

VOX

ENGLISH
EDITION

INTERVIEW
SPECIAL

journalist
Bert Brussen

pastafarian
Mienke de Wilde

PhD candidate
Maria Vliek

NWO president
Stan Gielen

weatherwoman
Margot Ribberink

dj
**Timon van
Merriënboer**

EUROPEAN CHAMPION
OLIVIA RASIGRAF SIMPLY
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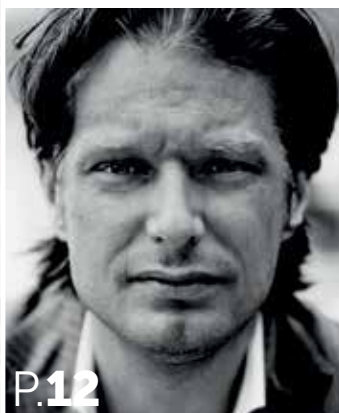
From 21 August until 1 September



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EDITORIAL

HEAVEN

The Netherlands makes Bert Brussen depressed. The former Radboud student and editor-in-chief of *The Post Online* wants to get out of here. Too many moral crusaders. Too much political correctness. This country sucks. How different from Olivia Rasigraf's experience. How many obstacles she had to conquer to finally end up in this heaven! Europeans have no idea how good they have it, she warns. She comes from Ukraine, where corruption is rife and Putin runs the show. And now the US, with Trump the narcissist at its head. The latter is incidentally good news, according to Bert Brussen. Finally, an end to all that softie nonsense!

The world seems to be spinning faster this year. Everyone reacts to change in their own way. Take weatherwoman Margot Ribberink. Every year she travels to Texas to chase tornadoes. Climate change will soon make her hunt even easier, as extreme weather is on the increase. Is she delighted? No! Trump is a disaster for the planet, she says.

Stan Gielen, the new head of NWO, does his best to combat the image of 'science as just an opinion'. PhD candidate Maria Vliek lived for three years in Mombasa, which changed her perspective on Islam. And Law student Mienke de Wilde? She converted to Pastafarianism and meets the world wearing a colander on her head.

Have a great summer!

Annemarie Haverkamp
Editor-in-Chief Vox

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BOER** sometimes failed a subject –
he had to give a concert in Australia or
thereabouts

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Every month Vox attends a social get-together related in some way to Radboud University. This time: **the beach volleyball tournament of the Olifant student association.**

Text: Mathijs Noij / Photography: Nick van Dijk

WHERE AND WHEN? In front of the house of the all-male Carolus Magnus Olifant association on the Straalmanstraat on Friday 9 June
WHAT ARE WE CELEBRATING? Olifant's 90th anniversary
WAS THERE SAND? Yes. Approximately 25 cubic metres.

Koen Straatman (left) is Olifant's proud President. But when we asked for him, we were directed to a different Koen. Straatman when we finally found him: "Everyone calls me Kees."

Franka Wijnbergen (left) is too sober to answer our questions. **Lotte Strijbosch** (middle) is not. "We at the Eileithya sorority are just too *fucking* popular. We drink with everybody."

Tom brought an umbrella: "I have very sensitive skin." **Ties** prefers not to reveal his last name. "Just call us funnel, since that's where we all come from."

Elke Dortant (right) and **Mirjam Schaap** both have a good eye for the ball. But Mirjam even more so, says Elke. "She's had more practice."

The association's dog, **Lulleaux**, is lounging upstairs. She is originally from Rumania and was brought to Nijmegen via a social project.



IN THE NEWS

Kutpéage What is the best song ever? That was the question we asked students and staff. At the top of the Radboud Top 40 no Bohemian Rhapsody or Hotel California, but Kutpéage by the Nijmegen student band Blueshift. It's a protest song against the University's printing system. The University took it in its stride: the band was invited to play the song at Radboud Rocks, the University's birthday party.

Campus poet Radboud University has a new campus poet: Sander Bisselink. The philosophy student is a familiar face on campus: in the spring of 2016 he won the Nootuitgang singer-songwriter competition. Under the artist's name of *überhaupt* he sang songs in Dutch with a German accent. Next academic year the German-born poet will write a poem for every Vox edition – in Dutch, incidentally.

Tie Next year the seats of the University Student Council will be neatly distributed between *AKKUraatd* and *ASAP*. Both parties won four seats in the student elections. This signifies the end of *De Vrije Student*'s presence in the council. The anti-patronizing party won one seat in the past two academic years. *Faculteitsbelangen*, a new party, did not get enough votes to make it through. The Works Council is also due for elections this year: the results will be announced on 27 June.

Neighbourhood concerns

Inhabitants of the Houtlaan, the street on the southern edge of campus, are viewing with suspicion the University's scrapping and construction plans. During an information meeting they expressed their concern about the construction traffic, required among other things to dispose of the rubble from the Thomas van Aquinostraat.



The Nijmegen student band Blueshift got permission to play their protest song *Kutpéage* at Radboud Rocks.

The University was unable to reassure the inhabitants. Following the information evening, billboards appeared above the Van Disveldpad bearing texts such as "3 years of heavy traffic through these woods. A bad idea. Also on behalf of hawk and fox" (both animals that live in the woods around campus).

PhD dissertations It was a fervent wish of Faculty of Arts Dean Margot van Mulken and others: to grant Associate Professors the right to supervise PhD dissertations. Although Associate Professors are often responsible for

the actual supervision, a Professor is required to put his signature on the diploma – and therefore gets all the honour. The First Chamber has agreed to the legal change. Radboud University is still setting the criteria for Associate Professors' rights to supervise PhD theses.

Student sports It has nearly become a tradition for Nijmegen to win the Great Dutch Student Championship (GNSK). And we did it again in 2017, with Eindhoven as host. Our fourth victory in five years' time.

3922

The amount that historian Bart Verheijen raised with crowdfunding. With his €3922 he brought back to life resistance songs from the time of Napoleon. This has allowed him to present not only a book, but also a CD at his PhD defence on 7 June. Verheijen advises other researchers to use crowdfunding to obtain funds. "It's a fun way to involve the general public in your research." You do need a concrete and appealing idea, he says. "People were really enthusiastic about the fact that I wanted to make these songs available to the general public."



DULY NOTED

'The idea behind travelling is simple: while travelling, you live in the now. It's mindfulness in practice'

Psychology professor **Ap Dijksterhuis** says travelling makes you healthier, happier and smarter. In 13 June's *HUMO*, he reports this is the case because humans need (new) stimuli in order to function properly.

ABOVE AVERAGE BORIS KONRAD

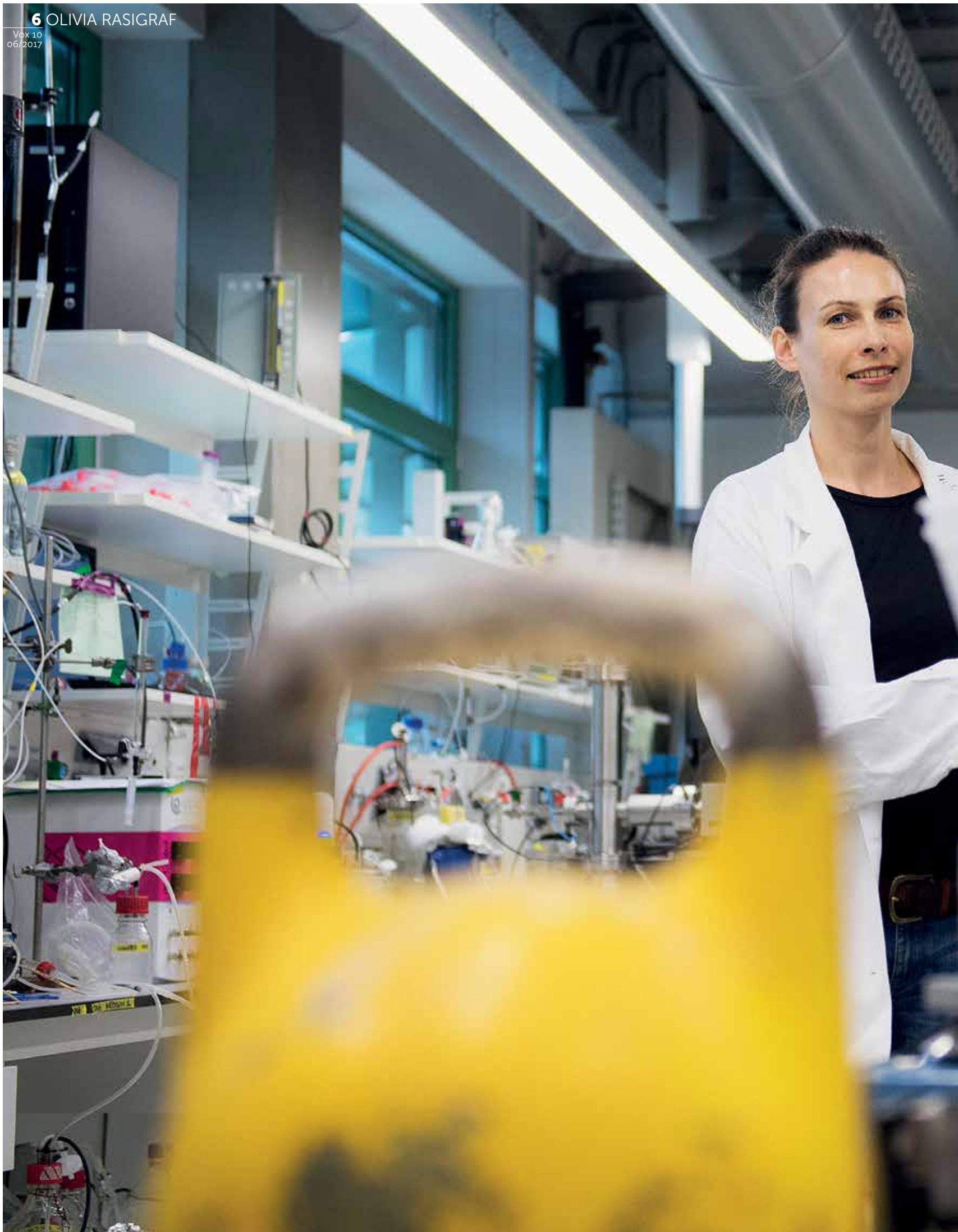
Brain scientist Boris Konrad (33) investigates how memory works. He is also making optimal use of his own memory by travelling around the world to take part in memory championships. For years his name has been appearing in the Top

10 of memory champions worldwide. Konrad would love his memory techniques to be integrated in regular education. He is convinced that secondary school pupils would greatly benefit from being able to remember words and formulas. "It makes learning so much easier and so much more fun." On Friday 16 June, he shared his ideas at *Bessensap*, the annual conference organised in Amsterdam by science organisation NWO and the association of science journalists.

See Boris Konrad's profile at voxweb.nl



PHOTO: BERT BELEN



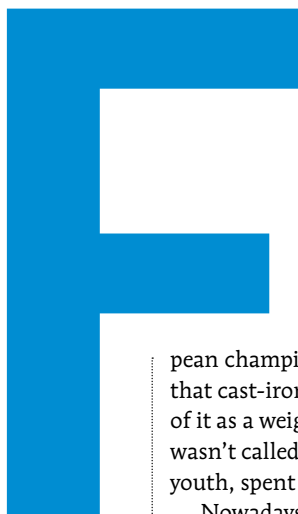
Microbiologist and top athlete

IRON WOMAN OLIVIA RASIGRAF

Up until three years ago she had never even seen a gym from the inside. Now microbiologist Olivia Rasigraf (31) is European champion and record holder in an obscure sport called kettlebell snatch. About a Ukrainian immigrant ('Putin is a psychopath') who worked her ass off to succeed.

Text: Thijs van Beusekom **Photography:** Bert Beelen





Five times a week Olivia Rasigraf can be found at the Radboud Sports Centre, waving heavy cast-iron balls around. And every week again, she has to explain to curious onlookers what she is doing. You have to admit that *kettlebell snatch*, which involves the athlete waving a kettlebell by its handle in one fluid movement above her head, is not the most conventional of sports.

In fact, until three years ago, the European champion herself had little idea of what to do with that cast-iron ball. Until then, she had only ever thought of it as a weight for weighing fruit and vegetables, and it wasn't called a kettlebell, but a *giryra*. A memory from her youth, spent on the Ukrainian Crimea.

Nowadays, Rasigraf is a microbiologist. As a postdoc she investigates the impact of climate change on the circulation of specific gases. She also studies microbes that breathe iron the way humans breathe oxygen. While the reaction vessels continue to double undisturbed, she explains to us a number of complicated processes. With great enthusiasm. That's a change from a few years ago. She was spending so much time on her research that her enthusiasm began to wane. "I was only busy with my PhD and I led an unhealthy life. I smoked too much. That's when I began to exercise."

Now when she hangs up her white lab coat and closes the door of the Huygens building behind her, she turns from a microbiologist into a European champion. Or maybe a bit of both, since she is excessively competitive. Has always been. She wants to be the best in everything she does. Although she began training with a kettlebell as a bit of a distraction – she didn't want to get caught in the web of striving for excellence in academic research – here too she now has trouble suppressing her fanaticism.

That inexhaustible drive. It's all to do with her roots, she thinks. Rasigraf is an immigrant and had to overcome quite a few obstacles to succeed. She was determined to succeed. She grabbed all opportunities and was out to show the world. Not for nothing did she work her ass off night after night. She learned German to be able to go to university in Germany – her dream.

Escape

Rasigraf did not have an easy youth in Crimea. As a young girl she would help her mother on the market while her father worked hard in a milk factory. Most of the money they earned was spent on food and clothing. And that while both her parents were highly educated. In 1979 they had moved from Chelyabinsk in the Ural to Crimea. As a Russian family with German roots, they were not particularly welcome. And neither was Olivia, born in 1985.

'WE WERE ONLY CONCERNED WITH SURVIVING'

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 did not improve their situation. The resulting economic and political chaos threw the family into poverty. "In those days, we were only concerned with surviving," remembers Rasigraf.

Halfway through the 1990s, the family saw an opportunity to escape. A new law was introduced in Germany which made it possible to emigrate if you could demonstrate that you had German nationality. The old Soviet passports of the Rasigraf family were suddenly a godsend. They clearly stated the family's German nationality.

Rasigraf had one problem: she didn't speak any German. And in order to be admitted to university, she had to complete a language test. Her parents sent her to a secondary school where German was taught as a second language. Everything with a view to the future. "There were so many

WHAT IS KETTLEBELL SNATCH?

In kettlebell snatch the athlete has to swing a cast-iron ball by its handle in one flowing motion in front of her body from way down to up above her head, such that the arm ends up in a vertical line with the body. In competitions athletes have to make as many snatches as possible in ten minutes' time. A judge assesses athletes on technique and speed. According to Rasigraf it's mostly about technique and endurance, not so much about strength. She is active in weight category 68+, with a kettlebell of 16 kilogrammes.

'I DON'T BELIEVE IN DOUBLE NATIONALITIES'



people with a German nationality. They also wanted to go to Germany, but many of them did not make it. Luckily we did." In 2002 the family emigrated to the Thüringen district, where they didn't know a soul.

"The first month we lived in a kind of refugee camp. We were given a bit of pocket money by the Red Cross. It was more than we used to earn in Ukraine," says Rasigraf. Her father, originally an engineer, worked as a garbage collector. In Germany, the family was offered opportunities they had never dreamed of. "We came to Germany as nobodies, and look at us now: my brother is an engineer, my sister a doctor, and I am a researcher."

That was no easy task. Even though she had learned German in Ukraine, language still formed a stumbling block at the German secondary school. "The science subjects were not such a problem, but then... I would suddenly have to read Immanuel Kant; even Germans find that difficult!" Night after night, she sat studying at the kitchen table with her mother, whose German had always been good, and who tirelessly helped her daughter. After secondary school, Rasigraf was accepted at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, where she studied bio geosciences. Her objective: a 1.0 (the German equivalent of a 10) for her Master's and an Erasmus grant to study in Nijmegen, because they had one of the best microbiology centres in the world. 1.0: check. Nijmegen: check.

Record

In May of this year, she came in first at the European Kettlebell Championship. She was not at the top of her form at the world championship in 2015 because she was completing her PhD dissertation at the time. She "screwed up" last year's European Championship by using the wrong tactic. "I started with my weak hand (the left, eds.), as a result of which I couldn't find my rhythm." This year, it had to happen. And it did. Winner with 225 snatches, the highest number on record. European champion: check. Record: check.

And that while she had never even heard of kettlebell snatch until three years ago. In fact, with the exception of two years of volleyball back in Ukraine, she had never done any sports. Her studies always came first. And yet, sport runs in the family. In her student days her mother was a fanatical athlete, despite her heart problems. "Sometimes she would cross the line more dead than alive, but there was no question of quitting!"

In the gym of the sports centre Rasigraf saw *giryas*. She followed a course, and things took off from there. More courses, some international competitions ("I love travelling") and a strict training schedule later she is a European champion.

German

In championships the Radboud researcher competes for the German national kettlebell team. Partially because Ukraine does not recognise dual nationalities. But even if



SUMMER TIP

**OLIVIA
RASIGRAF**
Thüringen
District

"Lots of people don't know East Germany very well. They never come further than Hamburg or Düsseldorf.

In Thüringen you have beautiful nature, such as the Thüringen Wald – you can also ski there. And it's quite a bit cheaper than the Netherlands or West Germany."



STUDENT2017

Maarten van Gestel, philosophy student

Bikeless

Flames. That's the first thing that flashes through my mind as I realise that the AFAC has confiscated my bike. My silver Batavus with its pink letters was neatly parked in the bicycle racks at the station. Now it has been unjustly deported. I refuse to pay the €100 ransom sum, so the only way to get it back is action-film style. Me, in ultra-slow motion, racing on my bicycle and behind me the biggest explosion the city of Nijmegen has ever seen.

Inflamed I walk towards the AFAC, which unfortunately turns out to be closed. Shit! There goes my plan. I find out from my housemate that the organisation only asks for €10 ransom. My explosive mood subsides somewhat. I scroll through the mugshots of incarcerated two-wheelers on the AFAC website, but see no sign of a grey Batavus with pink letters among the orphaned children's bicycles and dilapidated scrap heaps. I conclude that my bicycle was stolen. Probably those pink letters.

I decide to take a different approach. What do I need a bike for anyway? In my 22 years on Earth, I have probably cycled more than the entire Tibetan population put together. It sounds as if I've done my bit where cycling is concerned. And bicycles have often nearly cost me my life – definitely during my six months in Jackass Poland. All those people trying to save their souls by quitting smoking are just taking half-measures. Me, I quit cycling.

My first post-bicycle era action consists of finding a useful way to spend the €10 I'd put aside for the AFAC. After five minutes in town my eyes fall on a book on Siberia by Russian photographers. The back-cover informs me that our ideas about Siberia are heavily influenced by the Western media. At home I contentedly leaf through the book. How much bike could I have had for those €10? A bar handle perhaps. Or a bell. For the same money I now have the world's largest tundra.

I walk to University feeling reborn. How could the obvious have escaped me all this time? Nietzsche did not discover the Eternal Return of all Things on a cycling break. The philosopher was resting from a hike and staring vaguely at a waterfall when that insight hit him. It may have taken me three years of studying, but the light of truth has finally dawned on me. Fuck bicycles. Philosophers are a walking breed.

it did, Rasigraf has never seriously considered choosing Ukraine. "I feel German from head to toe, and I don't believe in double nationalities. If you want to really integrate, you have to choose. As far as I'm concerned, the same is true of Turkish people in the Netherlands. You see how complicated it is to have two passports: they remain attached to Erdogan."

At home, at her parents' place in Germany, the family still speaks Russian. This is due to her father, whose political proclivities go towards Vladimir Putin. He doesn't speak German and only reads Russian media. In this he differs from the rest of his family, explains Rasigraf. Even her mother does not support him. And neither does Rasigraf: she considers Putin to be a psychopath. "The political system in Russia is corrupt and diseased. But I try to avoid discussions at home." Despite her competing for Germany, her father is incredibly proud of her. "Maybe because this is originally a Russian sport," she says cheerfully.

European champion

Personally Rasigraf doesn't feel much affinity with Russia. "Aside from being a German, I mostly consider myself to be a European citizen. It's a bad thing that the European Union is crumbling. Many people are not aware of how good we have it. All that freedom. My background has given me a different perspective." The Russian annexation of Crimea was painful for her to watch. "I still know people there. Some of them support Russia; they have become indoctrinated by Russian politics, as has my father." With a climate sceptic in the White House and a psychopath as Russian President, she fears for the future.

Her contract with Radboud University ends at the end of next year, and Rasigraf doesn't know whether she wants to remain in academia. As far as her sports career is concerned, she has a clear goal: to become world champion in weight category 24 kilogram, one category higher than where she is active now. "Then we'll see. There are also veteran competitions for kettlebell. Who knows, I might end up there by the time I'm eighty!"

Drive: check. *

GERMANS IN RUSSIA

In the eighteenth century, Catherine the Great, the German-born Russian Tsarina, brought German colonists to Russia. They were given their own villages, and allowed them to retain their own language. During and after World War II, Dictator Joseph Stalin saw the German communities as a threat and dispersed them. Rasigraf's ancestors on her mother's side were deported to Siberia. In the city of Chelyabinsk, where kettlebells are also made, Rasigraf's mother met her father.



journalist Bert Brussen

IT SERIOUSLY SUCKS HERE

As editor for the Algemeen Nijmeegs Studentenblad Bert Brussen (41) already enjoyed challenging sacred cows. So much so that he made it into his job. Having worked for a while at GeenStijl he is now editor-in-chief of ThePostOnline. 'The Netherlands makes me depressed.'

Text: Mathijs Noij / Photography: Duncan de Fey

'IN A SNAP
ELECTION
I WOULD
VOTE FOR
**THIERRY
BAUDET**'



Friday afternoon, lunchtime. Students of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences are sprawled in the sun along the Amstel while Bert Brussen poses for the *Vox* photographer. He is wearing a grey suit, no tie, and his white shirt is unbuttoned at the top. His black Ray-Ban sunglasses slide on and off his nose at the photographer's request. Brussen did not dress up for his interview with *Vox*, he says. This is what he wears to go the supermarket. He thinks it's fun. "All Dutch journalists wear jeans. So I don't."

Three men walk by. "Try to look a bit more cheerful, won't you!" says one of them, just loudly enough to be heard. An innocent remark, but Brussen cannot see the humour. "This is exactly what I mean. So typically Dutch. Something unusual happens on the street and people immediately have to get involved, with such a fucking cliché remark."

Don't expect Brussen to mince his words. If something is ugly, it's ugly. If something bothers him, he will say it loud and clear. For example Amsterdam, his home city. "It seriously sucks here." Or the Netherlands: "This country makes me depressed."

Brussen wants to emigrate. Away from Dutch meddling, rules and jealousy. He recently returned from a holiday on the Canary Islands. "I would like to settle there permanently. Anything I do in the Netherlands I can do there too. As long as I have a corner to work, it's good."

Brussen studied philosophy in Nijmegen and is now editor-in-chief of the *ThePostOnline* (TPO), a news and opinion website averse to political correctness. Via TPO, right-wing opinion-makers who are not welcome in mainstream media attract millions of readers. Brussen created the website himself back in 2009, originally under the name of *DeJaap.nl*. It was a response to the launching of *Joop.nl*, a VARA opinion site. Brussen quit his work for *GeenStijl* and has been self-employed ever since.

Why do you want to emigrate?

"I am not that positive about the future of the Netherlands. Criminality is on the rise, even though the CBS tries to convince us otherwise. The number of police reports may be on the decrease, but the citizens' experience of criminality remains dramatic, and pretty much consistent. The law is powerless to intervene. In Limburg and Brabant organised crime is increasingly running the show: it's starting to look like *Narcos* down there. And I expect more and more problems with Islamisation."

Are things really so bad in the Netherlands?

"For people like me the Netherlands is becoming less and less fun. I can't say things got better after the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*, or the Bataclan. We are the ones to get hit. I know lots of PVV politicians and editors at *GeenStijl*. And Thierry Baudet. It's incredible, the bullshit people have to put up with."



SUMMER TIP BERT BRUSSEN

Brussen doesn't have a concrete tip for us. With the exception of Schiphol. "It's the shortest way out of the Netherlands."

You know what it is? People have to learn to live with things that are offensive or hurtful. If you don't like something, don't click on it. Don't read it. You can write whatever you like about me, but don't assume I will read it. In the Netherlands, victims have more and more power. Minorities, women, people who are gender-neutral, they're all saying: "I feel hurt, so I want a solution".

What about your new life on Tenerife, what will that look like?

"Ah, it's just relaxed over there. It's officially Spain, so unfortunately still part of the EU. Ask a restaurant owner there whether there are too many rules, and he is sure to say yes. But there is not so much control. I hope to move within a year."

And the climate is great on the islands. As far as the weather is concerned, we catch Brussen at a good time: the sun shines on Amsterdam. "I feel so much better now than in the winter. Then I would rather not go outside at all." In an earlier interview with *Vrij Nederland* Brussen openly talked about his winter depression and dependence on antidepressants (quote: "Without pills I turn into a kind of plant").

But it's not only the Dutch climate that gets Brussen down. It's also the people. "This entire society is obsessed with being liked. I sometimes wonder: don't you ever get lonely, or sad? People don't dare to admit it anymore, unhappiness has become a taboo. What remains is social talk, clichés. I'm seriously worried about the generation growing up now: What will become of them? Now I really sound like an old man."

He rarely watches TV. He finds the programmes too annoying. "My girlfriend sometimes watches *De Wereld Draait Door*. I can hardly stand it for more than five minutes. Every time there's been an attack, Beatrice de Graaf comes on to explain that it's all due to underprivileged youths smoking too much marijuana. It's so cliché, it's just state propaganda."

Pressing ahead

Brussen was always allergic to conventions. As a student he read all the books his fellow students ignored. If something was hip, he lost interest. At the *Algemeen Nijmeegs Studentenblad* (ANS) at the start of the century Brussen finally found the critical minds with whom he felt at home. He was already keen to challenge sacred cows. Carolus Magnus and the Executive Board were favourite targets. "We were rock-hard. Find a vulnerable spot and press ahead, that was our motto." He never completed his philosophy degree – "I was having far too much fun at the ANS."

Riots, with the accompanying consequences, were a logical consequence: reductions in subsidies, editions of ANS that the President of the Executive Board would personally throw into the shredder. "At some point our cartoonist made a drawing of Ron Jeremy, who wasn't allowed to make a porno film in Auschwitz. "And we had

planned such fantastic shower scenes,” says Jeremy in a text balloon. That was not appreciated. Already then the University was afraid of bad publicity.”

A year ago you agreed to do an interview for ANS, in which you criticised Vox. “Reading Vox will make you fall into a coma,” claimed the text balloon above your head.

“Well, isn’t Vox a boring magazine, a humourless folder? In my days, in any case, it was about things that couldn’t interest me less as a student. It’s a pity that there aren’t more ANS-like publications, that are really independent. I guess we were the Nijmegen *GeenStijl* on paper, back in those days. Studying is already serious enough. People would read ANS and grin from beginning to end. Plus it was a great learning school for me as a young journalist.”

In 2004 you founded a student party, LIAM. Why?

“At the time you had SIAM, Studenten In Actieve Medezeggenschap (Students in Active Co-participation). Those were all D66 boys and girls who joined the board to improve their CV. Those diplomatic types I was so opposed to. They had all these empty slogans like ‘For a better University!’, etc. But you know what: nobody cares! 90 percent of students are there to study and drink beer every night. So I founded LIAM (Lucas In Active Co-participation – Brussen used the pseudonym Lucas, eds.). During a debate I had someone throw a cream pie into my face, as a playful nod to Pim Fortuyn. Luckily I didn’t win any seats, because I am clearly not suited for politics.”

And even later, you never considered going into politics, the way Jan Roos did with GeenPeil?

“Absolutely not. I am not a joker and a screamer like Roos. Nor am I someone who stands on the side-line. If you go into politics, you really have to be capable. I would go nuts after one day at the Chamber of Representatives. You have to make compromises. Politicians never get angry and walk away, with the exception of Geert Wilders perhaps. There is someone I admire.”

What are your thoughts on the new government formation?

“I hope for a minority cabinet with VVD, CDA and D66. That would be an OK cabinet. They can rule together for a while. As long as GroenLinks doesn’t get in. That party is out to get rid of anything that’s fun. I personally voted for PVV, as a protest vote, although if there are new elections, I will vote for Thierry Baudet. He’s doing really well.”

What about Trump?

“The first months were not that great, I’ll admit. But I am glad he’s there. It’s understandable that he cancelled the climate agreement: America was built on a gross abuse of fossil fuels. Their cars are holy to them. This is of course terrible for the climate. I don’t have any children, so it’s easy for me to say that things will last my lifetime. So I understand Trump, but that doesn’t mean that I don’t



‘I AM A JESTER’



COLUMN

Lucy's law

Lucienne van der Geld is lecturer in Notarial Law and Legal Director of the Notary Network

Grow up?

I recently read in the *NRC* that people mature later these days. "The psychological state of mind that accompanies adolescence lasts longer," a professor told the journalist. Classical adolescence stretches from puberty until approximately age 20, but this boundary has shifted, to nearly 26. Legal maturity is referred to as 'majority' and set at 18. Once you turn 18, you can buy a house, get married, and vote. Sixteen is old enough to write your own will, and start your own business, if you convince the judge to grant you an 'exemption'.

When dealing with students, what I see mostly is fragmented maturity. In some aspects they behave like adults, in others like adolescents. Grown up enough to write a will, but not to buy a house. Something like that. As a lecturer, this kind of fragmented maturity can sometimes be confusing.

Take for example Student J. The cool type (with beard!). Organises the most extravagant trips for his student association and produces his own dance music. But when he fails an oral exam, he can hardly keep back his tears and runs back home to mamma. Mamma calls the lecturer to ask why her darling didn't make it. "He doesn't understand what happened, and to be honest neither do we. He spent weeks at home studying for this exam." Nothing wrong with a bit of immaturity, of course. A certain amount of light-heartedness should be part of every human life; I plead guilty to it myself (something to do with Pokémon and Candy Crush). I also enjoy other people's immature light-heartedness. For example the latest hype: "the floor is lava". How fun, as soon as someone shouts "the floor is lava", to get your feet off the floor within five seconds, film the procedure, and post the result someplace!

recognise the problem of climate change. As far as I'm concerned, we could spend more money on innovation and green energy."

Until five years ago Brussen was all over Twitter. As a true addict (his words) he threw his unvarnished opinions left and right into the digital world. He made a lot of enemies in the process. And yet, in real life, he is 'a very nice boy', as *de Volkskrant* once proclaimed in a heading. This reporter is forced to agree. And Brussen is a great interlocutor – because he seems to have an opinion about pretty much everything.

What do you think about the criticism levelled against universities for being left-wing strongholds?

"Well, it's not yet as bad as in the UK. That country is politically correct to the bone. You're not allowed to wear a sombrero to parties because that's *cultural appropriation* and every restaurant has to serve a halal menu. In Canada they now don't want students to be referred to as he or she, since that may offend people who are – what's the term – gender fluid. Here at the University of Amsterdam things are also getting out of hand. They now appointed a diversity officer. This is really taking it too far, you know. And the curriculums have to be revised, because they say they are too 'white'. Well, Plato was white, just like all those other Greeks. Not much you can do about that."

Brussen sighs. "The problem is when people no longer get invited because of their ideas. Like what happened in Berkeley (city in California, US, eds.), where all hell broke loose when someone from the right-wing Breitbart News wanted to pay a visit. No matter how far apart people's ideas are, it's important to keep talking. If universities refuse people because their ideas don't match those of the researchers, that's the end of free research."

*Your previous employer, *GeenStijl*, was recently attacked by more than one hundred Dutch female journalists and celebrities. They asked companies to no longer advertise on *GeenStijl* and the associated *Dumpert*, because their content was allegedly misogynistic. What do you think about that?*

"That's the worst kind of journalist victimization." *He makes a vomiting sound. * "Go cook a meal or something. Or take out your trash. Pathetic Nazi behaviour. Besides, it's completely pointless. If there is one thing that has nothing to do with morality, it's advertisement. Take the Ministry of Defence: they have to attract three thousand new recruits every year. The profile of these recruits? Seventeen years old, secondary vocational education, and male. So where do you think they put up those ads on Internet? On *Dumpert*. Those advertisers are not likely to go away, I can assure you.

Once again: if you think something is misogynistic, don't click on it. Don't visit *GeenStijl*. If I write something, you don't have to read it. Nobody is forcing you to. So what's the problem?" *

bio

Bert Brussen

place of birth

Bennekom (1975)

degree

Philosophy
(dropout)

Pastafarian Mienke de Wilde

THE COLANDER AS THERAPY

For seven months now Law student Mienke de Wilde (31) hasn't been allowed to drive because she insists on wearing a colander on her head on her ID photograph. The municipality won't allow it. She says: my religion prescribes it. What drives this obstinate Pastafarian?

Text: Annemarie Haverkamp / **Photography:** Duncan de Fey





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She could also take it off, the colander. So that people on the street stop calling her names and the municipality agrees to extend her driver's license, which they refuse to do as long as she wears one on her head on all her ID photographs.

But no matter how much inconvenience she experiences from her original headgear – most people use it to strain broccoli or pasta – Law student Mienke de Wilde refuses to take off her colander.

It's all a question of principle, the right to be different, and spaghetti.

Where to start? Maybe in the mid-1990s, in Epe. Mienke de Wilde attends a primary school where children sit in class wearing only socks on their feet. The wooden clogs that betray their origins are neatly lined in the hall. Mienke herself does not come from a farm – she lives in a regular row house, with her two sisters, mum and dad. She wants to be a truck driver, because she often sees her father, who works in a workshop, at the wheel of one. Unfortunately for Mienke, the future has other things in store for her: she is too clever to limit her world to the cabin of a truck and trailer. She ends up in grammar school. She prefers to spend her free time outdoors, on her grand-father's farm.

"I've always felt that I didn't really belong," she explains. "On the one hand I was a real country girl, on the other hand at school I would lose myself in classical languages." Not a real country girl at all, really, although she does speak with an accent. This led to her also feeling uncomfortable among the 'intellectuals' at grammar school. "From a young age I tried to figure out how group pressure works. For example, I found out early on that when people ask you: 'How are you?' they don't really want an answer. They only ask because everyone else does; it's one of those group things. I found it fascinating and strange. I wasn't good at it – I didn't understand the codes."

A few years later, when things get rough at home, this lack of understanding contributes to her breaking down. The insecure teenager becomes depressed and is hospitalized. She doesn't really want to talk about this dark period, but her struggle with life lasted a few years. When she finally returns to secondary school, people try to convince her to switch to HAVO (professional secondary education). They reason that at least then she'll have something. She does keep in touch with the classical languages teacher, though. "I would come to tea. She played a really important role in my life. She saw that I had potential and told me that I was a worthwhile human being. She was always supportive."

Living at home was not an option, so Mienke moved out before her eighteenth birthday. On her own, after obtaining her HAVO diploma, she worked her way through adult education to an academic level, so that she could study at university.

'I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT I DIDN'T QUITE BELONG'

"I tried architecture and veterinary medicine. No classical languages unfortunately. I had a B-profile and I thought I should first try to do something with that."

After moving around for a while, she ended up in Nijmegen. At the Law Faculty. Why? Out of idealism, primarily. Mienke de Wilde had turned into someone who takes things to heart. Who stands up for refugees (it's not their fault their government is waging a war), fights against discrimination, and organises a bus for

CHURCH OF THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER

In 2005, the American Bobby Henderson founded the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster. It's a religion that primarily asks questions. Why would the world not have been created by a spaghetti monster? The Church has its own gospel and followers across the world, of which approximately ten thousand

in the Netherlands. Discrimination is one of the themes the Church preaches against. In the Netherlands, a number of lawsuits have been brought against municipalities that refuse to approve a passport or driver's license photograph with a colander. Radboud University Philosopher of Law Derk Venema frequently

acts as advisor to Pastafarians. He denounces the fact that religions are not treated equally and raises the question of what makes a religion a religion. In a number of countries, including the US, colander suits have already been won, and in New Zealand the Church performed its first wedding ceremony last year.

students to protest in The Hague against a world leader who excludes people (Trump's Muslim Ban).

On the tractor

That thing about the bus, that's later on, though, in late 2016. She first enrolls at Radboud University in 2014 while living in Vorden, in the Achterhoek. Yes, in the countryside she loves so much. How wonderful after a day of lectures to jump on the tractor and join the men on the land. Her boyfriend, whom she meets on Internet, owns a contractor company there. He and his personnel fertilise soil, cut grass and chop corn for the local farmers. In the canteen, everybody speaks in dialect.

It's here, on a beautiful June day under a perfect blue sky, that we hold our interview. "Now that I don't have a driver's license anymore, it's not so convenient, living here," she says while giving a tour of the grounds. She looks like a dwarf against the background of massive agricultural machines.

O yes, her driver's license. The one she stubbornly continues to fight law suits over. The more resistance she encounters, the more fundamentalist Mienke becomes. She wants the municipality to allow her to wear her ubiquitous colander on her ID photograph. The reason: it's an expression of her religion, Pastafarianism. Mienke believes that the world was created by the Flying Spaghetti Monster. A year ago, she officially converted to this religion (see box). It's not up to the municipality or the government to determine whether a religion is a real religion or a parody, she argues. She wears a colander on her head every day to express her devotion to the Flying Spaghetti Monster, just as Muslim women wear headscarves and Jews a skullcap.

The Flying Spaghetti Monster may well have saved her. It's in any case the reason she still studies Law in Nijmegen. She'd become quite disillusioned by her second year. "My choice for law was strongly rooted in my sense of justice." Imagine her disappointment when she found the lectures were mostly concerned with rules and regulations. "At university I want to be able to ask questions like why? As if law books were some kind of Holy Scripture: this is what was written."

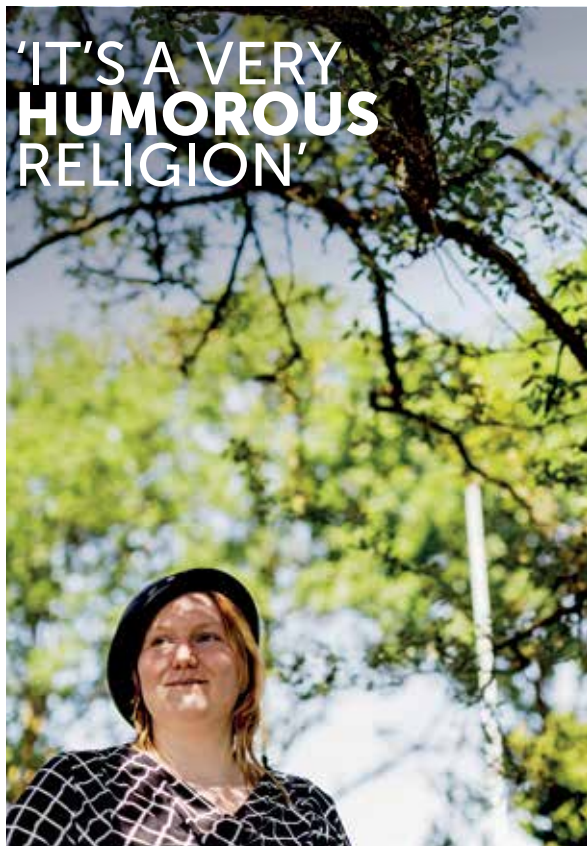
Luckily she chose Philosophy of Law as a third-year subject, and there found space for asking questions. One of the seminars focused on a lawsuit against a Dutch Pastafarian. "Let's attend the appeal hearing for fun," Mienke suggested. And so they did.

Pastafarianism fascinated her. Here was something she wanted to belong to. Especially since you didn't have to belong to belong. "The thing that connects us is that we are allowed to be different." Which is perfectly in line with her aversion to uniformism. People nowadays are quick to kick out of the nest anyone who is different.

'THEY MAY BE
MORE USED
TO STRANGE
THINGS IN THE
ACHTERHOEK'



'IT'S A VERY HUMOROUS RELIGION'



Intolerance has become the norm, notes Mienke. "Not only Muslims, but anyone with a different view is a target."

And there's something else. She sees wearing a flashy colander in public spaces – at the Gamma, the village baker, the cinema – as training in not taking criticism personally. This was not her original intention, but it certainly works. As someone who's always been sensitive to other people's opinions, she now catches herself thinking 'whatever!' "You have to ask yourself what you really find important: other people's opinions or what you think. Philip Zimbardo (of the Stanford Prison Experiment, eds.) says that if you want to practise resisting group pressure, you should walk around for a day with a black dot on your forehead. And not care what people say."

The colander is her black dot. This gives the object, which can be purchased at any ailing Blokker store, a therapeutic value. The symbolism is also interesting: spaghetti strings stand for chaos and by walking around with a colander on your head, you learn to separate the essential from the frivolous. The Flying Spaghetti Monster is not an almighty deity as in other religions – a kind of perfect human – but a monster made of spaghetti and meatballs who created humanity in a drunken moment. He would never look down on ordinary mortals.

"It's a very humorous religion," admits Mienke de Wilde. "And the humour is precisely what helps you put things into perspective. Religions that take themselves too seriously may run into conflicts; examples abound all over the world. We don't have Ten Commandments, but eight 'rather not's'. One of them boils down to this: respect other people's opinions and beliefs."

Funnily enough here in the Achterhoek people are much less quick to comment on her colander than in highly educated Nijmegen. "I didn't expect that. The first time I went to the supermarket here I was really scared. But maybe they're just more used to strange things here, with bands such as Normaal and Jovink – who are always getting up to funny stuff." In Nijmegen someone called out to her the other day that she stank of spaghetti – and not just anyone but a young father holding a small child by the hand.

Incidentally she didn't run into any problems at the University, she hastens to add. She keeps her headgear on during lectures and examinations, and attends the most serious meetings of the Law Programme Committee 'as herself'. For a while now, she's been working as a student assistant, with her colander on. In future she hopes to do a PhD.

As a professional researcher she plans to continue to live in the countryside; it's good for her. The peace, the space... and of course love. Two months ago her boyfriend proposed to her. In his own way. With a cultivator he wrote three words in a field, followed by a question mark: "Mienke marry me?"

The fact that she might appear at the altar wearing a colander on her head is a non-issue. He loves her and will continue to do so, even if she starts wearing an orange mixing bowl. ★



SUMMER TIP

MIENKE DE WILDE
Mañana Mañana Festival

"Mañana Mañana Festival comes to Vorden! By the same organisation as Zwarte Cross. In its own words: 'For all culture lovers who hate any form of narrow-mindedness and are looking for a relaxing time in a beautiful setting.' Not to be missed!"

PhD candidate Maria Vliek

'PEOPLE ARE MORE THAN THEIR RELIGION'

The attacks on London, Manchester and earlier this year Paris and Brussels are the work of Muslim terrorists. Always those Muslims, you hear people sigh. What does PhD candidate of Islamic Studies Maria Vliek (29) think about it? She worked for three years in Mombasa, where such attacks were a daily occurrence.

Text: Martine Zuidweg / Photography: Erik van 't Hullenaar

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The port of Mombasa, 2012. Maria Vliek is perusing a file when her boss storms in. He is enraged. Another attack in a church, on a market, at a school or in a disco of his city. The Al Qaida-affiliated Somali extremist group Al-Shabaab is overactive in Mombasa in those years. Precisely the period during which the Twente-born Maria Vliek works for a large transshipment company in the harbour city. She has been assigned to *corporate social responsibility*, the charities supported by the company: hospital wings under construction, schools, that sort of thing. Back in the Netherlands, she will write about these attacks in her Master's thesis. A depressing list: fifteen pages in five years' time.

No wonder her parents were not enthusiastic when she left for Kenya after her Bachelor's in English Language and Culture, because she'd had enough of studying and of the Netherlands. Nor did it help that her parents had never met the English friend she was going to help with his volunteer organisation in that country.

Her time in Kenya was certainly not dull, says Vliek looking back on this period. "At the club we always went to, one day hand grenades were suddenly thrown inside. That was very scary." She ended up working for a transshipping company in Mombasa for three years. The owners, a Muslim family, received her with open arms. Always friendly, helpful, hospitable. Vliek had never seen her boss as angry as he was that morning. "Maria," he snorted. "The Quran says you are not even allowed to take your own life, let alone someone else's!"

Al-Shabaab

We sail through the port of Rotterdam, Vliek's current place of residence, where she has settled with her soon-to-be English husband. Just as Mombasa, Rotterdam is multicultural and internationally oriented. With the dif-



**'HAND GRENADES
WERE THROWN
INTO THE CLUB'**



ference that there are many more Muslims in Mombasa. Half the inhabitants there are Muslims, the other half Christians. With its attacks, Al-Shabaab tried to drive a wedge between the Christians and Muslims in the city. To no avail, noted Vlieg at the time. “The people I spoke to always said: “This is the work of Al-Shabaab; they are not Muslims.” The attacks were politically driven; they had nothing to do with religion. The Muslims said so, but so did the Christians. They also said: “This is not Islam. We’ve been living together peacefully for thousands of years.” No matter how hard Al-Shabaab tried, they never managed to tear the community apart. I found this truly remarkable.”

Vlieg notes that the attacks of extremist Muslims on Manchester, London and other big cities are disastrous for the reputation of Muslims in Europe. Muslims are often viewed with suspicion. This doesn’t serve anybody she says. On the contrary: it only increases the frustration that seems to play a role in the radicalisation of young people. “People are so much more than their religion. But this us vs. them attitude is truly the most harmful thing. It makes it difficult to maintain an open dialogue about a topic such as Islam in the Netherlands. People often ask me why young people radicalise. Many theories have been written about it, which focus on marginalisation, racism, masculinity, ideology, religion, culture. So many factors play a role. But not everyone is willing to recognise this complexity, and people are quick to label.”

Fear of globalisation

The 29 year-old PhD candidate looks on as the touring boat makes waves on the Maas. A city like Mombasa is probably more resistant to religious conflict, says Vlieg, than most Dutch cities. Mombasa has a long history of trade and migration. As early as the sixth century the island was already trading with China and India and it was conquered consecutively by Africans, Persians, Omanis, Arabs, Jordanians, Portuguese and Brits. The local religions have co-existed for centuries and fought out quite a few religious conflicts. “I think that therein lays their power. The city has built up resilience against religious conflicts that we can learn from. In our country Muslims have only recently become a large minority. The fear of globalisation that you can now feel in the Netherlands is something of the distant past for Mombasa.”

God bless

Back in Groningen Vlieg studied Religion, Conflict and Globalisation. She wrote a Master’s thesis on how young Muslims in Kenya define their identity. And the role of religion in this process.

On the port side we now see SS Rotterdam, “the largest passenger ship ever built in the Netherlands”, says the



**‘THE FEAR OF
GLOBALISATION
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IN MOMBASA’**

announcer. Vliek does not hear it. She is thinking about our latest question: why would a pragmatic Twente girl become so fascinated with how Muslims experience their religion? Her PhD is also about this topic. She interviews people who have left Islam behind, and who are going through a difficult process of doubt and sometimes hard confrontation with family members and the Muslim community.

"I've always found religion interesting – I was brought up Protestant – but my interest really grew in Mombasa. There I saw what religion can mean to people. The Netherlands is a very secular society: we practise religion behind closed doors. Things are very different over there." In Kenya, religion is more visible, in clothing and in behaviour. People constantly refer to God in their daily speech. For example, when Vliek left in the afternoons to go home her colleagues would always say 'God Bless'. "There religion is not just something you do on Sundays. It defines how people live, how they deal with each other. Many Muslims I met use their religion as a guide through life."

She gives the example of her former boss who spent so much of his money on schools, hospitals and combatting poverty. "He was incredibly involved in the community. And I think this certainly had to do with how he experienced his religion. I don't think he saw it as his duty to care for others, but more as something that as a Muslim you do as a matter of fact. Of course not everyone is so involved in the community, but I did see a lot of it in Mombasa."

Security

Was it strange to go back to the Netherlands? Vliek nods. "I still remember when I came back in 2014 for my Master's programme; I was amazed by how little security there was here. Huge groups of people like those at Dutch festivals are unheard of in Kenya, because of security reasons. Every supermarket has a metal detector. In the Netherlands I think we enjoy a unique degree of freedom in this respect. At a festival, they mostly just check whether you're trying to smuggle in alcohol. How great is that!" She's not trying to play down the attacks. A violent death is a terrible thing. "But I do think Mombasa has made me more pragmatic, and most of all that it's given me the feeling that I shouldn't let myself get frightened. There is absolutely no point in living in fear. When you



SUMMER TIP MARIA VLIK festivals

"To see all Rotterdam in all its glory, I advise you to visit one or two festivals this summer! What's more fun than discovering new bands at Metropolis Festival or Reggae Rotterdam, or exuberantly celebrating Carnival on the Cool-singel during Rotterdam Unlimited?"

do, you play straight into the extremists' hands. That's why I try to avoid thoughts such as 'It could happen to me too'."

We are passing Hotel New York, located in the former headquarters of the Holland-America Line, where once upon a time thousands of Europeans, full of hope for a better life, left for North America. Vliek is concerned about Trump's election in the US and the wave of right-wing extremism in Europe. She finds fear of immigrants unnatural. "I think it's an intrinsically human characteristic to want to get to know each other. We are social creatures. And especially with people who are really different, you can learn so much from each other. I think it's a terrible thing that immigrants – and nowadays that usually means Muslims – are seen as something evil, something to be afraid of. Besides, this completely does away with the incredible diversity among people who use the Quran to guide their lives."

But she also sees the other side of populism. The strong reaction it engenders. Ideals are sharpened; emancipation movements get a wake-up call. "You might argue that this shouldn't be necessary, but I think that even before the rise of right-wing populism, Europe and the US had a long way to go with regard to emancipation of minorities. This has just become more visible now. As the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie points out: we still live in a white man's world."

The white metal wires of the Erasmus bridge tower over Vliek's head. We've reached the end of our boating tour. Al Shabaab's last big attack took place in April 2015, at the university in Garissa. 148 students died. Vliek attributes the relative calm that followed to the hard line taken by the Kenyan government. The police now immediately shoot down anyone suspected of terrorist activities. Kenyan Al Shabaab recruits are put on the spot by the home front: either they help dismantle Al Shabaab or, as *The Economist* formulated it earlier this year: "They can refuse, and risk being 'disappeared' by the police."

Vliek and her Englishman still go back to Kenya on a regular basis. Whenever they are in Mombasa, they always remember to drop by to see Vliek's former colleagues. But nobody talks about the attacks from the time when she worked there. "Once it's no longer in the news, people don't find it so important. *Life goes on*, I guess." *

president of NWO Stan Gielen

'THE MAN WITH THE BEST HORRIBLE JOB OF THE NETHERLANDS'

One moment you're running a faculty at a middle-sized university, the next moment you're one of the leaders of the country's main research organisation. Stan Gielen (64) looks back on his first year as president of NWO, the largest research organisation in the Netherlands. 'It's great to be flying so close to the flame.'

Text: Paul van den Broek / Photography: Bert Beelen



It's hard to catch Stan Gielen in a bad mood; his smile seems to have been chiselled on his face. This kind of attitude can easily be explained if you have a fairly relaxed job as head of the science faculty in Nijmegen – where Gielen was in charge for the last six years. But when we visit the man who since October of last year has occupied the “greatest horrible job of the Netherlands”, we expected to find a slightly more tired, less cheerful President. All the more since at 64, he is no longer a spring chicken. But no. In the most beautiful apartment of the NWO block district in The Hague, Gielen receives us as the lively man we have always known: the same smile, the same boyish appearance. “How are things in Nijmegen?”

Your predecessor Jos Engelen once called the NWO presidency ‘The greatest horrible job of the Netherlands’. Why would a man of 63 choose to take on a position with so many pitfalls (see box: The changing face of NWO)?

“I don’t feel that old. Anyway, this was not the position I originally applied for, but it makes me feel good to be able to do something for others.”

Your friend Peter Zuidema had hoped to start a philosophical art project with you. Another one of your talents, but it seems you found NWO more important?

“That’s right. I make music, I was an athlete at a reasonably high level. Life is full of fun things. But I especially hoped to take my academic career one step further.”

Where did this urge come from?

“Research needs a boost. I am not the only person who can do it; others may be more suitable, but they were unable or unwilling to take on this presidency. I have clear ideas about how research should be conducted, and when I was asked, I decided to put them into practice.”

So the art project with Peter has been put on hold?

“Yes. I signed for four years, with an option for a one-year extension. Peter and Janet will understand. Peter, who recently retired, was very keen to get started. But we have known each other for forty years, so that friendship is not likely to go away.”

“He is flourishing again,” said your wife about the past year. She says after six years as a Dean in Nijmegen you’d had enough: “It had become routine, with too little challenge.” Were you fed up with Nijmegen?

“It sounds blasé, but there is a grain of truth in it: the



SUMMER TIP STAN GIELEN about The Hague and its surroundings

*I can give you a tip for when the weather's good and when it's bad. When you want to keep dry, I can recommend the Haags Gemeentemuseum. When it's nice out, I prefer my bicycle. There's this great booklet *Fiets de stad uit* (Cycle out of the city), which contains fifteen cycling routes just outside of the Hague. My personal tips: explore the Meijendel dunes or cycle through the Green Heart.*

faculty was doing well, and then there comes a time when you have to make room for new people. Even the most successful football manager will be replaced one day. It's good that there is now new life in Nijmegen.”

Your wife is once again impressed with your “potential for growth” over the past year. “Where will this end? I just hope he won't become Senate Member next.”

“I can reassure her: in four or five years, I'll be done. Then we can get started on the music project.”

Scientific research in turmoil

Gielen's first year as president coincided with growing opposition to research. At the opening of the academic year, Radboud University Rector Han van Krieken expressed his concern about undermining the scientific method, a problem that is being stirred up by President Donald Trump dismissing scientifically proven facts as nonsense and deleting them from websites. On 22 April, researchers joined forces in The Hague for the March for Science: a protest rally to underline the importance of scientific research. Stan Gielen was there on the Malieveld in The Hague, together with Han van Krieken and other prominent figures in the Dutch research world.

“He was there on the podium, but not at the front. Typical Stan,” said Peter Zuidema. Do you recognise yourself in this description?

“It's true that I don't find it easy to appear in the foreground. But if I don't agree with something, I will let you know. There were enough influential people already on that podium in The Hague.”

Why did you join the protest rally?

“Scientific research can only flourish if there is freedom of movement for persons and ideas. You have to be able to discuss things with each other, keep each other on your toes, and make use of each other's tools.”

At what point did you feel that this ideal was being threatened?

“A clear warning sign came at the official opening I did of Virgo, in Pisa. This new installation for research on gravity ways required enormous investments, and we need to make optimal use of it. This can only happen if the best people are put in charge of measurements. The opening took place two weeks after Trump had issued his ban on travellers from Islamic countries, and although I didn't mention him directly in my speech, I did express

THE CHANGING FACE OF NWO

In 2014, the government announced a reform of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO): there were too many separate and independent academic fields and far too many separate institutes. The puzzle was how to bring the nine domains and nine institutes under

a single NWO authority, while still guaranteeing enough input from researchers. The goal is better alignment with NWO tools in various domains: this facilitates interdisciplinary research and gives researchers more clarity on where to submit their research proposals. In addition, the tools should

be more flexible, leading to less sluggish and time-consuming procedures. Stan Gielen originally applied for the part-time position of Science administrator, but was asked for the position of President. Gielen was appointed president on 1 October, for a period of four or five years.

'THE **LACK OF
KNOWLEDGE** OF
WHAT GOES ON IN
THE SCIENTIFIC
WORLD REALLY
SURPRISED ME'

my concerns. Afterwards, the Polish Vice-Minister came to me and said: "You really can't say such things, you know!" That scared me."

What scared you?

"That even an EU country like Poland would not automatically endorse my call for free movement. I understand that I should not be too politically involved. NWO must conform to government policy. For example, if the March for Science had been a purely political rally, NWO would not have been able to join in."

In The Hague you did not carry a banner. If you had, what would it have said?

"I have to think about it." A few days later, Gielen sends me an e-mail: "NWO for independent research."

1 billion extra

As president of the largest apolitical scientific organisation in the Netherlands, his position happens to be extremely political: Dutch scientific research is faced with the challenge of attracting €1 billion extra in the new coalition agreement, which will require quite some political flexibility on Gielen's part. Together with the Association of universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), NWO forms a national "coalition for knowledge" that tries to convince political parties in the new government to release these funds.

'Joining forces is crucial if we want to get this 1 billion,' says Wim van Saarloos, Vice President of KNAW. Are you optimistic?

"Moderately optimistic: we may get a little less. But aside from the money, a good distribution is also important: half of it should go to public-private funding of research. The best news of the past year is that NWO has been put in charge of coordinating how this part of the money is spent."

You talked to all the parties, I've been told. You know all the ins and outs of this new government?

"There is formal and informal contact. Through my contacts, I was recently able to submit an important A4 with our views to Alexander Pechtold. Earlier on, I also spoke to D66 about their planned transfer of NOW institutes to the universities. Luckily they could see the point of my criticism."

Van Saarloos called you a "typical science administrator": "He understands things faster than other people, and therefore runs the risk of listening less carefully." This is something you should work on if you want to be effective in The Hague, he says.

"That's a very good observation on Wim's part. It is one of my weak points. I am working hard to change it."

What did this past year teach you?

"To not be so solution-oriented, but instead to first think: why is the other person saying this? What's behind this?"



'A UNIFIED VOICE FROM THE UNIVERSITIES IS SOMETHING THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR SCIENCE'

For example, my wife Janet and I were going cycling for a day in the Reichswald. Before we left, she said: "Let's go back to the Waalkade for lunch." I immediately felt stung: that wasn't the agreement, we said we were going to the Reichswald. A totally wrong approach, I can see that now. What I should have done is ask Janet why she had changed her mind. I really have to learn not to react so fast."

Peter Zuidema warns you about the The Hague milieu: "They don't deal well with people who say what they think." Did The Hague surprise you?

"The greatest surprise was the lack of knowledge of scientific research among the spokespeople for higher education. One of them didn't even know the difference between NWO and KNAW. The lack of knowledge of what goes on in the scientific world really surprised me. No, I cannot give you an example; it would be traceable to the person in question."

A spokesperson who denies the climate problem?

"No, it wasn't that bad."

Has Trump poisoned the Dutch political climate? And reduced the odds of getting that 1 billion?

"No, I did not see any signs of contempt for science among the coalition parties. Lack of knowledge, yes, and this is something that we should be concerned about. If all transport companies were to go on strike tomorrow, the entire country would grind to a halt. But if the universities go on strike, nothing much will happen in the short term. We need communicators to explain what scientific research is about and what it is for. Luckily there are people like Robbert Dijkgraaf."

You are also on the front line. What is your role in the coalition for knowledge?

"I am one of the generals. With a strong army of NWO employees behind me."

Shortly before you took office, you mentioned in VOX that one of your tasks was to clean up the NWO office. You felt that you could do with fewer people. This statement led to a storm of criticism.

"Yes. It was not very diplomatic to put it in VOX like that. Later on I had a good talk with the works council, and since then we have developed mutual trust."

According to the NRC State Secretary Dekker reprimanded you in person.

"Well, someone from the ministry expressed dissatisfaction on Dekker's behalf. That was a lesson."

Time-consuming

When he was appointed Gielen promised to reform the grant system, which he saw as much too opaque and time-consuming: researchers spend many hours on applications which other researchers then spend at least as much time assessing. And 85% of these efforts are futile: no grant. "In some grant rounds, the acceptance rate is only 4%!" exclaimed Gielen last year in Vox. Halfway through April, the research community met in Amsterdam to consider a new and better system, a milestone for the President.

On the wall in the NWO head office hangs a meter-long illustration with ideas by the researchers who attended this conference, including the Nijmegen Professor Frits Vaandrager. He is quoted as saying "Take 2 million euros and use this to come up with a completely new system."

At the conference Vaandrager pleaded for a rigorous new distribution model: let the research community itself distribute grants. Gone the useless applications, gone the time-consuming assessment procedures. What do you think, is this a good idea?

"First of all: every method that results in less hassle without endangering the quality of research proposals has my blessing. But VENI grants are sometimes awarded to beautiful plans by researchers nobody has ever heard of. If researchers are going to distribute the money themselves, there is a risk that the money will stay in well-known networks. How to avoid favouritism, that's the question."

Vaandrager proposes to explore these objections by means of an experiment.

"That can be done, but it would require €50 to €100 million. NWO does not have that much disposable income. This means we would have to reach an agreement with other parties, especially with the universities."

Another proposal involved universities making their own pre-selection for NWO grants, thus reducing the odds of unsuccessful applications.

"This I am completely in favour of, but it's up to the universities. I know that some universities are aware of how undesirable it is to let dozens of researchers work for days on an application that has very little chance of being accepted."

We heard from Wim van Saarloos that you are critical of so-called 'collaborating' universities. You supposedly said that "the greatest enemy of the VSNU are the universities themselves."

"That's right. And I would like to once again publicly reiterate this: it is in the interest of Dutch science that universities have a unified voice to represent them to the outside world. As far as application pressure is concerned, it is really essential that universities themselves take the time to better pre-select applications. The VSNU recognises the importance of this, and I also hear positive things from the universities themselves, for example from Nijmegen."

The government is also talking about a new grant system. What can we expect?

"Dekker wants to assess applications on knowledge valorisation. If the applicant has already contributed to valorisation in the past, he or she will have a higher chance of being awarded a grant. We are now discussing this with Dekker: how do you measure this kind of past performance? And which subsidies specifically are subject to this criterion? I don't think it's a good idea for VENI grants, meant for young researchers."

After an hour and a half, the spokesperson calls for a last question. Gielen's next appointment is waiting.

You wife has expressed her concern: "Will Stan manage to keep this up until he is 68?"

"Yes. It can be difficult at times, but it brings such beautiful things. The broad support for NWO, the collaboration in the coalition for knowledge. I am prepared to take some hurdles to reap such rewards."

Your administrative assistant Jet van 't Woudt is amazed.

"Where does Stan get his energy from: always working late, always in a good mood, always ready for a chat." What's your secret?

"The energy I get from this work. I am flying closer to the flame than ever, and I get to shape the contribution of science to urgent social problems." *



weatherwoman Margot Ribberink

'WHEN I
SAW MY
FIRST
TORNADO,
I CRIED'

Tornado hunting: that is the remarkable passion of the Nijmegen weatherwoman and former biology student Margot Ribberink (52). And she's not just doing it for kicks. With the Texas storms on her heels, she explains that tornadoes are becoming increasingly more frequent. The cause: climate change.

Text and photography: Annemarie Haverkamp



Outside, the siren is sounding. On the radio, a computer voice warns: “This is a tornado alarm. Seek shelter immediately.” Our hired Ford van races over the road. Not away from the threatening clouds, but right towards the storm. “This might just turn into one,” exclaims Margot Ribberink excitedly from the back-seat. Her eyes are scanning the horizon. “Keep looking, guys! If you don’t look, you won’t see anything.”

A statement worthy of Johan Cruijff, she admits, but she means what she says. In tornado hunting, her greatest passion, you can sometimes make the mistake of focusing too much on the computer screen. If you concentrate exclusively on the constant stream of weather data, you can completely forget to look up. And, as a result, miss the magical moment when a devastating trunk appears below the swirl of dark clouds.

We are driving at high speed through Texas. This is tornado country. Every year, the dreaded whirlwinds claim dozens of US victims. At speeds of hundreds of kilometres per hour, the tornadoes rush over the vast country, dragging houses, trucks, cows and people in their wake. To escape these natural disasters, most people dig a shelter next to their house.

But Ribberink does not seek cover. Together with her team of Dutch meteorologists, she jumps out as soon as the van stops, camera in hand. There is an air of excitement. Is it going to happen? The weatherwoman explains that what we see is a supercell, a thunderstorm of the heaviest kind. The odds are 10 to 1 that this “monster” will give birth to a tornado. “Scientists still don’t know why a tornado develops in some cases and not in others. It probably has to do with the difference in temperature between the warm rising air flow and the cold air sinking towards the ground from the cloud.”

But no matter how apocalyptically the dark clouds are spinning, we will not see a tornado today. We have to get back in the car, as waiting for a thunderstorm to hit you is extremely dangerous. The weather radio station warns against the hailstones we already hear bouncing off the

roof. The accompanying lightning flashes may well hit us. The trick is to follow a storm and watch it from as close as possible, but in such a way that you can quickly get away in your van. On one of these chases, Team Ribberink covers an average of eight hundred kilometres per day.

A gift

It’s her hobby. Nearly every year, the Nijmegen weatherwoman – she was the first weatherwoman on Dutch TV and later became famous with her weather reports for RTL4 – takes three weeks off from her job at MeteoGroup to chase the utmost extreme weather at her own expenses. This year, tornadoes abound in the US: already more than one thousand were observed. In other years, this represents the total at the end of a whole season (from March until August). Bad news for the citizens, but a gift for the storm chasers.

What’s so exciting about this cloud-chasing on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean? “Extreme weather such as this is much rarer in the Netherlands,” explains Ribberink. “These skies are so imposing. And very instructive. On the way we formulate our own predictions based on observations and radar images. We follow our own scenario, even if the weather reports say something else. It’s so exciting when we get it right! As meteorologists, that really gives us the feeling that we understand the atmosphere.”

Of course she takes care to not cheer in public when she sees a tornado – that’s something the Dutch meteorologists do in the privacy of their Ford van. Because the damage for the inhabitants can be severe: from lost harvests to

THE BIRTH OF A TORNADO

A tornado occurs when cold and warm air meet. The two don’t mix, but form a demarcation line along which the air swiftly rises. This can grow into a thunderstorm. If there is enough wind shear (large difference in wind speed or direction above and below in the atmosphere), a supercell can form. The rising warm air causes an air deficit close to the ground (a small low pressure area) that is replenished from below. If this air flow condenses all the way down to the ground, we speak of a tornado. Dangerous tornadoes are between twenty metres and a few kilometres wide (on the ground) and can reach a speed of 150 to 450 kilometres per hour. They usually cover a few kilometres.



Photo above: Driving through Texas. Bottom left: The team holds a briefing every morning in their hotel room. Bottom right: Dutch stickers are placed on the Ford van.





Above:
Photo left: Adjusting our expectations.

Photo right: The team, with (from left to right) Arno Paanstra, Bart Pelgrim, Floris Bijlsma, Margot Ribberink and Melody Sturm.

Page 17:
Photo left: Apocalyptically swirling clouds
Photo right: Mammatus clouds at sunset

devastated villages, not to mention deaths. Ribberink wants to use the knowledge she acquires in Tornado Alley, roughly the area between Mexico and Texas, in the Netherlands. "The better we understand how this kind of dangerous weather occurs, the better we can warn people about it. On 23 June of last year in Brabant, there were ten-centimetre wide hailstones: nothing like that had ever happened before. We will also increasingly have to deal with this kind of extreme weather."

The cause: global warming. Ribberink has been warning people about the consequences of climate change for over twenty years. "I read book after book on the topic; I knew so much! At some point I thought: I have to do more than simply present the weather report. I have to make people realise that we are heading in the wrong direction. The first step is sharing knowledge."

Climate commissioner

This kind of knowledge tends to be lacking in the part of America we are now driving through. Most people here are uneducated and poor. Sixteen percent of Texans live below the poverty line (an annual income of less than €2,000 for a four-person household). Along the road we see trailer parks and junkyards. And signs announcing gun shows.

We stop in a desolate-looking village. Most of the shops are vacant, a small dog is crawling over the hot asphalt. "Hey, I'd rather not see the likes of you around here," jokes a fat woman, pointing at the tornado stickers

on the side of our van. Tornado chasers in your street spells out trouble: bad weather is on its way. Then she tells us her own tornado story. How she once saw four tornadoes in one day. How her son was lifted up in the air, only to be dropped back down (luckily still alive) further on. No, she is not going to watch it; she'd rather hide deep in her cellar.

The irony is that it is Texas of all places that voted for Trump, the man who denies the cause of the natural disasters that so often hit people here. Not only that, he is even taking down websites that offer scientific evidence of climate change, and is planning to stop funding the largest climate research centre in the US, the National Weather Center in Oklahoma (where we plan to make a tourist stop the next day). Trump prefers to spend his money on space and defence programmes.

"This is truly very alarming," says Ribberink. "This centre creates overviews of temperatures across the world. They register extremes – forest fires and floods – so you can see how fast the Earth is warming up. All over the world meteorologists make use of their data. Everyone knows it. The knowledge they produce is essential."

The fact that the controversial president recently pulled the plug on the Paris Climate Agreement is a historical disaster, she says. "America is one of the key players."

Although on her travels through America, Ribberink feels no need to play climate commissioner – where do you start? – But in the Netherlands, this occupies most of her time. She gives lectures and provides information and



is one of the driving forces behind Nijmegen Green Capital; in 2018 the City on the Waal River can call itself the most sustainable European City.

"In the Netherlands we also notice the effects of climate change, but in other parts of the world, the situation is much more drastic. The famine raging through the Horn of Africa has everything to do with the climate. If we want to stop the Earth warming up by more than two degrees, as was agreed in Paris, we have to quickly and dramatically reduce our CO₂ emissions. I like to show people that they themselves can do something about it."

In order to chase tornadoes, you fly to the US and drive thousands of kilometres in a diesel van. Speaking of CO₂ emissions...

"Yes, this is a dilemma I'm fully aware of it. At home I try to compensate, for instance by planting trees via Trees for All. But it would be better if I didn't fly. The problem is that that would also mean not being able to garner this knowledge."

Tough

The next morning at our motel we see on TV 'our' storm, the thundercloud we chased all the way to Oklahoma. Hailstones as big as baseballs fell out of the sky, the towns' streets were covered in white. "You're really lucky," says Ribberink as she sips weak coffee from a plastic cup. "The circumstances are once again favourable. We may be able to see a tornado today. You could just as easily have had two days of bad weather." By "bad weather" the tornado chaser means blue skies and sunshine – sounds awful indeed!

After a short briefing in the breakfast room we are off once again. Deeper into Oklahoma. Promising thunderstorms are expected there later today.

Ribberink tells us how she joined the Dutch team, whose members change every year, for the first time in

'IN THE NETHERLANDS TOO, WE WILL INCREASINGLY HAVE TO DEAL WITH EXTREME WEATHER'

2004. Her children were still young. "What is your mother going to do?" asked the teacher when her youngest, aged 8, proudly announced that mamma was going storm chasing. At home it was a non-issue. Her husband doesn't mind her passion and her daughters – both of whom are now studying at Radboud University – thought it was cool. "We all want to come home in one piece," says Ribberink as she looks around the van. And yet, things can get quite uncomfortable. In 2013, three American storm chasers were killed by a tornado. Including a devoted father and son. "I knew them. They were very experienced and certainly not reckless. It makes you think: should we really be doing this? It could go wrong any day."

But adventure beckons. The first three years that she joined the team, her patience was really put to the test. Not a single tornado in sight. "When I finally saw my first one, I cried", she remembers. This was also due to the men teasing her, blaming her, as the first woman on the team, for the bad luck they had those three years. Ribberink may look tough, but she also has a vulnerable side. As a child she had little self-confidence and was shy. This led her to



Yes! Margot Ribberink watching a tornado in Texas

the wrong choice of study programme: she went to study biology in Leiden because two of her Twente friends were going there too. They were supposed to share a house, a very safe proposition. “After two weeks I hardly saw them anymore; they just went their own way. I didn’t get along with the Leiden students at all, and felt deeply unhappy. After six months, I went back to Hengelo.”

She got a second chance in Nijmegen. Ribberink ended up at the Galgenveld and immediately felt at home with the other students on her floor. “We did everything together. Late nights at De Fuik, Dio and the HBO association [now Merleyn, Eds.]. I had a great time there!”

Suits

While she talks, Ribberink taps on the window in the direction of the clouds above us. “Look! That cauliflower is growing nicely.” And “There, mammatus clouds, also known as udder clouds – those are rare in the Netherlands.”

She’s always had a fascination for the weather, but it was only after graduation that she decided to do something about it. She applied for a job at the newly formed Meteo Consult, a rival of the KNMI, and was accepted. She retrained herself from plant ecologist to meteorologist and underwent a physical transformation as well. “I looked like a biologist. I had a long braid and wore overalls. They told me there was no way I could appear on TV

dressed like that.” Ribberink was sent to the hairdresser and fitted with suits. She found the result so horrifying that for two years she did not dare to look in the mirror. Once again her shyness prevented her from saying anything about it. It was only later that she developed her own TV look. Now she presents the weather report at Max Broadcasting or Gelderland Broadcasting sometimes even while wearing jeans. “Nice jeans, mind you, but when I coach other weatherwomen, I always tell them to stay true to themselves.”

On the horizon the yellow stripes have now turned into threatening sky. Team member Arno shows us his laptop. “You see this blue pit?” A broad grin. The blue pit on the radar is a hellish thunderstorm very close to where we are. We are at the right spot! The road fills with the pick-up trucks of other tornado chasers, some with impressive satellite dishes in the back. We get out in the ditch as the wind pulls on our clothes. The supercell sways like a spaceship above the land and has a swirl at the bottom. But the cold air ruins it all. No trunk appears, and we have no choice but to go in search of a new thunderstorm. ★

Afterword: On this trip, the team ended up seeing five tornadoes (the reporter was back in Nijmegen by then). Photographs and videos can be found on the Facebook page of Tornadojagers.nl.



SUMMER TIP

MARGOT RIBBERINK
Palo Duro Canyon,
Texas

“A beautiful canyon close to Amarillo. If we see a high pressure area on the weather map and it looks like a sunny day, I like to go for a hike. A bit of exercise is great when you drive an average of eight hundred kilometres a day.”

dj Timon van Merriënboer

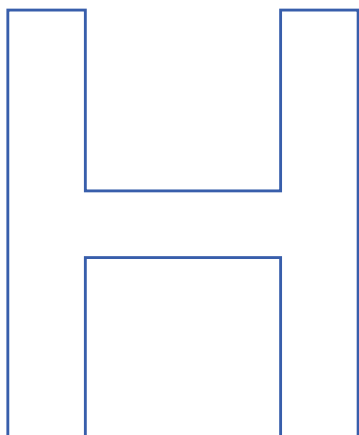
'I'M NOT REALLY RICH'

DJ Rebourne, also known as Timon van Merriënboer (23), flies to festivals in the US, Australia and Chile, where he mixes hard style for thousands of fans. In between he also studies. Not to mention making music with Arjen Lubach.

Text: Maarten van Gestel / **Photography:** Gerard Verschooten

'I HEARD AN
ARENA OF **FIFTEEN
THOUSAND**
PEOPLE CHEER'





He doesn't own a car, lives with three friends in a student house and can go to the supermarket without being recognised. But when he spins at a Chilean hard style festival DJ Timon van Merriënboer, alias Rebourne, is stalked at his hotel by fans waiting for a signature and a selfie with him.

Because of his collaborations with D-Block & S-te-Fan and Arjen Lubach, the 23 year-old student of Social Geography, Planning and Environment is the greatest student DJ of Radboud University and perhaps of the Netherlands. We spoke to the quiet Molenhoecker on the small roof terrace of his student room turned home studio.

Normal students work on weekends at the Albert Heijn. You fly to festivals in Los Angeles, Australia and Chile. Can you describe one of these trips?

"In April I was in Chile; that was a real highlight. I flew from Buenos Aires to Santiago, arrived at the hotel, and an hour later I was already being picked up for a mixing session. I hadn't slept in twenty hours and hadn't even seen a bed because my room wasn't ready yet. When I arrived at the festival, I heard an arena of fifteen thousand people cheer as I began to play my intro. All of a sudden all I could feel was energy. Everyone went totally berserk, that was truly the best audience I ever had."

You study Social Geography, Planning and Environment. Did you get a chance to explore Chile during your trip?

"I always try to see as much as possible, but it's difficult. This festival took place during the day, so I didn't see anything on Saturday. On Sunday I took a taxi with three other Dutch guys to visit the hotspots. But the real Chile, like the poorer areas, I only saw on the way between the airport and my hotel."

So you got full VIP treatment?

"In Chile yes. That was rather extreme. We stayed at the best hotel in Santiago. My room was amazing, although they had probably reserved the penthouse for DJ Hardwell.



SUMMER TIP

TIMON VAN MERRIËNBOER
the
Elbphilharmonie
in Hamburg

"I sometimes end up in strange places. Close to Hamburg, they turned a skiing hall into a club.

I decided to stay on for the weekend. They have a new concert hall there with the best acoustics in the world, so we really wanted to attend a concert. Unfortunately we were too late reserving, but it must be fantastic."

Backstage at the festival there were all these bottles of alcohol and an enormous table filled with food. And then every artist also has his own rider (a list of artist's requirements for a performance, Eds.). Mine consists mostly of technical stuff, together with some cans of Red Bull and a six-pack of Heineken."

Chile had the best audience you ever saw, you said.

How was it different from the Netherlands?

"I had the feeling that these were mostly very young people. What I also noticed was the audience was the same for all genres. The festival had programmed trance on Friday afternoon, and techno on Friday night. On Saturday there was hard style, and on Sunday, house. In the Netherlands, with all our sub-cultures, it would be unthinkable for all these genres to attract the same crowd. In Chile they all totally went for it all. Even with techno – here everybody only knows the one step – all the Chileans were jumping up and down."

Why do you think that is?

"In the Netherlands we are used to having a festival every weekend. People don't really blow their top anymore. I, too, sometimes enjoy just relaxing on the grass with a beer. In Chile, they have one big party every six months. Everyone looks forward to it, I imagine, so they really totally blow their top."

What if you have a Monday morning exam after one of these trips? Do you study on the plane?

"I try to avoid that. But I did sometimes fail an exam because I was in Australia for two weeks, and missed a lot of compulsory presentations. I tried to organise something beforehand with the lecturer, but no luck. Another time I had a resit after a show in Canada. I went straight from the airport to campus. During the exam I was falling asleep. Luckily I had three hours to complete it."

The University has special exam regulations for top athletes. Is there no such thing for top DJs?

"Unfortunately not. I've talked about it with my study supervisor and the Dean. He said they might arrange something with music, but that was more for students who attend the Conservatoire. I didn't really get the impression that they consider making dance music a top sport."

Did you ever think of quitting your studies to become a full-time DJ?

"I once had a moment of serious doubt. That was at the start of my second year, when I failed one subject and had to do one resit. I thought: 'I'll just take the risk, and see how it turns out!' But my parents advised me to first complete my Bachelor's degree. Three weeks ago I passed the last exam, with only one year delay. What a relief!"

'MY FELLOW STUDENTS WERE OFTEN HUNGOVER IN CLASS'



PHOTO: MICHEL VAN ROSSUM

*Do you see yourself also doing a Master's programme?
Or do you plan to mix until you turn fifty?*

"I'm certainly not planning to start a Master's programme in the coming year. As for later on, we'll see. I don't think I'll be hanging around clubs until I turn fifty. But I would like to keep working in the music industry. Just as footballers turn into trainers at some point many DJs end up launching their own label or concept."

At seventeen you were record label Fusion's youngest artist ever. How did that feel?

"Great. Till then I'd just been messing around in my room, and suddenly it looked as if I could really do something with music. The funny thing was that I then also got bookings as a DJ, while I'd never mixed before. At home I always used Virtual DJ (user-friendly DJ software, eds.), so I did understand the general principle. But I touched DJ equipment for the first time in a show with a live audience."

A year later you began your study programme. Did you feel different from other students?

"Not really. I just took part in the introduction week, and attended get-togethers at my student association. The only difference was that my fellow students were often hungover in class. That didn't happen to me. I was busy making music and I had the idea that the more time I devoted to that, the more it would pay off."

And you were right. Your track Louder with D-Block & S-te-Fan was streamed more than 2.7 million times on Spotify. "That collaboration was so much fun! I'd sent them the beginning of a track, just to ask them what they thought of it. They gave me some advice, and then I offered to finish it together. They made that track ten times better. I realised I would never have dreamed of making a track like that five years ago. And then suddenly, there it was."

Hard style makes me think of hard head-banging music.

Does your music differ from that of other artists?

"My tracks are a bit more melodic than regular hard style. It sounds cliché, but I like there to be a story in the music. I'm not really interested in making head-banging music. At festivals, my friends sometimes joke about it. We'd be standing there listening to one of those raw hard style artists, and they tell me I make sissies' music."

You will soon for the second time dive into the studio with The Galaxy – the DJ act of Arjen Lubach. Do you still find it scary?

"Scary is not the right word. I mostly think it's funny, because I love Arjen Lubach as a person, because of his TV programme, Sundays with Lubach. And I loved his music (trap, a mix of hip-hop, dubstep and hip hop, eds.) long before I knew who was behind it. But in the studio we're just two boys passing a MacBook back and forth. Compared to the music that comes out of it, this kind of collaboration is very calm."

Are you rich now?

"My hourly rate for a performance is of course much higher than that of students working a supermarket job. But you shouldn't forget that I spend most of my time making music. I don't get paid for that directly. And I have a study debt, like everyone else. So I'm not really rich."

Do you have a last edifying message for 'normal' students?

"Maybe that you should take risks and follow your dreams – that sort of thing – but I personally chose to play it safe by first completing my degree. DJ Martin Garrix quit secondary school to mix and it worked out for him. But I also know plenty of guys who stopped studying, made music for two years, and then went back to studying. It's important to think about what you do and how. No matter what you do." *

AGENDA



PHOTO: MARJOLEIN VAN DIEJEN

Festival De Kaaij

SUMMER TIPS

30 JUNE TO 9 SEPTEMBER: All summer long, Festival De Kaaij will once again take over the beach under the Waalbrug. A great opportunity to eat, drink beer, listen to music, or follow one of the workshops or lectures.

30 JUNE TO 2 JULY: The first edition of Beer Festival MOUT was such a success that we will soon gather once again for a weekend of special beers in the Julianapark.

15 JULY TO 21 JULY: The fame of the Four Day Marches and the accom-

panying festivities extends far beyond Nijmegen. Come and join us at the Op 't Eiland Festival, the Valkhof Festival or the mainstream podiums in the city. Or get your own beer crate and settle down along the Via Gladiola.

STAFF

www.ru.nl/pv

5 JULY, 2.30 p.m. Volunteers on campus. A mini symposium on the occasion of the farewell of Staff Association Board Member Reijer Goettsch. With Cees Buren, Paul van Tongeren and Dirk Ruiter. Location: the Aula.

Radboud Reflects

www.ru.nl/radboudreflects



PHOTO: LESCHATEL.D.CC

War in cyberspace

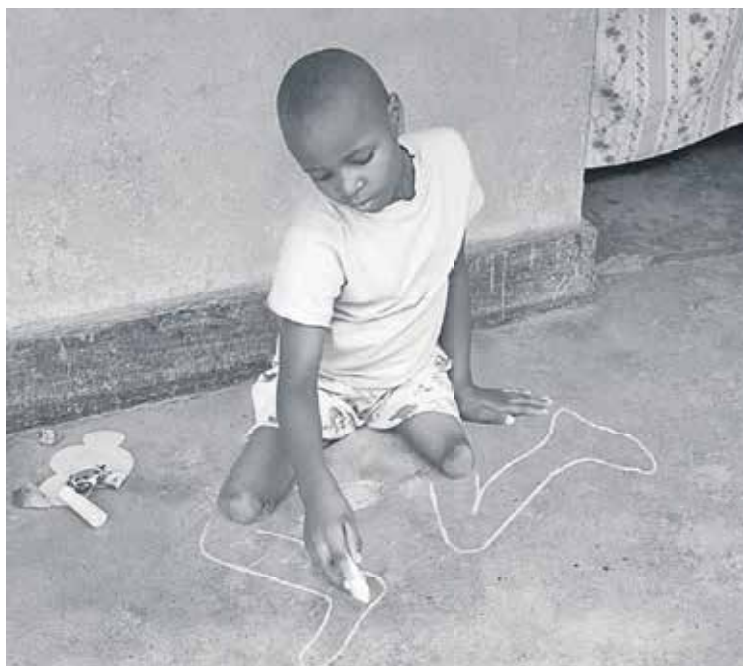
20 JUNE, 7.30 p.m.: Zero Days. Documentary & discussion with philosopher Evert van der Zweerde and digital security expert Merel Koning. What does it mean to wage war in cyberspace? Location: LUX.

27 JUNE, 7.30 p.m.: The Constitution as a Guide. Lectures by former politician Bas de Gaay Fortman and law philosopher Derk Venema. On the Constitution, its usefulness and ideals. Location: Lecture hall complex.

15-19 JULY, 6.30 p.m.: Radboud Reflects @ Op 't Eiland Festival. With lectures by Jeroen Linssen, Lisa Doeland and Roy Dings, among others.

25 AND 26 AUGUST, 10.15 p.m.: Radboud Reflects @ Cultural Terrace De Kaaij. Join researchers and philosophers to reflect on the great challenges of our times.

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open de wereld
voor een kind
met een handicap

COLOPHON

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