



**ARTS COUNCIL
2006 ANNUAL REPORT**

Arts Council 2006 Annual Report





'Stella'
Stella Spitaleri, Noise Maker 's Fifes (Kortrijk, 12 October 2004).
Sculptures in the background: Miet Brants.

A word from the president	7
I. The events of 2006	10
Meetings	10
Advice	10
Echo	19
Letter from the minister	19
Support centres and promoters of interests	22
In the press	23
In the Flemish Parliament	24
The 2005 Annual Report of the Arts Council	25
Analysis of the visitor statistics for the website	26
II. The changes in 2007	28
The Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is set up	
Debate on the activities of a strategic advisory council	28
What is changing?	28
How can the council organise itself?	30
Strategic advisory council learning platform: conclusions	32
Conclusion	37
III. Legal framework	39
Mission	39
Advisory Deadline	39
Public Nature	39
Rules of Procedure	39
IV. Composition	40
History	40
Composition	40
Who is who?	40
V. Secretariat	42
Composition of the strategic advisory councils unit	42
Website	42
Colophon	44

A word from the president

Dear reader,

The Arts Council has probably come to the end of its last year of operation.

The subjects on which the council focused in 2006 were very diverse. Part of the agenda was reserved to follow up the Arts decree. A number of urgent changes were the subject of a preliminary draft decree, viz. the conditions for admissibility and the creation of a reserve. In its advice, the council regrets that there was not a single amendment with regard to the project subsidies and periods for submission. Subsequently, advice was also given on additional assessment criteria.



One trend which characterised this year and had been relevant for some time is the conclusion of the management agreements by the Government of Flanders. The Arts Council was asked to advise on the management agreement with Flemish Literature Foundation. For this management agreement, there has been detailed consultation between the cabinet, the IVA Arts and Heritage and the VFL, which provides for a very large basis. However, during the discussions in the council, it emerged that the rigorous division of the preparation and implementation of policy which takes place in the project "Better Administrative Policy", is not completely positive.

This year the reform of the Flemish Opera into a not-for-profit organization was also on the programme. In 2004, the Arts Council had already given critical advice on this subject. At that time the assumption was still that the VOI "Flemish Opera" would turn into an external independent agency with a public law character, a so-called "EVA". The draft decree presented here was compared to the provisions of this advice and it appears that the advice given in 2004 was taken into account to a large extent.

In this last year of its activities, the council also focused on the new management form. As a result of an administrative reform of the Fle-

ish administration, a strategic advisory council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media will be charged with the task of advising on policy, probably in the autumn of 2007. In fact, the reform means that the preparation, implementation, and advice on policy will be separated. Therefore the Arts Council will disappear: as will the Council for Popular Development and the Dissemination of Culture, the Culture Council, the Flemish Sports Council and the Flemish Media Council.

When the first plans for the strategic council appeared on the table, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction. Because of the delays in this new decree, it was possible to think about the text in great detail and propose various far-reaching changes. This led to an extremely constructive and fruitful dialogue with the minister. Therefore the text was changed in a positive sense.

Looking at the past legislative period, this was characterised by the first application of the new arts decree. The Arts Council cooperated intensively on this important text in the past few years. It was now a matter of focusing on its implementation in practice. For various disciplines, the advantages of the new legal regulations were quite apparent. On the whole, there was a great deal of satisfaction about the new mechanisms. Obviously there were also points which were criticised. In the field itself, these were sometimes related to exaggerated financial expectations, which could not even be met with an increase in the budget.

In 2005, the council itself carried out an important evaluation with the aim of discovering where there were defects. A detailed report was published of the results. It may be useful to present two points from this report. In the first place, the spirit of the drafters of the decree was certainly not observed when the two-yearly subsidies were granted. In addition, an advisory commission was established for the arts, but a series of problems emerged in practice which had not been foreseen when the decree was written. The question arises whether the task, though it is clearly described in the decree, is not rather difficult to carry out in practice. The council also regretted that there was insufficient will in the advisory commission to cooperate in practice (a refusal which was based on the commission's legalistic attitude). However, with the abolition of the Arts Council this problem is automatically resolved.

In the new strategic advisory council, the sectoral Arts and Heritage

council will be responsible for advising on policy. The sectoral council is no longer composed in stages with commissions. It will be a combined council, consisting half of independent experts and half of representatives of social organizations.

Reviewing the work which the Arts Council has achieved in connection with the new decrees, it can only be concluded that it was possible to do some very useful work. The strength of the council was that the comments and suggestions came from people who were closely involved in the field. In this way, the "theory" was automatically compared to practice, even before everything was formulated in texts. This interaction certainly benefited the quality of the advice. The Arts Council hopes that the new strategic council will work with the same quality and that it will make sure that it does not lose touch with the field at any time.

All this work was carried out thanks to the efforts of a large number of volunteers. As the president, I would like to thank all the members of the Arts Council. Their experience and their ideas have certainly contributed in the last few years to the continued development of policy. I would also like to express my great appreciation for the secretariat, which not only supervised but also constantly supported the work. This makes the organization a pleasant task.

The curtain is falling on a particular form of an administrative organization. In the Flemish Community this was a far-reaching innovation. There is no question that the establishment of the Arts Council proved its worth. We now start a new period, supported by a different administrative theory. Let us hope that the new council will perform equally fruitful work in the future.



Johan Thielemans
President of the Arts Council

Meetings

The Arts Council met twice in 2006. The full reports of these meetings can be consulted on our website www.raadvoordekunsten.be.

6 June 2006

The point of the agenda of this meeting concerns the advice which the Arts Council is expected to give on the management agreement between the Flemish Literature Foundation (VFL), and the Government of Flanders. Mr Carlo Van Baelen, director of the VFL, and Mr. Dirk Van Ryckeghem, director of the Arts and Heritage division of the department, attended to provide explanations with the documents. The members are able to ask questions. Subsequently, the members can discuss the next steps behind closed doors.

26 September 2006

1. Approval of the report of 6 June 2006
2. Advice on the restructuring of the Flemish Opera
3. Advice on the establishment of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sport and the Media
4. Advice on the decision on determining additional evaluation criteria for the execution of Article 8, § 2 of the Arts Decree
5. Questions and miscellaneous

Advice

This year the Arts Council gave advice six times. The advice for the preliminary draft of the decree related to the establishment of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media deals with the follow up by the Arts Council as a result of the restructuring of the Flemish administration. Because of the great importance of this, it is included in full in this annual report. We would also like to refer you to the preliminary advice C03/06 and the advice C05/C06 of the Council for Culture on the same subject. The different interested councils, including the Arts Council cooperated with these pieces of advice. The other cases where advice was given are summarised below.

The complete texts of all the advice given by the Arts Council can be found on the website www.raadvoordekunsten.be, click on "raden en commissies Cultuur".

2006 advice	Subject	Date of approval
K01/06	Advice on the regulation for the subsidies for participation, experimental and special projects, and hobby associations 2006	16 February 2006
K02/06	Advice on the draft management agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Flemish Literature Foundation	6 June 2006
K03/06	Advice on the changes in the conditions for admissibility and the creation of a reserve in the Arts Decree	4 July 2006
K04/06	Advice on the draft decree relating to the termination of the decree of 5 April 1995 for the establishment of the Flemish Opera and to regulate the legal succession	26 September 2006
K05/06	Advice on the decision of the Government of Flanders containing the provision of additional evaluation criteria for the execution of Article 8, § 2 of the Arts Decree of 2 April 2004 for two-year or four-year financing budgets	26 September 2006
K06/06	Advice on the preliminary draft decree relating to the establishment of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media	26 September 2006

Advice on the regulation for the subsidies for participation, experimental and special projects, and hobby associations 2006

K01/06 – 16 February 2006

The Arts Council believes that it is positive that the category of special projects is eliminated. This to some extent meets the comment made last year that the regulation was rather untidy and difficult to understand (Advice K01/05 of 23 February 2005).

The council determined that the other comments in the advice given last year were not taken into account and considers that it must reiterate them.

Advice on the draft management agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Flemish Literature Foundation K02/06 – 6 June 2006

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, management agreements are concluded with large institutions. It is a trend which was introduced some time ago. The Inspectorate of Finances insists that management agreements are formulated as real contracts in accordance with general principles of management, with general objectives, operational objectives, indicators and measurement instruments.

For this management agreement, there has been extensive consultation between the cabinet, the Arts and Heritage IVA and the VFL. These three partners all support this agreement. The structure that was followed is the same as for virtually all the management agreements. As regards the structure, it is a sort of model contract. The VFL is internally autonomous, but not as regards its policy choices. These are made by the minister who is bound by the decree. Therefore, because of the planning for several years, the choices have in principle been determined.

ADVICE

Following a discussion on the points of the comments of the Inspectorate of Finances, the council formulates its advice. The Arts Council agrees with the draft management agreement that was submitted and can support the replies of the VFL and the Arts and Heritage Agency to the unfavourable advice from the Inspectorate of Finances in its memorandum of 6 April 2006, reference GST/CDH/06/00164.

The Arts Council would like to emphasise a few points:

- The VFL must devote attention to developing good quality, and where possible, quantitative indicators to determine and evaluate the results of the actions and initiatives. In this respect, the council refers to the figures which are already incorporated in the annual reports.
- There is another reference to the issue of Better Administrative Po-

licy (BBB), in particular the division between the implementation and preparation of policy. Once more it has become clear that vigorously applying this principle does not result in better administrative policy, but only in administrative policy.

Advice on the changes in the conditions for admissibility and the creation of a reserve in the Arts Decree

K03/06 – 4 July 2006

INTRODUCTION

Following the first implementation of the Arts Decree, the first evaluation of the Arts Decree was carried out at the request of the minister competent for Culture.

This evaluation should result in detailed changes by 2009. However, in addition, there were a number of urgent problems which must be tackled with the enclosed preliminary draft decree.

Essentially this preliminary draft decree deals with two elements: the conditions of admissibility for the application for the subsidies, and an adaptation of the reserve norm and its extension to two-yearly operations.

ADVICE

The proposed changes have the agreement of the Arts Council.

However, the council wishes the preliminary draft decree to also include a modification with regard to the project subsidies and the periods for submitting them.

1. Admissibility

The original text of the decree contains the conditions with which an organization must comply in order to submit an admissible application. The Arts Council agrees with the proposed change to make a distinction between the basic conditions and the subsidy conditions.

It is clear that it is virtually impossible to examine whether an organization will observe a collective employment agreement upon the first application. Certainly, the demands are very high, while the subsidy which is actually intended to promote professionalism does not yet exist at that point. Therefore the Arts Council supports the proposal.

2. Norm for the reserve

Currently only organizations which receive a subsidy for the whole of

the operation for a period of four years can create a reserve. As the two-year operations are equally recognised as permanent support which should ensure the professionalisation of the operation of the organizations, it is necessary to also provide a regulation for these with regard to the creation of a reserve.

The regulation proposed here differs from that which applied up to now for the four-yearly operations in the Arts Decree. The proposed regulation for both four-yearly and two-yearly operations is the same as that provided in Article 50 of the Heritage Decree and Article 8 of the Decree on the recognition and subsidy of organizations for popular culture, and the establishment of the Flemish Centre for Popular Culture. This benefits the conformity between the decrees in the cultural field, which is laudable.

The Arts Council refers to the evaluation of the Arts Decree. ¹ The council pointed out that the decision of the Government of Flanders to mainly award two-year subsidies and view this as a permanent support, does not correspond to the spirit of the Arts Decree. However, the Arts Council recognises the need for the proposed change with regard to the creation of a reserve and its importance for the proper operation of the organizations concerned.

Finally, a regulation for a reserve was also provided for publishers of periodical publications with legal personality with a non-commercial character. However, as practice shows that this is a minority and that without a regulation in a decree, it is not possible for publishers with a legal personality and a non-commercial character to create a reserve in any way, an exception was made for them. The council supports this regulation.

3. Project Subsidies and periods for submission

The Arts Council is extremely surprised that there has been no adaptation at all regarding project subsidies and periods for submission. Two periods of submission are laid down for all the applications, for music there are three. This is now so strictly applied, that applicants have to submit again for every period, even when this concerns the same project.

For a concert organization drawing up a programme for a season, this

¹Arts Council, 2005 annual report, Brussels 2006, D/2006/3241/011, page 11, also see www.raad-voordekunsten.be

is a heavy administrative task, but it is also difficult for the evaluation commissions and administration.

Both the administration and the evaluation commission for music have repeatedly insisted on changing the decree so that it would also be possible to submit applications for the operation of one year or for the operation of a season. If this is not adapted now, we will have the same absurd situation for at least another year, and perhaps even up to 2009. The council considers that there should be at least a maximum of two periods for submission and that annual operations which necessarily fall under a project subsidy should only apply once.

Advice on the draft decree on the termination of the decree of 5 April 1995 for the establishment of the Flemish Opera and the regulation of the legal follow-up

K04/06 – 26 September 2006

INTRODUCTION

On 3 March 2004, the Arts Council gave critical advice on the preliminary draft decree for reforming the public institution, "Flemish Opera", into an external independent agency with a public law character. The council compared this draft decree with the provisions of this advice. It shows that the advice of 3 March 2004 was taken into account to a great extent. The Arts Council has expressed its satisfaction in this respect.

ADVICE

The Arts Council asks that the following aspects are taken into account:

- The schedule: the opera productions for 2008 are being programmed today. This means that both for the new board of directors and for the new manager, it is necessary to take into account a transitional period.
- The possibilities. The (international) experts who must develop a vision for the future task and mandate of the Flemish Opera, should be well informed with regard to the Flemish context in terms of funds and possibilities.

In addition, the Arts Council asks attention for the following points.

*It is appropriate that, as provided in the explanatory memorandum,

the possible applicant manager(s) should not be part of the working group of experts.

*It is artistically justified to coordinate the working conditions of the musicians of the Filharmonie, The Flemish Radio Orchestra and the Flemish Opera. Turning them into a not-for-profit organization gives the new board of directors of the Flemish Opera the possibility to work on this.

* In the past, there was frequently some friction between the Government of Flanders and the cities of Antwerp and Ghent about the funding of the opera infrastructure. It would be best to come to a lasting solution for this.

* The Arts Council asks that a basis be found for the problem of dealing with the costs from the past with a reasonable grant.

* The subsidy for the Flemish Opera, like that of four other institutions, is regulated in the Arts Decree. In itself this is a positive thing. However, the sanctions which have been put forward in the case of inadequate operation, are not very good. The Arts Council argues that the Arts Decree should allow for the possibility of imposing sanctions on the large institutions, which are adapted to the operation of those institutions.

The Arts Council is positive with regard to the reform of the Flemish Opera VOI into a not-for-profit organization. This means that the Flemish Opera will be structured in the same way as the other large cultural institutions. At the same time, the choice for the not-for-profit formula provides greater flexibility for the artistic policy.

Advice on the decision of the Government of Flanders which provides additional evaluation criteria for the execution of Article 8, § 2 of the Arts Decree of 2 April 2004 for two-year or four-year financing budgets

K05/06 – 26 September 2006.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Flanders proposes six additional criteria to determine the size of the financing budget for a subsidised activity and for a two year or four year financing budget. The proposed criteria are not completely new. They stipulate the criteria which are included in the Arts Decree or ratify priorities formulated by the Government of Flanders.

ADVICE

The Arts Council gives positive advice on the proposed additional criteria. This is a step forward.

Advice on the preliminary draft decree for the establishment of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media

K06/06 – 26 September 2006

I. The proposal

The Government of Flanders' decision to set up a strategic advisory council to focus on the policy areas Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is based on the Decree of 18 July 2003 for the regulation of strategic advisory councils.

II. Consideration of the proposal

The Arts Council is delighted that the outcome of the talks between the Flemish Minister Bert Anciaux and the advisory councils that come within his policy area is clearly being taken into account. Most of the councils' demands are reflected in the proposal.

The broad-based remit is greeted with enthusiasm. The new Council is expected to be an important tool for analysis. This significant challenge will require the members to make even more efforts and an even stronger commitment.

In any event, the Minister will have to ensure an appropriate balance is struck within the Council in terms of expertise, gender, the Cultural Pact (pursuant to an Act of 16 July 1973 to ensure pluralism and to avoid excluding access for certain philosophies and ideologies to facilities available for cultural purposes), diversity, sectoral and policy levels. However, this may create problems if candidates are sought through an open call for expressions of interest.

Nonetheless, the advantage with an open call is that people who reply will be highly motivated. There is more transparency when there is an opportunity for individuals to offer themselves as a candidate.

The president of the General Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is appointed by the Minister, while the Sector Councils are entitled to choose their presidents themselves. This is regarded as pseudo-democracy: what criteria are used to choose the president? The members of a new Council are not always familiar with the experience and

expertise of their colleagues. As the Minister has the members' CVs it is right that the official should also appoint the presidents of the Sector Councils, not just the one for the General Council.

The strategic advisory councils enjoy a legal personality. The administration is the responsibility of the executive body (permanent bureau comprising the presidents): this involves finance, staff, accommodation... The legal personality provides for accountability and responsibility but increases the workload for the presidents, who take on an administrative role.

The members carry out their activities 'completely independently from the Flemish Authorities', while having 'to take account of the political agenda'. This means having to express an opinion or help to examine themes featured on the political agenda without necessarily agreeing with them. The Council regards constructive loyalty as a key principle, involving a discerning yet positive contribution towards the debate.

It is not apparent why a situation of incompatibility should be initiated between membership of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media and an executive member of a support centre. This generally concerns individuals with a broad-based, strategic perspective of a sector.

It is crucial to maintain familiarity with the practicalities. It is of key importance to formalise and give tangible shape to the system for exchanging information with the policy enforcement evaluation committees.

III. Arts Council advisory opinion

While welcoming the creation of the Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media, the Arts Council proposes:

- merging paragraphs 2 and 3 in article 6 to form one paragraph reading as follows: 'The composition has to pay heed to the question of social diversity, as provided for in the various legal provisions, viewpoint presentations and action plans of the Government of Flanders. The Council also has to offer a balanced reflection of the various levels of governance, types of activity and promoters in the case of Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media';
- removing the incompatibility for executive members of support centres as reflected in article 7, paragraph 2, second point;

- recording in article 10, paragraph 2 presidents of Sector Councils are appointed by the Minister;
- stressing in article 15 that the protocol concluded between the Policy Council and the strategic advisory council should specify that a formal flow of information is required between the strategic advisory council and the evaluation committees in the light of their policy-relevant experience.

Echo

Letter from the minister

In a letter to the President, Bert Anciaux, Minister for Culture, Youth and Sports, has spelled out his positions on the advisory opinion about the creation of a strategic advisory Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media. The full version of the letter is featured below.



Mr President,

Some time ago, your Council delivered an advisory opinion about the new strategic advisory Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media.

Allow me to express my sincere appreciation of the positive and constructive approach reflected in the advisory opinion. Our conversation in late June and the subsequent correspondence and ad hoc consultations established a firm basis for the broad themes and priorities of the new strategic advisory council.

I am writing this letter to let you know about the reaction to your latest advisory opinions.

The structure of the council, which, apart from a general council, comprises four sector-specific councils that may directly issue advisory opinions, is closely in line with the administrative framework established by the Authorities of Flanders and the needs and requirements of the various sectors. The present proposal now allows progress to be made on the basis of an integrated and specialist approach.

The sector-specific councils are an integral part of the strategic advisory council but may develop with a specific identity. As expressly requested

by the Flemish Sports Council, the sector-specific councils may choose a specific name consistent with their rules of procedure. This combination of representatives of community-based organisations and outside experts, plus the large number of members, will guarantee a balanced yet operational composition.

I am delighted we have succeeded, in consultation with the Flemish Youth Council, in including guarantees for efficient cooperation offering opportunities for the viewpoints of children and young people, also in the context of the general council.

I am pleased to be able to lend my support to a large number of the proposals made by the Culture Council, the Arts Council and the Council for Adult Education and Cultural Diffusion, where valuable adjustments to the wording of the preliminary draft have been recommended.

The job description for the Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is amplified with the opportunity to issue own-initiative or requested opinions about the proposals for Decrees. This provision was also provided for in the framework Decree concerning strategic advisory councils.

The provisions for the composition of the council have been worded in a more straightforward manner, without affecting the need for diversity in terms of the levels of governance, the types of activities, promoters, men and women and ethnic-cultural diversity.

I also go along with the arguments raised about membership of a strategic advisory council and membership of a supporting structure board being incompatible.

I agree with the proposal to minimise potential automatic representations in the case of the delegation of sector-specific councils in the general council.

The strategic opinions concept makes a distinction between policy planning and policy implementation. This carries the risk that the experience and knowledge built up as a result of implementing the policy will not be conveyed to those who reflect upon the policy and deliver opinions. Hence I agree with the advisory opinion seeking to formalise exchanges of information between the strategic advisory council and the policy enforcement review panels. Timely, comprehensive information is vital for issuing relevant advisory opinions that may enhance the value of the policy.

I have decided against backing certain items in the advisory opinions. I do not agree with the proposal to have the presidents of sector-specific councils appointed by the Minister. I am anxious for the sector-specific

councils to enjoy full autonomy and am absolutely confident that the sector-specific councils will make well-considered choices. They have every interest in doing so.

The list of candidacies for independent experts obviously has to be publicised and the final choices have to be accounted for. This is generally consistent with the principle of administrative openness. Consequently, I do not regard it as advisable to include provisions along these lines in the Decree.

Nor do I go along with the proposal to use a decree to grant the strategic advisory council the right to act as a forum. The framework Decree does not provide a forum-related role for strategic advisory councils in the nonetheless broad task descriptions. However, this does not prevent the council from taking its own initiatives and therefore setting up a forum but I am above all anxious for the strategic advisory council to focus on the decretal tasks.

In the case of formal and financial support for the strategic advisory council, I would like to highlight the Euro 65,000 financial grant I have included in the 2007 budget. 2007 is a year of transition because the council cannot yet operate for a full 12 months. I will adjust the financial grant in 2008 to a full working year.

The council will also have a permanent secretariat at its command with five full-time employees.

I am planning to submit the draft Decree as soon as possible so it can be reviewed by the Flemish Parliament. A few preliminary advisory opinions are required, including the one from the SERV (Flemish Economic-Social Council) but I hope the text may still be reviewed before the summer recess. The open call for applicants may then be made and the community-based organisations can then nominate their representatives. Once the Government of Flanders has approved the composition, the first strategic advisory Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media policy area can make a start on its key tasks. It is the beginning of a new chapter but I have high hopes and trust we can continue working together on a compelling narrative.

I would like to pay sincere thanks to you and the members of the advisory council for the efforts you have made and will continue to make. There is every chance that I will be meeting you again with your colleagues in the context of a high-power, high-performance strategic advisory council and sector-specific councils.

Best regards,

Bert Anciaux

Flemish Minister of Culture, Youth, Sport, and Brussels

Support centres and promoters of interests

The websites of the *United Organisation for Visual Arts (VOBK)* and the *Flemish Theatre Institute (VTI)*, refer to the 2005 Annual Report of the Arts Council. The VOBK is satisfied that the critical notes of the council on the Arts Decree are identifiable as elements which they have already referred to themselves.

9 May 2006

In addition, the VOBK also reports on the urgent advice of the Arts Council regarding the decision of the government regarding determining additional evaluation criteria for the execution of the Arts Decree. There is a link to all the reports and advice of the council.

12 October 2006

The *Consultation for Arts Organisations vzw, oKo*, also reports on the advice of the council on the additional evaluation criteria

23 October 2006

The *Federation of Organizations for Adult Education Work (FOV)* has a link to all the advice of the Arts Council, but in its report mainly describes the "battle of words on evaluation commissions". In fact, in August the press wrote about "heated discussion" regarding the role and competence of the advisory commissions in the Flemish culture policy. Are these advisory commissions actually evaluation commissions or do they actually have only a small influence on the final decision?" FOV listed all the arguments.

One extract reads as follows:

"The president of the Arts Council, Johan Thielemans, also states that quite a large number of the members of the commission feel misunderstood, but he does not support the Baeten's lobbying. "Although Anciaux customarily follows most of the advice, when he does deviate he does this without giving reasons."

The council submitted a memorandum to the minister asking minister Anciaux to communicate about his subsidy decisions."

1 September 2006

On the reform of the strategic advisory council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media, in which the current Arts Council will be incorporated, the reports are mainly in the FOV news messages.

In the press

De Morgen – “In future, Flanders will have 13 ministries” 7 January 2006

The reform of the Flemish Administration has not gone unnoticed. De Morgen explains that in future, there will be one strategic advisory council for each policy field, with specialists and representatives from the social organizations.

Gazet van Antwerpen – “Anciaux imposes a quota of immigrants” 21 February 2006

By 2008, 10% of the members in the new strategic advisory council for Culture, Youth, Sport and Media should have diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

De Standaard – “Just persevere” 8 May 2006

The Flemish Opera is going through a cleaning up operation and is reducing the number of productions. Johan Thielemans, President of the Arts Council, explains this from his position as a publicist and opera fan.

De Morgen – “Anciaux wants closer consultation with evaluation commissions” 9 August 2006

In August there was a strong discussion in the newspapers between the evaluation commissions and minister Anciaux. On 9 August, an article in De Morgen stated: “The minister of culture, Bert Anciaux (Spirit), will in future explain in more detail to the evaluation commissions who advise him on arts subsidies, why he makes different choices.” He has said this in response to criticism from the Arts Council.

This umbrella organization considers that Anciaux deviates from the advice on which the members of the commission, specialists in the field of various arts disciplines have sometimes met for months, without giving clear reasons. Johan Thielemans, president of the Council said: “We are asking the minister to communicate and explain his decisions better to the commissions.

The 2005 annual report of the Arts Council already reflected this request for better communication between the parties, in the first evaluation of the Arts Decree.

De Standaard – The management agreement of the government and the Flemish Literature Foundation streamlines the Foundation to the general culture policy.

27 October 2006

De Standaard points out that Anciaux has a much greater impact in the field of literature than would appear to be the case at first sight. The production of books lies somewhere between the support of authors (the Foundation) and readers (the Reading Foundation). Anciaux provides support there with the Culture investment.

De Standaard – “A clean slate for the Flemish Opera”

5 December 2006

The Flemish Opera is confronted with yet another change in its statute: from a Flemish Public Institution to a not-for-profit organization. However, this does not (immediately) solve the problems: after all, in the opera world the planning takes place a long time in advance, which will become difficult with a change of manager.” The new manager of the Flemish Opera should really start today”, according to Johan Thielemans, who formulated the advice of the Arts Council for the draft decree. One possible scenario is that the period of Clémeur will be extended by one more year.

In the Flemish Parliament

Some of the advisory opinions have become Parliamentary documents, or were subject to discussion in the Flemish Parliament.

Date of appearance in the Flemish Parliament	Advisory opinion	Parliamentary document	Context
18 July 2006	K02/06 Advice on the draft management agreement between the Government of Flanders and the Flemish Literature Foundation Issued: 6 June 2006	Document 927-1 (2005-2006) – Nr. 1	Exchange of ideas concerning the annual report 2005 and the management agreement 2006-2010 with the Flemish Literature Foundation. The recommendation of the Council is frequently quoted.

Date of appearance in the Flemish Parliament	Advisory opinion	Parliamentary document	Context
28 september 2006	K05/06 Advice on the decision of the Government of Flanders containing the provision of additional evaluation criteria for the execution of the Arts Decree Issued: 4 July 2006	Document 946-1 (2006-2007) – Nr. 1	The design of decree includes the recommendation of the Council as an appendix.

The 2005 Annual Report of the Arts Council

2005 Annual Reports for the Arts	Number of orders
Dutch	Circulation Flanders: 2,345 Circulation abroad and Brussels: 24 Additional orders: 14 Total: 2,382
English	Circulation: 179 Additional orders: 4 Total: 183
French	Circulation: 135 Additional orders: 7 Total: 142

Analysis of the visitor statistics for the website

In 2006, an analysis was carried out of the statistics, which shows the number of visitors to the website of the councils, www.wvc.vlaanderen.be/cultuurbeleid/raden_commissies, together with a great deal of other useful information. This analysis led to a number of conclusions.

It showed that the website is mainly consulted in a work-related context, viz. during the working hours with a peak at the end of the working day, and rarely in the weekend. During the period that was analysed, the number of visitors was reasonably evenly spread. On average, 13

people visited our website per day. Most of these logged on on a computer of the Ministry of the Flemish Community. Servers and providers of the support centres and lobbies promoting interests were also reasonably represented.

The top servers, providers and reference sites (websites visited by the visitor before arriving at the site being measured) show that cultural actors such as support centres and lobbyists play an important role in disseminating information about the councils. News reports or reports of new advice on a website resulted in a clear increase in the number of visitors to the website. There was also some interest from abroad, probably also because of the translation of the 2005 annual reports into English and French.

The last important conclusion is that people mainly referred to our webpage about the composition of councils, advisory and evaluation commissions when they are looking for someone's name. This clearly is important information which is of interest to a great deal of people.



'Grote K'. 'Thurn und Taxis', Brussels.

The Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is set up.

Debate on the activities of a strategic advisory council

Over the past year the advisory councils for the Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media policy area², which have been phased out to make way for the new strategic advisory council, have gathered together in a spirit of constructive loyalty to discuss the Authorities of Flanders' administrative strategic advice scheme.

The Administrative Affairs Department and the HayGroup consultancy firm have lent their support, while a learning platform was tasked with considering the organisational dimension of the advisory council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media.

The debate was apparently effective in setting the stage for issuing an advisory opinion on the preliminary draft Decree on setting up the Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media.

The conclusions reached during the debate have been included in this annual report in the hope that they may be useful to our successors.

What is changing?

Below is a summary of the changes due to appear in the advisory process:

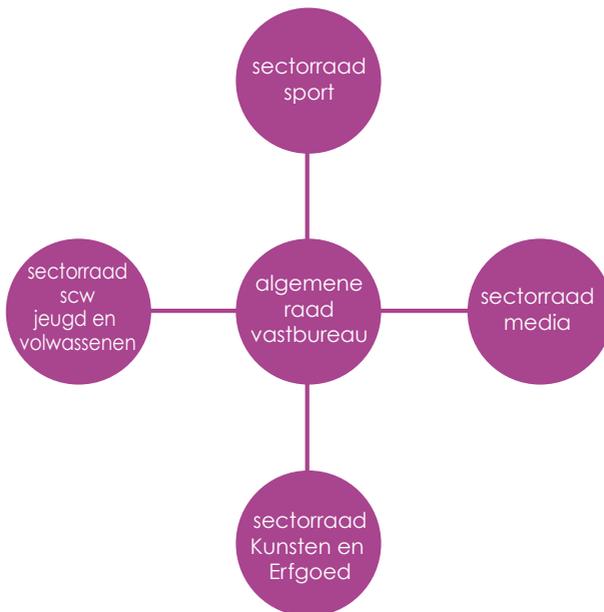
1) inclusion in the policy chain: in its capacity as an autonomous policy advice body the strategic advisory council is a link in the policy chain. It operates alongside agencies in charge of policy implementation and alongside the department responsible for policy planning. The Flemish Parliament, too, can turn to the council for advice.

2) legal personality: the council has its own financial grant and a secretariat responsible solely for lending support to the advisory council. This means the council is allowed to act autonomously and personally organise its activities but it also implies that the council is responsible and accountable for the way the resources are deployed. The ma-

²The Culture Council, the Arts Council, the Council for Adult Education and Cultural Diffusion, the Flemish Media Council and the Flemish Sports Council. The Flemish Youth Council was also involved although it continues to operate as an advisory body for its category, responsible for youth issues in various policy areas.

management tasks resulting from this autonomous status are assigned to a permanent bureau.

3) one advisory council for the Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media policy area in contrast to the earlier situation where there was at least one council for each component. The council comprises a general council, a permanent bureau and four sectoral councils (see figure).



4) key activities as assigned by the Decree:

- a. issuing own-initiative opinions or requested opinions
 - Preliminary draft or draft Decrees
 - Main policy themes
 - Draft decisions of the Government of Flanders
 - Policy intentions, plans and regulations being prepared at European Union level and in the case of international conventions
- b. Contributing to the development of a policy concept
- c. Keeping track of and interpreting social developments
- d. Giving careful consideration to the policy documents the Flemish Parliament presents

The Government of Flanders is required to seek opinions about any pre-

liminary draft decrees and draft decisions deemed to be strategically important³.

5) mixed composition, half of the members are representatives of civil society, proposed by representatives of campaigning organisations, and the other half are independent experts, proposed after an open call for applicants.

6) right to information established in a protocol concluded between the strategic advisory council and the policy council⁴.

How can the council organise itself?

The changes are quite significant ones that raise various questions.

What are the implications of the autonomous status? Is too much being asked of the members of an advisory council that apart from being called upon to act as advisor also has a managerial role?

Will the council be able to enjoy enough human and financial resources?

Are there any advantages to be discovered in the new situation?

Is it feasible to operate with just one advisory council?

And what basic organisational conditions have to be met for the strategic advisory council to successfully fulfil its mission?

During a learning platform held by the Administrative Affairs Department and supervised by the *HayGroup*, a review was made of the options available for the new strategic advisory council to organise itself so the key activities it has been assigned can be brought to a successful conclusion.

³ As a result of being involved for 30 years with the Culture Pact, the sector has built up a quite a lot of experience with the advisory opinion formality.

⁴ A policy council, chaired by the minister, is created for each policy area. The policy council is the forum for political and administrative debates leading to policy making. Within the policy council and against the background of a give-and-take discussion, the Minister has direct consultations with all senior managers coming within the scope of the policy area for which the minister is competent: not only those from the departments but also those from the internally autonomous agencies, internally autonomous agencies with a legal personality and externally autonomous agencies. The policy council lends support to the high-level policy-making process, while primarily operating as policy integration and coordinating platform, where, in particular, consultations are held about strategic objectives and their implementation, and policy intentions and innovative projects are tested.

The remit and concept referred to below are drawn from the basic texts dealing with "Better Administrative Policy".

The Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media is a permanent body set up by decree for the purpose of advising the Flemish Parliament, the Government of Flanders or individual ministers about strategic policy issues. The council offers expert, evidence-based advice about policy matters in the light of its independent status.

As the strategic advisory opinions form part of the policy planning process, the council is anxious to adopt a proactive and forward-looking stance. The council is eager to operate as a sounding board for rudimentary ideas and themes.

The strategic priorities decided on are:

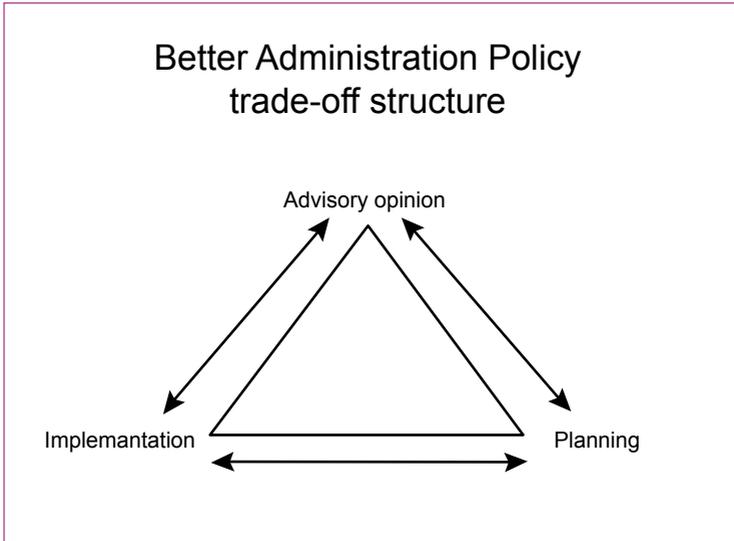
- independence,
- reliability,
- agenda-setting and horizon-exploring approaches,
- advisory opinions meeting high standards, creating a base of support and making an impact

The focus next turned to finding the keys to success and criteria for organising the project and a potential concept for the permanent secretariat. Under this heading account was taken of the structure of the sector (and its sectoral councils) and the secretariat's planned establishment plan (5 full time equivalents: 1 supervisor, 2 strategic and 2 administrative employees). The process resulted in two options.

Option 1 involves opting for an 'advice'-based organisation concept where the staff takes on different roles. Option 2 entails deciding on a project-based approach focused on 'fields of activity'.

The learning platform conclusions may be summarised as follows.

Strategic advisory council learning platform: conclusions



Keys to success

- Managing the trade-off
- Managing the flow of information (appropriate timetable and effective guidance)
- Harmonisation between the Culture, Youth, Sports and Media policy areas
- Providing an input (developing substantive expertise)
- Developing an adequate level of authority and credibility

Keys to success for the secretariat

- Ability to develop a knowledge network and to harness knowledge swiftly - networking
- Transparent and effective work processes
- Ensuring integration and coordination
- Firmly-based planning and a proactive approach
- Adequate base of support and authority
- Ability to cater for the needs of the various groups of customers
- Firmly established project management (each advisory opinion is a project)
- Continuity, constant interchangeability

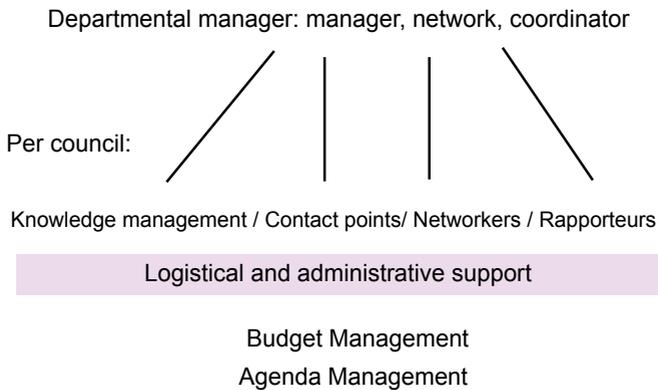
Organisation of the project criteria

- Contact point for the sectoral councils
- One supervisory system with a flat structure
- Networking (with a straightforward and effective system for identifying knowledge)
- Firmly established project management (structure lending the best possible support to project management)
- Continuity, constant interchangeability

Roles - Option 1

- Administrative supporter
- Coordinator
- Networker
- Budget manager
- “Contact point” per council
- Managerial role: planning, coordination, management, follow-up
- Staff manager
- Logistical supporter
- Reporter
- Signalling role
- Knowledge manager

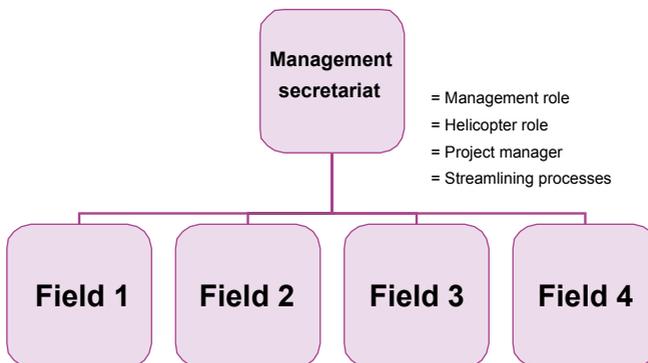
Organisation Model - Option 1



Roles - Option 2

- General management (=secretary)
 - Contact point (outside world)
 - Tactical and operational management
- Management tasks: staff, logistics, administration, budget follow-up
- Networking: who has what expertise?
- Substantive expertise together with a general concept
- Designing processes and process monitoring
- Communication and public relations
 - Publishing the advisory opinions
 - Projecting an image as an autonomous entity
- Project activities
 - Roles and responsibilities

Organisation Model - option 2



Theme option 1 and 2

- “Management tasks” are undertaken by the secretariat
 - Finance
 - ...
- The secretary is responsible for coordination
- One contact point per sectoral council
- Expertise building takes place in the secretariat
- Information gathering and transferral
- Signalling role for the permanent bureau

Important for implementation

- Suitable expertise
- Number of people
- Preventing silo formation (for example, contact points in tandem)
- Realist concept of the skills required
- Promoting people’s expertise
- Physical location
- Staff mobility (networking support)
- Result-orientation and quality (explaining what a good advisory opinion is)
- Organising performance management (what is expected from staff, how to follow up, who follow up...)
- Clarity about contracting authority (ies) and delegations to the secretariat

Conclusion

The learning platform turned out to be a rewarding and far-reaching experience. Apart from the two options that were formulated (option 1 based on 'advise' and option 2 on 'fields of activity'), other initiatives may be available for making the secretariat operational.

Irrespective of the new advisory council's organisational system, these five factors obviously have to be taken into account.

1) High standards have been set for the strategic advisory council. They ensure a social-based system of advice, one that is not cut off from the world nor compartmentalised but reflects the specific features of the various strands of the policy area.

2) The new council has to operate according to an integrated and specialist approach. This is the reason for the specific structure attributed to the Council for Culture, Youth, Sports and the Media: invested with a general council and four sectoral councils with all the councils being entitled to issue direct advisory opinions. This provides a means of operating on an adaptable and flexible basis, thereby avoiding any going-through-the-motions approach. The challenge involves striking a balance between centralisation and deconcentration so as to maximise the interaction between the general council and the sectoral councils and between the sectoral councils themselves.

3) Criteria such as expertise, involvement and representativeness have to be to the fore when the members are being nominated. Success depends on being able to exploit the know-how, experiences and networks of the members and tapping into their willingness to invest in their advisory activities. It is also vital to have a structure that is independent from the administration and from the individual organisations.

4) The expertise of the secretariat staff is also crucial. They will have to show loyalty and adopt a result-oriented approach.

5) The protocol with the policy council should ideally ensure that the council is involved in the early stages of the policy planning process so that there is more chance of the 'strategic' advisory opinions being issued 'on request' rather than just being a question of going through the motions (because of the duty to provide opinions) and being me-

aningful for all stakeholders.

Those from the current advisory councils taking part in the learning platform:

Sigrïd Bousset, vice-president of the Culture Council

Johan Thielemans, president of the Arts Council

Hugo De Vos, a member of the Council for Adult Education and Cultural Diffusion and the Culture Council

Jan Korthoudt, a member of the Flemish Sports Council

Pepijn Debosscher, coordinator for the Flemish Youth Council

Iris Van Riet, secretary with the Culture Council and the Arts Council

Guidance:

Marleen Roggeman, Administrative Affairs Department

Simona Hollinger, *HayGroup*

The Arts Council has been established by the 19 December 1997 Flemish Parliament Act (Belgian Official Gazette of 11 April 1998), modified by the Flemish Parliament Acts of 30 March 1999 (Belgian Official Gazette of 27 August 1999), 18 May 1999 (Belgian Official Gazette of 15 July 1999), 2 April 2004 (Belgian Official Gazette of 6 July 2004) and 7 May 2004 (Belgian Official Gazette of 9 July 2004).

Flemish Government Decree of 5 May 1998 (Belgian Official Gazette of 25 June 1998), modified by the Flemish Government Decrees of 20 October 1998 (Belgian Official Gazette of 5 December 1998) and of 15 December 2000 (Belgian Official Gazette of 1 February 2001).

Mission

The Arts Council is responsible for all matters relating to the arts policy and the impact of the broader policy on these matters.

Advisory Deadline

If the Flemish Government asks for advice, the Arts Council is to provide advice within the deadline set by the Government.

Public Nature

Five days after the advisory opinions and reports have been submitted to the Flemish Government or the Flemish Parliament, they shall be made public.

Rules of Procedure

The Arts Council submitted a proposal for rules of procedure to the Flemish Government. It was adopted by the Flemish Government on 12 March 2004.

History

On Friday 12 December 2003, the Flemish Government appointed the members of the Arts Council (Belgian Official Gazette of 14 January 2004 – Ed. 2).

Composition

The Arts Council is composed of a chairman and committee members, namely the Performing Arts Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 5 members), the Language and Literature Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Music Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Plastic Arts Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Museums Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members) and the Architecture and Design Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members).

Who is who?

The current members are in alphabetical order:

1. Mr Patrick Allegaert, Curator for temporary exhibitions at the Dr. Guislain Museum, Ghent, in charge of communication
2. Mr Herman Baeten, Director of Musica vzw, Impulscentrum voor Muziek
3. Mr Paul Buekenhout, Director of Het Beschrijf
4. Mr Rik Bevernage, Director of De Werf
5. Mrs Moniek Bucquoye, exhibition maker, author Design en Architectuur
6. Mr Piet De Gryse, Curator of the Royal Army and Military History Museum, Brussels
7. Mrs Chantal De Smet, Professor, Head of department of Communication and Culture, Institute of Higher Education, Ghent
8. Mrs Daniëlle Gielen, Vegas communication bureau
9. Mr Johan Lagae, lecturer in the history of architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Ghent.
10. Mrs Leen Lever, Marketing Director, Standaard Uitgeverij, Manteau and Meulenhoff/Manteau
11. Mr Frank Loosveldt, President of Passacaille record label, Chairman of Flavio vzw (centre for creation, presentation and consultation), Director of "Uitblazen" Coastal Festival

12. Mrs Anna Luyten, journalist with De Standaard
13. Mr Jacques Morrens, notary
14. Mr Johan Pas, curator
15. Mr Gustaaf Pelckmans, Director of De Warande, Chairman of the Arts Centres and Workshops Assessment Committee
16. Mr Harold Polis, Publishing Editor with Meulenhoff/Manteau
17. Mr Jan Rispens, Head of Department of the Conservatorium Hogeschool Gent, Government Commissioner VRO-VRK, deFillharmonie
18. Mrs Els Roelandt, Editor-in-Chief with A Prior Magazine
19. Mrs Christel Stalpaert, lecturer in theatre sciences, Department of Art Sciences, University of Ghent
20. Mr Wim Supply, architect
21. Mrs Hilde Teuchies, project development and distribution Het Muziek Lod, freelance expert in cultural affairs
22. Mr Johan Thielemans, President of the Arts Council, Guest lecturer at the Herman Teirlinck Institute, Institute of higher education Antwerp.
23. Mr Steven Thielemans, General Director for Museums, Conservation Libraries and Heritage, City of Antwerp
24. Mrs Kristel Van Ael, designer
25. Mrs Veronique Vandekerchove, Curator of Urban Museums, Louvain
26. Mrs Elisabeth Van der Elst, Head of Department KMKG, Brussels, Curator of Hallepoort
27. Mrs Lucienne Van Deyck, Royal Music College, Antwerp
28. Mrs Leen van Dijck, Director of AVMC-Letterenhuis, Antwerp
29. Mrs Adinda Van Geystelen, architect
30. Mr Jan Vermassen, Director of Flanders Reproduction Fund and Lukasweb.be

The Secretariat of the Arts Council is held by the Unit for strategic advisory councils of the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sport and the Media of the Flemish Community. This Unit supports as well as provides a framework for the activities of the Culture Council and the Advisory Appeal Committee on Cultural Matters.

Composition of the Strategic Advisory Councils unit

Iris Van Riet, Secretary of the Arts Council
02 553 41 93 • iris.vanriet@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

Hanne Schuermans, Policy Assistant
02 553 41 71 • hanne.schuermans@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

Viviane Petré, Executive Secretary
02 553 41 91 • viviane.petre@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

Grieta De Ruyter, Assistant
02 553 41 34 • grieta.deruyter@cjsm.vlaanderen.be

The aforementioned members of staff are employed as the unit's director, assistant director, expert and administrative officer respectively.

The secretariat has many different tasks. In this context it is possible to refer to the tasks of the Arts Council as described in Article 8 of the Decree of 19 December 1997⁶. More specifically this concerns: coordinating activities, preparing discussion memorandums, and (draft) advice, following up projects and working groups, carrying out limited studies, following up the working field, making contacts, external communication, reporting and all the related administrative tasks. The secretariat is also preoccupied with the reorganization to a strategic council for Culture, Youth, Sport and the Media.

⁶ Belgian Bulletin of Acts and Decrees of 11 April 1998.

Website

All the reports, advice, points of view and publications of the Arts Council can be found on www.raadvoordekunsten.be.

The publications of the Council for Culture can also be ordered through 1700, the former Flemish Infoline. You can find more information about this on the website of the Government of Flanders, www.vlaanderen.be.

Editing

Flemish Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sport and the Media (since April 2006)
Unit for strategic advisory councils

Responsible editor

Johan Thielemans
President Arts Council
Arenbergstraat 9, 1000 Brussel
02 553 41 71 • www.raadvoordekunsten.be

Graphic design

Flemish government, Communication's section
Ingrid Van Rintel

The photographer: Jo Voets

Jo Voets (°1958) always searches for a balance between two values: there exists no beauty without content, nor the other way round. Each element must find its place and meaning in the composition and has a link with the other elements and with the whole. The photographs of Jo Voets are indisputably realistic and are very imaginative. His work distinguishes itself by an interest for the composition in itself, borrowed from modern abstract art. The key to his work is the use of the space in order to build relations which are sometimes suggestive and sometimes surprising.

His fascination is with producing reports about social injustice, and the people who are sidelined in our society. He spent four years off and on in Bucharest, Romania, working with street children and families who literally lived underground in tunnels beneath the city. 'Bucuresti Underworld' was selected for the first Berlin Photography Festival, in 2005.

Even if he makes use of reality, Jo Voets has admitted that he is, in his heart, an ironical player. The results can be alarming, but he guards us for the stereotypes. However we do not react less strongly to the represented tension.

Johan Swinnen, art critic (VRT and <H>art)

Catalogue number

D/2006/3241/321

Publication

2007