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WORLD OF MAWYC

CONNECTIVITY

COMMITMENT

PRECIOUSNESS

BEAUTY

DURABILITY

RESPECT

FAMILY

SIMPLICITY

OPENNESS

MYSTERY

Together, these core values constitute the manifesto of the world of Mawyc Group. They are the spine and the unique DNA of the company. After all, doing business is so much more than the sum of facts and figures. Every year, we explain one of those values in our World of Mawyc magazine. In this issue, the concept of **connectivity** in all its meanings is central. Nowhere is the connectivity between words and images expressed more beautifully than in artists' books. Some of these are highlighted at the end of this edition.

tot nu toe was er nog geen sprake van dat de wereld van sluisdrift in  
 landen... op deze manier... van het personeel had eerder...  
 Hij merkte nu gemaakt het nieuwe...  
 en in plaats van... maar dat was zijn...  
 Hij had niet verwacht dat er plots een camerateam voor z...  
 was zou staan. Tot overmaat van ramp kwam er in de loop van  
 de middag een ander camerateam langs. Ze beelden de pianier  
 genist, maar konden het niet maken hem niet in hun avond-  
 journal te brengen. En het lot kregen ze ook iets te horen wat  
 ze nog niet anders gehoord hadden. Zo kwam het dat hij aan  
 deze journalist vertelde dat er een wat... van plaatsun-  
 den op het vlak van connectiviteit.  
 en anders sprong... van 1,4 - 2 miljard mensen  
 te maken... op het internet, naar 4 à 5 miljard.  
 uit van... mogelijkheden... enorm zouden toene-  
 men. Dit is bij die 3 miljard... wat mensen zouden zitten  
 met nieuwe en frisse ideeën... vooruit...  
 neken...  
 e... vil het journal van de wereld...  
 resante nieuws bracht van de connectiviteit, bracht het ande-  
 re journal spectaculairder nieuws. De dochter van onderne-  
 mer Victor Shis is opgenomen in een psychiatrisch ziekenhuis.  
 Mijkbaar was Leo Goenen verder geen spinnen. Of misschien  
 was hij getint door de politie. Victor was...  
 geïnteresserd dat de...  
 en nu... tijd en aandacht...

## FROM BRICKS TO CLICKS

These are incredible times, certainly where technology is concerned.

These days: 'connectivity' is associated with linking computers and systems, and is often described as the possibility to make machines communicate with each other, increasing their capacity. A good example is computing power, which has increased by factor 2 to the 32rd power in about 64 years (i.e. times 4,294,967,296 ...).

The world of the web, the mobile and apps is still experiencing an enormous explosion in capacity and computing power.

Evermore powerful machines will continue to find new patterns in numerous 'connected' data collections - the so-called big data - and thus create new opportunities for the business world.

How about cars that already phone the garage themselves to book a service? And how about Siri, your personal assistant in your smartphone? In no time, he or she finds restaurants, tells you about the weather, communicates the share price of your investment, sends texts without you having to type them, etc.

Yet for IT-connectivity this is only the beginning.

The capacity is there, but what does it mean for the PRESENT?

## 'From bricks to clicks' .... But are we still connected?

In business, connectivity also means service.

But what, exactly, is service? At Mawyc Group it means that employees use their personal knowledge when fulfilling a task and, if necessary, when looking for solutions. We are aware of the fact that modern means of communication will become ever more important. We don't turn a blind eye to it, on the contrary: we keep anticipating it. In spite of the 'new technical connectivity', here at Mawyc, *renewed personal communication* will become more important than ever.

We will make use of the improved and faster flow and processing of information to adapt our personal communication with the customer.

One of the values at Mawyc, therefore, is permanent development. So how can we find the right balance between machine connectivity and interpersonal connectivity? In other words, how can we get the two to work together in an 'empathic' way? Talk about a challenge!

In our Forwarding and Insurance department, personal connectivity is still our greatest asset, since *quick time-to-market* is the challenge. The computer takes over more and more in that field. We work with this and only use it as a basic service.

With us, interpersonal relations, understanding what is needed, remains our 'little extra something'.

The human factor will always remain 'switched on' with us. That is our connection.

*We stay connected, whenever and wherever!*

  
 Jacques M. L. M. Wyckaert, CEO Mawyc Group



“ *Connectivity is not a technological notion. It is all about people*”

MARC DE GUSSEMÉ, JAN DE NUL

“*It may sound strange, but I go walking or cycling for at least an hour every day. Every day, 365 out of 365, and often alone. When you do that every day, come rain or shine, you really feel a connection with the elements*”

DIMITRI CASTELEYN, WRITER

“*Mawyc Group now assures the worldwide coordination of all our policies, using its own partner network of brokers to do so. The benefits of this are clear*”

DIRK DEES, BELGOTEX

“ *Problems can often be solved more quickly with one phone call or one confirmation mail than through endless communication with many people in cc*”

DANNY SIMONS, MAWYC GROUP

“*With us, interpersonal relations, understanding what is needed, remains our ‘little extra something’. The human factor will always remain ‘switched on’ with us. That is our connection*”

JACQUES WYCKAERT, MAWYC GROUP

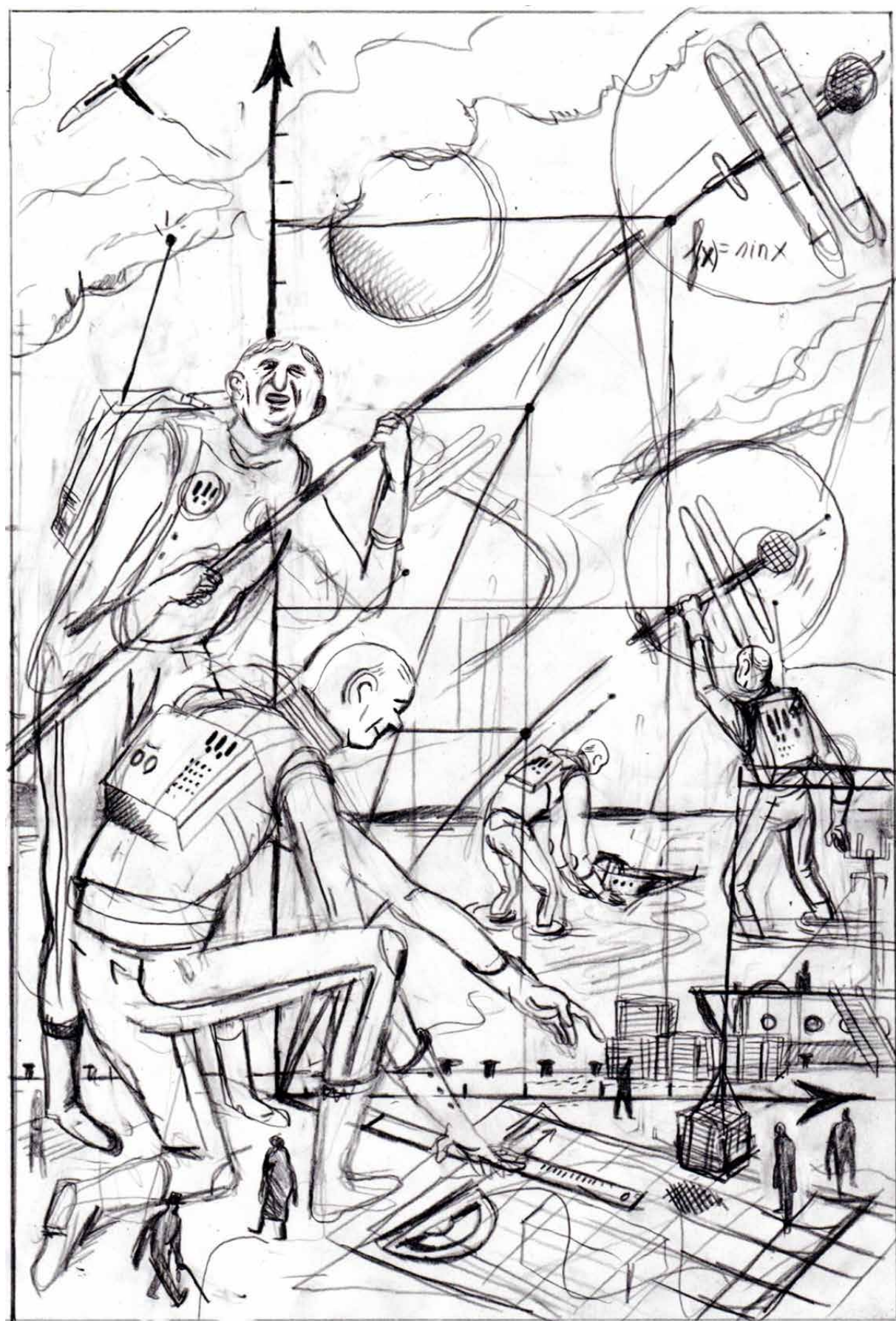
“*We are often confronted with damage claims. In that case, an insurance broker who just takes commission and handles the paperwork is not good enough; we need a proactive service provider*”

BART BRACKE, VUYLSTEKE

“*Like Rein, we try to be different. The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is a little extra*”

“*Curiosity is the key to creativity, openness the key to knowledge*”

JACQUES WYCKAERT, MAWYC GROUP & REIN ERGO, ERGO PERS



*Since its foundation in 1924 Mawyc Group has grown into an international expert in Insurance and Forwarding.  
A short company history.*

## INSURANCE

An entrepreneur has to take risks. Sometimes a lot of risk. For four generations now, Mawyc Insurance has made it its speciality to clearly assess these risks. Time and again, we manage to assist entrepreneurs in the most effective way when it comes to risk exposure. As independent, international brokers, we offer our clients made-to-measure policies with the right balance between risk coverage and the premiums to be paid. To our specialists, efficiency, a thorough knowledge of the client's dossier and friendly, client-orientated service are more than just words. Our experts put themselves in the shoes of our clients and see both the risk issues and the value from their perspective. A regular contact person closely follows up dossiers, allowing us to offer the best possible service. Mawyc Insurance specialises in insurances where we can add considerable value. Think liability insurance, transport insurance, consequential loss insurance or employee benefits. The latter include, amongst other things, group insurance, pension plans, medical insurance for expats, collective travel plans and hospitalisation insurance. *Would you like to know more about our Insurance department? Go to [www.mawyc.be](http://www.mawyc.be) or phone us on: + 32 (0)9 223 35 42.*

## FORWARDING

The world has become a village in which companies import and export to every continent. Mawyc Forwarding helps companies organise this transport by land, sea or air. Whether this involves standard LCL or FCL containers or unique complicated transport, our knowledge and dozens of years of experience enable us to direct the whole logistic import or export chain: from supplier of raw materials to manufacturer to final destination. For example, we load ships, planes and trucks, arrange storage and distribution. Moreover, we are specialised in European customs law, which allows the whole process to proceed smoothly. Mawyc Forwarding also represents its clients at customs and VAT points. We use our own people and materials, or work with our worldwide network of partners and agents. *Would you like to know more about our Forwarding department? Go to [www.mawyc.be](http://www.mawyc.be) or phone us on: + 32 (0)3 610 06 24.*



*Two giants find each other, in spite of the enormous distance between them, and shake hands cordially. Illustrator Lukas Verstraete about his visual interpretation of worldwide networking: "Networking has always involved shaking hands. Mawyc Group wants to achieve that direct human contact even over great distances. The extensive, familiar network of contacts that Mawyc offers is also illustrated by the dotted lines crisscrossing the sky."*

## THE SPIDER IN THE WEB

*It may not sound all that nice to compare Mawyc Group to a spider, but it is a fact that the company has a worldwide network at its disposal, both in Forwarding and Insurance. Tools such as Risk Management Solutions (RMS) and the Workflow Management System (WMS) help everything run smoothly and ensure maximum 'connectivity'.*

"Where Insurance is concerned, we have an international network of partners at our disposal: local, independent brokers who share our philosophy," says Jacques Wyckaert, CEO of Mawyc Group. "We strive for a personal approach, perfect service and a swift despatch of our dossiers."

Mawyc manages the worldwide programme policies of its clients in the fields of - amongst other things - liability, transport, property, business interruption and travel. The partners in the network provide for the local insurance needs of the clients because they are perfectly familiar with the 'Good Local Standards', local needs and customs.

"Our network has grown organically into a spider's web, and we are right at the heart of that web," laughs Jacques. "We are present in all countries that are relevant to our clients. We also follow our clients when they grow and start being active in other countries."

*"Our network has grown organically into a spider's web, and we are right at the heart of that web. We are present in all countries that are relevant to our clients. We also follow our clients when they grow and start being active in other countries"*

Moreover, Mawyc Group has a licence in respect of free traffic of services in the European Union concerning insurance brokering. "Even if they don't have their head office in Belgium, from here we can still offer all our European clients worldwide insurance and support," says Legal Counsel and Manager Insurance non-life Bruno Dewaele.

At the moment, the Mawyc Risk Management Solutions (RMS) tool is used for internationally active clients who feel the need for it. RMS is an interactive web app where information is shared worldwide concerning the clients, their policies (both in worldwide and in local programmes), analysis and management of risks - including all necessary preventative measures. "Through various approaches, everybody has access to the data that are relevant to them, both when it comes to policy management and to follow-up of damages," says Bruno. "Via RMS we can also keep an eye on the budgets for premiums and damages. Therefore, RMS is also a strong tool for reporting."

Jacques: "RMS makes everything more transparent and more manageable for the client, the insurance company and for us as brokers. All parties already know each other. For every dossier, we are partners and not opponents."



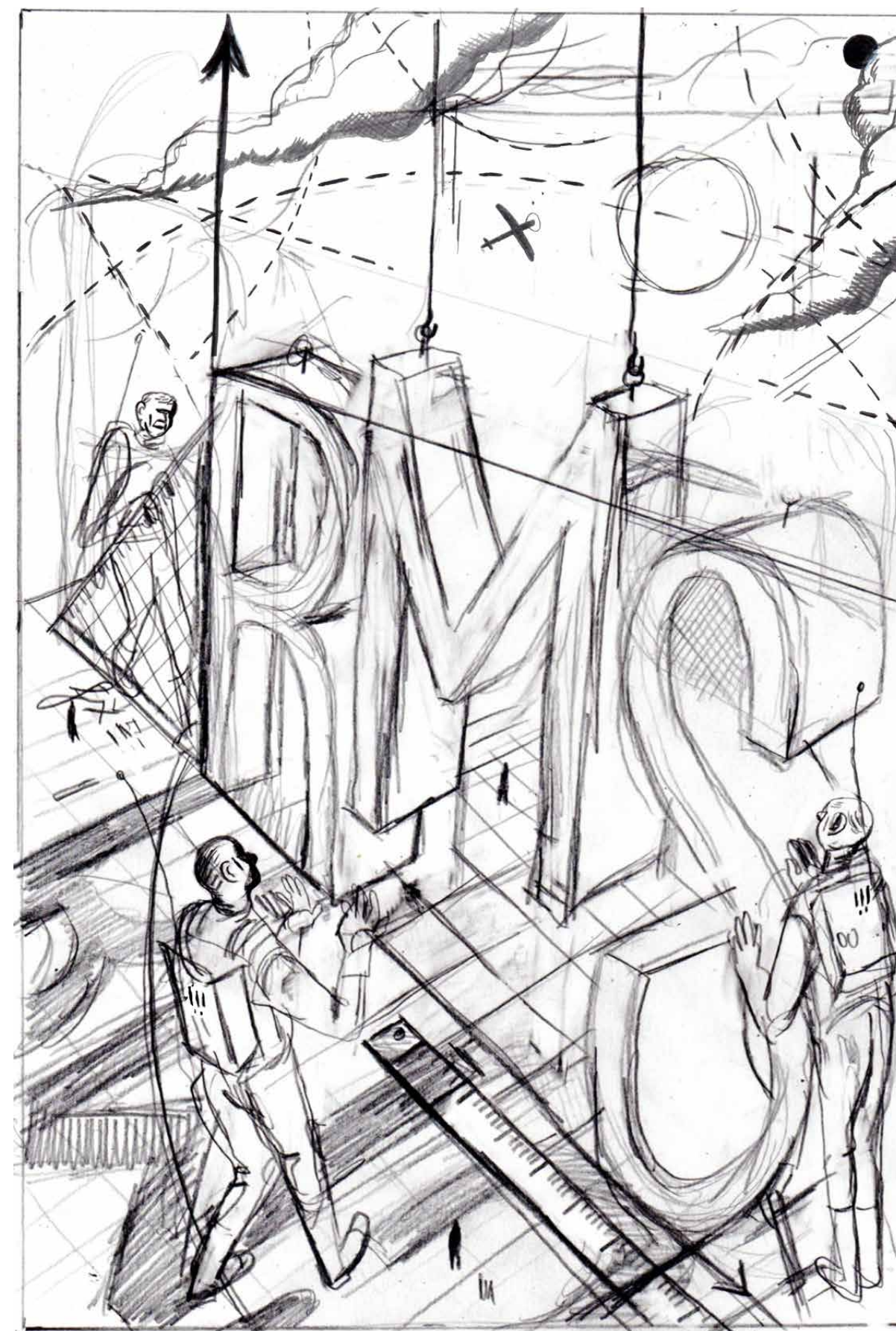
When it comes to the Forwarding department, there, too, Mawyc Group can rely on an extensive worldwide network. “In the old days, the seller of goods would arrange the transport to the port of destination,” Danny Simons, sales manager, remembers. “Now we have evolved to door-to-door deliveries via combined transport. The client or supplier outsources all the transport involved. In order to provide good, efficient service to the client, a good agent who knows his territory through and through is indispensable, both in the port of origin and at the destination. There is a lot of reciprocity in this relationship: our agent in, say, New York, will be happy to contact us when he needs to import goods from Belgium.”

The Mawyc network already encompasses 200 agents and becomes tighter all the time - the number of white spots on the world map is rapidly diminishing. Danny explains: “We find new partners through existing connections and once the trust is there, a first formal contact can rapidly grow into a warm, strong personal relationship.”

*“Transport will always be ‘people business’. Nothing can replace personal contacts, both with shipping companies and with agents and clients”*

That network, too, needs a tool, in this case the Mawyc Workflow Management System (WMS). This online track & trace tool allows us to track the location of the containers and the workflow in the dossier. ICT is a tool, but no more than that, states Danny Simons: “Nothing can replace personal contacts, both with shipping companies and with agents and clients. Problems can often be solved more quickly with one phone call or one confirmation mail than through endless communication with many people in cc. This is something our young colleagues don’t always sufficiently realise. Transport, after all, remains a ‘people business’.”

WORLD OF MAWYC



*We are busy rolling out the interactive web tool Mawyc Risk Management Solutions (RMS), which inspired illustrator Lukas Verstraete to this visual translation. Lukas: “The figures watch closely while the M is lowered to take its place between its companions, the letters R and S. Together, they form one of the pillars of Mawyc Group. Like the abbreviation, the drawing represents the company’s offering of solutions in the field of risk management.”*

***To lead and be led***

*An order was given,  
I take over,  
Take it by the arm,  
Suddenly feel like a robber  
A moment at the u-turn,  
We both need  
Positioning*

*Whispering voices somewhere  
Whispering voices on the edge of nowhere  
Trying to get a grip, feeling my way around*

*Down the steps, hesitating and keen  
I am, from now on, an accomplice  
Into the lift, briskly or carefully  
Past the edge  
All bridges burnt behind us*

*Silence, seeing without being seen  
A frame to the mirror of the soul  
Through the face's profile  
The smooth lines of the face are seen  
Expression of contained power*

*Downstairs,  
Back to the present  
Then the exposure  
With looks in the eyes that  
Carry far greater wisdom than  
Their age can bear*

*Thoughtfully coats are buttoned  
With intensity that approaches zenith  
Ruminating: what has happened?  
Is there relief or sadness?*

*A smile, do you have far to go sir?  
And please be careful on the road,  
I open the door and he humbly slips away  
Seeking the values I  
Proclaim, being only guilty of not  
Achieving the norm, as  
Deafening as the quiet  
Before the storm*

*I pass the mirror and when I  
Gird myself once more  
I realise, far too late  
That it was me  
Who has been led*





*“Mawyc’s worldwide network guarantees smooth communication and a more efficient implementation of our policies”*

DIRK DEES, BELGOTEX



“For nearly twenty years, **BELGOTEX** has had an excellent relationship with Mawyc Group”, says CEO Dirk Dees. “We are very happy with the service the company offers. And now there is the added bonus of the new software platform Risk Management Solutions. The co-operation and communication will be better than ever.”

Belgotex, with its head office in Kruishoutem, is a group of businesses owned by the Colle-De Clerck family, and therefore has roots in the world of Beaulieu. The company has manufacturing plants in Belgium (Nyobe, manufacturer of polyamide yarn, and carpet factories Associated Weavers and Papilio), France (Balsan), South-Africa, Brazil and Australia, and sales offices in Dubai, Australia and India. Belgotex has revenue of 430 million euros and 1800 employees.

“Twenty years ago customs office Machtelynck, now part of Mawyc Group, developed an easy solution for us which meant that our drivers no longer had to go to the customs offices themselves with their trucks,” Dirk remembers. “We then also started to work with them for our insurance. Mawyc bundled a whole range of transport policies into Marine Cargo Insurance, and since 2007 they have renegotiated quite a few other policies for us. Our group insurances within our Belgian offices were also streamlined by Mawyc.”

An international company such as Belgotex takes out the most diverse policies in its different branches, always through local brokers. “Mawyc now assures the worldwide coordination of all those policies, using its own partner network of brokers to do so,” Dirk continues. “The benefits of this are clear. Thanks to central management and negotiation we have a better overview and get better deals for all our framework contracts concerning liability, transport, property, business interruption and travel.”

“The new platform Risk Management Solutions (RMS) that is now being put in place also creates a central database in which we will assemble and follow up all our policy data - down to ongoing damage claims. Policies that were taken out locally will also be included. This means that everybody has access to the information he or she needs.”

Good personal contacts with the people at the top and with Mawyc’s specialists are an enormous asset. Dirk: “Within Mawyc Group we have our regular contact persons, with always a good back-up, who also handle the contacts with Mawyc’s international partners. This worldwide network guarantees smooth communication and a more efficient implementation of our policies.”

*[www.belgotexinternational.com](http://www.belgotexinternational.com)*



Stien Bekaert made an artistic interpretation of the Vuylsteke company. Original Images courtesy Vuylsteke, [www.the-nelson-collection.com](http://www.the-nelson-collection.com)

## WORLD OF MAWYC

*“Mawyc is so much more than an insurance broker, it is a professional service provider”*

BART BRACKE, VUYLSTEKE

In West and East Flanders, **VUYLSTEKE** has built a solid reputation as a contractor. Owner, manager and business engineer Bart Bracke is now at the helm. He married the oldest daughter of Chris Vuylsteke. In 1999 his father-in-law took him into the firm, and in 2004 he was given the opportunity to take over the business.

Bart further expanded his father-in-law's Meulebeek building business and his factory making prefabricated concrete elements. The revenue increased from 12 to 50 million euros and these days the group has 170 employees. Founding an investment business for project development has certainly contributed to this constant growth.

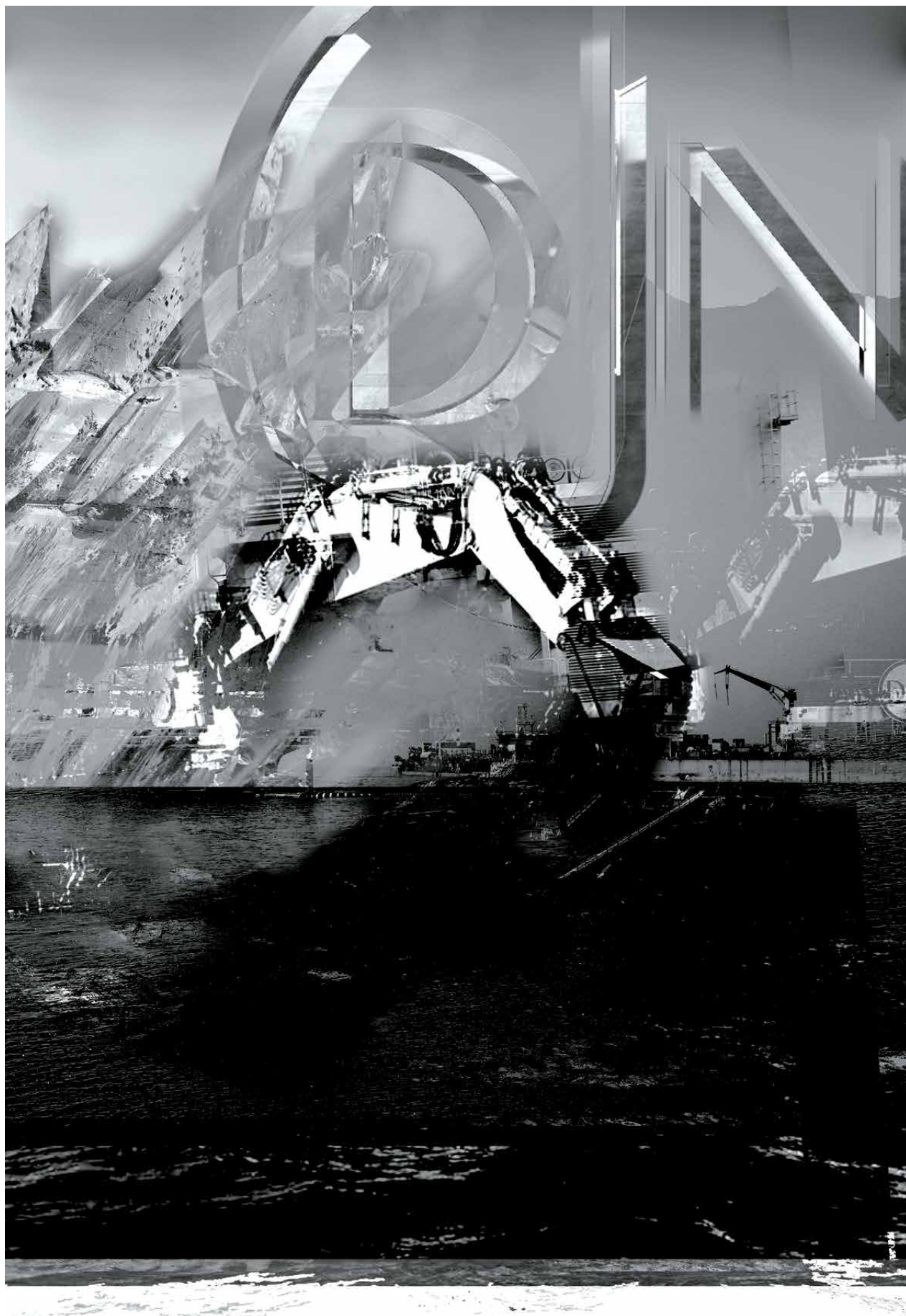
“When it comes to building projects, we take on orders of between 3 and 15 million euros. This makes us the biggest of the small contractors in the area, and the smallest of the big ones,” Bart says about his company. “We work for both the public sector and for private clients, and we mainly build parking garages, apartments and buildings for the social sector such as old people's homes, schools or hospitals. We have recently evolved from ‘straightforward’ projects to broader DBF-contracts (design – build – finance, editor's note) where we provide both design and building, but also finance.”

Bart favours projects that involve a lot of concrete, and with his own concrete factory he can deliver the prefabricated elements to the building site at exactly the right time. “That saves a lot of time. It also means that we are less dependent on the weather,” Bart sums up the advantages. “Of course, the architect needs to be involved, for as soon as the plans have been drawn up and production has been planned, nothing can be changed in the design.”

Bart entrusted all his insurance affairs to Mawyc Insurance. “The most important to us are the building site insurance (ABR), the public liability insurance (BA) and employers liability insurance (AO)”, he sums up. “We are often confronted with damage claims. In that case, an insurance broker who just takes commission and handles the paperwork is not good enough; we need a pro-active service provider who sees the matter from a legal point of view and gives us personal advice and support. At Mawyc Insurance they have all the knowledge to do that. We also always have Mawyc Insurance check the policies of our builders and other partners in the building process, and our contracts with them.”

Moreover, Mawyc Group has an extensive network of contacts, not only on the insurance market, but also amongst experts and lawyers, and they are familiar with the needs of a contractor. Bart: “We have good personal contacts and our regular ports of call within Mawyc Insurance. When we took out a group insurance for our people, the specialist Employee Benefits at Mawyc Insurance came to give a personal presentation to explain everything. In case of damages or if we have questions, we don't speak to a secretary who has to look up our files, but our contact comes to see us virtually on the same day,” Bart continues. “You know: Mawyc is more than an insurance broker, it is a professional provider of services. We can see this close cooperation continue for a long time into the future.”

[www.vuylstekeaaneming.be](http://www.vuylstekeaaneming.be)



*“We have developed a warm personal bond with Mawyc, which means that all problems can be discussed and therefore solved”*

MARC DE GUSSEMÉ, JAN DE NUL

**JAN DE NUL** is probably the largest dredging company in the world, and it has the most up-to-date fleet. But dredging - building harbours or deepening fairways - is only one aspect of their activities. During the past years, the company has diversified and now also specialises in civil works, environmental rehabilitation and offshore hydraulic engineering: wind farms, rock installation and ballasting, installation of sub-sea cables... In all, the 7000 employees of the Jan De Nul Group realise a group turnover of 2.1 billion euros.

Behind that number lies a whole mechanism, of which international transport is an important part. “When we start a project, we transport all the necessary materials to the site, amongst others by chartered ships,” says Marc De Gussemé of the International Transport Department. “But while the project is being executed, we also need a constant supply of spare parts and consumables. This is arranged in the transport department, whether it is by sea, by air or on the road.”

Huge sums of money are nothing unusual in a company of this size. Still, Jan De Nul Group tries to keep costs in check at every stage. Marc: “Every site receives one delivery by air, and at least one container by sea or road every month. We are working on dozens of projects at once worldwide. A small saving on each delivery makes quite a difference at the end of the day.”

That is why Jan De Nul Group is very careful when it comes to contracting out transport. Marc: “For air freight, we work with a yearly tender per destination. For sea freight we offer each transport to a limited number of companies, selected on the basis of fees and experience. Mawyc Group is one of these. They are also our agent for all goods imported by De Nul via the port of Antwerp, both returns from the sites and goods that we order outside the EU.”

Just like Mawyc, Marc, too, highly values ‘connectivity’. “Many people interpret this notion in a technological way: like being ‘connected via your computer network’. I prefer to think of it as being connected to your job, your friends, your colleagues and even your providers - such as Mawyc Group,” Marc explains. “It is not that hard to learn the technical aspects of your job, but that is not sufficient if you don’t establish a bond with other people. In the beginning of our dealings with Mawyc, our contacts were purely technical and formal, but by now, we have developed a warm personal bond, which means that all problems can be discussed and therefore solved.”

[www.jandenul.com](http://www.jandenul.com)



*About two years ago, **MWM LOGISTICS** became part of Mawyc Group. Storage, logistics, distribution and transport are the core tasks of the company. This means that it offers clients a complete logistic chain. That, too, is an aspect of 'connectivity', a value close to Mawyc's heart.*

MWM Logistics operates from cargo airport Brucargo in Zaventem. Therefore, many of the transport assignments start or end with international air cargo, with MWM providing the road transport. At Brucargo, MWM Logistics has a 1000 m<sup>2</sup> depot, plus an extra 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of logistic space in Ghent. From there, all Belgian provinces are served, as well as the border regions in Germany, France and The Netherlands. In other words: MWM Logistics has a range of some 300 km.

The company recently deployed recently deployed six new trucks and vans, doubling their fleet. These vehicles are used on a daily basis to collect or deliver (semi) industrial goods to clients all over the country.

Another recent addition is the IT platform that connects the client, the driver and the company and allows easy communication between them. The new system fits collection and delivery assignments into the schedules of the vans and trucks. At the same time, all the necessary administrative documents are created immediately and automatically. This means the system is linked both to the operational part of the assignment and to bookkeeping. Moreover, there is uninterrupted contact with the drivers by means of an on-board unit. A sort of extra large smartphone allows us to add more assignments and adapt the driving schedule accordingly.

The new IT platform, therefore, is much more than just a track & trace system for the truck and its cargo. It works in two directions. The driver can input remarks of the clients and link proof of

*Thanks to a new IT platform, the client,  
the driver and the company can easily communicate  
during the whole route*

delivery or collection, and even photos of damage to the load, to the client's dossier. From dispatching, it is easy to see if the driver respects his driving and resting times, if he is on the road, is in a traffic jam or has to take unexpected delays at the client's into account.

This way MWM can allow its rolling fleet and his employees to work more efficiently. And thanks to the permanent contact with the driver, the company can react extremely quickly when circumstances change. A luxury for MWM, but also for the client. After all, MWM can communicate in a more transparent way with the client, which means the assignment can be fulfilled more quickly. A broader 'connectivity', therefore, offers nothing but advantages.

[www.mwmlogistics.com](http://www.mwmlogistics.com)





*Not many people manage to make the transformation from entrepreneur to bestselling author. DIMITRI CASTELEYN did just that. And how. Once, he had his own communications agency and was he the power behind production company De Racconteurs. Witte Warmte (White Heat), his second novel, promises to become another bestseller.*

**Connectivity, or rather, the lack of it, is an important theme in your novel.**

It certainly is part of the book. The novel is about the relationship between a father and his daughter, and the lack of contact between the two. It is a kind of connectivity you really don't want to have (*laughs*). Much of my work is about relationships. In the village where I live, there is a poem of mine on a wall: 'We are what we make of each other with words, tender words.' I often think about the images that people project of themselves. **In your novel, Victor says that 'a revolution will take place where connectivity is concerned. Is that what you think yourself?**

I find it very fascinating; Victor is convinced that we are at the beginning of humankind. If we compare the existence of the earth with that of humanity on a scale of one year, we have been on earth for exactly eleven minutes. That is a fascinating thought. If you know that three hundred years represent exactly one second and that in the last tenth of that last second mobile phones and social media were invented, you can only conclude that we are at the beginning of humankind. However Eline, Victor's daughter, feels we are ruining everything and just go on as if nothing is happening. They have opposite opinions and as a reader you think: 'What is the truth?' That makes is so fascinating.

**As an author, do you feel connected to your readers?**

To be honest, I never think about the readers when I'm writing, only about the book, the characters and the plot. The reader comes in later. I don't write with the idea: 'This is what people want to read.' Publishers have asked me to write certain kind of books, but I won't do it. I don't even have enough time to write the things I do want to write.

Connectivity with the reader comes in once the book is published. On average, a novel is read by 2.5 readers: that has helped me to become a fulltime writer. Four thousand copies were sold of my first book, so that is ten thousand readers. For them, I want to make the effort and write another book. I have a rather mathematical approach, it's true. It has to do with my former life as a businessman (*laughs*).

**Do you meet your readers?**

Certainly. I give regular readings and I meet people there who are very interested in what I do. Which is great for an author. Unfortunately, the readings usually take place at weekends.

(*laughs*) Social media are also great. Some time ago, someone wrote that he had wanted to read my book after seeing a trailer on my website. It turned out that it had had some 20000 hits in the first week, while such things usually don't get more than 5000 views. By now, the film has been viewed 45000 times, triggering people who normally seldom or never read a book. 'I was curious, so I bought the book after not reading for years. I finished it, liked it and immediately bought three other books,' someone wrote to me. You see... (*laughs*) I also get friendship requests from people who then tell me what they thought of the book. That is very nice.

**With what or whom else do you feel connected?**

With nature. It may sound strange, but I go walking or cycling for at least an hour every day. Every day, 365 out of 365, and often alone. When you do that every day, come rain or shine, you really feel a connection with the elements. I feel an enormous admiration, but also a great powerlessness. Nature is incredibly strong, that is obvious. But of course in the first place I feel connected to my wife, my children, my parents and my friends.

**Not to your former life as a businessman, it seems.**

That is true. It was a gradual process. Of course, I was a writer already. I had work published in literary magazines. But writing hadn't become my profession yet. I studied Germanic languages and then went on to do an MBA. That is how I ended up in business. And that was how I could buy what was most important to me: time. I didn't earn anything for one and a half years because I needed to write that novel.

**Finally: can we say that the revolution Victor was talking of, is slowly becoming reality?**

Absolutely. Abundance, a book by Peter Diamandis, predicts that the one billion people who are now on the internet, will have grown to three or four billion by 2020. Talk about a revolution (*laughs*)! Four billion brains exchanging ideas will not only lead to new things, but also to more ethical problems. That makes it so interesting for a writer. Really, we are at the beginning of evolution. We haven't seen the start yet.

*For the novel Witte Warmte a trailer was made that - unique in Dutch literature - was shown for a while in the cinema. The book is published by Manteau, [www.wpg.be](http://www.wpg.be). More info on [www.dimitricasteleyn.be](http://www.dimitricasteleyn.be).*

Excerpt from Witte Warmte (Dimitri Casteleyn)

Victor Sluis had become a name, a reference point. Whenever nanotechnology was to be discussed on radio or television, he was invited to the studio to explain the latest developments in his clear, easy-to-understand way. At first, journalists mainly wrote about his characteristic bald head, but when he started making fun of it himself on national television, nobody said anything denigrating about it anymore. He jauntily told people he had learned to embrace his baldness once he realised it was no good to fight against the genes that had decided he would lose his hair. He had then taken the clippers and shaved it all off. And coming clean had made him feel better than ever.

It was also thanks to Victor that everybody understood what nanotechnology was about, and why it was so important for the future. The Louvain University benefited as well, for in the years after his first media appearances the number of students who enrolled to study nanotechnology had doubled. Gradually, the faculty of engineering technology began to feel the effect as well. It was called the ‘Sluis effect’, and company managers were very grateful to him. He did make a small blunder when he spontaneously claimed in a talk show that there were too many people on earth, but he quickly made amends by saying that technological improvement was there to meet, channel and direct the new needs of

an ever-growing society. TV bosses realised that the ratings went up when Victor Sluis was a guest on their shows, so he was more and more in demand. Radio soon followed. People especially appreciated the fact that he was independent. He didn’t have a company to sell, he didn’t need to defend a certain policy, he didn’t even have a book to promote. Victor Sluis was someone who gave his unprejudiced opinion on the wonderful ways the future was shaping up, and assured us that we should all welcome these developments, and that, thanks to the technology of the infinitesimal nanoparticles, our own existence would benefit. We would all become happier. Thanks to his positive message, even commercial channels became interested in what he had to say, especially when he could explain the advantages of robotics and other scientific developments in such a clear, succinct way. According to him, even gene technology had nothing but positive points.

At first, Victor was surprised when everybody crowded around him at parties, and wanted to be his friend. Up till then, he himself had always chosen whom to let into his circle. Now, others wanted to decide for him. Before, he had to look for friends, now he only needed to select the right ones - those who were good for his network.

From a very young age, he had learned how to build a network slowly but surely, always with a definite purpose. He kept a tight rein, and decided who would and who wouldn’t be part of his inner circle. When, as a teenager, he discovered a pond full of frogs in one of the many corpses in his village, he decided to only tell a



he sat spying in his other tree house, hoping that Sophie would not turn up there. To his great joy, Sophie didn’t appear with her friends. For the first time in his life, his trust had not been betrayed, for the first time in his life he had a real friend, and a girl at that: Sophie.

Early in life, Victor realised that only a handful of choices were really important in life. He had learned this from his many books. The choice of a career, the choice of your life partner and the choice whether to have children or not. If you chose right, you were ahead of those who had chosen unwisely or too slowly, and who sooner or later would have to reconsider one of their choices. This kind of advantage would persist for the rest of your life.

Sophie had caught his eye at the fair in the neighbouring village, precisely because she was not very noticeable. She was completely herself, and wasn’t constantly trying to show off in order to be accepted by her friends. She was who she was, take it or leave it. She didn’t go from one dodgem to the other, didn’t scream on the Caterpillar ride, she didn’t join in when the others smoked. Victor remembers that he started a conversation and that they got on straight away. He didn’t buy her an ice cream and a bottle of lemonade until the end of the day. From then on, they met frequently and became best friends. Whatever he suggested, it was fine with Sophie. Victor liked taking the initiative, Sophie liked being inspired by him. That was more than 35 years ago... Victor was 11 and Sophie 10 on the day they met.

few of his friends, because before you knew it the whole village would be visiting the pond. But he hadn’t taken into account that his friends would give the location away, and before he knew it all the village youth had found their way to the frog pond. He wasn’t going to let that happen again. He learned to select his friends even more carefully and put them to the test every now and then without them being aware of it. For instance, he built a tree house in a secret place and showed it to his friend Nicholas. Nicholas was the son of the local librarian, who had given Victor the key to the library so that he could always let himself in. He was allowed to keep the books longer without incurring a fine and the librarian even ordered books especially for Victor. His friend had to promise that he would keep the location a secret. In the days and weeks that followed, Victor installed himself in a second, well-hidden tree house to see if anybody would visit his first tree house. If nobody came, he knew he could trust his best friend Nicholas. Unfortunately, after a few weeks it turned out that even his best friend could not be trusted. He never let on that he knew that Nicholas had disclosed the secret of his tree house, and decided to stay friends with him for the time being, but as soon as he left the village he would forget him.

This is how, much later, he chose his future wife Sophie. She was the most beautiful girl in the neighbouring village. Apart from being beautiful, she was also sweet and clever, and she seemed trustworthy. It was the first time he shared his secret tree house with a girl. He didn’t tell her either that in the day after her visit,



## WORLD OF MAWYC

*Rein Ergo is the driving force behind **ERGO PERS** publishers, Jacques Wyckaert is CEO of Mawyc Group and collects artists' books published by the maverick Ghent publisher. World of Mawyc brought them together for a fascinating exchange about beauty, passion and added value.*

### How did you two become friends?

**Rein:** We met at an artists' book fair in the gardens of Peter Buggenhout and Berlinde De Bruyckere, a childhood friend of Jacques'. That was the first time we had a conversation, and something happened. We realised that we were fascinated with the same artists. We had similar visions, a similar intuitive feeling for beauty. We understood how we wanted to give art a place in our life. Through our curiosity and our common interests we learned to appreciate each other's universe. As the years went by, our friendship grew.

**Jacques:** Whenever Ergo Pers publishes a book, Rein gives me a personal explanation. It is about more than just buying a work of art. The poem, drawing or etching unfolds and shows itself in all its aspects. This brings us closer together as well.

### Did you feel you were kindred spirits?

**Rein:** There was a kind of spark between us, yes. Right from the start.

**Jacques:** It was so obvious that that would happen. I remember that Rein had published an artists' book I really liked. I thought: 'There is an intelligent concept behind this.'

**Rein:** I had made a book with Dan Van Severen and Raoul De Keyser. Jacques recognised that. He recognised something of himself in it.

### You both seem to be idiosyncratic entrepreneurs.

**Jacques:** Our idiosyncrasy lies in in the way we run our businesses. We have nothing to show for it. Or we do, but it is all about damage and problems. In our forwarding business there isn't much to show either. While arts, architecture, words, images, show and offer so much. We can't do that, and I feel that as something we lack.

**Rein:** On the other hand, when I see your offices... They are full of aesthetic choices. It means that you have a different mentality. You are a home with many unexpected rooms. Your Taste department encompasses the secrets of good taste, of coffee,

tea, chocolate, honey... There is beauty in that.

**Jacques:** Yes, we want to be different, but without showing off. The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is a little extra. To us, architecture is more than just a decor. It gives us something to think about.

**Rein:** I think it is all about beauty, and how we surround ourselves with beauty. That beauty can be found in a book, the tactility of things, how something feels, paper, but also a material, a suit that fits you perfectly. Or in architecture, how your organise the space that surrounds you, and the flow of the different rooms. It is the same with a book: every page is a new room you enter.

**Jacques:** We also try to provide value. We go deeper in our analysis.

**Rein:** Jacques told me that he knows and trusts the people he does business with. It's something I recognise. Artists really need to trust you to make an artists' book together with others. Many of the books I publish have been made by friends: Hugo Claus and Alechinsky, Roland Jooris and Roger Raveel or Raoul De Keyser ... They know and trust each other, they want to seal their friendship with a book. The pleasure they derive from working together speaks clearly in the book. These are books by writers who are friends, and you can feel that.

**Jacques:** Rein is known by a certain audience, and outside them nobody knows him. It is the same with us. Only the people who work with us know what we are about. With us, everybody does his job with passion and puts up with the less pleasant aspects of it. This passion allows us to achieve hood things. Dialogue, therefore, is very important. In Rein's case, it also takes a lot of talks before a book is created.

**Rein:** I bring people together and wait to see what happens.

Jacques: It is the same for us. It sometimes takes years before you can accomplish something, and then suddenly it happens.

### For both of you, the aesthetic element is very important.

**Jacques:** Yes, I am passionate about it. The first thing I do with

an artists' book, is feel the paper. I do the same with materials. It's part of me to love beautiful things. For instance, I love washing a beautiful car myself, if only to feel those lines.

**Jacques, what appeals to you so much in artists' books?**

**Jacques:** I try to understand the writers and the artists, but time and again, I realise how hard it is to really get to the depth of it.

**Rein:** I understand that. It is a completely separate world. Poetry and graphic art. The intimacy of a page, a book. Your profession is different, a different universe, a different language, that is logical. What makes people like Jacques so fascinating, is that they allow themselves to be surprised. Time and again he asks me: 'Rein, what have you made now?' Curiosity is the key to creativity, openness the key to knowledge.

**Jacques:** Nice quote, Rein. Let's think about it... When I went to the Roger Raveel museum to see *Main d'œuvre – 20 jaar Ergo Pers (20 years of Ergo Press)* I was surprised by the format of the exhibition. How artists' books went into dialogue with original works by artists. I realised I had missed something. I would have loved to do that as well. I would love to have a space where I can show our collection the way it was done there.

**Can entrepreneurs learn from artists?**

**Rein:** Everybody can. But not from every artist.

Jacques: Who is an artist? That's the first question. There are many people who think they are good.

**Rein:** My father was an artist as well, and growing up in that environment taught me a lot. I got to know about Italian and Flemish paintings, learned to listen to music. I was immersed

in mediterranean life, recognised the silence in Roman churches, the beauty of decay in Italian towns. My childhood was a great gift. But above all I learned that freedom is the key. Freedom and independence. And that is what I needed. My own rhythm. Working very hard, then doing nothing for long stretches of time. After staring dreamily out of the window, Bram van Velde would still feel he hard worked hard. That says it all. The importance of introspection. (self-reflection). Handling things slowly and carefully. And then the greatness of art.

**Finally: what would be a dream project for you?**

**Rein:** We already have one. An old dream brought Berlinde De Bruyckere and Stefan Hertmans together to make an artists' book. They kept giving each other something. A word, and image. They kept making something for each other. There were supposed to be seven encounters, early in the morning. In fact, three took place. Only three. We have a text and images, but no book. It would be wonderful if we could finish the project, and one day, have a book.

**Jacques:** That will certainly happen. The question is just when. The image of the future...

**Rein:** A book presentation on the premises of Mawyc Art. Why not? There is nothing better than an artistic world that brings people together.

*The photographer takes a last few photos, and Jacques and Rein start a personal conversation, away from the book full of books, the art they have in common.*

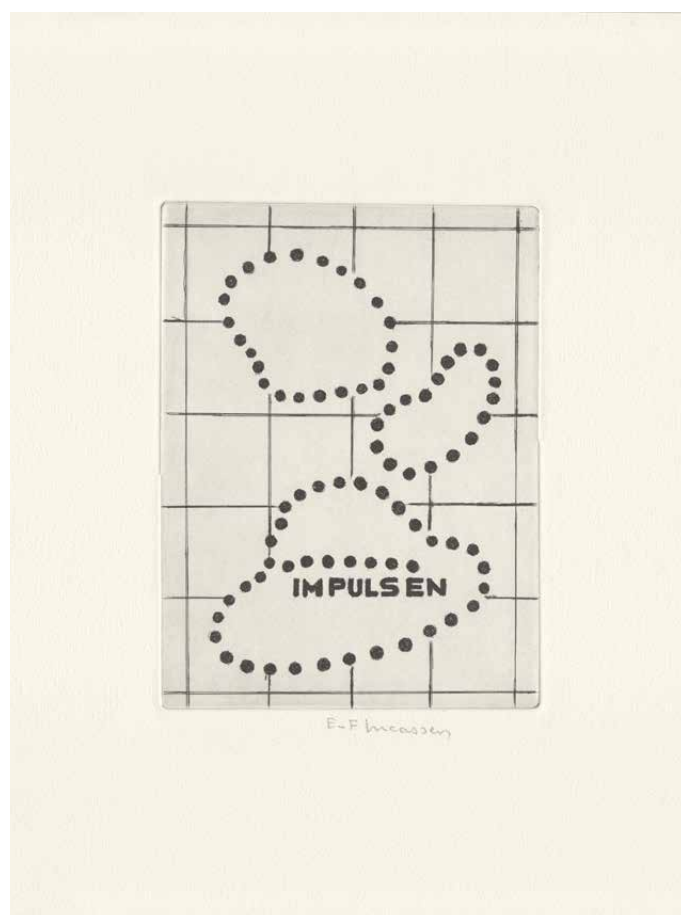
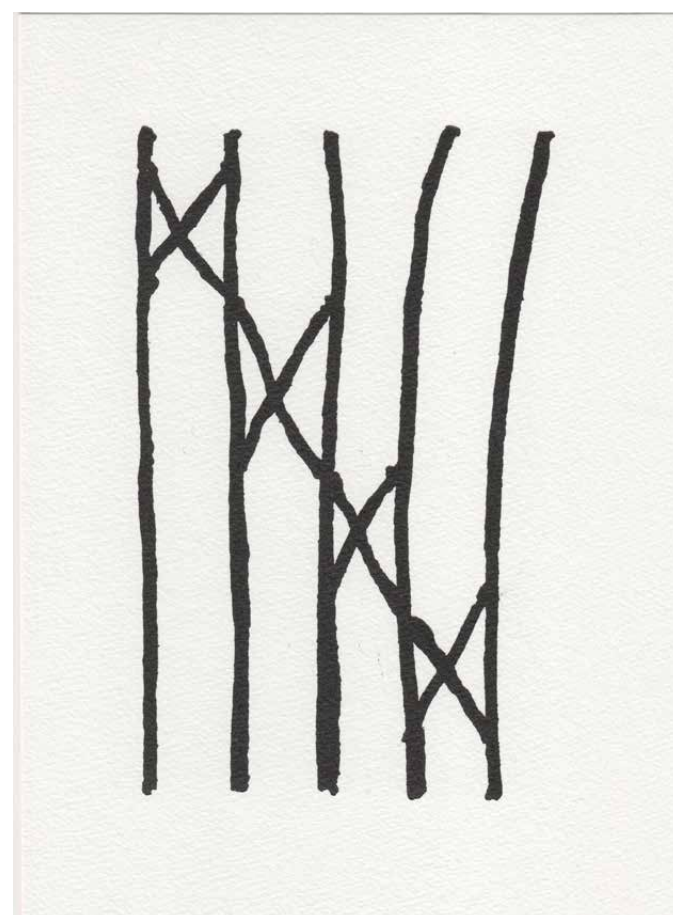
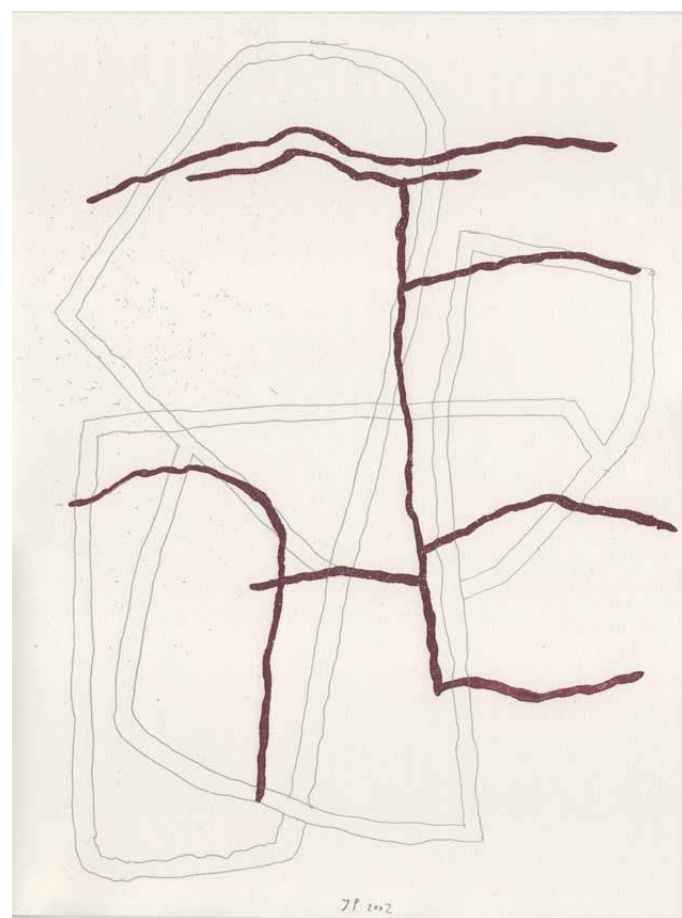
*The first thing I do with an artists' book, is feel the paper.  
It's part of me to love beautiful things"*

JACQUES WYCKAERT



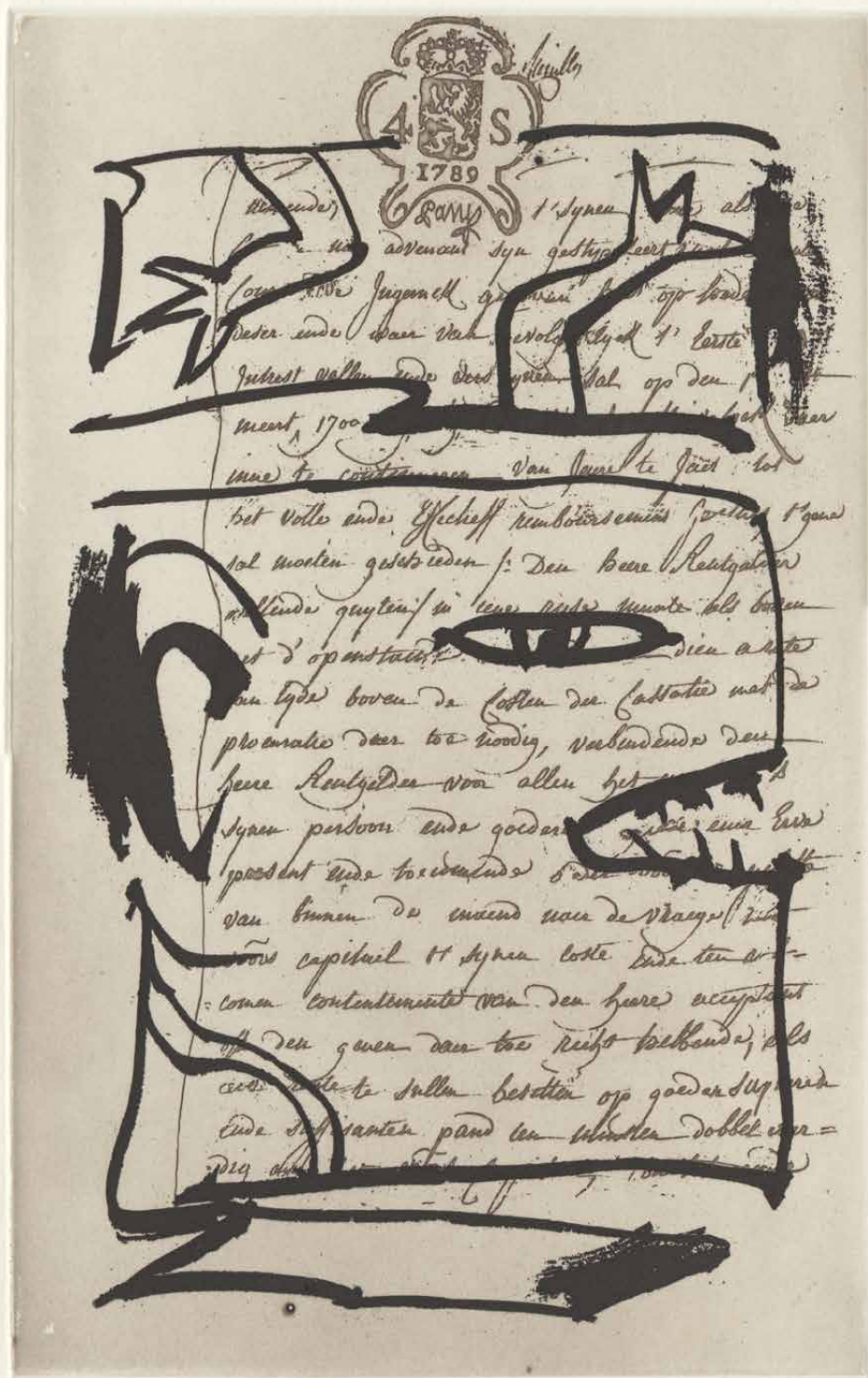
*"Every page is a new room you enter"*

REIN ERGO



*“There is nothing better than an artistic world that closes ranks”*

REIN ERGO



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**ON THE COVER**

Raoul De Keyser, relief print, from ‘Hok’, a plaquette with poems by Roland Jooris, Ergo Pers, 1996. ©Ergo Pers and the artists. All rights reserved

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