

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

Your path through the collection lead along Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023, Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [2], Neptune in opposition [13/20] – A foraging fox, Neptune in opposition [10/20] – Kinship, Neptune in opposition [8/20] – Diamonds, Neptune in opposition [6/20] – Pier, Neptune in opposition [3/20] – Azure, Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield, 300 year old seaweed, Aggressive mimicry, Mary, What the left hand forgot, Zebras, Wheelhouse (replica), A Fever Dream, Another letter from abroad, Croûton d'Or, Raisins, Vérandah

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 16.10.2024 18:37, printed on _____ and contains 19 documents on 44 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/17-10-2024-6435/>)

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 constant, dependable presence. With the camera focused on the North Star for an extended period, the rotation of the Earth becomes visible. Nearby, in the municipality of Wiederstedt, the geologist, poet and philosopher Friedrich von Hardenberg (better known by his pen name Novalis) spent his childhood years between 1772 and 1784. A quote of his is engraved on a stone bench in the park surrounding the chateau where he was raised: “The human being does not speak alone – the universe also speaks – everything speaks – infinite languages.”

Notes

- From *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

Starry sky, long exposure, Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt), 14 April 2023



type
photograph

date
14.06.2024

filename
Bild 003_mk.jpg

size
73 MB

author
Stephanie Kiwitt

category
astronomy, literature, Trigger

00:04:42

Freely adapted from interviews with residents of Sandersleben (Saxony-Anhalt). Three-act play. The first two acts take place in the present day; the third is set in the future.

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From Act 2 'The Inhabitants', Scene 5, 'Living Differently'.

Characters: MR DUNST club member I, MR WINDORF amateur astronomer

Notes

- Stills from text animation *S. Anders Leben. Eine Handlung in Gesprächen/S. Anders Leben – Living Differently: An Act in Conversations*
- Stephanie Kiwitt (1972) is an artist based in Halle (Saale), Germany. Utilizing a large number of images, various perspectives and also textual elements, she is known for her insightful photography that explores spaces emblematic of contemporary phenomena. Over the past three years, she has focused on evolving habitats in rural areas, photographing traces of transformation and conducting interviews in Saxony-Anhalt, the region she moved to in 2020. From 2018 to 2020, Kiwitt was a guest lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels.
- In spring 2024 the-documents.org and Trigger co-publish a series of online articles with a focus on the meeting ground between photography and the document.

Interviews with residents of Sandersleben, no specific location, 2023 [2]

HERR DUNST I imagine that if nothing were to happen, the future would be a blank canvas, devoid of anything.

HERR WINDORF Just beyond S, there was a Stone Age settlement. When I gaze at the stars there at night, I'm struck by the thought that what I'm seeing has already been witnessed by someone long ago. From Saturn's perspective, Earth is merely a faint dot, yet here we are living on it – tiny, but incredibly beautiful. It's captivating. It changes the way you walk through the forest, the way you move through S.

type	date	filename	size	author
collage	14.06.2024	2-Stone Age.jpg	108 KB	Stephanie Kiwitt
category	archaeology, astronomy, encounter, landscape, Trigger			

00:37:23

A first try at using the instrument for making a recording: excitement as we succeed in pointing the telescope at the brownish dot afar we just noticed on the other side of the valley. As it continues scavenging, we wait for night to set in.



type	date	filename	size	author
video	27.09.2022	2020-05-30-1755_8-CapObj	105,04 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
animal, astronomy, encounter, food, landscape, Neptune, technology

00:37:25

Theory becomes the apparatus. A metonymic relation. A trope of nearness. Miniscule gravitational disturbances become known as a kilometres-long, L-shaped facility. Particle physics: a circular tunnel beneath the Geneva hinterland.

Somewhere in the early 1970s, our grandfather, a carpenter by trade, buys a telescope^{1,2}, installs it on the lawn, and points it over the hedge. ‘I remember seeing the craters on the moon. The rings of Saturn,’ he told us.

In the shabby plywood box I made to transport the telescope lies a metal ring I ground flat to be able to attach my camera and focus it on infinity.

The hedge, now three metres in height, shields the lower part of the sky from sight and needs pruning.

Notes

- 1 Tasco / Reg. No. 83140 / 140 Power / Reflection telescope / D=3" / F=700mm / Coated optics / Model No. 3TE-R / Japan
- 2 ‘It never fails to draw you in closer – the moment when you raise a pair of binoculars to your eyes. In that instant, life is magnified clearly; as if just for you. The curious bird that becomes instantly identifiable. The night sky that never looked the same after that night. The actual sweat running down the brow of a sports hero. The sun scattering light across a clear stream as you trace for signs of a Rainbow trout. These are the moments of magic that Tasco delivers. Simple, pure and honest. And for another split-second, you’re struck by the quality of experience weighed against the value you’d previously placed on “just a pair of binoculars.” Welcome to a world where, “Seeing is Believing.”’ (Tasco Manifesto).



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	24.09.2022	_44A4753.dng, _44A4787.dng	56,09 MB, 49,37 MB	De Cleene De Cleene
category	astronomy, family, hand, Neptune, packaging, technology			

00:37:26



It is said that ‘if a space traveller were unfortunate enough to enter the atmosphere of one of the giant planets [such as Neptune], he or she would not find a single solid surface. Instead, as he or she descended into the planet, our traveller would find that the temperature, pressure, and density would all continue to increase smoothly, with no sharp transitions. Assuming that he or she was adequately protected from the temperature, pressure, and radiation, our traveller would eventually “float” at that level in the atmosphere where the surrounding density and his or her own density were equal.’¹

It is said that it storms on Neptune.
Violently.
1200 mph.

They observed a great dark spot and called it: The Great Dark Spot.

It rains diamonds on Neptune.

Sources

- 1 Miner, E.D. & R.R. Wessen. *Neptune. The Planet, Rings and Satellites*. Chichester: Springer-Praxis, 2002, p. 18.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	22.09.2022	_44A5917.dng	52,41 MB	De Cleene De Cleene
category				
astronomy, crash, Neptune, wind, precipitation				



As an architectural structure, the pier is fundamental in observational astronomy: it can be found in the backyards of amateur observatories, as well as in professional ones. This column is a quintessential part of the physical interventions that are necessary to distinguish noise from valuable data. The pier disjoins the telescope from the observer, from the observatory and from the surroundings. Tremors of passing cars, the astronomer's footsteps and coughs, the neighbour's soundsystem: they could result in an agitated telescope. A falling mug would cause the instrument to shift lightyears away from its target.

Notes

- In August 2019, I visited Chris De Pauw, an astrophotographer, at home. He showed me his private observatory. As we were both waiting for clouds to obscure the sun and get softer light for the photograph, he told me about the rolling shed, its advantages and the modifications he was planning on. On closing the observatory – by rolling the shed over the instrument – he manoeuvred the instrument into its 'park'-position: an azimuth of 160 degrees and an elevation of 8 degrees above the horizon. The shed's doors and hinges barely cleared the telescope.



type
photograph

date
21.09.2022

filename
_44A7375.dng, _44A7394.dng

size
55,61 MB,
56,96 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, astronomy, encounter, Neptune, technology

00:37:35



The planet Uranus should have followed a course as predicted by Newton's laws. It didn't. There were 'residuals', the 19th-century observers said: irregular data, which had to be interpreted as Uranus deviating from the projected trajectory. They could think of three possibilities. A) The planet Uranus was too far away from the Sun, which might render the Law of Gravitation invalid. B) The observations were incorrect. C) There was another planet, still further and yet unknown, with its own gravitational field and pull, causing Uranus to deviate from its course.

Following hypothesis C, astronomers predicted the position of a planet with a gravitational field, influencing Uranus, by means of mathematical calculations. Telescopes were directed to that calculated spot. There was a luminous point, with a touch of bright azure blue.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	18.09.2022	_44A5708.dng	43,48 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category

astronomy, automobile, encounter, interference, landscape, map/plan, mathematics, Neptune, physics, technology, mistake

00:37:35

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

the-documents.c

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

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



type
photograph

date
17.09.2022

filename
_44A5698.dng

size
53,26 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

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

00:37:36

This stack of seaweed was offered by Henning, a farmer of the wonderful island of Laeso. This matriarchal pirate island, north of Denmark, is known for its tradition of building roofs from the seaweed growing in the surrounding salty water. Back in time, women would harvest and slowly weave the material around wooden beams from shipwrecks. This time-consuming process and technique of building shelters from what comes from the sea engaged the population in working together, building a ritual around each construction. Then those wild, yet full-of-care roofs, conserved in salt, would last for hundreds of years.

When I arrived on his land, Henning told me about how he restores those old beauties, weaving fresh seaweed around old beams and pressing the collected old material into insulation panels for new buildings. We talked about the clay of his land and how seaweed can become a material for ceramics in the process of making glazes.

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
06.09.2022

filename
clementine_300_yo_seaweed.JPEG

size
1 MB

author
Clémentine Vaultier

category
architecture, encounter, house, repair

00:37:36

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

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

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

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

Sources

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



type
photograph

date
21.08.2022

filename
_44A3849.dng

size
50,83 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

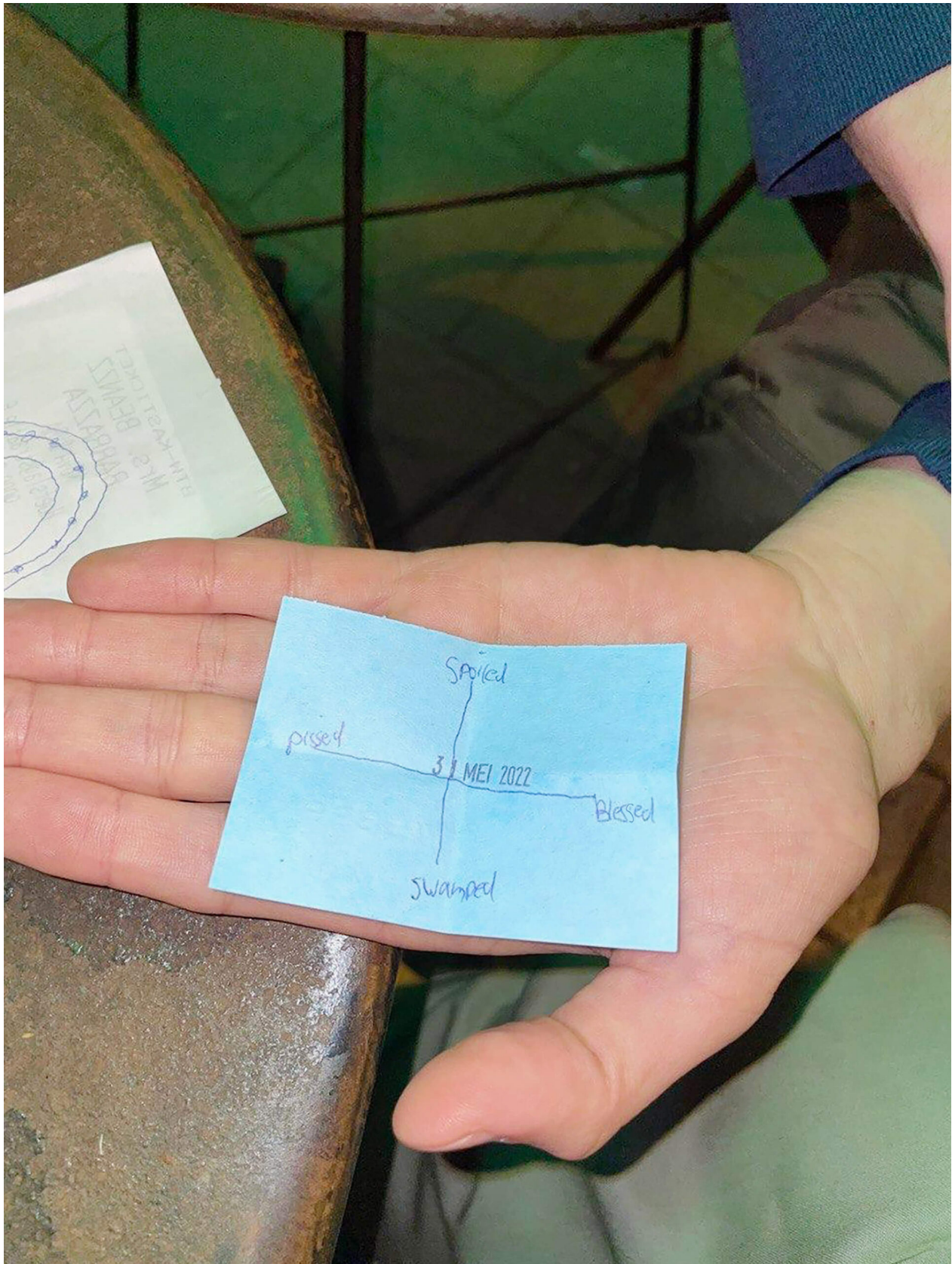
category
animal, botany, replica/copy, trompe l'oeil

00:37:37

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

Notes

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



type
photograph

date
04.08.2022

filename
SBSP.jpg

size
1,1 MB

author
Tjobo Kho

category
botany, card, collecting, hand

00:37:38

At the end of the day, riding home after work, I find
a text on my hand:

C
D[...]ers
Desk
K
Communication book

‘Diapers’, I recall, and stop at the shop to buy them.
Sweat, dust, and manic hand rubbing have rendered
parts of the writing illegible. ‘C’ is for Carl, whose
newborn I need to visit as soon as possible.
Sometimes, I can’t remember what the initial stands
for. I don’t have any friends with names beginning
with a K (who have newborns I need to visit).

The right hand writes, the left hand serves as the
canvas. The back of the right hand, folded around
the pen, is blank and tells the always already written
on back of the left hand, whose palm never holds a
pen, what to register. Right: an author. Left: a
poem, sunken into the pores.

Back home, I trace ‘Desk’ again, as not to forget to
clean it tomorrow.



type	date	filename	size
photograph	18.07.2022	_MG_7728.JPG, _MG_7792.JPG	5,5 MB, 5,7 MB
author			
Arnout De Cleene			

category
data storage, literature, hand

00:37:38



On Mondays, before noon, I go to the supermarket with my two-year-old son. After passing the lasagnes, the loaves of bread and the fruit and vegetables, we make a short stop at the aquarium with the lobsters. Around New Year, there are two of them.

After we've paid for the groceries and have put them in the car, we walk into the pet shop. We look at the parrots (Jacques, Louis and Marie-José), the rabbits, the guinea pigs, the assorted caged birds and the fish and turtles. He's very fond of the *Cyphotilapia Frontosa Burundi*. He calls them zebras. They hail from Lake Tanganyika, the label says. It's the second-oldest freshwater lake, the second-largest by volume and the second-deepest. The pet shop has adorned their aquarium with a scene of ocean waste.

In an effort to avert guilt, I look for something cheap and more or less useful to buy: birdseed, a snack for the neighbour's cat, a comb for his grandparent's Labrador, etc.



type
photograph

date
05.04.2022

filename
IMG_0214.HEIC

size
1,5 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

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

00:37:39

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



type
photograph

date
20.03.2022

filename
bridge_001.jpg

size
15,31 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

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

00:37:39

During the night, both of us get unwell. One of us is shaking, intensely and relentlessly. The windows are open. For minutes that seem to be hours, it feels like it's freezing. We get extra blankets. Then, it gets too hot.

One of us dreams about *cocodrillos*. It starts out with a single animal, like the one we saw in the National Archaeological Museum, escaping from an aquarium, and ends with lots of little ones crawling all over the place. It's impossible to know how many have escaped.

The other dreams about seismologist Luigi Palmieri's unfortunate assistant and his family's quest to redeem his good name. To deprive him of the burden and guilt set upon him by Luigi Palmieri's report of the 1872 eruption of Vesuvius, the assistant's offspring were building a monument just below the observatory in which their great-grandfather fell asleep. The monument was permanently, and continuously, unfinished.

We both dream of hearing fireworks in Naples.

In the morning, we're slightly alarmed that we both got sick and feverish at the same instant. It's the middle of January, and the weather has been summerlike all week. A gentle morning breeze flies in from the Neapolitan bay while we wait for the bus to take us to the airport.

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
24.02.2022

filename
DCDC_napels_089_vuurwerk.tif

size
75,46 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
angst, animal, seismology, Vesuvius

00:37:40

Because an acquaintance of the family was a missionary, the postage stamp collection had a large quantity of stamps from the Philippines. You had to boil water, hold the empty envelope above it, wait until the glue and the missionary's saliva loosened and evaporated, and then gently peel off the stamp. Then, it was put on a piece of pink blotting paper. Once dry, the stamp was slid into a tailor-made booklet.

Between a Horta building's facade and King Baudouin's portrait, there are exotic fish, religious scenes, butterflies, and advertisements for NGOs.

Mango is the Philippines' national fruit. Pope John Paul II visited it in 1995. There was a guerrilla unit in Northwest Pampanga during WWII.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	23.01.2022	2022-01-22_213134.png	27,7MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
animal, architecture, book, collecting, fruit, sticker

00:37:40

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

00:37:41

When I grew up, my parents told me that the number of raisins in the local baker's raisin bread attested to the result of the most recent soccer match of KAA Gent. A victory was celebrated by throwing more raisins into the dough than usual, a loaf following a painful loss was hardly a raisin bread at all.

The baker retired long ago. Today my two-year-old son picked out all the raisins from his slice of bread. KAA Gent's last game was a tie against Union.



type
photograph

date
30.12.2021

filename
IMG_9810.HEIC

size
1,2 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

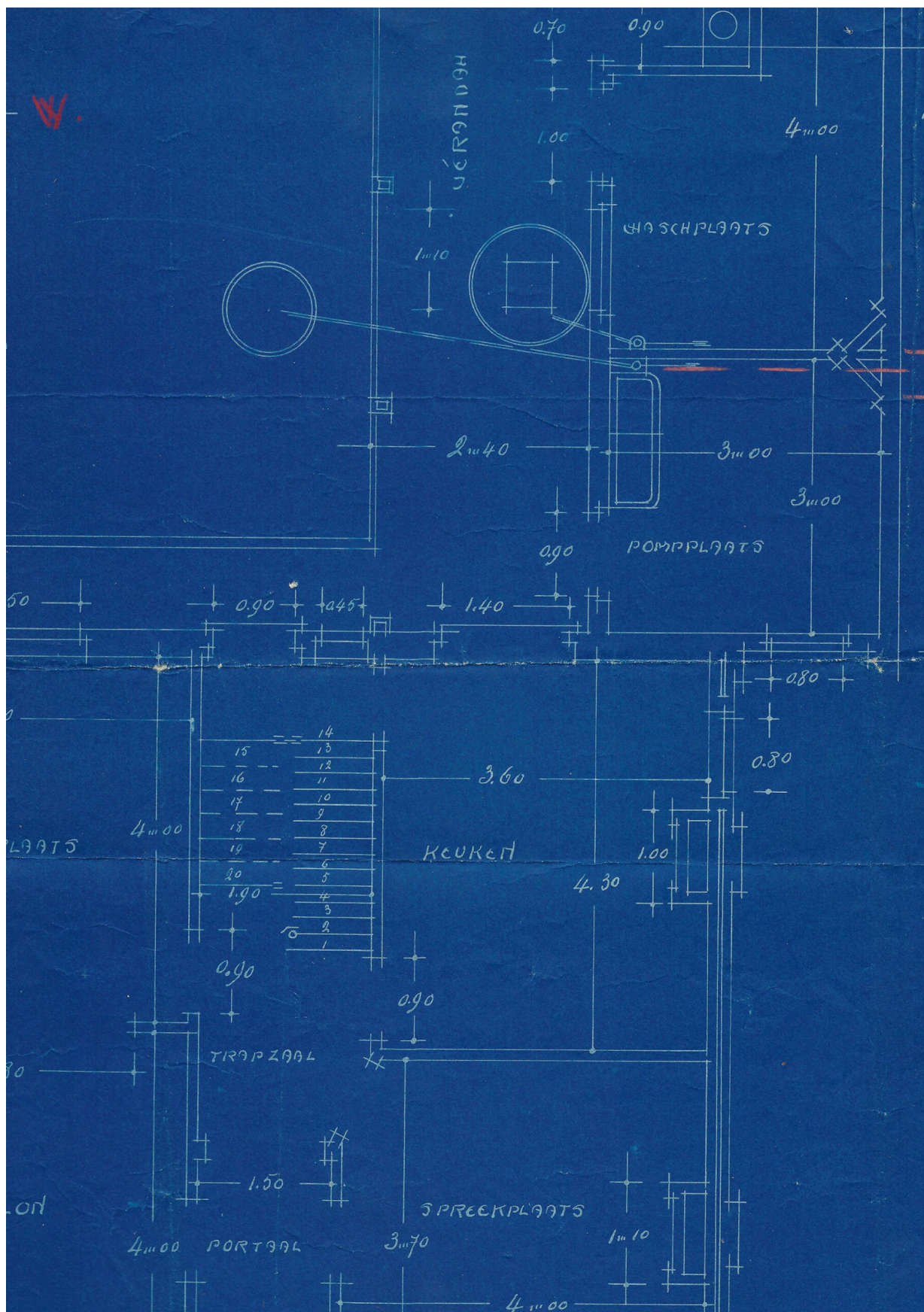
category
family, food

00:37:42

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.

type
scan

date
28.12.2021

filename
Foto_2021-12-27_194400.pdf

size
7,2MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

```
category
architecture, archive, family, house, map/plan, 0. Clemminck
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00:37:43

