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

Your path through the collection lead along AI submission, A smoker's history of energy, Birthday Omen, Weight Bench, A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, Passing Time Near a Particle Accelerator, Tipp-Ex, F 6, Gold Varnish, Bent Concrete, Mushroom Picking Prohibited, Une étoile est-elle un document?, From Asturias, Into Cantabria, Pipe, Gatun Locks, Crash (2), We Welcome Comments, Roofing (6) – JEM, Roofing (3) – Simon, tu me manques, Schelp, Iguanodon, Flint, At the copyshop, This site has been seized, The Imaginary Edge of the Roadway, Investment, A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca, Passing Time Near a Particle Accelerator, Waybill, Gold Varnish, It's Pouring, Launching a Website, Mushroom Picking Prohibited, From Asturias, Into Cantabria, Mammoth Tree and the Golden Spurs, Gatun Locks, Thunder Afar, We Welcome Comments, Roofing (5) – UDI

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 14.07.2022 13:31,
printed on	and contains 39 do	ocuments on 81 pages.
(https://the-doc	uments.org/log/14-	07-2022-4092/)

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.







'Submission for an art project named the-documents.org' is a collection of 9 images<sup>1</sup> generated by DALL·E mini<sup>2</sup>, an open-source AI model, on the basis of the prompt 'Submission for an art project named the-documents.org'.

DALL·E mini is a freely available AI tool that generates images based on a description of the desired image (a prompt) provided by a user.

Though DALL·E mini seems to be primarily used as a source of humour within the online community - being able to create a set of images from any specific or abstract prompt – it also gives rise to more serious questions on AI ethics and copyright. As the model is trained with unfiltered data from the internet, it may reinforce societal biases, generating images that contain stereotypes against minority groups. DALL-E mini and similar, more advanced tools, are also capable of creating art 'in the style of' when they have sufficient data to source from (e.g. using a prompt as "Van Gogh painting the Eiffel Tower"). This leads to the legal and ethical question whether an artist should have a say in the use of his/her artwork as AI input data, and whether the artist should be able to claim rights for AI generated images based on this data.

#### Notes

1



- 2 DALL·E mini was created by Boris Dayma et al. 2021-2022, https://huggingface.co/spaces/dalle-mini/dalle-mini, to be migrated to www.craiyon.com
- Ward Verwaeren is a legal counsel in the tech industry, and former IP lawyer. He tries to know more about art than the average lawyer, and more about law than the average artist.

### the-documents.o



type screenshot date 01.07.2022 filename dallemini\_2022-6-19\_21-53-48.png

size 1,61 MB author Ward Verwaeren A mostly empty book designed to collect cigar bands. The bands are glued to the paper at their left side, so the information on the backside, explaining the image and referring to the series it belongs to and the number of different labels the series contains, can be looked up. The book has complete and incomplete series on Christopher Columbus (complete), tanks (incomplete), the origins of civilization (complete), Ancient cultures (incomplete), fashion (complete), South-American sculptures (complete), Ancient columns (incomplete), Nobel Prize Winners (incomplete), an unclarified series of seven men, most of whom are 'prof.' or 'dr.' (complete / incomplete), design plates (incomplete), famous Belgians (complete / incomplete), statesmen (incomplete) and football players (incomplete). The first page in the book is used to present two series. The left column presents the Egyptian dynasty (incomplete). The middle and right column present a series of bands by the brand Jubilé on the history of energy in telling scenes and pieces of machinery.

Series: Energy

#### Middle column, top to bottom:

- The writing telegraph. Hughes
- Experiment with a sulphur globe. William Gilbert
- Primitive telephone. Philipp Reis
- Wireless telegraph. Guglielo [sic] Marconi
- The arc of Volta. Sir Humphry Davy
- Fire in the wagon. Thomas Alva Edison
- Experiments with lightning. Benjamin Franklin
- Cathode for creating X-Rays. Wilhelm Röntgen
- Rotating magnetic field. Galileo Ferraris

#### Right column, top to bottom:

- Electric discharge. William Watt
- Magnetic telephone. Antonio Meucci
- Muscels reacting to electricity. Luigi Galvani
- Voltaic pile. Alessandro Volta
- Oscillating circuit. Guglielo [sic] Marconi
- Development of the telephone. Graham Bell

#### Notes

- 1 The scene shows a man standing at a desk, sticking out his hand to an officer in a window that reads, in mirror writing: Customs.
- On eBay a complete series is advertised (15 EUR), with a lo-res picture of the whole collection, including the five bands missing in my grandfather's collection. The information on the back, however, is not given. It leads to a highly speculative history of energy.
- A man in a gown watching a T-shaped object.
- A child in a cellar, sitting on a stool at a table with gray objects.
- A soldier kneeling beside a child, in front of a train, and in front of a boat.
- A low table with a giant cartwheel of sorts and a box.
- A vertical object with what seems to be a bell on top.

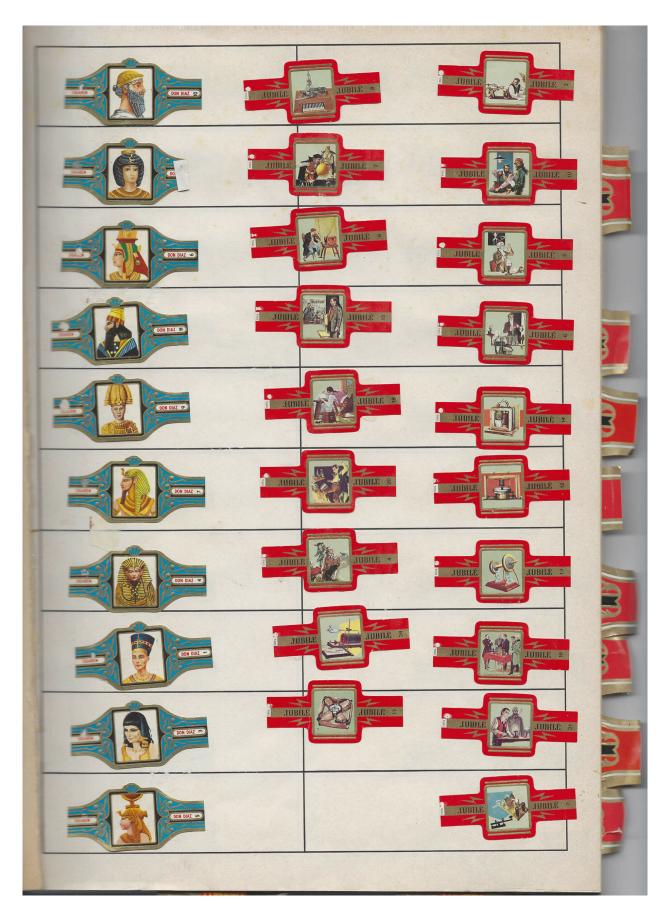
### the-documents.c

- Telephone, beginning of the 20th century
- Next to his wireless telegraph. Guglielo [sic]
   Marconi
- Invention of the incandescent light bulb.
   Thomas Alva Edison
- Morse's telegraph. Samuel Morse

The series is incomplete.<sup>2</sup>

# A smoker's history of energy

org



type scan date 18.08.2021 filename Document\_2021-07-23\_160752.jpg size 10MB author Arnout De Cleene Most mornings I eat three slices of bread. I stack them. Between the highest slice and the one in the middle I put a slice of cheese (young Gouda). I put the whole in the microwave<sup>1</sup> for 1 minute and 50 seconds. The result is what I like to call a *smelteram*<sup>2</sup>.

On the morning of my thirty-second birthday the plate broke in half during heating.

#### Notes

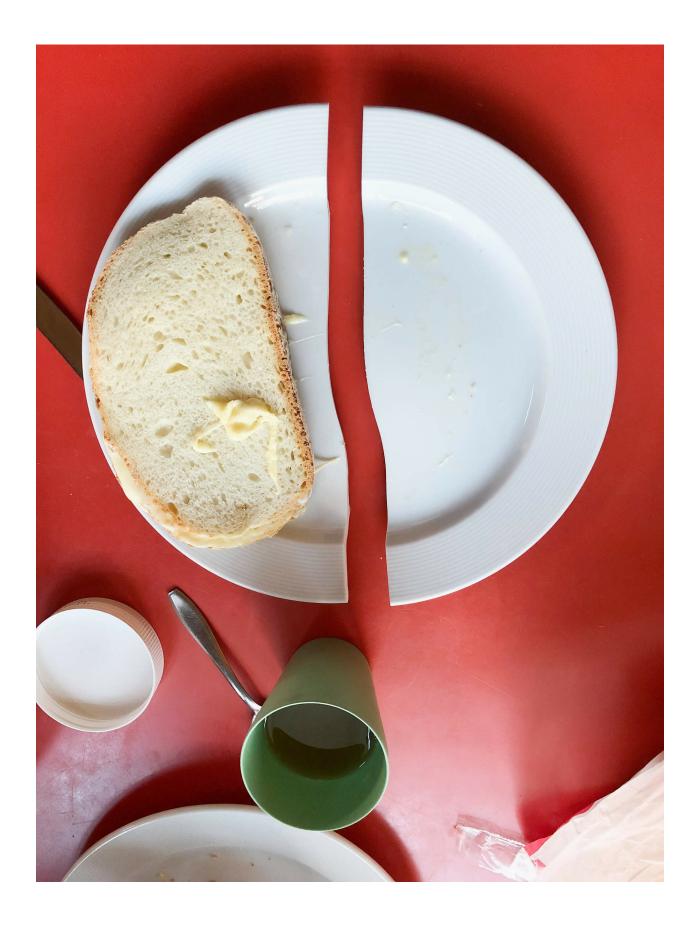
1



 A contraction of smelten (Dutch for melting) and boterham (Dutch for a slice of bread).

## the-documents.d

# Birthday Omen



type photograph date 05.08.2021 filename IMG\_1129.jpg size 2,06 MB author Michiel De Cleene

category fissure, food, house, sign, technology

Today I brought an old bedspring, the styrofoam the air-humidifier came in, a few bags of sawdust and some scrap pieces of plywood to the municipal recycling center. As I was waiting to mount the stairs to the scrap metal container, a gray-haired man wearing blue leather shoes, dark jeans and a checkered shirt was tipping – with relative ease – a weight bench over the edge of the container.

## the-documents.d



type photograph date 26.07.2021 filename IMG\_7874.HEIC size 1,2MB

It's early spring. The pool is covered with a sheet of plastic. The deciduous trees are just leafing out. A tree stump serves as a placeholder for the diving board's foot – it was customary to take it indoors for winter – and keeps people from kicking its threaded rods sticking up from the silex tiles that line the pool.

The upper right corner of the plastic frame is missing. It's probably where the insect – now dead, dry and yellowish – got in. The frame was left behind in the laundry room overlooking the garden, the pool and the pool house. At the time it hadn't been used for quite a while. Half empty, the water green.

In summer, when the wind dropped, horse-flies came. You could shake them off temporarily by swimming a few meters underwater.

### the-documents.c

# A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca

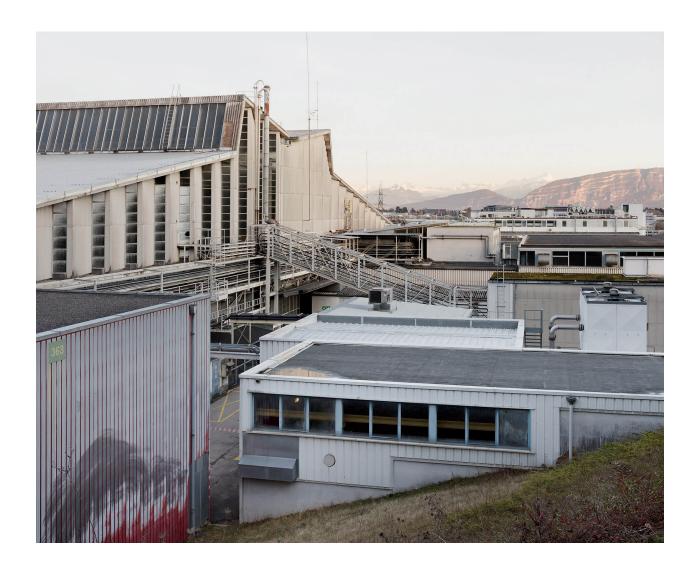


type scan date 22.07.2021 filename pool.jpg size 38,87 MB

On the second to last day of a research visit at CERN, there was some spare time in the schedule. I took a long walk towards building 282 in search of some excavation samples: cylindrical pieces of rock that were preserved when the tunnel was dug, glued to a block of wood and frequently exhibited in museums over the last three decades as material evidence of the earthwork and as a witness to the depth. The route led me along the back of building 363 where the wind caused young trees – now gone – to scuff the facade over time.

### the-documents.c

# Passing Time Near a Particle Accelerator



type photograph date 11.07.2021 filename cern\_011.tif

size 57,57 MB

A white Mercedes van inserts in front of me in a traffic jam near Antwerp. The back of the van has been altered in several ways: a latch was added to the door, a footstep was bolted to the bumper, a couple of tie-wraps are holding up the lights on the left side. Traffic is moving slow. There is no Mercedes logo. Some parts have been retouched with white paint that differs slightly from the rest of the bodywork, not unlike a tipp-ex'ed document.

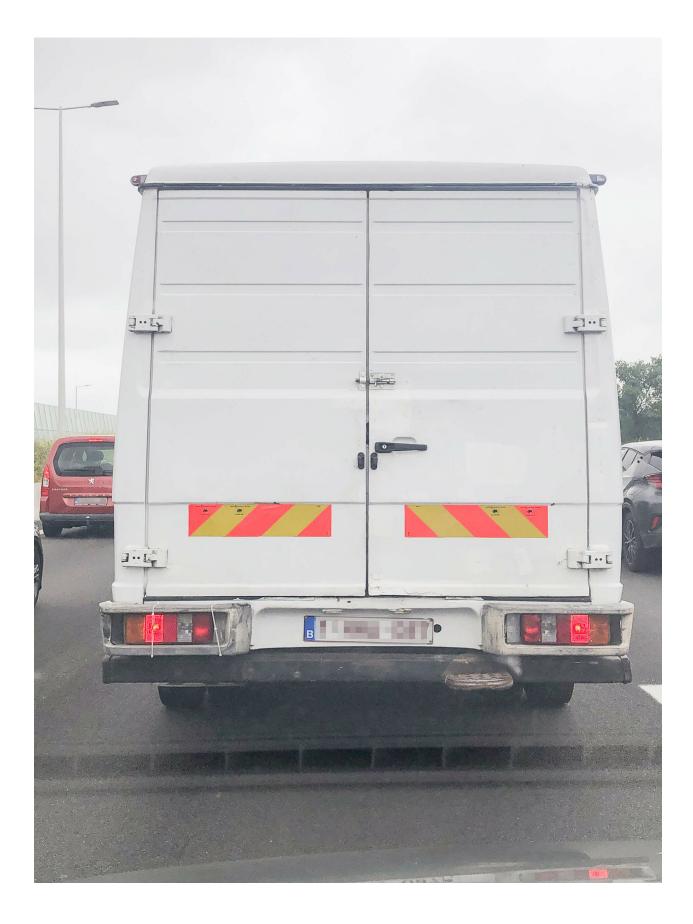
#### Notes

- 1 Maybe the original locking mechanism no longer functions, or, perhaps, the owner wants to add a padlock to the doors at night.
- 2 Maybe a corroded screw caused the lights to come loose, or a slight collision.
- 3 Someone might have stolen it. Mercedes stars are often stolen, although mostly from the hood.
- 4 Maybe to counter corrosion, to conceal a mark someone made on the van or to cover up a fixed dent.
- Legislation concerning the publication of someone else's licence plate on the internet and the demand to blur it, is somewhat ambiguous.

### the-documents.c

# Tipp-Ex

org



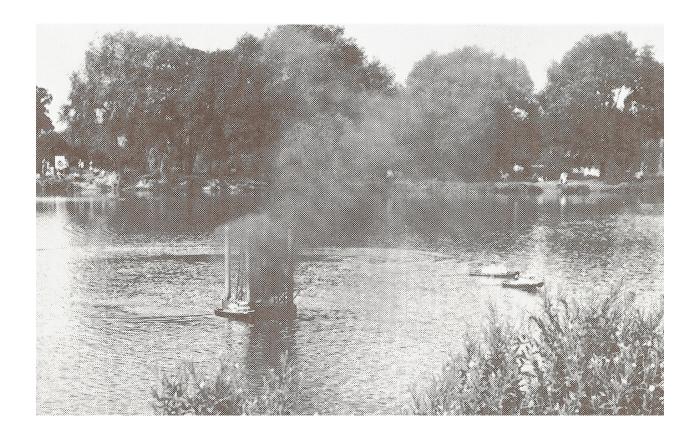
type photograph date 05.07.2021 filename IMG\_7538.HEIC size 714 KB

In his *Handboek Varende Scheepsmodellen* (Handbook Sailing Ship Models) André Veenstra explains the different classes in ship model-competitions. There's a wide variety. For static ship models the most important one is 'truth-to-nature'. A jury compares the model to photographs of the actual ship and brings into account categories such as amount of work, degree of difficulty, scale ratio, construction execution and painting.

The most interesting class – according to Veenstra – is F 6. In this particular class, a number of participants with different boats will form a team. Together, they will perform a certain 'act' with a maximum duration of ten minutes. During the act, they mimic a slice of reality. Such as, for example, 'rescuing' and towing a ship in distress; extinguishing a fire on a tanker or oil rig, lichen and/or tow the sunken wreckage to the harbor, stage a naval battle, etc.

Page 262 shows a photograph of such a mimicked slice of reality. The caption explains: 'Image 14.15. The Dutch demonstration in the F 6 class during the European Championship of 1975: the oil rig is set on fire by a motorboat with terrorists. The fire is extinguished and the oil rig is quickly towed to a safe harbor by tugs. The show was performed by six people and took a very creditable fourth place.'

### the-documents.c



type scan date 22.06.2021 filename veenstra-b.jpg size 20,17 MB

I'm taking a scan of a family photo album given to me after my grandmother passed away, wanting to write something about the marvelous portraits inside. The genealogy is only partly clear to me: I recognize my dad as a kid, my uncle, my grandmother, her brother in the laboratory he (said he) ran. He smelled of cigars and severe perfume. The older photographs present people I don't know, but must be my ancestors. My grandmother told me stories<sup>1</sup> that, historically, reach further back than the figures I recognize in the photographs. There are no names and no dates in the album. The first two pictures seem to be the oldest ones.<sup>2</sup> I retract them from the album pockets in which they were slid to check if something is written on the backside. When I take the album away from the scanner's glass plate, particles of leather, gold varnish and sturdy cardboard come loose. I place a sheet of paper on the glass plate and press 'scan' again.

#### Notes

Once she (my grandmother) went home from school, sick, with her bicycle. She studied to become a nurse. The school was in Brussels, about 60 kilometers from her native village M. The milkman's van tipping over in front of my grandmother's parental house. A milk covered street. My great-grandfather, physician and mayor at M. Something happened during the Second World War having to do with telephones or radios when she was still a kid.



### the-documents.

## Gold Varnish



type scan date 20.06.2021 filename Handgeschreven\_2021-06-18\_110124.jpg

size 1,9MB author Arnout De Cleene 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  $130 \times 15 \times 40 \text{cm}$ .

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.'

### the-documents.c

#### Sources

## **Bent Concrete**



type photograph date 02.06.2021 filename \_44A7339.dng size 42,54MB

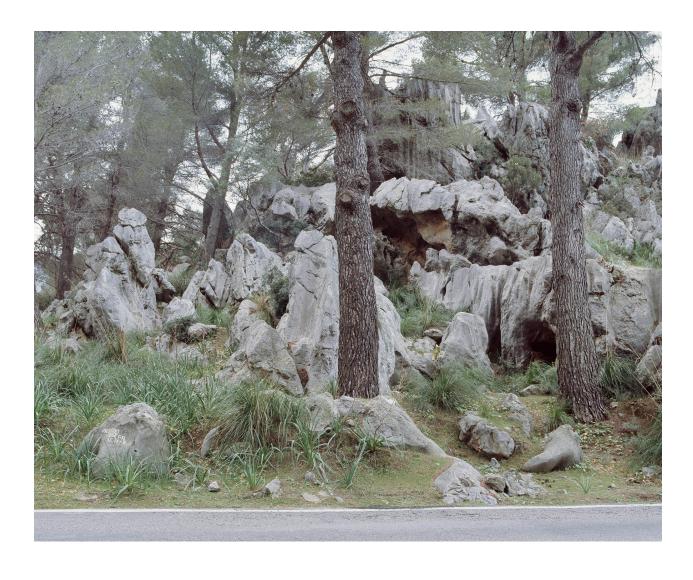
I must have driven past this rocky landscape about sixteen times, going back and forth between viewpoints and the house the parents of a friend let me stay in. On the last day, I left early for the airport, pulled into a lay-by, took my tripod and camera out of the trunk of the red Volkswagen Polo rental car and made two photographs. It was only when I got home, had the film developed, scanned it and was removing dust particles from the file, that I discovered the hand painted text on the rock: 'PROIBIDO BUSCAR SETAS'.

### the-documents.d

Notes



# Mushroom Picking Prohibited



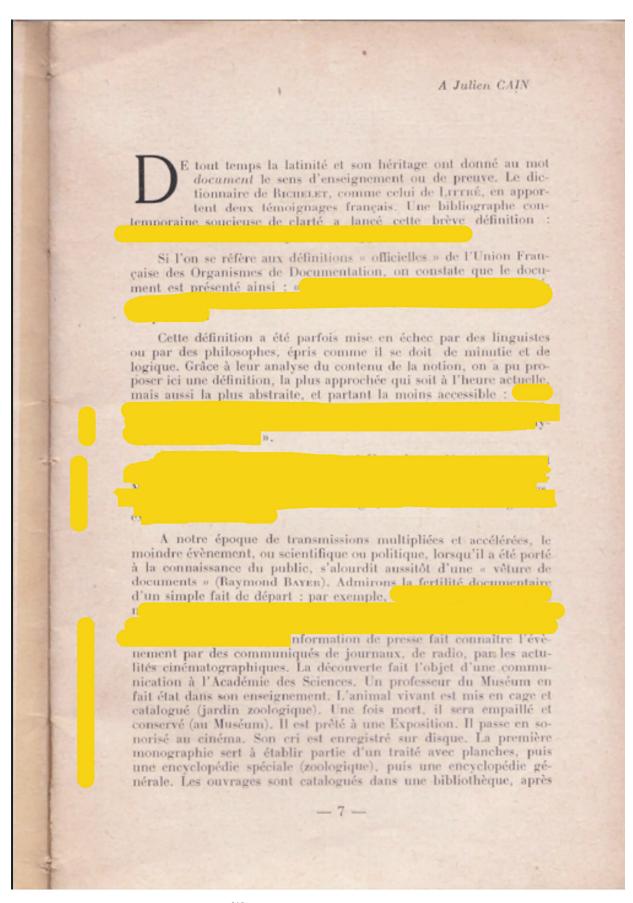
type photograph date 19.05.2021 filename Untitled99993-dustfree-nosharpencrop2.psd

size 365,37MB

In the introduction to her book *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?*, French 'documentalist' Suzanne Briet asks what a document is. In a scrappy scan of her book I found online I am highlighting almost everything she writes. Is a star a document? Briet says it isn't. But the catalogues and photographs of stars are. When I quickly opened the file with Apple's 'Preview' application to check the above paraphrase, the highlighted sentences were illegible.

## the-documents.d

### Une étoile est-elle un document?

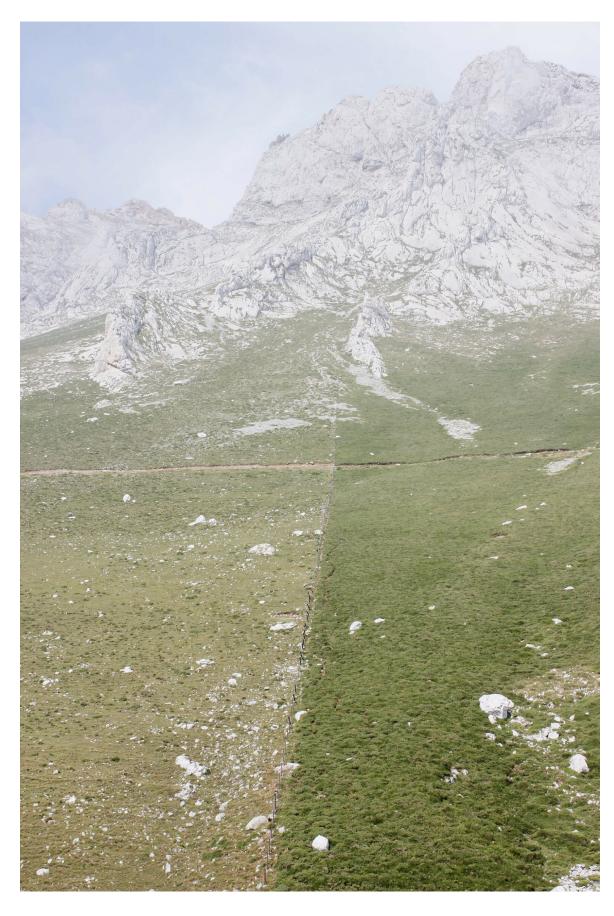


type screenshot date 17.05.2021 filename Schermafbeelding 2021-05-13 om 11.41.58.png

size 201KB author De Cleene De Cleene A half a day's walk from the Fuente Dé *teleférico*, there are less and less traces of passers-by. The path to Sotres suddenly runs through a lusher green. The fence between two pastures keeps the sheep from crossing and coincides with the border between two regions. A hole in the fence would change the landscape's hue.

## the-documents.d

# From Asturias, Into Cantabria



type photograph date 15.05.2021

filename \_MG\_9795.jpg size 4,6MB author Arnout De Cleene

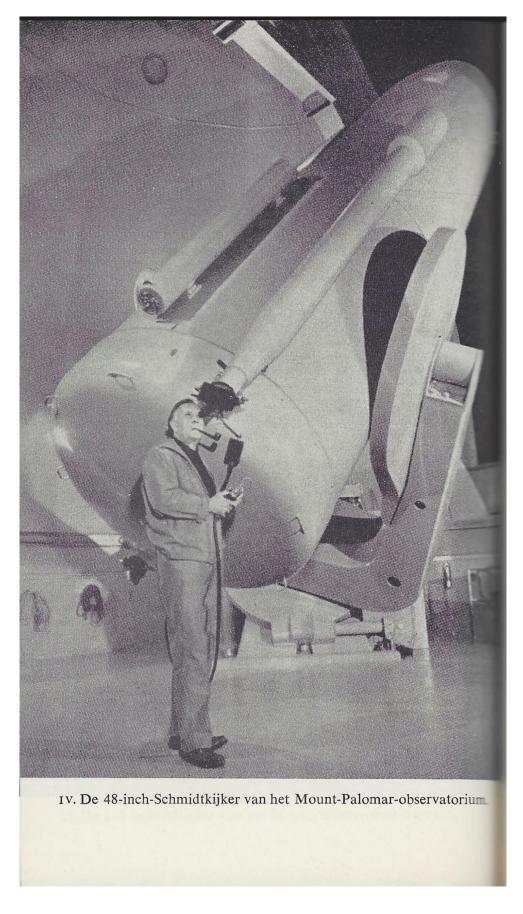
category animal, landscape, government

The 48-inch Oschin Schmidt, a renowned reflecting telescope at Palomar Observatory, California, was used for the Palomar Observatory Sky Survey (POSS), published in 1958, one of the largest photographic surveys of the night sky.

Based on the man's pipe shadow's direction, thrown onto the telescope, there is reason to believe an off-camera flash was used to make the picture.

## the-documents.d

# org Pipe



type scan date 14.05.2021 filename Foto\_2021-05-18\_221027.jpg size 2,5MB author Arnout De Cleene On March 23th 2015, a high pressure system above Panama Bay blew strong winds landwards. At the Gatun locks, one of the webcams overlooking the Canal neglected the traffic and briefly captured its own images. The ship's presumed passage through the Gatun locks wasn't recorded by this camera and the AIS-transponder did not save any data of the ship's transit from the Pacific to the Atlantic side of the canal: the Authenticity managed to swap oceans undetected.

On February 16th 2016, the transponder still signals the ship near the port of Bahia Las Minas. The current is calm, the ship has been practically immobile for a year.

### the-documents.c

## Gatun Locks



type video date 10.05.2021 filename gatun-cam3.mp4 size 53,16MB

Near Avenue 61 on an artificial island close to Seef, a truck is being towed after the driver lost control over the vehicle and flipped it onto its side. A warm wind blows in from the Persian Gulf.

A police officer signals us to come closer. 'Why are you taking pictures?' he asks. 'This is just an accident. You have to delete the pictures from your phone. Now.' After checking the pictures-folder on our phones, he gets in his car, drives a few metres, stops the car and rolls down his window. 'And don't do it again!' he yells. Then he drives off, raising a cloud of sand in his wake.

### the-documents.c

# Crash (2)



type photograph date 08.05.2021 filename IMG\_5071.jpeg size 2,71MB

Robert Nemiroff and Jerry Bonnell's lesser known project (R.N. and J.B. being the creators of Astronomy Picture of The Day), was making websites containing over a million of digits of square roots of irrational numbers, e.g. seven. 'They were computed during spare time on a VAX alpha class machine over the course of a weekend. [...] We believe these are the most digits ever computed for the square root of seven on or before 1 April 1994.' Elsewhere, R.N. states: 'They are not copyrighted and we do not think it is legally justifiable to copyright such a basic thing as the digits of a commonly used irrational number.' If one wanted to get a copy of the 10 million digits of the square root of the number e R.N. and J.B. computed in their spare time, one can send an email to R.N. at nemiroff@grossc.gsfc.nasa.gov.

#### the-documents.c

#### Sources

- https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/gifcity/sqrt7.1mil
- $\bullet \qquad https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn\_dig.html$
- https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn.html

#### We Welcome Comments

What follows are the first 1 million digits of the square root of 7. Actually, slightly more than 1 million digits are given here. These digits were computed by Robert Nemiroff (George Mason University and NASA Goddard Space Flight Center) and checked by Jerry Bonnell (University Space Research Association and NASA Goddard Space Flight Center). They were computed during spare time on a VAX alpha class machine over the course of a weekend. We do NOT guarantee the accuracy of these digits. Although these digits have been checked once we encourage others to check them as well. We believe these are the most digits ever computed for the square root of seven on or before 1 April 1994. If anyone is aware of more digits we ask them to please alert us of their existence. We have computed at least 10 million digits of the square root of two as well as several digits of the number e and the square roots of other numbers. These are available on this mosaic server (URL: http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn.html). We welcome comments.

- Robert Nemiroff and Jerry Bonnell

The square root of seven =

filename

type date Schermafbeelding 2021-05-01 om size author screenshot 01.05.2021 16.44.39.png 340KB Arnout De Cleene

category

astronomy, archive, data storage, irrational numbers, mathematics

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.

### the-documents.



type photograph date 14.04.2021 filename IMG\_6510.jpeg size 6,61MB author Michiel De Cleene

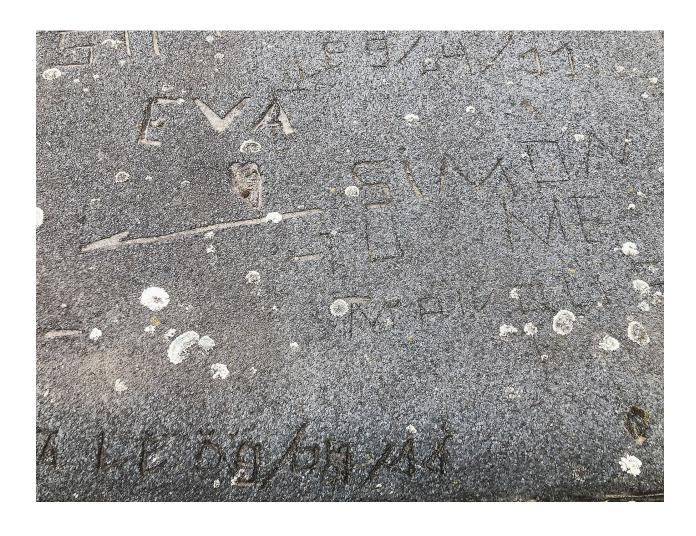
category automobile, decoration, fissure, map/plan, parking, precipitation, roofing, sign

In what order and by whom the various texts and drawings were carved into the soft roofing is unclear. To the right of 'EVA', a heart symbol and an arrow (pointing to the left), the roofing reads 'SIMON TU ME MANQUES'.

The short sentence usually – yet hastily – translates to 'Simon, I miss you'. However, in French the 'you' (tu) is the subject and has an active role, whereas the 'I' (*me*) is the direct object. In short: by his not being there, Simon actively effectuates hurt to the one who carved this text.

### the-documents.

## Roofing (3) – Simon, tu me manques



type photograph date 14.04.2021 filename IMG\_6512.jpeg size 4,50MB

Halfway March my dad started finding empty clam shells on the banks of the Zuidlede along the pasture where he used to herd sheep. He had never seen this type of clam before. There were easily seventy of them along a hundred metre stretch of riverbank.

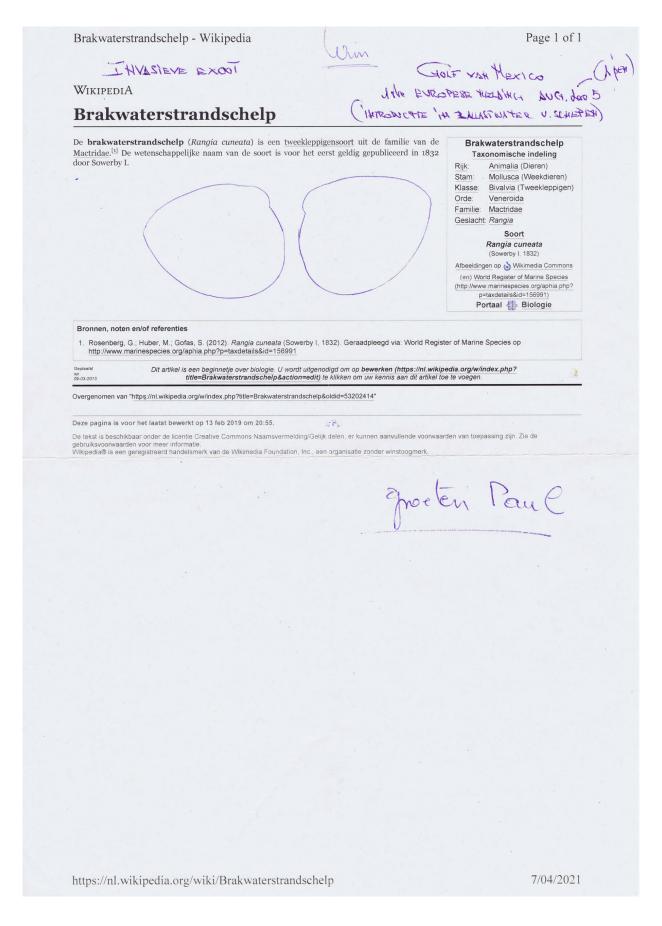
He brought two specimens to someone he knows in the neighbouring provincial domain. She would look into it, she said, and that she would probably pass it on to someone at the educational department.

Yesterday he (my dad) received a printout of the Dutch wikipedia-page on the Brakwaterstrandschelp (Rangia Cuneata). On the page Paul (who sends his regards at the bottom of the document) traced around the scallops with a blue ballpoint pen.

My dad added in capitals – also with a blue ballpoint pen – that the Rangia Cuneata is an invasive species, native to the Gulf of Mexico. The first time it was observed in Europe was in Antwerp in August 2005, most probably they reached Europe in the ballast water tanks of large ships.

#### the-documents.d

### rg Schelp



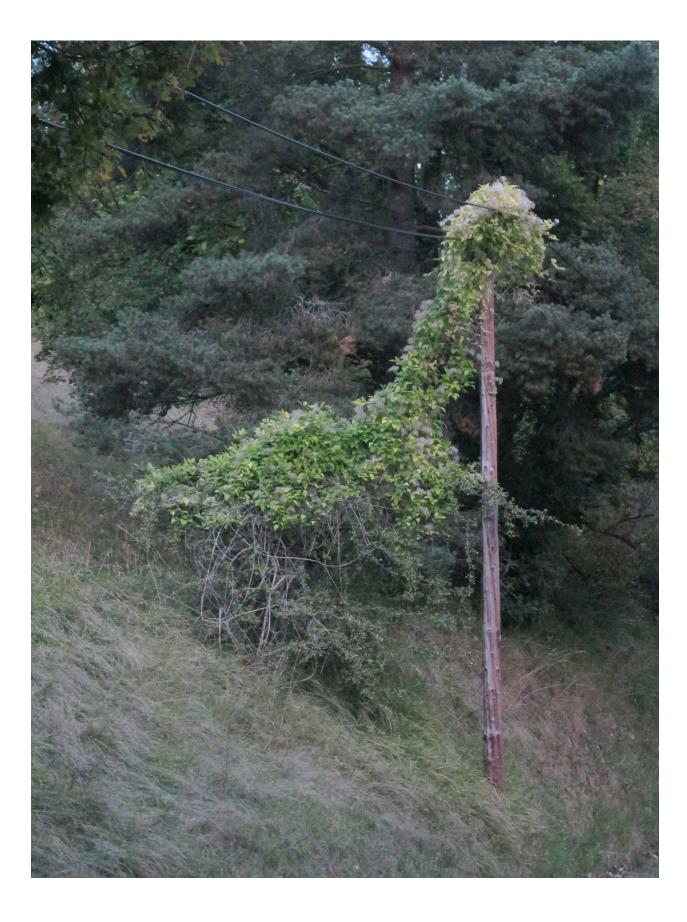
type scan date 11.04.2021 filename schelp2.jpeg size 7MB

I recognized it in a flash, the late Jurassic-early Cretaceous herbivore looming dangerously over the road I was cycling on. I thought of *Some Windy Trees*.<sup>1</sup>

A utility pole (425638, 07/99, 07/2002, COBRA), electrical wires, a hawthorn (Crataegus) and an old man's beard (Clematis vitalba). A symbiosis.

#### the-documents.d

## Iguanodon



type photograph date 17.10.2021 filename IMG\_2711.jpg size 4,66 MB author Michiel De Cleene

category angst, animal, book, botany, dusk, mistake, tree, trompe l'oeil, wind

A cigar box, standing at the back of a shelf next to the heating installation, with in it silex-like stones with what seem to be traces of prehistoric usage.

In the garage, there were papers (the archive of O. Clemminck) and objects (stones, tiles) left to us by a man who had worked at the city archive. He was an acclaimed expert on our village's history.<sup>1</sup>

#### the-documents.d

#### Notes

1 A recent study by professor Philippe Crombé at Ghent University states that during the last Ice Age, in the region where I grew up, there was once a great lake, with, at the shores, proven presence of prehistoric man. As a kid, we dug up shells with a toothbrush, and set a perimeter with plastic tape. The former presence of a tavern where my parents now live, and the restaurant which still serves seafood at the other side of the road, prevented accurate dating.

## Flint



type photograph date 11.10.2021 filename \_MG\_7417.JPG size 6,5MB author Arnout De Cleene At the copyshop, on a shelf above photocopier 8, the lid of a box of paper serves as the container for 'forgotten originals'.

the-documents.

# At the copyshop

org



type photograph date 28.09.2021 filename IMG\_0105.JPG size 1,8MB author Arnout De Cleene Conducting research into the effects on energy consumption of blockchain-based applications such as bitcoin, I was triggered by the fact that many of the facilities making blockchain-mining<sup>1</sup> possible are located in Georgia. Low energy prices and a relaxed taxation policy are said to be among the reasons why companies such as Bitfury locate their plants there.

After a three-day hike in the Caucasus Mountains, on the Georgian side of the border with Chechnya, we are invited to pitch our tent in the garden of Murati, a local farmer in a small mountain village. We are overwhelmed by the scenery and Murati's hospitality. Many of the villages, thrown on the mountain flanks, have tower-like structures of some twenty meters high, making them all look fortified. They have no windows or doors on the ground floor.<sup>2</sup>

Murati invites us into his house to drink warm milk with his family and brings us cheese-filled bread. One of us speaks Russian. He inspects our backpacks, headlights and drinking bags. He tells us a 500 kilogram pig of his did not return to the house that night. The family is saddened.

#### Notes

1. 'Mining' is what is being done when data – a transaction – has to be added to the blockchain (which, in itself, is the sum of all previous transactions, added to each other as data). To do this, computers have to solve a complex mathematical puzzle, which is crucial for the trustworthiness of the system, but for which loads of energy is needed. Criticism on the effects of blockchain-mining is growing, as it has a gruesome effect on resources. In 2018, Andrew North writes, Bitfury used 28 million kilowatt-hours of electricity per month, equalling the consumption of 120,000 Georgian households.





#### the-documents.d

In the evening, we see him taking his granddaughter by the hand. They walk to the highest point of the gravel road in front of his house and together watch the last light of the day fall on the snow-covered triangular peak of one of the Caucasus' highest mountains.

I'm mistrusting my memory and look the passage up in the journal we kept. The village is called Zagar. The mountain is Mount Tetnuldi. The granddaughter's name is Anna.

When I click through to one of the websites promising information on Georgia's blockchain economy, I happen to stumble on a dark webrelated website and access is denied.<sup>3</sup>

## This site has been seized



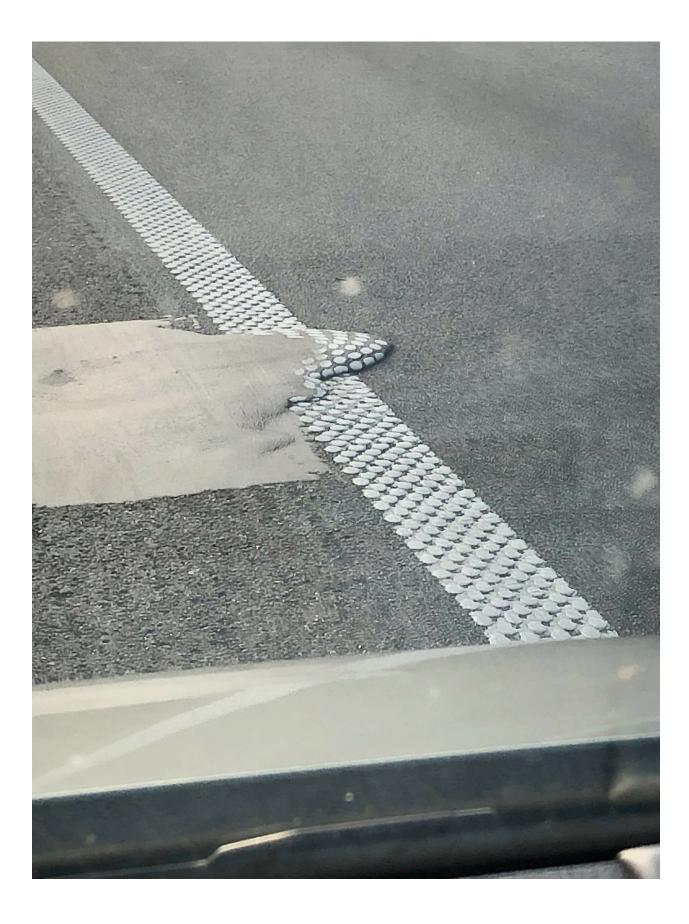
type photograph date 22.08.2021 filename \_MG\_6532.JPG, JPEG size 5,9MB author Arnout De Cleene Article 75 of the Royal Decree containing general regulations for road traffic and the use of public roads, published in *Het Belgisch Staatsblad* on 9 December 1975, lists the rules for longitudinal markings indicating the edge of the roadway.

According to 75.1, there are two types of markings that indicate the actual edge of the roadway: a white, continuous stripe and a yellow interrupted line. The former is mainly used to make the edge of the roadway more visible; the latter indicates that parking along it is prohibited.

In 75.2, the decree focuses on markings that indicate the imaginary edge of the roadway. Only a broad, white, continuous stripe is permitted for this purpose. The part of the public road on the other side of this line is reserved for standing still and parking, except on motorways and expressways.

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## The Imaginary Edge of the Roadway



type photograph date 08.08.2021 filename IMG\_7943.HEIC size 659 KB

The oldest coin in the collection has darkened over time, but upon inspection, the text 'AD USUM BELGII AUSTR' (left) and the contours of a (female) head (right) can be discerned. A quick search learns it stems from the middle of the 18th century. The coin was made and used in the Austrian Netherlands, reigned by Maria Theresa, who is the one depicted. My mother recollects finding it in the backyard when she was a kid.

About 40 years later, the euro was introduced. The ringbinder with my mother's coin collection was taken from the shelf. A dilemma came to the fore: we wondered if we should keep one of each existing Belgian coin and banknote and put them in the binder, alongside Maria Theresa, or if we should exchange them for the new European currency. The decision to keep a coin of five Belgian francs was not difficult to make, but as the amount raised, the answer was increasingly hard to give. This was an assessment of the old currency's emotional and projected historical value, compared to its current financial worth. It was a decision based on investment principles.

To accentuate the value of the Maria Theresa kronenthaler of 1 liard, I put the coin on a pile of red post-it-notes when photographing it. Coins like these are sold on eBay for prices ranging from 0,70 euros to 16 euros.

#### the-documents.o

### Investment

org



type photograph date 29.07.2021 filename \_MG\_6826.JPG; \_MG\_6825.JPG size 6,7MB; 7,7MB author Arnout De Cleene

the-documents.



It's early spring. The pool is covered with a sheet of plastic. The deciduous trees are just leafing out. A tree stump serves as a placeholder for the diving board's foot – it was customary to take it indoors for winter – and keeps people from kicking its threaded rods sticking up from the silex tiles that line the pool.

The upper right corner of the plastic frame is missing. It's probably where the insect – now dead, dry and yellowish – got in. The frame was left behind in the laundry room overlooking the garden, the pool and the pool house. At the time it hadn't been used for quite a while. Half empty, the water green.

In summer, when the wind dropped, horse-flies came. You could shake them off temporarily by swimming a few meters underwater.

#### the-documents.c

## A Dead Insect on the Trunk of a Cedrus Atlantica Glauca



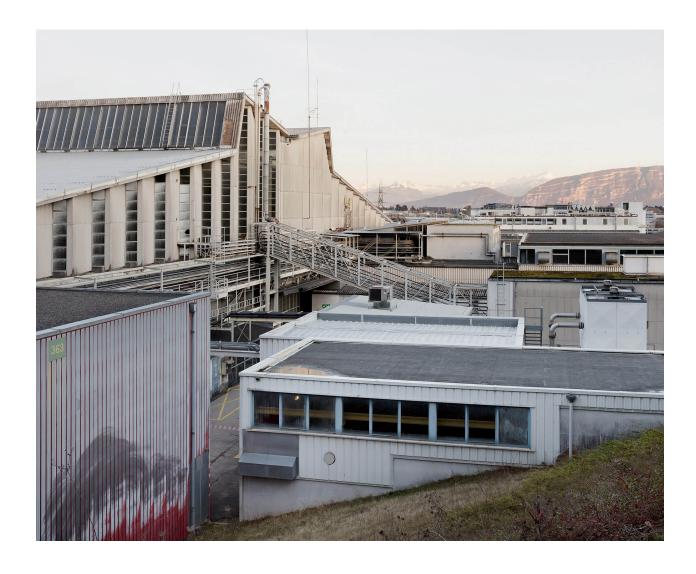
type scan

date 22.07.2021 filename pool.jpg size 38,87 MB

On the second to last day of a research visit at CERN, there was some spare time in the schedule. I took a long walk towards building 282 in search of some excavation samples: cylindrical pieces of rock that were preserved when the tunnel was dug, glued to a block of wood and frequently exhibited in museums over the last three decades as material evidence of the earthwork and as a witness to the depth. The route led me along the back of building 363 where the wind caused young trees – now gone – to scuff the facade over time.

#### the-documents.c

## Passing Time Near a Particle Accelerator



type photograph date 11.07.2021 filename cern\_011.tif

size 57,57 MB

'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.'

the-documents.c

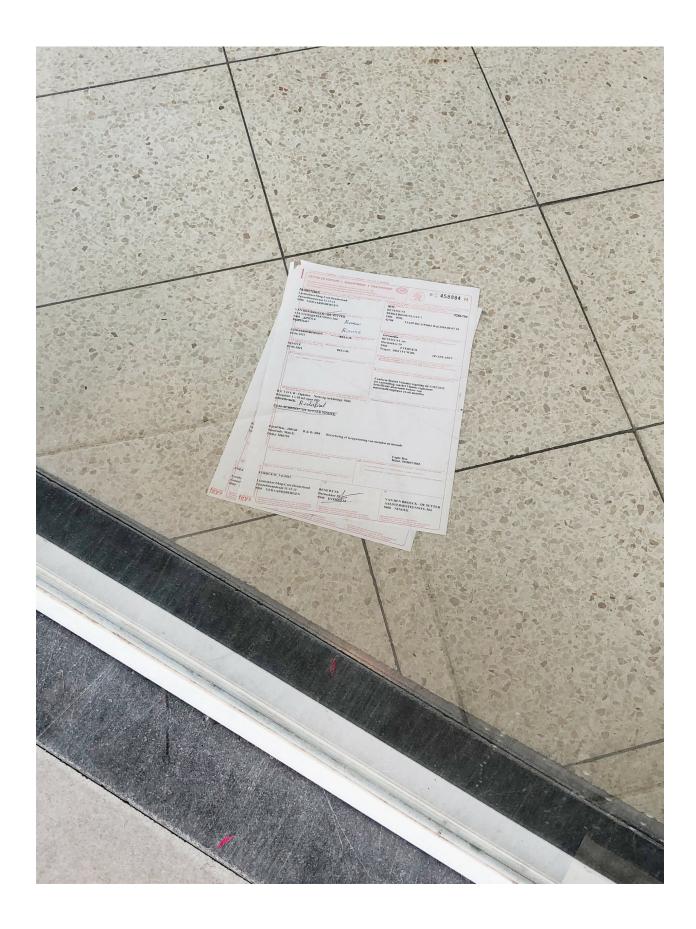
#### Notes

'I'll look around.'

- 1 The waybill documents the transport of a 30m<sup>3</sup> 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.

## Waybill

org



type photograph date 28.06.2021 filename IMG\_7499.HEIC size 1,6 MB author Michiel De Cleene

category decoration, economy, mistake, waste

I'm taking a scan of a family photo album given to me after my grandmother passed away, wanting to write something about the marvelous portraits inside. The genealogy is only partly clear to me: I recognize my dad as a kid, my uncle, my grandmother, her brother in the laboratory he (said he) ran. He smelled of cigars and severe perfume. The older photographs present people I don't know, but must be my ancestors. My grandmother told me stories<sup>1</sup> that, historically, reach further back than the figures I recognize in the photographs. There are no names and no dates in the album. The first two pictures seem to be the oldest ones.<sup>2</sup> I retract them from the album pockets in which they were slid to check if something is written on the backside. When I take the album away from the scanner's glass plate, particles of leather, gold varnish and sturdy cardboard come loose. I place a sheet of paper on the glass plate and press 'scan' again.

#### Notes

Once she (my grandmother) went home from school, sick, with her bicycle. She studied to become a nurse. The school was in Brussels, about 60 kilometers from her native village M. The milkman's van tipping over in front of my grandmother's parental house. A milk covered street. My great-grandfather, physician and mayor at M. Something happened during the Second World War having to do with telephones or radios when she was still a kid.



#### the-documents.

### Gold Varnish

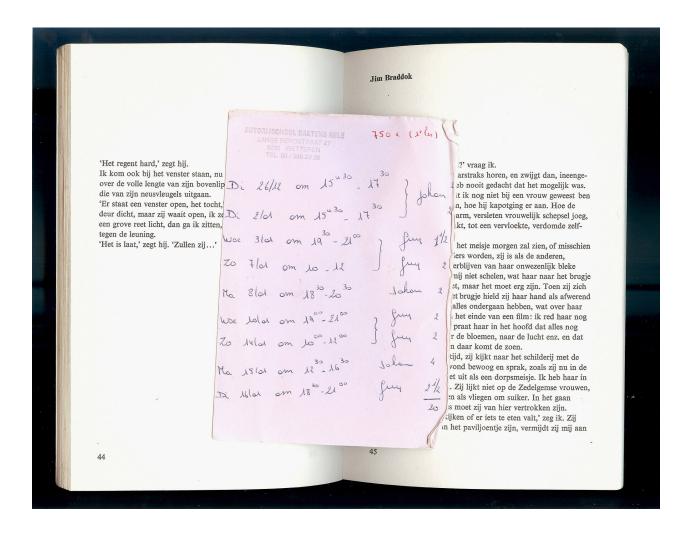


type scan date 20.06.2021 filename Handgeschreven\_2021-06-18\_110124.jpg

size 1,9MB author Arnout De Cleene In his debut novel 'De Metsiers' Hugo Claus employs a multiple narrative perspective. In the copy I picked up in a thrift store, there's a bookmarker between pages 44 and 45 where the perspective shifts from Ana to Jim Braddok. It's pouring. The pink piece of paper lists 9 sessions at a driving school. There's a total of 20 hours, taught alternately by Johan and Guy.

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### It's Pouring



type scan

date 09.06.2021 filename
metsiers.jpg

size 11,61 MB

As the hours passed, and while clouds continuously kept us from seeing stars and planets, we started to photograph the set-up used to launch this website. To highlight the umbrella that protected the gear from the unpredictable bursts of rain, we used a flashlight: during the thirty second long exposure, it was lit for two seconds. This proved to be enough to give the whole the feel of an untampered, realistic view. Meanwhile, the website was in all likelihood streaming a grey haze, as the telescope was pointed to the fleeting clouds and gradually spinning along with the earth's movement to keep track of the same invisible celestial bodies. As we returned to the base, planet Jupiter had become visible to the naked eye.

In another exposure of the same length, we left the flashlight on for approximately eight seconds and pointed the beam a bit lower.

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## Launching a Website



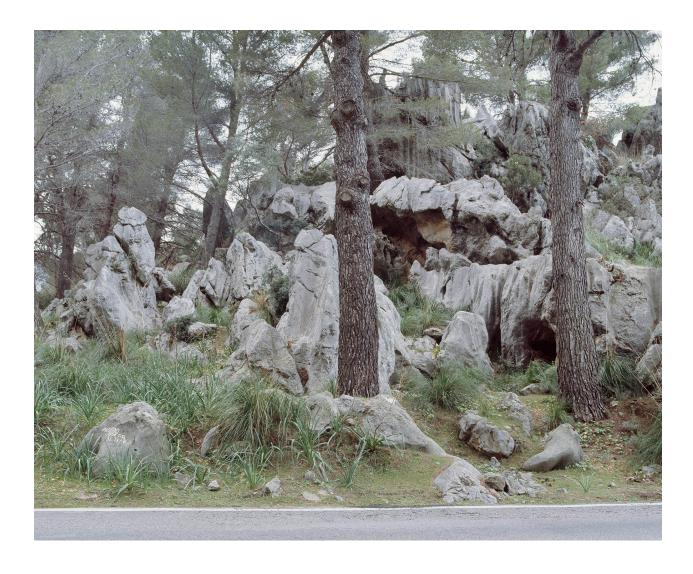
type photograph date 26.05.2021 filename \_44A0953.DNG size 44,52MB author De Cleene De Cleene I must have driven past this rocky landscape about sixteen times, going back and forth between viewpoints and the house the parents of a friend let me stay in. On the last day, I left early for the airport, pulled into a lay-by, took my tripod and camera out of the trunk of the red Volkswagen Polo rental car and made two photographs. It was only when I got home, had the film developed, scanned it and was removing dust particles from the file, that I discovered the hand painted text on the rock: 'PROIBIDO BUSCAR SETAS'.

#### the-documents.d

Notes



## Mushroom Picking Prohibited



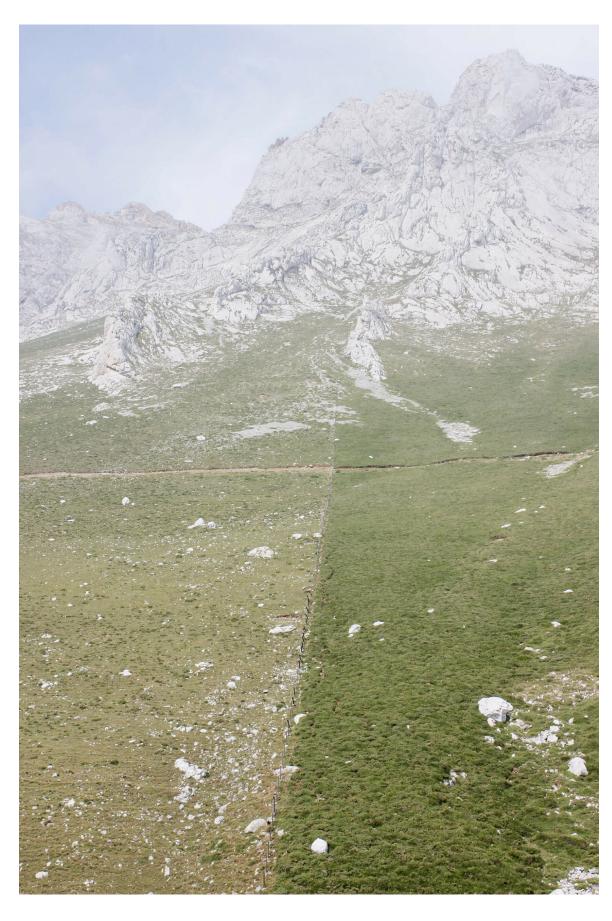
type photograph date 19.05.2021 Untitled99993-dustfree-nosharpencrop2.psd

size 365,37MB

A half a day's walk from the Fuente Dé *teleférico*, there are less and less traces of passers-by. The path to Sotres suddenly runs through a lusher green. The fence between two pastures keeps the sheep from crossing and coincides with the border between two regions. A hole in the fence would change the landscape's hue.

## the-documents.d

# From Asturias, Into Cantabria



type photograph date 15.05.2021 filename \_MG\_9795.jpg size 4,6MB author Arnout De Cleene

category animal, landscape, government

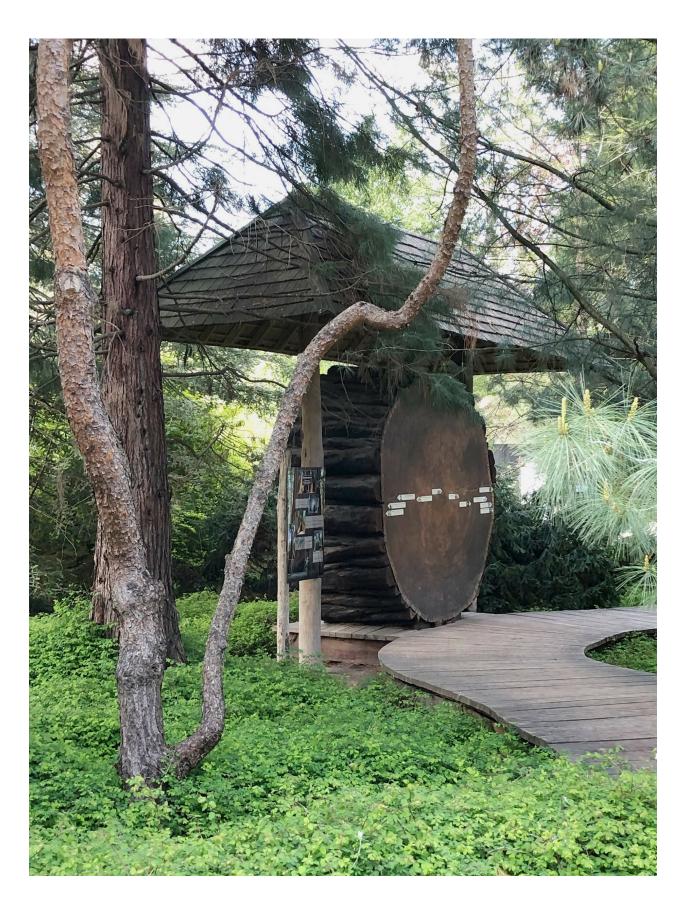
Between the rhinos and the kangaroos in the Antwerp Zoo a wooden footpath curves through a grove of Sequoiadendron Giganteum trees. In the middle of this Californian forest, visitors find the giant slice of a felled tree of the same species. It was brought to the zoo in 1962 and was approximately 650 years old at the time. Eleven labels point out significant moments in history on the tree's growth rings. They range from zoo- and zoologyrelated moments (for instance: '1901: The Okapi is described as a species', or '1843: Foundation of the RZSA and opening of the Zoo', or '1859: Darwin publishes The Origin of Species', etc.), to cultural and historical milestones ('1555: Plantijn starts publishing books in Antwerp', or '1640: Rubens (baroque painter) dies', or '1492: Columbus in America'). Another label points to the last growth ring and reads: '1962: this tree is felled and this tree disc is installed at the Zoo.'

The label pointing to the centre of the tree implies a simultaneity between the tree's first growth year and the Battle of the Golden Spurs in 1302.

#### the-documents.c

#### Notes

# Mammoth Tree and the Golden Spurs



type photograph

date 15.05.2021 filename IMG\_6958.HEIC size 1,9MB author Michiel De Cleene On March 23th 2015, a high pressure system above Panama Bay blew strong winds landwards. At the Gatun locks, one of the webcams overlooking the Canal neglected the traffic and briefly captured its own images. The ship's presumed passage through the Gatun locks wasn't recorded by this camera and the AIS-transponder did not save any data of the ship's transit from the Pacific to the Atlantic side of the canal: the Authenticity managed to swap oceans undetected.

On February 16th 2016, the transponder still signals the ship near the port of Bahia Las Minas. The current is calm, the ship has been practically immobile for a year.

### the-documents.c

## Gatun Locks



type video date 10.05.2021 filename gatun-cam3.mp4 size 53,16MB author Michiel De Cleene 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.

### the-documents.c

## Thunder Afar



type photograph date 04.05.2021 filename \_44A3920.psd size 449,09MB author Michiel De Cleene Robert Nemiroff and Jerry Bonnell's lesser known project (R.N. and J.B. being the creators of Astronomy Picture of The Day), was making websites containing over a million of digits of square roots of irrational numbers, e.g. seven. 'They were computed during spare time on a VAX alpha class machine over the course of a weekend. [...] We believe these are the most digits ever computed for the square root of seven on or before 1 April 1994.' Elsewhere, R.N. states: 'They are not copyrighted and we do not think it is legally justifiable to copyright such a basic thing as the digits of a commonly used irrational number.' If one wanted to get a copy of the 10 million digits of the square root of the number e R.N. and J.B. computed in their spare time, one can send an email to R.N. at nemiroff@grossc.gsfc.nasa.gov.

### the-documents.c

#### Sources

- https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/gifcity/sqrt7.1mil
- $\bullet \qquad https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn\_dig.html$
- https://apod.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn.html

#### We Welcome Comments

What follows are the first 1 million digits of the square root of 7. Actually, slightly more than 1 million digits are given here. These digits were computed by Robert Nemiroff (George Mason University and NASA Goddard Space Flight Center) and checked by Jerry Bonnell (University Space Research Association and NASA Goddard Space Flight Center). They were computed during spare time on a VAX alpha class machine over the course of a weekend. We do NOT guarantee the accuracy of these digits. Although these digits have been checked once we encourage others to check them as well. We believe these are the most digits ever computed for the square root of seven on or before 1 April 1994. If anyone is aware of more digits we ask them to please alert us of their existence. We have computed at least 10 million digits of the square root of two as well as several digits of the number e and the square roots of other numbers. These are available on this mosaic server (URL: http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/htmltest/rjn.html). We welcome comments.

- Robert Nemiroff and Jerry Bonnell

The square root of seven =

filename

type date Schermafbeelding 2021-05-01 om size author screenshot 01.05.2021 16.44.39.png 340KB Arnout De Cleene

category astronomy, archive, data storage, irrational numbers, mathematics

The torn off section of roofing on the grass has part of a text carved in it: 'UDI' and 'EN' are still legible. It must have come from another roof; the one shown in the photograph has no missing sections, nor visible repairs.

The roofing that is still on the garage shows a drawing of some kind. A floorplan for a squarish building with a supporting column along each side, or the layout for a tactical explanation, perhaps.

### the-documents.d

# Roofing (5) – UDI



type photograph date 14.04.2021 filename IMG\_6509.jpeg size 6,90MB author Michiel De Cleene

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