

tijstoppen

14 may to 7 june ~ Ernest Claesstraat 12, Antwerp ~ Curation: Nina-Joy Thielemans & Niel de Vries

At spring tides and storm surges the Scheldt oversteps the banks imposed by humans and flows over the Blue Stone on the Right Scheldt bank. When the full moon gives her right of way, she ripples unhindered along the city's edge and greets the trickle of people who come down to see her. So, who really is the river Scheldt?

Should we use the plural? She contains so much. With her tide level the Scheldt offers us her turbulence and fullness, But what flows back to her that she can continue with? How can we meet her, learn of her fluid body and become more attuned to this crucial lifeline? Through which ways can she, in all of her meanders, changes, tides and agencies, be approached?

In *Tijstoppen* the Scheldt is explored from her intrinsic dynamics: her flood of stories, currents, tides, erosion and deposits, which layer by layer form a memory of presence, a continuous flow of impressions. The works in the exhibition create a temporary topography of cultural and ecological connections with the river and extends an invitation to embrace the Scheldt in our daily lives.

Each in their own way, the artists focus on an aspect of the Scheldt, often surrendering physically to her water, silt, river clay and ecosystem. In the work of Kiara Govaert, Carmen Molenaar, Samantha Pellarini, Joris De Rycke, Nina-Joy Thielemans and Niel de Vries a vital Scheldt emerges, shaped through careful bonds with her various guises. Those who take up the challenge to engage with the Scheldt may find in her a place to meet, a bed of consolation or a course of promise.

Text: Miek Zwamborn. Writer, translator, and visual artist. Since 2017, she has been mapping the southwestern coastline of the Scottish Isle of Mull, where she established the collective study space KNOCKvologan.

Kiara Govaert ~ Waterpeil & Borborygmi ①
[paper, usb-stick, headphone]

Waterpeil is a visual representation of a measuring instrument, indicating the sea levels of the province of Antwerp around the Scheldt river over a period spanning from the Miocene to 2050.

Borborygmi is a performance that took place in the Ruien (the chapel, Keistraat in Antwerp). It was performed live using field recordings of the underground canals, effects, and a hydrophone to create a composition that serves as a portrait of the Ruien and the city's relationship with water. The USB stick contains a recording of that event.

Carmen Molenaar ~ Print and Imprints ②
[photography, paper, Schelde sediment, glass, 60*46cm]

Prints and Imprints is a layered study of the Scheldt and its history. These two works are an excavation into the river's dynamic character, the interaction between man and water, and the traces found in the soil and cartography.

One work dives into the rich history of Saeftinghe; the other examines the past of what is now the Galgenweel. Both are collections of photos and sediments from field research along the Scheldt and interpretations of old maps and soil profiles. Together, they form a glimpse of the layered and shifting impressions and imprints of this river landscape.

**Samantha Pellarini ~
Schelde MAGIC/ River Ghost** (III)
[various found materials, photo print, video]

Schelde, MAGIC/ River Ghost began as a performative film-making experience in which participants became a temporary documentation crew exploring the underground space of the De Ruijten with one question in common: was the river ever here? And if so, did it disappear? This collective exploration took place on April 18th at 16:30 in the afternoon, during a heavy rainfall day with a 5.1 meter tide in Antwerp, Belgium. Equipped with sensing tools such as thermal cameras, sound recorders and light, the group collectively searched for traces of the hidden river and its past. Part documentary exercise, part speculative ritual, the work asks how a river takes shape and continues to exist in different form. Can you see what they saw? Check out the fragments of this altar and find out.

Joris De Rycke ~ Schelde plant portraits (IV)
[RISO print, 32*43cm]

An edition of 7 prints. Each print depicts a wild plant growing in the vegetation along the banks of the Schelde river. Their presence is an expression of specific conditions: tidal changes, brackish water, environmental stresses etc. These plants have a long history of medicinal, edible and folk uses. Words associated with their use, ecology and description are put in each other's proximity. Read the meaning into it if you want. Some are well known like celery, which in its undomesticated form grows along the river. Others are more obscure, but together they form an image that captures something about the river. If you take care of them you can take prints home.

Nina-Joy Thielemans ~ Manuport: de korte ridders van Antverpia (V)
[ceramics on rammed earth, 58,5*103,5*133 cm]

A work from the *Manuport* series is displayed alongside ceramic fragments from De Korte Ridderstraat (excavation, Archaeological Service Antwerp, 1980). *Manuport* explores a contemporary relationship with the Scheldt and its polluted silt, emerging from experiences at the Margueriedok, a sheltered harbor where tidal changes and mudflat formation are still visible and accessible. Due to river straightening and embankment construction, these river dynamics have become less visible and rare in the city(center), which is one of the reasons why working with Scheldt clay is no longer so common. The ceramic fragments trace back to 1250–1500, when local pottery was abundantly made from clay sourced from a free-flowing, tide-rich Scheldt with creeks, marshes, and emerging embankments.

Niel de Vries ~ De kaart is niet het territorium & De Perfecte Rivier (VI)
[RISO print, 32*43cm | 4k digital film, 16:14]

In these two works, I explore the Scheldt as a narrative and subjective landscape. *De kaart is niet het territorium* is a social cartography resulting from five mapping sessions aboard the Sint-Anna ferry. By commuting back and forth for hours and engaging with fellow passengers, a watery web of local stories, knowledge, and memories was slowly mapped.

The film *De Perfecte Rivier* starts from contemporary urban development, which frames the Scheldt as a passive backdrop to look at. Gradually, the essayistic voice makes way for a speculative story told from the mud: murky, slippery, and alive.

