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Jewellery heist

TEFAF with all its luxury creates an atmosphere in which nobody even thinks for one second about a robbery. But it happened almost two years ago.



Photo: Loraine Bodewes

While a protective case was being smashed to pieces, many visitors and art dealers just looked calmly at the 'spectacle'. "This situation was absurd and irrational, so the fact that there was no outbreak of panic, is not so strange at all", says Donna Yates, associate professor at Law

page 6-7



"It's hardly surprising that the government has decided to crack down on the increased use of English in universities. We brought it on ourselves."

Read the opinion article by former editor Wammes Bos on page 5.

How UM researchers are helping industry improve the recycling of plastic waste – from shampoo bottles to crisp packets and vacuum cleaners.

"There's still a lot of room for improvement."
page 4





editorial

Burning questions about sex

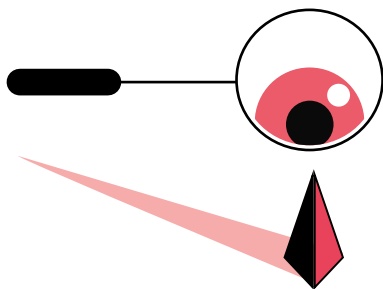
Riki Janssen

I was fourteen when my parents allowed me to go to the pub for the first time. Yes, I was quite young, but it was normal in our village. Later, my mother would often wave me off. Just before I cycled away from the house, she'd call after me, "I don't have to say it, do I?!" She never put it in so many words, but I knew exactly what she meant. *Don't do anything I wouldn't do*; in other words, don't have sex with anyone. Her greatest fear was that I would get pregnant and bring shame on our family. It was the 1970s. My colleague CF is about two generations younger than me. She grew up during a time when the Dutch government used the slogan "A smart girl is prepared for her future" to promote women's empowerment and employment. No stern words of warning for her. When she got her first boyfriend, her father suggested she go on the pill, and so she did. He,

too, didn't want his daughter to get pregnant unintentionally – not out of fear of shame, but because of how it would affect her future. Our colleague LvdL is a generation younger than CF. She went on the pill when the time was right for her. Neither of her parents had anything to do with the decision. Our meeting this week had already ended when we exchanged experiences, sometimes laughing. The conversation was prompted by our upcoming series for the next academic year, in which UM sexologist Marieke Dewitte will answer students' questions about sex and sexuality. A few facts: young people are having sex later, as shown by recent research from Rutgers. Both pill use and condom use are declining, while there has been a rise in the number of people who have experienced sexual misconduct. And

consent currently plays a big role in sex education, Dewitte told *Observant*. This is a positive development, she thinks, although there should also be more focus on the joyful and pleasurable aspects of sex. Monday 4 March marks the beginning of Spring Fever Week, during which primary schools in the Netherlands educate children on "resilience, relationships and sexuality", as it says on the organisation's website. A good moment for *Observant* to take to social media and ask students to submit their burning questions about sex and sexuality. We will put them to sexologist Dewitte – anonymously, of course.

Every week, the editor-in-chief writes about what has been happening at the Observant office.



splinters

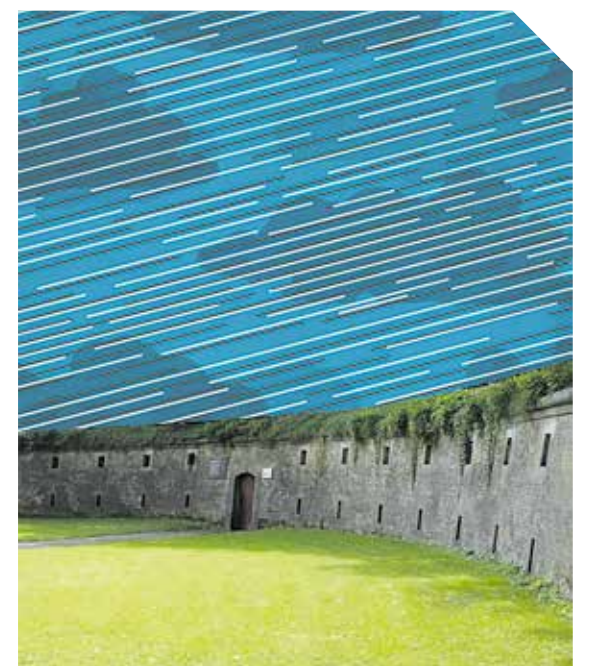
A funny incident, a striking piece of news, something interesting that happened elsewhere in the country: it is in this column. Contributions: HOP, Cleo Freriks, Lotte van de Loo

Dildo on campus

Quickly purchasing a dildo between lectures? This option was recently introduced at the Science Park in Utrecht, sister newspaper *DUB* reports. Spar University supermarket has joined forces with EasyToys, a company that sells sex toys. Since last week, a pink rack filled with vibrators, lubricating jelly and cock rings takes centre stage in the shop. Spar also stocks sex toys at four other campuses in the country. In doing so, the supermarket capitalises on recent research by *Rutgers & Soa Aids Nederland*. This shows that 'the first time' for youths takes place later and later: whereas in 2012, this was still at the age of 17 years, it is now 18.7 years. So, during one's time as a student. Aside from their intimate purpose, these toys also stimulate something else: lots of discussions – with occasional giggling – writes *DUB*. So, are the sex toys selling like hot cakes? According to a member of staff, plenty have already been sold. Among students, however, responses are different: "I would be more inclined to buy one online. I don't want to be recognised."

Flying is cheaper than a room

In some Canadian cities, there is a dire shortage of rooms too. It is so expensive to live in Vancouver that a student came up with a cheaper solution: he lives 700 kilometres away and flies up and down. It costs student Tim Chen 1,200 Canadian dollars (a little over 800 euro) per month to fly from Calgary, where he lives, to Vancouver twice a week. In doing so, he saves 900 dollars per month; the rent of an average student room in the Canadian university city is 2,100 dollars (more than 1,400 euros). In comparison: in Amsterdam, the most expensive university city in the Netherlands, you pay on average 948 euro per month for a room. Partly due to the overheated housing market, the Canadian government – just like the Dutch Parliament – wants to curb the influx of international students. The latter will be reduced by at least 35 per cent next year.



Beautiful history

Good news for everyone who was rained on for the umpteenth time this week. No, the sun is not suddenly going to shine, but all that rain did yield something wonderful. The fierce rainfall revealed an undiscovered system of corridors on the Tongerseplein. It is located just outside the well-known Kazematten (casemates), a defence network of corridors and bunkers. Jos Notermans, chairman of the Menno van Coehoorn foundation, which is dedicated to maintaining the historical defence systems, finds it "very special," he says to *RTV Maastricht*. "It is very possible that nobody has been in the corridors since the closure of the fortifications in 1876." The network will be investigated during the coming time. In 2022, a subsidence due to rainfall also revealed a small piece of history. That concerned an old bridge over a filled-in branch of the Jeker river in the Looierstraat. As coincidence will have it, there was other memorable news for history lovers too this week. The ArcheoHot-spot was opened in Centre Céramique last Saturday, *De Limburger* writes. Everyone can help archaeologists and volunteers there by selecting old shards or studying other archaeological finds. Anyone who has dug up anything interesting, can bring that along too.



University elections: from 22-25 April

University Council seat ‘pays’ better than faculty council seat



Illustration: Simone Golob

A student member of the University Council receives at least 662 euro per month – for some, this can even run to more than 1,100 euro. Students in the various faculty councils receive considerably less per month, Observant discovered when it asked around.

The nominations have been almost completed, the election campaign for student members of the University Council and the faculty councils can begin. But what does a seat like that actually yield? This varies considerably from council to council.

The most favourable arrangement is the one for the University Council. Student members there receive a standard compensation based on 20 per cent of the salary of a fourth-year

student assistant (30 per cent for a member of the presidium, the Council's Executive Committee): 662 euro per month (993 for presidium members). In addition, they can apply for 'board months', as a compensation for possible delay in their study due to council work. A 'regular' council member receives a maximum of four months, which altogether is worth 1,382 euro, a member of the presidium a maximum of five, which comes down to 1,727,50 euro. If we add to that the 320 euro for reimbursement for expenses that all council members receive, then a 'regular' student member of the University Council can expect up to 9,600 euro per year; a member of the presidium up to almost 14 thousand euro. Students who manage to obtain a faculty

council seat, have to make do with less. Although there is a general rule (5 per cent of the salary of a fourth-year student assistant, or about 150 euro per month), the amount varies per faculty. The law faculty diligently complies with this rule, while at the School of Business and Economics they seem to deviate slightly: Economics students receive 1,322 euro for their council work, annually. That is excluding the 185 euro reimbursement for expenses to which all faculty council members are entitled. By the way, not every faculty could produce figures before this newspaper went to press.

Peter Doorakkers

New cap appears to lead to fewer student candidates university elections

Slightly fewer candidates than last year seem to want to participate in the upcoming university elections (for students only) that will take place from April 22-25. The decrease probably has to do with the cap the University Council put on the number of candidates per party last summer.

Previously, parties were allowed to list up to 30 candidates. But because of low turnout, parties with many candidates had an unfair advantage over their competitors with few

candidates, the U Council found last summer. After all, those with thirty candidates could already count on thirty votes. And since fifty votes was sometimes enough for a council seat in recent years, that long list of candidates can make a difference.

So a new maximum: 150 percent of the number of seats available. For example, the university council has ten student seats. Student parties may then list up to 15 candidates for this council.

Only students may vote for their faculty coun-

cil and university council this year. Members of academic and support staff serve two-year terms. There are also elections for service councils, but only at ICTS are there more candidates than seats.

All figures are subject to change: the lists may still be completed in the coming days.

Cleo Freriks



Orange Juice Politics

“

At the national level, Dutch politics is a mess right now. For many of us, the desire to have a government in place again is offset only by nervousness about what such a government would look like. There are worse things than a power vacuum, after all. How refreshing, then, to receive a small reminder this week that the Dutch contract between those who govern and those who are governed remains stronger than the front pages might suggest. The reminder came in an unlikely form: my 11-year-old daughter and her friend were looking for someone to interview for the school yearbook, and decided to approach the mayor of Maastricht. Keen to do it all themselves, they arranged the whole appointment without help. When the day came, the pair ascended the steps of the historic *Stadhuis* alone, and chatted with the city's highest-ranking public servant over glasses of orange juice. Listening to the recording afterwards, I was struck by how gamely - how earnestly - the mayor answered questions that ranged from "If you could be anyone for a day, who would it be?" to "What's the worst part of your job?" I don't have any particular insight into the current mayor's politics - it might well be that we don't see eye to eye on many policy decisions. I could nevertheless not help but be impressed. It is difficult to imagine two ordinary primary schoolers being able to arrange something like this in many other countries, including my native South Africa. The girls left the interview feeling taken seriously and listened to. In other words, they left feeling like citizens. It's a long way, of course, from the Maastricht city hall to The Hague. And anyone can take half an hour from their day to speak to some children, you might argue; this hardly means they have the answers to the country's most pressing problems. But is that true? Exactly because a widespread perception of political and social decay is one of those problems. Looking around us for small examples of trust and bipartisanship can help to prevent political distrust from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Elsje Fourie,
assistant professor of Globalisation &
Development Studies

series the societal impact of um research

Plastics in the adolescent stage: “There’s still a lot of room for improvement”



Prof. Kim Ragaert Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

In today’s world, the societal impact of research findings seems more important than getting published in an academic journal like *Nature* or *The Lancet*. What impact has research conducted at UM had in recent years? This week: how UM researchers are helping industry improve plastics recycling.

“A lot of supermarkets have replaced plastic trays with cardboard for deli meats. This makes customers feel like they’re doing their part to help the environment, but the opposite is actually true. Cardboard trays are often coated in plastic, making both the paper and the plastic more difficult to recycle”, says Kim Ragaert, who has been a professor of Circular Plastics at the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) since 2021. So why do supermarkets opt for these trays? Ragaert rubs her thumb over the tip of her index finger. Money, that’s why. “Even though they know better, companies respond to consumer demands. And plastic has a bad reputation, when in fact it’s often the best solution – not always, but more often than you’d think. Plastic trays, for example, are simply very useful for preserving food.”

A world without plastics would therefore be unrealistic. A more effective approach to reducing carbon emissions would be to improve reuse and recycling. “There’s still a lot of room for improvement”, says Ragaert, taking a sip from her reusable coffee cup. Recycling rates are significantly higher for traditional waste streams, such as paper and glass. “Plastic is still in the adolescent stage. Globally, only 9 per cent of plastic waste is recycled. Europe – and the Netherlands in particular – is doing better at 30 to 40 per cent, but we must push these rates higher.”

Incinerator

However, this won’t be an easy task. There are lots of different types of plastics, each with its own properties. And this number will only continue to increase with the advancement of

biobased plastics (produced without fossil fuels) and biodegradable plastics (compostable, but not necessarily biobased). This complicates matters, as Ragaert points out. “Take PET plastic, used for amongst others soft drink bottles, and PLA bioplastic made from corn starch. They are chemical similar, which makes them often difficult to separate in waste processing plants. And incorrect separation has a negative impact on recycling – PLA reduces the quality of recycled PET.”

Moreover, recycling is a numbers game. “It’s economically viable only in large quantities. Many new types of plastics have not yet reached critical mass and often end up in the incinerator instead.” Again, ignorance often plays a role. “During my time at Ghent University, the cafeteria proudly introduced biodegradable disposable soup cups. But

what’s the point if people toss them in the bin anyway? They just get incinerated.”

Shampoo bottle

Ragaert sees raising awareness as part of her mission, not just by educating consumers but also by advising governments and industry. “For example, we advise on the best ways to use biodegradable plastics – not in soup cups, but in compostable products like tea bags or coffee pads. We also advise on ways to make recycling bioplastics profitable, encouraging collaboration rather than competition. So many companies focus solely on their own product. It would be better if they all focused on one type of bioplastic, working together to make it economically viable.”

And she doesn’t just advise industry. Ragaert’s research group on the Brightlands Chemelot Campus in Geleen actively collaborates with companies. “Some products contain several types of plastics. We’re researching the best ways to recycle these products. One of our PhD students is focusing on a recycled shampoo bottle with a cap made of a harder type of plastic. How does recycling them together affect quality? The company will be able to use the findings to determine whether it’s worth the cost and effort to separate the cap from the bottle during the recycling process.” They also do research on reusable products. “For example, how can chip containers be cleaned hundreds of times without releasing harmful substances?”

Worth the investment

Which of their findings have already been put into practice? Ragaert can’t give specific examples, citing competition concerns. Doesn’t this go against the purpose of scientific research? “We do publish our results, just without disclosing company names or specific commercial names of plastics types. So our research definitely has scientific value. Besides, we don’t just experiment with materials to find out which works best; we also want to find out what’s happening at the molecular level. But if you focus solely on the latter, no one will care about your research. We want our research to have a social impact. By collaborating with industry, we hope our findings can always be implemented within a few years.”

Are there any examples she can share? Brands like Samsonite and Philips have already released suitcases and vacuum cleaners, respectively, made from recycled plastic, helped by research Ragaert did when she was at Ghent University. And there is one UM example she can share: research they conducted for CEFLEX, a European consortium focusing on flexible packaging materials like sandwich bags and crisp packets. “We tried out a new, more expensive, system to filter these plastics from household waste and process them into high-quality new products. It proved to be worth the investment. A demonstration plant is currently being developed for large-scale application.”

Dennis Vaendel

Kim Ragaert is one of the three finalists for the 2024 Prince Friso Engineering Prize. The winner, to be named “Engineer of the Year”, will be announced on 13 March. A jury prize and a public prize will be awarded. You can cast your vote until 10 March on www.prinsfrisoingenieursprijs.nl



We made it seem like we didn't care about our 'teeny-tiny' language

It's hardly surprising that the government has decided to crack down on the increased use of English in educational institutions like Maastricht University. We brought it on ourselves, argues former *Observant* editor **Wammes Bos**, who has been keeping a close eye on developments at the university since the 1980s.



Illustration: Bas van der Schot

Just before Carnival, three UM administrators – two deans and the president of the Executive Board – held an online “Ask Me Anything” session to answer questions about the ongoing political debate on internationalisation and the increased use of English in Dutch higher education. They also had some news: UM will be recruiting more Dutch students and offering more bachelor's programmes in Dutch. Towards the end of the session, someone floated an idea. What if we made Open Days just a little less English-dominated? And perhaps the university website, too? I was flabbergasted. Who decided it would be a good idea to hold Open Days in English in the first place? Didn't anyone realise this might put off Dutch high school students, locals included, who still have no idea what they want – especially if they bring their parents along, who might not appreciate being greeted with a “Good morning, would you like a piece of *vlaai*”?

Doctrine

I'm afraid the truth is that no one did stop to think about it. And that no one at this university has stopped to think about these questions for a very long time.

After all, this situation has crept up on us. It all started with internationalisation in the 1990s. What began as a survival strategy grew into a conviction and then became a defining feature, maybe even an ideology. Or worse, a doctrine. To be sure, the intention was good: to prepare students for the global labour market, embracing the concept of the International Classroom. There's nothing wrong with that.

But have we taken it too far? At one point, it was decided that universities have a responsibility to preserve Dutch as an academic language. It even says so in the law. Apparently, Maastricht decided this didn't really apply to us. Our Dutch student population was dwindling anyway; local enrolment rates were

too low while international student numbers continued to rise, even more so when programmes aimed at them were introduced. After that, the focus shifted to developing even more English-taught programmes to attract even more international students, who now make up almost 75 per cent of new admissions.

Out of sight

And that's how Dutch gradually faded out of sight at Maastricht University – and no one seemed to mind.

Here are a few examples to illustrate my point. --Not too long ago, a professor at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences wondered aloud what “CMW” stood for again. Mind you, this professor has been around since the establishment of the Dutch *faculteit Cultuur- en Maatschappijwetenschappen* (CMW) – now known as “FASoS”.

This very faculty used to offer a Dutch-taught Arts and Sciences programme until about

a decade ago. According to some of its last cohort of students, the faculty had begun to actively discourage students from taking the programme. Eventually, the Dutch version was effectively axed.

--The University Council switched to English. As we once agreed to be a bilingual university, it was decided that members could still speak Dutch at meetings. This was particularly nice for support staff who didn't need English for their work. But if you spoke Dutch, you'd be the odd one out because everyone else spoke English. So you either remained silent or used some kind of English and kept it brief. I wonder how many people refrained from running for the University Council because they felt intimidated by its use of English – and how many of our community members went unrepresented as a result.

--A Dutch business administration student once wrote *Observant* a note in shockingly poor Dutch. When this was gently pointed out to him, he said with a grin, “Oh well, who cares? I don't need Dutch for my studies. Everything is in English.”

Or take international staff members who have lived here for years, sometimes decades, yet can barely speak Dutch. They never felt the need to learn the language – and worse, they were never encouraged to.

--We also had no choice but to adopt an English name. Clearly, “*universiteit*” is a Dutch word that wouldn't be understood anywhere else in the world. *Universiteit Maastricht*? No, we are Maastricht University, even in Dutch texts. It's plastered on all our buildings (all of which are located squarely in the Netherlands, last time I checked). Randwyck came up with a reasonable compromise; seen from the A2 motorway, the name on the building reads “Universiteit-Maastricht-University”. Tapijn only has English on the facade. The same goes for the FSE building. The Faculty of Law says “Law”. And if you want to work on your health and fitness, just follow the signs to “UM SPORTS”; and not Sport without an s, the Dutch way. Nowadays, our faculties exclusively sport English names.

--UM has brought in international staff, both academic and non-academic, across all levels of the organisation. No problem. Or is it? We now get policy documents that were clearly written in English and then translated into Dutch, if translated at all. UM once published a Strategic Programme, the official document of the university, to be sent to the Ministry of Education in The Hague, the province of Limburg, the municipality and any other interested parties. The Dutch version was riddled with awkward phrases.

Disdain

Why is this? Is it disdain for our native language? We're just a teeny-tiny country with a teeny-tiny language, so why bother making a fuss – is that it? Or is it simply a matter of carelessness, laziness?

Either way, it makes sense that the government is grumbling (although they're admittedly going a little overboard). We've brought this on ourselves. We made it seem like we didn't care about our language. UM administrators never fail to remind us that we are “an international European university”. Is it any wonder, then, that international students and staff come here expecting everything – and really everything – to be in English?

Serious

And now the tide is turning.

Here's a thought: why not return to a fifty-fifty split between Dutch and international students? That would feel a lot more balanced than the current ratio. And let's be serious about being a bilingual university, rather than just paying lip service to the idea.



Analysis of a jewellery theft

“You don’t expect hammers, guns and glass flying all over the place at TEFAF”

On 9 March, the antique and art fair TEFAF will be opening its doors to the public again. Who doesn’t remember the news from 2022, when five men with *Peaky Blinders*-style caps used a hammer to smash open a protective case of an English jeweller at the fair in MECC? Bystanders appeared to remain reasonably calm as the crime took place before their eyes. Donna Yates, associate professor at the Department of Criminal Law and Criminology, explains why.

Text: Wendy Degens Photo: Loraine Bodewes

Tuesday 28 June 2022, about 11 o’clock in the morning: *The European Fine Art Fair* is world news. Five thieves manage to steal jewellery worth millions in broad daylight. “I was at the faculty in a digital conference about art and received all kinds of messages and links to Twitter and news sites,” Yates remembers. The previous day, Yates had taken a tour of the fair for her research within the framework of a large project subsidised with European funding, called *Trafficking Transformations*, for which she had received a starting grant worth 1.5 million euro. What is the attraction to people of rare collectable items such as antiquities and fossils, and how do they maybe ‘inspire’ them to commit a crime, Yates wants to know.

TEFAF is a choice opportunity to do fieldwork. Which was the case on 27 June, one day before the theft. Yates savoured the general atmosphere, focussed on the furnishings and decoration as well as the clothing style. Normally, the fair always takes place in March, but in 2022 this was moved to June due to Covid. “It was hot!”, Yates remembers. So hot that it was the primary topic of conversation in the MECC. The congress centre did not have climate control which regularly drove a considerable number of visitors, but also the art dealers, to despair. Because, what could this heat mean for fragile objects? Also, would potential buyers refrain from coming because of the heat?

Sneakers

“Although there is no obligatory dress code, there are unwritten rules. People dress for the fair and the fair dresses them,” Yates describes in the scientific article *Affective Atmosphere in Art Fair Jewel Heist*, which she and Diāna Bērziņa, a colleague from the Faculty of Law, published last year on account of the heist. Those unwritten rules imply that gentlemen wear neat trousers, shirt and blazer, possibly with a scarf, tie, cap or hat. Neat leather shoes are always appreciated, as are luxury watches or expensive rings. Women wear fitted suits, designer dresses or blouses with expensive

trousers or skirts, says Yates. “The norm is impeccable hair and make-up.” That day, Yates wore jeans, a T-shirt and sneakers. “I wore those on purpose. I wanted to provoke something; what will happen if I walk around like that?” She, herself became subject of her own observation. If there are any women walking around the fair in jeans, those are designer items. Moreover, they won’t have sneakers on their feet, but high heels. Yates received subtle disapproving glances that Monday afternoon, gallery owners ignored her. They preferred to be on their telephones. Whether that was just because of her appearance, she can’t say for sure, she admits, but during her earlier visits to fairs, when she was dressed ‘appropriately’, she was approached in a more friendly fashion. It brings her to two elements that she highlights in her publication: the thieves’ clothing. Their style fitted in with TEFAF to a large extent, she says. “It is exactly the reason why they were not noticed at all.” On the photographs circulating on the Internet, we see men in light-coloured shirts, often completely buttoned up, vests and a blazer on top, as well as ties. Four of the five wore *Peaky Blinders*-style caps on their heads, named after the criminal gang from Birmingham in the late 19th and early 20th century (a drama series on the BBC is named after them).

Absurd

TEFAF with all its luxury – carpets, upholstered seating, insane flower arrangements, flawlessly dressed members of staff, security, champagne and oysters on the menu – creates an atmosphere in which nobody even thinks for one second about a million-euro robbery. While a protective case is being smashed to pieces, many visitors and art dealers just look calmly at the ‘spectacle’ from a distance. They take photographs and videos with their telephones. The highlight is maybe the older man, resting on a bench with his legs crossed, right next to where it is all happening. When the thieves run away, in front of and behind him, he just looks at them. There is

one person who picks up a vase and wants to throw it at the five, but changes his mind when he sees a gun. He is one of the few to take action. What is happening here? Yates: “When you are witness to a crime on the street and you see someone smash a jeweller’s shop window, you immediately know: this isn’t right. But at this art fair, you don’t expect hammers, guns and glass flying about the place. This is absurd and irrational, so the fact that there was no outbreak of panic, is not so strange at all.” Even the day after the robbery, when Yates spoke to a number of eyewitnesses at TEFAF, she understood: “People were not afraid, they thought that it was performance art, that it was part of everything.”

Banksy

Yates sketches a broader context. In 2018, there were lots of protests in the Sackler wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York – the Sackler family made their wealth through the sale of the addictive pain killer OxyContin. Demonstrators threw bottles of pills on the floor. The same ritual followed later on in the Guggenheim Museum in the same city and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. In the British Museum, hundreds of protesters gathered to demonstrate against an exhibition that was sponsored by oil company BP, in 2019. Also, just before the TEFAF heist, a man hit the protective glass of the *Mona Lisa* in the Louvre and smeared it with cake. A so-called ‘environmental protest’. And who doesn’t remember the demonstrators who glued themselves down or the ones who threw soup? Artists themselves also contributed, Yates argued in the article. Remember Banksy’s painted version of *Girl with Balloon*. At the exact moment it was sold, half of it went through the shredder. Deliberately. The work became many times more valuable after that. The thought that the five ‘*Peaky-Blinders* types’ would reveal themselves at some stage as being activists or artists was not strange at all in light of events like these in the art world, Yates reckons. “People could expect the unexpected to happen.”

“People were not afraid, they thought that it was performance art”

background

“Here, I’m not a professional, but a volunteer”



Angeliki Pantelidi Photo: Ellen Oosterhof

Having a lie-in is not an option for Angeliki Pantelidi from Greece this Saturday morning. In addition to studying for the master’s of Legal Psychology, the 26-year-old student also carries out voluntary work. And no, not just feeding some goats at a children’s farm, but as a host in a shelter for homeless youths. She received a UM edubadge for her work.

Eight-hour shifts, sometimes during the day, sometimes during the night. It gives her a sense of satisfaction, as well

as a kind of recognition (see box) from Maastricht University (UM). All well and good, but it doesn’t earn you any money. For six long summers, Angeliki Pantelidi waited tables in Greece. With her savings and a little help from her parents, she doesn’t need to do paid work here.

“I started this morning at 8 o’clock,” she says. Many students would prefer to turn over in their beds, but that is not the case for her. Since September last year, she has been a volunteer at the Credohuis, a shelter for homeless

youths. “Ultimately, we want to help them live independently by offering them a home that is as ‘normal as possible.” And indeed, it seems like a very normal terraced house with a communal living room and kitchen downstairs.

The house has enough room for six people to sleep. “On the first floor, there is an office and the rooms for the women. The second floor is for the men,” Pantelidi explains. There is no maximum length of stay. The aim is no more than a year.

A text from the bible on the wall betrays the organisation’s Christian identity. Pantelidi is fine with that. She herself is Greek orthodox and regularly visits a church in Maastricht. “To light candles and to pray. One for my family, one for myself, and one for every lost soul on earth.” But when she is working at Credohuis, she is not thinking about that. Not all of the occupants are actually religious. “One inhabitant goes to church every now and again, escorted by a colleague.”

Lost

How did she end up there? “A friend pointed it out to me when I came to Maastricht to study in September. He had already been doing it himself for a couple of months.” Pantelidi was a volunteer in Greece as well. She gave extra lessons to children and did similar work to what she does now, but the youths there suffered with psychoses. “That was tough. But I know how lost you can feel, during my bachelor’s of Psychology in Greece, I was very depressed. I have been in therapy for five years. Fortunately, I am now better able to deal with my emotions and so also those of others. And during my study I learned a lot about the relation between me as a ‘professional’ and the client. Although” – she doesn’t manage to suppress a smile – “I’m not here in that role of course. I am a volunteer here.”

Entertaining

What does she do there exactly? “I am there to help the inhabitants and to ‘entertain them.’ They can always come to me if they want a listening ear. In addition, I cook with them, we eat together and sometimes we watch a film or play a game.” Fortunately, we don’t need to entertain them all the time. An open laptop and notepad beside Pantelidi reveal a non-work-related activity: studying. “Most of the inhabitants are either gone or still asleep. Then I can get some studying done.”

Lotte van de Loo

Edubadge

Two years ago, the UM set up the ‘Civic Engagement Activities’ project, with the aim of involving students more in the city. They did this by encouraging volunteer work and subsequently by ‘recognising and rewarding’ this. This recognition is expressed in the awarding of a so-called ‘edubadge’. The award is subject to certain conditions. For example, the student must spend at least 28 hours a year doing voluntary work and write a reflection report. The badge can be added to the LinkedIn profile as well as to one’s cv.

Agenda academic ceremonies Aula Minderbroedersberg 4-6

29-2, 10.00 h	Ting Wang	14-3, 16.00 h	Astrid Nicole Louise Hermans
29-2, 13.00 h	Marie Rickert	15-3, 10.00 h	Martine Uittenbogaart
	Double degree Maastricht University and University of Münster	15-3, 13.00 h	Melissa Sophia Anna Maria Bevers
29-2, 16.00 h	Anouk Rijken	15-3, 16.30 h	Dr. Jur ten Berg inauguratie
01-3, 10.00 h	Iris Catherina Lodewijk Linden	18-3, 13.00 h	Antonio Soares Martins Neto
01-3, 13.00 h	Kelly Gerardus Helmina van de Pas	18-3, 16.00 h	Mayra Pacheco Pachado
01-3, 16.30 h	Dr. Miranda Schram inauguratie	19-3, 10.00 h	Wilhelmina Leentje (Lieve) van der Meer
05-3, 10.00 h	Narek Manukjan	19-3, 13.00 h	Pia Brinkmann
	Double Doctoral Degree University of Birmingham and Maastricht University	19-3, 16.00 h	Jinmi Zou
05-3, 13.00 h	Maarten Christiaan Ottenhoff	20-3, 16.00 h	Jacqueline Rose Mary Salguero Huaman
05-3, 16.00 h	Farzaneh Rajabighamchi	21-3, 10.00 h	Daniëlle Johanna Henrica Kerkhofs
	Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University and Hasselt University	21-3, 13.00 h	Stephanie May Ashton
07-3, 10.00 h	Jennifer Margaretha Klasen	21-3, 16.30 h	Prof. dr. Saskia Brand inauguratie
07-3, 13.00 h	Johannes Paul Van Schayck	22-3, 10.00 h	Anouk Tanja Rudy Weemaes
08-3, 10.00 h	Marlijne Cornelia Grietje de Graaf	22-3, 16.30 h	Dr. Inge Dijkgraaf inauguratie
08-3, 13.00 h	Lieve Clasina Johanna van Delft	25-3, 10.00 h	Hansje Puck Smeele
08-3, 16.30 h	Dr. Piet Leroy inauguratie	25-3, 13.00 h	Poramapa Poonpakdee
11-3, 10.00 h	Chukiat Tantiwong	25-3, 16.00 h	Sharon D’Souza
	Double Doctoral Degree Maastricht University and The University of Reading	26-3, 10.00 h	Qian Li
12-3, 16.00 h	Renier Hendricus Jacobus (Rik) Hendrix	26-3, 16.00 h	Mathias Dirk Gilberte Van den Eynde
13-3, 13.00 h	Rebekka Maria Koeck	27-3, 10.00 h	Imke Demers
14-3, 13.00 h	Pascale Heins	27-3, 13.00 h	Lies van de Kuilen
		27-3, 16.00 h	Mirjam van der Ende- van Loon
		28-3, 10.00 h	Sorina Ruth Simon
		28-3, 16.00 h	Robert Josephus Johannes van Gassel



Maastricht University

Vacatures

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*Medewerkers van UM kunnen een volledig overzicht van interne- en externe vacatures vinden door in te loggen op SuccessFactors via UMPLOYEE.



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