atelier, we gather everything that was purposelessly there: a weird collection of things from the past, waiting to be organized, displayed, used or thrown away.

The firing tool was made to take out the accumulating ashes from the firebox, to keep the air flowing in the oven, raising the temperature, reaching our ceramic-making goal of 1150°C. Not very efficient, time or heat resistant, this savage, yet poetic composition barely survived the firing.

The wooden handle was borrowed from a broom. The scraper is a fragment of a chandelier previously hanging in one of the salons.

The connecting element is an old electrical resistor we found in one of the dismantled ovens.

Notes

- Clementine Vaultier's interests, although trained as a ceramist, are in the warm surroundings of the fire rather than the production it engenders.



type
photograph

date
01.09.2022

filename
clementine_firing_tool.JPEG

size
991 KB

author
Clémentine Vaultier

category
alchemy, archaeology, architecture, brick, collecting, decoration, waste

21:20:24

The *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri* is commonly known as the mealybug destroyer. This species of ladybird gets its nickname from its capacity to battle mealybugs in plantations and greenhouses.

The website *waarnemingen.be* that gathers observations of plants and animals in Belgium lists multiple observations in the wild of the *Cryptolaemus montrouzieri*. The website explains that ‘in (northern) Europe, the species is widely traded and used in greenhouses and will regularly escape from them. But this ladybird cannot survive our winters (yet?). Sightings within the Benelux must therefore be entered into the register as “escape”. However, the species is already established in the Mediterranean area.’ (our translation)

The larvae have a waxy covering that makes them look like the mealybugs they prey upon, allowing them to avoid being correctly identified by the ones they are about to devour.

In an attempt to get rid of the mealybugs on my plants, I ordered 25 adult ladybirds. They were dead on arrival.

Sources

- <https://waarnemingen.be/species/600135/>
- <https://waarnemingen.be/observation/244840499/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aggressive_mimicry



type
photograph

date
21.08.2022

filename
_44A3849.dng

size
50,83 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, botany, replica/copy, trompe l'oeil

21:20:30

This video-still is taken from a documentary about 'Le Coin du Balai – De Bezemhoek', a Brussels neighborhood on the edge of the Sonian Wood. Historically, the inhabitants had the exclusive right to harvest young shoots of trees to make and sell brooms. In 1976, filmmaker Willy Biesemans captured the last broom-maker, still in possession of this vernacular knowledge.

Nowadays, the Sonian Wood is commonly understood as a place of natural beauty surrounding the city. The wood the forest produces is managed as a chain of production and sold in public auction to the best buyer. The bulk of the forest's produce is exported abroad and eventually imported back as manufactured goods.

Notes

- Clementine Vaultier's interests, although trained as a ceramist, are in the warm surroundings of the fire rather than the production it engenders.

Sources

- Biesemans, W. *De Bezemhoek*. 1976 ([YouTube – De Bezemhoek](#))



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	16.08.2022	clementine_learning_broommaking_ag ain.png	3 MB	Clémentine Vaultier

category
botany, economy, landscape, tree

21:20:33

For about an hour, he has been saying 'owl' at regular intervals. A cartoon character he picked up somewhere and is now fantasizing about, I guess. Or a Disney reference in one of the songs that have been playing on repeat all day, in the car, driving home from holidays.

50 kilometers further, I recognize the birds in the high-voltage pylons along the highway.

According to the amateur experts at hoogspanningsforum.com, these French pylons – used for conducting electricity from 63kV to 400kV – are nicknamed 'chats': the wiring can be interpreted as feline whiskers.

Some genera of owls, such as the *Megascops* or Screech owls, have whiskers.



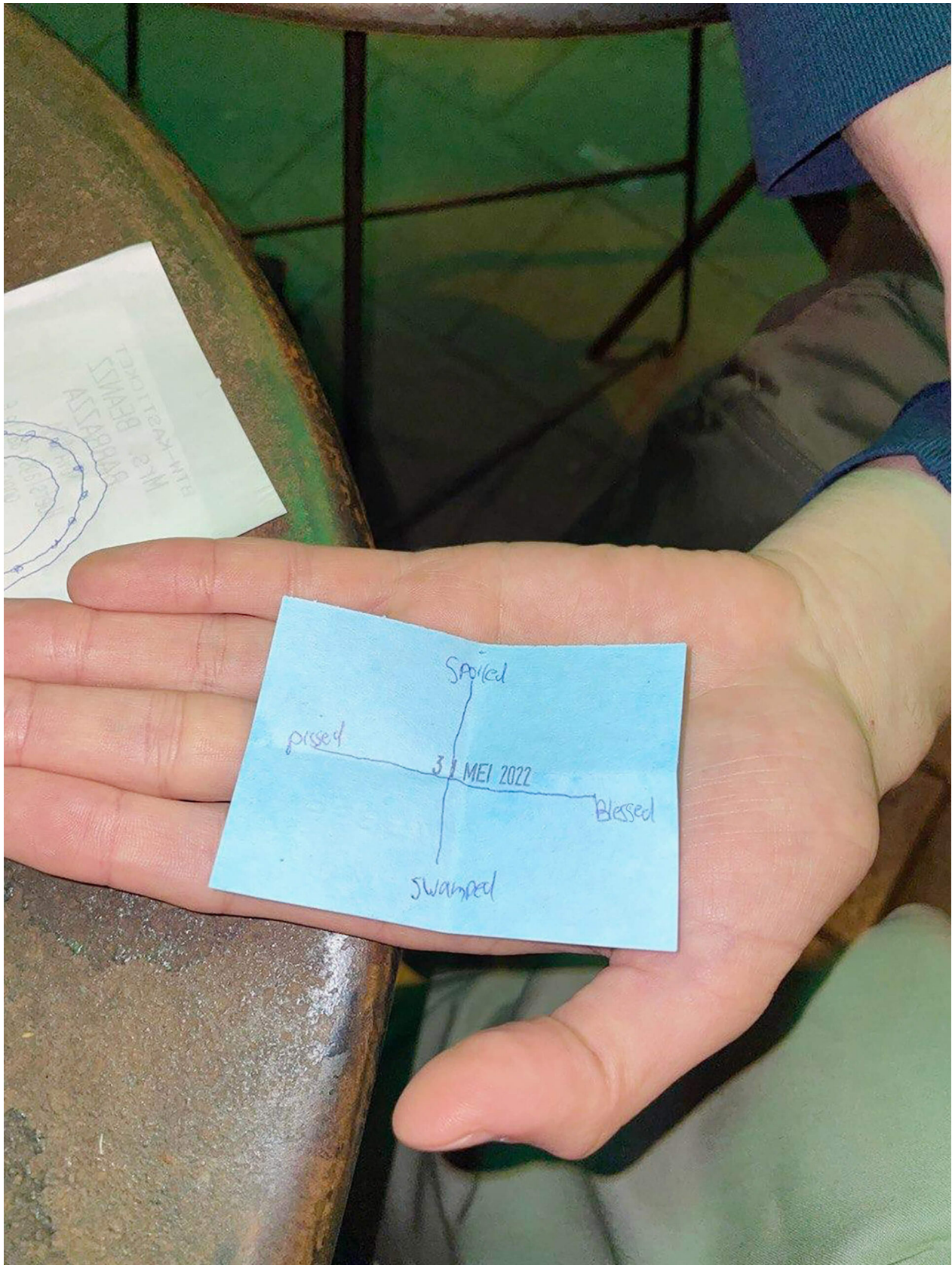
type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	12.08.2022	IMG_1944.HEIC	1,59 MB	Arnout De Cleene
category	animal, automobile, family			

21:20:36

On a morning sometime in January 2022 at the dinner table, after a cozy sleepover, she took a deep sigh full of relief and cracked a charismatic smile while looking at the festive breakfast that was in front of us, saying how she felt. Alone in a park I wrote in my notes: 'Spoiled & Blessed'. Half a year later I was going through my purse, dehoarding some stuff I gathered in the past weeks. I stumbled upon an old receipt from the laundromat. It had a drawing on it that I drew some time ago, when we were having drinks to round up an exhausting project that took way too much time and energy. After putting the receipt back in my purse, I returned to my work to finish some stuff. Back at my computer I emailed myself: 'don't forget to plant sunflower seeds'.

Notes

- Tjoko Kho is a graphic designer and publisher based in Amsterdam. Since 2017 part of the floating collective and publishing platform OUTLINE, and recently started his own publishing house *no kiss?*.



type
photograph

date
04.08.2022

filename
SBSP.jpg

size
1,1 MB

author
Tjobo Kho

category
botany, card, collecting

While I was sitting in the laundromat one evening waiting for my laundry to finish its cycle, *La Isla Bonita* by Madonna came on the radio. Competing with the rustle of seven rotating laundry machines, the song reminded me of a T-shirt that was now being washed.

The short phrase in the song's lyrics 'last night I dreamt of San Pedro' would nestle itself somewhere in the back of my head and bubble up every now and again for no particular reason. I made this shirt for the occasion of Valentine's Day in 2019 to commemorate my friendship with Jan-Pieter. I remember once mumbling the lyrics to *La Isla Bonita*, replacing 'San Pedro' for 'Juan Pedro', forgetting it for some time and then a while later printing it on a T-shirt.

Notes

- Tjoko Kho is a graphic designer and publisher based in Amsterdam. Since 2017 part of the floating collective and publishing platform OUTLINE, and recently started his own publishing house *no kiss?*.



type
photograph

date
25.07.2022

filename
photo_2022-07-11_17-29-40.jpg

size
132 KB

author
Tjobo Kho

category
music

21:20:40

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	author
photograph	18.07.2022	_MG_7728.JPG, _MG_7792.JPG	5,5 MB, 5,7 MB	Arnout De Cleene
category	data storage, literature			



He's wearing a digital watch. It looks like a Casio. It's impossible to read the time, no matter whether you are studying the high-resolution scan of the negative or the negative itself, with the aid of a loupe and lightbox.

The device had a stopwatch function. When we were around eight and ten, we used to compete in trying to start and stop the stopwatch in the shortest possible interval. The smaller the gap, the closer to zero. Sometimes he would also have a try. We once managed to get it down to 00:00:00:03. Neither of us dared to press 'reset' and try again.

Notes





type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	10.05.2022	032a-07s.psd	802,34 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
archive, family, house, mirror, technology

21:20:46

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

21:20:47

According to art critic Rosalind Krauss, nineteenth-century stereographic images presented 'views', not 'landscapes'. Looking at a stereographic image through a stereoscope involves a particular experience that is altogether different from looking at other types of photographs, or paintings, as it is defined by 'the isolation of the viewer with an image from which surrounding interference is masked out'.¹ An image of a violent and sudden eruption, higher up on the mountain, hanging next to a stereographic image of a petrified lava flow, would not be perceived.

Sources

1. Krauss, R. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Mass./London: The MIT Press, 1986, 139.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	03.04.2022	Foto_2022-02-17_110818.jpgFoto_2022-02-17_110818.jpgFoto_2022-02-17_110818.jpg	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
impact, landscape, seismology, technology, trompe l'oeil, Vesuvius

21:20:47

At the nuclear waste processing facility. While the photographer and the head of the communication department are making their way from the processing building to the temporary storage building, they walk past the central chimney.

‘On the highest of the accessible levels of the chimney, operators were finding small steel rings. They gathered them, but soon noticed that new rings were added. At a certain point at a rate of one ring a day.

[...]

It took them some time to realize what they were, so they started collecting them by slipping them onto a piece of rope. By now the rings on the rope span about this distance [spreads his arms to indicate a distance of about 1.2m].

[...]

They turned out to be rings that came from pigeon’s legs.

[...]

On top of our chimney resides a peregrine falcon.

[...]

I was told pigeon fanciers have a tendency to give a peregrine falcon – or any other bird of prey in their area – a hand at disappearing, but this one took up residency in the internal perimeter, where – as you know – access is severely restricted.’

Notes

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



type
photograph

date
02.03.2022

filename
duivenringen_001.jpg

size
20,04 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, collecting, food, Reference Guide, technology, waste

21:20:48

_44A6588.dng

At 13:26:43 I took a photograph of a concrete building without windows in an industrial zone just south of Brussels.

_44A6590.dng

At 16:46:15 I photographed a succession of office buildings in the same industrial zone.

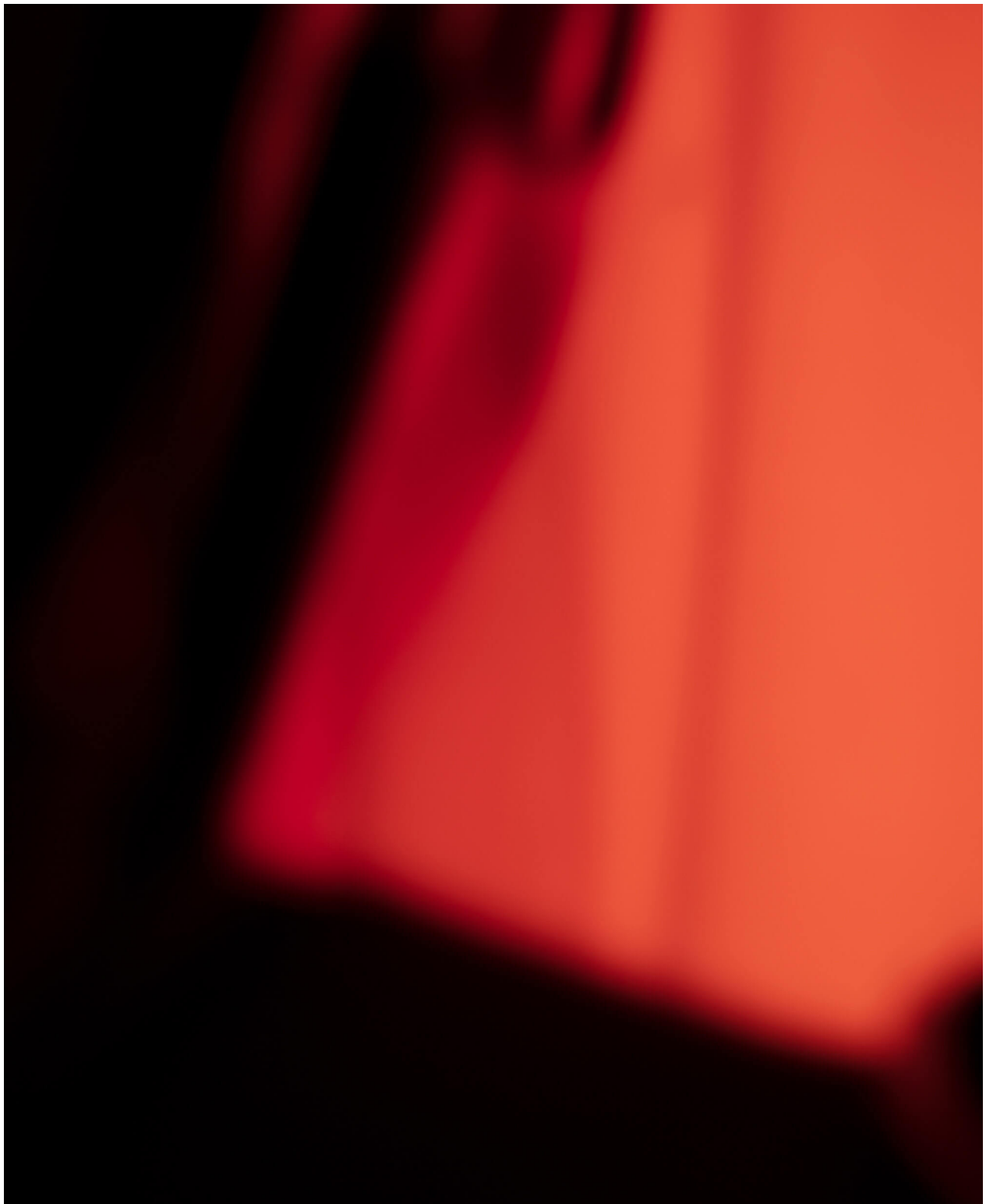
_44A6589.dng

I must have walked about 1 kilometer between the concrete building without windows and the section of the industrial zone with the offices. At 13:43:49, the camera, safely stored in my backpack, recorded 0.4 seconds of the 20 minutes it took me to get there.

In *The Snows of Venice*, Alexander Kluge wonders whether he can take the liberty to conjure up what the sky looked like on 31 December 1799, as Schiller made his way to Goethe's house. He goes on by saying that, historically, there's a 'LACK OF SENSORY ATTENTION AT CRUCIAL MOMENTS'.¹ There are exceptions, though, like the cameraman that was sent out to document the fireworks on New Year's Day 2000. The camera was turned on prematurely. The batteries were used up by midnight, but 'certain gray tones, however, filtered through the cracks of its protective case, conveyed the motion of the walking cameraman, the transportation. The incompletely shut, low-information container was documented exactly [...] To this day it provides inexact testimony as to the qualities of the leather of a twenty-first century carrying case and the precise sensitivity to light and dark demonstrated by a twenty-first century recording medium.'²

Sources

- 1 Lerner, B., Kluge, A. *The Snows of Venice*. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018, p. 53
- 2 Ibid.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	15.02.2022	_44A6589.dng	37,87 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, data storage, mistake, packaging, technology

21:20:48

On the online thrift shop 2dehands.be the homepage generates a 'for you' section. On November 9th this section listed, among other things, a picture of the sky on a patch of concrete. On closer inspection, it became clear that it was the sky's reflection in a mirror with a red frame and four lightbulbs in it, the kind you might see at the hairdresser's or backstage in a television studio or theatre. The seller estimates the mirror's current value to be 45,00 EUR. The listing includes five photographs. In the fifth one, the object for sale reflects a bucolic landscape: a blue sky, white clouds, some trees and a fragment of a barn.



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	16.01.2022	Schermafbeelding 2021-11-09 om 20.54.40.png	2,92 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
economy, landscape, mirror

21:20:49

On a pile of fresh hospital sheets, near the radiator, the tangerine curtains and the black marble window sill (the window looks out over the parking lot), underneath the two-day-old bouquet of flowers and next to a pile of magazines with a handwritten note on top (about a syrup that relieves slime and tastes like oranges), lie two sheets of paper.

Earlier that day the physiotherapist had come by. Twice. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon. He had each time drawn the first line, as an example. A straight line in the morning, a curvy line in the afternoon.

With a ballpoint pen my grandfather, who is recovering from an accident, diligently copied the examples (31 in the morning, 5 in the afternoon).



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	09.01.2022	IMG_9441.HEIC	862 KB	Michiel De Cleene

category
family, manual, medicine, parking, replica/copy

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.

What they took for ice that slid down the dam's slope, appears to be the reason for draining the reservoir: a fissure in the watertight layer. The dam became unreliable.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.12.2021	IMG_0515b	5,42 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category	fissure, landscape, mistake, repair			

21:20:51

