

# BIENVENUE

AUSSI POUR EMPORTER

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TEL 21.14.40  
**JS**  
GLACE

*Soft Carwash*  
**DODANE**

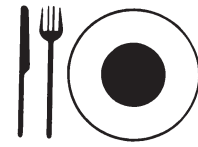


**ZEN CAR**  
Spécialiste tuning AUTO - MOTO et QUAD  
Specialist in tuning AUTO - MOTO

@  
**ABIR**  
CALL SHOP

TELEPHONE @ INTERNET

*chez momo*



RESTAURATION

DA TONY

Avis

**A  
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S**

ALEX CARS  
AANKOOP - VERKOOP  
24h-24h  
IMPORT - EXPORT

**ASTRA  
NAIL'S**

*meubles de bureau*

## Après La Mort, La Vie Continue Non Stop.

**BRIGHT  
NIGHT**  
Night Shop

**CHALET DU  
SANS FOND**

SALLE POUR  
BANQUETS  
ET RETOUR  
DE DEUIL

RESERVATION  
067/55.25.56

**Physical  
WORLD**

**AU DELICE**

BOULANGERIE - PATISSERIE  
BOULANGERIE AU DELICE PATISSERIE



*Le Prince*

1  
8  
6

**FRITUUR**

LAS VEGAS 2

LAS VEGAS 2



**BUROBRO**

**KINDKENS**

# GRILLES

**BE**  
**Sécurité**  
sprl



!!! ALIMENTATION **IDEAL** VOEDING !!!  
LES PRIX LES PLUS FOUS  
**IDEAL**

## Sandwichs A GOGO

**I'M A RAMBLER  
I'M A GAMBLER  
I'M A LONG WAY FROM HOME  
AND IF YOU DON'T LIKE ME  
THEN LEAVE ME ALONE  
I EAT WHEN I'M HUNGRY  
I'LL DRINK WHEN I'M DRY  
AND IF MOONLIGHT DON'T GET ME  
I'LL LIVE TILL I DIE**

*(Traditional)*

**The Stone Road**  
(On Track. Off Track.  
Memorising the Mid-World.  
Walking the Fifth-Space)

the artistic work and to use those links to move forward as a group. Working as a collective is a way of gaining power, exchanging ideas, creating a pool of research and artistic output and a way of remaining autonomous within the art world.

symbols of the failure of the urban web that is spreading out from major cities towards their smaller siblings. The N6 could be any road. A road is a good place to start.

"We know there are at least four other people out there doing the same thing alone. This gives us a sense of solidarity. We know it's not real walking, in the sense of going somewhere, it's not walking from Brussels to Mons or vice versa. It's walking from one thing to another thing. Walking 'to' and 'from' is a form of learning. We keep what we learn undefined for as long as possible. We are all acting undefined along the road. We only walk for ourselves, the things we walk 'from' and 'to' make us walk. Our eyes decide the direction. Our eyes make us walk." Excerpt from the AutoText written by the N6Team

**The Breathing Room**

When I envisaged this new Firefly project I thought we needed a 'breathing room' that could exist to bring a group of artists together over a long period of time without the immediate pressure of production. I built that room. It has 5 doors through which one can enter or leave at will. The main aim of this breathing room is to develop a working process and to reconsider how we function both as individual artists and as a group inside a small social space that exists inside a larger one. It is a place to test habits, measure strengths, improvise, ad lib, breathe pure oxygen. It is a place to build a group project in a state of release, to create hyperlinks in

Efficiency has no place in this room. It is a place for the rough, the chaotic and the poetic. Because the room has five doors we found our way outside, we found a road – to be precise we found the N6. The Stone Road. The people wandering on the stone road are architect Wim Cuyvers (BE), visual artists Orla Barry (IR), Els Dietvorst (BE), Johanna Kirsch (AT), Nikolaus Gansterer (AT).

As we moved along this road, some of us referred to ourselves as 'Urban Impressionists'. Others became 'Drifting Sponges'. Others walked in single file keeping on track. Our 'urban' stories are universal and exceed the concrete ugliness of the N6: they deal with walking, the individuality of our society, the growing aggression, the solitude, the hopelessness and the continued gobbling of the countryside by the concrete web.

Sometimes we come back to the breathing room, each person through his or her own door. Then we throw everything out of our pockets on to the table, we sit down and gasp... what is this Stone Road? Over the coming pages you will see a work in progress – a gathering of thoughts, texts, images and project proposals which have been developing while walking along The Stone Road and while sitting in The Breathing Room.

The national road N6 runs from Brussels to Mons, a town in Wallonia, Belgium. It used to be one of the routes to Santiago de Compostella. Now it crosses the linguistic borders of Brussels, Flanders and Wallonia. It is a trunk road laden with heavy traffic and all the typical signs of human fatigue: run-down houses and churches, deserted shops, rubbish pile-ups. The whole space is infused by a sense of desolation, a place where urban design is non-existent. Europe has many of these roads, urban trails that violently cross the countryside,

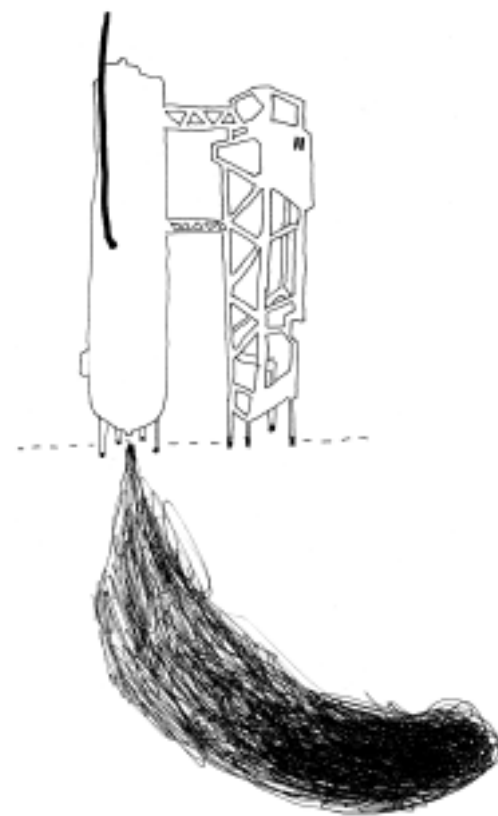
We all travelled this route numerous times since July 2006, individually walking or cycling along a road not constructed for such pursuits. Each of us progressed at their own rhythm, with their own purpose and their own box of tools.

By the repetitions and crossovers in the work the memory of the space grows and is transformed from reality into fiction or hyper-specific description. Walking becomes like sifting a certain space for existential gems and dysfunctional urban nuggets.

(O.Ba)



(N.Ga)



# IDENTITY CRISIS

**It is hot and the Chaussée is alive. I am walking along a part I know: the night shop with the young Pakistani boy and his Birmingham English, the bakery with Sunday morning croissants, the ever empty Chinese Palace, the old-style Spanish shoemaker, specializing in leather key rings, the bar with the fumes of beer and smoke, the Grand Bazaar supermarket that was burgled twice and saw two robbery attempts prevented; they say the Chaussée is a good street to undertake robberies, close to main roads, parallel with the canal and easy access to the car trade.**

Everything on this Chaussée moves quicker than I do, the cars, the girls with their prams, the motorbike boys, the papers carried by the wind. I walk and float in slow motion, hoping to grasp a word, an eye, a hand, a smile, or a human being who stops or talks.

The more I walk in unknown territories, the more my identity crisis increases. What is this fucking road, who owns it? It looks like an uncoloured dirty grey picture. It makes me unsure about everything I know. I see only lost things, things left behind, things run over, things that are in a state that is beyond death. Before me a discarded toilet that stands between two cars and looks perfectly lost. Before me two dis-

carded shoes that look as if they are still walking; the left shoe a bit behind the right one as if somebody has just disappeared into thin air. Are these the sculptures of the Chaussée? By leaving them behind you no longer feel any sense of responsibility. They belong to the street and the streetwalkers. Is this its identity? The farther I walk, the bigger my identity crisis gets and questions flash through my mind, but I do not know the answers to them.

What's the cultural identity of the Chaussée de Mons? What is the identity of Belgium? What will be the new function of churches? What if my camera breaks down? Do all men have sexual problems? Who is going to tell me a pleasant story? Why are we not walking anymore? Does art have any function on this road?



## THE WIND AND THE MAN

The wind picks up; the smells of car engines, Greek cigarettes, kebabs and dust mingle.

*continued on > page 10*

# LIGHTNING killed THE MAN, BUT THE TREE is STILL STANDING

# FROM FOUND LANDSCAPE TO FILM SET

(AVOIDING THE GIVEN TASK)

Index of typefaces and their status

**PREFACE:**

**Placenames:**

**Locations:**

1<sup>st</sup> N6 trip:

2<sup>nd</sup> N6 trip:

3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> N6 and misaleneous trips:

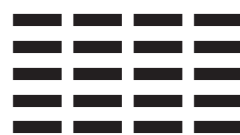
*Scenario sketches:*

Notes:

■ ■ ■ ■ ■ REWRITING BREAKS

**Note:** Dear Reader, this is a working text and should be read as such; it is a collection of notes which can be read in any order. I wrote it over a period of one year travelling up and down the N6. These are the workings, re-workings, word pile ups, sentence traffic jams and space descriptions which precede the making of a video essay called 'From Found Landscape to Film Set' depicting the N6 and its surroundings as a 'total film set'.

A film scout has been sent out to find a specific setting for a conventional film but she becomes entwined in her own search for a story. She realises gradually that there is no story to be found on this road, she is wandering a disintegrated storyless space.



**PREFACE:**

HERE IS A BLANK DOCUMENT, AT LEAST IT STARTED AS ONE: I NEVER MADE IT TO 'THE PLACE I NEVER GOT TO'

One year later and I still did not make it to 'the place I never got to'?

~~Did I ever want to reach the destination, did I ever think about the fact of whether or not I wanted to reach the destination?~~

**Note:** The place I started: The inner ring. The place I passed under: The outer ring. The place I ended up at: The outer ring of the next city before 'the place I never got to'.

I AVOIDED THE 'STONE ROAD' AS MUCH AS I COULD, OR SHOULD I SAY I COULD NOT STAY ON IT. IT'S PART OF MY PERSONALITY TO AVOID THE GIVEN TASK EVEN IF I HAVE SET THE GIVEN TASK FOR MYSELF! I HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CORRECT MYSELF... AND THAT HAS LED ME TO A SERIES OF PERPLEXING PLACES.

EVEN WHEN MY PLAN IS TO GET HOME BEFORE MIDNIGHT I END UP WANDERING... AN IMAGE ENTERS MY HEAD. AN OLD IMAGE, ABOUT 12

YEARS OLD. ONE NIGHT I END UP IN A GREEK RESTAURANT ON THE POSH SIDE OF TOWN. IT'S A PLACE FULL OF SMILING CHARMING WAITERS FEEDING ME FLAMING OUZOU. THERE ARE A LOT OF STRANGE MEN AND WOMEN TRYING TO MAKE PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH VARYING DEGREES OF INTENSITY. I'M JUST LETTING THINGS HAPPEN, NOT CONTROLLING THE SITUATION, JUST GLIDING RANDOMLY OVER THEM ALL WITH MY EYES, DEVOURING THE FREE ALCOHOL AND NOT RETURNING THE CONTACT, ONLY SMILING AND FILLING MY PUPILS WITH ALL THE MOMENT COULD GIVE.

A MOMENT NEVER LASTS LONG. BY TAKING A PASSIVE POSITION YOU TRY TO PROLONG IT BY NOT DISTURBING IT. BUT ATTEMPTING TO TAKE FROM A MOMENT WITHOUT BECOMING PART OF IT IS A DIFFICULT EXERCISE. UNEXPECTEDLY ALL THE INNUENDO MOVES TOWARDS SOMETHING MORE DEFINABLE. THIS MOMENT WHERE AMBIGUOUS MOVES TOWARDS UNAMBIGUOUS IS ALWAYS THE POINT WHERE BOREDOM OR FEAR TAKES OVER, AND FLIGHT TAKES PLACE. I WAS BRISKLY PUT BACK ON TRACK BY ONE SINGLE ACTION. IT WAS THE ACTION OF A DRUNKEN WOMAN GETTING UP ON THE LONG UNTIDY OVERFLOWING TABLE IN FRONT OF US TO DANCE. A FEW GLASSES WENT CRASHING TO THE FLOOR. HER SEXUALLY SUGGESTIVE PERFORMANCE, PLAYING TO THE MAINLY MALE AUDIENCE GOT ME MOVING. THE IMAGE WAS SORDID AND FRAMED IN AN EXPRESSIVE GOLDEN KITSCH FRAME OF DRUNKENNESS. AS THE CROWD NOTICED ME ASKING FOR MY COAT, A GREEK MAN WAS PUSHED FROM THE SIDELINES AND FORCED INTO CLOSE CONTACT WITH ME. I AWOKE FROM MY TRANCE BY THIS BRISK PHYSICAL CONTACT. I SMILED, STOOD UP, AND LEFT WITHOUT MY COAT. WHEN THE FREEZING WINTER AIR HIT MY NOSTRILS AND LATER MY BRAIN I REMEMBERED THAT I WAS ON MY WAY HOME. 'OUZOSED' I TRIED TO FIND THAT 'HOME' DIRECTION.

THAT EVENING COMES TO MIND RIGHT NOW WHEN I THINK OF MY FIRST STEPS ALONG THE N6. I WAS ON THE ROAD SOBER BUT THE DISTRACTIONS RENDER DRUNKENNESS LIKE A BLUE SCREEN RENDERS ANOTHER PLACE BEHIND AN ACTOR IN A FILM. IT IS HARD TO CONCENTRATE ON SOMETHING. I HAVE TO ESCAPE THAT SENSE OF HYPERREALITY.



**Day 1 and other days:**  
From Andytown, to Edge of Splicity and Back



# auto

# teXXXXXXxt

miss t-shirt  
mouillé

Interdit-16 ans

Inscriptions à l'entrée  
Jusque 02h00

Walking, cycling, thumping, driving and sometimes crawling, we make our way along the N6. We walk at dawn, at mid-day, at twilight, after sunset, in the evening, at night. We are amazed and agressed at the same moment. Our eyes open and close. We face on or block out what we see. Zooming in and zooming out. Time in. Time out. We are open and closed. The atmosphere dictates to us how we should act.

We know there are at least four other people out there doing the same thing alone. This gives us a sense of solidarity. We know it's not real walking, in the sense of going somewhere. It's not walking from Brussels to Mons or vice versa. It's walking from one thing to another thing. Walking away from one thing walking towards another. The road we walk is research. We keep it undefined for as long as possible. We are all out there acting undefined, while going from one thing to another. We only walk for ourselves. The road makes us walk. The work makes us walk. Our eyes make us walk.

We don't know so much anymore... The only thing we know is what we see; that we do still 'see'. To be able to see, we stop; we stop our walking to be able to see. We are looking for places to stand, places to become a shadow for a minute. There is nowhere left to stand still along the N6.

**SO ARE WE  
THEM? WHO  
ARE 'WE' AND  
WHO IS 'THEM'?  
THEY ARE  
ONLY 'THEY'  
BECAUSE 'WE'  
ARE 'WE',  
OR CAN 'WE'  
BE 'THEM'?**

We are walking in Belgium but it could be another place. The landscape is dotted with people and devices. We could potentially communicate, but would we? Could we stop a car to ask for help if there was an emergency? Could we knock on a door to ask for a glass of water? Or a restroom? Or shelter from the rain? Is there shelter behind those closed faceless facades? Is there somebody living behind those plastic or wooden or metal doors? They look so unused. As if the humans who lived there could evaporate through the door, rather than opening it, leaving it untouched. By evaporating they avoid getting their hands dirty from the nebulous, auto-dust-build-up. Or are they just hiding all the time? Never going outside. Copulating,

cooking, sleeping inside these sealed houses? Or are they just thinking, and trying to block out the grey auto-noise? Or are they trying to create a new language of resistance?

Would we dare to create a radical smile, a rock solid salute to a suspicious stranger? Would we accept a stranger's smile if he or she walked like us down this un-walked side of the road? Perhaps we no longer know how to do that. Did we ever learn? Who might have taught it to us? Are we the generation who never learned to smile at strangers? The only time we talk is when we're lost. Oops! The 'radical smile' fell out of the car as he opened the door; it smashed on the concrete and never reached us.

We walk up to a petrol station (in order to piss) and ask for cigarettes and ice cream and pay with our credit card. We smile hesitantly at the man behind the counter. Can we use your restroom, sir? Why do you guys want to use our restroom? he replies. Huh? Did he really mean it? We want to eat our ice creams in the toilet and play with our credit cards! we roar.

We see lost objects, lost words, lost visions, lost loves, lost houses, lost sculptures. We see people that seem as if they never speak. They are mirror images of us. Mirror images or shadow projections. We are them, then they are us and vice versa. There they are, waiting endlessly for the bus, the bus that seems as if will never come. We are not waiting, we have feet, we walk. So are we them? Who are 'we' and who is 'them'? They are only 'they' because 'we' are 'we', or can 'we' be 'them'? We cannot write from the point of view of 'them' - that is the limit of language. When we write we can only say 'we' or 'them' unless 'they' become 'we'. Then 'they' would be writing this and not 'we'.

We are ruined by our radicalization.

On and on. Out here we lose any notion of chivalry. We only see the sad beauty of an old tree, we turn to see the desperate look in a drunken woman's eyes and we turn again to face a poor abandoned dog. We know we want our souls to be cured, our heads emptied, our hopes fulfilled. We are the abandoned dogs and drunken women. We are them.

We follow arrows or let the bus take us to the last stop. We wonder how we will get to the next point and how we will get back. We follow the bus on foot. We know the act of walking is dying out. We follow the wet footsteps we cannot see swallowed by rain. We follow the fake glittering aura of the city light. We know cars and motorbikes are stronger and trucks scream we are the highest power. They honk, flash and blind us. The walker is always slave. The walker is always abused. The walker only walks if the body allows it. Walking on the N6 is like dying over and over again. We breathe in the trucks' stinking exhalation.

We follow intuitive spontaneous impulses while consciously taking the 'wrong' shortcut or the unknown entrance. In order to find the right shortcut we need to know where we are

going and where we are coming from. We follow our vision as we peep through a tiny gap in the heavily patterned eighties curtains. We are looking straight into a strangers' living room with our cameras in our hands ready. We are shocked when an eye meets ours; we have been caught stepping into somebody's hyper-clean-super-smug mini life. We participate, it hurts, it becomes real. The human in his sofa has been dispossessed of his privacy. The desire to take a photograph is gone. We have been caught in the dirty act. We have a strong urge to trample and level the entire microcosm from where we stand in the grubby, smelly, overactive street.

We follow a man into a weird bar just to accentuate the feeling of not belonging to this place, of not belonging to this world. We are following fear, need, longing, curiosity, a place beyond the horizon. We enter the mid-world of belonging and not belonging. An 'unbelonging' stranger with a roof over our heads for a few moments. We drink an awkward coffee quickly because being 'unbelonging' outside is more comfortable than belonging in a place that is refusing us. We would really like to talk to the stranger. Instead we just drink. He is eating potage maison. He licks his spoon with pleasure, alone.

We wonder, what we are doing? We try to escape; we take parallel routes - the illusion of escape. Or we stay on track forcing ourselves through the rain - the illusion of fulfilling a task. We are never bored. We try to reach some kind of beyond but while walking the N6 we realize that there is no beyond, the N6 is endless, its extensions spread like a disease across the countryside. We could keep walking the same street to the next country and to the next continent and we would be exposed at various stages to the same disease. Is it our illness or the street's illness? At some stage if we continued our trip, we would pass through some sanatoriums, light empty places where the traffic recedes and weather exposure takes over. We are just pretending to be explorers; in reality we prefer the comfort of our cars, our living rooms, our heads. We are nobody out here. We are nobody anywhere. We are spinning narratives to make us feel like we exist, to make the walking work.

**WE ENTER THE  
MID-WORLD  
OF BELONGING  
AND NOT  
BELONGING**

We took our house with us; like snails we proceed, rucksacks on our backs: credit cards and mobile phones in our pockets. When we walk we cannot forget our safety net. Every now and

then we put our hands in our pockets, we caress our digital house, as if admiring our own homes and the security it brings us. We feel safe. We wonder if we are 'WE'. We wonder what is common and what is of the individual. We pass as male or female while wearing a thick winter jacket climbing over a fence. We enjoy this androgynous moment, like some kind of a feeling of freedom. We change appearance, class, gender. The grade of dirt on our clothes says how long we have been out here. Some of us wish we were in Rousseau's mind where belongings did not belong. Where every acre of land was free, where trees and fields were fenceless. And a few moments later we close the door of our house, we light the 'TV fire', we drink our own coffee, we pay the bills and fill in the paperwork as if we had never been near the N6.

**WE TOOK  
OUR HOUSE  
WITH US**

The N6, an exploration of back and forward movements, 57 km in length. A walk that seems to seal the death of the countryside as the urban web takes its place. We speculate: the length of the queue if you could collect all the Sansevierias trifasciatis in Belgium and put them in one long line. We mentally measure the kilometres of fence: green and grey and the dirty white plastic of the shutters. Would all the empty flattened beer cans along the road stacked on top of one another create a metal beanstalk high enough to touch the low sky on a grey N6 day?

What are we trying to find out? Is it the saddest road on earth? The most uncommon? The ugliest? There must be much uglier roads than this; but we keep wondering how we can walk the N6? How can we undergo the N6 without telling stories because that could make it a tourist trip? But stories can also broaden what we can say about a place. Maybe we can tell stories to ourselves, maybe we can talk to ourselves by telling stories; talk ourselves into staying or turning back and going home. Maybe we can frighten ourselves with the stories emitted by empty beer cans and cigarettes butts. Maybe we can comfort ourselves or talk ourselves into going home.

We wonder how we can walk, how we can make work without reducing the road, its environment and the people living there into caricatures. But they are caricatures, like any person seen from a distance without the layers of their personalities. We are all caricatures if seen from the right distance. We are not able to avoid the distance between ourselves and others: we're doomed to keep the distance between them and us 'right', we just keep on seeing each other from that perspective: our clothes, our haircuts, our cars, all-giving fuel to the creation of that huge human caricature.



As image hoarders we find beer cans, broken Bacardi Breezer bottles, dead dolls with split brains, dead pigeons, used condoms, cockroaches, brown limping dogs, people with cherries or selling cherries, dilapidated buildings, split language zones, leaking bridges, geese with damaged wings, damaged males, damaged females, damaged cars, prostitutes behind closed doors, pools of depression, ritual musicians, Flemish workhorses, lighters with naked women caressing their own breasts. We find plastic bags full of markers, which we pass on to the ones among us who can draw in the hope of plastic bags full of drawings in return. We see a yellow Ferrari racing with a red Ferrari at three a.m. We find a state school that became a gambling hall. We hoard images of these places and try to fill our bags with N6 pixels.

Are we the first people to walk the N6 alone at night for no other reason than experience it, to mind-map it, before being buried by it? What we're doing is not strong: millions of people are walking roads, dusty, polluted roads. We're walking back and forth, we write things, take pictures, and stare into the space around us in the hope that it will give something back. In the hope we can make ugliness beautiful. Looking keeps us going, but it also takes the rhythm out of our walking, the bodies' rhythm is broken. Stopping kills the real experience. We know that it is impossible to walk and to think about the walking at the same time, because when we are thinking about walking we are stepping out of the walking experience. We know that thinking kills the experience. Some of us are always outside the walking experience, always using walking as a way of thinking. Could we walk so far that we get into a trance? Would it be walking or thinking? It's not about walking itself but about what to do all the time we are not walking. And if we are not walking, we are hitchhiking. Being picked up by a car full of thoughts, being bombarded from the outside in. Picked up by people we don't know, picked up by thoughts we don't know. We become acquainted for a moment. We do the small talk, and we try to find a conversation that makes the stiffness of the situation bearable for both of us. And we're glad when the car stops, when the person that picked us up lets us out - we behave uneasily, we don't know if we have to shake hands or not, we don't know whether to leave our thoughts in the car or whether to take them with us. Our monstrous thoughts, would they stay in that car forever fermenting and eventually being squashed at the city dump? Or would they escape into the street being picked up by the next passer by? Maybe that's where we got this text from - the huge N6 thought dump.

Then we decide to stop. We transform ourselves into someone who can enter a bar alone at midnight without being harassed. Or someone who needs exhaust fumes and second-hand cigarette smoke as much as oxygen to survive. We're willing to lose ourselves just for the sake of surviving. In adapting, we are disappearing. In telling it, we find ourselves again.

The N6. People live there, pass there, work there, fuck there, shop there. They're not different from us. We are like them. We are all the same. We drink like them. We look tired like them. We're grey like them, we're longing like them. But then again we are just passing by.

The sound of the traffic mixes with our own mental noise. We come across a passer-by. Are we hoping for reciprocal care? The urge to protect ourselves from our own desires stops us from being able to share the strangers longing or telling them what we ourselves are longing for. The idea that they might be longing for us, that they might like to touch us, makes us tremble. We enjoy the sinful thought, reflect again and turn our heads away. We do not explain to them why we're tired; we don't dare to ask them why they're tired. But that does not curb the desire to make contact. The bright eye, which holds the light to the soul, makes the grey body seem irrelevant. But can we get close enough on a lonely street to grasp the light and make the grey body explode with colour and how long will that colour last before it fades back to grey? We're walking naked along the stone road, hidden in layers of cosy synthetic clothes. We progress between walls, between fields, we're not proud; we're ashamed of our grey bodies. We're ashamed of ourselves. The people living next to the stone road build walls and gardens and fences and shutters around their shame, around their grey naked bodies. The ones who pass at high speed are hiding their grey bodies in brightly coloured shiny cars. We disappear into darkness. We can only hope for accidents. Yes, we can only hope for accidents.



Collectively written by the N6 team  
**Orla Barry** (O.Ba)  
**Wim Cuyvers** (W.Cu)  
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**Nikolaus Garstener** (N.Ga)  
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PREFACE | Placenames | Locations | 1<sup>st</sup> N6 trip | 2<sup>nd</sup> N6 trip | 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> N6 and miscellaneous trips | Scenario sketches | Notes | **REWRITING BREAKS**

**Note:** Dear reader, please take all days as multiples of each other and of mixed order. The first time I travelled the N6 I did it chronologically. However as time went on I went back and forward over the same stretch again and again. Beginning and re-beginning at different unchronological points. For you, the reader, the chronology doesn't really matter. We are just travelling and deviating a given route. Perhaps you should just forget about this note...

As I leave the house my body is telling me 'heatdeath' will get me. My head is telling me the sun will sizzle my hair. My brain flickers and registers the 'given task'...I get on my bike.

I roll past the 'abandoned' house, which becomes more and more overgrown by the day. The noise in the street is already unbearable. It's the noise of builders desperately trying to finish buildings before they take their summer holidays. They continue building while the perfect poor 'abandoned' house just rots.

**Today (day 1 for the second time) I can't get further than two minutes from home. Walking on the spot. Burning a hole in the footpath. My mind is racing ahead of me. No, no more tangents. I am trying to stay on track. I leave my bike behind. I have to walk today, perhaps the fact that it takes longer to deviate on foot will force me to stay on track.**

In the countryside my tendency is to wander less even though wanderers are often associated with rural landscape. Like figurines wandering through a painting. There are less roads and paths: less symbols to take me off in another direction. Physical condition, light and weather constraints will stop me from deviating. I am afraid of a huge sudden fog which could descend and obscure my path.

Out here in cowboycity we have all become urban movers, all hoping to make it somewhere: out of the suburbs, into the suburbs, away from the suburbs. The outskirts, the space between urbanity and nature is the perfect place for a kind of dysfunctional wandering. Here I am walking between exhaust blackened houses, garages, shops, abandoned churches, mini light industry zones and sooty heavy industry zones. I am consumed by the 'monster traffic' and its tremendous noise. The stone road, a thoroughfare for encapsulated automobile people getting from A to B and from C to D to E and back.

Zigzagging, wandering 'without' a purpose among all these people going in straight lines with a purpose is a privilege, and wandering is important to be able to focus the eyes to see 'without' an aim. Life has become so efficient. I know these wanderings will become specific but not yet. For the moment I am aimless out here, inefficient. Finding inefficient treasures on an aimless walk.

Description of the first images as I begin my 'first second walk'. Grey Saturday afternoon. Everybody in the world is on his way to Ikea. They pour from the metro station, the buses. They pour into the car park in their family cars. They pour into Ikea. They follow the arrows in the direction Ikea decided they should follow. They are resigned to that movement. Any efforts to go in any other direction will be quashed by the crowd. No directionless or digressive movement allowed. I sniff the air in an effort to smell Johanna's chocolate factory. I look at Wim's bus stop. Outside the grey N6 holds its rows of traffic in its claws. I wander unsure which direction to take.

Walking is different. The bicycle keeps us at a little distance from the street. The car isolates us from the street. Every locomoted machine keeps us at a distance from what's really going on around us. Now, we are kept at a distance from life by not walking. I am heading off the stone road, away from the chaos, the overwhelming swell of automobiles and people with an aim. Even walking cannot keep me on track.

I note a couple of American trucks for sale. Huge monsters, they stand complete with American flags. I never saw them before, probably because they are not interesting, so I greet them with my eyes and push them to the bottom realms of my memory.

~~I don't struggle with cycling but I am struggling with what I should see and how I should describe it, words and images are they not all one? What am I searching for? In the 90s I have the feeling that I used to do this all the time always SLEEPING along the paths I had as I made my way to one or other of the numerous bars I worked in Brussels.~~

**Note:** Why do I not see anymore? Time? It's an amazing thought that you need time to see, when in fact you have sight and time all the time.

Within the minutes of starting my trip I start to veer off. The first opportunity is a good opportunity, and I begin my N6 parallel route. As I take the first street to the right, a train roars past. I stand squashed between the train and the little houses.

~~**Note:** Becoming a tourist in our own neighbourhood would be a good way of reevaluating own our streets. Making a picnic everyday for a week, staying outside, sitting and watching what is going on around us. Going into the nearest bar, the one we have never been and having a beer. Finding a restful place, a place to sit and read. Making the space now. Walking into corners we have never been. Taking time in the place reserved for passage.~~

~~Rue de Droit de l'Homme is cornered by a police station.~~

A workman repairs the road. He is small with extremely muscled legs and short denim shorts. He looks like a tree trunk. He extends his arm and leans against some bricks to ponder his work, like workmen do...

I come back up Ave de la Société Normale. Here we are in this normal society! I hear a voice shouting "tous ces noirs sont les mêmes! ils sont tous les mêmes!" He violently kicks a can into the gutter before he enters his shop. My eye follows the can to the gutter. Thousands and thousands of cigarette butts there no rain to wash them away... Sweating. 32 degrees.

A shop window... modelage des ongles... retouche... tattoo semi permanente... maquillage semi permanente... prix très intéressants extentions des cheveux naturels... garçon-coup finition... dames-shampoo coup brushing soin... filles-shampoo coup séchage... hommes-shampoo coup finition... **Budget!** One of those amazing Belgian words for a hotel.



# A MEANINGLESS SPACE – REALITY CHECK



# N6



## EXERCISE IN THE LOSS OF SENSE NO.1

I place myself in a vacuum.  
 With every step I take, I touch the anchor points of the construction of my existence,  
 based on many untraceable relational meanings.  
 I inhale existential confusion – at a given moment I exhale it anyway.  
 In the distillate of my breath I find an essence of that confusion,  
 the by-product of my sense-evacuated space.

I long to be able to move freely through space –  
 Free of the symptoms of social and ecological animosity –  
 I long to travel through a space that does not reject my body or make my existence impossible.  
 I know that this space is a utopia.  
 The N6 space is an inverse utopia, a negative space.  
 Its borders outline my desires, its friction shakes my very foundations..  
 It agitates my nature and pulverises my brain.<sup>1</sup>

The negative N6 space opens itself<sup>2</sup>:  
 I notice that it's not good for me to be here in this state right now.<sup>3</sup>  
 I notice what makes me more complicated.  
 It's very simple, I am nearly there.  
 I wish I could drink water without paying for it.<sup>4</sup>  
 I wish people would approach me gently instead of accosting me.  
 I wish it didn't matter if I were a man or a woman or an X<sup>5</sup>.  
 I wish I could get some rest.<sup>6</sup>  
 I wish that no one were afraid of me and that I were afraid of no one.<sup>7</sup>



- 1 Walking along the Chaussée, just before Tubize, I get my period. Hardly any houses, no bushes, a drizzle, lorries roaring past, a nightclub by day, a workshop, a police station. I think: 'Public buildings,' I think: 'Don't have that attitude.' I think: 'Don't think that much,' I think: 'Simply ask!' I ask the police officer behind the glass in polite, broken French if I can use the loo. He asks me why. (!) (It's a crisis here, here is the crisis.) I say: 'Because I need to go urgently, I have an urgent need...' He says: 'No.'
- 2 Negative spaces always hurt when they open: to notice, to wish, to dare, to be able to, to be obliged.
- 3 With or without credit card.
- 4 I have unlearned the self-confidence to simply ask for things in a normal way, or to believe that it is normal to ask for things or even to know what kind of things you can normally ask for.
- 5 I've made this all singular to apply to X. I think you can get away with 'inter-stages' once you've set up the meaning through other phrases. Also, I added semi-colons, which make it easier to read and take in. Woman, man, child, inter-people; dog, bird; young, medium-young, old, medium-old, dead, or in-between; rich, poor (what exactly is that?); class, inter-classes; ill, healthy or in-between; well-insured, un-insured, in-between; Belgian passport, foreign passport, no passport, right of residence, non-resident, residency pending; life expectancy, expectations of life, expectations in life; big, fat, medium, slim, medium-slim, inter-stages; sweat, sweatshirts, leggings, colours, skin, skin colours, cars, car colours, inter-stages... too many categories, too many interpretations...
- 6 Private rest and public noise. Why do these houses face the loud street?
- 7 Reality check: (was a bigger font size) I walk along the Chaussée. It's dark. On my left there is a wood, on my right the street. It looks creepy out here but I wonder what I'm afraid of. There's darkness to protect me from the streetlights and there are streetlights to protect me from darkness. My TV brainwashed mind talks to itself: 'What, if someone were peeking at you from the bushes?... You would jump out and stop a car and run and scream and make a call and cause traffic chaos...' It's that damn bloody, nasty, socially acquired perception of danger...

(J.Ki)



*1 potage maison*  
*2 plastic flowers*  
*1 aquarium*  
*without fish*  
*4 men*  
*drinking beer*  
*1 gravestone*  
 = 2 EURO (E.Di)



(J.Ki)





**AutotimerAutoshot: road gasstation**



**AutotimerAutoshot: gasstation roof**



**AutotimerAutoshot: me and old N6 lady**



**AutotimerAutoshot: busstop hanging out**

(J.Ki)

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The buildings rise above me, I face all the different sun-bleached curtains. A man with a big hairy dog walks past. I pass through a diagonal passage piétons. 'Diagonal passage piétons' written down, these three words together do something nice but the image they create sounds more interesting than it actually is. The sun reflects off the top storey window straight into the apartments opposite. I can imagine the blinding light from the apartment and I reflect further about the sun-bleached curtains...

A newspaper shop that has been closed for years with the opening hours still clearly marked. On a corner a triangular three-storey apartment block, a satellite dish on every floor taking images and voices from the air into the darkened room.



**Location 1: Bienvenue**



A house called Bien Venu: in this context it seems so totally misplaced as if inviting the urban scum of the city to enter one's 3rd space.

Café Vautour 10 am. I would like to stop for a coffee but there's a man who looks like a live corpse sitting outside, beer in hand. He shouts: 'Pédale plus vite, Madame!' I don't know where he found the voice in his corpse mouth to express those four words. My blood boils. I feel like putting an end to his miserable half dead life!

I go down a street called 14 15 28. I end up on a football pitch, the first one. My camera gets out of my bag and shouts 'let me make images then you don't need to write about these places,' he mumbles. My notebook forces its way in front of my camera. 'Writing is simply more layered than photography, Camera dear, you are doomed to the button, frame, shoot syndrome.'

**Location 2: Monotone: The Phonestop**



The Bunker. Café Chevalier, Café Maestro. My need to piss makes me focus on the names now. ~~How many times in how many cities do I see these names repeated?~~ (Go back to the beginning of the chaussée, take down the names of all the bars.)

I don't dare to approach or sit among these southern-looking foreign men after so many years of verbal abuse on the streets of Brussels... Even though I would love coffee they keep making

comments and my bladder remains at bursting point not wishing to confront their words at a closer proximity in this insufferable heat.

*(A woman pissing in the street. Put the camera on the car waist height, open trousers, bend down to piss, only top of head visible.)*

Finally I reach the Brussels end of the stone road, which ends on the small inner ring. I have cycled from the outer ring to the inner one. I'm still dying to piss. I can't believe there is nowhere I feel I won't be verbally abused. I turn and start cycling back the way I came. I came along the right hand side of the road and smile to myself as I turn to realize I will still be on the right on my way back. My bladder is still pressing against my insides.

I get to the road that leads to the Anderlecht market and turn left off the Chaussée. (People crossing the road to Anderlecht market on Saturday). I see a Congolese bar, I go in... I shout 'Perrier please' to the barmaid while still moving towards the back of the café. I barely make it too the toilet. When I come back, relieved, my Perrier is still closed on the table, I feel dehydrated. I look at the barmaid she comes out from behind the bar and says 'I didn't want to open it till you sat down because if you see me opening it, you know it is fresh!' I am too hot to ask any questions so I just smile and say thank you and drink my fresh water.

I haven't really homed in yet but when my senses finally settle I hear a strange organ playing religious music. I look around me again as if to check my surroundings... yes, a Congolese bar, yes, a black barmaid, yes two grey-faced men, yes, a woman drinking beer and two children asking a lot of questions, yes, it all looks how it did when I came in but why the music? Perhaps it's one of those obscure African religious movements that own the bar... I take another sip, refreshed, I smile at the barmaid. Again she smiles back, yes, definitely that's it - a religious cult, God is in the house!

I take another sip and glance at the group sitting next to me. I see them all looking up. I follow their line of vision until I am looking directly at the TV. There is a funeral on! What the hell is there a funeral on TV for? It is the funeral of Stacy Lemmens and Nathalie Mahy... That explains the music and the church-like atmosphere in the bar... I can hear the commentator... it is somehow slow like the commentary during a break at Wimbledon... I can't believe it. I am sitting in a bar, it's 32 degrees outside and I'm watching a funeral. I sit a while longer gazing at what could be a home video because of the slow un-television-like content. As I leave the bar the woman is looking a little drunk and her children are asking what happened to Stacy and Nathalie! (Film the interior of a bar while a voice over tells this story the camera is just laid on the table (rewrite the story) use the sound in the bar mixed with the sound of funeral music coming from a TV.)

A hairdresser's shop with all the towels drying outside on the windowsill, in this weather they are not drying, they are burning and getting covered in exhaust fumes. It's time to head home.

I pass by 'Le Vautour' again, the grey corpse man is still alive, still sitting on the same spot like a stuffed animal, a dead soul in a skin. He doesn't see me this time so I slip past without a dead man's voice following me.





**AutotimerAutoshot: gasstation collum climb**



**AutotimerAutoshot: busstop hanging out**



**AutotimerAutoshot: truck and landscape**



**AutotimerAutoshot: road gasstation**



**AutotimerAutoshot: handstand road**



**AutotimerAutoshot: on the hanger**



**AutotimerAutoshot: green trucks**



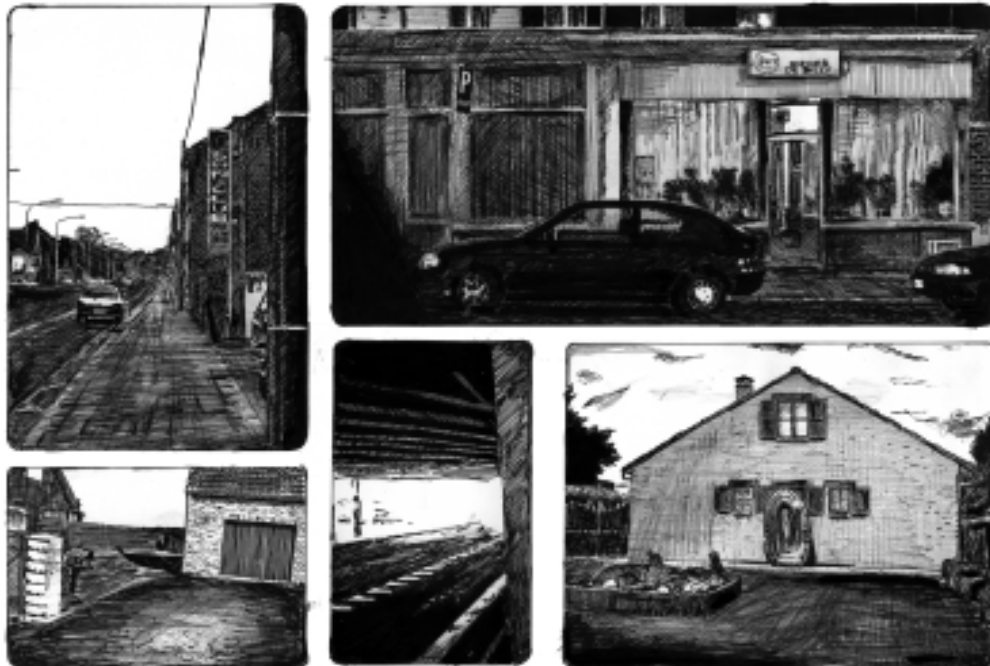
**AutotimerAutoshot: gasstationroof**

(J.Ki)



# Consumption and waste. Abortion and anorexia. Speed and spawn.

(E.Di)



(J.Ki)

At the back, a concrete wall that was precast together with the side walls, left and right, and the roof, as a single unit. Eloy et Fils SA, a firm from Sprimont must at some stage have poured the liquid concrete into the form. The side walls are symmetrical, narrower at the bottom than the top, from the ground up the front of the side panel angles backwards for about forty centimetres then angles forwards again. It's as if the side walls have been cut into, as if someone has dealt them a hard, sharp blow. Roof, sides and floor together form a funnel from which one (might) look at the world – blinkers, like the black flaps around a film spotlight, to direct the light. Integrated with the back wall, half a metre from the ground, is a bench; the bench is rounded and much smoother than the walls and ceiling, polished. He goes and sits on it, although he would have preferred to remain standing, one foot raised, his back to the rough concrete. He is aware of the words in thick black letters and one word in orange-red on the back wall. A big, blackened patch over a name or a word. A cancelled-out word, a permanently tattooed name effaced, by scoring the arm with a razor blade – the broken word frozen in the abstraction of the black rectangle. The underside of the concrete roof and the side walls are daubed with the same

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I realize that the part of the stone road that interests me the least is the first 5 kms. The part which leads from the city out of the city. There is no clash with the countryside. The conflict is buried by concrete. I don't have any feeling of wanting to wander down the side streets. There is no escape. ~~I only want a helicopter to take me directly up into the sky. I will not travel this part of the chaussée again.~~

What interests me most is the part of the stone road after the ring. Here blood is spilled in a never-ending battle between concrete and countryside. Green against grey. This war zone is where a dead space exists. A graveyard full of half-dead souls. By their very existence these areas symbolize how isolated we have become. The shitty family garden, the leftover farmers field, the allotment, the football pitch, the piece of unused, ungrounded ground, all at war with the advancing city. Here between the grey and the green, beautiful words would be lost yet some kind of magic ugly poetry begins. The stone road and its surroundings are full of static-cling waiting to be rubbed the wrong way, so that it can escape into some tortured movement beside a traffic jam under the sad trees. On the stone road the production of existentialist meaning is inevitable. People struggle or give up on making the environment around them livable. Here space is not looked at but rather travelled through.

Mid Summer. Le Cimetière des Anciens Combatants; I can't believe where I have ended up. A huge garden divided up into green courtyards for the dead. Roses; overwhelming pink on each side of the main avenue. Willow trees line up and swish down to greet the dead. Linden blossom trees feeding off dead souls and spread their sweet odour to dead nostrils. Army graves line up in a semicircle ready for war with the dead. The graves are organized so that they have no personality, it hurts less this way.

Near the bottom of the cemetery the graves are older and look more like a small city. They are surrounded and protected by trees. A really weird green light transfers on to the stones. The moss looks like it is light growing, a pure reflection of the trees. As I head for the gate a cobweb tries to keep me from leaving the old section. I unravel myself from the cobweb, still alive, and walk past the huge expanses of empty hedged areas waiting to be filled by people who are alive today. The sun burns down on life and death. I worry about cobwebs and soldiers and head for the exit. The smell of the linden trees and the roses drugging me and enticing me to lie down in the shade. 'Escape now and lie with us, the voices call, death is sweet and easy if you choose.' I cycle away.

**Note:** My second/third visits happen in winter.



## Day 2 and other days: Andytown to LLtown and Back

Heading towards LLtown from Andytown. I take the first right after the outer ring road.

### Location 3: The New Graveyard for the Recently Deceased

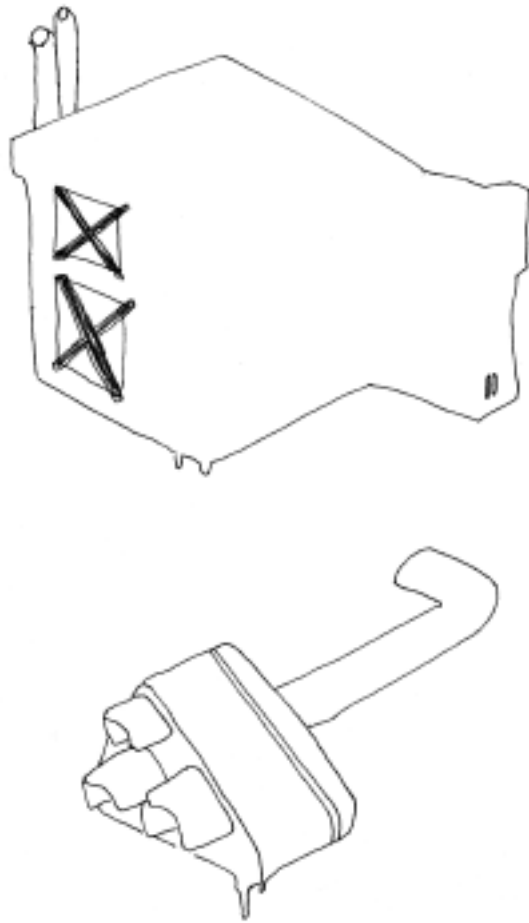


Walking around the winter graveyard with piles of freshly dug graves. My brain is about as dead as those recently buried souls and my eyes are like swollen transparent pigs waiting for the sun. I walk around the row of recently covered graves; holes recovered from the earth to be refilled with human souls. There has been a storm and torrents of rain. There is not one miserable leaf left hanging on any tree except on the stubborn evergreens. The place is dishevelled. Piles of uprooted discolouring plastic bouquets which a day earlier adorned the graves with their faded plastic petals, have been strewn across the graveyard. They are covered in mud. It is a melancholic violent image. It's like somebody's messy bathroom, an open-air, intimate interior or some kind of paradox like that. It is a 'comédie noire', the sadness of death transformed into some kind of muddy plastic chaos.

The remembrance stones have not yet been placed, they would sink into the chaotic winter mud. Temporary wooden crosses have been staked out hence the makeshift untidy aspect of the graves. The ground is sliced up like iced chocolate cake. A heart made of pink plastic roses has blown from its carefully tearfully placed spot. The rose petals are all caked in mud. Other plastic pots perch mercilessly after being pushed around by the wind. White stones and ornamental cabbages adorn one grave. One hole is left open. It awaits a dead soul which should arrive any minute. There is a big pool of water at the bottom of the grave. Michele notre maman Cherie. A heart of twisted plastic carnations, red and whit, alternating as they twist. I spent hours there with those floating souls locked in the land of death without a tombstone. Little black soul mushrooms push up on the grassy verges; I see rhizomes of knotted spirits escaping through these little black fungi.







(N.Ga)

Across the street a short Italian-looking middle-aged man is cleaning in front of his house, but the wind overrules him. He manages to collect a small heap of dirt and holds it down with his broom, he looks around, waits patiently, walks a bit further and puts his broom down. The wind picks up again and removes a piece of paper from the heap, he hurries back with small steps, tries to control the loose pile of dirt, waits a minute, walks another ten metres and starts sweeping again.

Suddenly a bus passes by and ruins his nicely constructed heap. He stops. He does not give up, but starts again. He moves quicker, uses shorter

broom strokes and tries to get as close as possible to the first heap. He places the broom onto the heap, looks around, there is still a bit on the left, so he walks over to it; in the distance another bus is coming, he looks and reacts immediately, he runs back to his heap and keeps it down with the broom, he puffs, he leans on his broom and smiles to the people on the bus. He beat the bus this time, but he still has to beat the wind.

He looks around, takes a deep breath. The job is practically finished, he puts the dirt in a plastic bag, closes it, looks around and walks three houses down. He leaves the plastic bag in front of a deserted house where the rubbish is piling up. He looks around, walks back, takes his broom and applies a last quick broom-stroke and happily enters the house. Mission accomplished. The wind, fighting imprisonment, picks up again and bit by bit liberates the dirt from the plastic bags.

## JOHNNY

I walk on. A suntanned 'Johnny' is drawing money at a cash machine. He takes the cash with his right hand and in the time between taking his card and his ticket he looks back, 'How are you?' He quickly takes card and ticket with his left hand, ogles me and turns around. I move a bit faster and overtake him, I hear him shout, 'Have you got a light?' Too late, boy. He steps into a shiny light-grey convertible Peugeot and leaves noisily and speedily. I pass by a very old man with a walking stick, I come closer, I smile, he smiles back, stops and points at my breasts with his walking stick: 'C'est naturelle ça, madame? Très belle!'

## ART-COEUR ET MERCI

There is only one living soul who claims the Chaussée as his own. He lives under the bridges, he takes his 'siesta' in Ikea's front garden, he waves to every passer-by, bidding them welcome. Arceem is a walker-philosopher-painter-sculptor-scavenger. He was born in Cameroon and ended up in Belgium for several reasons. Up to now he is the only person I have met on the Chaussée who walks and who has looked me in the eye and asked me 'serious' questions. 'Why is it that Belgian people can't keep their children under control? Why does everybody dump their garbage on the streets? Why do Belgian people have no respect for each other?' In his view, everything began to go wrong with colonization, the evil things King Leopold did in the Congo... He believes it is his mission to tell us that. He is the only one I have come upon so far who 'uses' the Chaussée. He asks the shops for the leftovers to eat, he collects all the objects he finds and makes them into sculptures, he builds huts for himself and claims any no man's land as his garden. He is rich, he tells me; he has at least three 'places' that are his.

When I came back from my last walk he was sitting in front of his third 'place'. He waved and said, 'I'm so happy to see you.' I looked at his



face, one eye was black and puffed-up and on his lips were blood crusts. 'What happened?' I asked. 'It's your children again,' he replied. 'I was asleep, they smashed a stone in my face.' 'It looks serious, do you want to go to a doctor?' 'No,' he said, 'we are all victims, victims of this society.' 'I don't think this is a safe place to stay,' I told him. 'It is too deserted at night.' He got angry and shouted, 'You are a Belgian citizen, this is your country and you tell me that it is not safe, why don't you do something about it, if it's not safe to live here, then who has to live here?' He stopped for a moment and added: 'It's your responsibility, this is your country or isn't it?'

*continued on > page 12*

## M I S P L A C E D S C U L P T U R E S

(E.Di)





OPEN CARS CLOSED CARS  
 CARS WITH ONE MAN LEANING  
 OVER AN OPEN BONNET CARS  
 WITH FOUR MEN LEANING  
 OVER AN OPEN BONNET EVERY  
 WHERE MEN  
 BLACK MEN  
 BROWN MEN  
 YELLOW MEN  
 WHITE MEN  
 SMOKING  
 LEANING  
 STANDING  
 SITTING  
 SPITTING  
 PISSING  
 SHOUTING  
 SNIFFING  
 STARING



(E.Di)

names, with the same words as those on the rear wall, they are etched into the concrete with spray can paint and soot, the words and the names hang like cobwebs in the corners of his eyes, like the black threads that float uncontrollably in front of his eyes when he's exhausted. Strewn beneath the bench is the litter of those who have sat there before him: drink bottles, cans of cheap beer, tissues, a few condoms, cigarette butts. In front of the shelter is a paved area: a strip of thirty by thirty centimetre concrete tiles, then a white line separating this section from a following one paved with cobbles on which is painted a giant letter B, a narrow concrete edging brick between the cobbles and a stretch of grey asphalt, beyond which there is another narrow edging of concrete with white lines and beyond that again cobbles, painted with diagonal, parallel lines, and finally another strip of grey, thirty by thirty centimetre cement tiles; on this strip a Renault Laguna is parked. Behind the paved area stand houses. The far left house has a bluestone base, bush-hammered to a height of about forty-five centimetres, the door is of black lacquered wood, inlaid with ten square black glass panes; the door and the lavatory window to its right were sketched out together on a post-World War II drawing board in a single bluestone frame. On the facade of narrow, smooth red bricks is a white metal tube protecting the cable television cable, two-and-a-half metres from the ground the cable emerges and bends horizontally to run below a bluestone string course that is supported by several small brackets. Out of the horizontal string course emerges a vertical course, as wide and as deep as the horizontal one. Around the windows on the upper floor is yet another band of bluestone. The window frame is wood, painted white, the glass panes are set in lead cames (what?) – single glass, a shutter has

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*Will I ever manage to film this? I don't have to film it I can say it.*

I now know someone who resides here now, his name was René. There were six only people at his funeral. His wife cried. The ground was soft and cold and wet when they lowered him down. She cried and said he would be cold down there. She was right. We begged her not to look.

In the summer it seems a huge never-ending new graveyard enclosed by a wall of leaves and trees and flowers hiding everything around the graveyard allow it to extend in the imagation into a huge place. But now that the leaves have left the trees the whole place has utterly changed. I can see all around me where the city tries to climb up over the walls and into the graveyard. Or the green spaces through the trees where the relentless city has given up its struggle and allowed a pasture of two owned by some brave farmer still tends his animals and the space opens out into some kind of small pocket of open countryside. A sacred place in every sense of the word I guess because it is in reality and in symbology just a place of pure escape. Dying is escaping for me, escaping life.

**Location 7: Birdsong Pylon Park**



Here in the electric pylon park grow the humming pylon hugging trees. The pylons grow like huge metal trees in a straight line across the landscape. Start at Drogenbos and follow the line. (In the editing I will multiply the pylons so the scout seems surrounded, like she is standing in a space full of pylon trees.) A woman eating a pita carrying an Ikea bag walking through the Birdsong Pylon park. I was thinking of something else. What was it? Goddamn, 'the pita woman' stole my thought and took it with her in her Ikea bag!

**Location 8: Blackdog Canine Club**



*Would it be possible to film this location and show its proximity to the graveyard.*

**Location 4: Farmlandviews**



The field with the two apartment blocks.



**Location 5: The Naked Theatre**



The abandoned house. (A naked woman sitting on the floor with her back to the camera reading a poem.) How quickly things change in the city things that I didn't film immediately gone like the leaves from the trees after a storm

**Location 6: Lakeside**



I have to see if it will be interesting to film. I will not develop these kind of places into any kind of narrative I am not sure if I will develop any kind of narratives along the stone road yet. The stone road seems to drown narrative

**Location 9: Brussels Sprout Garden**

Allotments full of half rotting sprouts. The smell of Brussels sprouts penetrates the concrete. The smell of a man pissing. The smell of a man's body odour as he jogs past. Choose a bus stop film one of Wim's stories Film someone kissing in a bus stop Someone waiting The trees the loss of the leaves. Film a series of places from the exact same spot at 3-times during the year

**Location 10: Niteclub Car**

Speeding blackout disco car pulls up beside a young girl. They tail her as she walks along. She tries to ignore them. The young men fear her. They continue tailing her. She keeps as much as possible to the inside of the footpath. You feel she is a strong woman. But she is nothing compared to these brainless boys when they are in a group. Suddenly they get bored. They can have no contact with this woman. Not unless they step up the assault from verbal to physical. They are not that kind of boys. They speed off. To save herself she has had to shut up and keep her eyes to the ground. Now that the car is in the distance she lets go. Streams of angry words pour from her.

*Need to find girl, car boys. This is for a cameraman.*

*All set up scenes need to be noted and planned with camera man*

Sunday afternoon. Cycling towards the winter sun. The stone road is empty. All the Ikea people have disappeared. Everybody is having their Sunday lunch on their Ikea tables. The rest of the Ikea furniture is piled up all round them in boxes still waiting to be assembled. Father pours over the instructions. He scratches his head.



# SWEET CHERRY AND HER CHERRY TREE

The Coca Cola building indicates that the temperature is 42°C and I am approaching the country's only 'inside border'. Today my destination is Braine-le-Comte, and that leaves me with ten more kilometres to go. I did eight

already. In the terrible heat I imagined rain, cold showers, a breeze. At the moment the feeling of despair has reached a peak, my tongue feels like leather, my eyes can hardly see and I am dripping sweat. I see a fata morgana: 'There sits sweet Cherry under her parasol selling fresh cherries direct from her cherry tree at home'. I buy one kilo and ask if I can share the shade for a moment. She doesn't mind. I ask her if she gets lots of customers on a busy road like this. 'Not really,' she says, 'but it is too hot to do anything else anyway. This is the old road to the village,' she says. 'I hear it is full of black people now.'

I decamp, leaving her under her parasol with her cherries and I take the black people's road, leaving a trail of cherry stones behind me. The houses look empty, not a trace of a living black soul. A man is working in his garage. I look at him. 'Can I use the toilet?' I ask, and he looks at me twice, 'Look,' he says, pointing at the thermometer, 'it's 39', where do you live?' 'In Brussels,' I say. He looks down, 'J'aime pas trop, il y a

beaucoup d'étrangers là-bas,' he says. 'I went to a shop in Brussels,' he says, 'I was practically attacked, one came over to my car, when I told him to get lost, suddenly they were six, if there's one, there's always more, they are like packs of wolves. You have to be careful in Brussels, young lady.'

# COWBOY LAND

On the outskirts of Tubize the pavement suddenly ends. Only a straight white line indicates where road and edge meet. From here onwards stretches out cowboy land. The draught of the cars and trucks as they pass makes me shake. I keep concentrating on the white line. Cars hoot, trucks flash their lights. I do not look sideways; I try not to look up. I sweat, is this

fear? I'm the only walker. I pass a social housing estate. From behind the window a fat old man makes obscene gestures at me. On the other side of the road, a car stops and hoots, I don't want to look.

The farther I go, the longer the green areas between two villages seem to extend. These green parts are deserted. What if anything happens to me here? I walk on, I feel like the female lead in a film that's going to end badly. A car with tinted windows stops beside me, I don't look, I walk faster and faster, it pulls away, the sound of car tyres skidding. I take a deep breath, protected by a parked car. How is this going to end? What if I'd been dragged into a car? This is ridiculous. I'm not sixteen anymore. I leave my hiding place. Another car hoots, I'm sick of it, sick to death of the stress. I take a side street.

The Chaussée has won.

(E.Di)



(N.Ga)





(J.Ki)

HER FATHER IS DRINKING A BEER  
 SHE EATS AN ICE CREAM  
 HER FATHER IS DRINKING ANOTHER BEER  
 SHE FINISHES HER ICE-CREAM  
 HER FATHER IS DRINKING ANOTHER BEER

(E.Di)

been lowered thirty centimetres. The gutter is finished with white plastic slats. On the roof of red clay tiles, a metal chimney flue; in the roof a skylight, no doubt Velux, installed long after the house was built. The ridge tiles are cemented on. There is no light anywhere. The house next door has a white painted cement facade. The street door is incorporated into a large window section, all in plastic, that contains the front door, a large fixed light twice as wide as it is high, and a fixed light the size of a standard door. The front door to the house is dark. At one time there must have been a shop at street level. Through a gap in the curtains covering the large window a ray of light escapes. Is it because the building has been converted from shop to house that it now looks like a brothel? Directly above the large window section is a bluestone string course painted white, like the rest of the facade; thirty centimetres above this is another bluestone string course, running below this one is a grey telephone cable. On the first floor is a window in white plastic, the window is divided into three parts, two wings are operable, and lined with curtains; below the window is a bluestone sill in two pieces, beneath the sill is a bluestone block with a hollowed-out spout to allow any water that gets into the joint between the two pieces of the bluestone window sill to drain away. To the right of the window on the upper floor is an eye-catching circular pivot window in white plastic, the window is mounted in a two-piece bluestone ring and under this window, too, there is a bluestone block with a hollowed-out spout. On the right side of the facade hangs a vertical zinc rainwater pipe. The zinc is painted white. The television cable, also painted white, snakes across the facade for a short distance before disappearing into the facade. When the cable was being installed a piece of the facade was damaged, that piece

PREFACE | Placenames | Locations | 1<sup>st</sup> N6 trip |  
 2<sup>nd</sup> N6 trip | 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> N6 and miscellaneous trips |  
 Scenario sketches | Notes | **REWRITING BREAKS** |

~~and wonders why he should know more about this than his teenage children. Did Ikea decide who in the family got the terrible job of trying to assemble this stuff? In winter there are only short mornings and afternoons. I mean there are evenings but they are black. Sunday morning. Everything to do with everyday life seems so removed. On Sunday evenings the devil plays with our minds. He reminds us that we have things to do, things for Monday. As I start to think about the devil entering my head I deviate, I know he will be there before 2 p.m. Subconsciously I deviate to escape the reality of time and the N6. Damn I'm off already I've only been on the N6 two minutes.~~

**Location 11: The Lost Lamppost**



Found a big bag of colouring pencils and felt-tips under the tree a lone lamppost surrounded by a willow tree in the Pylonsong park garden.

**Location 12: Lock In Lock Out House**



Another steady image.



**Note:** After that detour and other detours every time I get back to the stone road I seem to gather a kind of short immunity period. A period of being able to deal with it. Very quickly my need to escape becomes overwhelming and I inevitably deviate.

I am on the stone road again it's noisy and chaotic. I search for my next escape and I think about my colleagues who are watching things, other things than me. I would like to bump into one of them now but we are running parallel lives.

**Location 13: The Village of the Nine Little Men**

The next road to the right and off the N6 I had been searching for finally presents itself. Direction Negenmannekes translated from my Dutch in to English as 'the village of the nine little men'. Finally as I turn right, the traffic recedes behind me. I find my way along the back of the stone road. Right again leads me downhill along a dead-end road, at the end of the dead-end there is the dead-end house.



**Location 14: The Lakes of the Organized Fish**

Beside the dead-end house there are three fishing lakes. Organized fishermen populate the banks and organized fish populate the murky shallow water! I curse the fishermen. I will tell them all to leave. I want to cool my overheated skin alone in the lake.

The N6 provides numerous possibilities for swimming but the possibilities have been crossed out.

**Note:** Text as thought. Dyslexic thought. A thought becomes like the process of writing it and vice versa, huge gaps, synapses, failures and intense moments cut off from the surrounding unfolding story of the day.

Beside the lake, a wood storage area. A very loud radio announcing a loud human presence to the organized fish. (Still image- use real sound radio.)

**Note:** the video will become a filmed photograph.

The green around the artificial lakes is as fake as the lakes themselves and hides the dirty factories behind branches and bright shiny leaves. Nature encloses industry in summer. In winter industry encloses nature. Every year the romance falls away with the leaves, the surroundings of this idyllic little place show themselves to the lake who himself felt safe all summer

The dead-end street leads to a dirt path. The dead-end path dirt ends at the Edelweiss Café; another dead-end café at the end of a dead-end. I don't know if I'm ever going to find my way back to the stone road. I keep trying to run as parallel as possible. I cycle parallel. I start DEAD-END TRACKING, a new rule, a new deviation from which to deviate or just forget. From here I take every dead-end street I come across. I always end up on another one, or on a football pitch, or a place with a few rundown benches. Every scene is totally deserted. The sun beats down. My clothes are soaking in sweat.

Back on the stone road.



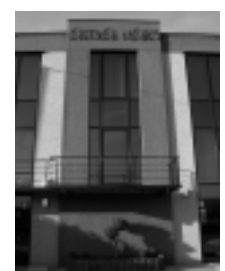
**Location 15: Le Versailles**

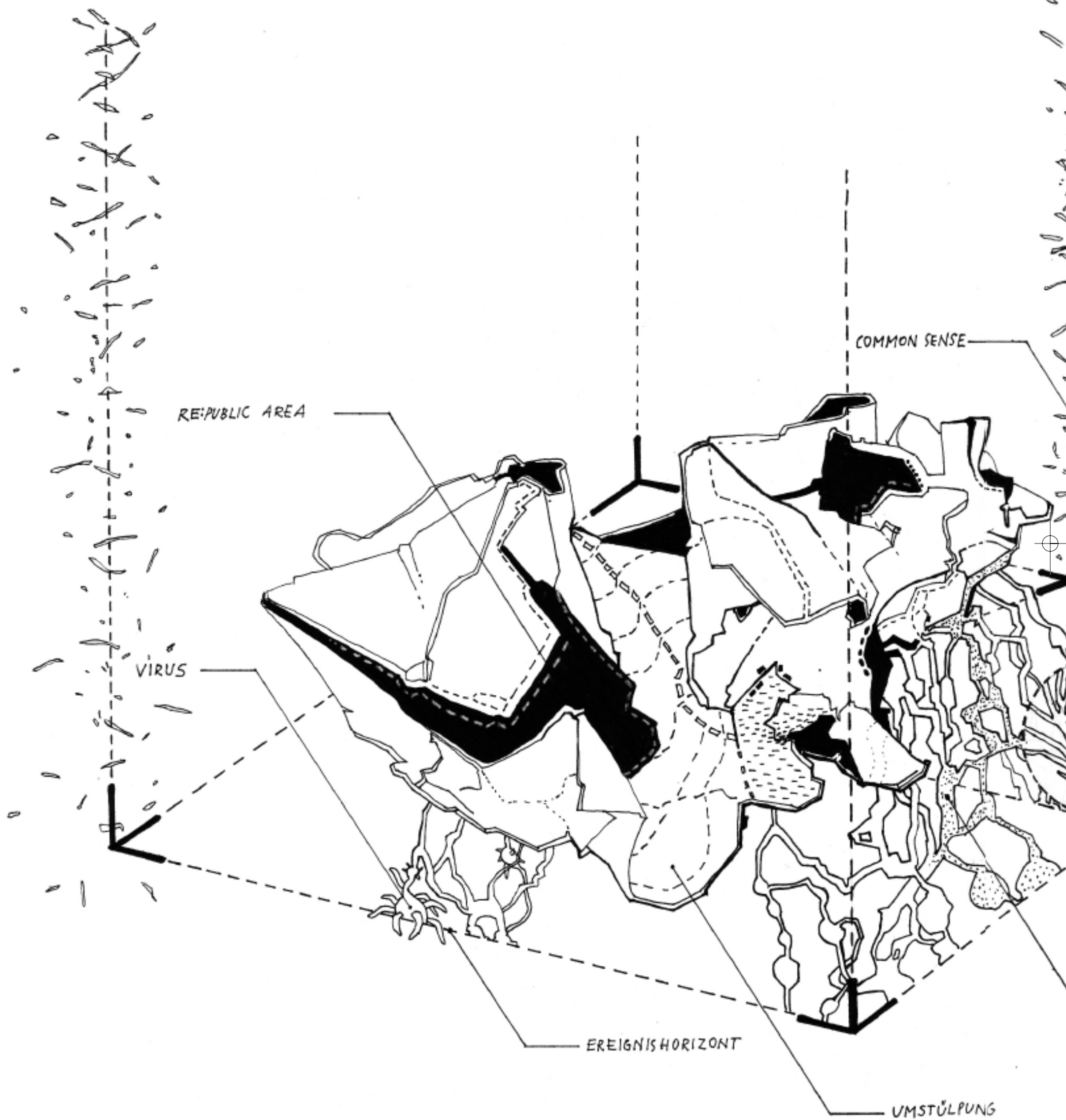


**Location 16: The Nothing Fire Station**

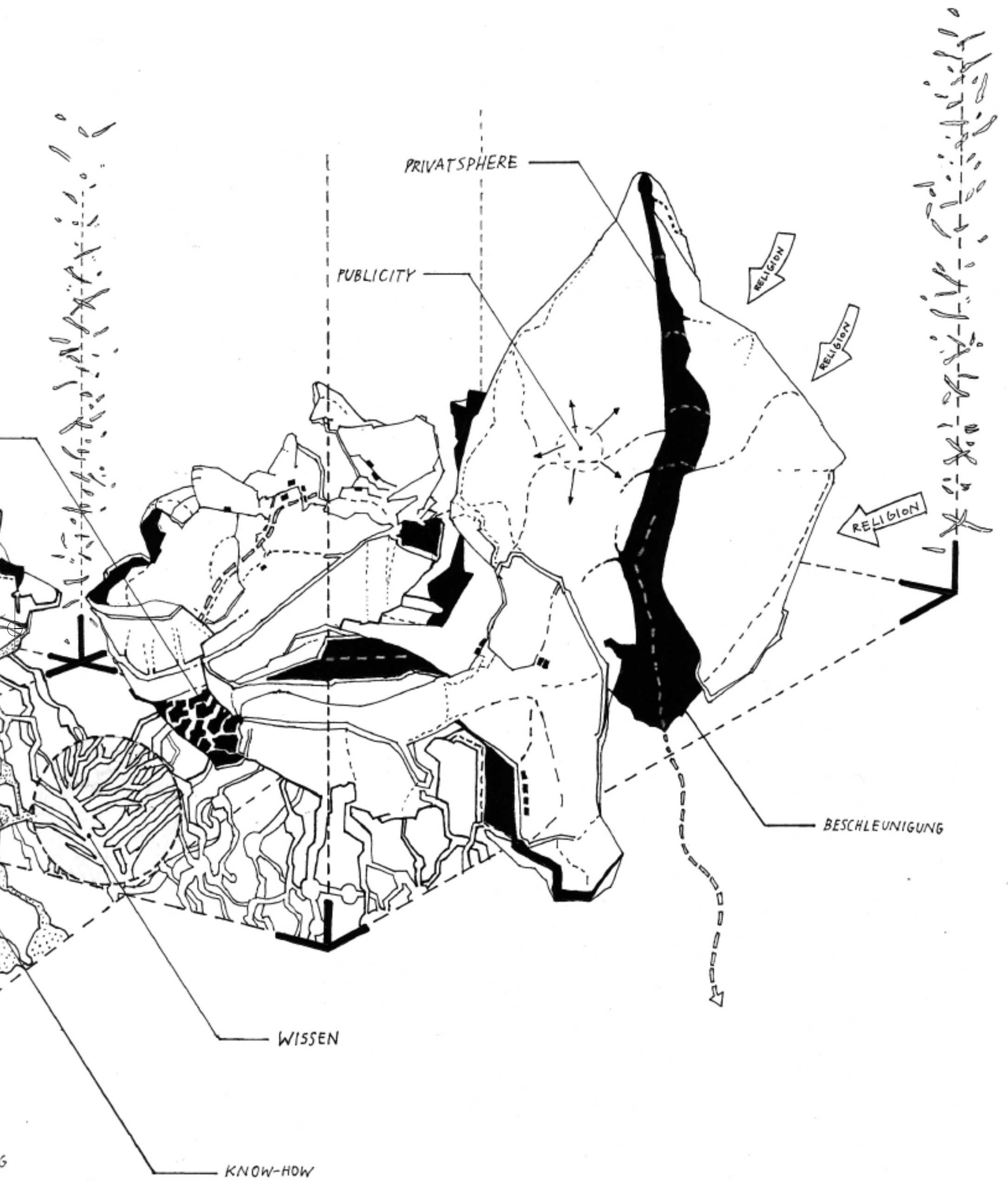


**Location 17: Astra Nails**

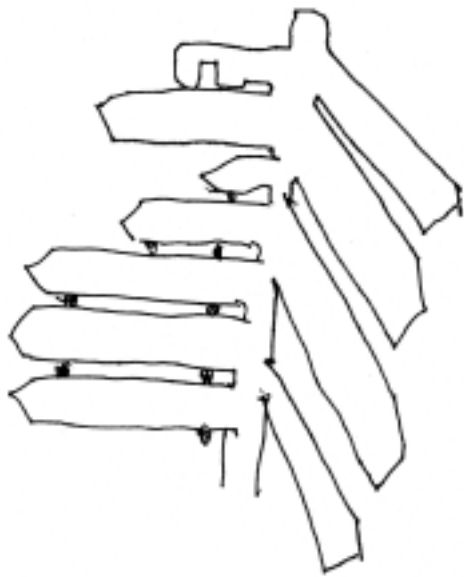








(N.Ga)



(N.Ga)

# LETTERS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF *THE ROAD*

*Dear Orla,*



I want to try to make a start with our talk about walking: for the moment let's just talk the two of us about our ideas and experiences about walking. We can try to include the other N6 members later on. If that might turn out to be difficult, at least the two of us will have tried to talk (about walking). One might say that we're both country people: I live in the middle of nowhere in a mountainous area in France, you grew up and are going back to live in the middle of nowhere beside the sea in Ireland. For this work we decided to walk 'urban'. But not only for this walk, at least for me: all the walks I made were urban: Sarajevo, Belgrade, Paris, Kinshasa, Bucharest, Manhattan,

Tirana, Brazzaville, Maastricht, Pristina, Marseille. I have the feeling that even the walks in Saint Claude will be urban. The walks that I did before and especially this walk are not about the countryside, they're not about the pleasures of walking toward a nice point of view, where you can look at and enjoy the beautiful landscape. They're not about reaching a summit, not even about touching the bottom of a cave. They're not about visiting important buildings, about works of art that you had to see, not about places where important people lived, they're not sports. If these walks are about anything they could be about flatness, about indifference. Another thing is that the N6 walks are about Belgium, but probably

## **There's nothing heroic to walking**

that's not another thing altogether – Belgium being an exponent of flatness, indifference... Belgium is the country that

I exiled myself from and that you have lived in for many years. Brussels is part of it. When you walk the N6 you cross the different borders that are contained by the country. You walk through the grey-ness, you walk through the absence of a global idea of society.

Talking again about earlier walks I took: Sarajevo after the war still had an appeal, the city shot to pieces was a strong image 'worth seeing'. Kinshasa and Brazzaville were really exotic places and every time I took a picture, that picture had an exotic appeal; black people, especially children, in colourful dresses – I didn't want to show that. That's why I ended up filming the soil and the sky in Congo...

There's nothing heroic to walking. That's one of the reasons why I don't agree with Hamish Fulton, not in the way he plans his walks and not in the way he shows his walks in the galleries. Exhaustion and disgust, that's what these walks are about. The exhaustion is not a result of the physical effort of the walking. You're not disgusted by the places you walk in or the people you (don't) meet while you walk. The disgust emerges from inside oneself. I guess that the slow movement,

through a space in which you're supposed to drive, the steady heartbeat, together with the noise of the cars, the pollution, the dust, the heat, the cold, the rain makes you look inside yourself and ponder your 'condition'. You can only look inside yourself and that's where the disgust and the exhaustion come from.

*Dear Wim,*



Walking for me never had to do with anything else than thinking. Some people walk up mountains with a stopwatch and it's all about how quickly you can do it, how high the mountain is and what reward will be waiting at the top. If I

continued on > page 20



# B U S S H E L T E R S

N°	POSITION OF BUSSHELTER	REFERENCE	THROUGH	FROM	ARCH	SIDE	NOTES
1.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 53.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 3400					school MONS
2.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 53.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 3500					
3.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 52.4 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 3600					
4.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 51.9 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 3700					french fries at church
5.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 51.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 3800					
6.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 50.5 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 4000					
7.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 50.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 4100					
8.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 48.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 4170					S.H.A.P.E.
9.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 48.4 KM						S.H.A.P.E.
10.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 47.9 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 4180					S.H.A.P.E.
11.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 47.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL MS 4190					
12.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 46.9 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2610					
13.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 46.9 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2600					
14.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 46.4 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2500					
15.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 46.0 KM						CASTEAU La Province
16.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 46.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2200					
17.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 45.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2100					
18.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 45.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL					
19.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 45.1 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 2000					
20.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 41.3 KM						
21.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 40.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 1000					
22.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 40.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 1010					
23.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 39.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 0950					
24.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 37.3 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 0600					
25.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 37.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 0700					
26.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 36.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SO 0900					Opposite BRICO SOIGNIES
27.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 33.0 KM						bullet hole, right after = boobscafé
28.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 31.0 KM						BRAINE-LE-COMTE market place
29.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 29.0 KM						concrete, 2 persons, 2 holes on side
30.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 28.6 KM						contrete 3 persons, no holes on side
31.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 26.3 KM						glass LA GENETTE
32.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 26.3 KM						glass LA GENETTE
33.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 23.5 KM						double poly carbonate
34.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 22.8 KM						half white plastick
35.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 21.8 KM						concrete, 2 persons, no holes on side
36.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 21.4 KM						concrete, 3 persons no holes on side, school
37.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 17.6 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 33					
38.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 17.1 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 32					
39.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT 16.8 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 31					
40.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT 13.6 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 21					

41.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	13.6 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 20					
42.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	13.0 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 104					in front of KRAFT
43.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	13.0 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 103					in front of KRAFT
	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	12.6 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 22					
42.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	12.0 KM						
43.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	11.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0800					
44.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	10.5 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 18					
45.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	10.5 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0700					
46.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	10.0 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 19					
47.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	10.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0650					
48.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	9.3 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 20					
49.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	9.3 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0600					
50.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	9.0 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0550					
51.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	9.0 KM	JC DECAUX JCD 21					
52.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	8.8 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0500					
53.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	8.6 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 1100					
54.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	8.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 450					
55.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	7.8 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0400					
56.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	7.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0300					
57.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	7.1 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0200					
58.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	6.5 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 0100					
59.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	6.2 KM	AD SHELL CLEAR CHANNEL SP 1050					
60.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	5.2 KM	JC DECAUX AND 188					
61.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	5.2 KM	JC DECAUX AND 189					
62.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	5.1 KM	JC DECAUX AND 191					
63.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	5.1 KM	JC DECAUX AND 190					
64.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	4.7 KM	JC DECAUX AND 175					
65.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	4.4 KM	JC DECAUX AND 176					
66.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	4.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 223					
67.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	4.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 222					
68.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	3.8 KM	JC DECAUX AND 114 113 109					
69.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	3.8 KM	JC DECAUX AND 112 111 110					
70.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	3.3 KM	JC DECAUX AND 182					
71.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	2.5 KM	JC DECAUX AND 247					
72.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	2.5 KM	JC DECAUX AND 220					
73.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	1.7 KM	JC DECAUX AND 280					
74.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	1.7 KM	JC DECAUX AND 281					
75.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	1.7 KM	JC DECAUX AND 246					
76.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	1.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 203					
77.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	1.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 202					
78.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	1.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 276					
79.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	1.0 KM	JC DECAUX AND 277					
80.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS LEFT	0.4 KM	JC DECAUX AND 278					
81.	N6 BRUSSELS-MONS RIGHT	0.4 KM	JC DECAUX AND 217					

(W.Cu)



# JUICEY APPLES FALL FROM OLD TREES NOBODY COLLECTS THEM

(E.Di)



was cemented back into place but never repainted. The gutter is finished with white plastic slats; the gutter is rectangular and projects at least sixty centimetres beyond the facade plane. The roof is laid with russet clay roof tiles. Immediately above the guttering is a Velux skylight. The house is the same height as the house to its left, the junction between the roof tiles of one house and the roof tiles of the other house is sealed with lead flashings. The house is eighty centimetres higher than the house to its right. The rising wall between the two houses is in red brick, metal anchors pierce the brickwork. The chimney is in red brick, topped by a cement capstone; the chimney stands on the right side of the roof and ends just above the ridge of the house. Greyish white lead flashings provide the water seal between the rising wall and the tiled roof of the adjoining house. That house is built in multi-toned facing bricks. The house is narrower and lower than the previous two houses: a front door and next to it a narrow window; the shutter of the ground floor window is fully lowered. The shutter is white plastic, as is the front door. In the front door are three panels enclosed in narrow mouldings and a window in the shape of a half moon, divided into four recessed panes; above the door is a rectangular fixed light. To the right of the front door hangs a small white letterbox. The facade of the house is built in multi-toned brown bricks, the pointing is light grey, above the windows is a soldier course lintel. On the lower floor, and also on the upper floor. On the upper floor are two windows, both windows are the same size. The sills are in thin, imitation bluestone, below the sill on the upper floor a thick cable runs horizontally across the facade. Both windows are wood. One window is brown, the other white, in the windows hang transparent white curtains with a flower pattern. No light burns

CHAPTER 36

WIM CUYVERS

PREFACE | Placenames | Locations | 1<sup>st</sup> N6 trip |  
2<sup>nd</sup> N6 trip | 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> N6 and miscellaneous trips |  
Scenario sketches | Notes | **REWRITING BREAKS** |

The next parallel dead-end takes me through the summer yellow maize and the summer golden wheat. More giant pylons feeding the wheat with an electric growth hum. High above the stone road this semi agricultural scene reminds me of Ireland. The warm wheaten smell. The concrete must be two kilometres away.

When I retrace my steps in winter. The maize and the corn have become empty ploughed fields ready for the next golden crop. I piss under a pylon, nice tidy piss. The winter sun faintly warms me.



### Location 18: The Bunker



The scout's camp would have been described here in my first notes, had I thought to write about it. Then it had the magic of a specially designated area that seems to have lost its purpose. Like a giant evacuated ghost space on the edge of a housing zone. This time it's Sunday. It's a hive of activity; football, tents, games, children, teenagers, families. The deserted magic is gone. A place 'properly used'.

~~Now, Sunday, it is just a green recreation area on the edge of a concrete space. Brilliant shiny Sunday and all those abandoned football pitches are in use. The places which were so suggestive to me before as places for sexual encounters, illicit substance usage are all full of football, footballers and scouts!~~

Steaming dung heaps beside the road. I smell the sweet acid odour. Two guys walk past I can smell the washing powder off their clothes. I smell piss mixing with acorns. I smell daisies in January.



*Continuously scouting. Been taking a lot of vertical photographs. Will video allow me to frame the same space. Vertical Widescreen. How does the scout appear in the film? A shadow? A hand a whole person?*

When I reach LLtown I decide to cycle back along the stone road. After a while my parallel desires come rushing back.

**Note:** Do I want to escape what I really should be doing? Or is it because I cannot keep my mind or my body moving along a straight line?

What about the snooker hall beside the supermarket?



I come across three empty football pitches. The old apple trees around one side of the field define what the space did before it became a football pitch. ~~These places exist yet don't exist at the same moment. They are just there saying nothing recounting a past presence~~

~~and an unused reality. They are there with their negligible urban planning and their illegal path ways which have been worn into the grass by urban wanderers trying to find a short cut from one place to another. It is so dry now. But I imagine these paths in winter, muddy urban shoes walking, collecting the semi urban, semi rural mud. These in between spaces give me peace I like their uselessness. They are also filled with a constant tension. You know humanity is too close by for peace and you wonder or you predict what happens along these clandestine paths.~~

Later I am cycling I end up following an ice cream van past a 'White Night' shop in the middle of nowhere, the bastard ice cream vendor overtakes me and nearly knocks me off my bike in a spray of kitsch ice-cream music.



### Day 3 and other days: LLtown to Davidsdown and Back

I start on the stone road just outside LLtown.

'Soirée tropicale' poster in the carpool car park. Empty summer carpools. Noise. Overstimulation.

### Location 19: The gravestone-carver's house.



*A man carving the gravestones outside his house.*

I follow a sign to the right for a swimming pool. The swimming pool leads me to the graveyard, which leads me to the football pitch. My three favourite spaces within 10 seconds of each other. Another 'dead end' kind of a place. I can't run parallel. There are no clandestine paths. No escape this time. I cycle back through a tunnel of trees. Back to the screaming N6.

Three seats in L-beck on a triangular corner. Who had the idea to put seats here and who sits on them? Who lives on dead-end streets? And why?



Recreational areas are full of people in Belgium. The truly empty spaces are the 'non defined green areas'. The places close to the stone road. The green areas between buildings, factories and agricultural or wasteland areas. These are the places for rest. In these areas there is the suggestion of people everywhere but there is no one. Is everyone avoiding these in between green/grey-zones?

I am as green as the trees now, as the sun reflects off the leaves and penetrates my body. Green penetration is what I need to get over N6 sickness.

Everyone has their arms hanging out the windows as the rest of their bodies



already know a walk then I embark on it like people do any repetitive movement. One foot in front of the other at my own pace. When I am doing a longer walk I

## Walking for me never had to do with anything else than thinking

can't help thinking about necessity. How long would it have taken someone who did not have a horse to walk from one village to another in 1850? I remember a scene in a Thomas Hardy book of a man walking to get to some one, somewhere far away. I remember the slowness that I felt, although it was probably only a short passage. I like this slowness. I like all the walking people did to have human contact in remote places when there were no other forms of transport. I like the necessity that entails but also the time spent. I like the walk Werner Herzog recounts – all the way from Germany to Switzerland (I think it was) to ask his wife to marry him. He had time to think about what he was getting into. Every walk was and is time to think, to think about what happened, to think about what to say. We seem to do all that thinking on trains and planes these days. I am sitting in an airport right now writing this while waiting for a bus.

When I'm walking I can't stay on track. I often sit down too long to watch the sunset. Then I have to rush before the pitch dark sets in and I can no longer find my way through the dunes without tripping up on rabbit holes. I never seem to get there on time. I don't look down. I can't

stop stopping and admiring. This is rural walking, of course.

As for the city walks, you speak of disgust and exhaustion, although you say it comes from inside. For me on the N6 I feel a sense of hopelessness and that comes from inside and from out. My city walks have the same aspect as the country walks except that I have a tendency to stop even more and to be even more disconcentrated. I could only say that I was 'dust and exhaustion' when I started this project. But it allowed me time. The time I had lost. The time I am allowing myself now to sit and write this to you. I like walking because it allows me the space to look, to get lost in my thoughts.

I think you are more extreme in your relation to the street. You sleep there. You stay. You don't to give up. As a woman, I am fed up with the risks that involves and I simply refuse to accept the noise and the danger. But I think I can imagine the exhaustion that staying on involves.

I took my bike along the N6 for scanning purposes, simply speeding up the process of walking, allowing me a wider scope. I saw very quickly as I moved along the Chaussée that I did not want to be on it. I wanted to be at its edges I wanted to feel the ugliness and violence of the city's dis-

## Remember that bar we saw together called LE CHALET DU SANS FOND?

regard for the countryside. For that reason I needed to deviate. I needed to be

closer to the edge. Not on the street, but where the street joins the soil.

Remember that bar we saw together called LE CHALET DU SANS FOND? Would we have found that on foot? Is it all down to walking or to time?

*Dear Orla,*



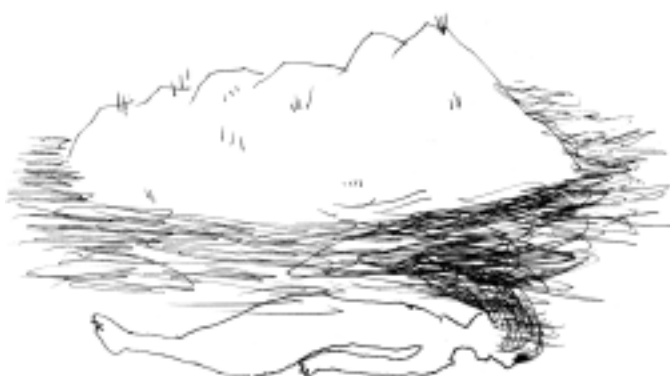
you say: 'I quit the Chaussée that I did not want to be on.' You seem to still have the possibility to decide what you want or don't want. I know that it must sound very contradictory what I'm going to say now but anyhow... I'm convinced that the only position – or probably condition is a better word that's left for me – is that of wandering. I like much better the French word 'errer', that also has 'erreur' in it, 'the one who wanders', but also 'who errs'. Strangely enough the Dutch word 'dwalen' also has this connotation of wandering and of making a mistake. In our functional world wandering is considered as a mistake. But it's much easier said than done that you want or have to wander. Our environment is very well organized to guide you, to not let you wander. It's outside factors that guide us, but also a lot of interiorized guards do everything to keep us away from wandering. And here I come to the contradiction: to be able to come closer to the state of wandering, closer to this wandering condition, I needed this 'appeal' by Firefly 'to walk the N6', and I'm glad to have accepted it, and by overemphasizing the acceptance,

by saying: 'OK, I'll walk that line, very literally', I become a state of wandering. The absolute acceptance of the limitations, of not having any resistance against these limitations, allows me to wander. I'm no longer distracted by strong impulses of commerce, of divertissement, of control – and there's no illusion of 'freedom' because that's exactly what wandering ('errer') is not about – wandering, I mean the absolute wandering will be the end of all illusion. The questions that people ask(ed) me, like you, like Firefly, become an occasion, an opportunity, an alibi to do things in a more coherent, more consequential way than when I would have done it all by myself. I guess that in a way I exaggerate what people ask me to do, I excessively focus on certain parts and aspects of their question, I prolong their question, maybe that's autistic, yes, the question becomes a contract between them and me, but even more a contract with myself, with the one who asked the ques-

## Our environment is very well organized to guide you, to not let you wander

tion as a witness, someone who controls whether or not I take the contract between me and myself seriously. What I'm trying to say is that I approach the state of wandering more by sticking strictly to the line, by not getting off the road. I don't know if you can possibly understand what I mean... That's also why I don't trust the 'dérives' of the

continued on > page 22



(N.Ga)



she does not feel sexy anymore  
 \* she dyes her hair \* paints her  
 nails \* buys a miniskirt \* she  
 dyes her hair again \* cuts her  
 nails \* buys high heals \* cuts her  
 hair \* puts on false nails \* tries  
 a string \* and starts smoking

(E.Di)



in the house. The gutter is semicircular in section and in zinc. In the top left, just below the gutter, hangs a junction box. To the left the gutter runs, via a bent zinc drainpipe, over the adjoining roof. In front of the house stands an aluminium-coloured pole with a traffic sign; it isn't possible to see what the sign says. Beside the house are two garages. These two garages sit beneath a single butterfly roof. The garages are built of the same brick as that used for the house; the garage doors are white plastic. There are soldier courses above the garage doors. On top of the brickwork is concrete coping, each coping stone is sixty centimetres long, the coping stones are pointed with cement mortar. Running horizontally across the full width of the facade is a thick, black cable, the cable lies just above the valley of the butterfly roof, where it meets the valley the cable angles downwards, on the other side of the valley the cable rises again two brickwork courses. The drainpipe of the adjoining house disappears into the front wall of the garages. The footpath in front of the garages, in thirty-by-thirty cement tiles, slopes slightly so that the right-hand garage door is below the level of the footpath. Next to the garages stands a small apartment building. Between the garages and the apartment building is a blind facade of hard, red-brown brick. The blind wall is set back ten centimetres vis-à-vis the front facade. The front elevation of the apartment building has a bluestone plinth, about fifty centimetres high. A narrow band of the facade is in dark, almost black bricks; to the right of the front entrance hangs the number of the building - 270 - in white figures on a blue plate. The front door is white aluminium and has a black vertical handle, left and right of the door are two narrow glazed strips, set into the glazing are two letterboxes which together form a horizontal band that appears to

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sweat inside their ears. It must be up around 37 degrees. There is something obscene about all these hairy arms, they suggest gold chains and white socks...loud music escapes the ears open windows and is left hanging in my ears with the imagined car odour inside my nostrils.

*Being on my way entails a lot of noise and the editing speeds up*

**Location 20: The Mad Baby Magnolia Park Bench.**



**Location 21: Clablack Heights.**



Rue de la falaise. From high up on a contour near Bize I can look down on Clablack. I have never seen Clablack from this direction. Somehow all these places could be flat or not have a back or a side until you have seen them from another angle.

**Note:** It reminds me of the first time I had been in a boat near the islands just off the coast where I grew up. I had only seen these islands from the land, and I had only seen the land I was standing on, from the land I was standing on. But once on a boat, on the other side of the islands it all looked like an unreal reversed negative because my eyes were so accustomed to seeing everything the other way round.

I keep cycling parallel. I get to a dead-end on some country road that has been split in two by a main road. I approach a ditch. I have to climb down with my bike and scramble out again, then dash across between the speeding cars. As I am about to go down, an injured goose leaps from the ditch and dashes to the other side. She runs as hard as she can. I am sure a car will hit her and it is all my fault for disturbing the 'ends' of dead-end streets. Breaks slam on! She dashes in to the cornfield at the other side dragging her damaged wing, I watch dismayed... incapable... I wonder if I will make it, dragging my bike behind me. Stung by nettles I am heading towards the castle. The count's castle.

**Location 22: The Count's Castle**

I am looking desperately for the blue bits I saw on my map, which I have been purposely leaving at home. I stop to ask an old woman... you see I am looking for 'blue bits' I say. She is an old Dutch woman. She moved back here in 1985 after her husband died. She didn't know if there was a lake in Ecaussine, she said. As it turns out the blue bits were quarries, lots of them, all fenced in, huge and empty. That old lady had lived there for 25 years and she didn't know that she lived in

between those quarries, the blue bits on the map. Maybe you only see what you need to see in life. I keep looking now wanting to see so much, hoping to find a swim. I look over a wall and down, down into one lovely expanse of blue, fenced, surrounded by barbed wire. Huge and empty. I bite my lip and sweat and I wonder what the hell am I doing here in this god damn concrete land!

I keep cycling. I arrive at the count's castle. I have nothing to recount about it except that it was like a gold bracelet thrown in a dustbin. Too beautiful, too old, too far from the car-beaten trail, too far from the stone road to be really described as a simple deviation. Still I go back a year later as I retrace my steps, as the rules change from deviation to retracing I am obliged to go back and I decide I will fit it into the rules somehow. Near Countsbrain there has to be a castle.

**Day 3: (revisited twice) From Countsbrain to Countsbrain and Back**

With all my wandering off the stone road I seemed to have missed Countsbrain. The second time I stop there to escape the rain. I enter a bar. I order a beer. I take out a cigarette. I ask for a light, the guy I ask tells me I can keep his lighter as he hands it to me. It image on it reflects the atmosphere of the bar; a woman half-naked on a black background clutches her breast.

**Location 23: Les Chicons Camping Site**



*Film when totally empty in winter, spend a whole day making shots there. I seem to remember the showers very well there was something about taking your towel in the morning and going to that concrete hole where nothing worked.*

**Location 24: Bombastic Bloom Bungalow**



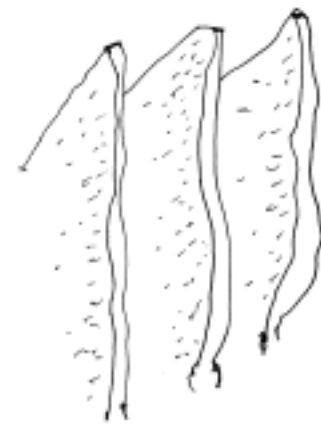
*Film when totally empty in summer.*

**Location 25: Le Chalet du sans Fond**



This place seems to bring all my interests together at once. The formalism of its layout. The existentialist name, the deserted football pitch, the sign, the bar, the dead-end near the stone road.





(N.Ga)

Situationalists; they trusted that they would be able to wander just like that. I'm convinced that they underestimated the powers of all kind of mechanisms that manage to guide us, to guide us to places where we can buy things, where we can consume, where we don't have to think, where we can not think anymore, where we can stop wandering around in the dark space that is our head.

*Dear Wim,*



it seems you have read about walking. I have not. Perhaps I should, but I have only walked. However, wandering in the dark space is what I do for a living and I think you do too, even though you like to walk a straight line in doing so.

Perhaps I don't trust my own rules. Perhaps if you had told me to walk the N6 I would have done it. If you had said, 'hey, why are we all on the road and you're on and off it', maybe I would have fallen into line. But nobody said anything. I cannot take my own rules seriously. I think it is all about resistance and desire. I could not stay on that road. I set up a situation for myself, and everybody else in this project, a situation I myself had to escape. It was a physical reaction; like recoiling from a huge pool of vomit. But I never 'quit it' as you say. I never quit the N6 totally. I never quit anything in fact. I am always smoking and giving up smoking. Drinking and giving up drinking. Being on the N6 and being beside it. When I started the N6 I took the first right turn

I came to on the road, and then I found 'my road', a parallel road that sometimes wiggled out of control and sometimes swerved back to the point, the N6 point.

In the act of walking or cycling I had also very naturally and spontaneously created the act of breaking 'contracts' if I try to see it in your terms. I had a new parallel pact with myself, which was pointless until by looking and evaluating I found the point for winging. It's weird because

**However, wandering in the dark space is what I do for a living and I think you do too, even though you like to walk a straight line in doing so**

really from the first seconds, I was on a zigzag, but my deviations all started to look like each other; football pitches, weird semi-parks with broken benches, streets full of garages all with closed doors, housing estates, main roads leading to country roads, leading back to main roads, that were impossible to cross. Dead-ends which weren't dead-ends, lost tracks, lost sidetracks. The desire to get back to the N6. The desire not to deviate on the way back and still deviating. Maybe I am too disconcentrated to continue the straight line you walked.

Maybe your answer is autistic and mine is dyslexic. Can dyslexics relate to autis-

tics? Maybe I have to deviate to make sense. Maybe I just can't resist the pleasure of sidetracking, of avoiding the given task, of getting myself back where I belong. Maybe walking in a straight line is not poetic enough for me. Reaching the end is also not the point. I kept thinking I have to get to Mons but I never got there. So I also never completed the goal. The one thing I did do while walking was to revisit, practice, repeat, rehearse, re-walk, in every direction. I confused the space. I remember you talking about not knowing any more which part of the Chaussée you were on. What do you think about wearing down a path by walking? Learning things off by heart? Making them familiar? Wearing them of their interest? And again my question: Do you think we would have found the LE CHALET DU SANS FOND if we had not had bikes that day? The one day we travelled for a short time together.

*Dear Orla,*



It only seems I have been reading about walking. Someone gave me the Thoreau text on walking and said that Thoreau made him think of me. And somebody else gave me the book 'Walking Artist' by Hamish Fulton and said this book made him think of me. And I read the Thoreau text and I looked at the pictures of Fulton but I could only see the way in which they 'walked' differently from the way I 'walk'. I first walked when I walked away from my mother, at the age of five, I think. I have the feeling that I knew how

to walk at that moment, from that moment on. When friends give me texts because they think that my walking is

**I remember you talking about not knowing any more which part of the Chaussée you were on**

like others and I only see the differences, it may mean that these (and other) texts and the differences that I see are possibilities to say more precisely what my walking is about and to compare and relate that to walks by others. And of course the aim of doing that is not trying to develop a method, or trying to defend one method rather than another... I really have no idea whether it might be better to stay on the N6 or to walk in the close surroundings of the N6. But I know that I had to stay on it. I agree with what you say about walking in a dark space and yes that's also what I'm doing, and yes I'm walking in straight lines, but not because I like to do so. It is because the dark space doesn't leave me any illusion of being able to do what I want to do. When you're talking about concentration, I have the feeling that I can only concentrate on the black space we're walking through, that we're living in.

LE CHALET DU SANS FOND is a confirmation, it's like a stamp that proves that insights gathered at the N6 are real, are correct, it's a very beautiful stamp, but the stamp is an abstraction, it seems to give 'a fond' to the 'sans fond'. What I want to say is that while walking on the

continued on > page 24





(J.Ki)

THE FISHERMAN FISHES  
IN THE RIVER AND THROWS  
THE FISH HE CATCHES  
BACK INTO THE RIVER.  
THE NEXT DAY HE DOES  
EXACTLY THE SAME.

(E.Di)

continue across the door. The door has a high sill in blue-stone, the sill projects some three centimetres from the facade plane and is rounded, above the door a concrete lintel supports the weight of the facade. Above the front door the thick cable continues across the dark brickwork. The building has two upper storeys. In the section with the dark brickwork are two square windows. The windows are in white aluminium. The curtains of the lower window are closed, in front of the curtains a box sits on the window sill. In the upper window the curtains are still open. Around the windows is a narrow concrete frame. The roof gutter is white plastic with a zinc bead. The gutter runs the full width of the building, over the dark brick section, but also over the neighbouring section which is made of precast concrete panels. There is a dirty grey mark on the white plastic gutter. The facade panels are beige. They are sixty-by-sixty centimetres and the joints between the panels are filled with cement mortar. On the ground floor of the building are two garage doors in white aluminium. Each door has a heavy bottom slat, on that bottom slat are aluminium-coloured handles for opening the garage doors. Between the two garage doors a column has been made, the column is thirty centimetres wide and faced with precast concrete facade panels. At the bottom of the column is a plinth of bush-hammered bluestone. Below the window on the first floor is a continuous horizontal ledge in bluestone slabs, five centimetres thick; this bluestone ledge projects five centimetres from the facade plane. Below the weather moulding irregular black patches are visible. In the beige facade are four windows, two on the first floor and two on the second floor, the windows on the left are the mirror image of the windows on the right. The windows are subdivided by an asymmetrical cross into

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**Location 26: Las Vegas 2 (Dawn)**



Where could we find Las Vegas 1?

**Location 27: The Facade**



Is there something to be played out here?

**Location 28: La Renaissance Apartment Block**



Low shot of the pansies in the foreground, someone enters the building

**Location 29: The Bus Stop Bar**



The camera is left on play. It's on the table. On the image inside the camera, you see a woman's hands playing with a lighter. There is an image of a half-naked woman on the lighter. She is fidgeting with the image of the half-naked woman, you never see her face.

**Location 30: The Green Water Tower**



Soft and endearing.

**Location 31: The Grey Water Tower**



Hard and foreboding

**Location 32: The Long Toffees Sculpture**



Whoever got the idea for this? Try to find out.

**Location 33: The Merry Maid**



The romantic sculpture on the edge of the stone road facing the cars is swallowed by traffic. The atmosphere pushes itself at me. The places contain the ideas. The planters in the middle of the street you have a great view. The empty garages - Filming the empty garages - in the background you can hear the voices of people on the street I like this idea of things carrying on around these empty spaces without human imagery. The film scout is only a shadow on the path.

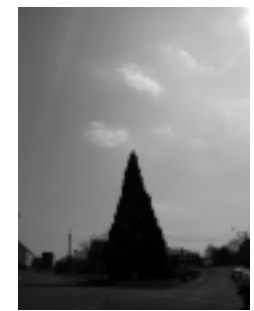
**Day 4: From Soignes to the Place I Never Got To and Back.**

Today is full of pizzerias and Italian flags, the world cup adds to that overly Italian flavour. So Italian it is. I eat pizza with too much cheese and have an argument about the coffee.

**Location 34: The Source of God Church**



**Location 35: The Triangle**



**Location 36: Multishop**



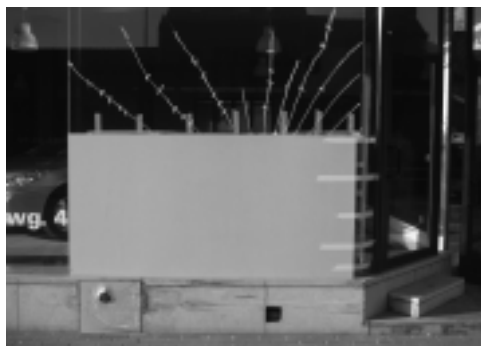
**Location 37: Star Fairy House**



N6 you don't even get the consolation of beautiful words or concepts. I keep using this Joyce quote about poetry that poetry is about the ordinary and journalism about the extraordinary. I seem to have an ongoing preference for 'mist', 'white noise', 'sameness', 'storylessness'. Instead of 'wearing a path by walking', I think more of 'wearing one's soul by walking'. That was what the first walk I did as a kid was already about: walking very fast, running, but in no way a sport, exactly 100 times around the house, away from the pressure of my mother for as long as it took to walk 100 times around the house.

Walking according to me has to do with not making anything, not going anywhere, not (wanting to) sell anything, not (wanting) to buy anything, just stumbling in the greyness.

*Dear Wim,*



It's been a while and 1000 interruptions. I have decided that this extended letter will have to deal with these interruptions. It seems before, before I grew up, I could escape to walking and writing. I don't know how exactly to retrieve that state. But I would like to have it back.

I receive your letters about walking and I always want to reply immediately, the same as I would like to have time to walk everywhere. For example in an hour or so I have to go to Leuven. I would like to walk, but that means I would have to leave early in the morning to get there before dark. I would have to drop all other considerations and just walk. I

**My body seems to be impregnated by words**

would probably have taken my recorder and talked to you as I walked and I would have transcribed my words into a letter and posted it on my arrival in Leuven.

The N6 allows me some form of that pre-responsible state so I can understand why childhood comes to your mind. I think really I walk to write. I don't write fairytales or fables. I write transformed realities. I need to walk for these transformed realities to come out. Of course I must alternate that walking with sitting for anything at all to get done. When we spoke last I liked how you described us being on opposite sides of the same road. We have to shout to communicate but I seem to be able to communicate with that guy on the other side of the road undertaking 'linear walking' with his rucksack and stopping at bus stops and taking photographs. No matter how the walking process differs, the writing stays the same - straight lines across an A4 page, handwritten, both with about 14 words to a line. Maybe your physical act of walking is closer to writing than mine... Or perhaps your writing flows as you walk and mine comes in stops and starts like my walking. I want to write more but I have to go now to Leuven as I mentioned before. Perhaps you can interrupt me...

*Dear Orla,*



I don't know if my walking is closer or not to writing than yours, but what I know is that it's very true that my walking is as close as I seem to be able to get to writing. (I consider climbing up and down ropes in caves also as walking, I have to say). It's not that the walking is a preparation for the writing, or an analysis, or a concentration - the walking is writing. While walking, I hear the words resonate in my head, or better, I feel the content, yes I know the content, I know what it's all about, without even thinking of the words that might try to say, to express all that. I guess that's what it's all about: walking reminds you of this elementary knowledge, everything that you've known since you were a child. The walking reveals how evident and right this knowledge was. During the walking, during this slow repetitive movement, when I'm not talking to anybody, sometimes it seems as if words resound in my head, then I have the illusion of being able to express the 'pre-verbal' knowledge of a child. After the walking

these words seem to be gone, lost. I don't seem to be able to remember these words, but in a way they seem to be in my body,

**I have nothing to say unless I have seen it or heard it and I would never write it unless I walked and walked, and walked it into words**

since I 'walked them'. My body seems to be impregnated by words. And there's a deep desire, a longing, to get back to these words, to hear them again - that's when I do another walk - maybe that's why I would like to walk forever. I'm glad what you said about my walking being close to writing. It's as if you, on the other side of the N6, heard some of the words that repeated come up in my head while I was walking at a constant rhythm. That's when this writing back and forth between you and me becomes really interesting, worth doing: when you can say something about my walking, something that I knew, but that I could not find the words for... I hope that the 'mechanism' will work in both directions, although we know that there are lots of trucks passing by when you're shouting to the person on the other side of the N6.

*Dear Wim,*



As promised, this letter will be in your letterbox when you get home.

I would like to return to rhythm in walking because I have two rhythms. One is sauntering. I saunter to write. I saunter to hoard images, to scavenge words and collect atmospheres. I must say that I

never felt like I was sauntering for the sake of sauntering or walking for the sake of walking. I was always going somewhere, however slowly. On the way back, it's a different story... that's when I speed up... the romance is over... the imagination is lost... I become a machine. My concentration is gone. I desperately need to get home, to get away from the words, away from the raw feelings. It's nice to do walks when you never have to turn back. Never have to see the same thing twice. Yet the repetition of walking can also be interesting. I'm not a ready-made writer. My writing is always only that of a visual artist, always a reaction to the visual impulse. I have nothing to say unless I have seen it or heard it and I would never write it unless I walked and walked, and walked it into words.

I am walking the 'Desire Lines', the worn paths of a walker who wants to take a shortcut across the green so that she can take time to linger somewhere else. It's like when I write, lingering on a detail is the important thing, not the story, or the psychological development of a character. That is the work of a novelist.

**You say you would like to walk forever**

I need to walk back and forward, turning the subject round and round until it ejects itself, has been sucked dry, become absurd, pointless, dead even. I am in the space left over after planning has taken place all around me, I need to find a way out.

You say you would like to walk forever. I think I also feel this urge. However, I have the feeling that if we walked together you would go at a faster pace and not stop so often. You mentioned something about keeping your head down looking at the ground in one of your texts. Is this true? Am I projecting an idea? Do you stop? I would keep stopping and saying, 'Hey Wim, look at this!' My system is a Dioramic system of movement. The legs pushing forward but the eyes holding back. I need to make mental slides for every step. The body remembers more than the mind, the body never forgets. I did more walking in my twenties, which brings us back to the question of time and walking... or time and thinking and the difference between those who can sit and think and those who have to move to

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**THE LOST GIRL IS LOST AND ASKS THE WAY, NOBODY REPLIES. THE NEXT DAY SHE DOES THE SAME.**

(E.D.)





two low fixed lights at the bottom, an operable rectangular light and a square hopper window. The white curtains of the left and right windows on the first floor are closed; on the second floor, the curtains are partly open. In the right-hand window on the second floor, the hopper window is ajar. The dark red-brown roof tiles are lost against the night sky, a tiny skylight protrudes slightly. It was my aunt who was driving, the car was a Citroën, Ami 6 – who still remembers this car, which made the same noise as a 2 PK? Who can still visualise the car's unusual reverse-raked upper body? As if someone had given it a hefty blow. The cousins were sitting in the back, they must have been quarrelling. My aunt must have turned around, to give them a smack. And, as she was turning around, she must have wrenched the steering wheel. Along the main road stood a lorry, with a loading platform, a dark green lorry, and the car must have driven under the loading platform; on the right side the superstructure was shorn right off, it looked like a sports car after the accident they said, a sports car with open roof. It seemed to me that the car with that peculiar fold had always been waiting for that collision with the lorry, just as a postage stamp waits to be torn off; that the car had been conceived for that very moment, that the car had always known it, just as I had. The older cousin didn't have a scratch but the younger one, my first love, lost half her face. Half an angel face was left hanging on the corner of the green lorry: a kiss from the sweetest child's mouth on the corner of the cold green steel. There was no room left in my head to think about the aunt, about how she must have reproached herself, there wasn't even enough room for that remaining half a head with its snow-white curly hair.

CHAPTER 36

WIM CUYVERS

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**Location 38: The O Mountain Bridge**



STOP FOLLOWING ME

**Location 39: The O Housing Estate**



**Location 40: The O Bridge to Nowhere**



**Location 41: Le Bar des Voituriers**

Now I am standing on a eerie foot-bridge between Otown and the place I never got to. Locked between the countryside and the city. This bridge is unreal, inspiring. It runs over a road, a canal, an expanse of green, another road and a railway track – all these layers of colour ordering themselves in the grey melancholic industrial landscape. It seems like a bridge that nobody ever uses. ~~I have grown to love these places in Belgium, there is nowhere else to love...~~

Dust coats the landscape, a cement factory deposits a grey film everywhere. People playing ball and fishing on the other side, the green tries to shine through the grey! I can feel the dust on my lips.

Three bridges close to one another. All bridges from nowhere to nowhere!

I'll never get to 'the place I never got to'. The rain is threatening. Am I becoming an overactive film scout?

~~I came back here twice but only took pictures I don't know why~~

The phone rings:

E: Yah we are on the town square having beer!

O: The city is blocking me from getting in...

E: Oh?

O: I cannot get across...

E: Oh?

O: I am hemmed in, outside!

E: Orla, what are you talking about!

O: I could get to the starting point of the bridge but I couldn't get across...I have to cross the canal, the motorway, the railway track; it's not easy, it's like spaghetti out here. 'The place I never got to' won't let me in. I am stuck in purgatory for the sin of not staying on the stone road!

E: Listen Orla, calm down, we are going to take the train back.

O: Spaghetti, Els, and it's gonna rain, very slippery after all that sun, I

don't know if I will make it, I'm gonna head back.

Cycling again through the woods. Fast. Can I go as fast as their train? An IBIS hotel in the middle of the woods, who comes here? I realize later S.H.A.P.E. is close by, that's the reason for the hotel, the magic is gone. I loved the idea of an IBIS for no-one, with a Jack Nicholson type barman serving whatever one would drink in an IBIS hotel for no-one.

Le bois des dames et la bar des voitures. Statues, dead-end roads, football pitches, graveyards, bars, churches, and factories, there is no way out. I seem to get myself into all kinds of trouble if I have a map, I have to stop every 5 minutes to check where I am. I don't trust my sense of direction anymore and all because of a piece of paper. ~~Today is the first day I took it, one of those stupid decisions I guess. I look up from my map and goddamn it, I'm in a morass! I'm going across a fucking forest being bitten by horseflies and pushing my bike through knee high grass, so much for urbanity!~~

~~A man comes out of a house I need to ask him a question about my map, it turns out he is American. He must work for S.H.A.P.E. But he doesn't know anything about maps. He doesn't know how far it is from Casteau to Soignéc. In fact he knows nothing. He thinks its 20km to Soignéc. I argue that by my map (even though I can't read it, it indicates that it must be around 5 kms. I just can't help discussing, he is so dopey.) He thinks for a minute in silence and then he says 'it's at least ten minutes by car or 20 clicks (as he calls kms) to the McDonalds in Soignéc!' I can't believe he has integrated so well in to Belgium!~~

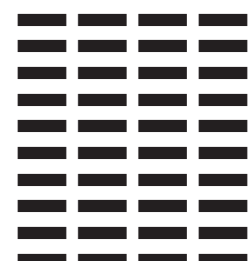
I cycle on faster now I have to catch up on the train that Els and Johanna are sitting on. I start to feel the muscles in my legs.

Another football pitch. Battery gone. I can't take another photograph. I am standing there trying to fool the battery to take one more photo... When suddenly like as if hypnotist had done a countdown and reached one, I stand there and remember every vivid detail of my first blowjob. The wooden changing rooms, the overhang under which I stood, the smell of a foreign country, the smell of a foreign man. I cycle on reluctantly, wishing to linger a moment to see if the hypnotist can take me a little deeper but I have to catch up on that train!

I am cycling fast, away from the scene. I am cycling on the wrong side of the road! I SNAP OUT the hypnotist is gone and I have a strange taste in my mouth...

I am now at the church where my map stops. I find my way back without it.

I never made it to 'the town I never got to'. Open a new blank document and start again...



think. The difference between urban walking and rural walking. The N6 is the anti-bag lady road; she is swept away by the traffic. I continue to submit tangents to myself and follow their chaotic structure. Fascination produces delay. So I stop. After the delay memory comes into play... I could keep going but I promised that you would have this letter when you got home so I have to run to catch the post!

*Dear Orla,*



Yes, I walk usually with my head down, architects often seem to do the opposite: they always seem to look up: at façades.

### **Walking along the N6 is like walking behind someone, not being distracted by possible choices**

On the N6 I walked for hours head down, yes without stopping, without shopping. The paces seem to follow the same rhythm as the heartbeat, the soft aching of the legs, the soft aching of the knees and the

back, the noise of the cars, all that melts together like an endless mantra: it brings you into some kind of trance, at the same time there are details that you keep seeing very sharply, things that you see in this egg-shaped or kidney-shaped surface that you see when you look down while walking. The things that I see then are usually very banal: rubbish and bottle tops. Some of these images filled with banal things are stamped in my brain, will never go away and these images take up much of my brain – instead of the things that other people find important. It's like some dreams you have when you are ill and feverish, dreams you can't shed. But it seems to be impossible to make pictures of these images; I can't even think of making pictures at that point. I don't mind walking back and forth, to do the same walk over and over. I really don't mind walking after someone as long as he or she walks on, steadily. It means that I don't even have to bother about which road to go. Walking along the N6 is like walking behind someone, not being distracted by possible choices. I guess I would never say when walking together: 'Hey Orla, look at this', I think I would just keep on going, ashamed, hoping that you would not see the inside of my head or heart or chest, the desire, the longing, the fire, the disgust. The walking seems to cherish that desire, that longing, that fire, that disgust, it seems to warm it up, to intensify it; I think that's why I have to walk: to feel that constant inside-insight-fire. The walking has nothing to do with excitement, it's not about kicks, it's about duration, a longwinded and slow exploration of the abysses in my head. It's an exploration and then again there's hardly anything new to be found – walking makes me remember what I've always known, since I was a child, when I didn't have the words yet to classify things in my head and to become distracted by that classification. Walking is a magnifying glass for the longing, when you hold the magnify-

ing glass to the sun the light focuses and burns you.

### **Walking is a magnifying glass for the longing, when you hold the magnifying glass to the sun the light focuses and burns you**

*Dear Wim,*



What a sentence! Walking is a magnifying glass for the longing, when you hold the magnifying glass to the sun the light focuses and burns you. Does the burning hurt or does it give pleasure? I am wondering about which kind of longing you are talking. I feel like it is something you are not fully accepting or it is a longing you cultivate to keep you walking and vice-versa? I feel I am heading for a tangent... You would have to put me on empty desert highway to describe something as beautiful as that. If I had a magnifying glass on the N6, I would be terrified. It's all already so close, so invasive, so overpowering. If I had to walk steady-

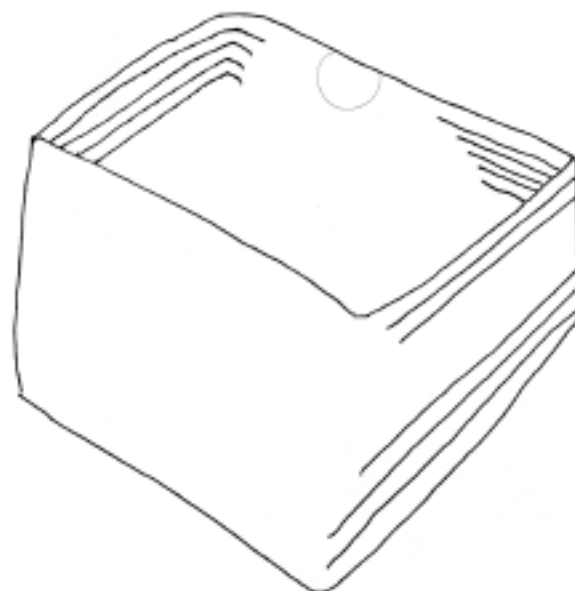
ly along the N6 without the feeling I could escape I would be petrified. I would become one of those garden statues Els keeps photographing. I would become solidified and dusty.

Distraction is possibly what keeps me moving forward while walking. Distraction is not very Christian; wandering down side roads off the main road, that's when unorthodox, unchristian things happen. Yet it seems safer and more interesting than the road I 'should' follow. The local parish priest would probably tell me I'm heading for trouble, but I don't know how many parish priests are left along this forlorn stretch of road, so I continue to deviate without any religious intervention! No one can judge why and how my deviations take place. No one can even see them; in fact one can only believe what I tell them, that's where fiction comes into play.

I think walking is definitely 'working' for both of us. But each one's walking is different. Usually the faster I'm walking the less I'm working. Slow walking on the other hand has to do with looking which for me is working. Fast walking has to do with assimilation, or training, or practice, or learning stuff off by heart or something. Fast walking has to do with wearing a path, heading towards a specific desire or goal. And yes maybe you are right it has to do with remembering and formulating. But when I slow down then comes the thinking, so seeing which for me equals working, might even mean stopping. Therefore my walking to work is one of a slow broken pace allowing myself the possibility of deviation while trying to stay close to the track. Walking maybe means not moving for hours. I don't think we could possibly walk together. We would lose each other quite quickly because the rhythms are so different although the aim is similar. I would get there hours after you and we would both be exhausted for different reasons.



(N.Ga)





NO SHOOTING

NO FOOTBALL

NO HANDSHAKES

NO SPITTING

NO WALKING

NO TALKING

NO PISSING

(E.DI)



Biographies

Orla Barry (Ireland, 1969) lives and works in Brussels and Wexford. Orla Barry's work is about language, both written and spoken. Visual deconstruction and displacement of language stands central in her work; via frequently associative techniques, she researches the semantics of her mother tongue and its cultural imbedding and implications. Her work is strongly poetic and lyrical, crossing a wide variety of media, evoking non-linear narratives, undercurrents of emotion and drawing on Irish disciplines of poetry and song. She works in many forms, including video, text, sound, and photographic installations. She has recently had a large solo shows of her work at the Irish Museum of Modern art in Dublin, SMAK Ghent, Camden Arts Centre London and W139 Amsterdam. She has also taken part in Manifesta 2 and in group shows such as 'Sense and Sensibility' in Sao Paulo, 'Some Parts of this World' in Helsinki. She has also been awarded the prize of the Palais de Beaux Arts in the 'Prix de la Jeune Peinture Belge' in 2003. She set up Firefly with Els Dietvorst in 1999.

Wim Cuyvers' (BELGIUM, 1958) work is about accepting the unacceptable life condition. He can not believe in language or institute. He wants to concentrate on the human instead of the social and sees space as 'the thing that might be able to take place between people'. He has worked in many forms including build spaces, video, texts, urban researching, speeches, shoutings, performances, installations. He can not think of his work as projects anymore: he's going to the dark wood. He has had solo shows in de Singel, Antwerp and Stroom, Den Haag. He participated in many (architecture and art) group exhibitions such as Archilab in Orleans 2004 and "Homeward, Contemporary Architecture in Flanders" Antwerp, Bordeaux, Rome, Venice, Plymouth, 2000,. He published a monography in 1995, a nameless book together with the artist Marc De Bleeck in 2002 and the book 'Text on Text' in 2005. He won the Culture Prize - Architecture of the Flemish Community in 2005.

Els Dietvorst (Belgium, 1964) lives and works in Brussels. She is an artist whose work focuses on communication, collaboration and social conflicts. She often returns to anti-utopian themes such as the outsider, the human condition, the symbolic prison. In her long-time film projects she works in non-places and socially contested sites where she collaborates with the people who host/inhabit these places. She is more interested in the artistic processes than the results. In these processes she collaborates with other artists to develop and experiment with aesthetic form and meaning. As well as film, she uses other media like drawing, writing and sculpture. Most recent projects are 'The Return of the Swallows' (2000-2006), 'Song for a Price of a Goat' (2002-2004) and 'King's Children' (2002-2004). Her projects have been shown in the MuHKA (Antwerp), Witte de With (Rotterdam), Palais de Beaux-Arts (Brussels). Since 1999 she is the artistic coordinator of Firefly.

Nikolaus Gansterer (Austria, 1974) lives and works in Antwerp and Vienna. His visual work deals with mapping processes of invisibility, often in the context of performative acts. In his installation works Gansterer focuses on the translation of processes emerging from cultural and scientific networks. By rejecting a strict differentiation of these two areas and through a consequent recombination of methods and settings from both fields, he finds unique lines of connection and division questioning the imaginary threshold between nature, culture, religion, art and civilization. Since 1998 Gansterer has been occupied with several on-going projects that explore the 'transacoustic'. He founded the Institute for Transacoustic Research and co-founded the Vienna Vegetable Orchestra. Some recent presentations include Living and Working in Vienna II, Kunsthalle, Vienna. Sonar Festival, CCCB, Barcelona. Moving Patterns, ACF, New York. Tricht-linnburg, Salzburger Kunstverein. Architecture of Interaction, Chisenhale Gallery London, Hard Rock Walzer, Villa Manin, Udine. www.gansterer.org.

Johanna Kirsch (Austria, 1980) experiments and reworks individual expressions of concepts such as autonomy and freedom and takes a look at the dynamics and flexibility of the borders defining these concepts. The work deals with the discovery of possibilities for checking the in-between spaces of self-definition and self-determination in cross-reaction with the social structures of space and the validity of their existing rules, limits and borders. This can be a very physical procedure her own body becomes a test dummy for such experiments; like crossing space using no given path or deconstructing and executing a road movie by living it or in becoming part of an environment and infiltrating it through actions like climbing, sneaking and attaching the body to it. The last view years she has been living all over Europe and has shown her work in different contexts such as film festivals, exhibitions, site-specific projects, her work has often taken the form of installations or performances. At the moment she lives and works in situ between the cities of Brussels and Vienna.

Colophon

A project by Orla Barry Wim Cuyvers Els Dietvorst Nikolaus Gansterer Johanna Kirsch



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Links: Artists: www.fireflyfilms.be www.b-site.be www.schrik.info www.gansterer.org www.nadjavillen.com www.bamart.be

Partners: www.janvaneyck.nl www.wuk.at/kunsthalle www.argosarts.org www.kfda.be

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EVERYONE LOVES  
AN ITALIAN GIRL

*Multi Coiff'*  
Coiffure Masculine

STOP!

BORORO

LE MODERNE

LIBERTY  
ROAD

LIBERTY  
ROAD

PISCINE COMMUNALE

High-TECHNO  
GSM ACCESSOIRES & REPARATION **DEVIS GRATUIT**

مطبخ اسلامي  
BOUCHERIE  
ISLAMIQUE

TELE

NIGHT  
ROUTE  
66  
WHITE  
SUPER  
MARKET  
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Media Markt

ملحمة  
BOUCHERIE  
HALAL

RESTAURANT GREC

JERDY MOTORS

LE TEMPLE D'ATHENA

FIN DE PISTE  
CYCLABLE

ACHAT - VENTE  
IMPORT - EXPORT