

# VOX

INTERVIEW  
SPECIAL

**'One day, we  
will be free'**

Sofiia Shtohryn from Ukraine

ENGLISH EDITION

RADBOD UNIVERSITY INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE  
ISSUE 3 - JUNE 2022

# VOX

**is the independent news medium  
of Radboud University.  
We write articles, shoot videos  
and publish magazines.**

Do you want to read up on  
the latest about the university  
and student life?

**Follow us on:**



voxweb.nl



facebook.com/voxweb.nl



@voxnieuws



**Follow us on  
Instagram!**

[instagram.com/voxweb.nl](https://www.instagram.com/voxweb.nl)

## Vallei Autoverhuur

**Bij ons staat uw gemak voorop**



Huur per uur  
mogelijk



Sterke merken  
en een jong  
wagenpark



Altijd  
interessante  
aanbiedingen

**Vallei Auto Groep Nijmegen**

Nieuwe Dukenburgseweg 13  
6534 AD Nijmegen  
T: 024 381 7104

[www.valleiautoverhuur.nl](http://www.valleiautoverhuur.nl)

## Karaktervolle locaties



### Vergader- en Conferentiecentrum Soeterbeek

*Ruimte voor concentratie*

[www.ru.nl/soeterbeek](http://www.ru.nl/soeterbeek)

reserveringsbureau@fb.ru.nl of bel: 024 - 361 58 25

Uw locatie voor één of meerdaagse cursussen,  
seminars, vergaderingen, trainingen of conferenties.  
Ervaar de inspirerende rust.



### Faculty Club Huize Heyendael

*Dé ontmoetingsplek op de campus*

[www.ru.nl/facultyclub](http://www.ru.nl/facultyclub)

facultyclub@fb.ru.nl of bel: 024 - 361 59 79

Lunch en diner à la carte, ook arrangementen voor  
recepties, diners en feesten. Uitstekend geoutilleerde  
vergader ruimten.



Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen







P.8



P.14



P.20



P.26



P.32



P.35



P.40

# EDITORIAL

## ATTENTION

For over two years, lockdowns and infection rates were all we talked about. But all this changed when Putin launched his war in Ukraine. COVID-19 suddenly seems very far away.

In this Vox edition, biology student Sofia Shtohryn (18) shares what it's like to be in Nijmegen, while bombs are raining on her birthplace of Chernihiv. At times, Shtohryn couldn't reach her family for days. Could you concentrate on your ecology or statistics lecture when you don't know whether your family is alive. Shtohryn's mother and two grand-mothers have now fled to Nijmegen.

Another person who fled to the Netherlands is Roberto Hernández. The Mexican director made the shocking documentary *Duda Razonable*, which exposes the torture and corruption within the Mexican judicial apparatus. He now gives lectures in Nijmegen. But back to COVID-19. Our attention may now be elsewhere, while experts are once again warning about a possible new lockdown in the autumn, partly as a result of what epidemiologist Alma Tostmann calls the 'all-or-nothing strategy' of the Dutch cabinet. A strategy that lacks a long-term vision, and that could really catch us out come this autumn.

Mathijs Noij,  
Editor of Vox

 [voxweb.nl](https://www.instagram.com/voxweb.nl)

 [www.facebook.com/voxweb.nl](https://www.facebook.com/voxweb.nl)

 [@voxnieuws](https://twitter.com/voxnieuws)

# VOX JUNI 2022 CONTENTS

P.8 / **SOFIA SHTOHRYN** studies in Nijmegen while a war rages in Ukraine

P.14 / The Dutch national Nitrogen Warrior **JOHAN VOLLENBROEK** won't let himself be stopped stop by intimidation

P.20 / Wheelchair rugby player **HUGO VAN IERSEL** aims for the Paralympics

P.26 / Corona dominated epidemiologist **ALMA TOSTMANN'S** life for two years

P.32 / Director **ROBERTO HERNÁNDEZ** had to flee because of his Netflix documentary

P.35 / Northerner **JAAP-HENK HOEPMAN** likes to punch holes in online security systems

P.40 / Wine has close to no secrets left for molecular biologist **KOEN KLEMANN**

# IN THE NEWS



DAY-TO-DAY NEWS:  
[VOXWEB.NL/INTERNATIONAL](http://VOXWEB.NL/INTERNATIONAL)

## Fifty years of 'Bata'

In the 1970s, a small group of Nijmegen students attended a relay race in Sweden. They found it such a great event that they imported the idea to the Netherlands. Fifty years later, the Batavieren Race – the world's largest relay race – has become a household name in Nijmegen student life. The Groningen team came in first in the jubilee edition on 30 April.

## Demolition and construction

Radboud University has ambitious plans for its campus. These involve ultimately demolishing the Spinoza building, Lecture Hall Complex, and Linnaeus building. Part of the Erasmus building will be devoted to student housing. The heart of the campus, where the Lecture Hall Complex is now located, will become a meeting centre with catering facilities and conference halls. The Faculty of Arts will relocate to a new building on the location of the Spinoza building.

## Vote pullers

Radboud University students did really well at the municipal elections in March. No less than six student candidates attracted enough votes to win a seat on the Nijmegen council. Two of them retracted their candidacy. Those who did make use of their newly won entry ticket are Sander van der Goes and Jasmijn Kraaijeveld from GroenLinks, and Léonie Janssen and Sophie den Ouden from D66.

## Working overtime in medicine

During their internships, medical students make more hours than legally permitted. This is what students Marjolein, Jasper, and Sara discovered when they took a closer look at their schedules. The students repeatedly raised this issue with the department, that refuses to adjust the schedules, and dismisses the students' calculations as incorrect. The three students feel that they are not being taken seriously, but hope that their fight will set something in motion; if only so that future prospective doctors dare to raise the alarm sooner.



↑  
read the full story  
(in Dutch)

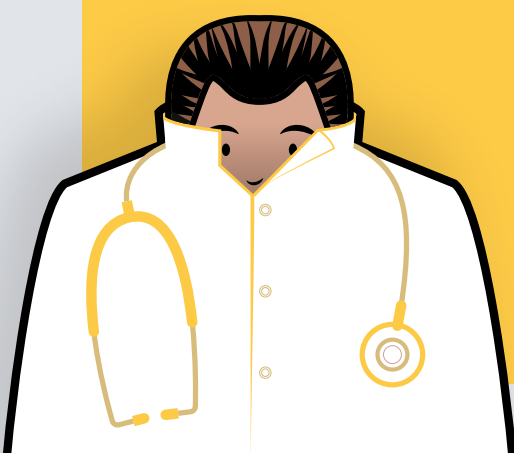
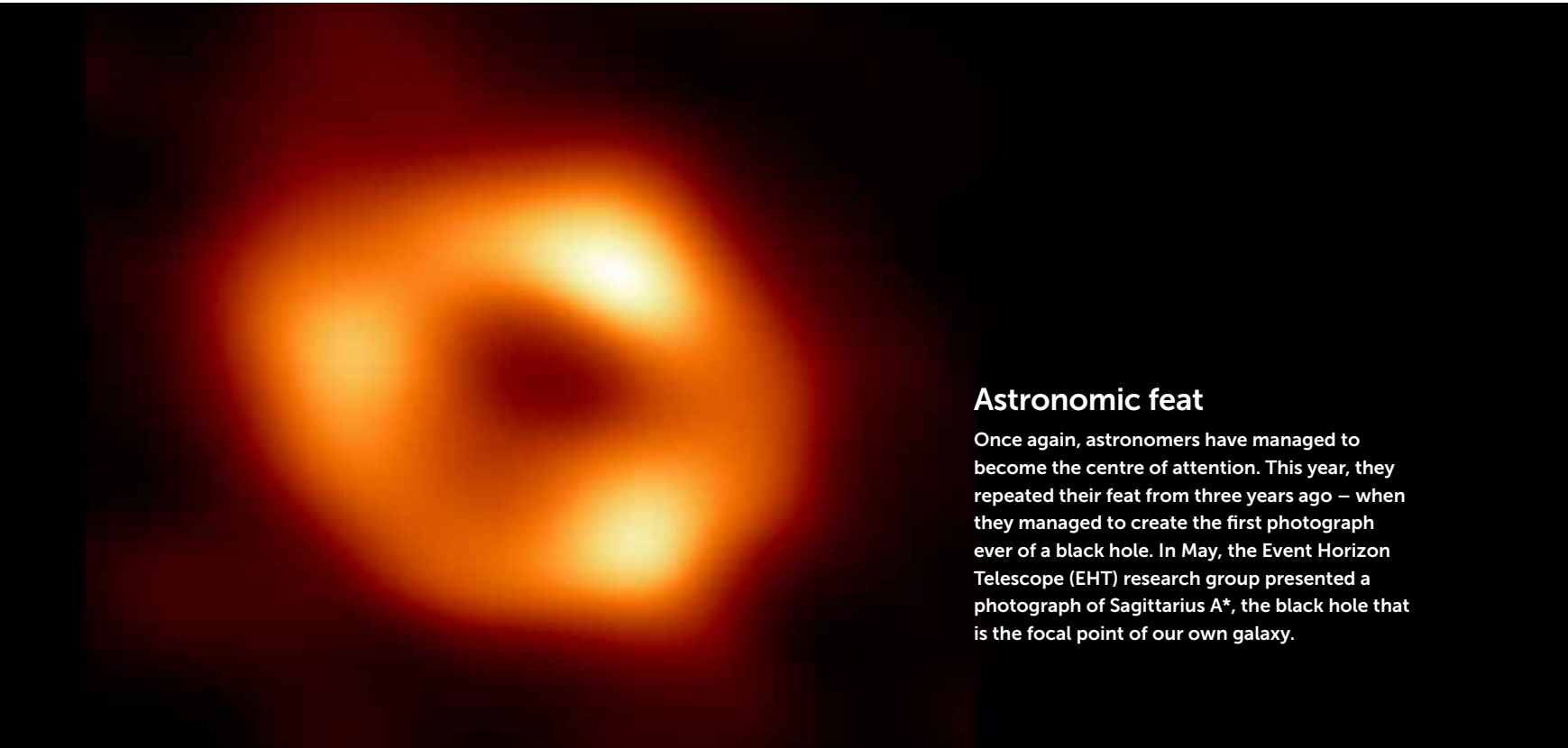


ILLUSTRATION: ROEL VENDERBOSCH





## Astronomic feat

Once again, astronomers have managed to become the centre of attention. This year, they repeated their feat from three years ago – when they managed to create the first photograph ever of a black hole. In May, the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) research group presented a photograph of Sagittarius A\*, the black hole that is the focal point of our own galaxy.

## Forever young

Nijmegen inhabitant Harrie Doeleman may be 69, but for the past 25 years, he's lived with much pleasure in a student room on the Oranjesingel. The pensionado shares a kitchen and bathroom with eleven housemates, and is clearly enjoying the arrangement. 'I have a great view of the city, and there's always something to do here. That's what I like,' says Doeleman. What about the parties? They don't bother him. He can sleep through anything, he says. 'And it's great fun for them, isn't it?'



## Ghost village of Risoul

What happened to students in the French ski village of Risoul? According to Dutch student associations, dozens of their members, including Nijmegen students, were taken ill during the past skiing season. The atmosphere in the village was grim, and security guards at the local bar were apparently guilty of transgressive behaviour. Was this some kind of massive drugging action? Or the result of contaminated drinking water? The French police carried out an investigation, but could find no evidence of drugging. The associations, however, have drawn their own conclusion: next year, they will opt for a different destination.

## Mega grant

Radboud University researchers have been awarded no less than € 97 million by the National Growth Fund to build the world's first autonomous robot lab. Wilhelm Huck, Professor of Physical Organic Chemistry, and his colleagues aim at combining automation and artificial intelligence. The advantage of robots is that they can perform massive numbers of experiments. Researchers can then use the data from these experiments to train algorithms. 'It's the future of chemistry,' says Huck. The robot lab will be located on the Novio Tech Campus.

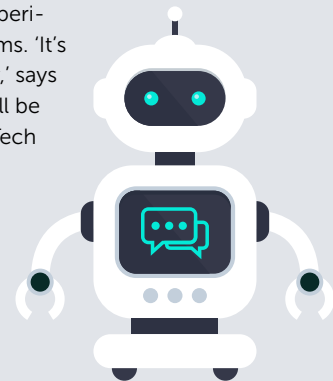


ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES



**IN THE PICTURE**







## CANONISATION OF TITUS BRANDSMA

Priest and Carmelite, professor and rector Titus Brandsma was canonised on 15 May on Saint Peter's Square in Rome. A delegation from Radboud University attended the canonisation led by Pope Francis. Rector Han van Krieken felt honoured at the ceremony to be wearing the same Rector's Chain as that worn by Titus Brandsma in the 1932-1933 academic year. Brandsma was arrested in 1942 for resistance activities against the Nazis. He died in Dachau concentration camp.

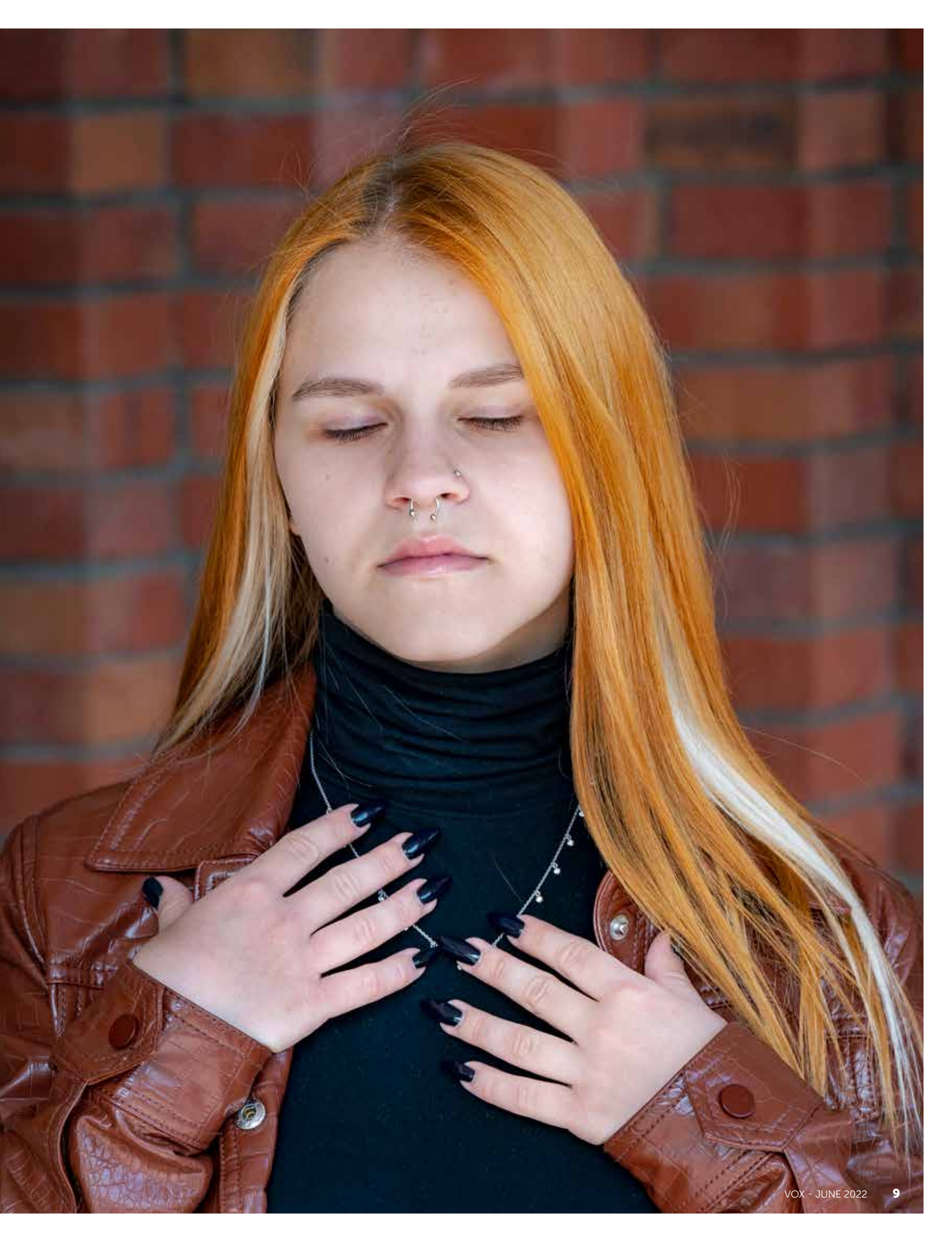
**Photography:** Dick van Aalst

# WHEN SUDDENLY THE BOMBS START FALLING

Sofia Shtohryn was only 17 when she arrived in Nijmegen last September. The Ukrainian started her studies in Biology at Radboud University, not knowing that a few months later war would break out in her home country. Her birthplace Chernihiv was bombed in the past months, and her family was in danger. 'You feel helpless and guilty about being here.'

**Text:** Marieke Smid / **Photography:** Bert Beelen





**S**he doesn't mind talking about the war, says Sofia Shtohryn emphatically. What she wants is to help raise awareness, because we clearly don't know everything that is going on. But it is also tiring for her. For months, she has lived in uncertainty about her parents. Her home. Her country. In the meantime, she also had to 'just' sit exams in Nijmegen.

It's been a pretty rough time, she now admits. Sometimes, Shtohryn was unable to reach her mother for days because the telephone lines were down, and she did not know whether her mother was still alive. By now, her mother and two grand-mothers have found refuge in Nijmegen. Her father and step-father are not allowed to leave the country because of the general mobilisation.

*What have the past months been like for you?*

'It was the only thing I could think about. I posted lots of photos from independent Ukrainian news websites on my social media to tell people the truth about what was happening. Because some people are still talking about it in

## 'I SOMETIMES CALLED MY MOTHER FIVE TIMES A DAY'

terms of a crisis or conflict, but it's a war. Maybe even genocide. This made me feel frustrated, so I had to do something. I also read the news all day long. Because I'm a member of twenty or more groups on Telegram and follow a lot of news sites, I was getting a lot of information. I also attended protests in the Netherlands, and stayed in close contact with my family. I sometimes called my mother five times a day.'

*What were these phone calls like?*

'Scary. I remember that on 24 March at 6 a.m., the phone rang. I was still in bed in my student house; I picked up the phone and heard my mother say: "The Russians are here; we're at war." I can't describe how that felt. It was like a bad dream or a film.' Shtohryn looks out of the window as she remembers that moment. We are in the conference room of the editorial office, looking out over the grass fields in front of the Maria Montessori building. After a short silence, she continues.

'After that, we called each other very often. My mother told me about planes flying overhead, about the city being bombed. Chernihiv is a suburb of Kyiv, so the situation there was very severe. My family had no electricity, no water, and sometimes no telephone connection for days at a time. I didn't know for sure whether my mother was still alive. Many of my friends are still there. And it's not safe to run away, because the Russians are also shooting at civilians. In the end, my mother and two grand-mothers decided to flee to Nijmegen. My landlord didn't allow them to live with me because of the rental contract rules, so I had to arrange accommodation for them. In the meantime, I also had exams and I had to study.'

*Wasn't that very hard, psychologically?*

'At such times, you feel helpless and guilty about being here, because you're safe. I tried to deal with my feelings by naively believing that the war would end soon. The worst days were when some presidential advisor or other said that the war could still last for months, or even years. When I saw images of the state my city was in, I felt even worse. One day, I tried to distract myself by going to a party, but of course, that didn't help: I only felt worse.'

Does she want to share some of these images? Of course. She takes out her telephone and scrolls down her photo gallery. 'There are so many,' she apologises. 'My father sends me photos every day of what is happening in our city.' It's easier to search for Chernihiv on Google. Look! A few seconds later, she points on her phone to a hotel near her parents' home. The roof is completely collapsed and the outside facade destroyed. Rubble covers the street. Shtohryn used to walk past this hotel a lot.

The secondary school she went to was also bombed. Luckily, only the windows were broken, she explains. Under the building, there are bunkers, which turned out to be very useful. No one was wounded. But: bunkers under a school? There aren't many Dutch schools that can boast having those. Shtohryn shrugs her shoulders and sighs.

*You don't seem surprised about the war breaking out*

'I'm not. The area where I live is still very much influenced by Russian culture. In my city, there are lots of TV programmes and books in Russian, and most people only speak Russian. I also used to speak it with my family and friends: it's only now that we've decided to switch completely to Ukrainian. I've always felt a certain tension and pressure from Russia. When I was 9 years old, the Revolution of Dignity took place in Ukraine. I remember one night, watching the news with my father and asking him: "Are the Russians going to attack us?" We always went to Crimea on our holidays, but after 2014, we couldn't do that anymore. I haven't been there since the annexation.'





'IT'S JUST THAT I HAD  
SO MANY **PLANS FOR**  
**THE FUTURE**, AND NOW  
I DON'T REALLY DARE  
TO HOPE ANYMORE'





*And yet, it must also have been unexpected, since you were studying here and your family was there. What was it like to be reunited?*

'Very emotional. I'd lived for weeks in uncertainty, because my family didn't know whether they should flee or not. When they suddenly decided to do it, it was very stressful to find a place where they could stay. A day after they left Ukraine, an important bridge was blown up. The idea that if they had waited a day longer they would have been unable to leave was very frightening, so when we saw each other, I was incredibly relieved. But I also have mixed feelings. My father and step-father are still there, and many old people in my hometown are still under the influence of Russian propaganda.'

*How do you notice this?*

'Many people still watch the Russian news, and are influenced by it. They sometimes say that Russia had no choice and was forced by Ukraine to start this war. That makes me so angry.'

You can see the frustration in her eyes. She herself was raised with 'European norms', something that isn't very common in the North of Ukraine. 'Ukraine is, of course, a democratic country, but not fully. There is still homophobia, sexism, and racism. Many people don't accept minorities. That's why I became an activist. I remember having frequent disagreements with my classmates.'

Shtohryn is getting a lot of support from the Ukrainian community that has emerged in Nijmegen over the last months. Every Saturday at 10.30 a.m. she joins the Nijmegen4Ukraine platform on the Mariëburgplein, where a group of like-minded people meets to demonstrate and talk. 'It's nice to meet people who think and feel the same way I do,' explains Shtohryn. 'And to speak my own language. It makes me feel less alone.'

There is also a lot of support at Radboud University. She is not an exchange student – as everyone always assumes – but a full-time Radboud University student. Why? Education in the Netherlands is really good, says Shtohryn. Seeing Ukrainian flags and the support of Dutch students makes her feel even more at home.

And yet, studying has not been easy. Since her parents were no longer able to work due to the war, Shtohryn didn't have money to pay her rent and tuition fees. Her future in Nijmegen was uncertain. Luckily, the university

came to her aid: they paid her rent so that she could stay. She was also given the opportunity to meet with a student counsellor to talk about her feelings.

*How important do you find your studies right now?*

'Much less than I used to. In the beginning, I was studying all the time, and really doing my best, but now studying is no longer my priority. I used to get sevens and eights in my exams; now, it's more likely to be a six. This is disappointing, even though I know that I shouldn't be so hard on myself: I still passed all my tests this year. It's just that I had so many plans for the future, and now I don't really dare to hope anymore.'

*What were those plans?*

'Completing a Bachelor's, a Master's, and maybe even a PhD in Nijmegen. I've always been interested in biology: I love animals, and I enjoyed working with them as a volunteer. But my future is uncertain. Right now, I don't have enough money to stay here. I might get a job, but that wouldn't cover my costs. The Dutch government is talking about lowering tuition fees for Ukrainian students. I really hope they do, because that would mean I could stay. Going back to my hometown doesn't seem like an option now that all student life there has come to a standstill.' [After this interview, universities decided to lower tuition fees, ed.]

*How do you see the future of Ukraine?*

'Of course I'm worried about my country, but I'm also really sure that we will win. Putin doesn't deserve a victory, and his army and economy are weak. I hope we can join the European Union; I really hope that will happen. This will give us more contact with EU countries, and make us more independent. I hope that our entire population will be proud of Ukraine, and that we'll all be able to speak our mother tongue. One day, we will be free. But it could still take a while.'

This is why Sofia Shtohryn isn't planning to remain silent in the months to come. She has noticed that people sometimes forget that there is a war on. 'It's logical: you can't be thinking about it all the time,' she says. 'But we're not allowed to forget. And I don't intend to keep silent if I hear someone say something untrue about Ukraine.' \*









# NATURE'S PITBULL

Johan Vollenbroek is both famous and notorious for his persistent fight for a stricter nitrogen policy. The chemist advocates for nature, because nature does not have a voice of its own. Back in his student days, he was a trainer at the athletics association 't Haasje, where he already argued that meat was in no way necessary for a top athletic performance.

Text: Annemarie Haverkamp / Photography: Paul Rapp



**J**ohan Vollenbroek (72) left home at age 15. Yes, he was a little young, confirms the 'Dutch nitrogen knight' as *De Volkskrant* recently called him, but it really was better for all involved. He and his father weren't getting along, so Johan left the Achterhoek farm to live on his own in Arnhem. Via a number of detours he ended up working at the Honig factory in Nijmegen. 'I know everything about soup and pasta,' he says drily. But even on his

parents' farm he knew that he wanted to do something for the environment; there were just no study programmes like that at the time.

'At Honig I had a boss who was an academic. But oh my, was that man a disaster! A real klutz. So I went ahead and enrolled at the university.'

A study programme in chemistry turned out to be an excellent choice. It was there that Vollenbroek first attended lectures on the nitrogen crisis, by Professor of Process Technology De Zeeuw. He still remembers learning about the CO<sub>2</sub> balance on Earth. How the sea would be unable to store the increasing quantity of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere. 'We were asked to calculate it, and you could see that acidity levels would increase, which would severely affect the corals.'

## 'THE NETHERLANDS IS THE DIRTIEST LITTLE BOY OF THE CLASS'

Vollenbroek is sitting on an azure blue sofa in his sunny living-room in Nijmegen-Oost. On the mantelpiece is a rolled-up verdict of the Council of State, tied with a red bow. His greatest feat and triumph. He will show it to us in a moment, and tell us how he and a small group of allies brought the government to their knees. The maximum speed on motorways was reduced from 130 to 100 km, large construction projects ground to a halt, and last January, a Minister for Nature and Nitrogen was even appointed, all because a few activists kept launching new legal suits until the entire country was in the grip of the nitrogen crisis. The top executives of mega-polluters such as Tata Steel, Schiphol and the Dutch Grand Prix in Zandvoort have since learnt to fear the tenacity of the 'man who knows everything about soup and pasta.'

But first, let's go back for a moment to the 1970s. Or even earlier. As a child, Johan Vollenbroek helped out on the farm, hoeing and grubbing, until one day, his father marched in with a tanker to spray all their fields with pesticides. 'I remember it vividly. The hired workers returned from the field looking as yellow as the crops.

Already then, I found myself wondering whether this was a healthy thing, but everyone found it normal.'

It was the era of scaling-up. Father Vollenbroek was not keen to join the fray; he was attached to his modest 10-hectare operation, although he also knew that it was ultimately too small to make a living from. His sons would have to expand the business or emigrate if they wanted to make money out of the farm. But no one was interested in taking over, and father ultimately switched to selling antiques. Exit farm life.

Son Johan followed the route of MULO secondary school, followed by technical college (during his military service), and university. 'I was 23 when I enrolled at university. My younger brother was already studying chemistry here. As I had worked for a couple of years by then, I had some savings and was able to buy a house on the Mozartstraat. And I rented out the upstairs rooms.'

He was not a wild student, living on beer and marijuana. No, Johan Vollenbroek was a runner. He had discovered this talent in the army, where he had been assigned to the twelfth mechanised infantry battalion, which was also home to a number of national athletics champions. 'My level was good enough, so I signed up for the running team. It was great, because it also meant that I was exempt from half of my active service. So I didn't have to throw so many grenades and that kind of thing.'

In Nijmegen, Vollenbroek's enrolment coincided almost exactly with the foundation of athletics association 't Haasje. The Achterhoek native became an active member. He raced as fast through the Nijmegen woods as through his study programme: within three-and-a-half years, he had obtained his diploma, cum laude. As a trainer at 't Haasje, he made a name for himself with his claims that athletes didn't need to eat meat. They could easily get the required proteins from plant-based food – 'I'd read all kinds of books on the subject; there was no Internet yet' – and before long, many of his running buddies were also giving up their steaks.

### Patents

Vollenbroek gets up to make some tea. His Spanish slippers are as soft on the wooden floor as his voice. In the door opening, he turns back to say that we really have to reduce global meat consumption. Intensive livestock farming forms one of the greatest threats to the environment. In the Netherlands, nitrogen emissions must be reduced by half by 2030, something that has finally been laid down in law.

Isn't it crazy, says Vollenbroek, that we have to import soy from South America – at the expense of deforestation in the Amazon – to feed our cows and pigs, which we then eat, leading in turn to a massive manure and ammonia problem. If we were to stop eating meat in the Netherlands, we could use all the fields we now use to grow maize for animal feed to grow wheat, barley, and spelt. One of the largest grain-supplying countries in the world, Ukraine, is currently at war, bringing the threat of a worldwide food shortage closer. All the more reason,





## 'IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT THE GOVERNMENT FACES UP TO THE FACTS'

says Vollenbroek, to once again produce our own grain. People don't need meat to live; and it's a highly inefficient system. 'I think in fifty or one hundred years, people will look back at this period and be very surprised: "Can you imagine? They were still eating dead animals!"'

Anyway. First a cup of tea. Johan Vollenbroek disappears into the kitchen where he and his wife cook a vegan meal every night. He still lives in Nijmegen. After his studies, he was offered a number of PhD positions, but he found this type of research too sterile. Instead, he joined engineering firm Royal Haskoning, where he worked on the interface of science and society. 'I still have two patents to my name,' he says with some pride. One for an olfactometer, a device measuring odour concentrations, and a second one for a method he invented for extracting ammonia from compost preparation so it doesn't spread through the air. For Royal Haskoning he was involved in many projects in Eastern European countries that were hoping to join the European Union, and therefore had to comply with European environmental legislation. During this period, it became clear to him that his own country was lagging behind. The Dutch government was doing remarkably little to protect nature.

'In terms of sustainable energy, we are far behind the Baltic countries. Around 2000, there was a lot of experimenting with windmills in the Netherlands, which was a good initiative. But Balkenende and later Rutte said: windmills run on subsidies; let's not go down that route. As result, the sector was taken over by the Danes, who are now doing great business, producing windmills for the entire world, including the Netherlands.'

The Netherlands is the dirtiest little boy of the class, grumbles Vollenbroek. 'In terms of nitrogen emissions, we are five times above the European average per square

metre. We are also very far from meeting the standards for clean surface water. And the EU wants to increase protected nature reserves throughout Europe to 30%. We just about reach 14%, and that's if you count the Waddenzee and IJsselmeer as nature reserves.'

### **David against Goliath**

Another cup of tea. We're finally coming to The Lawsuit, the notorious verdict of the Council of State, tied with a bow and shining away on the Nijmegen mantlepiece: the verdict that shook the Netherlands to its foundations. Twenty-five years ago, Johan Vollenbroek and Imre Csikós launched Mobilisation for the Environment (MOB), an organisation that now works closely together with six legal experts and environmental experts. They initiated hundreds of lawsuits against companies that failed to comply with environmental agreements, and against unlawfully granted permits. Often with success. MOB boasts legal victories against coal-fired plants, refineries, and Tata Steel (formerly Corus). In 2019, the Council of State ruled that the Dutch nitrogen policy was falling short. MOB joined forces with the Vereniging Leefmilieu (another Nijmegen initiative), to initiate a procedure against what was known as the Dutch integrated nitrogen approach (Programma Aanpak Stikstof, PAS). With this policy, the government issued permits to companies, including farmers, allowing them to emit nitrogen, but only if compensation measures were taken to reduce the negative impact on nature reserves.

The Council of State found in favour of Vollenbroek and his companions: the Dutch policy was at odds with European legislation. The consequences were far-reaching: construction projects were delayed, farmers were refused permits, and the extension of Lelystad Airport was shelved.

'As the MOB team, we celebrated our victory that night with a bottle of organic wine,' says Vollenbroek. 'It's a huge achievement to win that kind of a David against Goliath battle.'

But too much rejoicing would have been in poor taste. After all, isn't it absurd, asks the Dutch nitrogen knight, that it takes a group of committed legal experts to rap the government on the knuckles, when the government in question was appointed to do the right thing. We have European rules for protecting nature, but the Netherlands keeps looking for ways to avoid them. 'I'm glad that we still have an independent justice system. There are a lot of things wrong in the Netherlands, but not that.'

Because let's be clear: Johan Vollenbroek and his team aren't doing all this for their personal benefit. Nature has no voice, which is why they speak on its behalf. 'Our feeling was: damn it, anything that has value is defenceless! It's about time that the government faces up to the facts.'

### Thugs

Vollenbroek sums up: over the last hundred years, the Netherlands has lost 85% of its biodiversity. The grouse is disappearing, the black-tailed godwit is struggling, and even the blackbird and lapwing are experiencing problems. No wonder, since most of our insects have gone. He therefore feels no guilt when farmers are refused a permit to extend their operations because of the Council of State ruling. It's not Vollenbroek farmers should complain to, but the Dutch government. And he doesn't mind explaining this to angry farmers who come to Nijmegen with their tractors, demanding to speak to him, as they did in the summer of 2020. It's at times like this that it helps that Vollenbroek has agricultural roots himself; he knows what he's talking about. And many farmers understand that he's not trying to make life difficult for them; he maintains regular contact with the leader of the Farmers Defence Force.

Things were different when MOB tried to stop the Dutch Grand Prix in the protected dunes of Zandvoort. The threats to Vollenbroek's address become more frequent and serious. 'I was suddenly confronted with a completely different group of people. They were real thugs.' Since then, he's been in close contact with the police, who already told him that if MOB ends up winning the new lawsuit they started against the Dutch Grand Prix, and the race is cancelled, he should go into hiding.

Vollenbroek explains all this in a calm tone of voice. He doesn't like it, and he's always vigilant, but he's not going to let anyone stop him. On the contrary, he thinks more people should stand up for the environment. He's



## SUMMER TIP JOHAN VOLLENBROEK

"Go and see the film *Dark Waters*. Why? If you believe the government is protecting you or nature, think again! You'll have to do that work yourself, if you want a liveable world for future generations. There is no film that demonstrates this bitter reality more clearly than Todd Haynes' 2019 *Dark Waters*."

in favour of the Scientist Rebellion initiative, which has also attracted a number of Nijmegen researchers. This sister organisation of Extinction Rebellion combats climate change and biodiversity loss. In April, researchers glued themselves to the Ministry of Economic Affairs with instant glue to demand attention for the latest alarming climate report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

'It's fantastic,' says Vollenbroek. 'I think more researchers should join these kinds of actions. What other options do they have? They can sit up in their ivory towers, being all impartial, but it won't change anything. As things stand, we need all hands on deck.'

### Boundless energy

With MOB, he has now set his sights on Schiphol – fewer flights – and the closure of Tata Steel in IJmuiden. And then there is still a cumbersome lawsuit against the CO<sub>2</sub> storage facility that the Rotterdam Port Authority wants to create, with Shell and other partners, in empty gas fields under the North Sea. This is an environmental project, which is why the Port Authority has been granted a dispensation for the pollution resulting from the construction work, but according to Vollenbroek, that's too easy. The nitrogen from the construction work spreads to nature reserves in the area, and he finds it ridiculous that Shell and consorts were granted €2 billion worth of subsidies for the project. 'This is taxpayers' money, while the company responsible for the pollution has just reported a quarterly profit of many billions. What is this? So I do think it's a good idea to tackle this project.'

Vollenbroek seems to have boundless energy. At the same time, he doesn't let things get to him. Whenever he has time, he grabs his yellow velomobile in the shape of a banana and goes for a fast cycle ride through the Ooijpolder. He calls himself a stoic: he only devotes energy to things he can influence. In the Netherlands, that is the nitrogen emission level. The lean Nijmegen inhabitant has no illusions about his ability to save the world. On the contrary. Without a trace of cynicism, he explains that humanity is in the process of self-destruction. If we continue with business as usual and the temperature rises further, entire areas of the globe will become uninhabitable. This will in turn create huge refugee flows that we are absolutely not equipped to handle. 'It will, of course, become one huge drama. But what is the existence of humanity on the timescale of the Earth? No more than a sigh. The whole ecosystem will recover as soon as we're gone.' \*







# 'I WANT TO BE THE BEST ONE-POINT PLAYER IN THE WORLD'

Top sports plays a central role in the life of business administration student and wheelchair rugby player Hugo van Iersel. The spinal cord injury he suffered in 2015 does not stop him from training at the highest level. He is now aiming for the Paralympics. 'I've decided to get the most out of it.'

**Text:** Vincent Decates / **Photography:** Johannes Fiebig





**P**laying hockey at the highest level: that was the dream of Hugo van Iersel, from Sint Anthonis in Brabant. Starting from age 14, he played in Boxmeer's first league team; by the time he was 17, he was invited to join the A1 team of NMHC in Nijmegen, playing at national level.

'Sports was my entire life,' says the now 24-year old business administration student, reflecting on the years before his spinal

injury. 'I sometimes think back to what my career might have looked like ... But in the end, it never went further than one training session and one practice match.'

As his dream of becoming a professional hockey player is suddenly and brutally shattered. At age 17, while playing football with some friends by a lake, Van Iersel dives after a ball, falls badly, and breaks his neck. As a consequence, he will be confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

'The ball was lying in the water, and I took a run-up from the bank,' he says, remembering the fateful incident. 'The beach was sloping, so I gathered quite a lot of speed. When the water was up to my knees, I thought: now I can dive. But it turned out to be much shallower than I thought. Due to the speed I was moving at, my head hit the ground first. It kind of became buried in the sand, and my body folded itself over it.'

## 'AT FIRST, I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING'

'I knew instantly that something had gone badly wrong. I was lying face down under water, and I couldn't move most of my body. I knew I had to attract my friends' attention, or I would drown. The only thing I could do was thrash about in the hope that someone would see me.'

Luckily his friends saw him in time and were able to get him out of the water, after which the rescue services arrived en masse. Van Iersel doesn't know exactly what happened next. 'I remember it all as a blur, also the following days. I do know that it didn't take long before I was told that I had suffered a spinal cord injury.'

A C5/C6 spinal cord injury, to be precise: a fracture around the fifth and sixth vertebrae in the neck. 'At first, I couldn't do anything. Very slowly, I regained some function: now I can move my shoulders and arms. But not completely.'

With enthusiastic movements Van Iersel shows how mobile he still is. 'My right triceps doesn't work, for example, but the left one does. And I'm less mobile in my wrists and fingers. But thanks to an operation in which they redirected and connected muscles and ligaments in my arms, I can now pick up things with my left hand. With my right hand, I can also pick up things quite well, despite the reduced function.'

It's striking how down to earth Van Iersel is as he talks about his handicap. He smiles a lot, and makes jokes at his own expense. 'My situation isn't likely to change just because I start playing the victim,' he says. 'After the accident, I decided straight away that I had to go on and get the most of out of it.'

'That was also my attitude during the rehabilitation, which began in the summer. In previous years, I'd always spent the summer at hockey camp.' Van Iersel laughs out loud. 'People around to take care of you, great food you don't have to cook yourself, playing sports every day: the rehabilitation felt more like summer camp.'

### Fanaticism

He sees his handicap more as a challenge than a limitation. 'If I'm alone at home and I want to grab a packet of chocolate sprinkles from the cupboard, there's no-one to ask for help. So I come up with a construction with a stick and a hook that I use to fish what I want out of the cupboard. Or if I'm lying in bed and I need something that's just outside my reach on the bedside table, I mess about with whatever is around to try and get it.'

This fighting spirit is typical of the Brabant native: even during his rehabilitation, he started playing sports again. 'I pushed myself by doing the physiotherapy exercises as thoroughly as possible. After a while, I played a few times with the Mavericks [the wheelchair rugby team of the Maartenskliniek, Eds.]. I really liked it: playing sports is fun and physical; it allowed me to release some energy, and it was a great way to clear my mind for a bit.'

Blood runs thicker than water. Wheelchair or not, there is no such thing as gentle exercise for Van Iersel. A smile spreads across his face. 'Gentle exercise? What a strange idea! When I'm on the field, I want to give it all I have.'

And practice shows that he does. Within a short time, upcoming talent Van Iersel managed to attract the attention of the Dutch wheelchair rugby team. Every second weekend, he drives up with his refurbished van to Sporthallen Zuid in Amsterdam, to train for two days with the Dutch team. As of writing, he has been a household name in the national selection for some years. Van Iersel doesn't know exactly how many international matches he has played. 'Tournaments always involve multiple matches, and I've played a lot of those. I've also taken part in three European Championships.'



'THE SPORT ALLOWS ME TO  
**RELEASE SOME ENERGY**'







Those matches are not for softies. At great speed, the players collide with each other's wheelchairs. Van Iersel often ends up on the floor. 'It's part of the deal. The only thing I want at moments like this is to get back up as soon as possible and re-join the fray,' he says resolutely.

Van Iersel's fanaticism is also apparent when he plays with the Mavericks, as he somehow manages to be all over the field, continuously giving instructions to the other players. 'The level here is, of course, much lower than on the national team, but it's not a problem. For me, the most important thing is to keep challenging myself as much as I can. Here I get to pit myself against Ruben, who also plays for the Dutch team. With him, I enjoy playing one-on-one matches.'

### Insight

A wheelchair rugby team is not allowed to have more than eight points. The heavier a person's handicap, the lower their score. Since Van Iersel cannot do much due to his spinal cord injury, he is worth one point, making him a 'one-point player'. 'But despite my low score, I'm pretty mobile,' he says. 'Normally, a player with a low score would mostly play a supporting role, trying to free up other players. But I'm also quite good with the ball: I have good insight, and I make nice passes. That's where my power lies.'

## 'I TRAIN SIX TIMES A WEEK'

Van Iersel hopes to develop further in coming years. He is in any case setting the bar high for himself. 'Our goal as a national team is to make it to the 2024 Paralympics in Paris. It's not going to be easy; we didn't do well in the last European Championship, which makes it harder to qualify. But if we work hard, we should be able to manage.'

Personally, Van Iersel also aims very high, he explains. 'I want to become the best one-point player in the world. Is it possible? Of course. I train six times a week, includ-

ing fitness and training sessions with the Mavericks and the national team. If I keep challenging myself, I should be able to manage.'

'But it also depends on what you assess people on. A person with a different handicap might, for example, also classify as a one-point player. But say if they are able to stretch their torso – something I can't – that will make them more agile and faster. I can train as much as I want, but physically, I would never be their match. I really have to rely on my insight.'

### Burnt hands

Although things are going well when it comes to sports, Van Iersel is still often confronted with the difficulties of living with a handicap. He used to depend on his parents, but thanks to a large van with a built-in lift and ingenious steering system, he can now drive himself from Sint Anthonis to the University or his training.

'On campus and at the Maartenskliniek, I can easily park my van in a disabled spot, but these aren't available everywhere. Due to the van's size and the fact that I also need space at the back to get in and out, parking can be daunting.'

As far as Van Iersel is concerned, the campus could be made more wheelchair-friendly. 'Look at the entrance to the Maria Montessori building. It's a brand-new building, isn't it? Incredibly beautiful and modern, but the paths leading to the entrance are sloping. For someone in a wheelchair, this is hard: you have to constantly brake going down. That means you have to hold the wheels back with your hands, leaving them almost burnt at times. Going back up is even harder. I'm quite fit, but the slope is so steep, that even I struggle. Someone who's less fit might not be able to get up at all.'

And yet, the student has few other complaints. By and large, the University is pretty well-organised. Not that he spends a lot of time there, he says. 'During the pandemic, a lot was invested in online teaching. For me, that's ideal: it means I don't have to come all the way to campus, which costs a lot of time. And I can watch lecture replays at a later time, so I don't have to miss training sessions.'

A top athlete existence and continuously having to navigate your handicap: Van Iersel certainly doesn't lead a standard student life. There's that smile again. 'But that doesn't mean that I never go out for a beer! I certainly enjoy a party or a night out.' \*



## SUMMER TIP HUGO VAN IERSEL

**"Go outside and enjoy nature to make sure you're well-rested for the wheelchair rugby European Championship from 4 to 11 September. If you're unable to travel to Norway to attend, you can always just tune in for the livestream from your couch at home."**

# 'I WOKE UP WITH COVID-19 AND WENT TO BED WITH IT'

She appeared on *Nieuwsuur* and *LuckyTV* while trying to keep the infection rate at Radboudumc as low as possible. For the past two years, the life of epidemiologist Alma Tostmann has revolved around COVID-19. But her passion is combating epidemics in developing countries. And the Lindy Hop.

**Text:** Stan van Pelt / **Photography:** Bert Beelen







**COVID-19? It's a conspiracy theory, says epidemiologist Alma Tostmann in a news broadcast on 15 December 2020.**

'Invented by HEMA, to encourage people to eat their sausages.' A rather remarkable statement from a Radboud-umc researcher. Eighteen months later, Tostmann has to laugh as she watches the video, which was not real, but a fake put together by *LuckyTV*. 'I just went

along with it, ha ha. My sister-in-law even gave me a HEMA sausage as a Christmas gift.'

The video is telling for how well-known Tostmann has become in the past two years. In her role as epidemiologist, she was repeatedly asked to interpret the COVID-19 figures: on TV for *Nieuwsuur*, on Radio 1, and in a number of newspapers. Does testing for access make sense? How about closing down schools? At the same time, it was all hands on deck at Radboudumc, where as interim head of the Infection Prevention department, she was responsible for ensuring that the work could proceed as normally as possible throughout the COVID-19 waves. Especially at the start of the pandemic, the virus dominated her life, she explains on our walk in the Dekkerswald Park in Groesbeek.

## 'EXPLAINING THINGS IS PART OF THE WORK OF A RESEARCHER'

*At the start of the pandemic, all these panicky graphs were going around, with exponential curves from Italian hospitals. Did you also feel frightened?*

'I was really surprised that Jaap van Dissel, from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), kept saying for a long time that the risk of an outbreak in the Netherlands was low, even after cases had been confirmed in Italy, and at Carnival time, in February 2020. If you want to keep something out, you have to take immediate action, I thought. At times like this, I personally tend to jump into action. At Radboudumc,

we immediately started preparing: we reorganised some departments, formulated protocols, and thought through scenarios, for example in case we were overwhelmed by COVID-19 cases. There was a feeling of: 'We're going to fix this; this is what we do.' I like this kind of adrenalin and healthy stress.

I wasn't frightened, but you do take that kind of stress home with you. I woke up with COVID-19 and went to bed with it. And I asked myself how close it would come to my life. Would my husband and I lose people in our immediate environment? Our parents, for example? Our children were also frightened in the beginning. Luckily, the virus never came that close.'

*At the same time, you also made frequent media appearances during the pandemic. Both on TV and on Twitter.*

'That's true. Clarifying and explaining things is part of the work of a researcher, I think. And it was really needed. Look, for example, at the last Christmas holiday, which was extended by a week. The government wanted to give schools the opportunity to remain open on Monday. This would have been a very strange move from an epidemiological perspective. It would have given everyone the chance to infect each other after all just before Christmas and it would have made the longer holiday pointless. So I made a passionate plea against it on *Nieuwsuur*. Later on, I heard from many schools that they talked about this fragment, and decided not to open their doors after all.'

*Did you have to get used to the media attention?*

'The first time I appeared on the radio, I was really nervous. I asked my head of department [Heiman Wertheim, Eds.] whether it wouldn't be better if he did it, because something might go wrong if I did it. 'So what?' he said. 'You can go even if you're nervous, can't you?' That was the response I needed. Now I make sure that I have a clear idea beforehand of the point I want to make, and no presenter will get me off track.'

*Fellow researchers like Marion Koopmans are getting threats because of what they write on platforms like Twitter. Is this something you also experienced?*

'Not actual threats, thankfully. Sometimes I get reactions of the type 'stop all that scaremongering!'. As if I enjoy it. But if I believe that things are going wrong with the policy, I will speak up, and I don't mind if people disagree with me. On Twitter I've blocked words like 'fear porn',





# 'COVID-19 STRATEGIES SIMPLY REQUIRE **STEERING FROM THE TOP**'

which really helps (she laughs). And I know by now which discussions are most polarised, such as vaccinating children.'

## **Tanzania**

Tostmann (1980) grew up in Leidschendam. She studied Biomedical Sciences in Nijmegen, and completed her PhD in 2009 on the side effects of tuberculosis treatment in Tanzania and the spread of tuberculosis in the Netherlands. She spent a few years in Tanzania, together with her husband, malaria researcher and Radboudumc professor Teun Bousema. Another part of her PhD thesis was written in Dekkerswald, the former sanatorium in the Groesbeek woods, which currently houses Radboudumc TB patients and other patients requiring specialist care.

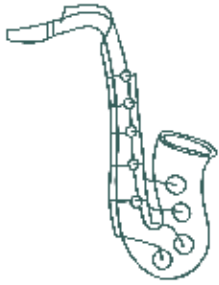
'Look, there, on the second floor, that was my office,' she says, pointing to the back of the original main building. The Japanese cherry blossoms tickles our nose, and the spring sun is reflected in the high windows – a sun that must have had a healing effect on the tuberculosis patients residing here in the first half of the previous century. 'I always enjoyed working here. My office was larger than the one I have now at Radboudumc, and my thesis supervisor, Martin Boeree, was nearby. He was head of the Pulmonary Diseases department at the time.'

These are the last weeks that the Radboudumc pulmonary centre is located in Dekkerswald. In June and July, the patients will relocate to a brand-new building on the Erasmuslaan. Tostmann: 'It's much closer to the hospital, where we have really modern, flexible and patient-friendly spaces.' The care for patients who may suffer from Ebola or other dangerous infectious diseases will be brought to a single location.

After completing her PhD, Tostmann left for a few years for England, only to return to Nijmegen with her family in 2012. From 2012 to 2019, she worked for the AMPHI academic workplace for public health (a partnership between municipal health centres (GGD), municipalities and Radboudumc), conducting research on the spreading and outbreaks of infectious diseases in the Netherlands. In 2018, she combined this with a temporary post as epidemiologist for the World Health Organization in a camp for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Since 2019, she has acted as interim head of department at the Infection Prevention department of Radboudumc.

### *What did you do in Bangladesh?*

'The refugee camp in which I worked faced one outbreak after the other: diphtheria, measles, etc. And there was a fear of cholera due to the approaching monsoon season. These outbreaks were caused by people living too close to one another in poor hygienic conditions. By means of data analyses, I tried to provide insight into what the major problems were. This allowed local authorities to take targeted measures.'



SUMMER  
TIP

ALMA  
TOSTMANN

“Tune in to the **Jazziness** podcast. In it, the history of jazz is pulled apart by the silky smooth voices of Belgian connoisseurs guiding you through the wonderful musical fragments. The first ten episodes are about swing jazz, my favorite kind of music.”

*What appeals to you about working in developing countries?*

‘Partly, it’s the sense of adventure. But mostly the impact I can have with my work - there is still so much to gain, health-wise. This is close to my heart and I find it more interesting than the latest technological analysis gimmicks. Resources are hopelessly unequally divided in the world, which I find shocking. Look at tuberculosis, which still claims one and a half million lives every year. For decades, no new drugs were developed to treat it, because it’s primarily a poor countries’ disease. Now that the West is threatened by COVID-19, suddenly we’re doing everything in our power to develop a vaccine.’

*Where does this ambition to make a difference come from?*

‘In the family where I grew up, it was perfectly normal to serve the public interest. My father always worked for the government, and my mother in geriatric care. I also recognise this idealism in Teun. A lot of funding was made available for COVID-19 research, some of it at the expense of other diseases, such as malaria. This is something he finds very frustrating.’

*What did you find most surprising about the response to COVID-19?*

‘How the role of communication was underestimated, as is the case with every infectious disease outbreak. Take for example, the isolation policy for COVID-19. If you are infected, you are now expected to spend five days in isolation, unless your symptoms persist longer. That last condition is often left out in the communication, I noticed. As a result of which, the other day I overheard a person who was coughing at the chemist’s, saying: ‘I did my five days, so it’s OK.’’

*In the Netherlands, people seem to be under the impression that the pandemic is over.*

‘They may well be disappointed this coming autumn; the virus is by no means gone. At Radboudumc, we had to postpone operations until quite recently because so many employees were ill. I also find the long-term vision of the Dutch government unclear. How exactly are we going to monitor the virus, now that testing at the municipal health centre (GGD) is no longer required? Sometimes it seems like an all-or-nothing strategy. The government wants sectors like the catering services to come up with their own plans in case measures are needed again. But why should these sectors re-introduce rules such as 1.5 metres distancing if this leads to financial losses? Things like this simply require steering from the top.’

*Two years of COVID-19 have taken their toll on healthcare. Many healthcare workers are overloaded or have switched jobs. Did you also come up against your limits?*

‘Well, I have to say that I’m happy things are a little

quieter at work. I no longer have to drop everything to figure out how to deal with COVID-19 cases at the hospital, while postponing all other, regular work. And I have a nice outlet in the Lindy Hop. It’s a dance performed to old 1930s jazz music, which I’ve always loved, even as a child. In 2015, I joined a Nijmegen group, and was immediately sold. It’s a completely different world. The music is fantastic, and the scene very welcoming: there’s this easy-going, open-minded and international atmosphere. The dance steps are nice and loose, and not as precise as in ballroom dancing, which I really hate. With the Lindy Hop, the goal is mostly to create a nice dance together.’

*That sounds like quite a contrast with dry epidemiology figures.*

‘Ha ha, actually, the two are more alike than you’d think. It’s no coincidence that I chose to specialise in outbreaks. It’s where the action is. I enjoy the dynamic aspect of it: how does an infectious disease develop, and what can you do about it? Yearlong epidemiological studies that







## 'I DO ENJOY A BIT OF ACTION'

ultimately only answer one question are not my thing. I enjoy responding to what is happening and improvising. And actually, this is also what you do in the Lindy Hop: you're constantly adjusting to your partner's moves and following the music together, it's all about going with the flow.'

*Bring on the next COVID-19 outbreak, in other words?*  
'I do enjoy a bit of action, yes. But now I mostly want to recover a bit from the past two years, and restart non-COVID-19 research that was put aside. COVID-19 has been a drama when it comes to health, but at the same time, professionally, it has been a very exciting time.' ✨



COLUMN

### Lucy's law

**Lucienne van der Geld** is a lecturer of notarial law and director of Netwerk Notarissen.

#### RU: Royal University?

On King's Day, the inevitable question to Amalia was: How likely is it that you will come to study here in Maastricht? After all, the celebrations this year were taking place in the university city of Maastricht. Our Crown Princess answered as expected – that she didn't know yet where she would be studying. I find myself wondering whether there is such a thing as a bid book, and whether university boards present themselves at the royal palace. And if so, whether Radboud University has joined the contest for Amalia's enrolment. Incidentally, I didn't see her on the Bachelor's Open Day.

In fact, I don't think a single Royal has ever studied in Nijmegen. Could it be because until recently, the university was officially 'Catholic'? Our University advertises itself as 'small-scale' and 'personal'. Small-scale is probably not what Amalia's looking for if she doesn't want to attract too much attention. On the other hand, small scale also means that the University may not be keen to be overrun by the storm of new students that her application would elicit. Which is exactly what happened when Prince William decided to study at St Andrews University in Fife (Scotland). The story goes that Kate Middleton was one of the many who consciously chose to study at the same university as William.

The recently presented campus plan has made studying in Nijmegen even more attractive. It promises more greenery and liveliness between the buildings. At long last! I hope the campus will regain some of the atmosphere it had when I was first appointed junior lecturer here many years ago. At the time, there was such a great buzz in the Thomas van Aquinostraat, with fantastic facilities like a bookshop and a campus hairdresser. In terms of facilities, the campus has lost much of its lustre in recent years, especially now that Het Gerech in the Grotius building, with its meagre offerings, can hardly still be called a restaurant.

I don't think Amalia will come to study in Nijmegen. Even though she would have felt at home with a children's hospital named after her. Not to mention hair salon *Amalia* in the Meijhorst, with its beautiful chandeliers. What a pity!

Stills from the film



# ON THE RUN FROM THE MEXICAN JUSTICE SYSTEM

With his film, *Duda razonable*, director Roberto Hernández challenged the powerful Mexican authorities. He had to flee to the Netherlands and now lectures at Radboud University as artist in residence.

**Text:** Alex van der Hulst / **Photography:** David van Haren, Netflix



**'Is it always this warm here in May?' asks Hernández as he walks down the stairs after his lecture.** Not that the director can't handle some heat. In *Duda razonable. Historia de dos secuestros*, you see sweat running down his brow during his interviews with inmates in Mascupana, in the state of Tabasco, where temperatures can easily reach 40°C.

As a student, Hernández discovered how corrupt the legal system was in his home country. 'We had to learn the civil code by heart, but in court, it was all about who you knew and whether you were willing to pay a bribe to get someone free.' He decided to use his knowledge and sense of justice to help innocent prisoners via stories, which he did in his earlier films *El túnel* (2006) and *Presunto culpable* (2008).



*Duda razonable* (available as a mini-series on Netflix under the title *Reasonable doubt: A tale of two kidnappings*) is about Hernández' struggle to help four prisoners who are wrongly imprisoned for attempted kidnapping. He has no trouble proving that the men were arrested and imprisoned without any evidence, to make it look as if the Mexican Public Prosecutor and police are taking decisive action against crime.

'I didn't want to conceal my involvement in the process,' he says about his own role in the film. 'I arranged a good lawyer for the four men, helped them round up witnesses, and exposed legal errors. By getting involved, I was able to test the system. I wanted to make this as transparent as possible for viewers, so that they could draw their own conclusions.'

#### **Car trouble**

*Duda razonable* starts with a car crash. Héctor Muñoz' car is hit by another vehicle near a petrol station. Angrily, he steps out to seek redress. As he approaches the other vehicle, the driver shoots him in the hand. Muñoz flees. The shooter, referred to in the film by his initials, ACP, tells the police, when they arrive, that Muñoz was trying to kidnap him. Besides Muñoz, ACP also points to two other men standing at the petrol station with engine trouble. A fourth man is arrested elsewhere because of his alleged involvement in the earlier kidnapping of ACP's sister.

## 'CRIME CONTINUES TO GROW IN MEXICO'

## 'THE SYSTEM IS RACIST AND DISCRIMINATORY'



'Crime continues to grow in Mexico, and there's no capacity to address it,' explains Hernández. 'As a result, prosecutors have become judges. This isn't a problem for the elite, because the people arrested usually come from the poorer segments of the population. The system is racist and discriminatory. The elite makes sure they have bodyguards, and when they get in trouble, they just bribe someone. Everyone knows what's going on. I asked a room full of prisoners in Mascupana who had been tortured during police interrogations. Approximately half the people in the room raised their hand. I then asked a room full of policemen who believed that people should not be tortured during interrogations. Not one person raised their hand.'

Hernández works fearlessly in his documentaries. He repeatedly films the prosecutors' furious glances as they walk in and out of court. He even manages to discover who was responsible for the torture. 'It was quite easy to find out who had done it, but Netflix didn't dare include it in the film,' he says. 'The local newspapers did write about it. After the film came out, the people responsible



### SUMMER TIP ROBERTO HERNÁNDEZ

"I suggest you spend the summer not watching films, but **cycling**. You've no idea how lucky you are with your cycling facilities."

appeared on the front page with their name and photograph. Not that this had any consequences. They're still in the same jobs. One prosecutor was even promoted to Mexico City, where he is now responsible for an area of 18,000,000 inhabitants.'

During the court proceedings, the van of the lawyer hired by Hernández burst into flames while on the road. The lawyer was in the van with two expert-witnesses who had just dismantled the prosecutor's story during a reconstruction. The van's doors wouldn't open, but the group nevertheless managed to get out. Clearly, malicious intent was involved. The lawyer, who previously worked for the prosecutors and was seen as a traitor, also received threatening telephone calls. That was the point when Hernández decided that he had to leave the country. 'A lot of journalists in Mexico are disappearing. I fled to the Netherlands with my family. We have friends in the Netherlands, I'd been here once on a visit, and I love cycling. I requested – and was granted – asylum as a refugee.' He believes that he may one day be able to return to Mexico. 'But only once the people I thwarted are no longer in power.'

#### Artist in residence

Hernández is happy with his lectures in Nijmegen. As artist in residence at the Spanish Language and Culture department, he teaches lectures in the *La cultura de los derechos humanos en el mundo hispánico* (Human rights and culture in the Spanish-speaking world) series. 'I've been here for nearly a year. I've finally got something to do, and the students are great.' This summer, Hernández wants to learn Dutch and complete his PhD thesis.

For the prisoners, and this is a bit of a spoiler (!), the film doesn't end well. One of them is released, the other three also seem to be on the verge of being released thanks to Hernández' work, but the Mexican prosecutors, unimpressed by the prospect of bad publicity, appeal at the last moment, and succeed in having the three sentenced to fifty years in prison.

*Duda razonable* drew a lot of attention in Mexico. The President spoke about it, as did a member of the Supreme Court. This highest legal body is now reconsidering the case, and the men may after all be released, be granted a new trial, or have their sentence shortened. 'Above all, I hope the Supreme Court will take a decision that will make an impression. Something has to change.' ★



# THIS OPTIMIST BELIEVES IN A FUTURE WITH PRIVACY

In the digital world of Jaap-Henk Hoepman (55), citizens would no longer be unpleasantly surprised by companies and governments. Hoepman conducts research on digital privacy and security. His specialty: punching holes in online security systems.

**Text:** Alex van der Hulst / **Photography:** Duncan de Fey





H

**Hoepman was born in Groningen, grew up in Leeuwarden, and returned to Groningen to study computer science.** 'Call me a northerner,' he says in answer to the question of whether he considers himself a Groningen or a Leeuwarden native. When he first came to work in Nijmegen in 2002, Hoepman already knew that he would be commuting.

'I knew some Groningen people in Nijmegen and they said: "Nijmegen is great, but Groningen is so much better. We feel a bit uprooted here." Groningen is my city. In my work, I often have to travel to other places, and if I have to go to The Hague, it doesn't really matter whether I start from Nijmegen or Groningen.'

And so it is that on a sunny day in April, we travel to Groningen, where Hoepman joins us in the canteen of the Law faculty (the very place where he once upon a time completed his community service) to tell us about a career that evolved in line with the digitisation of society. As a PhD candidate at Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica (CWI) in Amsterdam, he watched the Netherlands go online in the 1990s. He worked for KPN research in Groningen, but found the research too applied for his taste. When the demand for computer scientists increased, he was offered a permanent position at the

University of Twente. Security, and later also privacy, became part of his work. 'I was worried about the protection of personal data, systems were becoming more and more sophisticated, and information was being collected on a large-scale basis. Bart Jacobs, whom I didn't yet know at the time, was awarded a Vici grant in 2002 to come to Nijmegen and set up a research group around this topic. He knew me from the opinion pieces I had written, and invited me to join in. He had enough money for five years, and then the funding would run out. I took the gamble, because I was keen to do research for five years, and I ended up staying around.'

Hoepman combines his part-time job as Assistant Professor in Nijmegen with appointments at the University of Groningen and Karlstad University in Sweden. He fights for privacy, while also sharing a lot of his work online. He writes a blog on an on-and-off basis, and lists hobbies (mostly music) and other activities on his page.

*It looks like the standard homepage from the days before people started using Facebook and Instagram to share their personal life.*

'When I was completing my PhD in Amsterdam, computer scientists like myself were the first to have their own page. It made perfect sense to us to make our articles



accessible online. An early variant of open access. At the time, it wasn't allowed, but we did it anyway. I still use my website as a way to share what I do.'

*You are less active on social media. No Facebook, no WhatsApp, no Instagram.*

'Google introduced Orkut [in 2004, Eds.], and I immediately registered. It was interesting at first, but I soon left Orkut and chat services behind, because I got bored. I thought Twitter was interesting, because you could follow all new articles and insights from researchers. It was faster than the newspapers. I linked Twitter to my blog. I'm not on Facebook because it has no function for me. Twitter and Soundcloud [music platform, Eds.] do.'

*So the reason is not privacy?*

'Partly, but it's mainly about how useful I find a service.'

*Bart Jacobs called you a deconstructivist. You are good at shooting holes in an argument or system.*

'I have a security mindset. Wherever I am, I scan the environment, and I immediately see the problems with systems. At Schiphol I see ways of circumventing security. If there's a wall somewhere, I can see how to get past it. When contactless payments were first introduced, I kept wondering how you could make sure that people standing close together didn't accidentally pay each other's bills. To me, these are interesting IT problems.'

*Does this mean that you are less busy with building things?*

'Other people are often more occupied with practical solutions. Although I've lately found myself wondering whether I shouldn't also create something. The problem is that I'm a loner, not an alpha male. The alpha male's sidekick, at most. I shouldn't be put in charge of a company.'

*During the pandemic and in the debate surrounding the COVID-19 app, there was a lot of talk around privacy.*

*What's your perspective on this?*

'I think we need to ask different questions. The COVID-19 tracker and CoronaCheck had enough built-in security checks. The question was whether they were needed. What I found striking was that the plan for the COVID-19 tracker didn't seem to come from the municipal health department (GGD) or from virologists. The question wasn't 'what information do we need?', but 'how great would it be if you could do it with Bluetooth?'. Basically, there was a crisis, and we had the technology, and so the government thought it would be a good idea to combine the two. We call this technical solutionism. But is it proportional to create a whole new structure?'

*Does it matter?*

'Experience shows that once these kinds of infrastructures are available, they don't just go away. The COVID passport hasn't disappeared from Europe. The process of introducing a European electronic ID is accelerating rapidly. Contact tracing is now built into the operating system of our telephones. Exposure notification, the fact

that two people were in each other's vicinity, is integrated in it. This functionality is now switched off. We apparently have to trust that Google and Apple won't turn it back on, or succumb to the pressure to turn it back on in certain countries. What's also important is that the definition of a valid intervention in times of a pandemic is in part determined by Google and Apple. They decide what exposure notification is; they decide how to calculate the risk score. This isn't something we have under control.'

*You often appeared in the news to talk about the COVID-19 app. Were you able to express these reservations during the pandemic?*

'The discussion quickly became polarised. I personally feel that I took a nuanced stance with the aim of safeguarding privacy. However, this stance was hijacked by the far-right camp, so I suddenly ended up in that corner. Many situations are complex, and you have to do justice to this complexity.'

## 'I SHOULDN'T BE PUT IN CHARGE OF A COMPANY'

*How did you feel about these discussions?*

'What I noticed was how you suddenly heard people saying that they felt restricted in their freedom of movement. I thought: now you feel the power of the state, because it touches your life. Many other people had already often felt the power of the state, for example in the childcare benefits scandal. But it's only when it touches us personally that we complain about it.'

*Is this power often abused?*

'We now have a situation in which government and investigation services have granted themselves far-reaching freedoms, and no one has called them to order. The Dutch Data Protection Authority (DPA) has expressed concerns about data being collected by intelligence and security services and the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security (Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid, NCTV). However, this didn't lead to stricter policy in politics. Instead, there was a retroactive adjustment of the law to make it legal after all.'

*In your book Privacy Is Hard and Seven Other Myths you are critical of how social media companies are handling privacy.*

'I find it important that software and sites are used responsibly. When you buy a car, you trust that the brakes work, that the steering wheel works, and that it won't explode when you start the engine. This isn't something you have

to check; it's just the way it is. Clearly, you want the same for the services you use online, but that's not what happens. People are getting conned left and right. Enforcement is difficult. An internet service from the US can't just be stopped at the border. It does what it does.'

*Advertising based on search queries, Facebook making friend suggestions. You write about sites that follow your cursor and recognise advertisements via your microphone. But it's not all negative, is it?*

'Ask the victims of the childcare benefits scandal, or the people who can't get additional insurance or a mortgage because they have an online risk profile. Ask people who are subjected to constant extra checks because of a profile like this. Maybe things like this don't happen to you or me, but they do happen, and precisely to the group that finds it hardest to make themselves heard.'

## 'PEOPLE SHOULD STICK TO THEIR TRADE'

*Can you give some more examples?*

'Normally, you have an interaction between a customer and a supplier, resulting in some kind of agreement. To make this process more efficient, you can digitise the process. This leads to systems like the OV chipcard, but also DigiD, and online services. It's great for people who can deal with it. 'Happy flow' is what we call it when software works as it should. When it doesn't, you get 'unhappy flow'. Then you can count yourself lucky if you manage to get hold of a phone number, because usually, all you can get is a chatbot. Computer systems are positioned between customer and supplier, or citizen and government, and the latter then become impenetrable fortresses, while you are left as just a cog in a mechanised system. This worries me because there are lots of people who can't cope with this system, and who have no idea how to look after themselves. You see this, for example, in debt restructuring, or in applying for benefits.'

*The government and companies say they want to make things easier for citizens.*

'If you have a uniform group of users, this can often be easy and safe, because everyone wants the same thing. But that's not what happens with a more diverse user group. Take DigiD. It's a safe basic identity system, but there's no way I can explain it to my elderly mother. If no



### SUMMER TIP JAAP-HENK HOEPMAN

*"Noorderzon, the annual theatre festival in the Noorderplantsoen in Groningen. Top level innovative dance, acrobatics, and theatre and musical theatre. And an ideal opportunity to get to know the city."*

one can help you, you're in trouble. For such a diverse group as 'all Dutch citizens', it's much harder to make a system that's comprehensible and works well. And I can't say I've got an easy solution for doing it better.'

*Encrypted email even turned out to be a challenge for Minister De Jonge and National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) Director Van Dissel. This spring, both used their private email for work, because they found it more user-friendly.*

'If an organisation believes that email should be encrypted, then it goes without saying that the boss should also use it. If the boss himself thinks he's allowed to bend the rules, everyone else is clearly going to follow suit. Having said that, you do have to make it so it's easy to use. A certain level of security will unavoidably bring some friction, but it should still be user-friendly.'

*And many people don't know that all Gmail traffic is stored by Google without any clear ideas about what happens to it. And that from a company that once had as its motto: 'Don't be evil'.*

'From a techie's perspective, I kind of understand it. Two boys once came up with the PageRank algorithm for making a search engine more efficient, and they started a company. I think they were quite serious about 'Don't be evil', because they knew Google had given them power. I'm not against my search engine trying to learn from my search behaviour to improve my search results. But at some point, economic interests entered the picture. People figured out they could use the collected data to generate income. At that point, 'Don't be evil' becomes no more than an empty slogan covering up abuse.'

*Tech companies also often say that they're doing it to improve functionality.*

'Things go wrong when organisations do more than they should. People should stick to their trade. If you're selling a certain product, why should you also collect as much customer information as possible and then try and sell it to third parties? Why do I have to create an account when I buy something? For the service provided, it's not necessary at all.'

*Does it make you cynical when you see how we are constantly being monitored?*

'I'm known to be an incorrigible optimist, but I sometimes feel discouraged when I see the ways in which our privacy and online security are being handled. And yet, I do believe in a future in which we make progress and organise things so that we aren't constantly being monitored online. It's really not that hard to design and build a system in a way that avoids unpleasant surprises further down the line.' \*



# POINT TAKEN!

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT COUNCIL AND THE WORKS COUNCIL

[www.numedezegenschap.nl](http://www.numedezegenschap.nl)



## Campus plan

The central participational bodies have met in person for the first time in a long while. They examined the Student Charter, the implementation of the student mentoring plans, the new strategy for promoting social safety among students, and the draft campus plan. On the matter of the Student Charter and student mentoring, the participational bodies are positive; the strategy for promoting social safety is still under debate. The campus plan was discussed in most detail. With this plan, the University aims to create a green and inclusive campus, with a strong campus heart. Together with Radboudumc, HAN University of Applied Sciences, and Mercator, the University wants to develop a top-level science park. The foundations for this plan are landscape quality ('forest campus'), strengthening internal cohesion, and the campus as a lively part of the city.

It's an ambitious plan. Every faculty will find a home in an 'identity-forming' building. This means new locations for the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies. The Erasmus building will be thoroughly renovated into a multifunctional complex, including student housing and start-up companies. The Lecture Hall Complex will make way for a new 'meeting centre' for conferences and events. The Heyendaalseweg will be transformed from a transit intersection into a residential area. The Linnaeus building will make way for an extension ('midway section') of the Huygens building, with a second entrance.

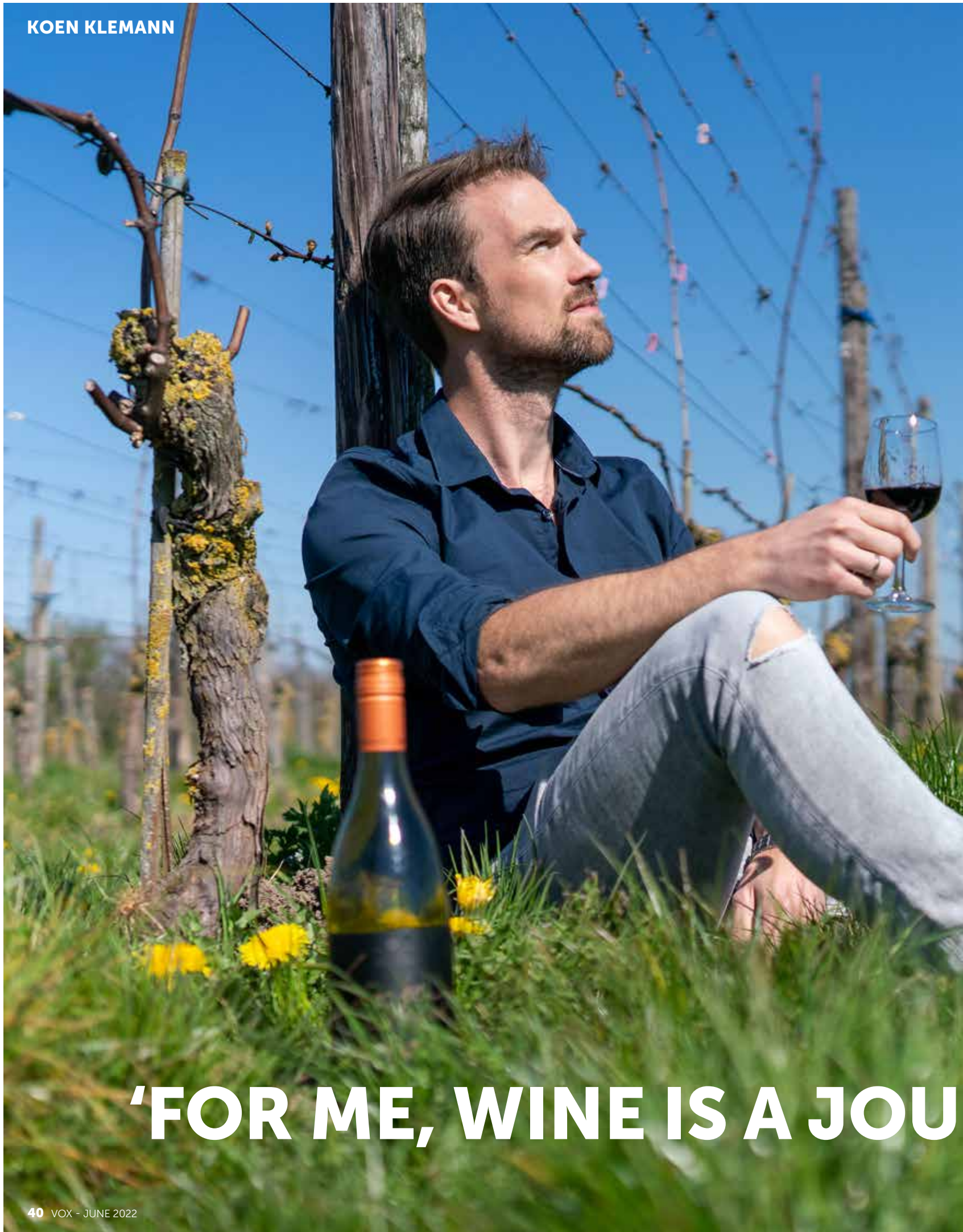
The campus plan builds, among other things, on current investment plans, the University's educational vision (still under development), the shift to hybrid working, the 'Sustainably

Reachable Heijendaal' initiative, the new energy plan, and plans for student housing and redevelopment of the Erasmusplein and its surroundings. The participational bodies are favourably impressed with the big picture, but point to the importance of a sound basis and vision for every component. What kind of science park does the campus want to be? And how do we create the capacity needed to develop the campus into a science park? How will the financial risks be managed in these uncertain times? With a view to the expected increase in staff, how will everyone be assured of a good workplace? How can we make the campus, including the construction and renovation activities, even more sustainable? The Board has agreed to include these and other items in their further elaboration of the plan.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE DISCUSSION?


Contact us via <https://www.radboudnet.nl/personeel/diversen/medezegenschap/leden/> or [https://www.ru.nl/usr/over\\_de/de\\_raad\\_stelt\\_zich\\_1/](https://www.ru.nl/usr/over_de/de_raad_stelt_zich_1/)

KOEN KLEMMANN



**'FOR ME, WINE IS A JOU**





Raising Dutch viticulture to new heights by laying bare the details of the viticultural process: that is the ambitious mission of molecular biologist and entrepreneur Koen Klemann. This is also the approach he takes in his research on diseases such as ALS and Parkinson's. 'I want to know everything.'

**Text:** Ken Lambeets / **Photography:** Erik van 't Hullenaar

**RNEY OF DISCOVERY'**

**A beautiful spring day.** The sun is high in the sky at the Betuws Wijndomein in Erichem, with its seven hectares of vines one the largest wine domains in the Netherlands. The vineyard is surrounded on all sides by apple and pear orchards, and in the distance, the wind-mill blades are slowly turning – the polder is rarely wind-free.

Within a few weeks, with the orchards in full bloom, it will be packed; blossom tours are popular among day trippers. But on this afternoon in April, the first buds on the vines are still not out. ‘Until the Ice Saints days, in mid-May, wine growers often have sleepless nights,’ says Koen Klemann (36). ‘Until then, there’s a chance of night frost, which can lead to them losing part of the harvest.’

Klemann knows the Betuws Wijndomein like the back of his hand. In an effort to learn more about wine-making, the molecular biologist worked here for a few years as a volunteer. He spent countless hours wandering between the vines with a pair of pruning shears. In the wine cellar, where grape juice ferments into real wine, he bombarded wine grower Diederik Beker with questions. All with a single mission: understanding everything there is to know about the process of viticulture.

## ‘THE WINE WORLD IS FULL OF STORIES AND ROMANCE’

Now Klemann, who lives with his wife and two sons in a village near Zaltbommel, is himself teaching courses at the Betuws Wijndomein. These are courses for beginners who want to know more about the different grape varieties, or learn how to make wine themselves. He teaches these courses under the banner of his one-man business: WijnWetenschap.

### Practical objective

This interest in wine emerged during his studies in Molecular Life Sciences at Radboud University, explains Klemann. ‘The chemistry courses got me interested in how wine is produced, in particular the yeasts that are used in the wine cellar, the cell processes that take place there, and the impact that these processes have on the wine. I read more and more scientific articles on viticulture, and one thing led to another.’

After completing his studies, Klemann started a PhD research project on the underlying molecular mechanisms of neuropsychiatric diseases such as Parkinson’s

and ALS. ‘I wanted to do research with a practical objective, namely to come one step closer to healing these diseases. My interest in biology and the link with clinical work made it a logical next step. Not that I personally know anyone with Parkinson’s or ALS.’

Since 2017, Klemann has worked in Mercator I at DrugTargetID. This Radboud University spin-off, initially created under the umbrella of the University, is now independent. ‘We try to understand the biological mechanisms that cause these diseases by studying large data sets,’ he says.

The method that Klemann used in his PhD, i.e. creating molecular landscapes of patients with Parkinson’s, is the company’s core task. Landscapes like these are complex networks and overviews of all proteins and metabolites, and their interactions, that lie at the basis of the disease. ‘We further refined and expanded this method over the years; now pharmaceutical companies are elaborating further on our work. Based on the drugable targets we identify – these are the proteins on which a potential medicine can be developed – pharmaceutical companies start follow-up studies to develop medicines. But we also work a lot with the Human Genetics department of Radboud University.’

### Evening course

Shortly after defending his PhD thesis in November 2017, Klemann signed up for a wine grower/wine maker evening course. For two years, every Thursday evening, he drove 75 minutes there and back to Hasselt in Belgium. There he learned how to design and maintain a vineyard, and how to vinify wine, aka turn pressed grapes into wine.

After completing this course, the inquisitive Klemann wanted to put his theoretical knowledge into practice. He contacted the Betuws Wijndomein, asking for an opportunity to gain experience. Which he was given. ‘It was nice, alongside my work on the laptop, to spend one day a week in the fresh air.’

### Why do you want to know everything about wine?

‘I enjoy discovering new facets of how grape varieties respond to different conditions or how wines can be further optimised in the vinification process in the wine cellar. This combination of biology and chemistry really appeals to me.’

### Do you take the same scientific approach to wine as to your research on neuropsychiatric diseases?

‘At DrugTargetID we collect as much data as possible, and then we scan these data for cues, like real trackers. We dig in the system of a disease to see whether we can crystallise something out of it. For me, wine is more of a journey of discovery. Wine growers often act nonchalant about it, but they actually work with great precision. If something goes wrong in the process, they want to know the reason. It’s a systematic, scientific way of working.’





And with the best wine growers, you can taste it in their wine.'

*Did you start WijnWetenschap because of all the nonsense being spread about wine-making?*

'The wine world is full of stories and romance, but the truth always lies somewhere in the middle. I enjoy finding out where exactly in the middle.'

### **Heavy clay soil**

One of the biggest misconceptions about wine-making, explains Klemann as he strolls between two rows of vines, is that it is impossible to do in the Netherlands. A lot of people also think that you can only grow vines on limestone soil. 'This is completely untrue,' he says. 'Limestone soils are excellent for vines, particularly because of their

good water balance. On other soils, you have to adjust your cultivation process more. This vineyard, for example, has a heavy clay soil. This means that you have to make sure the soil doesn't become too compacted, and create good drainage for excess water. If you grow grapes on sandy soil, you have to take into account that you will have to add organic material.'

There is also a lot of romanticising around aromas in wine, says Klemann. 'In wines from maritime regions, such as Muscadet, or wine regions in locations where there once was a sea, like Chablis, people often discern a briny taste. With wines that grow on granite, they often talk about aromas such as flint. They attribute this to the type of soil. These stories often appear on the wine labels, but this is just a marketing ploy, unsupported by any scientific evidence. Minerals that attach to the crystal



## 'IT'S GREAT BEING ABLE TO SHOW PEOPLE THE WORLD OF WINE'

structure of a stone aren't soluble, so they're simply not absorbed by the vine roots.'

*Aren't you just dispelling our romantic ideas about wine-making?*

'But don't you find it just as romantic that wine growers have to put so much scientific knowledge and energy into the wine in your glass?' He laughs: 'Although I do enjoy a good chuckle whenever I read one of those labels.'

*Your PhD supervisor, Bas Bloem, only drinks organic wine, because the use of pesticides in the vineyard may trigger diseases such as Parkinson's.*

'Various pesticides have been linked to Parkinson's, including fungicide Mancozeb and products that contain glyphosate. It's a good thing that these substances are forbidden or subjected to strict rules if they turn out to be harmful to people. Where possible, it's always a good idea to make organic wine. But in the Netherlands – and in many other parts of Europe – this isn't always possible. The wet and cold summer we had last year, for example, made it impossible to make a good wine in the Netherlands in an organic way. This kind of weather means more fungi in the vineyard, such as mildew, and these have to be kept in check somehow. In organic vineyards, by late August, there wasn't a single leaf left on the vines, which meant the grapes couldn't ripen, and entire harvests were lost. If you're running a commercial wine company, you sometimes have to make different choices. Luckily, there are strict regulations concerning pesticides, and science, with the help of people like Bas Bloem, is working to make sure that these regulations are implemented if there are any indications that the substances used may be harmful for the growers.'



### Busy schedule

Four days a week, Klemann commutes to the Radboud University campus for his work at DrugTargetID, and one day a week he is at home with his two sons. His work for WijnWetenschap is something he does in his free time. 'On Thursday evening, I give wine courses or write articles,' he says. 'I offer vineyard consultancy in the evenings and at weekends. It's a busy schedule, but a fun one.'

*Would you like to devote more time to your wine company in the long term?*

'I would like to devote half my time to it, but the Dutch wine sector is too small for that. Of the two hundred vineyards, thirty to forty are commercially active. They no longer need my expertise. It's mostly new wine growers who want to know how to start a vineyard, and luckily, there are new wine growers every year.'

*What should people who want to start a vineyard know?*

'The most important thing is to avoid beginner's mistakes. People only want to design their vineyard once, and they hope that it will last thirty years. So it's a bit of a disappointment if they have to dig up their vines after two years because they planted a grape variety that doesn't ripen. Or they find out that they didn't work the soil properly. It's fun to help people figure these things out.'

*Do you also give advice to the Betuws Wijn domein?*

He laughs: 'Here, the information flow is usually in the other direction. Wine grower Diederik knows so much about viticulture; he's been making wine since 2004. At the start of this year, we did work together in presenting a survey to the Professional Association for Dutch Wine Producers, asking them which of the yeasts they used in the wine cellar were suitable for the grape varieties grown in the Netherlands. I also conducted a study on lowering the sugar percentage in grape juice; because of the increasingly warm climate in the Netherlands, Dutch wines sometimes have too high an alcohol percentage. We emphasised a few solutions, such as adjusting the vine canopy [for example by pruning the plant differently, Eds.], without this affecting the wine's aromas. In this way, we hope to raise Dutch wine production to new heights.'

In the long run, I'd like to develop more courses for wine growers, including retraining programmes. At the moment, we're still too dependent on the knowledge



## SUMMER TIP

### KOEN KLEMANN

*"With its seven hectares of vines, the **Betuws Wijn domein in Erichem** is one the largest vineyards in the Netherlands. Wine grower Diederik has already won some impressive prizes in the Netherlands and abroad. When the weather is nice, join us at the Betuws Wijn domein to walk the 'klompenpad', have a picnic in the vineyard, or enjoy a glass of wine on the terrace."*

available in Germany or France. This is a project for the next five to ten years; I don't want to put too much pressure on it. It needs to remain a fun thing.'

*Is Dutch wine a good alternative to German or French wines?*

'Certainly wine growers who have been in the industry for a longer time, and who therefore have a lot of knowledge and experience, can easily compete with their French and German colleagues. These wine growers also perform well at international wine competitions. Due to the cool and humid climate, Dutch vineyards are more likely to suffer from diseases and fungi than, for example, vineyards in the South of France. So in the Netherlands we have to put more effort into the actual cultivation process. This makes the wines proportionally more expensive.'

*And therefore more or less unaffordable for students?*

'It's true that you won't find a Dutch wine for under €5; it's a fact that good wines cost money. Having said that, students do pay €3-€4 for a speciality beer.' He laughs: 'So over €10 for an entire bottle of good-quality wine should also be manageable.'

*Does climate change mean that the Netherlands will become better suited to wine-making in the long run?*

'In part, yes, but climate change doesn't bring only warmer, but also more extreme weather. A few more degrees is no problem in the Netherlands, but the question is what other shifts this will bring. If a few weeks from now, we're suddenly faced with a huge whirlwind or heavy hailstorms, we will immediately lose part of the harvest.'

*Which wines do you personally like best?*

'I prefer discovering and experiencing new flavours than having the idea that I'll be drinking the same wine for ever and ever. For the rest, it all depends on the moment. With a substantial meal, I enjoy a strong red wine; sitting out on a terrace, I prefer a white wine with fresh acidity.'

*Have you already started a vineyard of your own?*

'No, not yet. I know how much work is involved; it's not something you can simply combine with a demanding job. But it's definitely on my wish list. I'd love to have a vineyard of half-a-hectare as a hobby. If possible, abroad, if the rest of the family agrees.' \*





# Op de vlucht. Dezelfde pijn, hetzelfde verdriet, gelijke nood.

**STICHTING  
VLUCHTELING**  
IBAN 9999

Opvang, bescherming en hulp voor mensen op de vlucht. Wie je ook bent en waar je ook vandaan komt. We zijn allen mens.

**VLUCHTELING.NL**



# POEM



## ZON, ZON, ONZE ZON

Ik wil haar iets beloven,  
een jaar met maar drie maanden,  
eindeloos veel perenijsjes, gewoon  
iets wat doet geloven in de dingen die we doen.

We slikken pitjes door, zonnebloemen, sinaasappels,  
gieten ijsklontjes op de keukenvloer  
tot het blote knieën raakt.

Ramen open, deuren open,  
we roeren onze armen door de zware lucht,  
zien het ontkiemen van de vingertopjes  
nu niets meer in de schaduw staat.

Ik vraag of ze merkt dat het zijn werk doet,  
voelt ze warmte in de holte van haar elleboog,  
waar het ruikt naar chloor en bladmoes,  
ligt de zon nu ergens in die huid verstopt?

Zij schudt haar hoofd alsof het regent  
sproeten spetters stuifmeel,  
zegt 'ik geloof niet in die dingen'  
en drukt een kruisje in haar muggenbult.

**SAM THEUNISSEN** IS THIS YEAR'S CAMPUS POET. SHE WRITES  
A POEM FOR EACH EDITION OF VOX.

## COLOPHON

**Vox is the independent  
magazine of Radboud  
University.**

### Editorial address

Thomas van Aquinostraat 1,  
Postbus 9104,  
6500 HE Nijmegen,  
Tel: 024-3611892  
redactie@vox.ru.nl  
www.voxweb.nl / @voxnieuws

### Editors

Johannes Fiebig, Annemarie  
Haverkamp (editor in chief),  
Ken Lambeets, Mathijs Noij,  
Anne Polkamp

### Proofreading

Machiel van Zanten

### Contributors to this issue

Vincent Decates, Alex van der  
Hulst, Stan van Pelt, Marieke Smid

### Photography

Dick van Aalst, Bert Beelen,  
Duncan de Fey, David van Haren,  
Erik van 't Hullenaar, Paul Rapp

### Design

gloedcommunicatie, Nijmegen

### Print

Zalsman, Zwolle

### Translation

Radboud in'to  
Languages, Translation & Editing  
Department, Nijmegen,  
Telephone: 024-27821849



