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

Your path through the collection lead along Neptune in opposition [20/20] – A constellation, 12M m3 [7/8] A Fissure, View, Zebras, Wheelhouse (replica), Crocodile Copy, Bent Concrete, Mai Ndombe, Neptune in opposition [14/20] – A rolling shed, Elevator, Crocodile Copy, Neptune in opposition [19/20] – Approximation, Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield, Marmara, Essie

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 10.10.2022 22:12, printed on ____ and contains 15 documents on 32 pages. (https://the-documents.org/log/10-10-2022-4802/)

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.decleenedecleene.be / info@decleenedecleene.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.

As we point the telescope to the sky – cloudy, and filled with chaotic bursts of rain – the dispersion of the city lights accentuates the swirling, frantic raindrops. The roof we are standing on is uneven. A puddle forms underneath the apparatus, around the right leg of the tripod and our feet. The sound of a car on a wet street, below. A kitchen light is flicked on. Temperature is low for a mid-September night, and getting lower by the minute. It seems impossible to tell the depth of field we are documenting, and at what distance from our position these fleeting constellations occur.

Sources

- Excerpt from Towards Civil Dusk (De Cleene De Cleene, 2020)
- Neptune in opposition [1-20] is part of ‘Documenting Objects’, a research project by Arnout De Cleene and Michiel De Cleene at KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. Their research is financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund. Previous research into this subject has amongst other things led to the documentary film Towards Civil Dusk and temporary public observatories at 019, Gent and Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerp.
- Thanks to:
  Angelo Van Daele
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  Philippe Molet
  019
  Astropolis (Oostende)
  Cercle Astronomique Mosan (Herbuchenne)
  Koninklijk Observatorium Ukkel
  Observatoire Astronomique Antoine Thomas S.J. (Namur)
  Observatoire Astronomique Centre Ardenne (Grapfontaine)
  Publieke Sterrenwacht van de Westkust (Koksijde)
  Volkssterrenwacht Armand Pien (Gent)
  Volkssterrenwacht AstroLAB IRIS (Zillebeke)
  Volkssterrenwacht Beisbroek (Brugge)
  Volkssterrenwacht Mira (Grimbergen)
  Volkssterrenwacht Urania (Hove)

Neptune in opposition [20/20] – A constellation



type	date	filename	size	author
video	05.10.2022	2020-09-24-1156_0-CapObj.mp4	51,05 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, Neptune, precipitation

22:12:34

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.

the-documents.c

12M m3 [7/8] A Fissure



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.12.2021	IMG_0515b	5,42 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
fissure, landscape, mistake, repair

22:12:37

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

22:12:37

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.

Zebras



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	05.04.2022	IMG_0214.HEIC	1,5 MB	Michiel De Cleene

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

22:12:37

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

the-documents.c

Wheelhouse (replica)



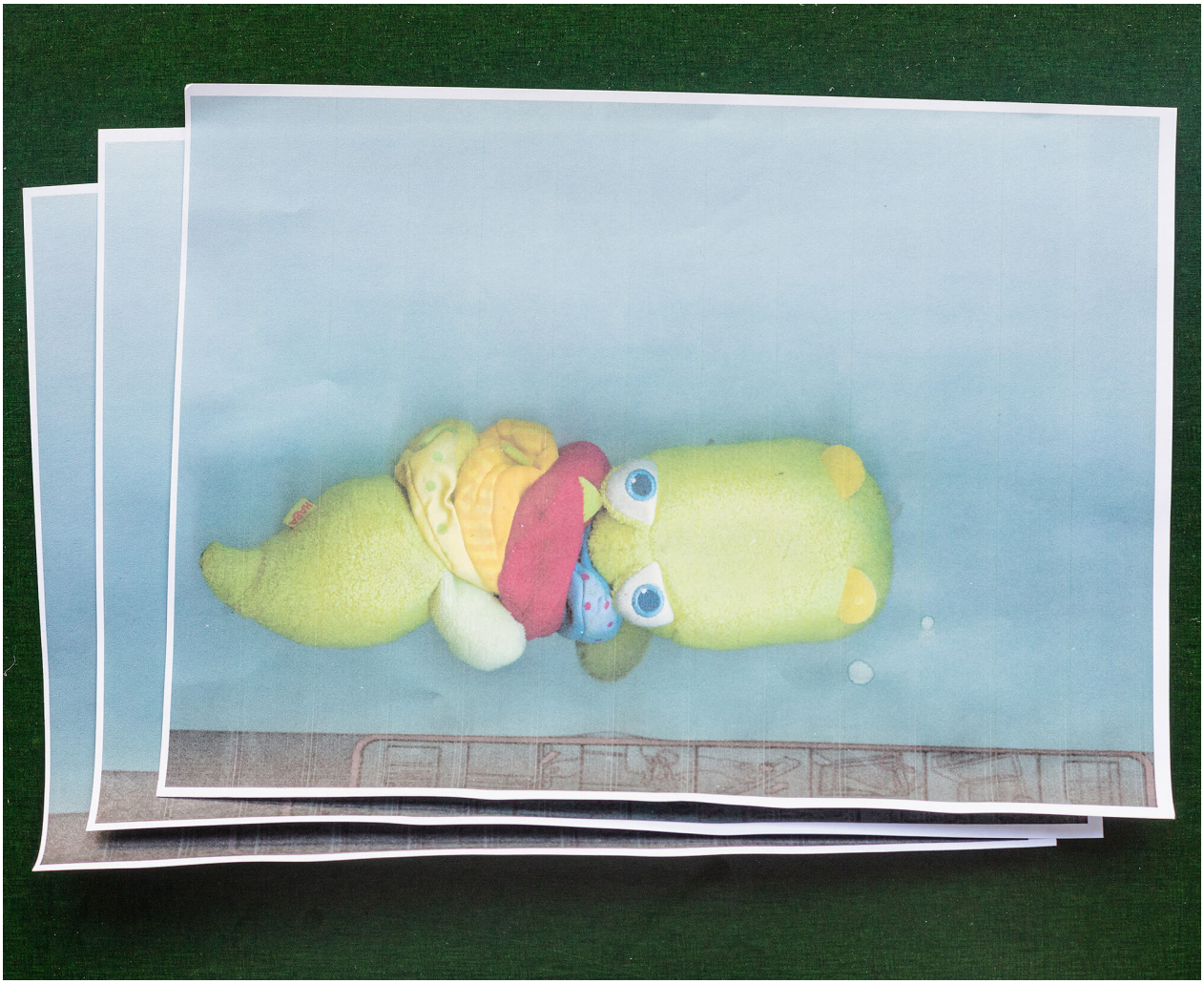
type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	20.03.2022	bridge_001.jpg	15,31 MB	Michiel De Cleene

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

22:12:37

Our one year old’s favourite toy he’s not supposed to play with is the *HP Officejet Pro L7590 All-in-one* in my office. I have given up on forbidding him to play with it. We have a new game: he brings me one of his other toys, we put it on the flatbed, close the lid – as far as possible –, press the button ‘START COPY – COLOR’ and wait for the print to come out of the machine. When we place the original onto the copy, he laughs. So far we have copied his blue pacifier, his planet-earth-bouncy-ball and his rattling crocodile.

org Crocodile Copy



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	16.02.2021	_44A8728.dng	50,04MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, archive, decoration, house, replica/copy, technology, trompe l'oeil, family

22:12:37

A block of concrete. Fissures are showing and rebar is sticking out from all sides. If it were still straight, the block would measure approximately 130 x 15 x 40cm.

It is lying by the side of the road, a few hundred meters from a construction site. It appears to be shaped by impact. Maybe the block plummeted to the ground from a great height. Perhaps, something heavy hit it. For all one knows, it served as a column and was exposed to an unforeseen amount of pressure, causing it to buckle.

According to Eyal Weizman '[a]rchitecture emerges as a documentary form, not because photographs of it circulate in the public domain but rather because it performs variations on the following three things: it *registers* the effect of force fields, it contains or *stores* these forces in material deformations, and, with the help of other mediating technologies and the forum, it *transmits* this information further.'[1]

Sources

1 Weizman, E. 'Introduction', in: Forensic Architecture. *Forensis. The Architecture of Public Truth*. London/Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014.

Bent Concrete



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	02.06.2021	_44A7339.dng	42,54MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
archaeology, architecture, crash, impact, mistake, sand

22:12:38

the-documents.c

On the second to last evening before we head home, we go for dinner at Suzanne’s house. She has invited a friend, a national deputy for the region where she grew up. We eat fish and *patates douces*. We drink beer. The deputy’s secretaries – there are three of them – closely inspect the worn manuscript we hand them. In blue ink: proverbs of their region, written by my girlfriend’s grandfather in local Kikongo language. In red: a Dutch translation. They laugh. A month later, the deputy will become Vice-minister of Internal affairs. The proverbs get marked by fresh grease stains.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	15.12.2020	Mai Ndombe.jpg	922KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
RDC, food, house, card, government

Summer 2019, between the swingset and the mesh greenhouse, astrophotographer Angelo Van Daele closes the observatory. The wheels roll smoothly across the rails embedded within a concrete slab. His former observatory is now a chicken coop. His neighbour’s trees need pruning. The camera mounted on the exterior of the shed allows him to see the instrument from inside the house.

the-documents.c

Neptune in opposition [14/20] – A rolling shed



type	date	filename	size	author
video	28.09.2022	044A7357.MOV	950,24 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, astronomy, encounter, house, Neptune

22:12:39

The building is almost finished. One apartment is still up for sale, on the top floor. The contractor is finishing up. There's a long list of comments and deficiencies that need to be addressed before the building can be handed over definitively to the owner. The elevator's walls are protected by styrofoam to prevent squares, levels, measures, drills, air compressors, chairs, bird cages, etc. from making scratches on the brand new wooden panelling.

In 1932 Brassaï began taking photographs of graffiti scratched into walls of Parisian buildings. On his long walks he was often accompanied by the author Raymond Queneau, who lived in the same building but on a different floor. Brassaï published a small collection of the photographs in *Minotaure*, illustrating an article titled 'Du mur des cavernes au mur d'usine' ['From cave wall to factory wall'].

Elevator



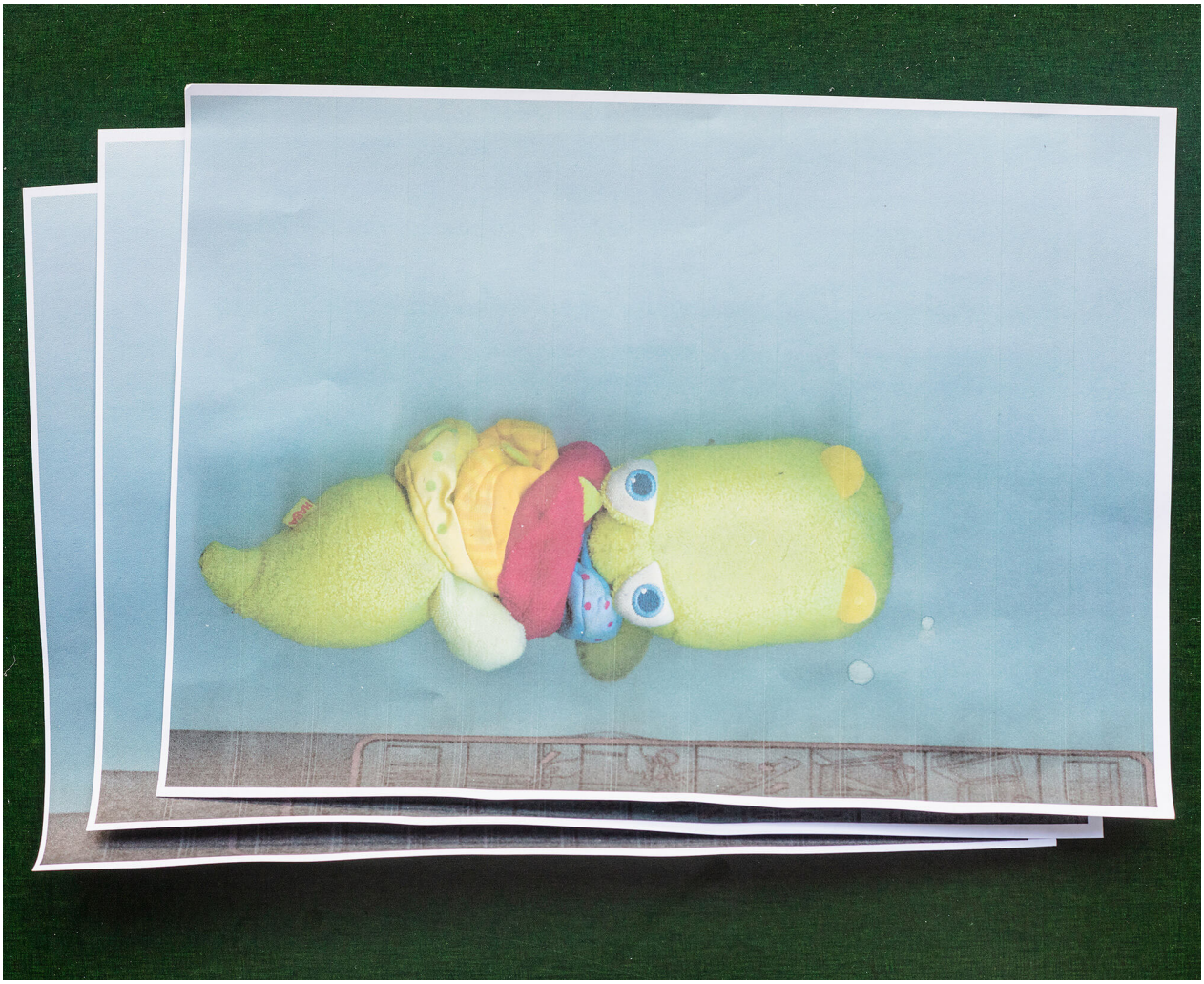
type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	13.11.2021	IMG_0039.jpeg	2,57 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, decoration, sign

22:12:39

Our one year old’s favourite toy he’s not supposed to play with is the *HP Officejet Pro L7590 All-in-one* in my office. I have given up on forbidding him to play with it. We have a new game: he brings me one of his other toys, we put it on the flatbed, close the lid – as far as possible –, press the button ‘START COPY – COLOR’ and wait for the print to come out of the machine. When we place the original onto the copy, he laughs. So far we have copied his blue pacifier, his planet-earth-bouncy-ball and his rattling crocodile.

org Crocodile Copy



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	16.02.2021	_44A8728.dng	50,04MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, archive, decoration, house, replica/copy, technology, trompe l'oeil, family

22:12:39

Sundown at the public observatory in Beisbroek. A choir of birds mixes with the continuous hiss of the freeway nearby. The camera captures the receding colours. The blinds are open; the half dome is closed.

A documentary approach: moving along a tension between proximity and distance. If the pendulum swings to either side, it becomes difficult to speak of *the documentary*. Proximity without distance, and distance without proximity, undermine it, precisely because any approach is then out of the question.

Sources

- Excerpt from Towards Civil Dusk (De Cleene De Cleene, 2020)

Neptune in opposition [19/20] – Approximation



type	date	filename	size	author
video	04.10.2022	approximation.mp4	176,3 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
animal, architecture, astronomy, automobile, dusk, landscape, Neptune

22:12:40

September 2020, three days before Neptune is in opposition, I meet Frédéric on top of a hill in Luxembourg.

Earlier that day he had sent me the coordinates of an airfield for remote controlled aeroplanes. He told me to meet him there at 20h. The airfield is situated on the top of a hill, granting a clear view of the horizon. Removed from highways and city centres, only the southern horizon lights up, where the Grand Duchy's capital is located, some 15 kilometres farther. The weather is promising: 'We might get a chance to see and photograph Neptune!' he wrote.

I get there early. Frédéric is already setting up his tripod. Two elderly men are training for the perfect landing.

Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	17.09.2022	_44A5698.dng	53,26 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, dusk, encounter, landscape, Neptune, technology

22:12:40

Fairly detailed map of the two major marble quarries on the island of Tinos, Greece. The spontaneous route-advice was prepared by a local marble worker, P.D., in the Karia region of the island on a locally extracted, green marble slab. The waved lines represent roads traversing uphill, while the straight lines represent roads following a contour line of the topography.

‘Tell your friend that the wine is for girls; it’s very sweet,’ the marble worker alerted my travel companion K.S. after offering us local sweet wine. The workshop smelled like boiled meat and bones.

Notes on map from left to right, top to bottom:

1. Towards Vathi
2. Quarry
3. incomprehensible
4. Towards Vathi Bleu
5. Isternia
6. Pirgos

Notes

Márk Redele pursues projects that fundamentally relate to architecture and its practice but rarely look like architecture. www.markredele.com

org Marmara



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	19.11.2021	marmar_.jpg	3,47 MB	Márk Redele

category
book, map/plan, marble, sign, hand

22:12:41

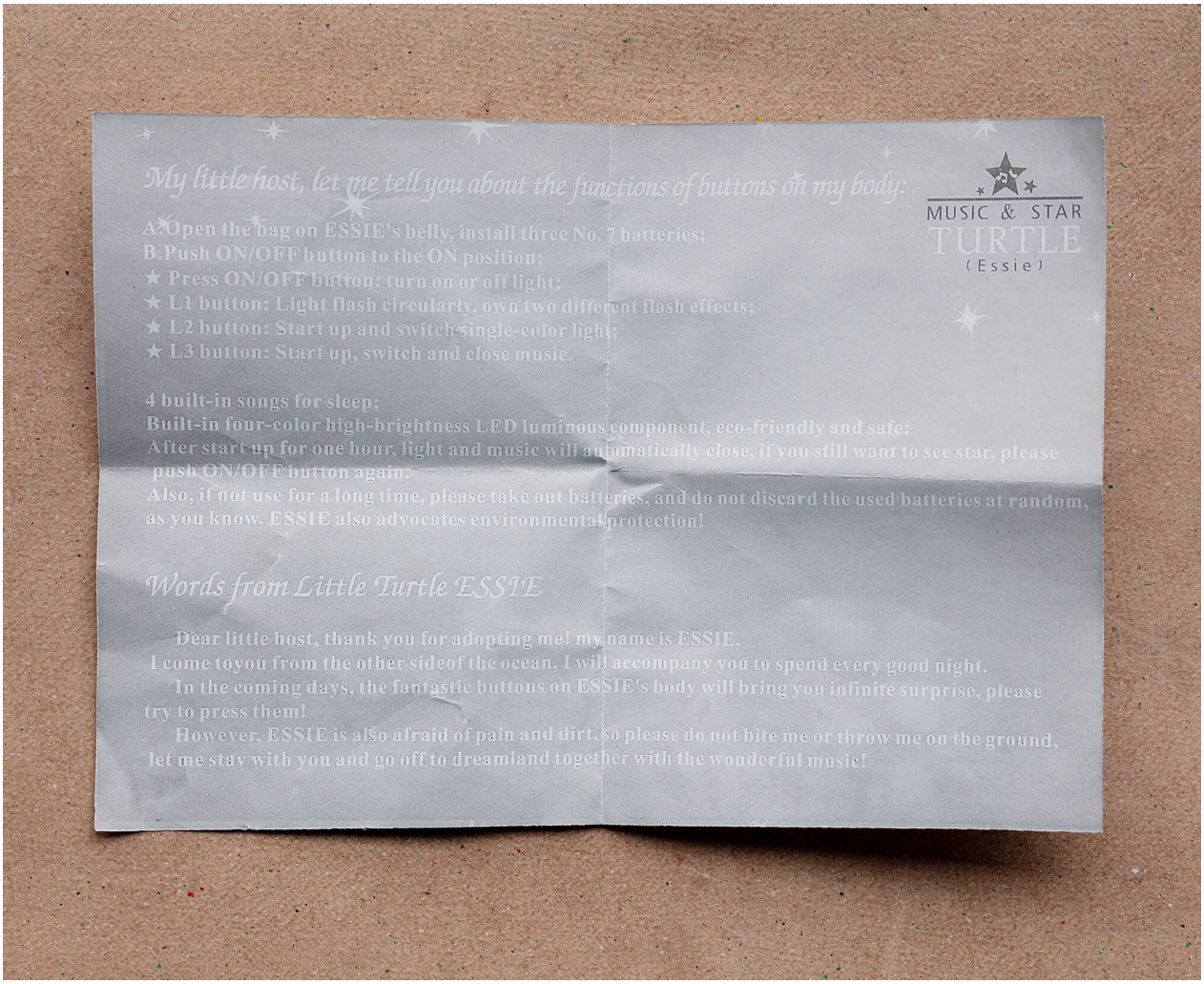
I bought my son a gift while abroad: a toy turtle named Essie whose perforated shield projects stars onto the ceiling in blue, green or amber. ‘8 actual star constellations’, the box proclaims.

The manual explains how to power up the turtle and what the four buttons on Essie’s back do. The small document (recto: Chinese, verso: English) concludes with some ‘Words from Little Turtle ESSIE’. In it the turtle shifts from direct speech to illeism[1] and back.

Notes

1 The act of referring to oneself in the third instead of first person.

Essie



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	17.12.2020	_44A8424.dng	50,6MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, astronomy, Bahrain, manual, family

22:12:41