

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

Your path through the collection lead along Swarms, Neptune in opposition [20/20] – A constellation, John's Sparta K-10, Hétéroclites, A Fever Dream, Roofing (3) – Simon, tu me manques, Flint, Raisins, At the copyshop, Negative sheet 21, negative 24, negative 24,5, Dust, Another letter from abroad, Aggressive mimicry, Crash (2), Owls and cats, Room 3, A Seismic Change

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 25.03.2024 22:34, printed on _____ and contains 17 documents on 36 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/25-03-2024-5818/>)

the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.

the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.

Notes

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.
www.decleenedecline.be / info@decleenedecline.be
- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

Sources

- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- 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



July. Our eight-month-old son has a fever. We have a hard time getting him to drink enough. The tally marks on the back of a tortellini-box keep track of the diapers he wets and the millilitres of milk and electrolytes he's able to hold down.

Stuck inside with worrying parents, a sticker-book about a farm is his brother's favourite pass-time.

Tired of having to go back and forth between the pastures and the sticker-filled sheets we decide to use my arm as a repository for animals that share a habitat.



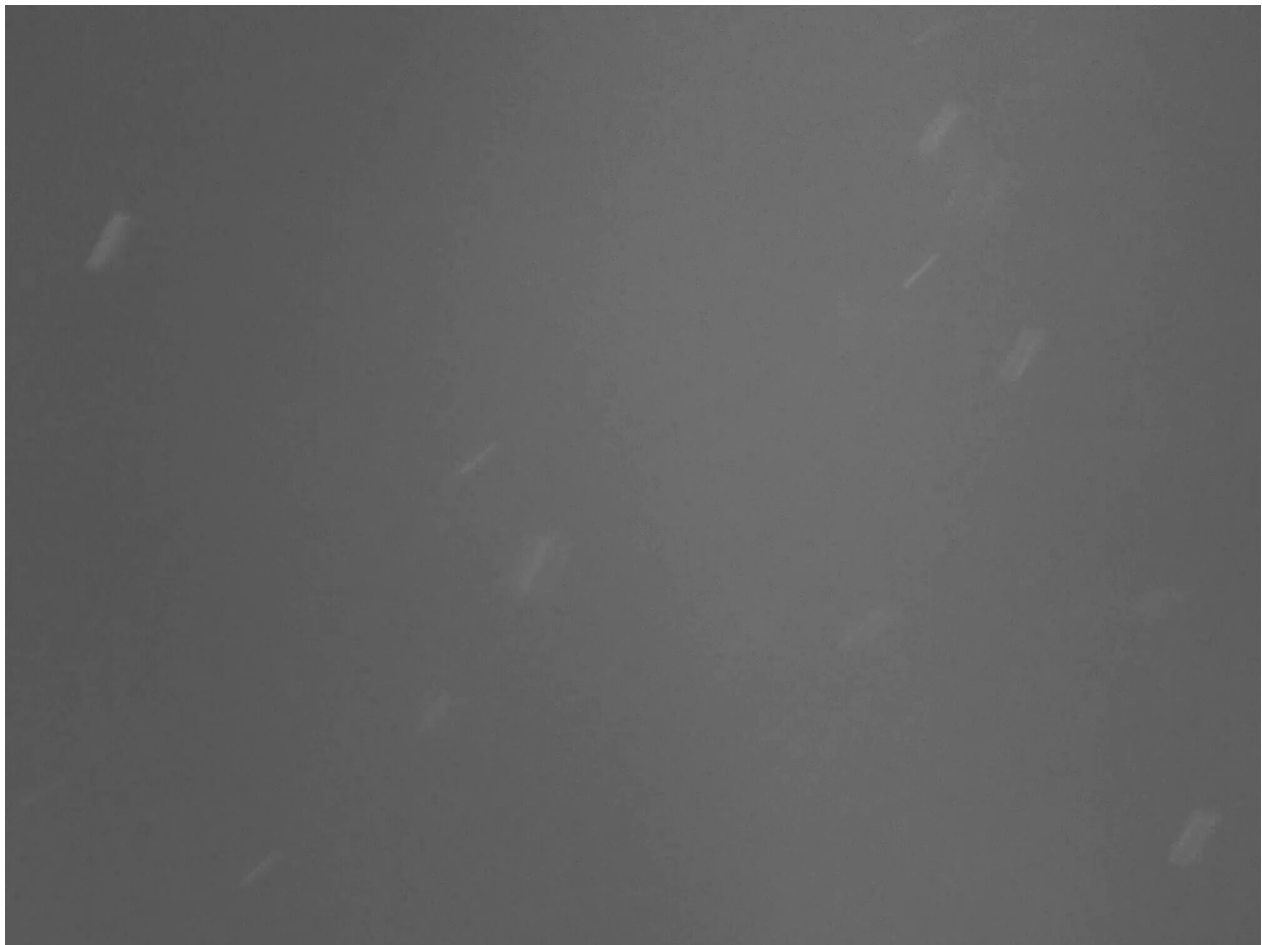
type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	23.01.2024	IMG_6467.jpeg	1,66 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category	collecting, family, hand, sticker			

22:33:56

As we point the telescope to the sky – cloudy, and filled with chaotic bursts of rain – the dispersion of the city lights accentuates the swirling, frantic raindrops. The roof we are standing on is uneven. A puddle forms underneath the apparatus, around the right leg of the tripod and our feet. The sound of a car on a wet street, below. A kitchen light is flicked on. Temperature is low for a mid-September night, and getting lower by the minute. It seems impossible to tell the depth of field we are documenting, and at what distance from our position these fleeting constellations occur.

Sources

- Excerpt from Towards Civil Dusk (De Cleene De Cleene, 2020)
- Neptune in opposition [1-20] is part of 'Documenting Objects', a research project by Arnout De Cleene and Michiel De Cleene at KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. Their research is financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund. Previous research into this subject has amongst other things led to the documentary film Towards Civil Dusk and temporary public observatories at 019, Gent and Kunsthall Extra City, Antwerp.
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 - Philippe Molet
 - 019
 - Astropolis (Oostende)
 - Cercle Astronomique Mosan (Herbuchenne)
 - Koninklijk Observatorium Ukkel
 - Observatoire Astronomique Antoine Thomas S.J. (Namur)
 - Observatoire Astronomique Centre Ardenne (Grapfontaine)
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 - Volkssterrenwacht Armand Pien (Gent)
 - Volkssterrenwacht AstroLAB IRIS (Zillebeke)
 - Volkssterrenwacht Beisbroek (Brugge)
 - Volkssterrenwacht Mira (Grimbergen)
 - Volkssterrenwacht Urania (Hove)



type	date	filename	size	author
video	05.10.2022	2020-09-24-1156_0-CapObj.mp4	51,05 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

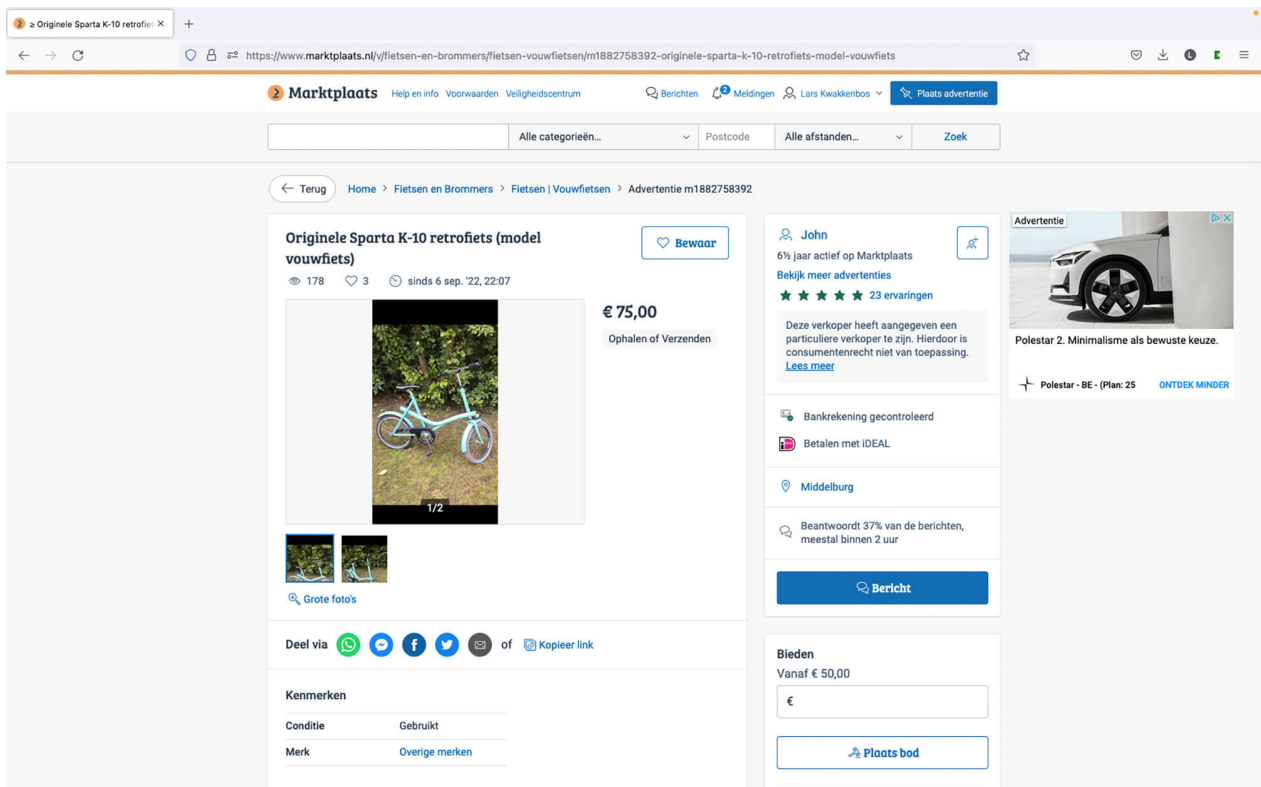
category
astronomy, Neptune, precipitation

22:34:04

John from Middelburg offers a K-10 without a loop at the back on marktplaats.nl. His K-10 does have a front light, which strangely never seems to be mounted in the front of the long tube of the frame. The asking price is 75 euros, bids may start from 50 euros.

Notes

- Lars Kwakkenbos lives and works in Brussels and Ghent (B). He teaches at KASK & Conservatorium in Ghent, where he is currently working on the research project 'On Instructing Photography' (2023-2024), together with Michiel and Arnout De Cleene.



filename

Screenshot 2022-09-30 at 09-09-26

Originele Sparta K-10 retrofiets

(model vouwfiets) – Fietsen

Vouwfietsen – Marktplaats.png

size

437 KB

author

Lars Kwakkenbos

type

screenshot

date

16.01.2023

category

bicycle, economy, technology

22:34:11

French writer Raymond Queneau did extensive research into what he called *hétéroclites*, and at other times *fous littéraires*, a continuation of a longstanding bibliographic project of assembling texts proposing eccentric theories that were never picked up by the scientific community.

Disappointed by the results of his research and unable to find a publisher, he abandoned the idea of publishing the encyclopaedia he was compiling.

Later, in his encyclopaedic novel *Les enfants du limon*, he picks up the thread, from a different perspective. It tells the story of two quirky characters, Chambernac and Purpulan, wanting to compile an encyclopedia on *fous littéraires*. The novel cites from the texts they have dug up. The novel ends when they give up on the project, and give their findings to a novelist they meet and who says to be interested in the material, and asks if it would be OK if he'd attribute it to a character in a story he's writing. Chambernac agrees, asking the name of the novelist he's meeting: 'Monsieur comment?' – 'Queneau'.

Sources

- Queneau, R. *Aux confins des ténèbres. Les fous littéraires du XIXe siècle* (M. Velguth, red.). Paris: Gallimard, 2002.
- Queneau, R. *Les enfants du limon*. Paris: Gallimard, 2004 [1938].



type
photograph

date
06.03.2021

filename
_MG_6560.JPG

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
book, encyclopaedia, mathematics, sign

22:34:13

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

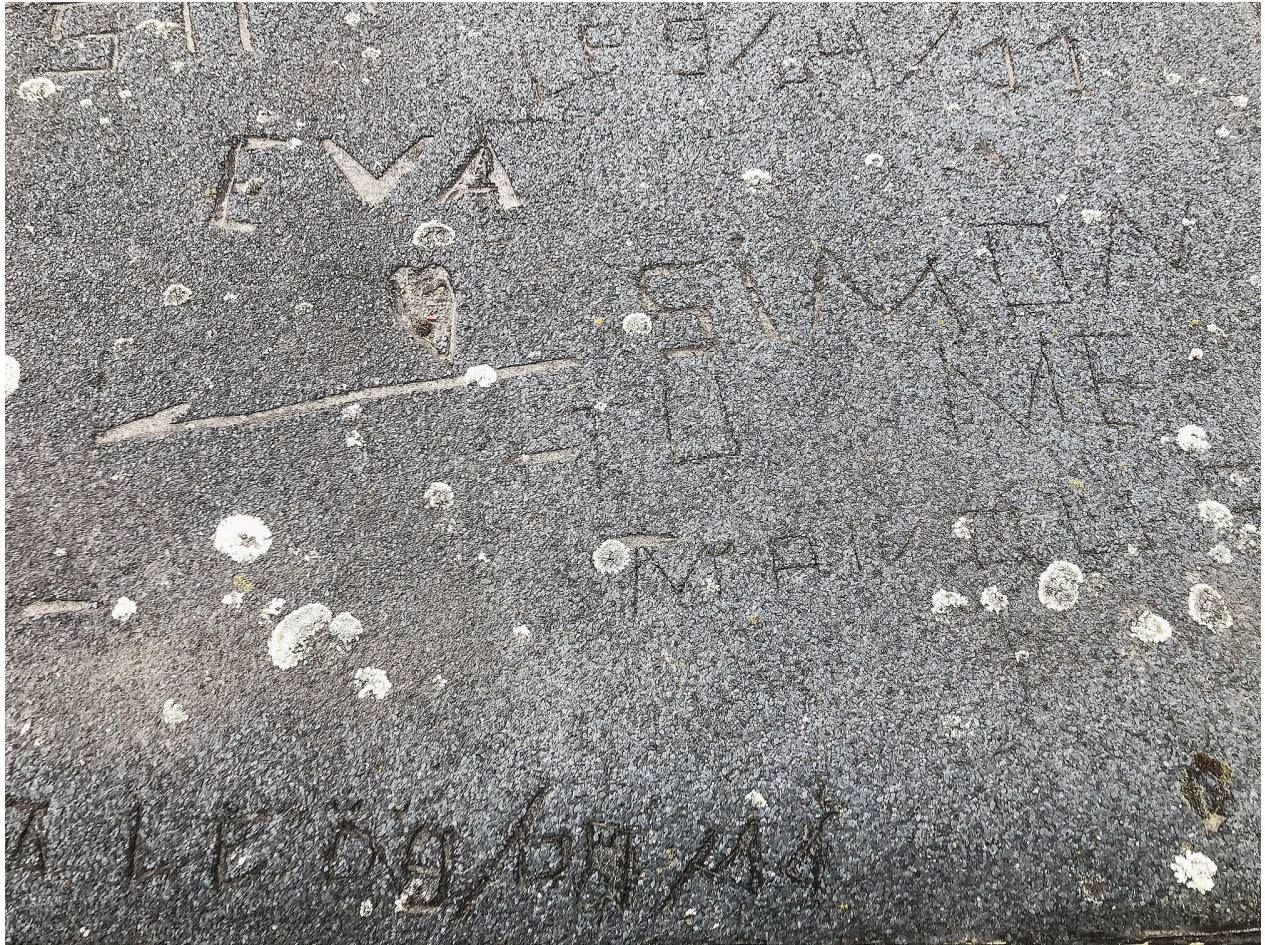
author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
angst, animal, seismology, Vesuvius

22:34:15

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.



type
photograph

date
14.04.2021

filename
IMG_6512.jpeg

size
4,50MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, decoration, fissure, parking, roofing, sign

22:34:16

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.¹

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.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	11.10.2021	_MG_7417.JPG	6,5MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
archaeology, animal, collecting, archive, family, house, landscape, mistake, waste

22:34:18

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

22:34:23

At the copyshop, on a shelf above photocopier 8,
the lid of a box of paper serves as the container for
'forgotten originals'.¹

the-documents.c

Notes

- 1 The book being copied: Didi-Huberman, G. *La ressemblance par contact*. *Archéologie, anachronisme et modernité de l'empreinte*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 2008.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	28.09.2021	IMG_0105.JPG	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene
category	archaeology, book, mistake, replica/copy			

22:34:25

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

22:34:27

Ten years ago, in November, I drove up to Frisia – the northernmost province of The Netherlands. I was there to document the remains of air watchtowers: a network of 276 towers that were built in the fifties and sixties to warn the troops and population of possible aerial danger coming from the Soviet Union. It was very windy. The camera shook heavily. The poplars surrounding the concrete tower leaned heavily to one side.

I drove up to the seaside, a few kilometers farther. The wind was still strong when I reached the grassy dike that overlooked the kite-filled beach. I exposed the last piece of film left on the roll. Strong gusts of wind blew landwards.

Months later I didn't bother to blow off the dust that had settled on the film before scanning it. A photograph without use, with low resolution, made for the sake of the archive's completeness.

The dust on the film appears to be carried landwards, by the same gust of wind lifting the kites.



type
photograph

date
06.09.2021

filename
LWT-Oudemirdum0002.tif

size
28,17 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
architecture, archive, data storage, landscape, sea, wind

22:34:28

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

22:34:30

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

22:34:31

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

22:34:33

For about an hour, he has been saying 'owl' at regular intervals. A cartoon character he picked up somewhere and is now fantasizing about, I guess. Or a Disney reference in one of the songs that have been playing on repeat all day, in the car, driving home from holidays.

50 kilometers further, I recognize the birds in the high-voltage pylons along the highway.

According to the amateur experts at hoogspanningsforum.com, these French pylons – used for conducting electricity from 63kV to 400kV – are nicknamed 'chats': the wiring can be interpreted as feline whiskers.

Some genera of owls, such as the *Megascops* or Screech owls, have whiskers.



type
photograph

date
12.08.2022

filename
IMG_1944.HEIC

size
1,59 MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
animal, automobile, family

22:34:35

A square photograph with an Arabic and French text underneath it is mounted on a foam board, in turn mounted on a sheet of plexiglass. The picture in the middle is flanked by a photograph of and a text about the tumuli of Umm Jidr (left) and the excavations at Abou Saybi (right). They are mounted on the West wall of Guest Room 3 at the Qual'at Al-Bahrain Site Museum, Seef, Bahrain.

Necropolises make up the main archaeological testimonies of the Tylos period (4th century BC – 3rd century AD). The urn in the photograph contains the remains of several babies. They most likely fell victim to an epidemic. The size of the ruler next to the urn remains unspecified.

Notes

The photograph of Room 3 was made while in mandatory self-isolation after flying to Bahrain from Frankfurt and waiting for the result of a Covid-19 test.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	11.12.2020	_44A7372.dng	49,3MB	Michiel De Cleene

category
archaeology, Bahrain, epidemic, scale, decoration

22:34:37

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



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

category
automobile, data storage, dusk, seismology, Vesuvius

22:34:39

