

## (Self-) Images of Flanders



Renaat Veremans at the Yserbedevaart in Diksmuide, 1950.

Photo by Paul Van den Abeele.

The composer conducts Flemish part-song at the IJzerbedevaart in Diksmuide.

This annual pilgrimage to the Yser, to the graves of the fallen in the First World War (“Here lie their bodies like seeds in the sand. Hope for a harvest O Flandersland”), has grown into a *lieu de mémoire* for the Flemish movement, which cannot shake off its Catholic origins: “All for Flanders, Flanders for Christ” (AVV-VVK).



Ernest Claes at Averbode Abbey, 1950.

Photo by Paul Van den Abeele.

The popular Flemish author, in 1950, flanked by two priests.

Literature in Flanders is still embedded.



Hugo Claus and Sylvia Kristel, Paris, 1976.

Photo by Paul Van den Abeele.

The Flemish writer has become a dandy, hooked on the soft porn star *Emmanuelle* (in reality a Dutch girl). In Paris, by the way, the writer is addressed as *Monsieur* Kristel.



Vic Anciaux, Komen / Comines 1979.

Photo by Paul Van den Abeele.

A Flemish Nationalist party president averts smouldering violence at a demonstration.  
Flemings are opposed to the Belgian state but don't throw bombs.



Inner courtyard. Holy Sepulchre boarding school, Bilzen, 1992.

Photo by Annie van Gemert.

The photographer captures a disappearing world: girls in Catholic boarding schools in Flanders.



Snellegem (fair-time cycle race).

Photo by Stephan Vanfleteren.

Flanders and cycle racing: a mystical marriage. The photographer shows a fair-time cycle race going round and round a Flemish church tower. The spectator is the archetypal fan of the most popular sport in Flanders, silently saluting those toiling on the road, to whom he's invisible.





Zaventem. Between the Olmstraat and the Brussels Ring.

Gardening in the no-man's-land of the Vuurberg.

Photo by Michiel Hendrickx.

“What’s nature now in this country?” sighs the poet. But all over Flanders there’s resistance to ribbon development and asphaltting. The vegetable garden survives in the desert.



Zellik, 2000.

Photo by Stephan Vanfleteren.

This photo was taken from the Brussels Ring. In the distance, the Koekelberg Basilica in Brussels. In a single picture the photographer captures the tension between rural and urban in Flanders.





Oast. Passendale, 1996.

Photo by Filip Claus.

Chicory is a substitute for coffee. The roots of the chicory plant used to be washed and dried and roasted on the heated floor of the oast house. Working in these closed, sweltering hot drying sheds was hard. The photographer captures this *huis clos*.

What is almost unimaginable is the *gleichzeitige Ungleichzeitigkeit* with the picture you see opposite.



District patrol. Lanaken, 2003.

Photo by Filip Claus.

Immaculate villa with just the right four by four on the drive. Gated community.

As of the 60s of the last century Flanders quickly became rich.