

Requiem for a Star

Commissioned by 101e % Société du logement de la Région de Bruxelles-Capitale / Le Foyer Laekenois
Rue Gustave-Demanet, Laeken, Brussels, Belgium. 2012

In an open-air passageway on Rue Demanet, we are invited to share the worldview of Flor Van der Vinnen, a well-known offbeat character from the neighbourhood's past. The text and the ritual in which the artist invites us to take part complement those of *The Refuge of Dreams*, but they stem from a different thought process: here, the dreams that we are invited to recall are to be addressed to someone other than ourselves. Echoing this, a shining star flickers as if expressing the time we have allowed ourselves to spend before leaving our contribution for all to enjoy.



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Texte-légende imprimé sur plaque de lave émaillée fixée sur le mur de pierre à proximité de l'arche

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In days of old, this neighbourhood was covered with large marshes. This street was then called Paddenstraat, Toad Street. Not so long ago, just a few steps from here, these amphibians could be heard croaking their heads off in the pond of a small farm where Florimond, a man unlike any other, used to live. His lifestyle was considered simple by some, but he was proud of it. Having come from Bruges in 1908, his parents settled in the neighbourhood to grow flowers which were very sought after by the perfume industry. Water was plentiful here and they became very successful. Flor, as he was known, was an unusual child who had created a very personal universe for himself. Even as an adult, he could often be seen travelling in his thoughts.

One day, his neighbour interrupted him while he was gardening, brandishing a newspaper : "Hey Flor, listen to this thought, it makes me think of you : "The solitary man thinks alone and creates new values for the community"." Flor burst out laughing, stroked his moustache and said : "Thank you, you have understood me well for I have always had many more dreams for the world and for others than for myself."

Nowadays, this star doesn't shine like any of the others : its heart beats to the rhythm of dreams which passersby entrust it with. It reminds us that even here, it is possible to offer a unique dream to the world and to others. The star will then take care to pass it on for the here and now.