

# The Beauty of the Ordinary

*On How I Got Into a Fight  
with My Neighbour*

**The Beauty of the Ordinary**

A project by Label Architecture

BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

10<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition – Belgian Pavilion

Venezia, Giardini di Castello

10 September 2006 – 19 November 2006

**PRESS PACKET**



**Brussels, August 2006** – During the 10<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Biennale of Venice – with ‘Metacity’ as its theme – the French Community of Belgium will present ‘The Beauty of the Ordinary’, a multi-faceted project offering visitors an opportunity to (re-) discover the beauties of Belgian territorial banality.

The Belgian entry, entitled, to be precise, ‘The Beauty of the Ordinary: Or How I Got Into a Fight With My Neighbour’, is curated by Label Architecture, a young Brussels-based architecture firm.

We can define our everyday landscapes as banal, extraordinary, populist, cold, bleak, empty, anecdotal, interesting, uninteresting, ephemeral, transitory, soulless, shitty, ugly, typical, small, well-trained, (Belgian), modest, resistant, plastic, exotic, familiar, larger, flat, rainy, windy, to be imagined, to be constructed . . .

Viewed as the spatial, political and cultural expression of the Belgian collective, the territory in question is characterised by a whole series of peculiarities that we can call upon in order to reveal the singularity of a setting for living, which constitutes its charm and its assets. These landscapes can be marked variously by spatial banalities, ordinary appropriations, improbably confrontations... This condition, and more particularly the gaze of the observer on it, allows us to question the extraordinary content of many ordinary situations, and vice versa. ‘The Beauty of the Ordinary’ aims to question this context: how, in a generic society, engaged in a globalised phenomenon of aesthetisation of everyday life, is it possible to bring to the fore particularities marked by the involuntary, the improbable, the anecdotal, the indefinite or the absurd, and as such, without exhaustiveness or incantatory discourse, by a possible identification, however relative?

To many among us, these territories symbolise an impossible disorder. However, we must admit that we are the source of it and – for reasons that often escape us – we like it that way. If we agree to view this situation positively and prospectively, how can we discern ‘the beauty of the ordinary’? What perspectives should we employ? What position should we adopt?

‘The Beauty of the Ordinary’ is a project in three components: an installation in the Belgian Pavilion, a publication in the form of a paperback book and an image magazine.

The project will be exhibited in Venice from Sunday 10 September to Sunday 19 November 2006. Press days will be held from 7 to 9 September 2006.



## Installation

A patio in the pavilion. Positioned centrally in the Belgian Pavilion, a walled space with an irregular shape, which one might recognise as that of Belgium's borders. On the floor, in the middle of this central space, a large aerial photograph reveals the whole of the Belgian territory, under the pallid light of an overcast sky. Large transparent balloons provide an opportunity to sit down, to take a break, and to observe and enjoy the territory. Seven doors connect this space with the outside. A different atmosphere there: an infinite corridor, irregularly shaped, dark. A few neon lights are all that suggest a possible direction to the visitor.

Along this corridor, three alcoves. Inside these, three videos are broadcast. Specially produced for the occasion by Stefan Liberski, they show long static shots of Belgian territories – urban, peripheral, rural. The sounds that accompany them provide new opportunities to understand a territory considered familiar and banal. A radically new way of seeing our environment.

An interior space, a vestibule all around it and projections on its periphery: three complementary opportunities that make it possible, together and/or separately, to perceive the beauty of the ordinary in a differentiated way.

## Paperback

The publication, a paperback instead of an exhibition catalogue, brings together 13 observations, 13 points of view from Belgian personalities on the theme of 'the beauty of the ordinary' and the way in which each one of them, with their respective gazes, interprets it.

Among them, we find Dieter Lesage, Bouli Lanners, Geert Bekaert, Thomas Gunzig, Jean-Michel Thibault, Claude Javeau, Alain Malherbe, pleaseletmedesign, Joachim Declerck, Christophe Van Gerrewey and Label Architecture. While most of these contributions were written and photographed especially for the occasion, others were reprinted for their pertinence, and still others republished for their topicality.

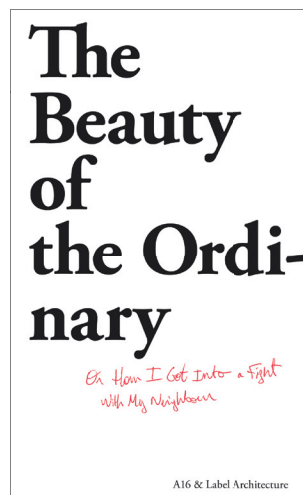
Available from 10 September 2006 in all specialised (art-architecture) bookshops for €10.

## Image Magazine

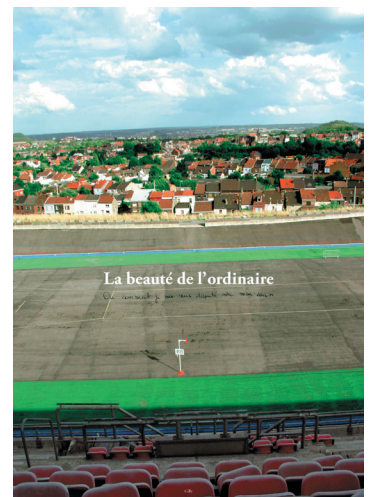
The magazine presents a selection of 10 images from a photo-reportage carried out across the entire country and containing more than 3000 pictures. Widely distributed by the Belgian press and available at the Belgian Pavilion in the Giardini di Venezia, this magazine offers a particular view of our environment and opens the debate on what defines 'the beauty of the ordinary'. It also provides a way to discover, from another viewpoint, the everyday nature of our lived territories.



An Installation



A Paperback



An Image Magazine



## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Label Architecture**

Label Architecture is an architectural practice based in Brussels. Its three partners, Jean-Didier Bergilez (b. 1974), Michel Lefèvre (b. 1978) and Thibaut Rome (b. 1977), officially opened their agency in October 2004. All three are graduates of the La Cambre Institute of Architecture in Brussels, a city they also call home. Their projects, on various scales, are as much an opportunity to play with existing space, from their common reference points, as not to take themselves too seriously while being serious about their work – an insatiable will to play with the obvious to maximum effect.

For two years they have shared their offices with A16, a small publishing house with Véronique Patteeuw as one of its founding members. An engineer-architect and graduate of the Catholic University of Leuven, Véronique Patteeuw has worked for, among others, Brussels2000 –Cultural Capital of Europe and NAI Publishers in Rotterdam, where she manages publications on architecture and urbanism. With A16, she produces publications on young Belgian architecture.

They teamed up to create this project.

### **Jean-Didier Bergilez** (b. 1974)

Jean-Didier Bergilez studied Latin philology at the Catholic University of Louvain-La-Neuve and architecture at the La Cambre Institute of Architecture, where he has taught since 2002. Since 2003 he has been a member of the La Cambre Centre for Architectural Research (CRAC). In 2004 he founded, with Michel Lefèvre and Thibaut Rome, the architectural firm Label Architecture. Alongside his architectural practice and teaching, Jean-Didier Bergilez has contributed to the publication *Who's Afraid of Architecture? White Book on Contemporary Architecture in the French Community of Belgium* and was co-commissioner and co-ordinator of the exhibition '[Re]Nouveaux Plaisirs d'Architecture. 12 figures émergentes de l'architecture en Communauté française de Belgique'. Since 2005 he has been a member of A16, an architectural publishing house, based in Brussels.

### **Michel Lefèvre** (b. 1978)

Michel Lefèvre studied architecture at the La Cambre Institute of Architecture. Since 2000, he has been an intern and independent collaborator at the Pierre Hebbelinck Architecture Studio (Liège), with Lhoas & Lhoas Architects (Brussels), Nomad Architecture (Montreal) and Peter Eisenman Architects (New York). In 2004 he founded the architectural practice Label Architecture with Jean-Didier Bergilez and Thibaut Rome.

### **Thibaut Rome** (b. 1977)

Thibaut Rome studied architecture at the La Cambre Institute of Architecture. Since 2001 he has been an intern and independent collaborator with Urban Platform (Brussels), Luc Deleu and TOP Office (Antwerp). In 2004 he founded the architectural practice Label Architecture with Jean-Didier Bergilez and Michel Lefèvre.

### **Véronique Patteeuw** (b. 1974)

Véronique Patteeuw is an architect-engineer and holds a diploma in complementary studies in cultural research. In 2000, during Brussels' cultural European presidency, she was part of the architecture section's organisational team. Since 2001 she has managed publications on architecture and urbanism with NAI Publishers in Rotterdam. She is currently working in the research group OSA in the department of Architecture, Urbanism and Territorial Planning at the Catholic University of Leuven and is scientific secretary for the review OASE. In 2002 she founded, with Vincent Brunetta, the publishing house A16, a platform for architecture in Belgium; within this framework and in collaboration with VAI and CIVA she has developed a series of publications on contemporary architecture in Flanders and francophone Belgium.



## CREDITS

### Installation

#### **Curator**

Label Architecture

Jean-Didier Bergilez, Michel Lefèvre, Thibaut Rome, Véronique Patteeuw

#### **Assistants to the curator**

Marie-Cécile Guyaux, Aurélie Lefébure, Carlo Menon

#### **Projections**

Stefan Liberski avec Gilles Bissot, Sarah Gouret

#### **Scenography**

Label Architecture

### Publications (Paperback and Image Magazine)

#### **Edited by**

Label Architecture

#### **Contributions**

Geert Bekaert, Joachim Declerck, Thomas Gunzig, Claude Javeau, Label Architecture, Bouli Lanners, Dieter Lesage, Alain Malherbe, pleaseletmedesign, Jean-Michel Thibault, Christophe Van Gerrewey

#### **Graphic Design**

pleaseletmedesign

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## INFORMATIONS PRATIQUES

### The Beauty of the Ordinary

BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

10<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition – Belgian Pavilion  
Venezia, Giardini di Castello

10 September 2006 – 19 November 2006

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### Opening times

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily

### Tickets

Regular admission €12 / Reduced-price admission €10

### Biennale Information

<http://www.labiennale.org>

### Belgian Pavilion Information

Label Architecture

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Photographs, graphic documents and additional information available from 4 September 2006 at  
<http://www.labelarchitecture.be>

The Belgian entry at the Biennale of Venice 2006 is an initiative of



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# The Beauty of the Ordinary

*Or How I Got Into a Fight  
with My Neighbour*

A16 & Label Architecture

## **The Beauty of the Ordinary**

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### Voucher for one copy of the **Paperback**

To be claimed at the Belgian Pavilion at the *Giardini di Venezia* from 6 to 9 September 2006

or

upon request by e-mail at [label@labelarchitecture.be](mailto:label@labelarchitecture.be)

Madame Fadila Laanan,  
Minister of Culture of the French-speaking Community of Belgium

Monsieur Henry Ingberg,  
General Secretary

Monsieur Philippe Suinen,  
General Commissioner, International Relations

Label Architecture,  
Exhibition Curator

are pleased to invite you to the opening reception for the exhibition

## **The Beauty of the Ordinary** *Or How I Got Into a Fight With My Neighbour*

Saturday 9 September 2006 at 11:30 a.m.

Belgian Pavilion  
at the Giardini di Castello de la Biennale in Venice

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