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

Your path through the collection lead along Neptune in opposition [8/20] – Diamonds, Neptune in opposition [6/20] – Pier, Neptune in opposition [5/20] – Magnolia leaves on a cloudy afternoon, Neptune in opposition [4/20] – Dispersion, Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield, 300 year old seaweed, Learning broom-making again, Last night I dreamt of Juan Pedro, AI submission, Stopwatch, Zebras, A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter, Backpack, Mould, The Imaginary Edge of the Roadway

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 23.09.2022 18:55, printed on ____ and contains 15 documents on 35 pages. (https://the-documents.org/log/23-09-2022-4638/)

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.



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.

Neptune in opposition [8/20] – Diamonds



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	22.09.2022	_44A5917.dng	52,41 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, crash, Neptune, wind, precipitation

18:53:45

the-documents.c



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 disjoints 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.

Neptune in opposition [6/20] – Pier



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	21.09.2022	_44A7375.dng, _44A7394.dng	55,61 MB, 56,96 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, astronomy, encounter, Neptune, technology

18:54:07

the-documents.c



18:54:07

While calibrating their telescopes, or dealing with unforeseen, cloudy weather, amateur astronomers tend to trade the far for the not-so-far, and point their telescopes at their immediate surroundings.

Sources

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

Neptune in opposition [5/20] – Magnolia leaves on a cloudy afternoon



type	date	filename	size	author
video	20.09.2022	2020-09-24-1150_7-CapObj.mp4	79,74 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, botany, Neptune, technology, tree, wind

18:54:20

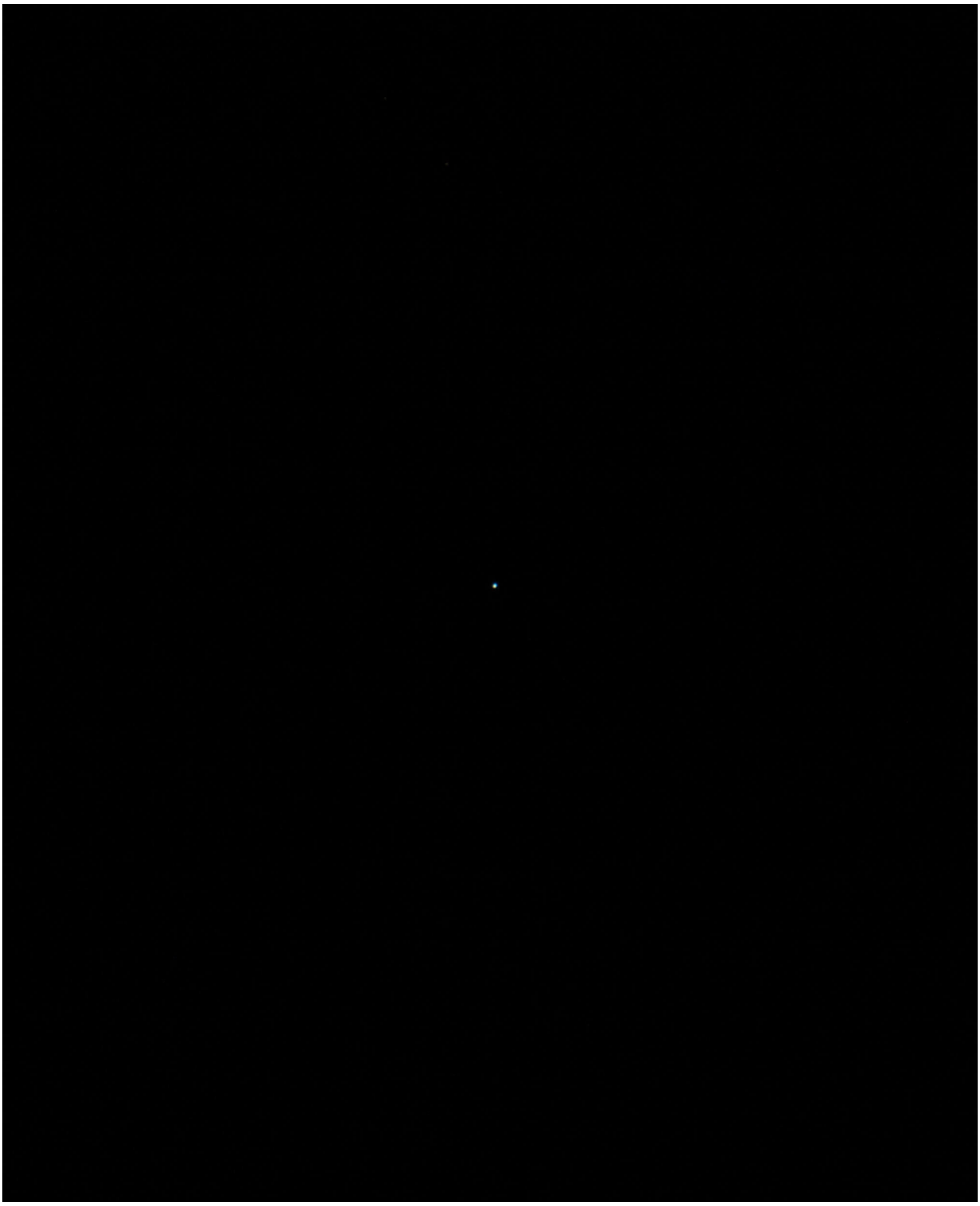
the-documents.c

As the light of celestial objects travels through the Earth’s atmosphere, the various wavelengths that make up this light are refracted differently. This effect is called ‘dispersion’ and results in colour fringing on the edges of planetary discs: images with a sliver of blue at the top and a red one at the bottom appear.

When celestial objects are positioned close to the horizon (like Neptune when observed from Luxembourg) the images are severely affected: the path of the light through the atmosphere is longer, leading to greater dispersion.

For the same reason sunsets are red, Neptune turns from a monochromatic blue disc into a misaligned, multicoloured oval.

Neptune in opposition [4/20] – Dispersion

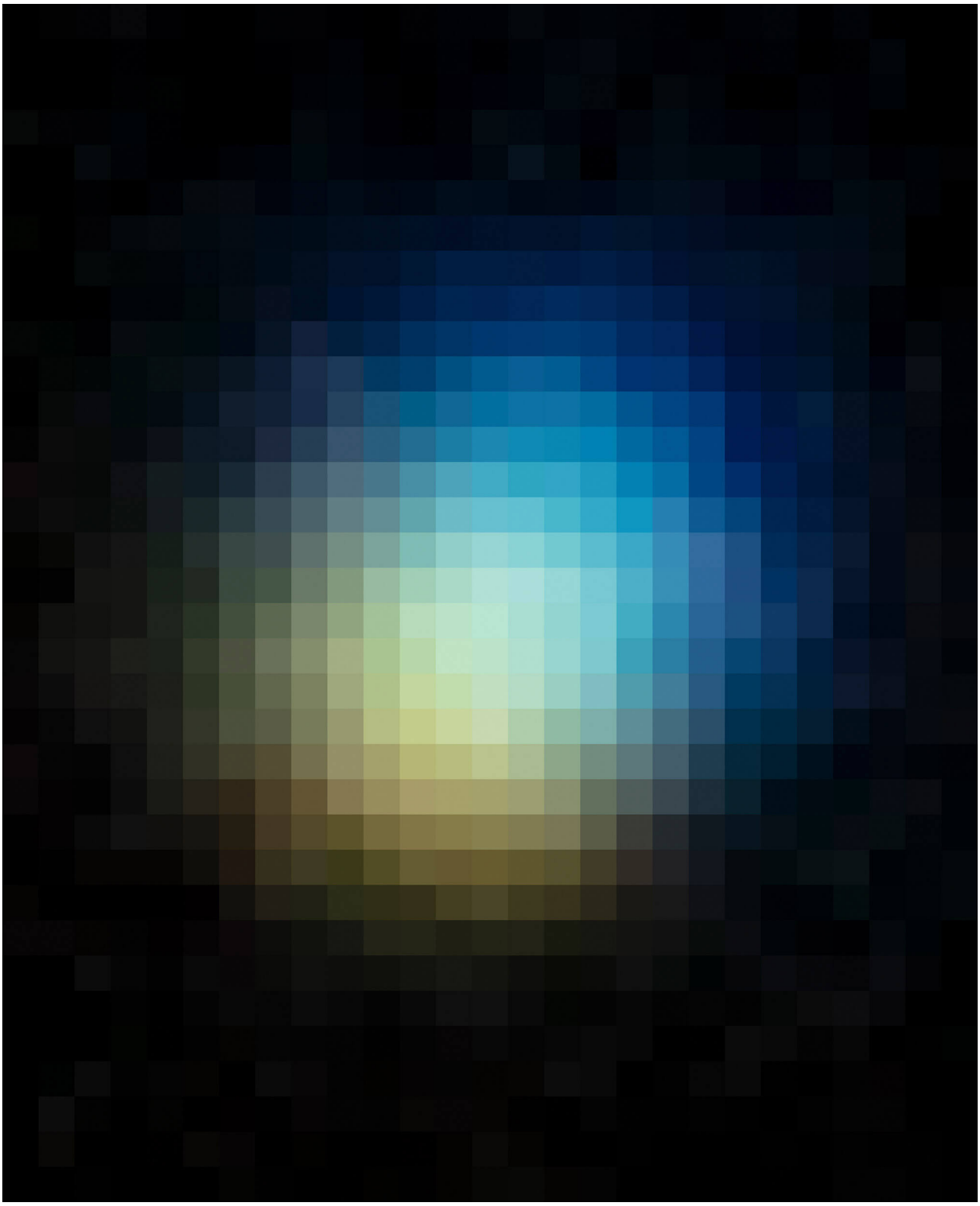


type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	19.09.2022	_44A5790.dng	37,43 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, mistake, Neptune, technology

18:54:29

the-documents.c



18:54:29

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

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

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

Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield



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

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

18:54:32

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.

300 year old seaweed



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.09.2022	clementine_300_yo_seaweed.JPEG	1 MB	Clémentine Vaultier

category
architecture, encounter, house, repair

18:54:38

This video-still is taken from a documentary about ‘Le Coin du Balai – De Bezemhoek’, a Brussels neighborhood on the edge of the Sonian Wood. Historically, the inhabitants had the exclusive right to harvest young shoots of trees to make and sell brooms. In 1976, filmmaker Willy Biesemans captured the last broom-maker, still in possession of this vernacular knowledge.

Nowadays, the Sonian Wood is commonly understood as a place of natural beauty surrounding the city. The wood the forest produces is managed as a chain of production and sold in public auction to the best buyer. The bulk of the forest’s produce is exported abroad and eventually imported back as manufactured goods.

Notes

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

Sources

- Biesemans, W. *De Bezemhoek.* 1976 (YouTube – De Bezemhoek)

Learning broom-making again



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	16.08.2022	clementine_learning_broommaking_again.png	3 MB	Clémentine Vaultier

category
botany, economy, landscape, tree

18:54:40

While I was sitting in the laundromat one evening waiting for my laundry to finish its cycle, *La Isla Bonita* by Madonna came on the radio. Competing with the rustle of seven rotating laundry machines, the song reminded me of a T-shirt that was now being washed.

The short phrase in the song's lyrics 'last night I dreamt of San Pedro' would nestle itself somewhere in the back of my head and bubble up every now and again for no particular reason. I made this shirt for the occasion of Valentine's Day in 2019 to commemorate my friendship with Jan-Pieter. I remember once mumbling the lyrics to *La Isla Bonita*, replacing 'San Pedro' for 'Juan Pedro', forgetting it for some time and then a while later printing it on a T-shirt.

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?*.

Last night I dreamt of Juan Pedro



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	25.07.2022	photo_2022-07-11_17-29-40.jpg	132 KB	Tjobo Kho

category
music

18:54:48

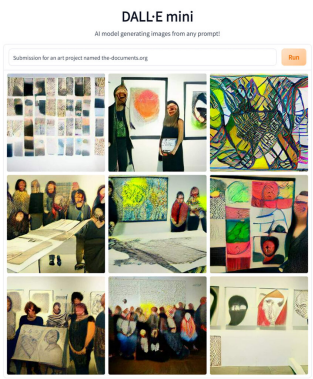
‘Submission for an art project named the-documents.org’ is a collection of 9 images[1] generated by DALL·E mini[2], an open-source AI model, on the basis of the prompt ‘Submission for an art project named the-documents.org’.

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.



type	date	filename	size	author
screenshot	01.07.2022	dallemini_2022-6-19_21-53-48.png	1,61 MB	Ward Verwaeren

category
archive, data storage, technology, artificial intelligence

18:54:49

He’s wearing a digital watch. It looks like a Casio. It’s impossible to read the time, no matter whether you are studying the high-resolution scan of the negative or the negative itself, with the aid of a loupe and lightbox.

The device had a stopwatch function. When we were around eight and ten, we used to compete in trying to start and stop the stopwatch in the shortest possible interval. The smaller the gap, the closer to zero. Sometimes he would also have a try. We once managed to get it down to 00:00:00:03. Neither of us dared to press ‘reset’ and try again.

Notes



org Stopwatch



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	10.05.2022	032a-07s.psd	802,34 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
archive, family, house, mirror, technology, hand

18:54:50

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

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

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

Zebras



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

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

18:54:55

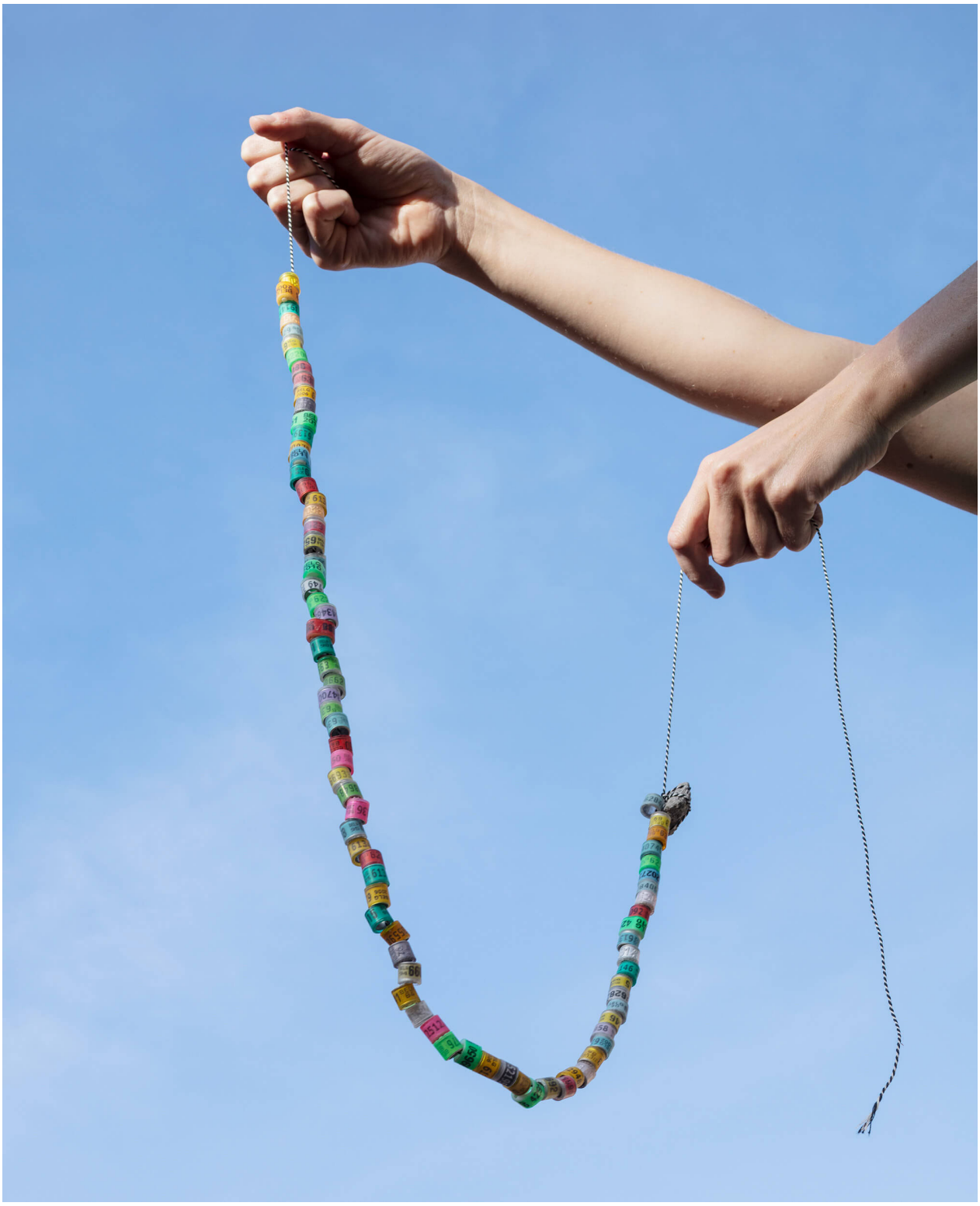
At the nuclear waste processing facility. While the photographer and the head of the communication department are making their way from the processing building to the temporary storage building, they walk past the central chimney.

‘On the highest of the accessible levels of the chimney, operators were finding small steel rings. They gathered them, but soon noticed that new rings were added. At a certain point at a rate of one ring a day.
[…]
It took them some time to realize what they were, so they started collecting them by slipping them onto a piece of rope. By now the rings on the rope span about this distance [spreads his arms to indicate a distance of about 1.2m].
[…]
They turned out to be rings that came from pigeon’s legs.
[…]
On top of our chimney resides a peregrine falcon.
[…]
I was told pigeon fanciers have a tendency to give a peregrine falcon – or any other bird of prey in their area – a hand at disappearing, but this one took up residency in the internal perimeter, where – as you know – access is severely restricted.’

Notes

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

A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	02.03.2022	duivenringen_001.jpg	20,04 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, collecting, food, Reference Guide, technology, waste, hand

18:54:56

_44A6588.dng
At 13:26:43 I took a photograph of a concrete building without windows in an industrial zone just south of Brussels.

_44A6590.dng
At 16:46:15 I photographed a succession of office buildings in the same industrial zone.

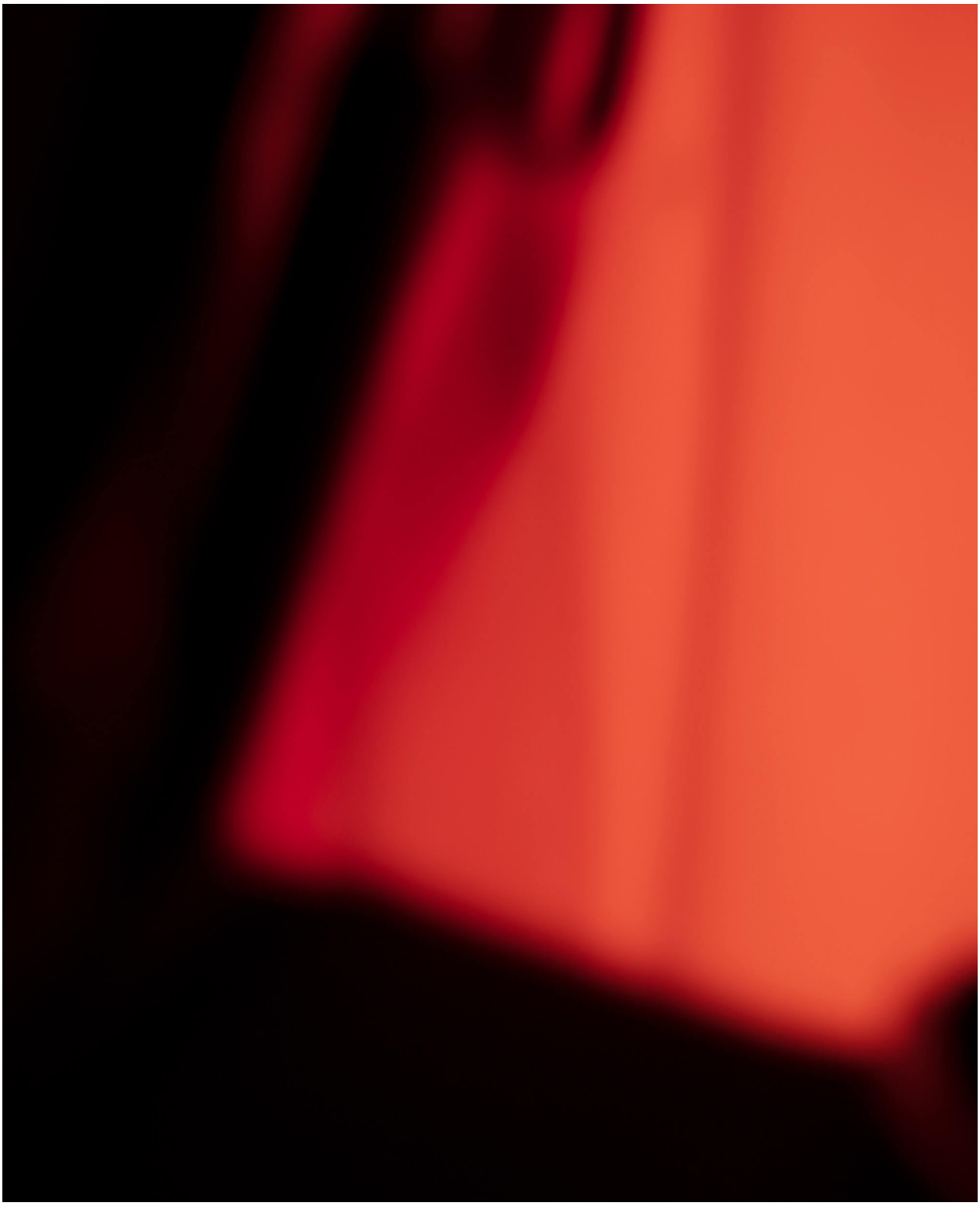
_44A6589.dng
I must have walked about 1 kilometer between the concrete building without windows and the section of the industrial zone with the offices. At 13:43:49, the camera, safely stored in my backpack, recorded 0.4 seconds of the 20 minutes it took me to get there.

In *The Snows of Venice*, Alexander Kluge wonders whether he can take the liberty to conjure up what the sky looked like on 31 December 1799, as Schiller made his way to Goethe's house. He goes on by saying that, historically, there's a 'LACK OF SENSORY ATTENTION AT CRUCIAL MOMENTS'.[1] There are exceptions, though, like the cameraman that was sent out to document the fireworks on New Year's Day 2000. The camera was turned on prematurely. The batteries were used up by midnight, but 'certain gray tones, however, filtered through the cracks of its protective case, conveyed the motion of the walking cameraman, the transportation. The incompletely shut, low-information container was documented exactly […] To this day it provides inexact testimony as to the qualities of the leather of a twenty-first century carrying case and the precise sensitivity to light and dark demonstrated by a twenty-first century recording medium.'[2]

Sources

1 Lerner, B., Kluge, A. *The Snows of Venice*. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018, p. 53
2 Ibid.

org Backpack



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	15.02.2022	_44A6589.dng	37,87 MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, data storage, mistake, packaging, technology

18:54:57

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

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

Notes

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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

org Mould



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	27.01.2022	_44A3429.tif	36,81 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

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

18:54:58

the-documents.c

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.

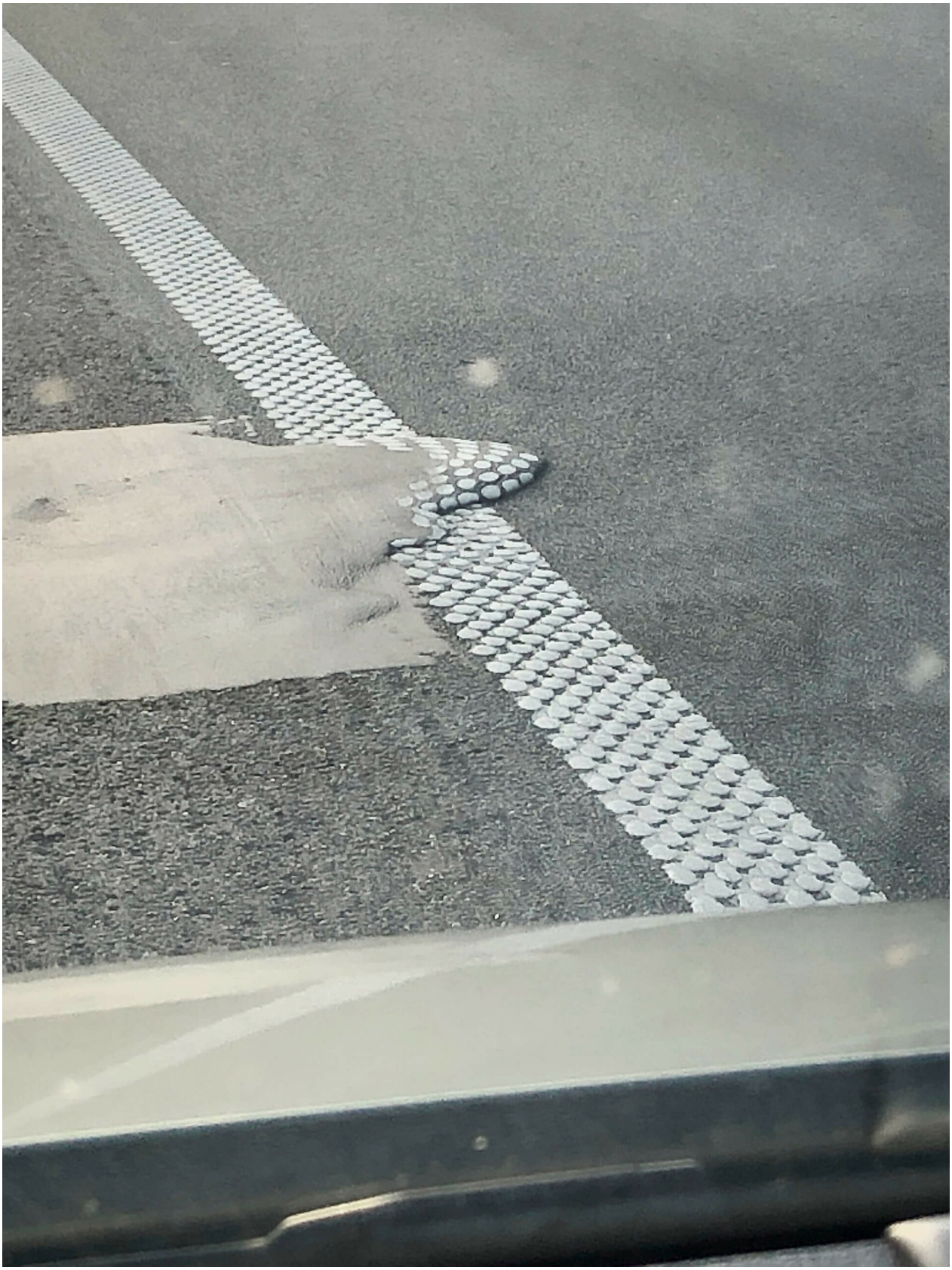
According to 75.1, there are two types of markings that indicate the actual edge of the roadway: a white, continuous stripe and a yellow interrupted line. The former is mainly used to make the edge of the roadway more visible; the latter indicates that parking along it is prohibited.

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.

Sources

https://wegcode.be/wetteksten/secties/kb/wegcode/262-art75

The Imaginary Edge of the Roadway



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	08.08.2021	IMG_7943.HEIC	659 KB	Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, government, parking, repair, sign

18:55:00