

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

Your path through the collection lead along Mould, Crash (1), A Seismic Change, The Events That Took Place in Grimbergen, YAY HOORAY, Battery, Estuary, This Year's Model, Measures, Lemon, Album, Antlers, Adhesive, Essie, Desiccation, LIGO, Crash (1), Croûton d'Or, Vérandah, 12M m3 [6/8] 56 years

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 Gittelman 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 13.02.2022 14:05, printed on _____ and contains 20 documents on 42 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/13-02-2022-3808/>)

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.
- Gittelman, 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



At a dental practice, the white Alligat[®]-powder is mixed with the right amount of water to get a mouldable dough that is pressed upon a patient's teeth. After thirty seconds, the Alligat[®]-dough stiffens and takes on a rubber-like quality. At that point, still white, it must be removed from the patient's mouth. Over the next few hours, the mould turns increasingly pink as the substance becomes less humid. Now, it can be used as a mould to create a positive master cast of the patient's teeth.

Outside the dental practice, the powder's possibilities remain to be fully explored.

Notes



Sources

- First published as part of De Cleene De Cleene. 'Amidst the Fire, I Was Not Burnt', *Trigger (Special issue: Uncertainty)*, 2. FOMU/Fw:Books, 25-30



type
photograph

date
27.01.2022

filename
_44A3429.tif

size
36,81 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
manual, medicine, packaging, repair, replica/copy

14:02:34

In June, 2014, a severe hailstorm hit Belgium. Warnings were broadcast. A football game between the national teams of Belgium and Tunisia was paused. The morning after, there were small dents in the hood and the roof of the car, each a square centimeter in size, some 10 centimeters separated from each other. The storm didn't get a name.

Assessing the damage, the insurance company's expert took the dents into account to establish the wreck's worth.



type
photograph

date
16.10.2020

filename
IMG_2236.JPG

size
2,8MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
automobile, crash, precipitation, insurance

14:03:22

The road down from the top of Mount Vesuvius, at Atrio Del Cavaillo. The sun sets. The last tourist bus has headed down. Then the headlights of the guardian's car swing their way down. It must be freezing. I am holding an orange-sized piece of petrified lava, probably stemming from the 1872 or 1944 eruption. A kilometer further down the road, the old Observatory is empty. Nowadays, monitoring seismic changes is done in a research centre in the city of Naples. Their seismographic registrations can be followed online, in real time. Two headlights swirling along the slopes, underneath me, are coming upwards.



type	date	filename	size	author
audio	15.01.2021	A seismic change.mp3	862KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
automobile, data storage, dusk, seismology, Vesuvius

14:04:12

- 09:10:00 The frame shows the first movement on the terrain. The gate has been opened, the barrier lowered. A black car is in the back. In the forefront, aviation signs on the ground: a yellow cross on a surface painted red; an arrow in a 90° angular shape; two circles connected by a line; a T-shaped line.
- 09:20:00 Two men talking, each one on one side of the barrier. The man on the side of the airstrip has two dogs with him. The aviation signs have changed: the arrow is gone; the horizontal bar of the T-symbol has moved to the other side of the vertical line; one yellow line that made up the cross on the red surface is gone, leaving one yellow diagonal line.
- 10:09:01 A small white aircraft (the two men and the dogs are gone).
- 10:20:01 The aircraft in the same position, with what seems to be an open roof.
- 10:40:00 Aircraft leaving the gas station where it was before.
- 11:10:01 A white car at the gas station, where previously the aircraft was stationed; a silhouette of a man, perhaps.
- 11:30:01 White car gone.
- 11:50:01 Small white aircraft at the gas station; man in red jacket next to the aircraft. Not clear if it is the same aircraft seen in frame 10:09:01.
- 12:10:01 Aircraft appears to be heading for take-off.
- 12:20:01 Aircraft gone.
- 12:40:01 White dots on the grass that appear to be birds.
- 14:10:00 First precipitation: snow, visibility lessens.
- 14:20:00 More snow, wind is stronger; someone has replaced the yellow stripe so that, again, a yellow cross is formed on the red background.
- 15:10:00 The grass and the concrete get increasingly white. No aircrafts, vehicles or persons can be discerned. The aviation signs beneath the thin-layered snow are still visible, and unaltered.

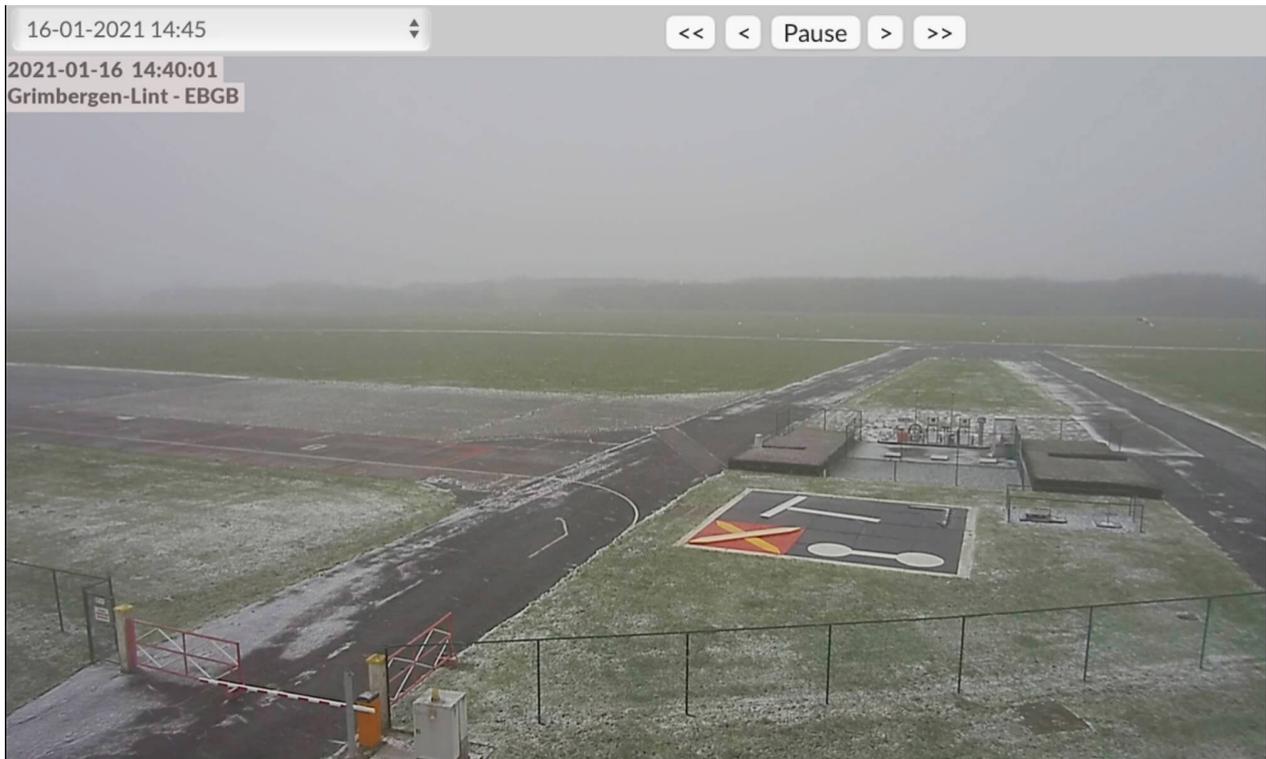
Notes

Every so often architects ask me to photograph projects of theirs under a blanket of snow. Snow-days are rare around here. In an attempt to avoid a futile drive along roads in winter conditions, I check webcams near the project-to-be-photographed before setting out.

Sources

- Webcam Grimbergen, meteobelgie.be:
<https://www.meteobelgie.be/waarnemingen/belgie/webcam/272/grimbergen>
- <http://www.rvg.be>

The Events That Took Place in Grimbergen



type	date	filename	size	author
video	06.01.2021	Schermopname 2021-01-06 om 15.35.57.mov	4,4MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
animal, architecture, automobile, precipitation, sign, wind

14:04:14

Depending on the perspective one chooses to look at the address, the house is adorned or not.

The perspective from the main road is an image made in August 2020, the website (Google Maps) says. Our car is in front of the garage. It must be the end of August. We drive home from the hospital with the newborn, who doesn't stop crying. Maybe I tightened the belts in the car seat too much.

Arriving at our house, we see the slogans and decorations friends have hung at our front door.

On the sill of the neighbour's first floor window, there's a brick that must have fallen from the second floor facade.



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	31.12.2020	Schermafbeelding 2020-12-31 om 10.50.02.png	8,7MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
automobile, brick, crash, house, map/plan, family

14:04:15

Due to strict regulations during the COVID-19-pandemic, the yearly vehicle inspection had to be scheduled by appointment. Getting ready to drive to the DMV, the car wouldn't start. It had rained heavily, the preceding days. The day before the DMV-appointment, water had come running into the car on pushing the pedals. My socks were wet.

I called the DMV to say I needed to cancel the appointment and make a new one (but that the car, besides not being able to drive, was perfectly fine, vehicle-inspection-wise).

Later that day, we got the engine up and running again, using jumper cables and a second car, so we would be able to drive to meet the midwife the next day.

ACCU: storting (4/4)**Starten met starthulpkabels**

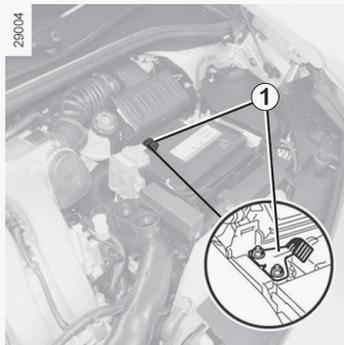
Sluit de starthulpkabels als volgt aan tussen de twee auto's:

Controleer of de starthulpkabels, verkrijgbaar bij uw merkdealer, dik genoeg zijn en in goede staat verkeren.

Beide accu's moeten dezelfde spanning hebben: 12 volt. De hulpaccu moet minstens de capaciteit (Ampère-uur, Ah) hebben van de ontladen accu.

Let erop dat de auto's elkaar niet raken (kortsluitingsgevaar als u de pluspolen met elkaar verbindt) en dat de ontladen accu goed aangesloten is. Zet het contact af van uw auto.

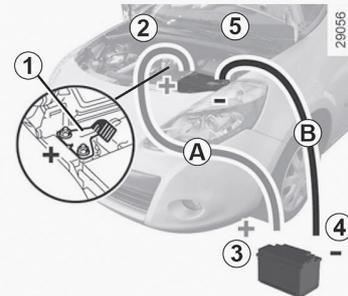
Laat de motor van de hulpauto met een middelmatig toerental draaien.



Sluit de positieve kabel **A** op de **steun 1** op de **pluspool 2 (+)** van de ontladen accu aan en daarna op de **pluspool 3 (+)** van de hulpaccu.

Sluit de negatieve kabel **B** aan op de **minpool 4 (-)** van de hulpaccu en daarna op de **minpool 5 (-)** van de ontladen accu.

Sluit de kabels A en B uitsluitend aan op de aangegeven aansluitingen.



Start de motor op de normale wijze. Maak, zodra hij draait, de kabels **A** en **B** in omgekeerde volgorde (**5-4-3-2**) los.



Controleer of de kabels **A** en **B** elkaar nergens raken en of de positieve kabel **A** geen metalen delen van de hulpauto raakt.

Risico van letsel en/of beschadiging van de auto.

5.31

type
screenshot

date
30.12.2020

filename
Schermafbeelding 2020-12-30 om
20.40.39.png

size
954KB

author
Arnout De Cteene

category
automobile, crash, epidemic, precipitation, technology, government

14:04:16

In between two cities along the Belgian coast, water has run from the dunes (and the Second World War Heritage site scattered among them), underneath the coastal road and tram rails, to the beach. It has formed a small S-shaped estuary, bound to disappear due to the increasingly harsh wind coming from the coast of Britain, blowing North-easterly, and hammering down on the levee. The vibrations of the empty Ostend-bound tram passing just before the photograph was taken, had no visible impact on the estuary.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	28.12.2020	WhatsApp Image 2020-12-28 at 21.45.31.jpeg	393KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
precipitation, wind, sea, sand

14:04:35

‘Because there is a kind of technological beauty to it.’

[...]

‘Yes, a perfect combination of the analogous on the one hand, and a kind of state of the art-futuristic cool on the other hand. It was elegant (unlike audio-cassettes), you could see the disc upon which your music was written (unlike the unfathomable MP3), it was less fragile than a CD(-R), and conveniently sized (you could hold it in the palm of your hand, slip it into your pocket). It had a kind of Mission Impossible-esque gadget feel to it. It had the aura of being permanently ahead of its time, but not in a far-fetched sci-fi kind of way. It was *real*.’

[...]

‘You mean the clicks. Yes, it had a sound of its own. A pleasant sound – the hard plastic hitting the hard plastic sleeve. The slidable, uhm, metal thing. The small read/write handle at the side. The small disc that was just a little bit loose. It – without being played – looked, felt and sounded like, like data, yes, like palpable data.’

[...]

‘Not any more.’

[...]

‘My uncle’s Elvis Costello *This Year’s Model* LP with way too little bass-sounds. *Watching the detectives*, to be precise.’



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.12.2020	Handgeschreven_2020-12-26_141512.jpg	608KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
data storage, music, technology, family

14:04:50

Besides the scale indicating the length in centimeters, and the marks made by using it, a folding ruler displays other marks. These are the marks found on the *weber broutin* www.weber-broutin.be folding ruler, from left to right:

- 2m (in a frame, between 1cm and 2cm); indicating the total length of the folding ruler.
- a hexagon, barely visible, punched into the wood (between 2cm and 3cm); unknown signification.
- LUXMA (in a frame, between 4cm and 5cm); the manufacturer of the folding ruler (different from the company who ordered the folding ruler, their company's, i.c. weber-broutin's) name is printed on the sides of the ruler, and is only readable when the ruler is folded together for at least 50% (=1m).
- III (in an oval, between 6cm and 7cm); indication of the preciseness of the scale in centimeters, with 'I' in roman numbers meaning the most precise, and 'IV' in roman numbers meaning the least precise. (It is therefore not entirely certain that the 'III' on *weber-broutin's* folding ruler can actually be found between 6cm and 7cm.)
- D 99 (in an oval, probably between 7cm and 8cm, see argument mentioned above); unknown signification.
- 1.1.60 (in an oval, probably between 7cm and 8cm, beneath D 99), signification unknown.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.12.2020	Handgeschreven_2020-12-26_153034.jpg	659KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
scale, sign, mistake, mathematics

14:04:51

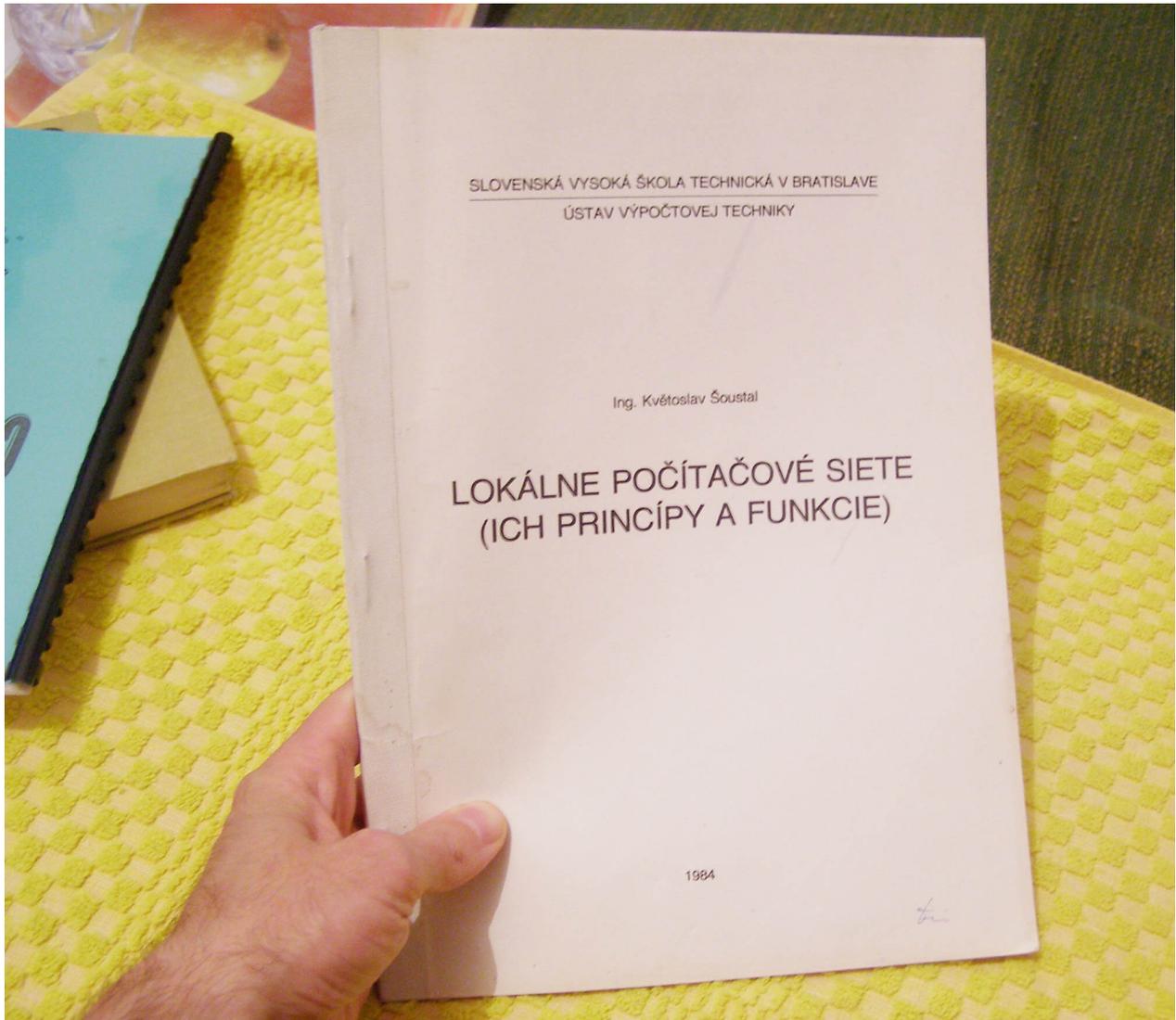
Depending on the language one chooses, the Wikipedia entry for 'document' shows a different picture. The French-language page shows what appears to be a Slovenian thesis written in 1984. The caption states it is a 'book of Czechoslovak computer science author Květoslav Šoustal about computer networks'. The image was uploaded by Kelovy, a Slovakian mushroom-picker.

The anonymous hand rests on a lemon-yellow tablecloth, on which a yellow book and a blue binded file lie. The top left corner is the most intriguing, however: the tablecloth seems to be draped over a lemon, alongside a drinking glass. The cloth, however, does not get shaped by the lemon. Nor does the shadow-side of the lemon coincide with the shadow the other documents throw on the tablecloth. A closer look seems to indicate that the lemon is in fact an image of a lemon, printed on a plastic napkin.

The Russian wikipedia shows the image of a lease agreement. The German wikipedia for 'document' is text only.

Sources

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Document#/media/Fichier:KVETOSLAV_SOUSTAL_BOOK.JPG, created October 3, 2006 / original in original: paper, 1984



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	23.12.2020	KVETOSLAV_SOUSTAL_BOOK.JPG	956KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
book, encyclopaedia, fruit, food, trompe l'oeil, cloth, manual, technology

14:04:55

At the State Archive in Kortrijk, I am leafing
through a 1955 photo album of the construction of
the provisional church in Lokeren by the famous
furniture company Kunstwerkstede De Coene.
Gigantic wooden, prefabricated beams structure
the building. It is cold. An old man in a grey suit
shuffles between the racks to look up the date of
birth of his great great grandmother. Snow covers
the unfinished provisional roof. A bus passes,
I reckon, through the pouring rain.



type	date	filename	size	author
audio	22.12.2020	VP100184.MP3	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
archive, architecture, book, data storage, De Coene, precipitation

14:04:58

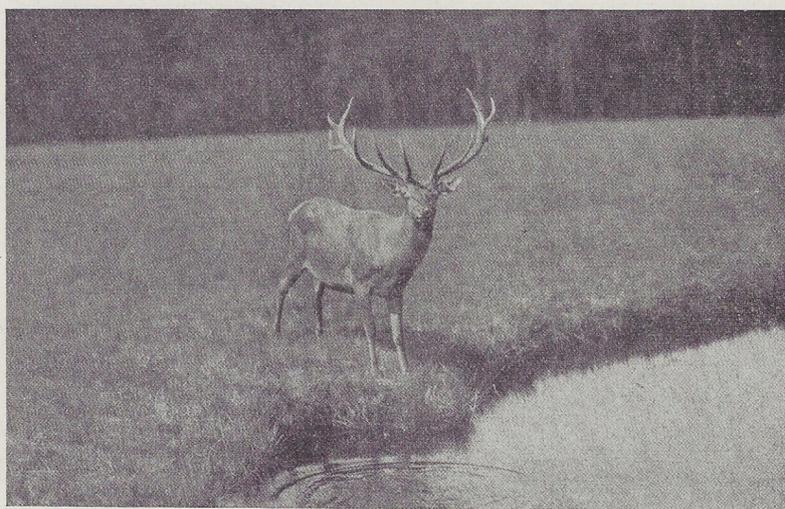
(‘Imaginary landscape in the actual greater Gent, some thousands of years ago. A grassy riparian zone separates rivers from the edge of the forests’)

Imagine a deserted city of Gent, overtaken by nature, Thiery asks the reader in his book *Het woud* (*The Forest*). After fifty years, you return to the city. Buildings have collapsed, streets are overgrown. It has become an impenetrable, dense forest, except for the river on which the reader makes his or her way through it. In the first half of the twentieth century, Leo Michel Thiery made one of Belgium’s first botanical gardens for educational purposes. In the middle of an industrialized quarter of the city of Gent, the garden presented different sceneries. There were landscapes from the Alps, dunes, the Ardennes, steppe. Besides sceneries with chalk-, loam-, marl- and sand-based vegetation, there were forests, grasslands and swamps.

After his death, Thiery’s garden decayed. Decades later, it was restored, with the Alps, dunes, the Ardennes and steppe now classified as a protected view.

Sources

Thiery, M. *Het woud. Een proeve van plantenaardrijkskunde*. Gent: De Garve, s.d., p. 14



Denkbeeldig landschap in het huidige Groot-Gent, eenige duizenden van jaren terug. Grazige oeverlanden scheidten er de rivieren van den boszoom.

type	date	filename	size	author
scan	21.12.2020	Document_2020-12-21_083327.jpg	3,2MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
animal, botany, book, landscape

14:05:14

The Bahrain Formula 1 Grand Prix takes place every year since the track's inauguration in 2004 – except for 2011 when the race was cancelled due to protests in the wake of the Arab Spring. To prevent sand from covering the track and entering the air-ducts and engines, the sand near the track is sprayed with an adhesive to keep it from blowing around.

The cloud of sand in the picture (made near Avenue 61 on an artificial island close to Seef) was made by kicking it into the frame while M.R. and M.D.C. had to stop and wait for a truck that was being towed after the driver lost control over the vehicle and flipped it onto its side. Days earlier M.D.C. had tried to make a photograph of the F1-track, but couldn't get close enough to make a decent picture.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	18.12.2020	_44A7884.dng	58,4MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, Bahrain, crash, drought, sand, trompe l'oeil

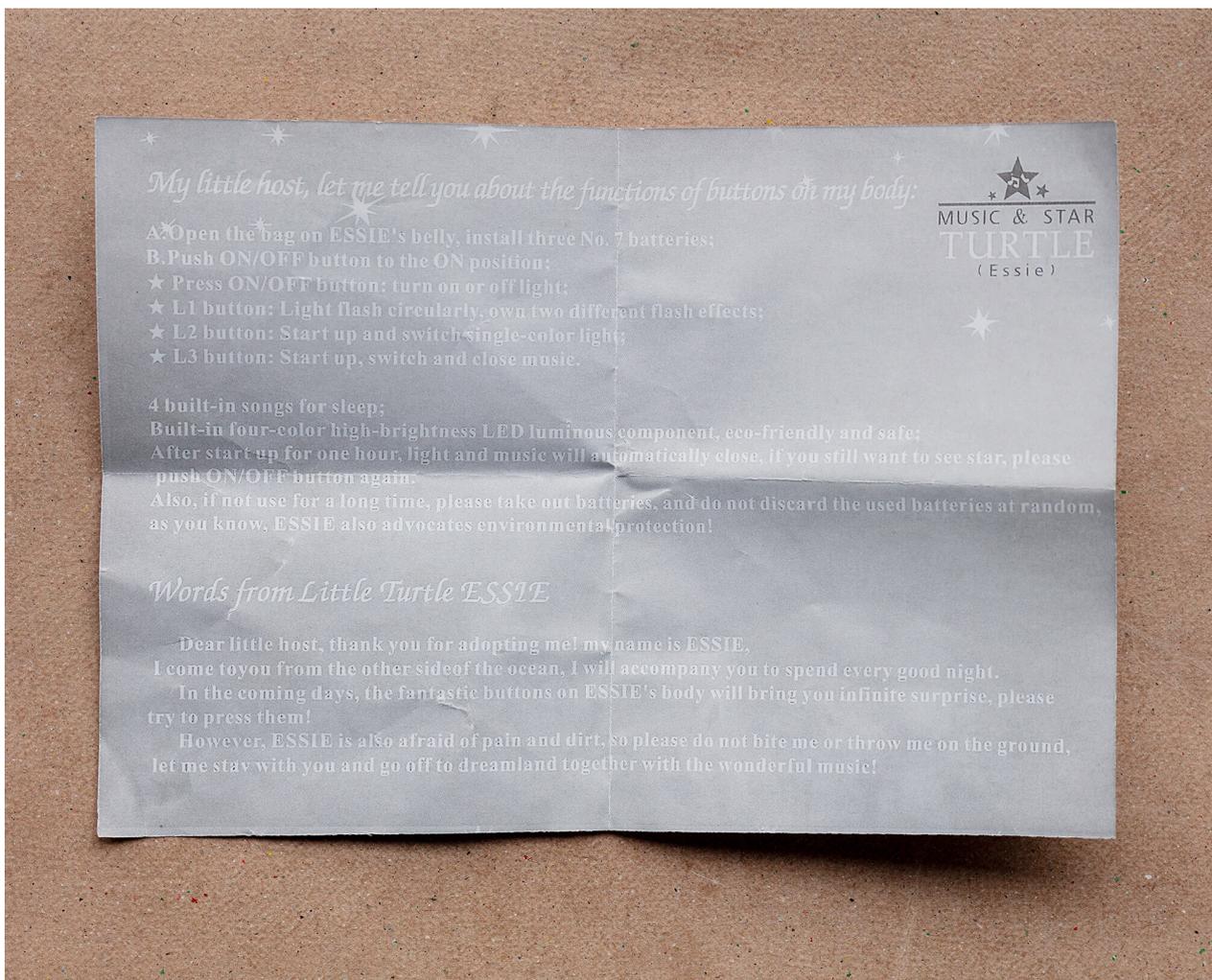
14:05:22

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 illeism¹ and back.

Notes

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



type
photograph

date
17.12.2020

filename
_44A8424.dng

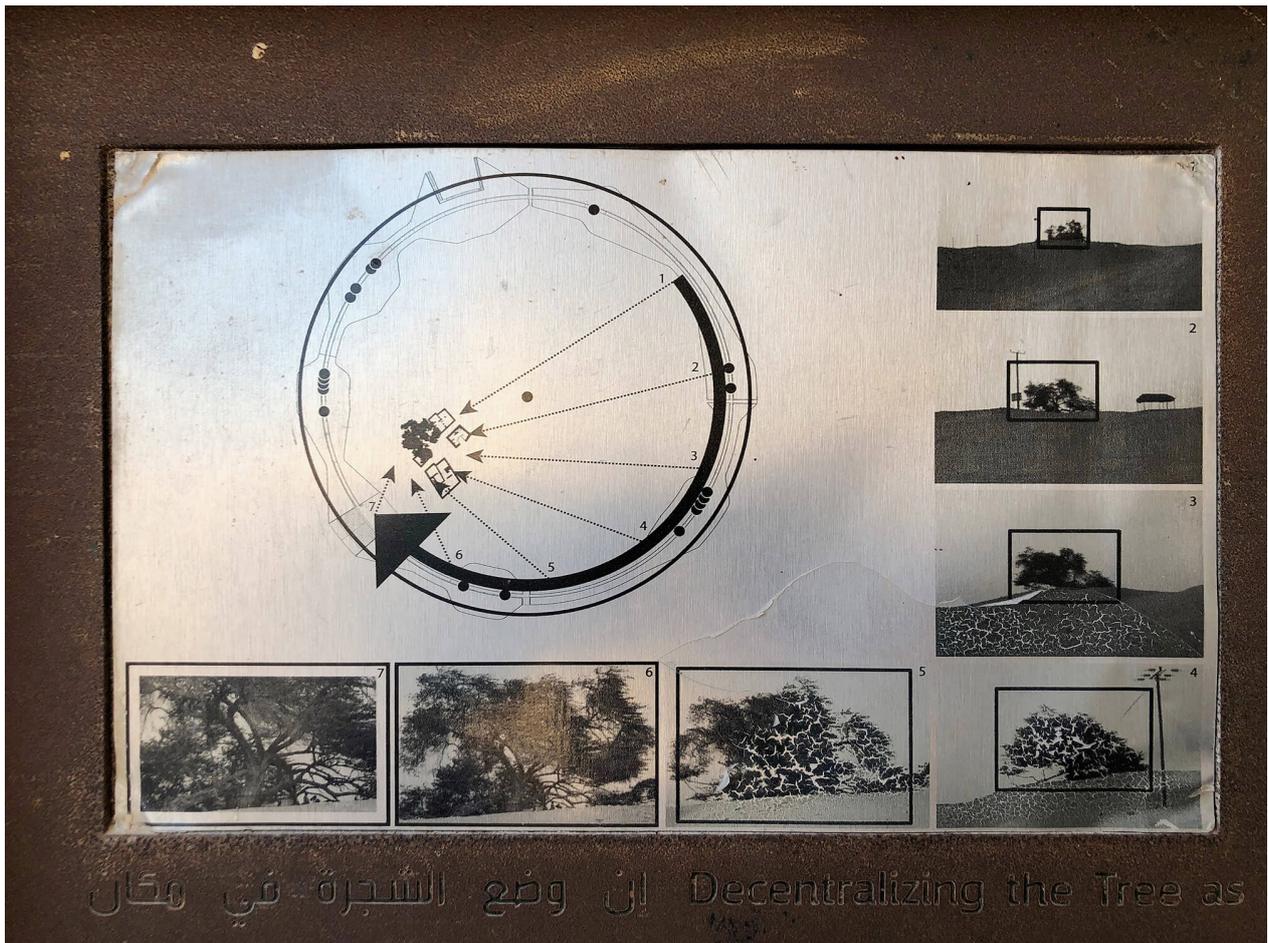
size
50,6MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, astronomy, Bahrain, manual, family

14:05:28

A sheet of brushed aluminium serves as the base for a monochromatic print showing a circular floor plan and seven photographs. The nearby *Prosopis cineraria*, known as the 'Tree of Life', is a well-known tourist attraction in the Arabian Desert near Jebel Dukhan. The plaque shows how the recently constructed concrete structure, circling the four hundred year old tree, allows the visitors to see and photograph the landmark in new and – because of the tree's decentralized position – surprising ways. In summer the temperature can rise well over 40°C. The different expansion rates of the aluminium and its imprint cause the latter to crack.



type
photograph

date
12.12.2020

filename
IMG_4888.HEIC

size
2,2MB

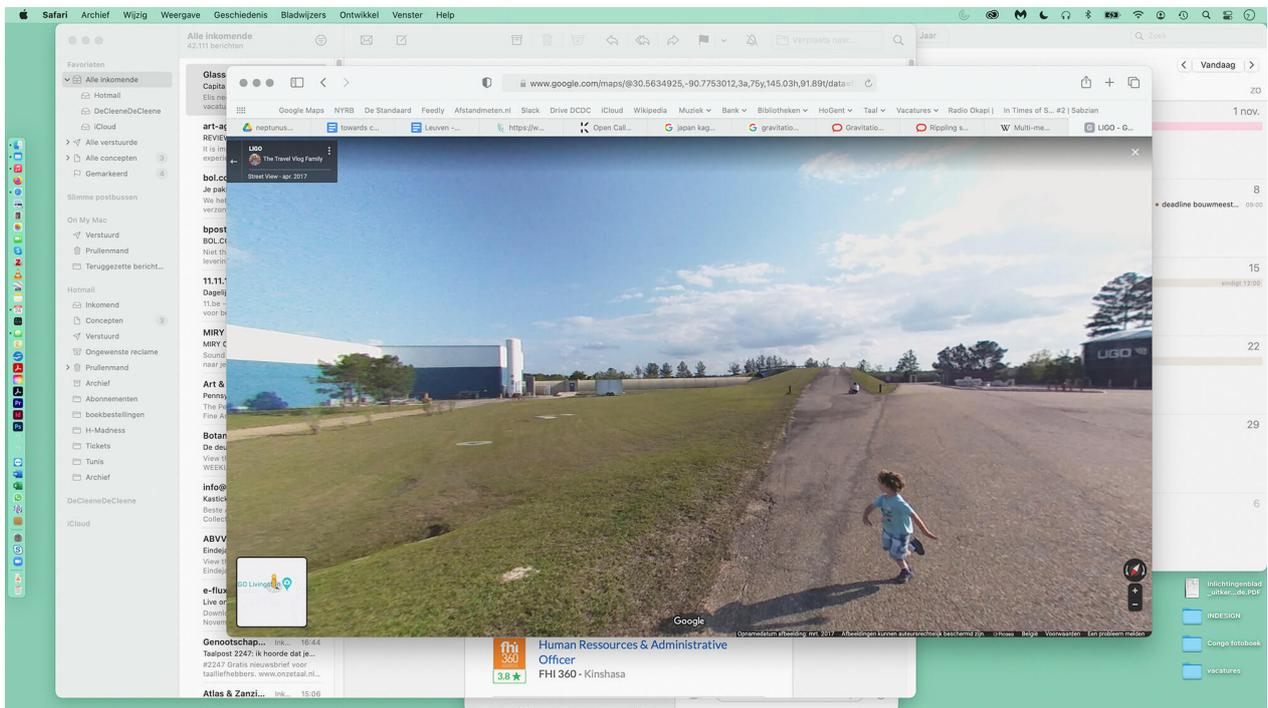
author
Michiel De Cleene

category
Bahrain, botany, drought, map/plan, tree, fissure, sand, sign, physics, scale

14:05:29

To detect gravitational waves, physicists built enormous research centers, amongst others at Livingston, Louisiana. The facility mainly consists of two tunnels in an L-shape. Mirrors inside provide data. Disturbances from gravitational waves are miniscule. To prevent interference from outside, such as vibrations caused by people passing in the neighbourhood, the mirrors have to be detached from the earth. They 'float', suspended by glass fibers in a pendulum-like construction.

As I was watching my screen, a courier was on his way to deliver a book (Noel-Todd, J. *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem: From Baudelaire to Anne Carson*. London: Penguin, 2019).



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	24.11.2020	LIGO.png	6,9MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
 physics, seismology, mirror, interference, book, architecture, mistake

14:05:31

In June, 2014, a severe hailstorm hit Belgium. Warnings were broadcast. A football game between the national teams of Belgium and Tunisia was paused. The morning after, there were small dents in the hood and the roof of the car, each a square centimeter in size, some 10 centimeters separated from each other. The storm didn't get a name.

Assessing the damage, the insurance company's expert took the dents into account to establish the wreck's worth.



type
photograph

date
16.10.2020

filename
IMG_2236.JPG

size
2,8MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
automobile, crash, precipitation, insurance

14:05:34

The archive of O. Clemminck, architect, was preserved in a box of croutons – by him, the historian who gave it to my father, or someone else (it contains a letter written by Clemminck's widow asking a client to pay the bill her husband had sent). The croutons had a flavor of fine herbs and, a stamp on the box with the plans in it says, should have been consumed before April 1987.



type
photograph

date
14.01.2022

filename
_MG_7420.JPG

size
6MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
architecture, archive, data storage, food, O. Clemminck, packaging

14:05:36

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.

Where once there was twelve million cubic metres of water, excavators and trucks are moving dirt and rocks that have been hidden from sight for 56 years; piling them up into a temporary dam: a *batardeau*.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	05.12.2021	IMG_0512b.jpg	6,68 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category	drought, landscape, repair			

14:05:40

