

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

Your path through the collection lead along Stopwatch,
Zebras, View, A peregrine falcon in the internal perimeter,
Mould, Straight in the morning, curvy in the afternoon, Raisins,
12M m3 [7/8] A Fissure, Shoulder, Slightly Askew (1), Album,
Essie, Mai Ndombe, Measures, Room 3, Roofing (1), Crash (1)

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 26.05.2022 02:34, printed on _____ and contains 17 documents on 36 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/25-05-2022-4007/>)

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



HOGENT
howest

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





type
photograph

date
10.05.2022

filename
032a-07s.psd

size
802,34 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
archive, family, house, mirror, technology

17:23:44

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

17:23:47

According to art critic Rosalind Krauss, nineteenth-century stereographic images presented ‘views’, not ‘landscapes’. Looking at a stereographic image through a stereoscope involves a particular experience that is altogether different from looking at other types of photographs, or paintings, as it is defined by ‘the isolation of the viewer with an image from which surrounding interference is masked out’.¹ An image of a violent and sudden eruption, higher up on the mountain, hanging next to a stereographic image of a petrified lava flow, would not be perceived.

Sources

1. Krauss, R. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge, Mass./London: The MIT Press, 1986, 139.



		filename			
		Foto_2022-02-			
		17_110818.jpg	Foto_2022-02-		
		17_110818.jpg	Foto_2022-02-		
		17_110818.jpg			
type	date		size	author	
photograph	03.04.2022	17_110818.jpg	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene	

category
impact, landscape, seismology, technology, trompe l'oeil, Vesuvius

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



type
photograph

date
02.03.2022

filename
duivenringen_001.jpg

size
20,04 MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

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

17:33:03

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



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
27.01.2022

filename
_44A3429.tif

size
36,81 MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

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

17:33:03

On a pile of fresh hospital sheets, near the radiator, the tangerine curtains and the black marble window sill (the window looks out over the parking lot), underneath the two-day-old bouquet of flowers and next to a pile of magazines with a handwritten note on top (about a syrup that relieves slime and tastes like oranges), lie two sheets of paper.

Earlier that day the physiotherapist had come by. Twice. Once in the morning and once in the afternoon. He had each time drawn the first line, as an example. A straight line in the morning, a curvy line in the afternoon.

With a ballpoint pen my grandfather, who is recovering from an accident, diligently copied the examples (31 in the morning, 5 in the afternoon).



type
photograph

date
09.01.2022

filename
IMG_9441.HEIC

size
862 KB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
family, manual, medicine, parking, replica/copy

17:33:06

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

17:33:11

What they took for ice that slid down the dam's slope, appears to be the reason for draining the reservoir: a fissure in the watertight layer. The dam became unreliable.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	06.12.2021	IMG_0515b	5,42 MB	Michiel De Cleene
category				
fissure, landscape, mistake, repair				

17:33:13

Yesterday I had my shoulder checked by a radiologist. He took an ultrasound and saw some minor inflammation of my right subscapularis.

After giving me some advice – ‘we could give you a shot of cortisone in the shoulder. It would relieve you from your pain for six weeks and then, without proper exercise, you’d be back where you are now’ – he walked towards the door. ‘I propose you do this exercise thirty times, three times a day.’

The radiologists put his right hand on the doorframe, his arm stretched, the weight of his body on it and then leaned forward and back again, while keeping his arm stretched. ‘This will increase the muscles around the sore subscapularis. It will take months.’ After giving me his advice, he sent me back into the dressing room. I put my shirt back on and went into the waiting room. The nurse called out my name, charged me 14,00 EUR and gave me a card. ‘This code will allow you to look at the images of the ultrasound at home’, she said.

Today I entered the code and password and – instead of my shoulder – found the röntgen-images of someone else’s broken heel.



type	date	filename	size	author
radiograph	14.01.2021	1f713c4c-6975-4760-ada1-9cc485930adc.PNG	1,2MB	Michiel De Cleene
category	data storage, mistake, medicine, fissure			

17:33:15

Until recently, for as long as I could remember, the packaging of Tabasco® Pepper Sauce had been unchanged. On the front of the packaging, there is a photograph of a bottle of Tabasco®, scale 1:1, against an orange background. As far as packaged goods go, this is a highly idiosyncratic and quirky example.

The background colour approximates the colour of the liquid inside the bottle, resulting in as good as no contrast. Moreover, as the image of the bottle is scale 1:1, the packaging becomes kind of unnecessary and superfluous, also because the life-sized image of the bottle is the only way information is given to the customer: there are no additional slogans, no repetition of the brand name, no props and no decor. The image of the bottle advertises the bottle. It seems to add nothing the bottle could not do by its own (like a bottle of wine does).

What makes the packaging truly stand out, however, is the fact that the image of the bottle is not positioned vertically, but is slightly askew. It seems to be the result of a design error, and has an amateur feel to it. The decision to keep it as such and not correct it up until today, is, however, a stroke of genius. The non-vertical positioning alters the relation of the image of the bottle to the bottle inside: as the box is standing on a shelf, the tilted image of the bottle undermines its representational superfluity.



type
scan

date
29.03.2021

filename
Document_2021-03-29_111649.jpg

size
180KB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
economy, food, mistake, packaging, replica/copy, scale

17:33:18

At the State Archive in Kortrijk, I am leafing
through a 1955 photo album of the construction of
the provisional church in Lokeren by the famous
furniture company Kunstwerkstede De Coene.
Gigantic wooden, prefabricated beams structure
the building. It is cold. An old man in a grey suit
shuffles between the racks to look up the date of
birth of his great great grandmother. Snow covers
the unfinished provisional roof. A bus passes,
I reckon, through the pouring rain.



type	date	filename	size	author
audio	22.12.2020	VP100184.MP3	1,8MB	Arnout De Cleene

category
archive, architecture, book, data storage, De Coene, precipitation

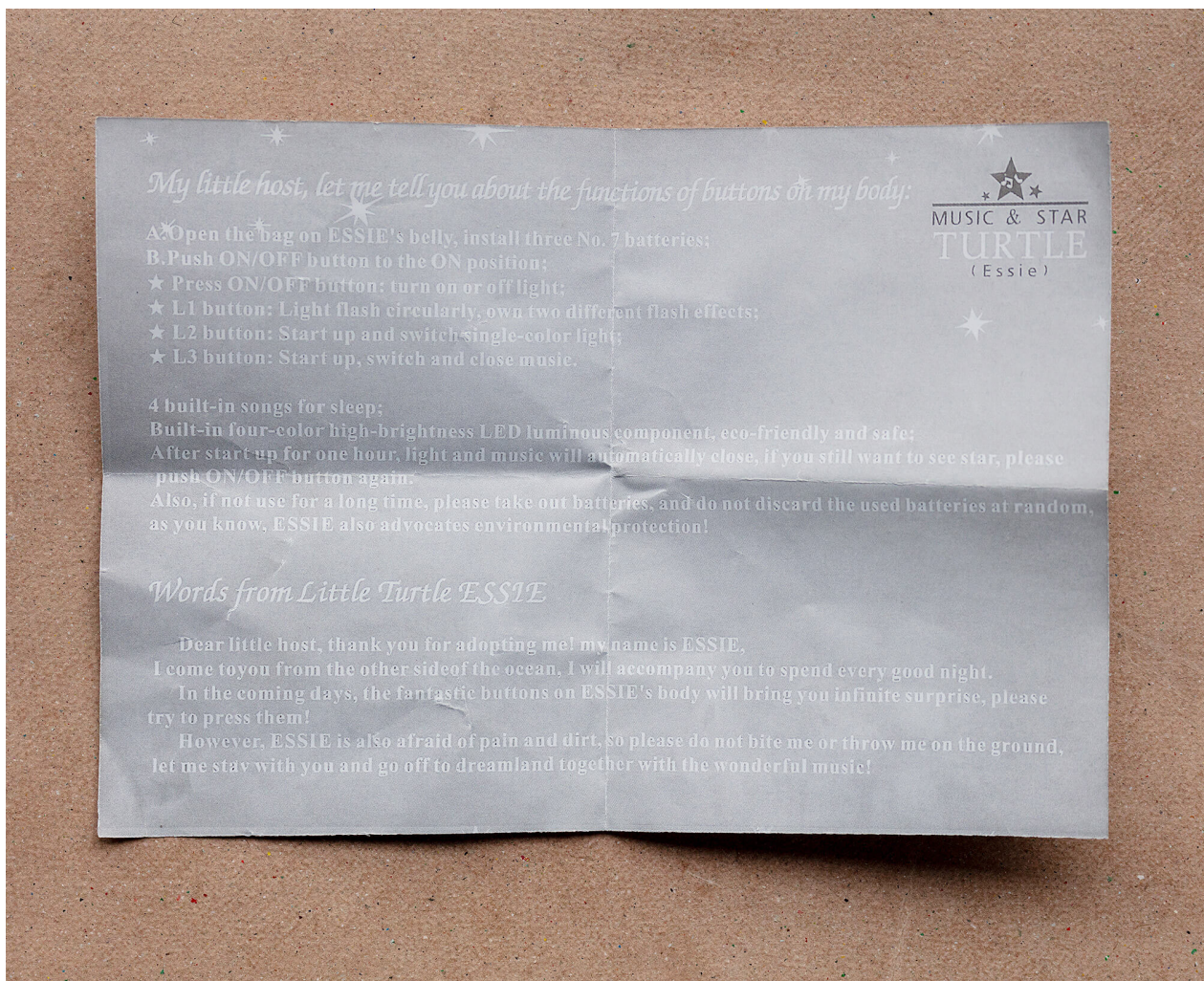
17:33:22

I bought my son a gift while abroad: a toy turtle named Essie whose perforated shield projects stars onto the ceiling in blue, green or amber. ‘8 actual star constellations’, the box proclaims.

The manual explains how to power up the turtle and what the four buttons on Essie’s back do. The small document (recto: Chinese, verso: English) concludes with some ‘Words from Little Turtle ESSIE’. In it the turtle shifts from direct speech to illeism¹ and back.

Notes

- 1 The act of referring to oneself in the third instead of first person.



type
photograph

date
17.12.2020

filename
_44A8424.dng

size
50,6MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
animal, astronomy, Bahrain, manual, family

17:33:25

On the second to last evening before we head home, we go for dinner at Suzanne's house. She has invited a friend, a national deputy for the region where she grew up. We eat fish and *patates douces*. We drink beer. The deputy's secretaries – there are three of them – closely inspect the worn manuscript we hand them. In blue ink: proverbs of their region, written by my girlfriend's grandfather in local Kikongo language. In red: a Dutch translation. They laugh. A month later, the deputy will become Vice-minister of Internal affairs. The proverbs get marked by fresh grease stains.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	15.12.2020	Mai Ndombe.jpg	922KB	Arnout De Cleene
category				
RDC, food, house, card, government				

17:33:32

Besides the scale indicating the length in centimeters, and the marks made by using it, a folding ruler displays other marks. These are the marks found on the *weber broutin* www.weber-broutin.be folding ruler, from left to right:

- 2m (in a frame, between 1cm and 2cm); indicating the total length of the folding ruler.
- a hexagon, barely visible, punched into the wood (between 2cm and 3cm); unknown signification.
- LUXMA (in a frame, between 4cm and 5cm); the manufacturer of the folding ruler (different from the company who ordered the folding ruler, their (the company's, i.e. weber-broutin's) name is printed on the sides of the ruler, and is only readable when the ruler is folded together for at least 50% (=1m).
- III (in an oval, between 6cm and 7cm); indication of the preciseness of the scale in centimeters, with 'I' in roman numbers meaning the most precise, and 'IV' in roman numbers meaning the least precise. (It is therefore not entirely certain that the 'III' on *weber-broutin's* folding ruler can actually be found between 6cm and 7cm.)
- D 99 (in an oval, probably between 7cm and 8cm, see argument mentioned above); unknown signification.
- 1.1.60 (in an oval, probably between 7cm and 8cm, beneath D 99), signification unknown.



type	date	filename	size	author
scan	26.12.2020	Handgeschreven_2020-12-26_153034.jpg	659KB	Arnout De Cleene

category
scale, sign, mistake, mathematics

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
photograph

date
11.12.2020

filename
_44A7372.dng

size
49,3MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
archaeology, Bahrain, epidemic, scale, decoration

17:33:39

Seven very similar and rudimentary buildings take in a trapezoid plot of land in Gilly. They are located between the school on the Rue Circulaire and the houses along the Rue de l'Abbaye. The structures are built of orange brick, concrete structural elements, whitish steel gates and roofing. Every garage has its own number, hand-painted in white on the concrete lintel above each gate. In summer the roofing gets hot and soft.



type
photograph

date
14.04.2021

filename
_44a9887.dng

size
56,68MB

author
Michiel De Cleene

category
automobile, brick, landscape, parking, roofing, sign

17:33:41

In June, 2014, a severe hailstorm hit Belgium. Warnings were broadcast. A football game between the national teams of Belgium and Tunisia was paused. The morning after, there were small dents in the hood and the roof of the car, each a square centimeter in size, some 10 centimeters separated from each other. The storm didn't get a name.

Assessing the damage, the insurance company's expert took the dents into account to establish the wreck's worth.



type
photograph

date
16.10.2020

filename
IMG_2236.JPG

size
2,8MB

author
Arnout De Cleene

category
automobile, crash, precipitation, insurance

17:33:49

