

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

Your path through the collection lead along Negative sheet 21, negative 24, negative 24,5, We were a modern house, License Plate, Negative sheet 16, negative 24, negative 24,5, Firing tool, Waybill, Gold Varnish, It's Pouring, Phase, Une étoile est-elle un document?, Mammoth Tree and the Golden Spurs, The Authenticity in the woods of the Bosque Protector de Arraiján, Crash (2), Block, Roofing (6) – JEM

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 15.11.2023 15:10, printed on _____ and contains 15 documents on 32 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/15-11-2023-5500/>)

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.



Flanders
State of the Art



A malfunctioning of the camera leading to a double-exposed negative. The car is decisive in establishing the relationship between the superimposed photographs. In the middle of the image, we see it parked in front of the house. Slightly less visible is the same car, repeated but further away. This makes it possible to deduce that the dark outline of the house, with the roof and the chimney, is also the same house as in the other photograph. This time, the house is photographed relatively frontally (the slightly angled point of view allows to bring the shed at the back of the house in the line of sight), and from nearby. At the bottom left, the lines that make up the street help to see the continuity of the one photograph, while the electric wires at the top right aid to comprehend the other one.

The camera malfunction speculates on a future addition to the plot. The dark, outlined shed's scale is realistic with regards to the scale of the house and itself (the shed) in the other photograph. Its position with regards to the other buildings seems logical. It imposes itself as a possible second shed for the owner to build in the next few years. In that future shed, the car, now standing in front of the house, could be comfortably parked.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	25.10.2023	021a_14.jpg	1,29 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, archive, automobile, house, panorama, parking, scale

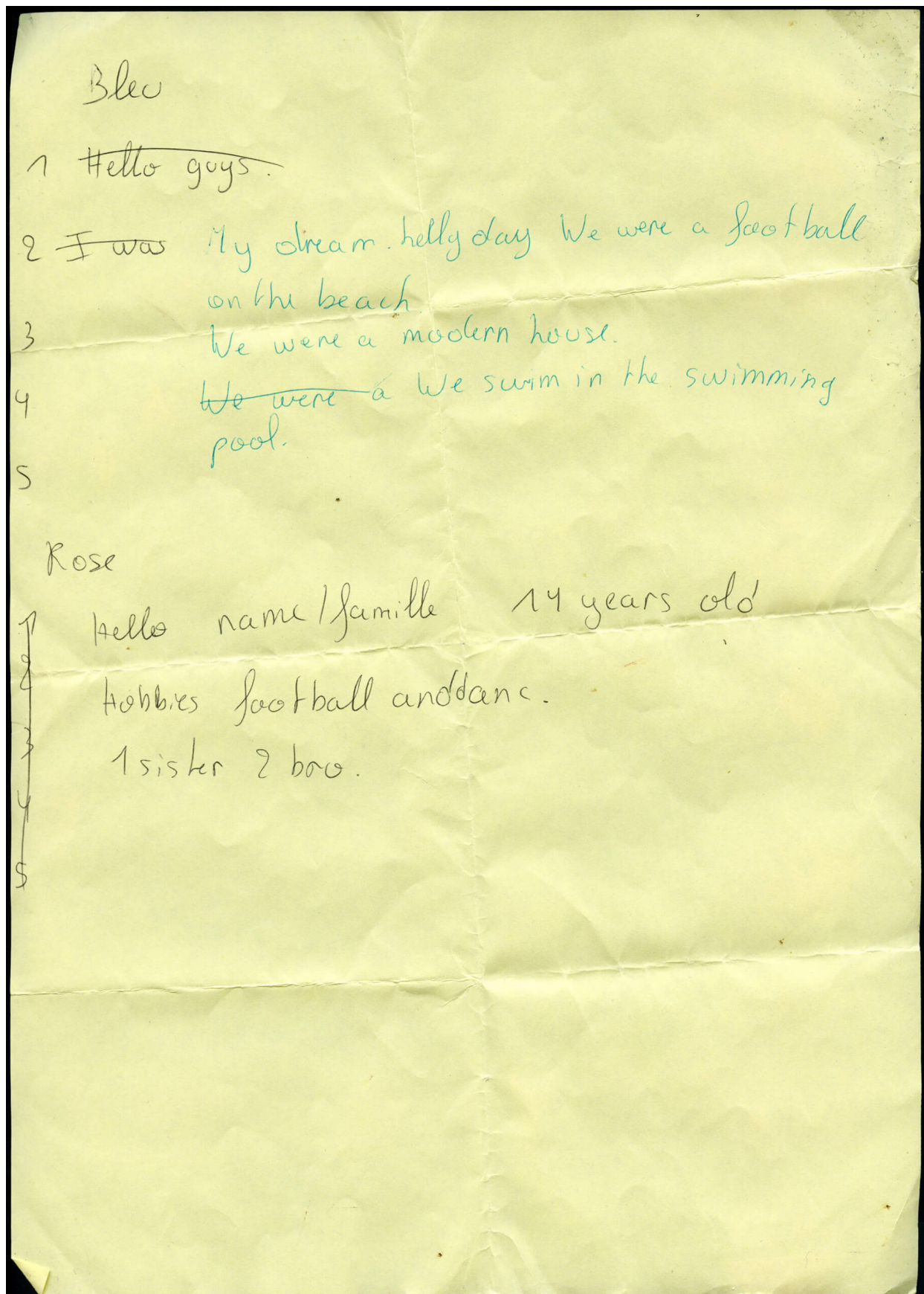
13:46:16

*My dream hollyday We were a football
on the beach
We were a modern house.
We were a We swim in the swimming
pool.*

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

Notes





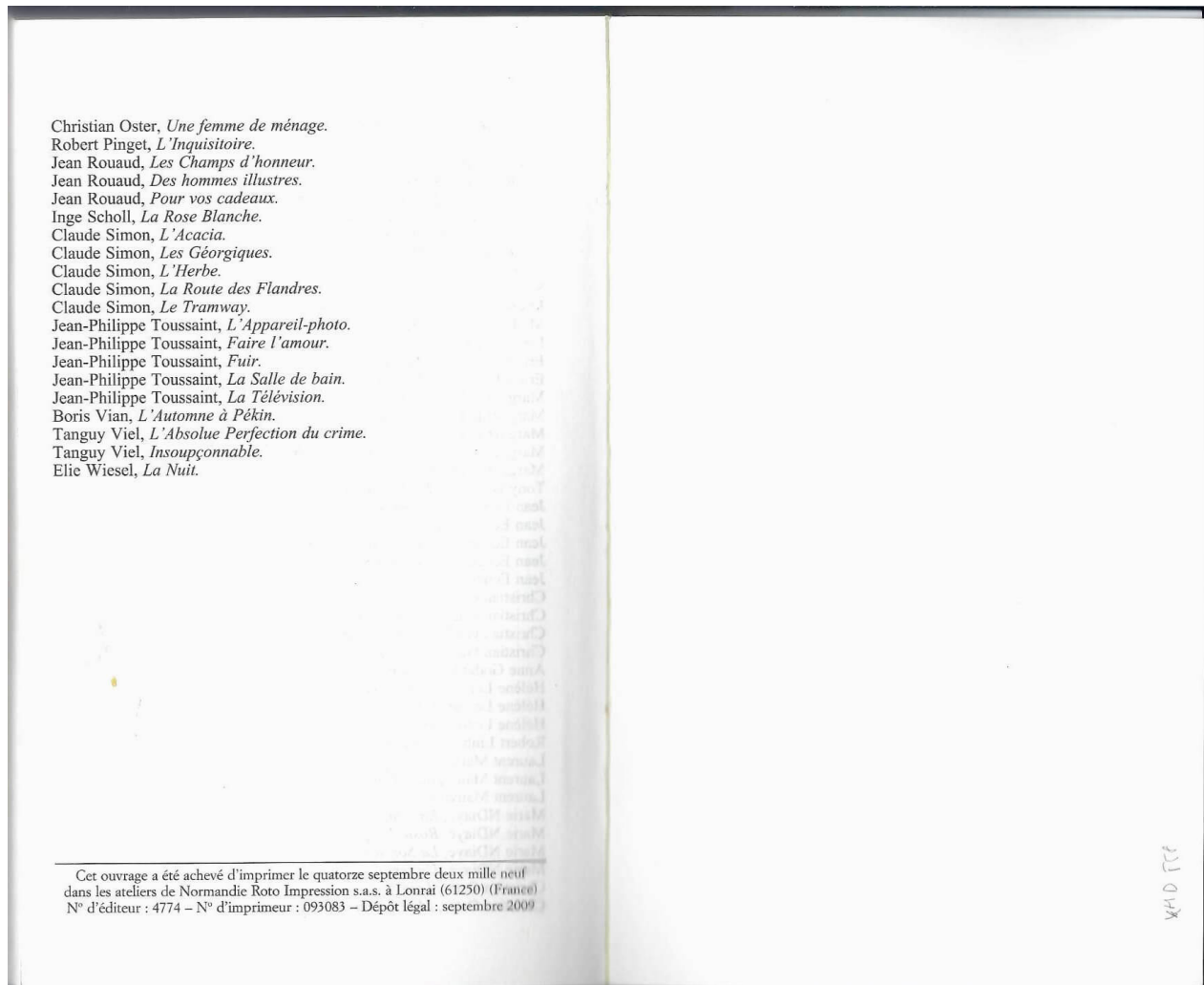
During the preparation of a seminar, I reread Pierre Bayard's *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* (2008). On the inside of the back cover, there's an inscription: it appears I wrote down a license plate number – something I have the habit of doing when a situation seems suspicious.

In *Qui à tué Roger Ackroyd?*, Bayard analyzes Agatha Christie's famous detective novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926). The literary critic disagrees with detective Hercule Poirot's conclusion: Ackroyd's murderer is not the narrator, James Sheppard, as Poirot would have it. It's a delirious interpretation, 'consistant à rechercher minutieusement des indices, à interpréter des faits et à organiser nos déductions en une construction d'ensemble harmonieuse'.

The car with license plate number XHD 558 is unknown to me. I can't recall what I saw that urged me to write it down, nor the time or location when I saw it.

Sources

- Bayard, P. *Qui a tué Roger Ackroyd?* Paris: Minuit, 2008.



‘Meunerie Duyckers & Conors, les nouveaux moulins’, better known as ‘De Nieuwe Molens’, is a flour mill established in 1897 in the north of Gent along the Verbindingskanaal. Due to increased production, the original 1897 building doubled in 1904.

Only the facade of the iconic warehouse has been preserved along with the recently renovated gasometers. The building is now part of the Tondeliërsite. It has been converted into lofts and flats, and was extended with a new construction.

Sources

- <https://inventaris.onroerenderfgoed.be/erfgoedobjecten/18269>



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	08.09.2023	016b_16.jpg	1,28 MB	De Cleene De Cleene
category				
architecture, archive, economy, panorama				

14:18:45

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

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

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

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

Notes

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



type
photograph

date
01.09.2022

filename
clementine_firing_tool.JPEG

size
991 KB

author
Clémentine Vaultier

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

14:18:45

‘You see?!’

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

‘It used to be here, I’m sure.’

[He looks around.]

‘I’m sure.’

[He turns towards me.]

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

[He points at the waybill again.]

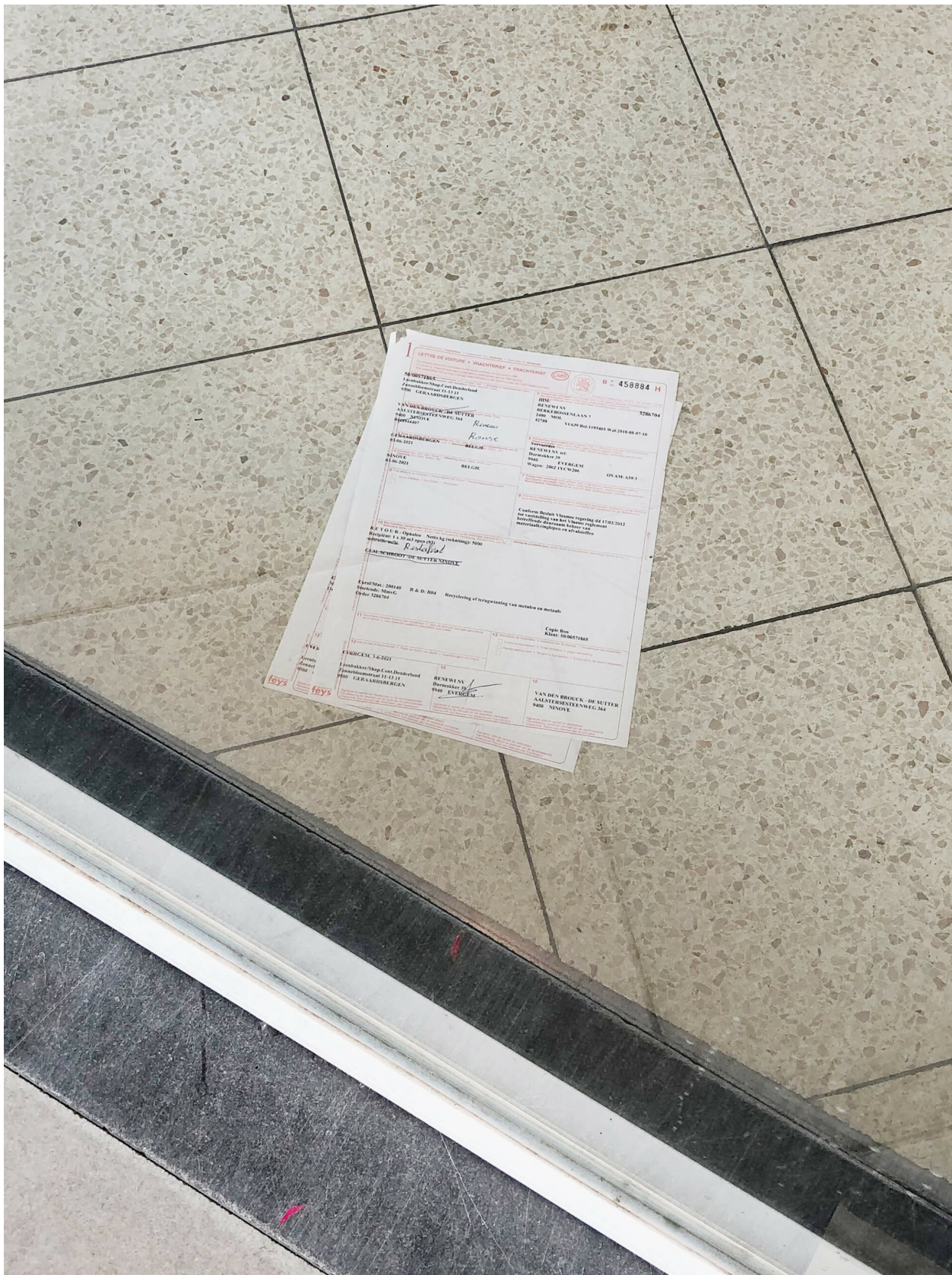
‘It was here. I remember well. It’s been years. But it’s here.’

[He walks away.]

‘I’ll look around.’

Notes

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



type
photograph

date
28.06.2021

filename
IMG_7499.HEIC

size
1,6 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
decoration, economy, mistake, waste

14:18:55

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 stories¹ 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.² 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

- 1 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.

2





type	date	filename	size	author
scan	20.06.2021	Handgeschreven_2021-06-18_110124.jpg	1,9MB	Arnout De Cleene
category				
book, family				

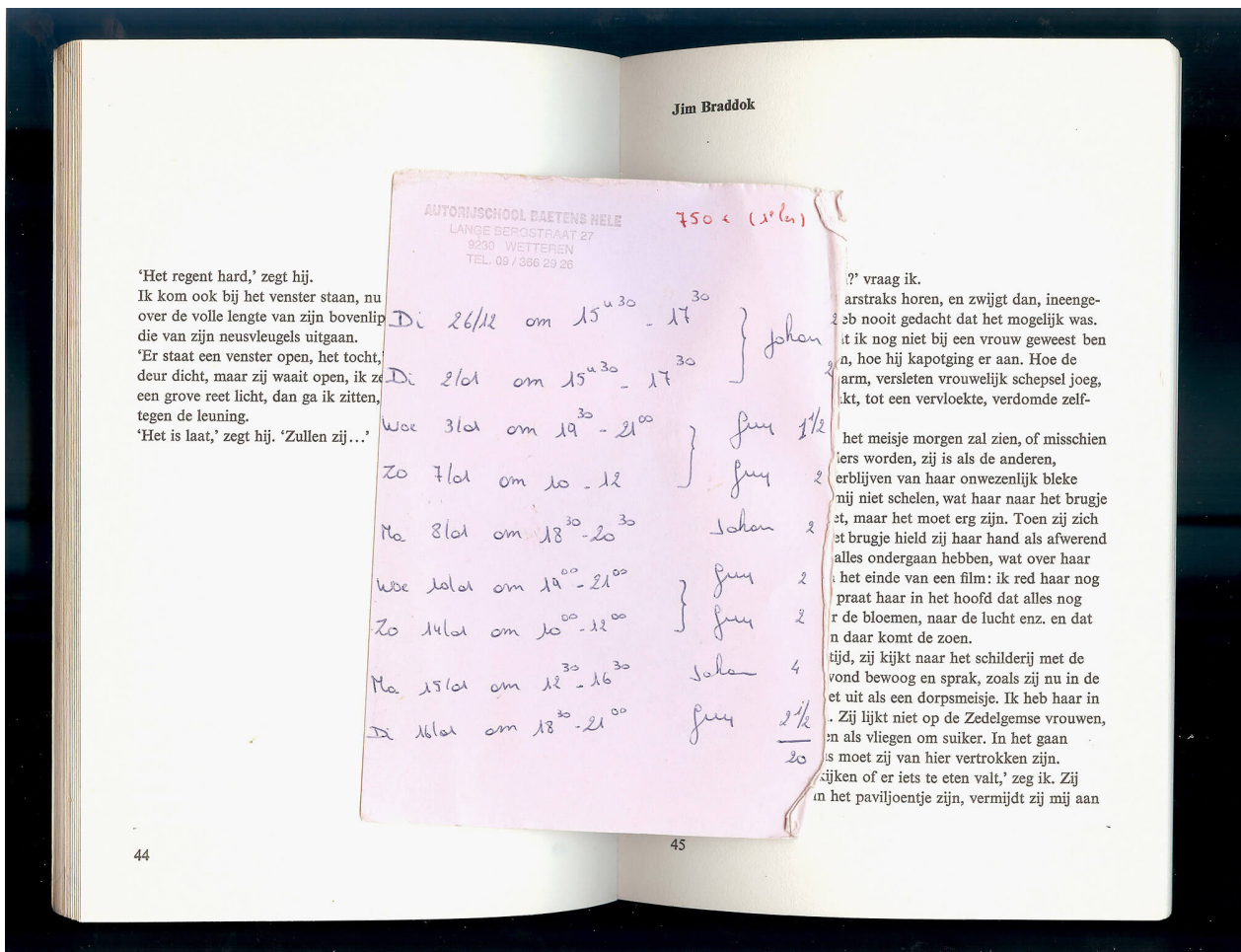
In his debut novel 'De Metsiers' Hugo Claus employs a multiple narrative perspective. In the copy I picked up in a thrift store, there's a bookmark between pages 44 and 45 where the perspective shifts from Ana to Jim Braddok. It's pouring. The pink piece of paper lists 9 sessions at a driving school.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

Notes

In 2000, 2006 and 2017 the twenty-sixth of December was a Tuesday. (Earlier years are improbable, since the Euro was not introduced yet.)

Sources

Claus, H. *De Metsiers*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Bezige Bij, 1978.



At the Tunis Institut National du Patrimoine, the sand-covered floor has traced Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker's movements to Steve Reich's *Violin Phase*. The venue empties out. It is dark and the way back to the hotel through the medina is labyrinthian and eerie. It has been a couple days since we arrived, and I have managed to make a mental image of the inner city by memorizing some waymarks – intersections, buildings, shops – coupled to a direction. Sometimes, a newly entered street would give out to such a waymark – a peculiar sensation: a flash of spatial insight, like a crumpled ball of paper unfolding. The narrow streets turn and turn. Some passages are closed at night. I must improvise a route, but the basic mental structure to do so is missing. Shopkeepers have moved their goods inside.

I have no sense of orientation. I can't estimate distances nor can I tell north from south. Everything is scaleless. My highly simplified scheme of the city's layout gets us to our destination. The functional interpretation of Tunis differs completely from the actual Tunis. It is a different city we crossed, and made while crossing.



type
photograph

date
25.05.2021

filename
_MG_1019.JPG

size
6,5MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
music, map/plan, sand, scale

15:10:39

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.

Notes

Briet is cited in Lisa Gitelman's *Paper Knowledge* (2014).

Sources

Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951. Online: <http://martinetl.free.fr/suzannebriet/questcequeladocumentation/briet.pdf>

A Julien CAIN

DE tout temps la latinité et son héritage ont donné au mot *document* le sens d'enseignement ou de preuve. Le dictionnaire de RICHELET, comme celui de LITTRÉ, en apportent deux témoignages français. Une bibliographie contemporaine soucieuse de clarté a lancé cette brève définition :

Si l'on se réfère aux définitions « officielles » de l'Union Française des Organismes de Documentation, on constate que le document est présenté ainsi : «

Cette définition a été parfois mise en échec par des linguistes ou par des philosophes, épris comme il se doit de minutie et de logique. Grâce à leur analyse du contenu de la notion, on a pu proposer ici une définition, la plus approchée qui soit à l'heure actuelle, mais aussi la plus abstraite, et partant la moins accessible :

A notre époque de transmissions multipliées et accélérées, le moindre évènement, ou scientifique ou politique, lorsqu'il a été porté à la connaissance du public, s'alourdit aussitôt d'une « vêtture de documents » (Raymond BAYER). Admirons la fertilité documentaire d'un simple fait de départ : par exemple,

l'information de presse fait connaître l'évènement par des communiqués de journaux, de radio, par les actualités cinématographiques. La découverte fait l'objet d'une communication à l'Académie des Sciences. Un professeur du Muséum en fait état dans son enseignement. L'animal vivant est mis en cage et catalogué (jardin zoologique). Une fois mort, il sera empaillé et conservé (au Muséum). Il est prêté à une Exposition. Il passe en sonorisé au cinéma. Son cri est enregistré sur disque. La première monographie sert à établir partie d'un traité avec planches, puis une encyclopédie spéciale (zoologique), puis une encyclopédie générale. Les ouvrages sont catalogués dans une bibliothèque, après

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 zoology-related 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.

Notes

On closer inspection the slice seems to consist of two halves that were put together like a jigsaw puzzle. The resulting gap is skilfully patched with what appears to be wood from the same species – possibly even the same mammoth tree.



type
photograph

date
15.05.2021

filename
IMG_6958.HEIC

size
1,9MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, book, botany, card, tree

15:10:40

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

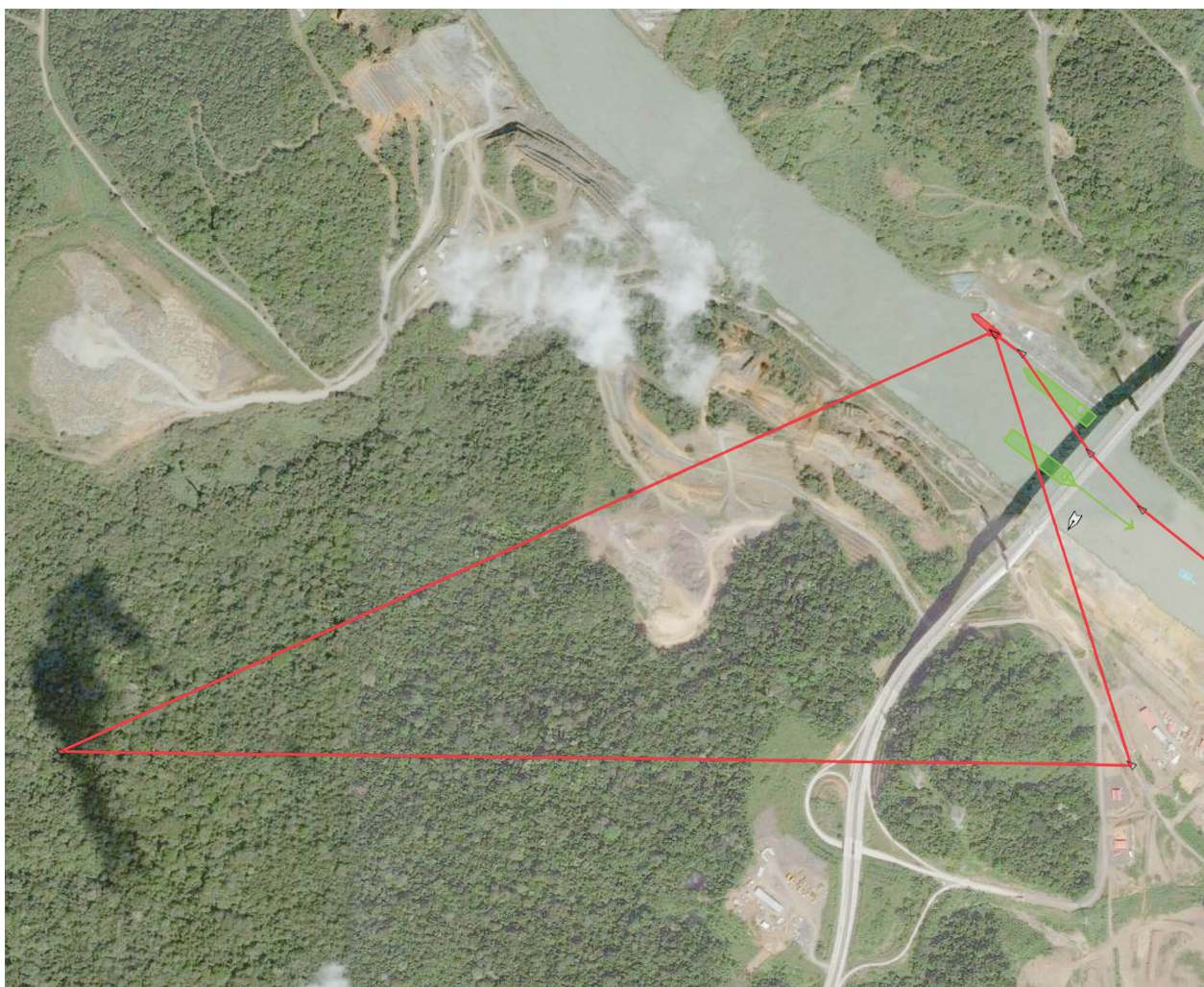
Notes

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

Sources

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

The Authenticity in the woods of the Bosque Protector de Arraiján



type
screenshot

date
10.05.2021

filename
caribe.jpg

size
17,33MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

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

15:10:40

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.

Notes

Photograph taken and recovered from my trash bin on 18.12.2020.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	08.05.2021	IMG_5071.jpeg	2,71MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
Bahrain, crash, data storage, drought, government, interference, mistake, parking, sand, technology

15:10:40

‘The masons in training pour a concrete slab and build four walls upon it in a stretcher bond. Then the block comes to our department and the students in the course *Electrical installer (residential)* can grind channels and drill cavities in it.’

[...]

‘It’s not always a success from the outset, but they learn quickly.’

[...]

‘Never grind horizontally, always vertically. Diagonally if there is no other way.’

[...]

‘Two fingers wide.’

[...]

‘After this it goes to the sanitary department. After the bell drilling, the demolition hammer follows and the masons make us a new block.’

Competentiecentrum VDAB, Wondelgem,
July 2019.

Notes

First published in A+ Architecture in Belgium, A+ 279, Schools (August, September 2019), <https://www.a-plus.be/nl/tijdschrift/schools>



type
photograph

date
04.05.2021

filename
_44a7269.jpg

size
27,17MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, brick, fissure, house, mistake, parking

15:10:40

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



type
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

15:10:41

