

# Together

AUTUMN 2023 #129

magazine

## FITNESS

Vincent Vanasch  
Hockey  
Electromyostimulation

## Travel

Skiing in Denver  
Venice

## Dining

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JARDIN  
DES OLIVES

## LUXURY

SCABAL  
MADE-TO-  
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Rothko retrospective

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Men's mental health  
Tap into your sense  
of purpose  
Pension planning

## INTERVIEW

GEORGE  
CLOONEY



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## Editor's LETTER

*Together:  
Inspiring you  
to reach your dreams...*



Georges Clooney: "Always remember why you started acting in the first place - for the love of storytelling"

## Hymn to him

The evenings are closing in and we are starting our build up to Christmas. The news over the last weeks has been particularly grim, the atrocities carried out in Israel by Hamas, were met with an onslaught on the entire population of Gaza and further violence and displacement against Palestinians in the West Bank. Grim days indeed, but to borrow from the Israeli writer David Grossman: "It is beneath our dignity as human beings to despair". Everyone will have to dig very deep indeed and find a way to fight for a better, more just and peaceful world. We return to the hopes encapsulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marks its 75th anniversary on 10th December.

One of my favourite songs from *My Fair Lady* is Hymn to Him, wonderfully delivered by Rex Harrison in the film of Lerner and Loewe's musical based on George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. Professor Higgins enumerates the many qualities of men compared to women, while acknowledging that "now and then there's one with slight defects. One, perhaps, whose truthfulness you doubt a bit, but by and large we are a marvellous sex." And at Together we could not agree more, so in this edition we will have a focus on men's fashion, beauty products and shopping.

November is also associated with the Movember movement to raise awareness about men's health, in particular prostate and testicular cancer, as well as mental health. Women can be more open about our woes, but sometimes men find it difficult to say that they are struggling, bottle up their emotions and feel that they have to be strong. We offer some tips on building your mental resilience.

Enjoy the autumn leaves!

**Catherine Feore**  
Editor



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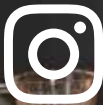
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**Grass Hockey:** Belgium has a dynamic and flourishing grass hockey scene. At the national level, Belgium currently has what you might call its 'golden generation' of players. Julian Hale tells us about his passion for the sport.

**Charity:** HelpAnimals is making a profound impact in the lives of countless animals. With not one but two shelters, they are on a mission to provide a haven for all creatures great and small. HelpAnimals has experienced both increased awareness and a surge in rescue requests.

**Georgia europaia:** This autumn europaia dedicates its arts festival to Georgia. We choose some highlights from a fascinating programme. We especially recommend a visit to the exhibition in Bozar, 'The Avant-garde in Georgia (1900-1936)'



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# Starring in Belgium

We look at three hot tickets



## Look who's coming to town!

Saint Nicholas is a little ahead of himself this year, but it's a big job and there are many presents to distribute for the 6th. On Sunday, 26 November, he is visiting Brussels! In what's described as a magical show for the whole family, children and nostalgic adults will experience a parade like no other with more than 200 dancers, actors and musicians. From circus artists to the Gnawas of Morocco, including the Drummers of Burundi and our local flag throwers. There are two shows, one at 11 and another at 14:30. With every ticket bought there is one ticket free for a child between 3-12 years old, and if you're under three, it is completely free!

26 November

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## Hozier - supported by The Last Dinner Party

The last time Hozier played Brussels it was in Cirque Royal, but it seems that with so many fans he's had to move to Forêt National for his return. The Irishman surged to fame with his first single "Take Me To Church" in September 2013. A talented composer, Hozier brings together folk, blues, soul and pop, in songs such as 'Cherry Wine', 'Someone New', 'Almost (Sweet Music)' and of course the very recent 'Eat Your Young'. The Last Dinner Party, the new sensation on the London scene behind 'Nothing Matters' & 'My Lady of Mercy' are special guests making this really two for the price of one.

8 December

[www.forest-national.be](http://www.forest-national.be)



## Sting - My Songs

No fancy new concept, no challenging change of direction, just the songs that you know and like. Nothing wrong with that, the man's 72 after all, he may be out of creative ideas. 'My Songs' is his fourteenth album made up of fifteen reworked greatest hits and was put together in 2019. Sting describes it as his life in songs: "Some of them reconstructed, some of them refitted, some of them reframed, and all of them with a contemporary focus." You will be able to enjoy the old songs, with a twist of the new.

25 November

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# Histoire de ne pas rire



## Surrealism in Belgium 21 Feb. ➤➤➤ 16 June'24

### Bozar, Centre For Fine Arts, Brussels

René Magritte, The Curious Glass, 1946, Private Collection © Photothèque R. Magritte, Adagp Images, Paris, 2019 © succession Magritte - Sabam Belgique 2023



# Help Animals: Rescuing and rehoming one animal at a time

**Nuala Morgan** visits one of Belgium's most well-known animal rescue centres



In the heart of Belgium, HelpAnimals is making a profound impact in the lives of countless animals. With not one but two shelters, they are on a mission to provide a haven for all creatures great and small. I sat down with Nadège, a passionate advocate and operations manager at HelpAnimals, to learn more about their remarkable work.

## Engaging the range of animal needs

From dogs and cats to farm animals and horses, HelpAnimals has extended their

care to pigs, sheep, rabbits, and even an unexpected visitor—an alpaca named Macintosh. But why such a diverse range of animals?

"There aren't many refuges for large animals," she says. "We saw the need to cater for all animals. Since we started in 1981, the demand for care just keeps on increasing. Thanks to donations, legacies, and dedicated members, we've expanded our shelters over time, buying more parcels of

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## “ SINCE WE STARTED IN 1981, THE DEMAND FOR CARE JUST KEEPS ON INCREASING ”

land here in Anderlecht, and on our farm in Braine-le-Chateau in the Walloon Region.”

### Raising awareness and adoptions

With growing interest in animal welfare, HelpAnimals has experienced both increased awareness and a surge in rescue requests. “We receive between 1,500 and 2,000 animals a year,” says Nadège. The summer months are the most critical, with pets often left behind as owners go on holiday. Yet, they also find forever homes for around 1,200 to 1,300 of these animals, thanks to a diligent adoption process.

## “ HELPANIMALS STRIVES TO MATCH EVERY ADOPTER WITH THE RIGHT ANIMAL ”

“Most of them do find loving homes,” she affirms. “But for farm animals like pigs, it takes more time.” Indeed, it made me wonder how one goes about adopting a pig...

### Animal adoption: A thoughtful process

When it comes to adopting animals, HelpAnimals places emphasis on thorough vetting and responsible pet parenting. “We ask potential adopters about their living situation, garden space, and family dynamics. For farm animals, we ensure they have enough space. The adoption process is meticulous, as we’re committed to the well-being of both animals and humans.”

There are no blanket criteria for adoption at HelpAnimals. “Every case is unique,” she says. “We consider factors like living arrangements, other animals, and the needs of the animals themselves.” Some cats prefer to live in apartments, sometimes dogs need another animal for company, HelpAnimals strives to match every adopter with the right animal.

### Education

HelpAnimals doesn’t stop at rescue and adoption; they also focus on education. “We work to raise awareness, even in retirement homes. We’re educating school children on animal well-being because it’s an upstream process.”

“Saving animals is teamwork,” she says. HelpAnimals welcomes volunteers with open arms, as they believe everyone can contribute. “Even a few hours a week or a small donation can save a life,” they emphasize.

I took a walk around the Anderlecht shelter with Laetitia, an intern studying to be an animal caregiver. While the dogs are housed in cages, they have adequate space, indoor and outdoor access, and daily walks. Volunteers can sit in the cattery, simply to read and allow the cats to get used to human presence. Two volunteers were playing with a large black Belgian Malinois, and talking to a litter of puppies who had just been brought in with their mother. It’s hard not to want to leave with one.

Dealing with animal distress can be emotionally challenging, but the team at HelpAnimals finds solace in success stories. Nadège says, “Adoption is a powerful antidote to the distress we encounter. Seeing animals thrive, evolve, and find happiness makes it all worthwhile.” Working with animals is also a great antidote. “If I’m feeling overwhelmed or a bit blue, I just take some time sitting with the cats, or take a dog for a walk. Having a little cuddle recharges my batteries!”

## “ WE’RE EDUCATING SCHOOL CHILDREN ON ANIMAL WELL-BEING ”



Nadège, who has a background in sculpture for opera sets, came to animal welfare through volunteering at a care centre for wild animals, before dedicating herself to domesticated ones. “I didn’t think before how sensitive these animals are. A wild animal won’t show emotion for fear of showing weakness, but it’s incredible to see the extent that domesticated animals are as sensitive as humans,” she explains. “Not just dogs and cats, but even cows love to cuddle and scratch!”

### Never Gift an Animal for Christmas

As the holidays approach, HelpAnimals issues a critical reminder: “An animal is not a gift. They are sentient beings, not objects. We urge everyone not to give animals as presents - give a stuffed toy instead!”

### Hope and resilience

Nadège leaves us with this touching message: “Saving animals brings hope and meaning to life. It’s a reminder of the profound connection between humans and animals. We’re here to help animals in distress, and every act of kindness makes a difference.”

HelpAnimals continues to be a beacon of hope for animals in need, demonstrating that each rescued life is a triumph worth celebrating. To learn more about their work, visit their website at [Helpanimals.be](http://Helpanimals.be) or plan a visit to their shelters to see these remarkable animals and perhaps make a difference in their lives.

### HelpAnimals Anderlecht

Rue Bollinckx 203, 1070 Anderlecht

### Help Animals Braine-le-Chateau

Chemin du Bois du Chapitre 10,  
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[www.helpanimals.be](http://www.helpanimals.be) ⓘ

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Putting physical and mental fitness to the fore*

## Balancing sporting performance, family and career

**Vincent Vanasch** explains why Aspria's Royal La Rasante supports his Olympic ambitions



**B**alancing sporting performance, family and career  
At 35, Vincent Vanasch is one of Belgium's most successful athletes. Known as 'The Wall', he is considered one of the best hockey goalkeepers in the world. Vincent is preparing to take part in his fourth Olympic Games, after London 2012, Rio de Janeiro 2016 and Tokyo 2021.

**“THE RED LIONS ARE AIMING TO RETURN FROM PARIS WITH A GOLD MEDAL”**

Reigning Olympic champions, the Red Lions are aiming to return from Paris with a gold medal, which is putting a certain amount of pressure on the shoulders of our players, including Vincent Vanasch. As you'd expect, the Brussels-based goalkeeper has to stay in top form every day - and to do so, he has chosen to train at the Aspria Royal La Rasante club.





“ AS A TOP-LEVEL  
ATHLETE, I WANT TO  
MAKE TIME FOR MY  
FAMILY, OTHERWISE  
I CAN'T PERFORM ”



#### A holistic approach

Vanash explains: “I chose Aspria as an athlete, but also because it meets the needs of both my family and my job! I can train with quality equipment, in specialized fitness areas and with professional coaches on hand to support. I can use the swimming pool for rehabilitation when I'm injured, and I can relax in the sauna or hammam after a workout. This year I've also decided to practice more yoga. In addition to fitness training and the wide variety of group classes, I also have the opportunity to take part in interesting talks and meet inspiring people.”

#### A welcoming family environment

“As a top-level athlete, I want to make time for my family, otherwise I can't perform. I didn't see my children much before because I was training a lot, or I was away with

the national team. At the club, everything is combined in one place: I take my family where I train!

It's really important to me that my children see me training: you don't become a great champion without working hard! After my workout, I spend time with my children. We

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## “THERE’S A REAL FAMILY SPIRIT AT ASPRIA ”

have fun in the small pool - they’re 2 and 5 years old - and then we share a lunch together.

There’s a real family spirit at Aspria. We’re thinking of signing our son up for a tennis course and we’d like to celebrate his birthday there.”

### Life after hockey

Vanash is making the most of his time at Aspria to also cater to his other ambitions: “I have a professional career to prepare for after my hockey one ends, so when I’m at Aspria, I take the opportunity to work in the



## “THE SUCCESS OF OUR NATIONAL HOCKEY TEAM LIES IN THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL STATE OF ITS GOALKEEPER ”

co-working spaces. I schedule my meetings, catch up on my admin work and make calls before or after a sports session. I feel good here and I’m more efficient!

Next January, the Red Lions must qualify for the Olympic Games in Paris against nine other nations. There is no doubt that one of the keys to the success of our national hockey team lies in the mental and physical state of its goalkeeper. And he can count on Aspria to ensure that he is always in top form!

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# Prioritize your MENTal health

It's Movember, when men grow moustaches to raise awareness of men's health issues, in particular prostate and testicular cancer and mental health issues.



Even if you are feeling fine now, you probably have, or will have to deal with moments of great distress in your life; it could be grief, it could be bullying at work, sadness over the breakdown in a relationship, or even a general malaise with the state of the world. There are so many reasons we won't try to list them all, but everyone goes through challenges at some time or another and even if this isn't you right now,

**“ IT'S STILL A GOOD IDEA TO LOOK AT WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE YOUR OWN RESILIENCE ”**

look around at your friends and check in on them. Ask them if they want to go for a coffee, a walk, to the cinema, just ask them how they are. If you're fine right now, that's great, but it's still a good idea to look at what you can do to improve your own resilience. Don't wait for the crisis to arrive.

Eurostat statistics show that the rate of suicide has been level and even decreasing in many countries, howe-

ver the rate of suicide among men is much higher for men than women. This is so tragic and so unnecessary, we need to ask ourselves why men are not seeking help. Nobody wants to look like they aren't coping, people often put on a brave face, this is especially the case for men. Clichés like 'man up', 'take it like a man', 'men don't cry' certainly don't help. Men are often under tremendous pressure to be the 'bread winner' or to be stronger than anyone else. Even in the reporting of recent conflict, the figures for women and children killed are considered worse than men dying - as if this wasn't also an outrage. Women are much more likely to talk about their emotions, to open up, we need to make this as natural for men.

While society often pressures men to portray a tough exterior, it is crucial to remember that taking care of your mental well-being is equally as important as physical fitness.

## Here are a few tips to help:

**Break the stigma:** The first step towards better mental health is breaking the stigma surrounding it. Men are often conditioned to hide their emotions, which can negatively impact their mental well-being. It is essential to encourage open discussions about mental health, sharing feelings, and seeking professional assistance when needed. Remember, reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

**Establish healthy coping mechanisms:** To maintain good mental health, it is important to establish healthy coping mechanisms. Engaging in physical activities such as exercise, sports, or yoga can help reduce stress and improve mood. Additionally, finding creative outlets like painting, writing, or playing an instrument can serve as cathartic means of expression. Writing down your thoughts can help a lot.



**“ MEN ARE OFTEN CONDITIONED TO HIDE THEIR EMOTIONS ”**

**Prioritize self-care:** Self-care should be a central aspect of every man's mental health routine. This includes getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet, and trying to make sure you exercise regularly. Taking time for oneself, indulging in hobbies, and engaging in activities that bring joy and relaxation are also crucial for promoting positive mental well-being. It's important to try to find time for you - this can be difficult with busy periods of work, but taking time out will probably also bring benefits to your working life.

**Cultivate social connections:** We are social animals, we need people, it isn't always easy to make new friends after your university years, but there are avenues, like joining sports clubs, a walking group, and engaging in community activities. Join a class, volunteer with a charity - Together features a different charity in every edition. Try to be open, approachable and take a risk and start a conversation: What did you think of



the game, walk, class? Yes, it's a bit of an effort, but you get out of life what you put in.

Practice mindfulness and stress management: Stress is an inevitable part of life, but managing it is crucial for mental well-being. Practicing mindfulness techniques like meditation or deep breathing exercises can help alleviate stress and improve overall mental health. It is essential to learn how to identify and manage stress triggers effectively, whether through self-reflection or seeking professional guidance. A short burst of exercise – either a fast-paced walk or even better a short run – can work wonders.

Limit excessive use of alcohol or drugs: These may temporarily mask underlying issues but they can worsen mental health problems in the long run. Reducing and limiting substance use is vital for maintaining good mental health. Seek healthy alternatives to cope with stress or negative emotions. Maybe use some self-talk, "when I'm stressed I have a large camomile/green tea", "when I'm stressed I go for a 20 minute walk and take it out on the pavement"... whatever works for you. If you have a more serious problem think of joining an organisation like Alcoholics Anonymous.

Seek professional help: If feelings of anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns persist, seeking professional help is vital. Mental health professionals can offer guidance, therapy, or medication if neces-

## “SEEKING ASSISTANCE IS NOT A SIGN OF WEAKNESS BUT A PROACTIVE STEP TOWARDS BETTER MENTAL WELL-BEING”

sary. Remember that seeking assistance is not a sign of weakness but a proactive step towards better mental well-being.

In a world that often expects men to be strong, it is crucial to prioritize mental health. What's more is that by talking about your own struggles or difficulties with others it often helps them. Always try to listen empathetically, you don't have to find solutions and your friend doesn't necessarily want solutions, but sometimes just airing some of your fears or worries helps to put them into perspective or relieve tension. The tips above apply to everyone, but please keep a special eye out for your male colleagues, friends and relatives, old and young alike, because we're all in this together.

*One organization that is there to help is the Community Help Service (CHS), it is a non-profit organization established in 1971 as a resource for the English-speaking expatriate population of Belgium. Since then it has developed its telephone Helpline, its Mental Health Centre and its Educational Testing Services to encompass the many different expatriate communities in Belgium who find it easier to use English rather than one of the official languages of Belgium. Since CHS has been in existence it has built up an expertise second to none, in providing solutions, through therapeutic support, to the range of difficulties encountered by the people who turn to it in times of stress.*

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# (Grass) hockey has taken off in Belgium

**Julian Hale** makes the case for hockey, whether you are young or old!



The sport of grass hockey, also known as field hockey, has been flourishing in Belgium, in particular in the last ten years or so. At the national level, Belgium currently has what you might call its 'golden generation' of players, with the team winning the World Cup in 2018, an Olympic Gold in 2020 and only narrowly losing - in a dramatic penalty shoot-out - to Germany in the 2023 World Cup.

Belgium has a dynamic and flourishing grass hockey scene, as is clear from the strong growth in hockey club members in the last 15 years and from the fact that as

many as 20 new clubs have been set up in the last five years. At the national level, Belgium currently has what you might call its 'golden generation' of players, with the team winning the World Cup in 2018, an Olympic Gold in 2020 and only narrowly losing (in one of those dramatic penalty shoot-outs) to Germany in the 2023 World Cup.

I write 'grass hockey' as, when I tell people I play hockey, they tend to think of 'ice hockey'. "Where's the ice?" said one friend of mine when coming to watch a game a while ago!



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Red Lions (men's national team)  
Belgium v Netherlands 27 January 2023 ©FIH

My passion for hockey dates back to my school days in the UK in the 1980s, where we were fortunate enough to play lots of sport, including three main sports (rugby in the winter, hockey in the spring and cricket in the summer), all of which require strong hand-eye coordination and strategic thinking skills. The simple pleasures of catching, stopping and running after a ball have always been passions of mine. And whilst I've continued to play all these sports and others involving a ball off and on, hockey is the one that I've ended up playing most.



Red Panthers (women's national team)  
Belgium v China 3 June 2023 ©FIH

### Why hockey?

Hockey has so much to offer. On a personal level, you can work on your individual skills (stopping, passing, tackling and feinting/dribbling/going past opponents). The pleasures of stopping a ball moving at high speed, intercepting a pass, making a good tackle, playing a well weighted pass and hitting the ball cleanly are considerable. And then there's the team aspect: i.e. not being individualistic, knowing when to pass and playing hard for your team as well as learning how to deal with different characters in your team.

Highlights for me included playing with and learning from some very gifted players (several England internationals) in a cup run that ended in my university, Bristol University, winning the English universities' cup as well as captaining a 7-a-side team to a local tournament win in Belgium this year.

Another big plus about hockey is that you can start at a very young age and play up until a very old age. My kids started playing when they were six years old and have had some wonderful coaching from committed coaches. Aged 54, I'm still playing and want to keep improving, which is why, along with a club teammate, I've set up a Belgian national ('Old Lions') over 55s team. We're training, building a strong team ethos and plan to play in international competitions. I also know of and play against people playing hockey into their 60s, 70s and beyond!

Another fun aspect of the 'Old Lions' team is the fact that it brings together French speakers, Flemish speakers and English speakers. So far, the on pitch language has been French but there is plenty of English and Flemish spoken too. On a personal level, it's a great way to improve my knowledge of colloquial French, pick up the odd bit of Flemish and, as I'm also looking for tournaments/matches in Germany, to keep my German going.



©HockeyBelgium

### Choosing a club

If you're thinking of taking up outdoor hockey or finding a club for your children, my recommendation is to ask friends/colleagues (or me) about the different clubs, club atmospheres and facilities, membership fees etc. There's no shortage of clubs, which can be found in the Brussels region, in Flanders and in Wallonia. (details can be found on Hockey Belgium's - [www.hockey.be](http://www.hockey.be)). Clubs have separate men's and women's teams whilst mixed hockey (men and women together) is relatively rare.

Geographical proximity is one obvious factor in choosing a club. I currently play for Parc, which is based in Auderghem, just a 20-minute cycle (part of my pre-match warm-up!) from where I live in Etterbeek. For me, another factor is the quality of the pitch. The best pitches to play on are water-based artificial pitches (the ball moves more quickly than on sand-based ones and you are less likely to cut yourself if you fall over), of which there are many throughout Belgium. And another key factor is whether you or your child(ren) want to play highly competitive or more social hockey.

### Some interesting facts about Belgian hockey

- Since 2008, the number of active members has increased by 8% per year on average, coming to 53,000 today
- The Belgian hockey community (including family and friends) brings together nearly 175,000 people
- There are 107 hockey clubs in Belgium (49 in Brussels and Wallonia, 58 in Flanders) 20 new clubs have been set up in the last five years
- Age range: Under 35 (35%), 35-44 (27%), 45-54 (28%), over 55 (10%)

Source: Opinion survey among members of the Association Royale Belge de Hockey [Belgian Royal Hockey Association], conducted by Nielsen Sports & Entertainment

Whilst still a work in progress, there's a growing trend towards distinguishing between highly competitive (with plenty of training and higher levels) and social/fun hockey (with very little or no training and lower levels). The generally more competitive eleven-a-side matches take place on Saturdays and Sundays. But there are also Gents and Ladies leagues - that focus more on fun than competition. These matches are played on Monday evenings and are often 7-a-side and played on half a pitch, so potentially, there's a little less running needed!

In addition to outdoor hockey, there are also indoor hockey leagues in the winter.

In all cases, it's fun to stay around for the convivial '3ème mi-temps' ['third half', the equivalent of the 19th hole in golf or 'beer-a-clock']!

To find out more contact: [JulianAHale@gmail.com](mailto:JulianAHale@gmail.com) or go to the Belgian Royal Hockey Association website: [www.hockey.be](http://www.hockey.be). ❶



# Daniel Camus: Electromyostimulation for well-being

**Nicholas Sirot** discovers a new approach to muscle toning



In the realm of sports and well-being, there are exceptional individuals who go far beyond the mere pursuit of physical fitness. They push boundaries to inspire and assist others in achieving their fitness goals. Among these visionaries is Daniel Camus, an accomplished athlete and the founder of Body Training Studios in Belgium and Spain.

Born in the Belgian capital, Daniel Camus is passionate about improving physical performance, a passion that has guided his journey since a young age. After a 17-year career as a professional first-division footballer, he


ventured into the event management industry while nurturing dreams of working in the sports world as a physical fitness trainer.

A transformative technological advance It was during his training as a professional footballer that Daniel Camus came across electromyostimulation (EMS). EMS quickly won him over due to its unmatched effectiveness.

"We are the only ones to follow European standards in the field in Belgium," says Camus. "To do this, we have an academy



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## “ EMS IS A WHOLE-BODY TRAINING METHOD ”

dedicated to the training of our coaches. EMS has a medical methodology, so it should not be taken lightly."

EMS works by sending electric impulses to electrodes placed on the skin near to the muscles stimulating a muscle contraction. Professional sports coaches use it as a complementary technique in their training methodology. A peer reviewed paper in sports science found that a 12-week EMS training program demonstrated beneficial effects on muscle strength and power in elite rugby players on particular strength tests.

EMS is a whole-body training method that combines the electric activation of muscle fibres, using the Miha Bodytec device with simple and targeted body weight exercises. Using medically certified equipment, it is carried out under the guidance and instruction of a trained supervisor with a clearly defined focus on prevention and therapy. It has the capacity to stimulate deep muscle and has the great benefit of working wit-



Daniel Camus

hout loads, meaning that there is no stress placed on the joints.

The other great advantage is that it is estimated that a 20-minute EMS session is equivalent to about four hours of intense gym workouts. To those of us with hectic schedules this is particularly welcome. Camus recommends no more than two sessions per week. There is also evidence to suggest that it helps those who suffer from lower-back pain - and that probably includes all of us who spend much of our day at our desks.

Through Camus' Body Training Centers this technology isn't just available to elite sports people, thanks to a franchise approach the Body Training Centers are popping up across Belgium and more widely. For those who have never engaged in sports, EMS offers personalized guidance from the start, a feature not found in all traditional gyms.

Sessions starting from €15 to €35, depending on the package. To learn more go to the website: [www.bodytrainingstudio.be](http://www.bodytrainingstudio.be). 📍



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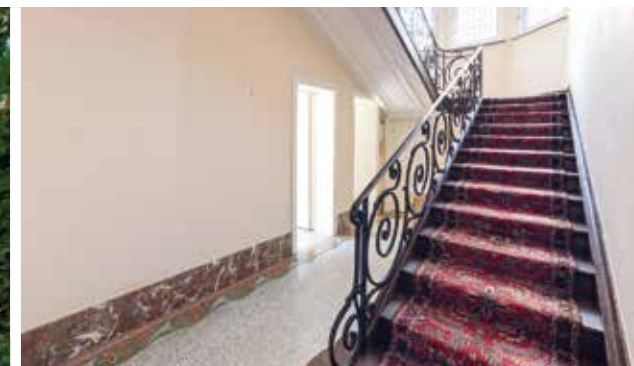
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# Tap into your sense of purpose

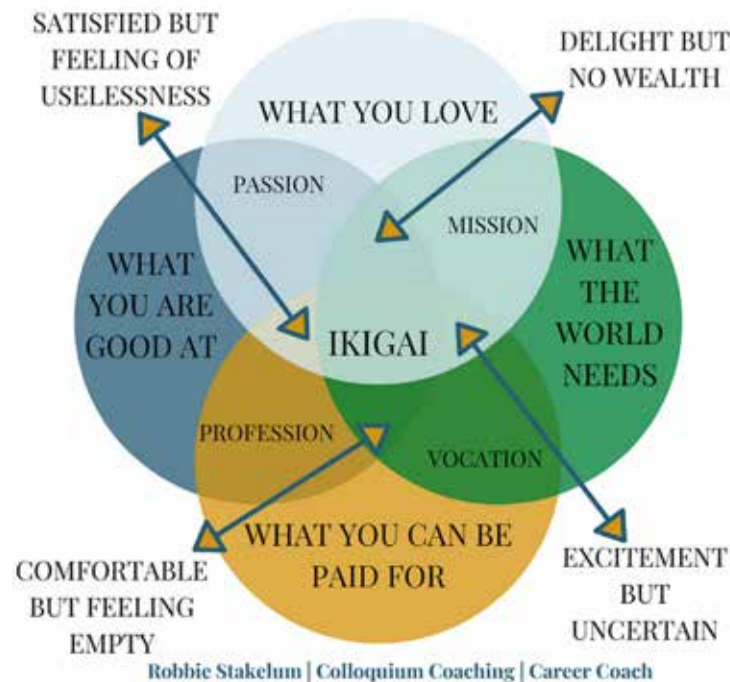
**Robbie Stakelum** suggests a method to help clarify your thoughts and find direction

Getting in touch with a sense of mission or purpose can feel incredibly existential, and challenging to do on your own. Csikszentmihalyi in his groundbreaking book *Flow*, argues that our brain is naturally set to deal with chaos. Our lives are so complex with competing interests vying for our attention that for many of us don't know where to begin when it comes to structuring our thoughts.

In this article I'm sharing two practical tools that I often use with clients to help structure their thoughts to both make sense of their career and to forge a path that means something to them while achieving a sense of fulfillment.

I use these tools with my clients, but the most effective part is the discussion we have after the exercises are completed, where we debrief and unpick thought patterns, beliefs, drivers, motivators and challenge the

assumptions you have about yourself, your career or your context that are holding you back. While I strongly advocate for one-to-one coaching to help you navigate these exercises, I know that not everyone has the resources to access coaching, so I've provided some questions for reflection to help you process some of your own findings.



## Ikigai

The Japanese concept of Ikigai is where your passion and talents intersect with something the world both needs and is willing to pay for. The starting point is your passion not income. Happiness comes from within, I know it's a cliché, but chasing money and materialistic goods doesn't guarantee a happier life.

Thinking about what comes next in your career can feel overwhelming and it's helpful to break it down into four smaller questions:

- What do you love to do?
- What are you good at?
- What does the world need?
- What are people willing to pay for?

The intersection of each of these domains can help you to dig deep on your passion, mission, profession and vocation, as outlined in the info-graphic below. This is an excellent visual exercise which is particularly useful for anyone who is finding it difficult to express or articulate all the thoughts swirling around their head. Putting pen to paper is a fantastic way to work through complex thoughts, and this exercise offers a unique and helpful structure.

### Tips for Use:

- Draw out the four big intersecting circles. Take up an entire sheet of paper for this exercise, you'll want lots of room to write down your thoughts.
- You're going to start from the outside of each circle and work your way in, each time increasing the number of times the circles intersect.
- Into each circle write down what comes to mind for each topic i.e what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs and what you can be paid for
- Then consider each of the overlaps. Take time to think about how what you love intersects with what you're good at to create

your passion. Fill out this section of the grid. And repeat for your mission, profession and vocation.

- Remember this is personal to you, so write down whatever comes to mind no matter how basic or far fetched.
- Continue again by moving into the next layer of overlaps. Find ways in which passion and mission intersect, and similarly how do passion and profession, mission and vocation, and finally vocation and profession connect to one another.
- Finally as you move into the final section, Ikigai itself, what connects and brings everything together? It doesn't necessarily have to be a clear job. It can be a broader checklist including sectors you'd like to be in, functions you'd like to work, people you'd like to work with, the type of work environments you thrive in.

### Questions for Reflection:

Here are some reflective question prompts for this exercise. I'd suggest writing your answers out on paper.

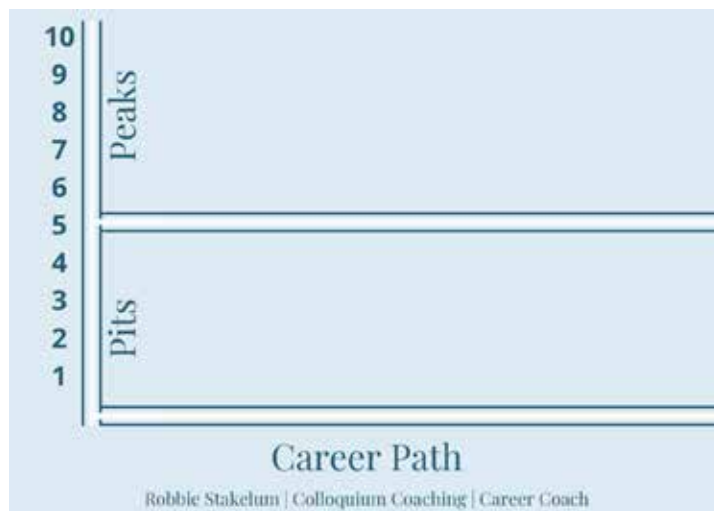
- What is the most striking thing about your Ikigai graph?
- What most surprised you and why?
- What have you learned about yourself?
- Why type of careers/jobs/functions are you now considering?
- What happens next?
- What do you need to do differently to achieve your Ikigai?

### Pits and Peaks

Ikigai is a great exercise for brainstorming for the future, but some clients need support in diagnosing the past. This exercise is particularly helpful for recognizing the factors that have made your past (and present) jobs feel like a success or failure.

Pits and Peaks is one of my most used tools. The purpose here is to assess what makes you happy at work.





*Tips for Use:*

- Take an A4 Sheet of paper. Draw a graph, with both an x axis and y axis.
- Along the x axis mark out your previous jobs, in chronological order starting with the oldest and ending with your latest job.
- Number the y axis from 1–10, as shown above, this is a happiness scale.
- Then divide y axis in half, marking above 5 as your work peaks aka when you were happy and below 5 as your pits aka when work wasn't good.
- Take a few moments to think about each job you've had. Decide where you'd plot that job on the graph, along the scale of 1–10.
- Write down an explanation for each position given. Think about what made you happy, excited, passionate or what made it a negative place to work, highlighting what you didn't enjoy about the work.
- Connect each of the dots, and you should end up with a graph that resembles a mountain range with peaks and pits of varying degrees.

*Questions for Reflection:*

With a coach, or if you don't have one consider a friend, reflect on the graph and answer some of these questions. If you decide to

do this alone, I suggest writing down and answering each of the following questions on paper.

- What do all the jobs in the peaks have in common?
- What do all the jobs in the pits have in common?
- What makes you happy at work?
- What is important for you when it comes to work?
- When did you perform at your best?
- What do you want to avoid in future jobs?

I also recommend clients to repeat this exercise in their current job. And replace the x axis with Monday to Friday, and at the end of each day plot how you felt about the day on a scale of 1–10, this can help you understand what elements in the current job you like and motivate you and conversely get specific on what you don't like and why.

I hope these two tools help you to find clarity around what comes next for you in life, and empower you to tap into a sense of purpose or mission in life.

Robbie Stakelum is a Brussels-based coach, supporting clients feeling lost and disconnected to find a sense of purpose by capturing clarity and building balance. Want to work with Robbie? You can find out more about his coaching practice, set up a free discovery call or find out if coaching is for you by checking out [www.robbiestakelum.com](http://www.robbiestakelum.com) or get in touch direct with Robbie by email via [robbie@robbiestakelum.com](mailto:robbie@robbiestakelum.com) ①

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# Top ten pro tips for terrific talks

In this article **Matthew Cossolotto** summarizes some of the lessons from this series



In my book — *The Joy of Public Speaking* — I provide readers with a detailed discussion about *Twenty Terrific Tips for Top-Notch Talks*. For this short article, the sixth and final in this master class series, I boil my twenty recommendations down to my top ten most powerful pro tips for powerful presentations. These ten suggestions offer performance-related and mindset-centered techniques and pointers to help you up your game whenever you address an audience.

## Tip 1 Every speech should be about one thing

You should build your presentation around one clear, unmistakable point and connect everything you say to that central message. A useful image is to imagine a tree with one main trunk and several large branches stemming naturally from it. These branches — ideally no more than three to five — contain the examples you'll want to illustrate your main message.

### Self help

It helps to start with the conclusion in mind. In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey urges readers to: “Begin with the end in mind.” That happens to be sound advice for effective people and effective speakers. Doing so will help you stay on message as you prepare the content and flow of your remarks.

#### Tip 2 ‘Brevity is the soul of wit’

Keep it brief. Remember the so-called 18-minute rule. After hearing somebody speak for about 18 minutes, give or take, audiences usually hit a wall. They simply can’t concentrate any longer. Martin Luther King’s inspiring “I Have a Dream” speech clocked in at 17 minutes. Steve Jobs delivered a well-received commencement address at Stanford University in just 15 minutes. And Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address — a speech that, contrary to Lincoln’s own words in the speech itself, has been much noted and long remembered — was only 272 words long and took less than three minutes to deliver.

#### Tip 3 Go easy on facts and stats

You want substance in your talk, but you don’t want to overdo it. It’s counterproductive to overwhelm the audience with detailed facts and figures, including PowerPoint slides crammed with too much information. Sure, some specialized topics and audiences require more technical details than others. You need to understand and cater to your audience. For most general interest audiences, you should highlight only the most compelling facts.

#### Tip 4 Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse.

If real estate is all about ‘location, location, location,’ effective speaking requires that you ‘rehearse, rehearse, rehearse.’ There’s no substitute for rehearsing your presentation out loud several times before delivery. Whenever possible, be sure to study video and audio recordings of your presentations.

#### Tip 5 Never look down at the text

My friend and leading speech coach, Granville Toogood, talks about the *Ozone*, the *No Zone*, and the *Go Zone*. The *Ozone* is when the speaker speaks while looking up at the ceiling or over the tops of the heads of the audience members. The *No Zone* is when you’re looking down at the text. You should never speak when looking down. If you do, it will be obvious that you’re reading the text. ‘Public reading’ is not recommended. Audiences don’t appreciate being read to, word for word. When looking down at the text, zip it. You’re in the *No Zone*. The *Go Zone* is when you’re looking out at the audience, making good, steady eye contact with individual members of the audience.

#### Tip 6 Banish ums and uhs

Many speakers seem to feel the need to fill every second with sound. Perhaps because silence makes them nervous. The strings of ums and uhs that too many speakers utter between words rob them of authority and power. These annoying junk sounds, as I call them, make you appear unprepared and uncertain. They should be avoided as much as possible. You will become a much more commanding presence on stage — and, for that matter, in media interviews — when you do so.

#### Tip 7 Use lively language and catchy soundbites

Make an effort to use lively language, memorable words, and catchy soundbites. Don’t overload your speech with them. Compelling, colorful language will help ward off audience boredom and help your audience remember your speech and key messages.

A little alliteration and words that rhyme go a long way. Paint word pictures with metaphors, similes, and vivid images. Use active, not passive, verbs. The key is to make your speech memorable. Lively language and a few catchy soundbites help you do that.

#### Tip 8 Don’t rush

Take your time. Too many speakers rush through their presentations like they have to catch a plane. Remember that real, live human beings are listening to you. They’re not reading the text. The audience can’t speed listen!

Don’t try to squeeze everything you know about a topic into the allotted time. It’s better to skip less essential material than to race through too much material. Time your rehearsals. Then cut out some of the content before you give your talk. A rushed presentation is a form of torture for the audience. I call it mental waterboarding, drowning the audience with too much content. Have mercy on the audience!

#### Tip 9 You are your best visual aid

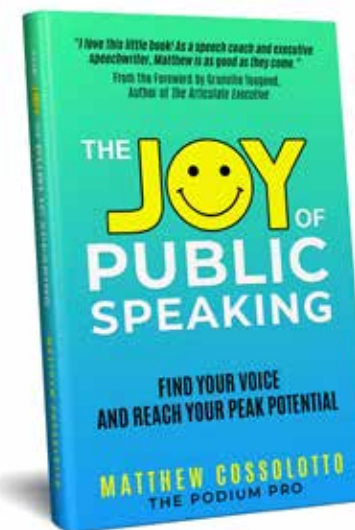
Should you use visual aids? It’s an important question. Simple answer: If you use them, don’t abuse them. Many of us have heard the expression: ‘Death by PowerPoint.’ If you want to be kind to your audience, think of yourself as your own best visual aid. The focus should be on you, the speaker, not on the slides you brought along. If you do use PowerPoint, keep them simple. Edit the words on each slide to a bare minimum. Use pictures and illustrations and cartoons that make a relevant point. Uncluttered charts and graphs can be very useful.

#### Tip 10 Cultivate the willingness to be admired


My former boss, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Jim Wright, made a profound observation about leadership that I believe also applies to speakers. Looking back on his decades-long experience with numerous U.S. presidents and other leaders worldwide, Wright observed that the top leaders he had worked with all possessed an important quality in common. He called it, ‘The willingness to be admired.’

Wright did not mean that these leaders were egotistical in their desire for public attention or admiration. Rather, they were simply willing to put themselves in the spotlight, to occupy center stage, to serve in the glare of public attention. This willingness to be admired also applies to anyone who mounts a podium to give a speech or presentation.

I believe these top ten pro tips — combined with other ideas and insights contained in *The Joy of Public Speaking* — will help you become a more compelling, confident, and joyful speaker. Remember: Always speak with joy!



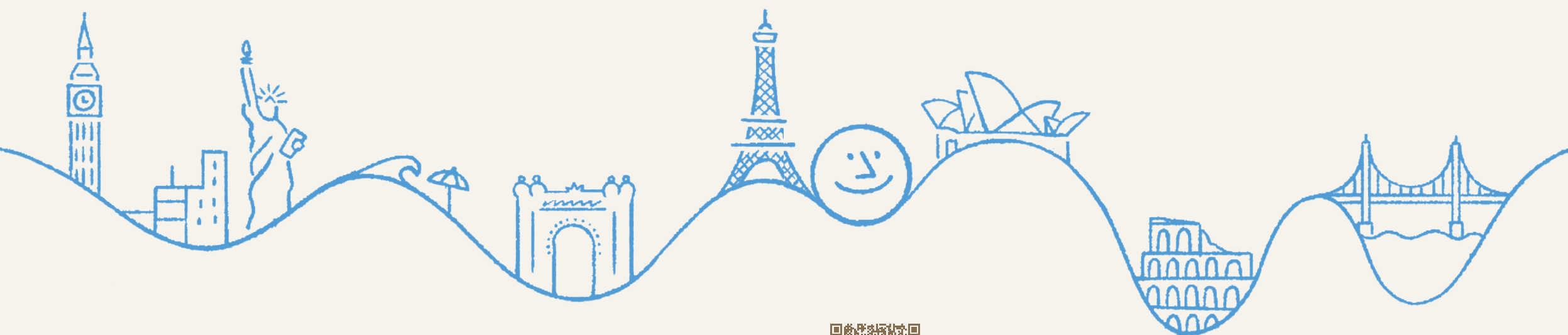
#### About the Author

A former NATO speechwriter, Matthew Cossolotto is the author of *The Joy of Public Speaking* and the forthcoming *Harness Your HabitForce* and *Embrace Your Promise Power*. Matthew provides coaching and conducts public speaking workshops and other Personal Empowerment Programs (PEP Talks) in Brussels and beyond. Visit: [www.MatthewCossolotto.com](http://www.MatthewCossolotto.com). 



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# Full Circle: A hub for ideas, inclusivity, and conversation

**Nuala Morgan** meets the founders of Full Circle, a club dedicated to the celebration of ideas



Nestled in the heart of Brussels on Chaussée de Vleurgat, Full Circle has been a beacon of intellectual exchange for a decade. I had the privilege of speaking with the founders, Bridie Nathanson (BN) and Louise Hilditch (LH), about their journey, the essence of Full Circle, and their plans for the future.

**Tell me about the Full Circle concept - what do you do?**

**LH** The Full Circle idea was born out of a desire to bring ideas to Brussels, connecting them with the individuals who hold the

power and influence to bring them to life. I was quite struck when I came to Brussels in 1993 that it wasn't the bustling hub of ideas I had envisioned. I have always been passionate about creating a space for discussions. In its initial phase, Full Circle operated as an itinerant club, hosting monthly dinner debates with guest speakers in different locations. The quality of these discussions was remarkable, but it proved resource-intensive and unsustainable in the long run.

However, when the opportunity arose to acquire an impressive hôtel de maître, we recognised the potential to establish a ver-



**“ WE HAVE  
CONSCIOUSLY CHOSEN  
THIS MEMBERS’ CLUB  
APPROACH TO  
MAINTAIN FINANCIAL  
INDEPENDENCE ”**

satile venue for both small and large events. This vision has come to fruition, evolving from hosting eight or nine speakers annually to a remarkable 30 this year. Talks vary in scale, drawing audiences ranging from 5 to over 100 attendees, proving that there is indeed a profound appetite for ideas in Brussels.

**You call yourself a ‘members’ club,’ which might suggest exclusivity, but your programming and positioning are inclusive and open. How do you define yourselves?**

**BN** While the term ‘members’ club’ might conjure images of exclusivity, it doesn't truly encapsulate Full Circle's essence. It's a term I struggled with. In Brussels, the traditional concept of members' clubs is largely dominated by old-school industry clubs, mainly

consisting of French or Dutch-speaking businessmen. Full Circle, in contrast, stands apart in various ways, providing a distinct and open space. The audience is self-selecting, finding their place based on belonging and shared interests. Full Circle is welcoming to the international community, where individuals can participate in activities, engage in discussions, or simply enjoy a friendly environment. We have consciously chosen this members' club approach to maintain financial independence, ensuring we remain free from funding constraints.

**LH** Importantly, we do not aggressively promote ourselves as a traditional members' club. Full Circle's audience generally discovers the space through specific events, whether they are focused on ideas or more social in nature. For instance, newcomers in Brussels searching for a book club might stumble upon one of Full Circle's events. The approach remains flexible, drawing individuals based on their interest in the event's content. This model provides space for varied, unique gatherings, fostering a sense of community.

**Do you see Full Circle as a modern continuation of the ‘salon’ tradition of the French Enlightenment era, where progressive discussions were often led by women?**

**LH** Full Circle's initial model was essentially a modern interpretation of the salon, assembling people to discuss ideas. The term ‘salon’ resonates with the essence of Full Circle. Full Circle's events don't adhere to the traditional conference model where an expert delivers a monologue to an audience seated in awe. Instead, it fosters dynamic and engaging conversations, encouraging the audience to challenge and interact with the speakers.

**BN** This format offers a refreshing experience for speakers, who are often not used



### Ideas

to being challenged. In today's context, talks often tend to take on an entertainment format, particularly in the post-COVID era, with more talks presented in a 'broadcast' style or journalistic interview. We have established personal connections with all our speakers, either directly or through recommendations, ensuring the discussions are genuinely engaging and nuanced.

**What's on the programme for this season? Is there a specific theme or ideology you are exploring?**

**LH** Full Circle's programming is deliberately eclectic, showcasing both well-known and lesser-known speakers. While no fixed theme defines the season, the lineup covers a wide range of topics, balancing complex and more lighthearted subjects. For instance, Michelle Meagher, a competition lawyer with a background in finance, explores how competition impacts society and how people can reclaim power. Kirsty Sedgman challenges the status quo with a discussion on being unreasonable.

**BN** As an organisation, Full Circle remains apolitical, non-partisan, and non-affiliated. However, every speaker invited to the platform is chosen based on their ability to share something 'planet-positive,' an idea that contributes to making the world a better place, even if in a modest way. While 'better' remains a subjective notion, Full Circle focuses on crucial topics such as climate, education, social justice, gender balance, and inclusion.

Additionally, Full Circle dedicates a programme to young people, allowing them to engage with the speakers. The younger generation's involvement is vital, as their fresh perspectives and challenges are instrumental in shaping future discussions.

**“ FULL CIRCLE  
REMAINS APOLITICAL,  
NON-PARTISAN, AND  
NON-AFFILIATED ”**



**LH** Another insight that emerged as Full Circle evolved is the realization that not everyone shares our same passion for ideas. To cater to a broader audience, Full Circle expanded its content to include a full musical programme. This diverse offering includes classical, jazz, pop, and world music. We specialize in featuring emerging artists and local bands who perform live at the venue. Moreover, social events such as book clubs, singles nights, and after-work drinks enhance Full Circle's appeal.

**Is Full Circle available for event rentals?**

**LH** Yes, Full Circle makes its space available for rent during the daytime. We can accommodate various events, ranging from smaller meetings with around 20 attendees to more significant gatherings with up to 200 participants. Full Circle offers a distinctive, comfortable atmosphere, catering to individuals and companies searching for a distinct venue beyond the conventional hotel setting.

**BN** Full Circle has the pleasure of hosting the Bridge Theatre for their production of 'Grounded' in November. The venue provides a refreshing and unique backdrop for diverse events, enriching the cultural landscape.

**“ THE ‘IDEAS  
FESTIVAL’ IS SET  
TO TAKE PLACE  
DURING THE FIRST  
WEEKEND OF  
DECEMBER ”**

**What should readers be on the lookout for in the coming weeks?**

**BN** Full Circle's 'Ideas Festival' set to take place during the first weekend of December, promises to be a highlight. It serves as a counterbalance to the frenzied Christmas shopping season, offering a cozy and relaxing weekend retreat. The festival theme centres on 'Hope,' featuring speakers from 11 am to 8 pm, accompanied by live music, food, and engaging conversations. Some of the talks will be livestreamed, providing broader access, and there is also a dedicated programme catering to teenagers.

**LH** And if they want to buy anything, they can buy a book!

Full Circle, Chaussée de Vleurgat, 89 - 1050 Brussels. Open Mon-Fri 9am-6pm for members. Full evening event programme for members and non-members [www.full-circle.be](http://www.full-circle.be). Ideas Festival 1-3 December 2023.

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## Be Successful

**Louise Hidditch** of Full Circle Ideas and **Anne-Marie Brennan** recommend a book that they found instructive.

Louise Hidditch chooses  
**'Men Explain Things To Me'**  
by **Rebecca Solnit**

I've always been a great fan of the essay. Might just be laziness but there is something wondrous about the distillation of complex subjects into a few short pages where every word really counts.

This collection of essays was published in 2014, but the original essay from which the collection takes its name was first published in 2008. Written by the established American historian, writer and activist Rebecca Solnit, she explains how she wrote the original 'Men Explain Things To Me' essay in a single sitting after recounting to one of her friends the sorry tale of a particularly irritating encounter with a know-it-all man.

Many of us have been there. Perhaps most women and certainly some men too. Having one's knowledge and experience batted away unthinkingly as someone with less knowledge and experience attempts to explain your expert subject to you. The way in which Solnit shares her own experience and knowledge is so direct, precise and funny, it's like a conversation over coffee with a friend.

Her anecdotes are often hilarious but the underlying message of how women are routinely silenced at home, at work and in public through speech but also through physical violence and even murder, crystal-



ized half-formed thoughts in my own mind and set me on a path to greater outspokenness and confidence. This turned out to be essential in my more recent work life where I am so often creating rich discussion experiences and encouraging everyone to contribute to a debate.

Solnit manages to tie together what is merely irritating in my own comfortable life with the much more serious violence against women perpetrated

literally everywhere - inside the home, in the street, at work. It happens in public life, in politics, in sport and in culture and it has serious consequences for us all. In only 120 pages Solnit sets out how the silencing of women is woven into the very fabric of our societies and how damaging this is. As a modern thinker she is unparalleled - only this week she was part of an amazing podcast about climate change and what we can all do. But if you want to cut to the chase you can watch the Full Circle salon Professor Kimberley Nicholas whose talk was ALL about what we can do starting today (search Full Circle Brussels on YouTube).

Reading Rebecca Solnit changed my own life trajectory and it could change yours. So dip in and out of this thought-provoking collection of essays whenever you have the time and inclination. And once you've got to the end, pass it on to someone else.

<http://rebeccasolnit.net/book/men-explain-things-to-me/>



## Books

**'Stolen Focus: Why you can't pay attention and how to think deeply again' by Johann Hari**

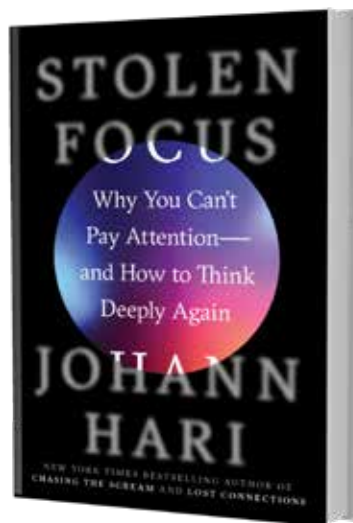
Anne-Marie Brennan picks Hari's latest book on a modern malaise.

You've finally sat down to finish a task you've been procrastinating about all week. You're in the flow, making good headway when an email notification pops up on your laptop. You just check it quickly – you'll forget otherwise. Then your phone buzzes with a message from your friend asking about meeting tomorrow – you have to reply, it would be rude not to. Suddenly it's been 30 minutes and you find yourself frantic and lost from what you originally sat down to do.

We've been told that this is 'multi-tasking' – something we should strive to be good at. But Johann Hari, author of 'Stolen Focus: Why we can't pay attention' disputes this in his most recent book. "The evidence suggests you will be slower, you'll make more mistakes, you'll be less creative, and you'll remember less of what you do," Hari says.

In a time when short-form videos have taken over social media, Stolen Focus is a book which holds information fundamental to understanding why we feel our attention span shrinking and suggests what we can do about it.

Hari attributes this crisis to a number of lifestyle factors, one of these being a decline in our sleep quality. He says that during his three months on Cape Cod, in which he went without the internet and most electronics, he noticed that his quality of sleep improved immensely. There are also references in the



book to studies which have shown those with lower quality sleep have worse concentration than their well-rested peers.

Research has also shown that if you were to stay awake for 19 hours your attention would be as bad as if you were legally drunk. A lack of quality sleep isn't the only thing which has impacted our concentration. Stolen Focus also discusses how the Western diet, distracting technology and an increase in harmful chemicals

have all played a role in attention-decline.

To display an alternative to the attention-switching practice, which he describes as 'fragmentation', Hari describes the theory of a 'flow state', defining it as a deep form of attention. This can be achieved through tasks such as artwork, reading, writing, gardening or solving puzzles. Establishing this flow state in your work, according to Hari, can boost productivity and help you to become calmer, Hari says.

These ideas are only a glimpse into the eye-opening research Johann Hari collected, along with his personal experiences and recommendations on improving focus. Hari approaches self-improvement with empathy and humility while also providing practical solutions to his readers. In brief, here are some of his top tips to regain focus: have unstructured free time, sleep eight hours every night, don't use any screens two hours before sleep, go for an hour-long walk without your phone every day, turn off social media.

<http://stolenfocusbook.com> ⓘ



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# When the going gets tough, the tough get 'intelligently' tougher!

Business coach **Arnon Barnes** looks at five areas where we can sharpen our response, survive and thrive.



As I'm coaching entrepreneurs, they usually come to me with questions regarding the best ways to branch out, learn new strategies to grow, and gather ideas on how to raise capital, generate more sales or simply be more tactical with their team. All good, but what they often forget to analyze are the blind spots in areas where they might be making mistakes along the way making it more difficult to succeed.

You see, often, the best strategies for success are not about more sales or expansions. The best and fastest way to grow is to eliminate drains in your business. At the beginning of coaching, when excited new clients tell me their stories, I first focus on finding the weakest links in their business endeavours. You have no idea how many of these leaks come to light as if from nowhere.



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### Entrepreneurship

We tend to get used to things in our crazy busy lives, so small things often tend to become big and scary obstacles especially if unattended for a long time. Think of a little bug in your contracts, the way to talk to potential clients, the partnership deals that were agreed ages ago with terms that might not be beneficial anymore.

And it's not only business areas where things tend to become stuck. When your personal development doesn't progress with time, your business will reflect that too.

Whether I'm building a business, buying a business, or coaching a business, I first tend to analyze the challenging situation based on these five failure areas where a lot of mistakes are made by the entrepreneurs personally.

#### Learning and development

Let me put it simply, if you are not engaged in continuous learning and developing your skills and talents, failure and struggle will fall upon you at some point on your business journey. Your business always reflects your state of self-development.

So put on your goal list educational to-do things like training courses, books, or seminars. Make a list of skills to upgrade, trades to groom, learn new technologies, or hire a world-class coach. Whatever you do in this area – don't do it alone. Nobody is ever done learning, and you always learn best from others. Get support from others, in whichever form fits you best. My best advice here is to always stay curious about things that you haven't yet mastered.

#### Lack of creative thinking

I often hear people complain about lack of time, money, energy, good people, and whatnot. I don't agree with that thinking.

There is never a lack of resources, there is only a lack of resourcefulness.

Whatever your goals are, you need to become extremely good at answering this question in as many different ways as possible: How can I get there in the best positive way as possible? We often stop at the most logical solutions, and they often don't work out as we would like them to. What separates great entrepreneurs from the ones who fail... is the ability to try the next thing, over and over again.

For those who have trouble being creative, I suggest you put that as a goal in itself. Creativity can be learned, so work for it. You will succeed if you put your mind to it. To support your creativity journey, try being around creative people. They don't even have to be invested in your area of expertise. You see, creativity is contagious. Get in the proximity of creative entrepreneurial minds and it will trigger your creative juices. Think artists or musicians to begin with and don't forget to read biographies of great thought leaders. Those books are true treasures when it comes to getting to know how to generate creative solutions.

#### Responding emotionally

If you want to avoid small issues from becoming big messes – you have to learn to stop responding to situations from a place loaded with emotions, remember; when emotions are high – intelligence is low.

Here is my advice on how to balance your responses in situations when everything seems to fall apart or escalate into scary disasters. When faced with a challenge, take a step back, and answer each of the following questions as logically as possible: What is the worst that can happen in this situation? What is the best thing that could come out

of this situation? What is most likely to happen?

That last question will gift you the precious gift of a realistic perspective. One that you can skilfully evaluate and accordingly act upon. This is where you will get your balance back, feel grounded, and get ready to act practically and sensibly.

#### Limiting 'meaning' labels

One of the most effective tools that I teach business owners is this: Be aware of the meaning you give to the situation at hand.

When things get heated, my advice is to catch yourself in the moment and take a step back for a moment. You need to get very clear on the answer to the question: What meaning am I giving this situation that I find myself in, at this very moment?

It's very human and natural to label tough situations as messed up, difficult, painful, or just disastrous. Often, we tend to hide, run away, freeze, avoid, or fall apart.

You need the ability to stop yourself in this moment, take a breather, and answer the question 'What meaning am I attaching to this experience?' I teach and talk about this a lot with my private coaching clients that are business owners and I always remind them: Nothing has meaning except for the meaning you give it. It's a powerful, insightful tool to rearrange your thoughts. You will get a more mature, grounded perspective on how to handle things, how to steer away from challenges & obstacles towards greater success.

#### Not knowing where you are

I can teach you all the great business strategies in the world, but if you keep implementing them in all the wrong situations – none

of them will do you any good. Most entrepreneurs who find themselves in challenging situations a lot tend to misidentify the right moments for the right actions. The biggest clue to knowing where you are in any situation and how to act accordingly is to analyze this and ask yourself: Is this the beginning or the end?

Your behaviour will be very different at the opposite ends of this equation. It will determine the amount of resources you can and want to invest in solving 'the mess' you are in. This is a very defining moment and one you need to master if you have big dreams and goals in life.

These 5 failure areas are very common and not every coach will point you to your strengths and weaknesses here. I solemnly believe that 'Diamonds are created under tough conditions!' Don't run, don't back off, don't shrink. As Winston Churchill said: 'Never let a good crisis go to waste.'

If you want to put the odds in your favour and master the saying 'The house always wins', then train yourself to become the house by being more aware of the opportunities that every challenging situation will present you. If you learn to deal with adversity, growth, improvement, and success will become easier, faster, and more natural.

Interested in learning more about business coaching and strategic mentoring with me, Arnon Barnes, so I can help you grow your business intelligently and live your desired lifestyle? Contact us via [info@arnonbarnes.com](mailto:info@arnonbarnes.com) or check out our website [www.arnonbarnes.com/coaching](http://www.arnonbarnes.com/coaching) for more information about private coaching. To stay inspired on all things Entrepreneurship and Leadership subscribe to our Instagram, follow us on Facebook or join our YouTube Channel. 📌





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# Four key steps to building a secure retirement

*Together* considers some positive steps you can take now to put your mind at ease



The question of how people are planning for retirement is one which is becoming ever more of a burning issue. Increasing numbers of people are living well beyond the official retirement age; and while that is to be welcomed, it does present serious challenges to the public purse and to individuals. Someone who is in good health can be looking at as many as thirty years of retirement. This is not an inconsiderable amount of time and needs to be given serious thought from as early an age

as possible. In Belgium, it is estimated that your statutory pension will be around 60% of your last salary.

Most EU states have carried out substantial pension reforms over the last decades given that projected low birth rates and increases in life expectancy will result in a much older population by 2060 halving the ratio of working aged people to those over 60. These reforms have been implemented through a wide-range of measures that have modi-



**“THE KEY IS TO CONSISTENTLY CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS OVER THE YEARS”**

fied the pension system rules which have included increasing retirement age, insisting on compulsory contributions towards a pension and increasing social contributions. Governments are also trying to find ways to encourage people to invest in their retirement, for example, making some, or all, of the money you set aside for your pension tax deductible.

Even people who have started saving for retirement have not necessarily thought in detail about how much income they will need for their retirement or whether their current level of saving is adequate. And yes, with so many other costs increasing it is sometimes difficult to think about what may seem like a distant future. When you're dealing with the day-to-day it may not be easy, but will be worth your while.

Planning for retirement is not a task to be left until the last minute. Starting early is crucial to ensure financial security and peace of mind. It's never too early to start thinking of your pension; if you're in your 30s, now is the perfect time to take charge of your retirement savings.

Here are the four most important steps you can take today to prepare for retirement from here on in.

**Start investing early:** Waiting even a few years before starting to invest can significantly impact your final retirement savings. By starting in your 20s or 30s, you have the advantage of time on your side. Consider investing in diversified portfolios like index funds or mutual funds, which provide growth opportunities while minimizing risk. The key is to consistently contribute to your investment accounts over the years, taking advantage of potential market growth.

**Maximize contributions to retirement accounts:** Alongside investment growth, it's essential to channel maximum contributions into retirement accounts. Take advantage of employer-sponsored pension schemes. Aim to contribute the maximum allowable amount annually to fully benefit from available tax incentives.

**Adopt a budgeting and saving strategy:** Living within your means and saving a portion of your income is pivotal to achieving a financially secure retirement. Develop a



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Finance

budget that outlines your monthly expenses and look for areas where you can reduce expenditure. Cut back on unnecessary expenses and prioritize saving for future financial goals, including retirement. Automate your savings by setting up automatic transfers into a separate savings account. This will ensure consistency and remove the temptation to dip into those funds for non-essential purchases.

Diversify your portfolio: Building a resilient retirement portfolio involves diversifying your investments across various asset classes. Diversification spreads risk and hedges against market volatility. Consider a mix of stocks, bonds, real estate, and other investment vehicles that align with your risk tolerance. One of the most sound investments you can make is in your home, you will always need a roof over your head!

### “ CONSIDER A MIX OF STOCKS, BONDS AND REAL ESTATE ”



The world of work is changing, more people are working flexibly or are self-employed; working beyond pension age - even if it's on a part-time basis - is something that you might want to do, for all sorts of reasons. There's a social element to work, after a lifetime of work you have probably gathered considerable expertise and can maybe share it through consultancy work, for example. Some people have a hobby that they can potentially earn money from. So if you don't see the immediate possibility of saving considerable sums, think about developing your skills and making them as future-proof as possible.

As you near retirement, you might want to gradually adjust your portfolio to include more conservative investments that focus on capital preservation rather than high growth. With all these steps it's always important to shop around for the best deal. It's also a good idea to think about speaking to a regulated adviser. Speak to your bank, speak to your mutual.

Preparing for retirement may seem daunting, but your future self will be more than grateful that you took the right decisions now to provide for a well-funded and secure retirement. Time is your greatest asset, so make the most of it by taking action today. By implementing these four steps, you can look forward to a worry-free retirement. So start now, and reap the rewards later!

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# Israel-Gaza - a conflict that must not dehumanize

**Catherine Feore** looks at the EU's response to events in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories



*The continuous bombardments that are hitting Gaza City during the night © UNICEF 2023*

On 7 October, we woke up to appalling news. Hamas had launched an assault on Southern Israel. Its full extent and the barbarity of its nature shocked the world. Hundreds of young people attending a festival were shot, bodies paraded, the atrocities celebrated by militants, nearby kibbutzim were entered and brutal killings carried out. It is estimated that 1,400 people were killed and more than 240 were taken hostage. In the immediate af-

termath countries across the world and the European Union as a whole stood in solidarity with Israel.

## “ THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A WHOLE STOOD IN SOLIDARITY WITH ISRAEL ”

The EU issued a joint statement on the same day condemning the senseless attacks and loss of life, adding that while Israel had the right to self defence, it must be done in line within the rules set in international law. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen took the decision to project

an Israeli flag onto the Berlaymont building and tweeted, adding her voice to those stating Israel's right to defend itself and saying that the European Union stands with Israel. This seemingly uncontroversial statement of support raised concern in some quarters because it failed to explicitly mention that Israel's action should be consistent with international law and international humanitarian law, very important caveats that set the limits between legitimate defence and crimes.

Israel's response to the attack was swift and brutal. Gaza was placed under siege with access to basic amenities of food, water, electricity and fuel cut off. The Israeli Defence Forces called for the mass evacuation of the entire population of Northern Gaza, an estimated 1.1 million. It was reported that 6,000 bombs were dropped on Northern Gaza in the space of six days. Given that the territory is densely populated this inevitably resulted in a high number of deaths. Israel claimed that all targets were legitimate and the high number of casualties were the result of Hamas' cynical tactic of using civilians as human shields.

At the European Council on 26 October, heads of government spent more than five hours discussing the wording in their conclusions on the situation. Opinion was deeply divided among the EU's leaders, some were calling for a humanitarian ceasefire, some were calling for a humanitarian pause. The eventual compromise was a call for “unhindered humanitarian access, [...] humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs.” The plea was ignored and the siege and bombing continued.

In Gaza, it is now estimated that at least 11,000 people have died, of this number more than 40% are children, more than 28,000 are injured, 2,700 are missing, approximately 45% of housing stock is destroyed or damaged and 50% percent of hospitals are

## “ ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO THE ATTACK WAS SWIFT AND BRUTAL ”



*Mohammed Alattar, 8-year-old from Rafah City, sits on the rubble of his family's house © UNICEF 2023*

no longer functioning. The territory remains under siege. Strikes have hit refugee camps, solar panels, fishing boats, schools, hospitals, mosques and churches. Research by *BBC Verify* found evidence to suggest that areas in the south, which were allegedly safe, were targeted. There are attestations that those who could choose to evacuate to the south were attacked as they evacuated. Doctors have had to carry out life saving surgical procedures without having access to anesthesia. There has also been a surge in violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, with entire villages being displaced and 163 Palestinians killed by Israeli forces or Settlers since 7 October, this brings the tally so far for 2023 to 371.

On 6 November, ambassadors from the 57 member states that make up the Organization of Islamic Cooperation called on all European institutions and EU member states



to oblige Israel to commit to an immediate ceasefire and to halt the barbaric military assault on Palestinian civilians. They also called for Israel to be held accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as for an end to its 16-year illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Criticism of the EU also came from within the institutions. Eight hundred officials signed a letter condemning "the patent show of double-standards which considers the blockade operated by Russia on the Ukrainian people as an act of terror whilst the identical act by Israel against the Gazan people is completely ignored." The staff wrote that the European Union, which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for being a beacon of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, should not remain silent while a tragedy unfolds. In failing to act, the staff wrote that the EU's position "gives a

free hand to the acceleration and the legitimacy of a war crime in the Gaza Strip."

The UN Human Rights Office issued a statement warning that there is increasing evidence of genocidal incitement coming from the highest levels of government. "Many of us already raised the alarm about the risk of genocide in Gaza," the experts said. "We are deeply disturbed by the failure of governments to heed our call and to achieve an immediate ceasefire. We are also profoundly concerned about the support of certain governments for Israel's strategy of warfare against the besieged population of Gaza, and the failure of the international system to mobilise to prevent genocide," they said.

Nevertheless, while calling for humanitarian assistance in the near term, the EU is thinking of what will happen next. Following a recent meeting of foreign ministers, the



Roberta Metsola, 1st from the left, Ursula von der Leyen, 2nd from the left, and Amir Ohana, Speaker of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) © EC - Audiovisual Service



The Israeli flag screened on the Berlaymont building

EU's High Representative Josep Borrell laid out six principles that would follow a truce.

Firstly, there can be no forced displacement of the Palestinian people out of Gaza to other countries. Secondly, the territory of Gaza cannot be reduced and there should be no permanent reoccupation of Gaza by Israeli Defense Forces, nor a return of Hamas to Gaza. Thirdly, Gaza cannot be dissociated from the rest of the Palestinian issue: the solution for Gaza has to be framed within the solution to the Palestinian problem as a whole.

On the "yes" side: A Palestinian Authority should rule Gaza, whose nature, role and legitimacy has to be defined by the UN Security Council. Secondly, the EU wants stronger involvement from Arab countries that is not just financial and limited to physical reconstruction, but also assistance in state building. Finally, a greater commitment from the EU in the region is required.

On 10 December, we mark 75 years since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into being. I write mark, rather than celebrate, as daily news bulletins are a reminder that the values enshrined in the declaration seem like a distant dream. Governments across the world appear to be moving further from its ideals.

The declaration was an attempt to create a new world order following the horrors of the

## “ THE DECLARATION WAS AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE A NEW WORLD ORDER FOLLOWING THE HORRORS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ”

Second World War. In its preamble it states that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind".

The declaration, which has arguably been one of the most influential international agreements ever negotiated, paved the way for dozens of human-rights related treaties. Established under the Rome Statute, the International Criminal Court provides a means by which the most serious crimes must not go unpunished. Their investigation into whether crimes by Palestinian armed groups and the Israeli government have been committed must be supported. Nobel Laureate and French lawyer René Cassins is considered to be the main draftsman behind the declaration's text approved by the UN General Assembly. In 1968 he wrote: "Now that we possess an instrument capable of lifting or easing the burden of oppression and injustice in the world, we must learn to use it." ❶



# LIFESTYLE

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LIFESTYLE

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## A passion for cloth

**Catherine Feore** discovers  
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## LIFESTYLE

Luxury

### But where to find this in Belgium?

While SCABAL is world renowned for its fabrics, it also has its own presence on Savile Row and... Boulevard de Waterloo.

When you meet Véronique Vranckx, the manager of SCABAL's Brussels boutique, you immediately feel like you are in safe hands; beautifully coiffed and suited, she is approachable and sets you at ease.

I ask why people opt for a made-to-measure suit? "The simple answer," says Véronique, "is that when a suit is made-to-measure it is adapted to the morphology of the client. When a client opts for a prêt-à-porter suit he is obliged to conform to the model or standard proposed; here, it is the opposite: the model is adapted to the client." While this may be the critical factor, there are many other considerations. Numerous other choices also make the made-to-measure suit unique to the wearer, there will never be a duplicate.

One of the first questions Véronique asks a client is what is the purpose of the suit: is it for business, a special occasion, or simply for the pleasure of dressing well. To help me understand the process, Véronique walks me through it.

"The first thing to choose is the fabric, SCABAL has 5,000 fabrics, then there are more than 200 different options to choose from."

**" SCABAL HAS 5,000  
FABRICS, THEN THERE  
ARE MORE THAN 200  
DIFFERENT OPTIONS  
TO CHOOSE FROM "**

**" WHEN A SUIT IS  
MADE-TO-MEASURE  
IT IS ADAPTED TO  
THE MORPHOLOGY  
OF THE CLIENT "**



I ask if people are overwhelmed with so much choice and so many decisions to be made. Véronique says that it very much depends from one person to the next. Some people come with a very clear idea of what they want, some even come with a picture of what they are aiming for, especially younger clients; others are happier to be guided in their choices.





## “ THERE IS ALWAYS AN ELEMENT OF CO-CREATION ”

Firstly we look at different fabrics according to the choice of colour, the weight of the fabric and the fineness of the thread. Then the client looks at the different models of suit: single breasted, double breasted, number of buttons, what type of vents, what sort of lapel... There are line drawings to illustrate all options, even if you don't know the exact terminology. If you are unsure of whether a particular design suits your shape you can try on one of their prêt-à-porter suits, which are also very fine, to give you an idea of what works best for you. Véronique and her team are there to guide throughout, they don't impose a view, but they have a level of expertise that most ordinary mortals don't possess.

There are a number of ludic touches you can add to give your suit an even more personal touch. You may have a very formal business suit, but maybe choose a more contrasting colour for the hand-stitched buttonholes, discreetly revealing a hint of rebellion. You can choose a distinctive lining. There's also the possibility of adding text to the interior, or under the collar. For example, with a wedding suit, clients sometimes like to add a phrase, or the names, date and place of the nuptials.

The next stage is the taking of measurements. Véronique is very clear that this is also about comfort, that the suit should feel “nonchalant”, that's to say comfortable. In a sense it is a second skin. The final stage is when the suit is assembled and an appointment is made to check the fitting. Occasionally small changes will be needed, for example, the trouser or sleeve length.



The latest autumn/winter 2023 fabric collection is called 'AUTUMN LEAVES'; as its name suggests, the fabrics are designed with the colours of autumn in mind. Divided into two chapters the first is a soft wool with added cashmere and the second is 100% extra fine Merino wool, both qualities are woven in a seasonal 320gm weight to give the additional warmth needed in the colder months.

The collection opens with a selection of bold checks with a bright red leading the way, it moves through a range of fancy checks each one with an individual feel and closes with a dramatic selection of plains with a distinctive light and dark twisted yarn effect which adds depth and character.

The colours include: reds, browns, greens, burgundy, rust, a selection of blues, greys and winter whites. All feature with many designs including multiple-colour combinations.



Finally, I ask Véronique how she feels when the suit is completed: “It's a grande satisfaction. We spend a lot of time with the client, the rapport with each client is different, but there is always an element of co-creation. It's a responsibility that I, and my collaborators, take to heart. We are impatient like children to see the results and when we see the smile on the face of the wearer 'c'est tout gagner', it's like you've won everything.”

SCABAL's shop can be found at Boulevard de Waterloo 32  
[www.scabal.com](http://www.scabal.com)



# LEGENDS *of the* FALL

*Photographer Maria Dawlat*  
*Art Direction & Stylist Nicholas Sirot*  
*Hair & Make up Boris Mignot using SCHWARZKOPF & CLINIQUE*  
*borismignot@gmail.com*  
*Models Milan De Zutter, Guillaume Boinem, Alec Rodts @Dominiquemodels*  
*Special thanks to Maison Degand - [www.maisondegand.com](http://www.maisondegand.com)*



*Milan Total Look: Maison Degand*



Guillaume: Turtleneck: Brax  
Long sleeve polo shirt: SUN68  
Short: Dockers

Alec: Shirt & short: Zara Tie: YSL  
Pullover: Lacoste Socks: Falke











Guillaume: Men's velvet suit: **Maison Degand** Shirt & pullover: **Zara** Tie: **YSL**  
Coat: **Eden Park** Socks: **Falke** Shoes: **Zara** Men's bag: **Le Tanneur**  
Milan: Shirt **SUN68** Tie: **YSL** Pullover: **Lacoste** Trousers: **Maison Degand**  
Socks: **Burlington** Shoes **Zara** Coat: **Gant**







*Alec: Velvet suit: Momoni Shirt & pullover: Lacoste  
Milan: Trousers: Maison Degand Socks: Burlington Shoes: Zara Coat: Gant*





# Wrist elegance

**Nicholas Sirot** looks at some must-not-miss men's watch trends

Beyond their practical utility, men's watches have evolved into genuine fashion accessories, reflecting the personal style and sophistication of the wearer. We've delved into the most fashionable trends in men's watches for you. From automatic watches to bold designs, discover how these exceptional timepieces can elevate your style and add a touch of elegance to every outfit.



**Bell & Ross Chrono**  
Green Rubber.  
Price: €6.400.



**Alpina Heritage**  
Carrée Mechanical.  
Price: €4.995.



**ICE Chrono**  
Khaki orange.  
Price: €119.



**Van Esser A-One.**  
Price upon request.

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**PRX**

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 TISSOT DESIGN FROM 1978





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Seastar 1000 40mm.  
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**Citizen** Automatic  
Promaster Marine.  
Price: €995.



**Maurice Lacroix**  
Pontos Day Date.  
41mm. Price: €1.990.



**Piaget**  
Squelette.  
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**Montblanc** Star Legacy  
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[www.kincollection.eu](http://www.kincollection.eu)



**KIN** Elytres glass vase.  
Price: **€225.**  
[www.kincollection.eu](http://www.kincollection.eu)



**KIN** Turquoise glass  
vase. Price: **€95.**  
[www.kincollection.eu](http://www.kincollection.eu)



**KIN** Blue butterflies.  
Hypochrysops polycletus.  
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## LIFESTYLE

Shopping



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**KIN** Bicolor Coral.  
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(shells) of jewel insects  
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the signs of aging, firms, tones  
and lifts your skin. Price: **€49,99.**  
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# The ultimate grooming routine for men

**Nicholas Sirot** presents the latest products for men

Gentlemen, it's high time to embrace a grooming routine that will allow you to shine. In a world where the image you project matters more than ever, it has become essential for men to look beyond how they dress and start taking care of their skin. Beauty is no longer the exclusive domain of women and men increasingly turn to grooming rituals to add that edge.



**Sisley** Buff and wash facial gel. 100 ml. Price: **€112,50.**



**Sisley** Purifying re-balancing lotion. 125 ml. Price: **€110.**



**DHIST'L** Face Wash Gel. 300 ml. Price: **€21,90.**

The key to radiant skin and a polished finish is a well-crafted grooming routine. It all begins with a gentle facial cleanse to rid the skin of impurities. Follow it up with regular exfoliation to remove dead skin cells, revealing a fresh complexion. To complete the regime, consider using a purifying lotion.

When it's time to trim your beard or shave up close, make sure to use a high-quality shaving foam. Shaving can be quite harsh on your skin, think of investing in a post-shave serum to restore and help mend any micro-abrasions. Hydration is crucial for maintaining skin suppleness. Choose a moisturizer tailored to your skin type to keep your complexion glowing.



**Mylène** Men Shaving Soap. Price: **€14,95.**



**DHIST'L** After Shave Serum. Price: **€28.**

For a penetrating gaze, don't forget to apply an eye-contour treatment to redefine and enhance your look. Neglecting sunscreen is not an option; it's essential for preventing the harmful - and aging - effects of UV rays.



**Annayake** Cleansing & shaving foam. Price: **€27.**



**Annayake** Soothing moisturizing gel. Price: **€54.**



**Mylène** Men Face Cream. Price: **€27,95.**



**Annayake** Eye contour care. Price: **€55.**



**Lancaster** Sun Perfecting Fluid SPF 50. Price: **€58.**



## Beauty

As for your mane, nurture your hair by revitalizing it with a nourishing shampoo. After a gentle dry, give your hairstyle a unique edge by using an invisible spray that will give it a veneer and finish. And don't forget a touch of carefully chosen fragrance to add that final touch and to leave a lasting impression. Choose something that matches your personality. At Together, we love Kagari For Him by Annayake and the fragrance Bottled Elixir by Hugo boss.



**Sisley** Revitalizing nourishing shampoo.  
Price: €72.



**Sisley** Invisible hold hairspray.  
Price: €82,50.



**Annayake** Parfum Kagari for Him.  
Price: €87.



**BOSS** Bottled Elixir. 100 ml.  
Price: €143.

Remember, the grooming routine is not just about appearance; it's also about valuing yourself. As we step into the new year, try to make your daily routine part of your ritual. Recognise that it is as essential as brushing your teeth or combing your hair. You'll notice the results and feel the difference! ①

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# Natural vibrations

Nature is at the heart of every sculpture created by Catherine François, writes **Aurélié Koch**

For the past 30 years, François has been exploring and transliterating the vibrations that emanate from what she sees before her. A very nice book has just been published about her work: Corentin Vanden Branden

For the longest time, Catherine François lived in the margin of words, as an observer. She spent many years looking at the world around her, with spontaneous wonderment at all representations of nature, all of these scenes and displays knowingly orchestrated by natural anarchy, which ultimately produces a visual balance and palpable sense of harmony. So it was no more than normal for her to subsequently seek to "capture" these images. She started out by taking photos of them. Then drawing them.







“ I PUMP EVERYTHING  
BACK TO NATURE,  
ALL I DO IS RETURN  
TO NATURE WHAT  
NATURE INSPIRES  
ME TO CREATE ”



Figuration is at the heart of her first inspirations: hair, movement, body. Always using the same modus operandi: watch in silence, draw, deconstruct, and then recreate in order to meld the form to come with the element set to receive it: nature. The running theme in Catherine François' body of work is nature, still is and always has been. "I pump everything back to nature, all I do is return to nature what nature inspires me to create, the things nature gives me. In the early days, my sculptures were figurative, over time I imperceptibly moved towards abstraction. Every shape, even inert, has its own energy, its own movement, which makes it perceptible to its sur

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**“ WHEN  
SOMEONE IS  
RIGHT IN FRONT  
OF YOU,  
YOU FEEL  
THEIR WAVES,  
THEY HIT ON  
YOUR OWN  
WAVES ”**

roundings. And it needs to find its own rightful place among this ensemble. That is the thing that resonates with me, these vibrations I feel, and only in a certain way, “I see”. I love the waves, the energy.

When someone is right in front of you, you feel their waves, they hit on your own waves, which in turn creates a third energy which is specific to that particular encounter. I believe that all harmony, this quest we are all on to find our place in this universe, is governed by these waves and these vibrations control us... vibrations which we emit ourselves, sometimes unbeknown to us.” This omnipresent nature, which translates into different “periods” across these past 30 years of creating, has changed over time.



**“ I PUMP  
EVERYTHING  
BACK TO  
NATURE,  
ALL I DO  
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TO CREATE ”**



**“ LIFE IS A KALEIDOSCOPE:  
OUR LIVES ARE TINY FRAGMENTS  
THAT MAKE UP A WHOLE,  
WHICH TEND TO WANT  
TO HOMOGENIZE ”**



After abstraction, Catherine started to "recover": spending lots of time walking along the seaboard, an inexhaustible source of inspiration, she collected various objects washed ashore by the waves. At her workshop, to the sounds of music she constantly plays, she composes her work using different shapes of the variations of human faces. "Life is a kaleidoscope: our lives are tiny fragments that make up a whole, which tend to want to homogenize. I love the idea of finding these pieces and composing them in a different way."

[www.catherinefrancois.be](http://www.catherinefrancois.be) ⓘ

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Model shown: Stuv P-20s pellet stove

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# Clooney goes behind the camera to shoot an inspirational story

*Together* meets George Clooney, an actor who is becoming as well known for his work as a director



In the luminescent world of Hollywood, few names shine as brightly as George Clooney.

The dashing actor, producer and director, who has graced the silver screen with performances that have left indelible marks on the hearts of millions, now offers audiences

a captivating tale with his new film *The Boys In The Boat*.

After initially being bought by The Weinstein Company, the movie rights to the bestselling book by Daniel James Brown – about Joe Rantz and the 1936 Berlin Olympics eight-oar crew – were eventually picked up

# LIFE OF LEISURE

*A rich programme for the arts this autumn*





by Smokehouse Pictures, the production company set up by Clooney.

The *ER*, *Oceans* and *From Dusk Till Dawn* star knew a lot about Brown's book and convinced him to pass it over to him to direct. The result is something from the Clooney stable that is, in many ways, unique.

That's quite a statement, given Clooney's illustrious career boasts a medley of famous roles, both in front of and behind the camera.

Away from the bright lights and red carpets, the 62-year-old's life is beautifully woven with family and love. He shares this world with his accomplished wife, international human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, and their two cherished children. From their Studio City residence, previously owned by the

legendary Stevie Nicks, to an 18th-century haven in Lake Como, each abode mirrors a chapter in Clooney's diverse life.

And let's not forget their Georgian mansion in Sonning Eye, majestically sitting by the River Thames, their luxury condo nestled in midtown Manhattan, or their breath-taking \$8.3million Provence wine estate in Brignoles, France.

Yet, for all his success and wealth, Clooney remains an advocate for the integrity of cinema. In a recent collaboration with long-time friend Brad Pitt, for the film *Wolves*, both leading men took pay cuts to ensure their film enjoyed not only a streaming debut but a theatrical release, emphasizing their unwavering commitment to the art of filmmaking.

### Tell me about *The Boys in the Boat*...

Oh, we're going right in there are we? [Laughs]. Okay, let's go. So, I read the book by Daniel James Brown. Not only did I think it was a fascinating piece of work - a truly great and inspiring story, but one I could truly get my teeth into from a director's point of view.

Sometimes you can have a great story that you just can't configure into the right place on film, but this one sat up immediately.

**“ IT’S BOTH A DEEPLY MOVING AND INSPIRATIONAL STORY WHICH REMINDS US OF THE UNPARALLELED STRENGTH FOUND IN UNITY ”**

**Daniel says how impressed he was, not only in terms of how much you knew about the story, but also because you understood why he had decided to write it in the first place.**

Sure - as I say, it was an inspiring journey of nine working-class young men from the University of Washington who went on to defy the odds and grab the gold medal in rowing at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. More than that though, this is about the personal stories mixed with the wider historical context.

Daniel does an incredible job of interweaving those, drawing the reader into that world, and showing us their determination and unexpected camaraderie.

It's both a deeply moving and inspirational story which reminds us of the unparalleled strength found in unity. I'm really looking forward to seeing what those who've read it think of it, as well as Daniel himself, of course. I sincerely hope that we've done it justice.





## Interview

**Your career has undergone a massive transformation since we first met you in ER. What's the biggest change between when you first started out and where you're at now?**

For so long, my only concern, my full focus, was on getting a job. Any job. I needed to make money. So, when you're at a stage in your career where you've had success, lucky enough to experience success, money isn't the primary motivating factor.

I'm very lucky that I've got to a stage in my life where I can work on movies purely because I want to work on them. The story we're trying to tell, the subject matter, all that is my purpose. So that's the most obvious contrast.

Also working on projects that help others has been a wonderful gift to be able to give, because without anybody taking a chance on me, I wouldn't have experienced any success. So, I think it's very important, you have to be mindful to give back, it's your duty in a lot of ways, and I like to do that.

**What role did you most enjoy in your career?**

One of the most fulfilling roles I've played was Michael Clayton. It was not just the complexity of the character, but the film touched on corporate malfeasance and moral dilemmas, which are very relevant issues.

Every time I stepped into his shoes, I felt a profound connection and responsibility to

portray his inner turmoil and convictions accurately. It was challenging, but incredibly rewarding.

**Who is your favourite person in Hollywood?**

That's a tough one, given I've met and worked with so many incredible talents. But if I had to pick, I'd say Steven Soderbergh. Our collaborations have always been seamless, from *Out of Sight* to the *Oceans* series.

He's not only a phenomenal director but a dear friend. He brings out the best in everyone he works with, and his passion for cinema is truly contagious.

**After going through a journey from working any job to earn, to becoming a fans' favourite, what is your advice to those actors who are starting out their own path?**

Patience and perseverance are key. It's easy to get discouraged in this industry, but remember, every rejection is a step closer to that one yes that can change everything. Stay true to your craft, continue to learn, and surround yourself with positive, like-minded individuals.

And most importantly, always remember why you started acting in the first place – for the love of storytelling. Hold onto that passion, and it will guide you through.

**You're a huge advocate for fairness, respect and equality, and have always been outspoken for the #MeToo movement... yet, as we continue to see allegations of past behaviour brought against famous personalities, are you glad at least these things are out in the open?**

Although it's not something that anyone should have to be reporting, as these incidents should never have happened in the



**“ ALWAYS REMEMBER WHY YOU STARTED ACTING IN THE FIRST PLACE – FOR THE LOVE OF STORYTELLING ”**

first place, the movement was and continues to be pivotal in history.

Now, the perpetrators, these men can and will be exposed for their crimes and no amount of silencing, intimidation or bullying will stop it. It's not just a wakeup call for Hollywood, it's a wakeup call for all industries and it's a call for a society - where women feel safe and secure discussing this subject, and where predators abusing these positions will be publicly shamed and brought to justice.

The key here is to not let it fade away. The movement is well over a decade old now and we need to ensure we continue to build on the momentum to ensure permanent change.





## Interview

**How is fatherhood treating you?**

It's still really fun. They're little kids now, we're able to have proper conversations, they still laugh at goofy faces and fart sounds – I mean, does there ever come a time when that's not funny? They make me feel like I'm the funniest person in the world and are absolutely the best audience and critics I've ever had. I never get a bad review from them!

**What do you think has been your biggest surprise since becoming a father?**

Although we all travelled through our journeys in life like this, I can't and probably never will really understand just how fully formed they are as human beings. Six years ago, they weren't here and now, they're both very different - he's this little thug, this out there personality and she's very sweet natured and dainty.

This is who they are, this is who they're going to develop into and grow up to be, and we as parents just have to try our best not to mess them up [laughs]. I want them to be happy and healthy and safe and it's our job to safeguard that to the best of our ability. And after that, it's like rolling the dice.

**As a family you split time between many different bases – which is your favourite?**

Every home holds special memories, but Lake Como has a certain magic to it. The serenity of the lake, coupled with the historic charm of the villa, provides a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle.

It's where I've had some of my most memorable moments with family and friends. The natural beauty, combined with the rich Italian culture, makes it a place where I can truly relax and rejuvenate. 📍





# Matt Dillon receives the Mimmo Rotella Award

**Federico Grandesso** interviews the film star, director and artist who was celebrated in Venice

The Fondazione Mimmo Rotella Award was created in 2001 from an idea by the artist and poet who is best known for collages made from torn advertising posters in a medium which he called “double décollages”. Rotella wanted to celebrate the link between the visual arts and cinema.

The prize is awarded every year to a person who, over the course of their career, has distinguished themselves as a major protagonist in the world of cinema, leaving an indelible mark on the medium, just as Rotella did with his art.

**Could you share your journey as a painter? What has been your experience been in the world of contemporary art?**

Art has been an integral part of my life since childhood. It has always been a part of my life, which was deeply rooted in my family's visual background rather than a musical or theatrical one. The seeds of creativity were sown in me and it's a legacy that traces back through my paternal family lineage. I can vividly recall being just six years old, gazing at my uncle's comic strips. My uncle, Alex Raymond, was a renowned cartoonist and the creator of FLASH GORDON. Meanwhile, my father was an accomplished oil painter, specializing in portraiture. Even my grandmother had a talent for painting.

Growing up in this environment, it was only natural for me to be drawn to the world of

art. I was always engaged in creative pursuits. From a very young age, I would document my thoughts and experiences through drawings, paintings, collages, and diaries. I remember carrying these visual diaries with me, even when I was just three years old.

Whether I was traveling to places like Cambodia, Thailand, or Miami for film shoots, I always had my art supplies on hand. I have a distinct memory of traveling after the events of 9/11. I was on a flight to Los Angeles while carrying my art materials, including color boxes and scissors. In the post-9/11 climate, security personnel were understandably concerned about these items, which were essential to my artistic process.

I was determined to pursue this artistic path, but occasionally, I would take breaks. However about a year ago, I established a habit of regularly practicing painting and drawing. Perhaps not every day, but at least every other day. Even when I was engrossed in filmmaking, I made sure to dedicate time to my art. It's not just a hobby; it holds immense significance for me. I've had the opportunity to exhibit my work, but what truly matters is the ongoing practice and the discoveries that unfold along the way. What's interesting is that it's a rather solitary endeavor. There's a directness in creating this type of art that you don't find in cinema. Cinema involves a lengthy process to achieve results and requires a significant budget, as well as the coordination of numerous elements. It's a collective effort, involving the organization

of many people around a project. In the realm of fine art, I can simply sit in front of a canvas or even sketch away on an airplane or find inspiration in my own kitchen. Of course, it sometimes demands more time and effort. I have a small studio in New York (an Old Church) where I go to work. What's most incredible is that it doesn't make me feel lonely; in fact, it's quite the opposite. Sometimes, I have the opportunity to meet other artists who are also painters, forming friendships with many artists who work in entirely different circles and create different types of art.

**Can you talk about your past and upcoming exhibitions?**

I did an exhibition in Berlin about two years ago in collaboration with Harold Falckenberg, a remarkable collector and curator, known for his unconventional approach. He taught me a lot about art. We have known each other for some time now, as he collected some of my art. He is a bit eccentric and enjoys breaking the rules, much like myself. I also have an appreciation for filmmakers like Lars von Trier, who challenge conventions. There is a Danish phrase he used to say: ‘Husk go shusk’, which translates to ‘remember to keep it messy’. It can also be interpreted as “to draw outside the lines.” These concepts resonate with me as I create art. Currently, I'm contemplating the work of Mimmo Rotella, to whom I was invited to pay tribute. Rotella is a remarkable artist, and I particularly admire his contributions to the field of collage.

**Considering when you first began your career and the current year, 2023, with**



Matt Dillon © Stephanie Cornfield

**the significant developments in the field of acting, how do you perceive the evolution of your profession? And how has technology influenced the field of acting?**

I don't know. The fundamental nature of acting has changed so much. There's still good acting, bad acting, and sometimes, bad acting can even be good, right? I don't really care much about technology; I'm more interested in human beings. Technology is a tool you can use to your advantage, but I don't think it can replace real actors with artificial ones. I don't believe AI can replace the human experience; I think AI can be used by humans to simulate these experiences. I'm not an expert, but I don't see AI as a Frankenstein monster created by us. Frankenstein was made from human materials; his brain was harvested from a criminal. It wasn't created automatically. So, that's my point of view.

**Do you have plans to direct more films in the future?**

I'm currently working on something, because directing has been a truly fantastic experience for me. ❶



# Venice lays its 'foundations' bare

*Together* takes a glance at two foundations making plans for the 60th Biennale Arte



German-American Nicolas Berggruen investor and philanthropist has just bought an imposing palace set to open its doors to the public at the next Biennale in 2024. The Palazzo Grassi has become a contemporary art palace.

In 2005, François Pinault bought the Palazzo Grassi for €29 million and had it renovated by Japanese architect Tadao Ando

and Icelandic-Danish artist Ólafur Elíasson. This 18th century palace, one of the last to be built along the Grand Canal shortly before the Republic of Venice was abolished by general Bonaparte in 1797, already had a pedigree as a museum, as Fiat CEO Gianni Agnelli had had it converted in 1983 by Gae Aulenti and managed by Swede Pontus Hultén, the first manager of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.



*The Aman Venice - Garden Terrace*

## Nicolas Berggruen's two palaces

Berggruen, a German-American investor and philanthropist, the son of art dealer and collector Heinz Berggruen set up the Berggruen Institute whose campus was established in Los Angeles, with two antennae in Beijing and Venice.

Berggruen played a key role in the Berggruen Museum's programming and curatorial autonomy, the museum having been set up with a donation from his father to the City of Berlin, which became part of Berlin's Nationalgalerie in 2000. Over the years, with the transformation of our living world as its central theme, he supported projects ranging from figures from the world of contemporary art (South Korean conceptual artist Anicka Yi, Ian Cheng and his virtual mutation agents, Rob Reynolds, Agnieszka Kurant from Poland or Pierre Huyghe from France) and researchers in the areas of artificial intelligence researchers and biology.

## “BERGGRUEN SUPPORTED PROJECTS RANGING FROM FIGURES FROM THE WORLD OF CONTEMPORARY ART”

In the City of Doges, his Charitable Trust sets its sights on two palaces. The first of which is the Casa dei Tre Oci located on Giudecca island, built in 1913 by painter Mario de Maria in tribute to his deceased daughter Silvia. In 2021, Berggruen signed a purchase agreement with the Fondazione di Venezia to organise conferences, workshops and exhibitions in partnership with museums such as the Tate (London) and the MoMA (New



## Travel

York). The Casa dei Tre Oci will be the European base of the Berggruen Institute.

**Venice as an epicentre**

The second palace is Palazzo Diedo, which would become the headquarters of Berggruen Arts & Culture, the last entity founded by the patron and collector. In March 2022, in the company of American artist Sterling Ruby (whose work he collects and whom he regularly saw in Los Angeles), he announced he had purchased this vast home in the sestiere di Canareggio. Older than Grassi, this palace was inaugurated in 1720, bought by the city of Venice in 1888, it served as a primary school before it was turned into a Sentence Enforcement Court in 1989. "Palazzo Diedo", Berggruen underscores, "showcases the works of and the events staged by Berggruen Arts & Culture", which he has just created, with Venice as its epicentre.

The works will take two years, with the grand opening schedule to coincide with the next Biennale in 2024, under the artistic direction of Mario Codognato, a man born and bred in Venice, who previously worked at the Naples National Archaeological Museum, before becoming the curator of the MADRE in the same city, the contemporary art museum billeted in the old Donnaregina palace from the time it was set up in 2005. To the man who had spent a long time working away from his home town, this project marks a return to his origins.

**Project in Four Acts**

Silvio Fassi, the Venetian architect behind this restoration, explains that it is one of the rare Venetian palaces of this period, comprising two piano nobile (étages nobles) with ceiling height of eight and seven metres, delivering a total of 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> in floor space. Other than the safety works and the upgrading work to meet standards to welcome members of the public, the most luxurious part of this renaissance will be to rid the



*The Aman Venice - Interior, Blue Room*

building of the unfortunate works performed over the last century, which concealed the stonework, the glazing, and the original murals, which have already been partly restored.

In the meantime, Sterling Ruby has started creating a series of installations to accompany the transformation of the building, entitled A Project in Four Acts, at the artist's residence at the Palazzo Diedo. The first of which is entitled HEX was part of the 59th Biennale. Ruby is planning other outdoor installations in line with the palace, followed by an exhibition to mark the inauguration of the palace in the spring of 2024.

**Art palace**

Venice has a wealth of accommodations on offer to suit all styles and budgets. The ultimate luxury being spending the night at one of the most gorgeous history palaces that has been transformed into a hotel: the Aman Venice.

Along the Grand Canal, there are not that many old palaces that have been recently restored and are in perfect condition. What is more, few of these palaces are open to the public. Among these palaces, the Aman Venice, which is housed in the Palazzo

**“ THE AMAN VENICE  
IS ONE OF THE  
EIGHT MONUMENTAL  
PALACES ALONG  
THE WATERFONT ”**



*The Aman Venice - Interior, Blue Room*



*The Aman Venice - Suite, Alcova Tiepolo*





Papadopoli, is one of the eight monumental palaces along the waterfront.

The owners are Count and Countess Gilberto and Bianca Arrivabene Valenti Gonzaga, who also happen to live upstairs in their sumptuous property, has been fully refurbished by Indonesian hotel group Aman. Aman was established in the 1990s in Amanpuri in Thailand, and has become the ultimate reference for travellers seeking luxury, history and authenticity.

Even though the group currently runs a very high number of establishments (the latest of which was inaugurated in September in New York, very close to Central Park, on 5th avenue), the Palazzo Papadopoli holds a special place in their portfolio. The quality of the palazzo's restoration, the meticulousness with which Venetian artisans were sought out, the care and dedication with which the renovation works are being carried out, under the expert and watchful eye of the owners, have resulted in a minor feat, often attempted, rarely accomplished: to bring together the most wonderful murals of the great Renaissance masters with the creature comforts of the 21st century.

Everything here astonishes and thrills: the period-correct mouldings, the rococo gildings, the Tiepolo murals, the walls upholstered with cuir de Cordoue (cordwain), the harmony of the Renaissance elements and the contemporary furniture. The geographical location finally allows guests to enjoy Venice exactly the way they like to. The nearby Rialto Bridge allows visitors to cut across from one river bank to the other. Or to get to the Biennale's gardens to admire other works. In Venice, everything is art. The Aman Venice has duly observed this doctrine to the letter.

[www.aman.com](http://www.aman.com) ⓘ



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# Go West!

As another winter season approaches **Mark Browne** of *Together* considers the attractions of taking a transatlantic trip to Denver, capital of the US State of Colorado which is home to some of the largest and best ski resorts in North America.



**K**nown as the "Mile High City", Denver does in fact have an official elevation of one mile (5,280 ft) above sea level. This means that visitors to the city can begin to acclimatise to the pure thin air of the Rocky Mountains right from arrival. However this is not a city in the clouds; on the contrary Denver enjoys an average of over 300 days of sunshine a year, making it a perfect environment to avoid the winter blues!

A city with a resident population of just under a million inhabitants, it has seen extensive growth and regeneration in recent years as more and more people are drawn by its reputation as a hip city offering a lifestyle that other US cities struggle to compete with. The growth of the city as a cultural, sporting and culinary capital marks a transformation from its historical role as a transport hub for the mining industries located



throughout the state. Its manageable size, 200 municipal parks and growing cultural scene including art galleries, museums and restaurant scene, as well as its proximity to some stunning natural parks have all proved to be a magnet for new residents and visitors alike.

Brewing is quite a focus locally and the Denver Beer Trail offers a convenient way to experience some of the best examples of local craft beers – many of which offer a good challenge to Belgian beers!

Although constructed almost entirely over the last 150 years, the city does possess some impressive and imposing historic structures like the State Capital Building and the Union Station building as well as more recent editions such as the Denver Art Museum designed by Daniel Libeskind.

On the sporting side the city hosts both the champion Ice hockey team the Colorado Avalanche and the Denver Nuggets basketball team at its impressive Ball Arena. This enclosed and hi-tech stadium ensures an electric atmosphere at home games which even tourists unfamiliar with the sports can thoroughly enjoy!

## Ski Portal

A key attraction for visitors is the city's role as a gateway to the many winter sports resorts that Colorado offers. These include household names like Aspen, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Vail as well as many smaller local resorts. Some of these, like Loveland ([www.skiloveland.com](http://www.skiloveland.com)), are only a short hop from the metropolitan area. This means that Denver can serve as a stop off point to visit en route to or from the mountains or even act as the base from which daily excursions can be made to local resorts for those who wish to enjoy the exhilaration of the slopes – ensuring that the trip offers something for all members of the family.





**Where to Stay**

Known as the Grand Dame of Denver hotels, the Brown Palace Hotel and Spa is the ultimate iconic choice for luxury lodging in Denver. Originally built in 1892 for what at the time was the princely sum of over \$2 million, this imposing hotel is faced with local Colorado granite and red sandstone. Such quality construction, as well as unique features such as its eight-storey triangular atrium topped by an Italian renaissance style stained glass ceiling and the golden onyx lobby decor, have earned it a listing in the US National Historic Register of landmark architectural edifices.

Spread over two stories and over 5,000 feet, the hotel's spa offers the full range of treatments to be expected from a five star venue as well as some custom therapies specifically designed for Colorado's climate, including special soaks in water drawn from the hotel's own artesian well. Just the spot to recharge after a long flight or before returning following a ski trip.

It will come as no surprise that the hotel has hosted a broad selection of celebrities over its illustrious history ranging from US presidents and world leaders to stars of the music and film worlds. Tours are available (on a



**“ THE BROWN PALACE  
HOTEL AND SPA IS  
THE ULTIMATE ICONIC  
CHOICE FOR LUXURY  
LODGING IN DENVER ”**

complimentary basis for guests) to give an insight into its history and some of the landmark events which shaped it.

Situated in the heart of the downtown area, the hotel is perfectly located for visitors wishing to explore the many aspects of this city. However, the hotel is very much a destination in its own right, with a broad range of dining and entertainment options. Foremost among these is dinner in the Palace Arms restaurant, winner of numerous awards. It's main dining room is adorned with a range of original Napoleonic memorabilia, including his duelling pistols!

Mark Browne was a guest of the Brown Palace Hotel and Spa. ●



## STANHOPE'S FESTIVE DELIGHTS



As the City of Brussels introduces its 23rd Winter Wonders celebration on November 24th, the Stanhope Hotel stands ready to weave its own magical tapestry for guests seeking a memorable festive experience.

Nestled between Brussels' historical center and the European quarter, the Stanhope Hotel decorates its halls with enchanting Christmas decorations, fostering an ambiance that invites you to savor hot chocolate or mulled wine by the crackling chimney.

To make the holiday stay even more delightful, the hotel offers exclusive room rates, including complimentary upgrades to Club Rooms coupled with breakfast, early check-in, and late check-out. Designed by renowned interior architects, every corner exudes elegance and a welcoming charm, inviting guests to unwind and create cherished memories.

One of the highlights of this festive season is the Christmas ornaments workshop curated by Margaux Baert, a local paper artist and craft designer. Scheduled for December 6th from 6 pm to 9 pm in the lobby, this exclusive session promises an opportunity for guests to craft their own holiday masterpieces. These personalized artworks can be taken home, and guests are invited to pen their wishes for 2024 on our

Wish-Tree, adorning the lobby with hopes and aspirations.

For a truly magical experience, the Stanhope Hotel invites guests to its Winter Garden – an oasis of indulgence. Whether it's savoring oysters and champagne at the bar or warming up with a cup of homemade mulled wine, the Winter Garden provides the perfect backdrop for festive celebrations.

As the holiday season unfolds, Stanhope Hotel stands as more than just a place to stay; it's a festive haven where luxury, warmth, and celebration converge.

Join us and be part of the magic!





# Bernard-Massard: Where heritage meets innovation

**Catherine Feore** visited Luxembourg to meet one of its finest producers of sparkling wine

Founded in 1921 by Jean Bernard, the family wine business located in Grevenmacher in Luxembourg is steeped in a rich history and a wine tradition anchored in excellence. Having first mastered the traditional method of making sparkling wines in the cellars of Champagne, Jean Bernard brought his know-how back to Luxembourg. Bernard-Massard adopted the traditional method and applied it to the grapes cultivated on the banks of the Mosel (Mosel) in Luxembourg. Like Champagne, Bernard-Massard's crémant is a cuvée; the four principle grapes used in Luxembourgish crémant are: Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Riesling and Pinot Noir.



production exceeding three million bottles, Bernard-Massard stands out as the leading wine producer in Luxembourg, proudly perpetuating the legacy of its ancestors through innovation, quality and exceptional products.

In 1923, Massard died only two years after founding the company. The Clasen family, who were a major investor in the original business, took up the reins and in homage to the founder kept the name which is the combination of his name and that of his wife Anne Massard. Today, with an annual



## “ BERNARD-MASSARD STANDS OUT AS THE LEADING WINE PRODUCER IN LUXEMBOURG ”

Bernard-Massard also makes still wines, Riesling is particularly close to Antoine Clasen's heart, most notably their Clos de Rocher wines: "Riesling, which is my favourite grape, it is very versatile, you can make sparkling wines, sweet wines, dry whites and terroir wines." Over lunch we enjoyed a delightful Pinot Blanc, Clasen says that the land where this was cultivated lends itself to making a potentially very fine Pinot Noir. There are constantly plans afoot!

"Still wines from Luxembourg aren't exported a lot," he says. "It's a pity because the quality is very high, but the producers are just not well known. I recommend visiting the different producers."

Returning to sparkling wines, which is their speciality, Clasen says: "Our cuvée is a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Riesling et Pinot Noir, occasionally we might even use Pinot Gris. Chardonnay and Pinot

Noir are two of the typical grapes used in Champagne; Riesling and Pinot Blanc are very typical of Luxembourg. We combine them and reproduce the taste that we have created from the year before, it's a mixture of different varieties and different vintages."

We were introduced to the entire process, from start to finish. Picking the grapes we were given strict instructions to be ruthless, the slightest sign of damage and the grapes were rejected. For Clasen, rigorous quality control in the picking process is axiomatic to the quality of the final product. After the Second World War they used an approach similar to Champagne where they bought grapes and produced the wines; however, since the eighties they started buying parcels of land. They still work with trusted wine growers, but for some wines, such as their organic sparkling wine, they take full responsibility for the harvest.





“ I’M NOT LOOKING  
FOR THE EXTREME  
BRIOCHE NOTES,  
I LIKE TO KEEP SOME  
OF THE FRUITINESS ”



Bernard-Massard are also importers of premium wines into Luxembourg: “When you are a wine producer you often say your wine is the best, when you keep an open mind and exchange with others you can learn so much and make your own wines even better.” Visiting a producer in Bordeaux, Clasen noted that they used large wooden barrels for some of their production. This allows for some micro-oxidation. Clasen says he doesn’t like a wood taste in sparkling wines, but by using very large wooden barrels you can give a wine a bit more complexity. On average the wines are left for 24 months.

Clasens like wines that are low in alcohol and high in acidity: “I’m not looking for the extreme brioche notes you find in some Champagnes, I like to keep some of the fruitiness, it’s always a balance.”

The quality is astounding, add a price tag that is affordable and you can enjoy a very festive season without compromise. Together recommends the Bernard-Massard, Crémant du Luxembourg cuvée 1921; Bernard-Massard, «Organic»; Bernard-Massard «Artisan»; and, Riesling, Clos des Rochers, Grevenmacher Fels, Moselle Luxembourgeoise, Grand Premier Cru.

To learn more: [www.bernard-massard.lu](http://www.bernard-massard.lu)

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# Pierre Marcolini - 'Noël Givré'

**Catherine Feore** gives a warm welcome to the great chocolatier's frosty collection



When Marcolini started his atelier in 1995 he was determined to do things differently. He wanted subtle infusions, deep spicy notes and chocolates that were no larger than 15-20g in size. He is a pioneer of the bean-to-bar movement, mastering the entire process of manufacturing chocolate from the bean onwards.

When sourcing his Grands Crus cocoa he goes directly to independent producers in Cuba, Indonesia, India, Sao Tome & Principe, Peru, Venezuela, Madagascar and even China. The cocoa's natural flavours are allowed to bloom, there is little added and with his pralines they are beautifully balanced with other flavours. "There are as many differences between cocoa beans as there are

between the grapes of different vineyards," says Marcolini. "There are nuances that can only be discovered by going to the source: whether that is Ecuador, Cuba, or Peru."

There is also a strong ethical dimension to the brand. Producers who work with Marcolini sign a charter forbidding the use of child labour, unfortunately this is widespread elsewhere. So you can enjoy the chocolate with a clear conscience. There is also a commitment not to use glyphosate in the growing process, instead making use of natural herbicides. Each batch of beans is tested by an independent organization. Growers also committed to biodiversity by not using the high producing CCN-51 cocoa tree, to make this attractive to the farmers

Marcolini pays €4,000 per tonne of cocoa beans - more than double the market price.

Other ingredients, such as pink berries from Morocco, pistachios from Iran, Sichuan pepper, vanilla from Madagascar, lemon from Sicily, cinnamon from Ceylon and Piedmont hazelnuts are also meticulously sourced making his chocolates stand out from the crowd.

With his Christmas collection, Marcolini has outdone himself yet again. The collection entitled "Noël Givré" is a play on the word givré, meaning frosty, but also a little crazy. It's partly nostalgic with traditional seasonal flavours of cinnamon, gingerbread, hazelnut, pistachio and candied orange, beautifully presented in boxes depicting mischievous little behatted elves. There is also a wonderful gourmet Advent Calendar to count down the days to Christmas.



Pierre Marcolini © Anne Combaz



**“ ‘NOËL GIVRÉ’ IS A PLAY ON THE WORD GIVRÉ, MEANING FROSTY, BUT ALSO A LITTLE CRAZY ”**



There's also a more sophisticated collection of "Malline Rare Japanese Whiskies". For those of you who know your Japanese whiskies, they are: Nikka Coffey Malt, Nikka Miyagikyo Single Malt, Togouchi Kiwami, The Chita, Suntory Toki and the Yamazaki Distiller's Reserve. Each of these are paired immaculately with caramel or a praline and other subtle tones of ginger, smoked piemont praline, cardamon, to name a few. At Together we can't think of anything more perfect than sitting down beside the fire on a cold winter's evening, with a glass of whisky in one hand and a delicious chocolate in the other. ❶



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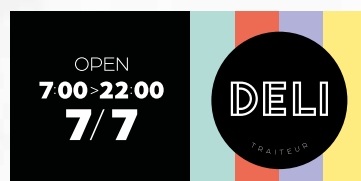
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Dining

## Jardin des Olives

**Catherine Feore** visits a bistro  
in the heart of the city

In the protected historic Saint Jacques district, more known for its bars than its restaurants, you will find the Jardin des Olives (rue du Marché au Charbon 100). Diagonally opposite the Notre-Dame de Bon Secours Church; it is a surprising find, just two minutes from Grand Place.



The restaurant takes its name from rue du Jardin des Olives, a very old Brussels street which can be found in the city's annals as early as 1358. In the Middle Ages, a pious man reconstituted the Garden of Olives along the first wall of Brussels, thus inspiring the name.

In 2018, Nancy Delsanne and Grégory Huon fell under the spell of this unique neighbourhood. They created a wine bar and a delicatessen. Then in May 2021, when most were reeling from the impact of the pandemic, they took on a second address, to create this small, creative bistro.

**“ NANCY DELSANNE  
AND GRÉGORY HUON  
FELL UNDER THE  
SPELL OF THIS UNIQUE  
NEIGHBOURHOOD ”**

The wine bar, which opens only on Friday and Saturday evenings, offers an interesting wine list mainly focused on organic and natural wines, including a good Belgian selection. Also on the menu, are a selection of Brussels craft beers, without forgetting a few cocktails including a Belgian Negroni.

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The Jardin des Olives menu is very eclectic. The kitchen is led by British chef Matthew Woollard, who has many years of experience, including at the prestigious Reform Club, a private members club at the heart of the British establishment. When he first came to Brussels he saw a gap between good traditional brasserie restaurants and Michelin starred restaurants. Woollard is passionate about food, all kinds of food. He tells me that he's kept the menu short (4 starters/4 mains/2 desserts). The kitchen is pretty small and having a concise menu is a way to maintain quality. Nevertheless, there's an incredible choice that touches on many different culinary traditions. The menu also changes on a regular basis, Woollard is restless and you feel his overflowing creativity demands this.



I ask Woollard what's in store for the next menu; without a note in sight he rhymes off what he's planning. His enthusiasm is contagious, he says there will be muscles in a Champagne sauce, with a potato mouse, seaweed crisps and warm brioche; confit belly of lamb served with a sweet and sour apricot sauce, fermented radish and a bouquet garnet of herbs in a pancake; a scotch egg and black pudding with kohlrabi remoulade; and a Japanese-style miso glazed aubergine with cucumber, chilli, tofu and cashew nut. That's just the starters, the mains and desserts are similarly tantalizing, for example, there's a filet of trout cooked in a Sandefjord sauce (lemon, fish eggs and dill) served with crushed new potatoes, fennel and crevettes grises for a main.

Jardin des Olives is a welcome - and much needed - addition to the sometimes rather jaded dining options in the centre of Brussels.

[www.jardindesolives.be](http://www.jardindesolives.be) ①

## Lily's restaurant & club

A year after it opened its doors **Catherine Feore** visits a restaurant with a lot of swagger



When the news hit the street that the Litvine Society had taken over Callen's Café, we knew that transformation was in store. Lily's, which opened in November 2022, is part of the family's ever growing empire of restaurants including Villa Lorraine (\*\*), La Villa in the Sky (\*), Da Mimmo, Odette en Ville, Lola, Le Variétés and Voltaire. The project to reinvigorate the space was achieved under the gaze of the Litvine children: Vladimir, Tatiana and Sasha. While the group came up with the concept of a restaurant and club, they worked with the 'of-the-moment' Israeli designer Saar Zafrir to help realize their vision.

*Together* went to explore for lunch, which is served in the pergola. It's hard to imagine in November, but in summer the roof can open so you can enjoy the glory (fingers



crossed) of the Belgian summer. For autumn, we looked out on the Jardins de l'Abbaye de la Cambre where the foliage was in full transformation. It's nice to eat in natural light at lunchtime, the space is comfortable and stylish. With a quick - and hopefully unobtrusive - glance I took in the lunchtime clientele, it was a mixture of quiet business huddles and also (adult) family groups. Yes, Lily's is explicitly catering for the grown-ups and can we just say 'hurrah!' to that.



## “ THIS WAS TRULY GRANDIOSE IN STYLE AND FLAVOUR ”

I spoke to one of the chefs who explained the approach to the menu, it is both classic and open to the world. Among more traditional dishes, there is a confit lamb served with za'atar, tzatziki, smoked aubergine caviar and salsa verde; korean lamb bao; and, ceviche of sea bass and tiger prawns with passion fruit, citrus, mango, avocado and red onions. When I asked if the clientele liked this more adventurous menu, I was told that the ceviche has become one of their “incontournables” - essentials.

For the starter I had the Saint Jacques with pumpkin and truffle (potimarron, jus corsé, émulsion truffle). The challenge here is the balance, the Saint Jacques must be just cooked and the truffle needs to be there, but not overpowering; I ordered it with a certain amount of trepidation knowing that this is the equivalent of the circus tightrope act.



It was perfection. My companion chose an ‘apéro’ of calamar frits, which passed his critical test of being tender without having the slightest hint of rubberiness. For the main course we shared the Cote à l’Os Holstein, served with confits cherry tomatoes and Lily’s fries. This was truly grandiose in style and flavour. We ordered glasses of wine, a nice Bordeaux; but the wine list is impressive, with Italian wines being particularly well represented.

Where Zafrir’s touch is most present is in the inside, set aside for the evening; it feels like one is on the set of Mad Men, with bucket chairs and closely set tables, it is plush, has a bit of swagger and oodles of style. This is a place to see and to be seen. As one would expect there is a fantastic list of cocktails and you can continue the evening behind a secret door into the Speakeasy. Scorsese would love it!

Finally, the staff at every point are professional; from the entrance to the exit, there is a seamless and relaxed atmosphere.

[www.lilys.be](http://www.lilys.be)

# Hadrien

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What's on

# Isabelle de Borchgrave: An ode to elegance through the art of paper

**Nicholas Sirot** visits the exhibition of recent work by this singular Belgian artist



*'Pleated circus' Isabelle de Borchgrave - Photos © Michel Figuet*

In the world of contemporary art, there are artists who follow trends, and then there are those who create them. Isabelle de Borchgrave is among a handful of artists who can be described as a visionary. Through her incredible works, she transports us into a realm where fashion, history, and art blend with striking harmony.

Throughout her life de Borchgrave has dedicated her talent and creativity to pushing the boundaries of artistic creation. Her most renowned work to date was her *Papiers à*

**“DE BORCHGRAVE  
IS AMONG A HANDFUL  
OF ARTISTS WHO  
CAN BE DESCRIBED  
AS A VISIONARY”**

*la Mode* where she covered 'a mere' 400 years of fashion history from Elizabeth I to Coco Chanel - an artistic feat that is breathtaking in scale and astounding in what can

be achieved with this most simple of materials. More recently, the success of *Miradas de Mujeres* (Women's Gaze) exhibition in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts received wide critical acclaim. The artist took inspiration from Frida Kahlo, with whom she shares a love of fabric, patterns and colours. Both project the same energy and passion: in a sense, it is a contemplation of one artist by another.

The latest exhibition of recent works returns to paintings on pleated paper, bronze furniture and decorative objects. We are reminded that de Borchgrave's work isn't only for museums! Bursts of colour, textures and materials light up the gallery. Despite first appearances this work is not a complete departure from her other work inspired by costumes and clothing. The pleating itself is inspired by the textiles and design of Mariano Fortuny who has also been a great inspiration. There is much debate about the line between artist and artisan, in de Borchgrave's world the two are merged seamlessly together.

Speaking to the artist at the opening (the short interview will be available in the online version) de Borchgrave says that her passion for art started at an early age. She left school at 14 to study drawing for three years without using colour at all, waving an arm at the paintings behind her she points to her paintings bursting with colour: "we see the result!". She has been inspired by the galleries and museums, she cites Vuillard, Bonnard and Matisse as strong influences.

Talking about her latest works she says that her paintings are often influenced by her travels, but this year she didn't travel and instead took inspiration from her surroundings and atelier. One pain-



*'Plissé hasard' Isabelle de Borchgrave*

**“BURSTS OF COLOUR,  
TEXTURES AND  
MATERIALS LIGHT UP  
THE GALLERY”**



*'Plissé bouquet' Isabelle de Borchgrave*



What's on

“THIS COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS ARE PERSONAL INTERPRETATIONS THAT BREATHE LIFE INTO THE WORLD AROUND US”

ting was inspired by observing three small pastels, where looking closely she saw the similarities with nature, with rocks. Like all her works, this collection of paintings are personal interpretations that breathe life into the world around us, and what a wonderful world hers is.

Her latest creations will be showcased at her studio, located at 73a



Isabelle de Borchgrave



'Plissé bleu' Isabelle de Borchgrave

Chaussée de Vleurgat, from 20 October to 16 December; an opportunity to (re)discover the unique universe she has crafted in the heart of the city, a hidden gem.

And one last note, if you are looking for presents, you can find a small collection of items designed by de Borchgrave, from Ginkgo necklaces and bracelets to beautiful garden furniture on her website: [www.isabelledeborchgrave.com](http://www.isabelledeborchgrave.com)

1

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# The Avant-garde in Georgia (1900-1936)



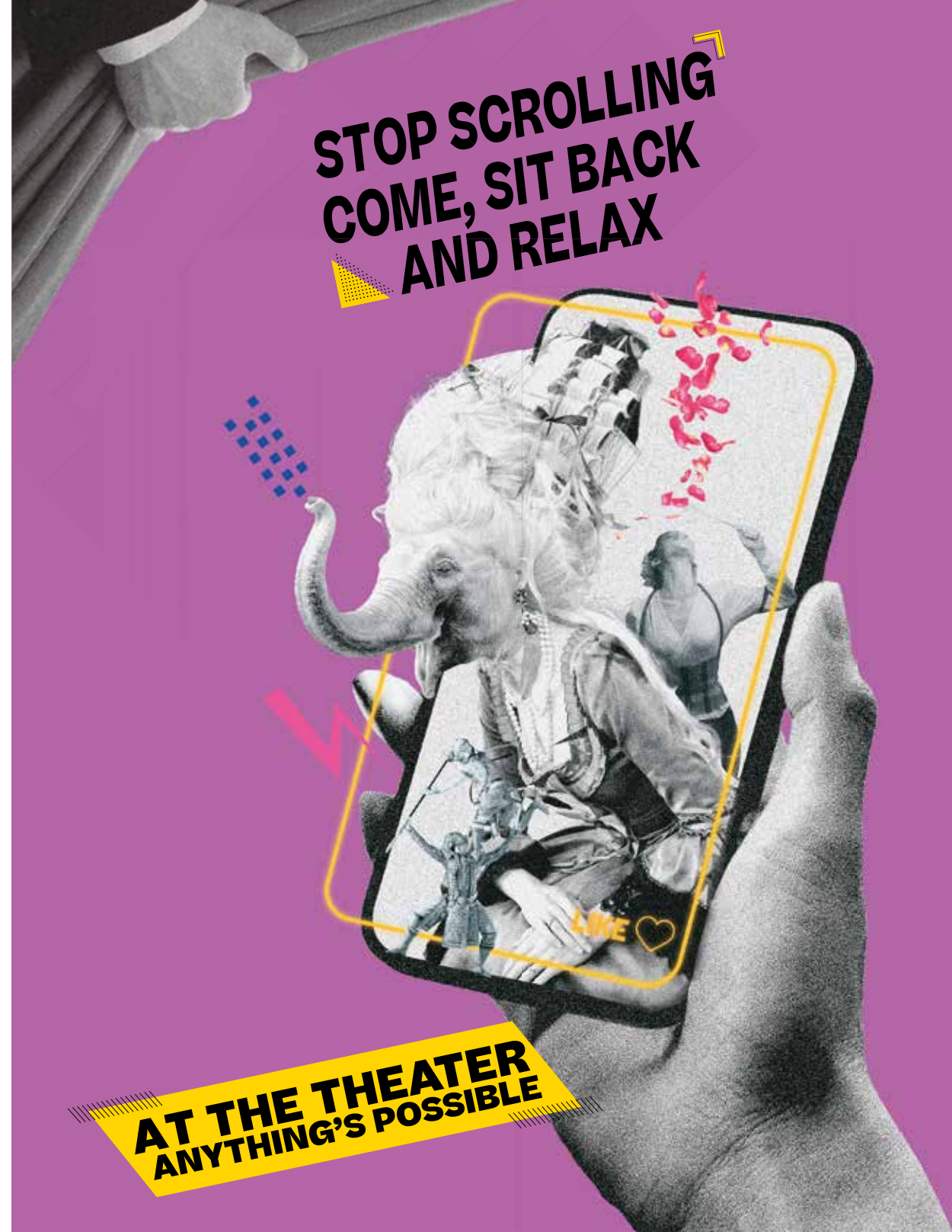
Irakli Gamrekeli, Set design for Ernst Toller's *Play Masses Man* © Art Palace of Georgia - Museum of Cultural History, Tbilisi

The exhibition 'The Avant-garde in Georgia (1900-1936)' opens as part of the Europalia Georgia festival with a presentation of a largely forgotten chapter in the history of European avant-garde art.

For the first time in Europe, the Georgian avant-garde is presented and contextualized through more than 150 works, including drawings, paintings, photographs,

artists' publications, theatre and cinema décors, coming mainly from the Georgian Museum of Fine Arts, the Art Palace of Georgia, the David Kakabadze Foundation and private collections. The curators of the exhibition are Nana Kipiani, Irine Jorjadze and Tea Tabatadze.

In the global turbulence that followed the fall of the Russian Empire and the October



Find Brussels' complete theatre calendar here





Petre Otskheli, *The Fire Starters*, 1927  
© Art Palace of Georgia - Museum of Cultural History

Revolution, Georgia declared independence in 1918. This enchanted interlude lasted only a short time before the Soviet invasion of 1921. Nevertheless, it allowed an abundance of inspiring avant-garde creations to unfold. It was notably among the many taverns and cafés in Kutaisi and in the capital, Tbilisi, that artists met, gathered and organized multidisciplinary events that gave shape to new artistic practices that redefined the general viewpoint on life. This can still be seen on the walls of cafes to this day.

The numerous collaborations took many forms and mixed Georgian traditions with Western and Eastern influences. They interacted in paintings, drawings, writing, films, photographs, performances, typogra-

phical experimentations, publishing books and theatre pieces. Movements as diverse as (Neo-)Symbolism, Futurism, Dadaism, Zaum, Everythingism, Expressionism, Cubo-Futurism all coexisted in an unprecedented creative effervescence.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the circulation of people and ideas intensified with an increasingly cosmopolitan Georgian society. Symbolism found literary expression in Grigol Robakidze's works and in the Blue Horns group. Works by painters Gigo Gabashvili and Alexander von Salzmannfed show the influence of exchanges with other international centres of creativity, particularly with St. Petersburg, Paris and Munich.

This was the case for Shalva Kikodze and brothers Kirile and Ilia Zdanevich, the latter of whom disseminated Futurist theories that led to the formation of the 41° group. As the artistic laboratory of the Caucasus, Tbilisi was also a place of refuge for Rus-



Kirille Zdanevich, *Sketch for the play Maelstrom*, 1924  
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## What's on

sian artists fleeing the civil war such as Sergey Sudeikin, Igor Terentiev and Aleksei Kruchenykh. Influenced by Mikhail Le Dan-tu, the Zdanevich brothers discovered and promoted the work of the self-taught painter Niko Pirosmiani, who was soon to become an example for many avant-garde artists.

In 1921, the enchanted interlude ended in Georgia with the Soviet invasion followed by annexation to the USSR in 1922. The Soviet authorities put pressure on artists and imposed the aesthetic principles of socialist realism. To circumvent these injunctions, avant-garde artists such as Irakli Gamrekeli, Petre Otskheli, Elene Akhvlediani, Kirile Zdanevich and David Kakabadze continued their practice by creating scenographies,

costumes and décors for theatre and cinema, areas in which avant-garde ideas could still develop for a while.

Under Stalin and the Soviet regime many artists were deported and executed while others emigrated, committed suicide, or adapted their work under political pressure. Artist Ilia Zdanevich (also known as Iliadze) did not return to Georgia and continued his activities in Paris, collaborating with Sonia Delaunay. Through his publishing house, *41°*, he also produced some of the most beautiful artists' books of the twentieth century, for which he collaborated among others with Picasso, and Max Ernst.

*Bozar to 14 January*

## Georgia: A Story of Encounters

The Art & History Museum (Brussels), will bring together unseen treasures from museums throughout Georgia, providing fascinating insights into this complex region, and testifying to multiple cultural exchanges and migrations, starting from the Neolithic era. These include Georgia's wine culture – the oldest in the world – and the forging of (precious) materials, which attracted diverse cultures to the region and created unique cross-pollinations.

*Art & History Museum to 14 January*

*Torso of a young man, Colchis, 200-100 BC, Georgian National Museum © Robb Harrel, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution*

# Enjoy the moment

02.12.23

Etienne Daho

16.12.23

Florence Foresti

01.02.24

Les Etoiles Du Cirque De Pékin

from 02.02.24

Michel Sardou

08.02.24

Véronic DiCaire

10.02.24

Laura Pausini

from 17.02.24

Disney On Ice

31.03.24

Mika

19.04.24

Stars 80

17.05.24

The Show, A Tribute to ABBA

from 28.05.24

Patrick Bruel

12.10.24

L'Héritage Goldman

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What's on



Tsotne © Nino Chakvetadze

### Tsotne Zedginidze

Europalia Georgia also has a rich musical programme including the latest wunderkind Tsotne Zedginidze. Born in 2009, Zedginidze has already received the recognition of some of the greatest musicians of our time including Daniel Barenboim and Giya Kancheli who called him one of the most exceptionally gifted musicians of the century. He began composing (for ensembles as well as orchestras) at the age of five and became increasingly interested in 20th and 21st century music during his studies. He will perform a programme of Schubert's 4 Impromptus and his own piece Dolorem (Tristesse) on 10 December.

### Sukhishvili Ballet

The famous Sukhishvili ballet, composed of around fifty artists, dancers and musicians, has been preserving authentic Georgian dance traditions for 75 years and continues to captivate audiences around the world. The history of the country unfolds before our eyes. A history of struggle and suffering but also of heroism and hope. The company will be performing over two evenings. Not to be missed!

Le Manège Maubeuge, 13 December; Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles, 14 December

For more information on the full programme please visit:

[www.europalia.eu](http://www.europalia.eu) 



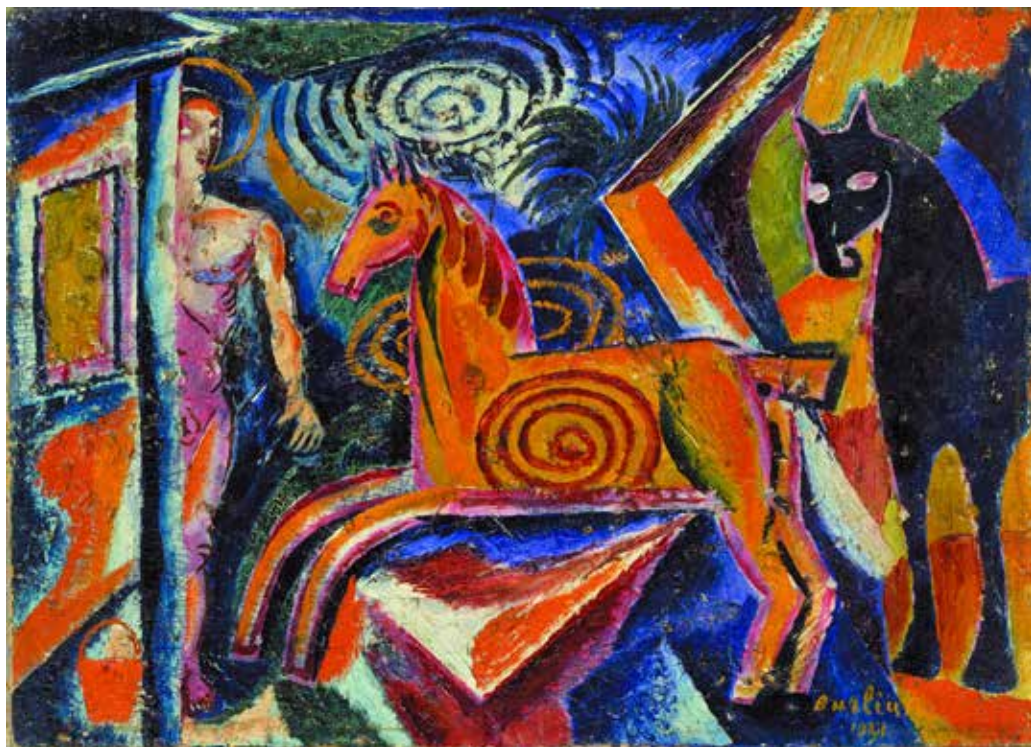
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# In the Eye of the Storm : Modernism in Ukraine 1900-1930s



Davyd Burliuk (1882–1967), *Carousel* (1921), National Art Museum of Ukraine

The modernist movement in Ukraine unfolded against a complicated socio-political backdrop of collapsing empires, World War I, the revolutions of 1917 with the ensuing short-lived independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (1917–1920), and the eventual establishment of Soviet Ukraine. Despite such political turmoil, this became a period of true renaissance in Ukrainian art, literature, theatre, and cinema.

During this pivotal period, the Ukrainian national identity developed, particularly through culture, before being threatened by Stalinist repression. The exhibition features over 60 works that bear witness to Ukrainian resilience and creativity in times of turmoil. The works range from figurative art to socialist realism, cubism, and constructivism.



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satellite television, free WIFI, safe, fridge and bathroom with shower or bath.

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What's on



Alexandra Exter, *Three Female Figures*, oil on canvas, 1909-1910, National Art Museum of Ukraine

The new exhibition at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium reveals the development of the Ukrainian avant-garde amidst major historical changes. Most of the paintings, gouaches, watercolours, and other temperas have been loaned by two major Kyiv-based institutions: the National Art Museum of Ukraine (NAMU) and the Museum of Theatre, Music and Cinema of Ukraine.

The exhibition brings together works by artists such as Kazymyr Malevych, Alexandra Exter and El Lissitzky, as well as by

**“ THE WORKS  
RANGE FROM  
FIGURATIVE ART TO  
SOCIALIST REALISM,  
CUBISM, AND  
CONSTRUCTIVISM ”**

lesser-known figures, including Oleksandr Bohomazov, Sarah Shor and Mykhailo Boichuk, all of whom have left an indelible mark on the country's art and culture.

*In the Eye of the Storm* paints a vivid picture of the very active Ukrainian art scene at the beginning of the 20th century and offers an eye-opening experience of the enduring power of art in the face of adversity.



Anatol Petrytskyi, *Costume Design for the Production of Lesia Ukrainka's Play 'In the Catacombs' (1921)*, The Museum of Theatre, Music and Cinema of Ukraine



Tymofii Boichuk (1896 - 1922), *Women under the Apple Tree* (1920), National Art Museum of Ukraine

To safeguard them during the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the works were evacuated from Kyiv on 15 November 2022, a delicate operation that had been weeks in the making. The convoy carefully avoided passing close to targets likely to be attacked along the way to the border with Poland. It was a dangerous exfiltration, carefully orchestrated by Museums for Ukraine, an initiative founded by Baroness Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza to provide much needed assistance to museums, curators, and artists in the war zone. After being welcomed in Madrid (at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza) and Cologne (at the Ludwig Museum), the precious convoy has arrived in Brussels, where it will remain until 28 January before heading for Vienna (at the Belvedere Museum) and London (Royal Academy of Arts).

Royal Museums of Fine Arts, to 28 January ❶



# 'A painting is not a picture of an experience, it is an experience'



Mark Rothko 'Light Cloud Dark Cloud' (1957)

The Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris presents its first retrospective dedicated to Mark Rothko (1903-1970) since the exhibition held at the musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1999. The retrospective brings together some 115 works from the largest international institutional and private collections, including the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., the artist's family, and the Tate in London.

Displayed chronologically, the exhibition traces the artist's entire career: from his earliest figurative paintings to the abstract works that he is most known for today. The works fill ten rooms and four levels. The exhibition opens with intimate scenes and urban landscapes - such as visions of the New York subway - that dominate Rothko's output in the 1930s, before he turned to ancient myths and surrealism to express the

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GOING PLACES TOGETHER



Left to right: Mark Rothko Untitled (1969) - Sculptures Alberto Giacometti: 'L'homme qui marche' (1960), Grande Femme (1960)

tragic dimension of the human condition during the War.

From 1946, Rothko moves towards abstraction expressionism. The first phase of this switch is that of Multiforms, where chromatic masses are suspended in a kind of equilibrium on the canvas. Gradually, these decrease in number, and the spatial organi-

zation of his painting evolves rapidly towards Rothko's "classic" works of the 1950s, where rectangular shapes overlap, characterized by shades of yellow, red, ochre, orange, but also blue, white...

In 1958, Rothko was commissioned to produce a set of wall paintings for the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building



Left to right: Mark Rothko 'Ochre and Red on Red' (1954) - 'Orange and Red on Red' (1957)





Mark Rothko 'Slow Swirl at the Edge of the Sea' (1944)


in New York. Rothko later decided not to deliver the paintings and kept the entire series. Eleven years later, he dedicated them to the Tate, which created a room to display them. Exceptionally, this series are included in the exhibition.

Rothko's son Christopher is a co-curator of the exhibition and cites his father's comment to Life magazine, 'A painting is not a picture of an experience, it is an experience': "My father's well-known statement makes explicit not only the actuality

of his work, but the central role of the viewer in the work's purpose." His son says that Rothko made his paintings as direct and genuine as possible to the viewer.

The painter's final Black and Grey series is displayed in the tallest room in the Frank Gehry building, alongside Alberto Giacometti's large-scale sculptural figures, creating an environment that is close to what Rothko had in mind for a UNESCO commission that was never realized.

Post-minimalist British/German composer and pianist Max Richter has been appointed as artist in residency for the exhibition, he has a strong affinity with the painter - comparing how Rothko's concept of place works well with the imaginary landscape of music.

The exhibition continues to 1 April 2024  
[www.fondationlouisvuitton.fr](http://www.fondationlouisvuitton.fr) 



Mark Rothko 'Self Portrait' (1936)

# The best of the big screen

**James Drew** makes his pick of films to watch in the coming weeks



## The Miracle Club

Drawing on the undoubted talents of actresses Maggie Smith and Kathy Bates, this warm and moving comedy drama sees Lily (Smith) and Eileen (Bates) win the trip of a lifetime - to travel to the French town of Lourdes, famous for its miracles. Set in 1967, in the impoverished Dublin community of Ballygar, the pair are delighted when they win a church talent competition, for a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Just before their trip, their old friend Chrissie (Laura Linney) arrives in Ballygar for her mother's funeral, casting a pall over their good mood. With Smith and Bates very much in charge here, there's likely to be a great deal to appreciate. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, who made December Bride (1991), directs. *Running time: 90 minutes.*

## Napoleon

This year has very much been one of the biopic, with Napoleon, by legendary director Ridley Scott, looking set to follow in the footsteps of the truly excellent Oppenheimer. Written by David Scarpa (All the Money in the World (2017)) and based on Napoleon's rise to power and fall, and detailing his volatile relationship with Empress Josephine (Vanessa Kirby), Oscar winner Joaquin Phoenix stars as the man of destiny, in what is set to be a truly spectacular epic. Previously the role has been played by Rod Steiger (Waterloo, 1970) who set the bar, but Scott, Scarpa and Phoenix will doubtless be wanting to claim this territory. *Running time: 157 minutes.*



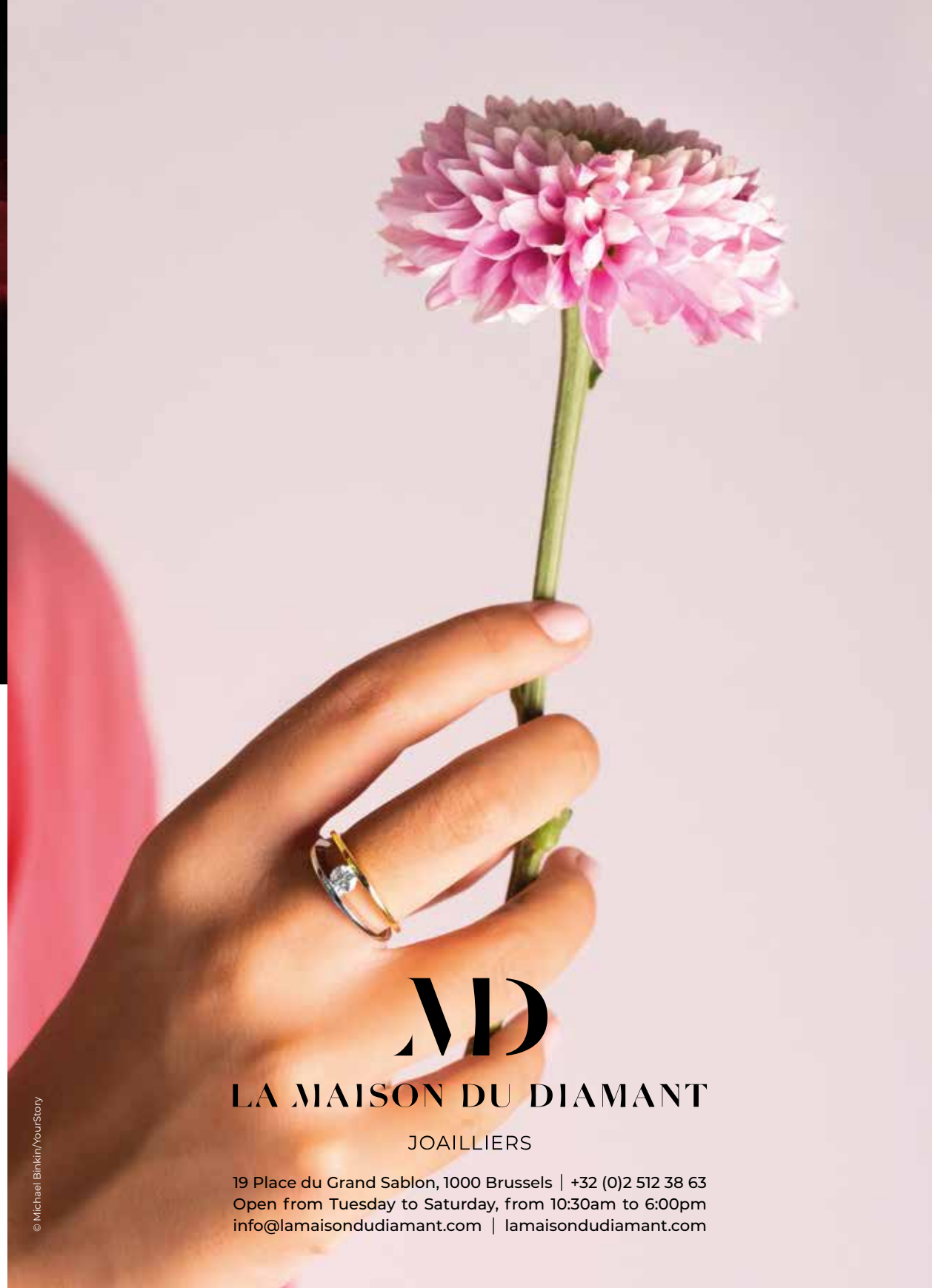


### Butcher's Crossing

It has been a while, but it would look like Nicolas Cage is finally turning in a good, even very good, performance in this powerful story about buffalo hunters in the Old West. Based on the classic novel by John Williams, *Butcher's Crossing*, who was a strong influence on writers like Cormac McCarthy. Directed by Gabe Polsky (*Red Penguins* (2019)), the film is a commentary on human nature, ambition and manhood. Will Andrews (Fred Hechinger) has left Harvard to find fulfillment, and he teams up with Miller (Cage), a frontiersman offering a huge number of buffalo pelts in a hidden valley. The men will be up against it, on a harrowing journey into the very worst that nature, and each other, can throw at them. *Running time: 105 minutes.*

### And the King Said, What a Fantastic Machine

An audacious and daring documentary, detailing mankind's progress (or is it?) from the first camera to 45 billion cameras worldwide today, visual sociologist writers and filmmakers Axel Danielson and Maximilien Van Aertryck take a journey into the past, present and future to chart humanity's unique obsession with the camera's image and the social consequences that may lie ahead. The film takes its title from the enthusiastic reaction of King Edward VII of England to Georges Méliès' staged recreation of his coronation (1902), and it is all about the way the camera has been used in its almost 200 years of existence. Definitely one to watch, get it. *Running time: 88 minutes.*



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