

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 [10/20] – Kinship, Neptune in opposition – [9/20] – Rooftops, a windmill and power lines, Neptune in opposition [8/20] – Diamonds, Neptune in opposition [7/20] – Leather, 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 [3/20] – Azure, Neptune in opposition [2/20] – The airfield, Neptune in opposition [1/20] – Approach, Oven encounter, Moulds for speculation, 300 year old seaweed, Firing tool, Aggressive mimicry

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 25.09.2022 09:28, printed on _____ and contains 15 documents on 36 pages. (<https://the-documents.org/log/25-09-2022-4679/>)

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



howest

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			

08:59:25



A scene in German author and director Alexander Kluge's *Die Patriotin*: a half-dome opens; the protagonist, Gabi Teichert, stares into the telescope. A montage follows: the waxing crescent moon coming into focus; a night vision of a cityscape with industrial elements; archival footage of a cityscape with skyscrapers during daytime; a giant fire; a woman giving birth aided by a midwife; raindrops falling into a puddle of water; a time-lapse video of a city at sundown; a ship floating by with, in the background, on the shore, windmills; images of tanks rolling by; close-ups of a purple-lit face of someone looking into the camera; archival footage of an air raid.^{1,2}

In a conversation with Ben Lerner, Kluge sees himself as someone 'creating constellations': 'We deal with moving bodies. "Moving reality." [...]' And this is something that you cannot present in a linear way, but in the form of constellations. "Constellation" refers to cosmic matter and gravitation. There are suns, moons, planets. There are also the dust particles, tiny particles that orbit around the sun for centuries according to physical laws. And there's no hinge, no screw that connects them. Invisible connections.'³

Sources

- 1 Kluge, A. (dir.) *Die Patriotin*. München: Kairos Film, 1979.
<https://youtu.be/ZRuQ3SUgSSk?t=449>
 - 2 Kluge, A. *Die Patriotin. Texte/Bilder 1-6*. Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1979, 60-64.
https://monoskop.org/images/4/49/Kluge_Alexander_Die_Patriotin.pdf
 - 3 Lerner, B. & Kluge, A. *The Snows of Venice. The Lerner-Kluge-container*. Leipzig: Spector Books, 2018, 66.
- Excerpt from *Towards Civil Dusk* (De Cleene De Cleene, 2020)

Neptune in opposition – [9/20] – Rooftops, a windmill and power lines



type	date	filename	size	author
video	23.09.2022	2020-09-23-0837_1-CapObj.mp4	10,76 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, astronomy, house, landscape, Neptune, wind

09:27:00

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				



A seminar on spectroscopy: how, by splitting light into different, separate rays, it becomes possible to deduct the chemical composition of stars and planets far beyond our reach, as those elements have an effect on the light that reaches the spectroscope. Beautiful graphs presenting colour in schemes of black and white. From the moment the course gets into the physics of light, my mind wanders off. What approaches the observer turns blue, what elongates itself becomes red. The teacher's leather shoes squeak as he goes back and forth between his self-made spectroscope and the desk. Redshift. Blueshift.

We meet him a couple of weeks later on the rooftop of a university building. He opens one of the half-domes. The sound of the mechanics is as obtuse as the shape it alters. A command on the computer based on coordinates: above our heads, the telescope slews slowly, only to halt at an apparently indistinct black region. From within the dome, we send ourselves an email with the photographs that we took of Neptune.

University classes will start in a couple of weeks. The city air is crisp. The roundabout below is strangely calm. On the horizon, the canopy of a southern forest delineates the sodium-lit sky.



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	22.09.2022	_44A5904.dng	57,76 MB	De Cleene De Cleene

category
architecture, astronomy, data storage, dusk, encounter, landscape, Neptune, physics, roofing, technology

09:27:11

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

09:27:14



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.

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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			

09:27:17

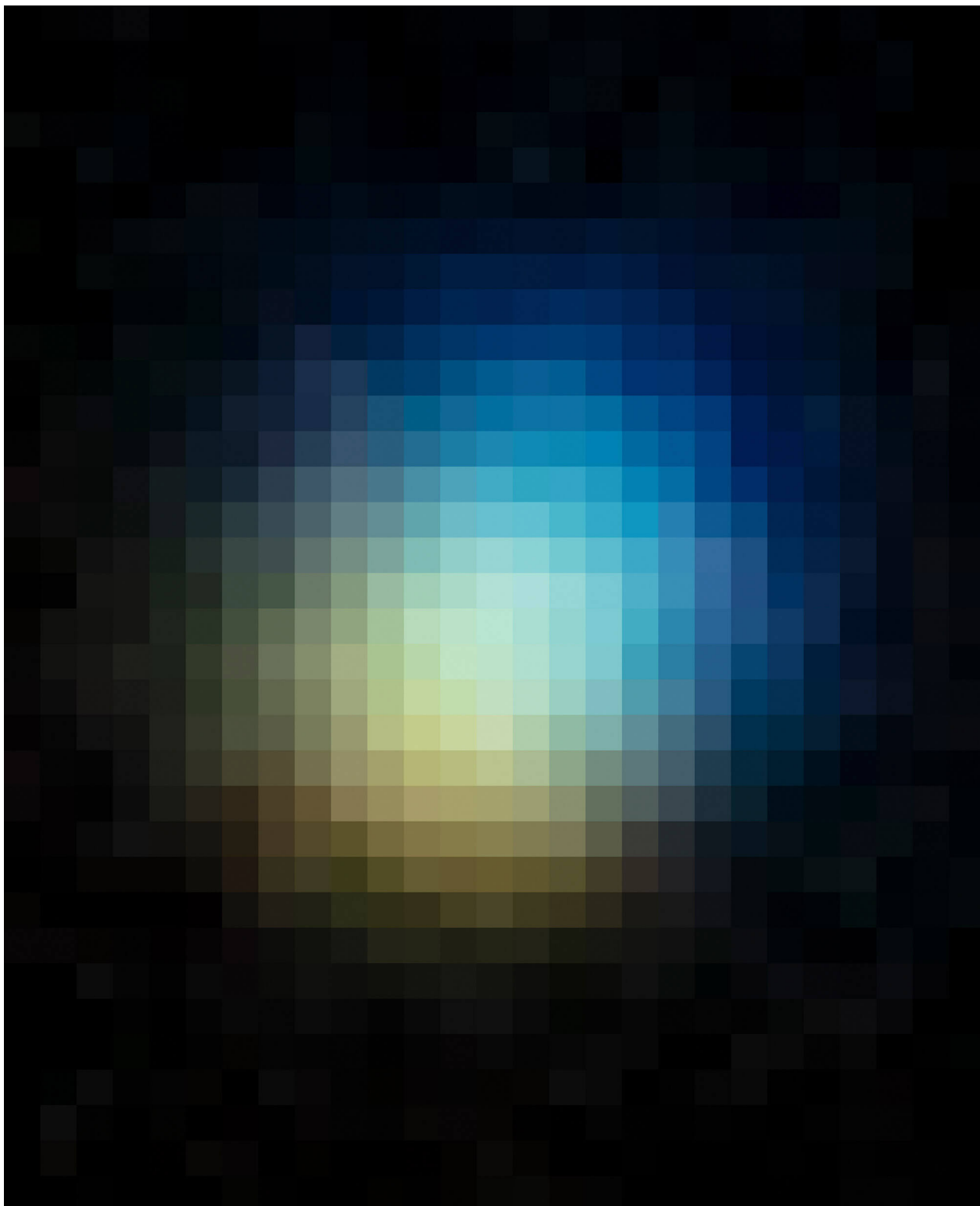
As the light of celestial objects travels through the Earth's atmosphere, the various wavelengths that make up this light are refracted differently. This effect is called 'dispersion' and results in colour fringing on the edges of planetary discs: images with a sliver of blue at the top and a red one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



type	date	filename	size	author
photograph	19.09.2022	_44A5790.dng	37,43 MB	De Cleene De Cleene
category				
astronomy, mistake, Neptune, technology				



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

09:27:27

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

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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

09:27:30

When the Sun, the Earth and one of the outer planets of the Solar System perfectly align, with the Earth positioned in the middle, the outer planet is said to be ‘in opposition’. It’s a moment of planetary approach and of optimal viewing conditions: the Earth and the outer planet are at their closest and brightest.

Notes

- *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* (2020) and temporary public observatories at 019, Gent and Kunsthall Extra City, Antwerp.



type
scan

date
15.09.2022

filename
opp2.jpeg

size
2,8MB

author
De Cleene De Cleene

category
astronomy, encounter, map/plan, Neptune, physics

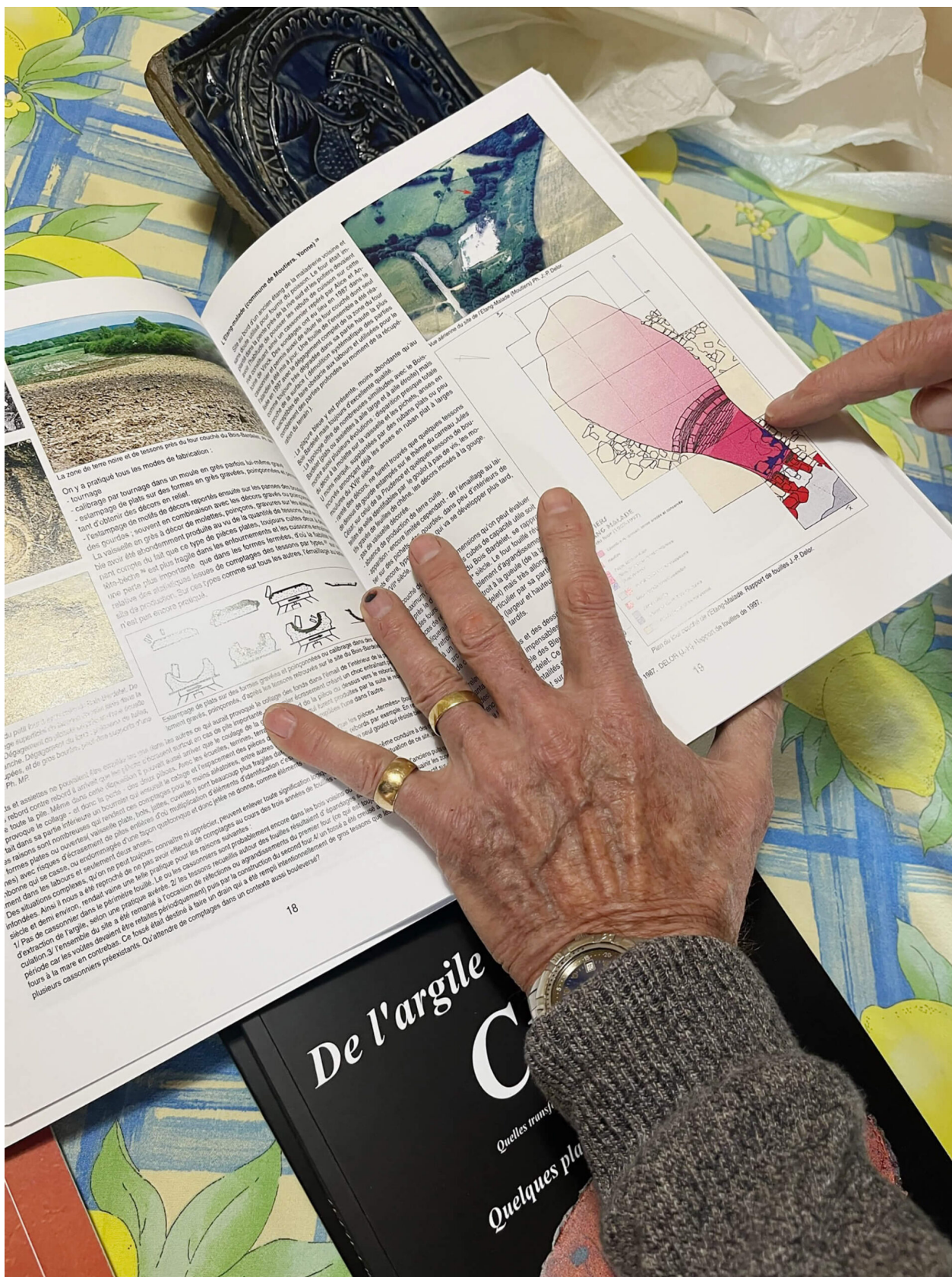
09:27:32

Here, on his kitchen table, Marcel Poulet, an expert on the stoneware tradition in the center of France, is explaining his archeological work on ‘whale ovens’.

I started collecting images and plans of ovens, for the beauty of those abstract technical lines and for what we can learn from them. In gathering the material that makes up this Atlas, and in sharing interests and knowledge, I learned that many people know about ovens, either in their homes, gardens, ateliers, factories, streets... Everyone transforms things through heat. Even bodies need warmth and produce some themselves.

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
15.09.2022

filename
clementine_oven_encounter.JPEG

size
1,3 MB

author
Clémentine Vaultier

category
archive, book, collecting, encounter, hand

09:28:02

In Veurne, at the bakery museum, old *speculaas* moulds are presented in an almost religious fashion. Looking at these wooden blocks, they appear to be the negatives to Romanesque sculptures.

How does it feel to be conserved and showcased when your nature is to be a tool? What would it mean to re-use them, to fill those empty molds, to shape something new without altering the matrix, to project what it would be like, to try out recipes and different baking, to learn from it and enjoy the results together? What scenes are even depicted? We lost part of their meaning, we could dig further, browse the books, ask our grandparents and collectively invent whatever narrative they might hold.

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	date	filename	size	author
photograph	12.09.2022	clementine_mold_for_speculation.JPG	1,5 MB	Clémentine Vaultier
category				
archaeology, collecting, decoration, food				

09:28:04

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

09:28:06

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

09:28:07

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

09:28:08

