

# KEMPENS

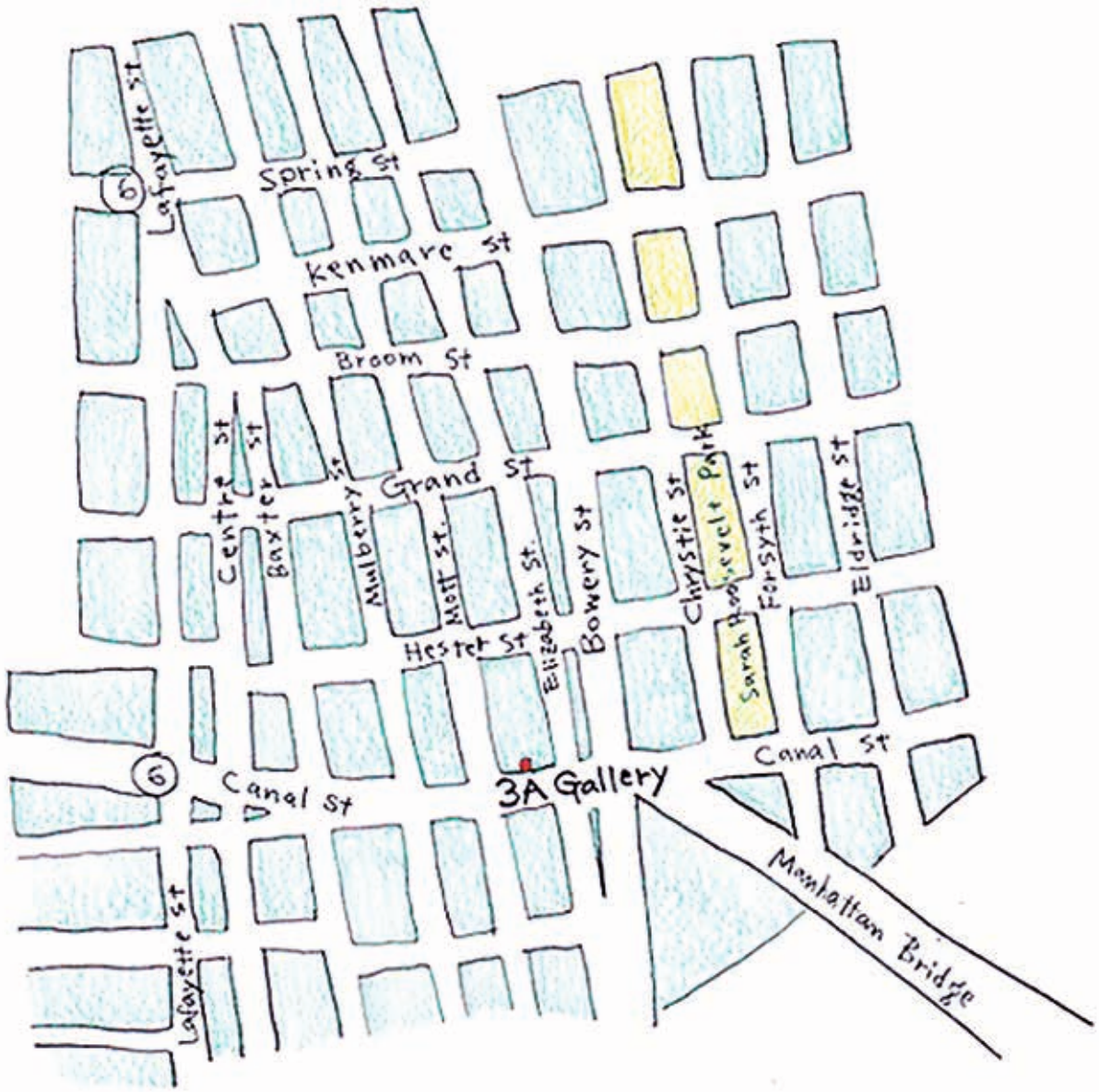
## Informatieboek

Verantwoordelijke  
uitgever  
**JEF GEYS**  
Langvennen 77  
2490 Balen  
België  
2015  
nr. 7

**SPECIAL EDITION NEW YORK - 3A**









## ***1. Life***

Reality is a glass jar  
with a pretty pink ribbon.

The rabbit living in your hat  
is a fantasy.

Your tongue tells everyone who listens  
that the glass jar does not exist.

Yet every day you pull a new  
white rabbit out of your hat.

The glass jar explodes and throws  
Hopes, Dreams, Expectations

as colored marbles in all directions.  
Yet you still stick with the white rabbit.

The rabbit ends up in a stew.  
Children recycle the marbles to play a game.

The pink ribbon is the only evidence left.

(New York City, 12/14)



## **2. Spider silk**

I wanna go with you to the meadow  
on the top of the hill, where the wild things  
thrive and thrill, where the owl hoots,  
the frightened lizard out of nowhere shoots,  
off to somewhere else, anywhere  
is good, we'll live off the land, we'll land  
on our feet, I know the roots to eat,  
and the exact number of crickets  
to count to fall asleep.

We'll abandon the car by the side  
of the road, I wanna walk beside you  
until I can walk no more, farther  
and farther from the shore, up the hill  
to the meadow where the stars will spill  
their light like an opera house, there  
I want to weave my home from threads  
of spider silk, stronger than concrete, shinier  
than gold, it will keep us warm from the cold.

When winter hangs stubborn over the land  
it will be tucked away in our hands,  
and melt into rivers to dabble in,  
I can't wait for spring to bring  
a Monet of colors, all those little beautiful  
dots connecting the odds of happiness,  
so little is needed to love so much:  
Only one spider to learn how to weave.  
And some courage to hang onto its thread.

(New York City, 12/14)



### **3. Organic**

You gotta do a few things wrong  
before you can get anything right  
That's the thing, I feel there's no  
privacy, space to breathe through  
missed abortions, only miracles  
are allowed in the nail polish  
with fungus called "this society",  
yet I kiss red lipstick all over too many  
stainless white shirts while  
the lunar system eclipses on the  
frozen ground at night in Brooklyn,  
I am finding my balance after gin  
with soda in a Dominican place  
that has no tonic it would be better  
to suck up the ice from the lake  
in the mountains, where the kale grows  
and green smoothies  
promise life after death.

(New York City, 12/14)



#### **4. *Bush girl***

How shall I name  
the unspeakable, that within me hides  
as a bird's nest in my chest? And in that nest  
not an egg, but a caterpillar. Something beautiful  
will fly away from it one day, but until then

How shall I name  
the unimaginable? That which seeks music to hum,  
and in that music the rhyme and rhythm of ancient  
cultures, not mine. I am the forgotten  
child in the bush, the one that searched  
for meaning in the carvings of woodworms,  
roaming the land as an orphan citizen  
but always looking for the forgotten treasure left  
by the ones who once owned the land

How shall I name  
The treasure I never found?  
The wisdom I gathered while searching?  
The parts of my soul I left behind,  
Scattered over several nations?

(New York City, 12/14)



## 5. "Wata" (Water)

Women walking by,  
balancing empty water jars and laundry  
pon their hot and heavy heads,  
in search fi di shrinking river.

Fi wash. Fi bathe.  
Fi drink. Fi cook.  
Fi survive.  
Fi stay alive.

But then now,  
out of nothing, I swear,  
appears one man, pulling one dead dog,  
lying pon its side,  
it moves along  
in perfect stillness,  
in a perfect straight line.

The dog's warrior spirit  
no longer hides  
in its clouded eyes.  
They hold no lies.

These are scorching hot days.  
The vegetables have shrunk to nothing,  
and jumped in price.  
One hundred Jamaican dollars  
for half a pound of tomatoes,  
to steam with a likkle cabbage and rice.

While man laments for "di wata truck"  
with a hush and sighs.  
The hog tied to the bush  
turns its other cheek  
to the heavenly skies.

Heat or no heat,  
out there in dem hills  
the horse and the heron stick together,  
the two a dem a pair so casually,  
waiting ever so patiently,  
for this endless drought to die.  
They need not know why.

This is no joke nor no brawta,  
everybody needs wata\*.  
But we nah go beg you nun today,  
because that's how we stay.

(Jamaica, 7/14)

"This is no joke nor no brawta / everybody needs wata" was contributed by Shanique Ferron, also known as "Grippy".  
"Fi survive / fi stay alive" was contributed by Edna Percy, better known as Juney.



## ***6. In the land of ackee and salt fish***

In the land of ackee and salt fish  
the light is brighter,  
the mountains hillier.  
The shades of green  
stretch to purple (if you close your eyes)

And the route taxi  
runs out of gas  
“pon di road”.

Cuss him out, the driver,  
while he runs after you  
for his money.  
Run for the hills  
to fall asleep with the crickets.

Dream about water,  
that it flows from the pipe.  
That you can bathe with five buckets,  
or reach the river in time,  
before the hills tire you out.

Hush now. You’re still “pon di road”.  
It is dark.  
The taxi driver just sent someone  
riding a bike  
for gas.

The bike has wheels  
that light up in the dark,  
just like the kitibu\*.  
They dance all night.  
They are their own moonshine.

Hours later, when you reach home,  
finally,  
you know what you will dream:  
about chicken back.  
and rice.

(Jamaica, 7/14)

\*kitibu is Patois for a species of lightning bug



## **7. *Ginger wine***

No stars shall twinkle more bright  
than the white of your eyes  
at the beach tonight.

Your arm, raised, throws speckles  
of golden beach dust all over my body.  
The stars are out there,  
but hiding shy behind their clouds.

Music and ginger wine, you,  
and two holes in our hearts.  
Nothing to be worried about.  
Each heart has a hole

to be filled with beach diamonds and the sweat of love.

A night like this never ends,  
even if we think the ignorance of years  
might wash it away, like the sea comes in  
and takes everything.

Even the turtles go back after they hatch.

It won't. Because you, your eyes like charcoal  
that burns a slow fire, tonight,  
two holes in our hearts,  
the sea, the stars hiding,

you

are drumming your way into this poem.

(Jamaica, 6/14)



## **8. *Dusk***

He tells me not to call him Mister.  
He says nobody does, except his enemies.

His silence -- the smoke of his cigarette  
is the weapon of his thoughts.

Bang bang. My baby shot me down.  
Everything about him is black, except his eyes.

Man invented God to fear, and now Nature, he says.  
He's into drobots but sends un-programmed kisses.

The law is out there, somewhere.  
But it is not even night in the City.

(New York City, 3/11)



## **9. Train D, Uptown and The Bronx**

You, a silhouette of a man  
unknown to me, both of us  
waiting for train D, your body  
going about its own business,  
until it breaks away from its routine,  
turns to me and I stare back,  
rewind, playback, like a movie  
running on its track, mimicking

train D to The Bronx,  
a train of thoughts of the kind  
common to a New York City  
evening in summer, hot and humid,  
with a drafty undercurrent  
that creeps up chilly, while train D,  
late as always, was being held somewhere  
in the belly of suburbia.

Below us, rats were scavenging  
on the tracks, un-fearful  
and determined in showing  
blatantly that train D  
was still miles away,  
time was on rehearsal that day  
for its grand premiere.  
It was then and there

that we struck up a conversation,  
your face surprised, curious,  
and somewhat unreadable to me,  
minutes passed like split seconds,  
until the train arrived finally  
and furious with the screeching  
sound of an arbiter who defines  
the game and its players.

We entered the subway car,  
minding the gap between our lives,  
closing ourselves inside  
that narrow space of intimacy  
defined by the limits of steel  
and motion, the speed of the train  
determined the pace of our encounter,  
6 subway stops the synopsis of our lives.

At 161st Street you got out,  
I watched you go, and as  
the train set in motion again,  
it paralleled the course  
of my life, a life lived  
on the move, not controllable then  
and not controlled today,  
I'm still part of the ride.

I would never ask myself  
who you are and why that matters,  
it just happened that summer,  
our lives intersecting in Manhattan  
and separating in The Bronx.

The note you left, said:  
"My apology for trying to be  
Marlon Brando."

(New York City, 3/08)



## **10. *Untitled I***

Being a woman  
is like a red poem  
that cuts you up.

Flows, mourns, burns  
but never exposed  
to the light of day

Let's dance, shall we?  
Then sit down, talk.  
Fuck.

Eat eggs with toasted bread  
fried in olive oil  
to mend your heart.

Do you mind?

Want some coffee or tea?

After that,  
will we be strong enough  
to fuck again,  
or shall we make love  
this time?

Please.

You stand up.  
Pack of organic milk  
in your hands.  
Open the fridge.  
Milk in.  
Cucumber out.

Imagine  
all the things you can do  
with vegetables?

Have to go now, you say.  
Don't want me to go?

Of course, go  
as you please.  
There's never a time for this.  
Never a good one anyway.

I'll go back to bed.  
My poem will be like red wine  
that pours itself out  
into you.

(New York City, 1/08)

# Port 22

## By Luke Cohen

1. October 19, 2006. Orchard meeting, New York City. Jef Geys exhibit is mentioned for scheduling.
2. February 3, 2007. Install Jef Geys show at Orchard. Inge Godelaine oversees.
3. February 4, 2007. Jef Geys's *!Women's Questions?* 1965-2006 opens at Orchard.
4. February 25, 2007. Dirk Snauwaert and Rebecca Quaytman host a panel discussion at Orchard for the exhibit. Dan Graham accuses Rebecca of being scared that Jef Geys is a hippy.
5. October 3, 2009. Letter introducing myself to Jef Geys sent via post.
6. October 21, 2009. RETURN TO SENDER. Letter was opened.
7. October 21, 2009. Katrien de Kerpel responds to my email on behalf of Jef Geys. Digital archive of Kempens Informatieblad.
8. December 13, 2011. I present Jef Geys in Rosalind Krauss's graduate seminar at Columbia University.
9. December 20, 2011. Receive Jef's package: *!Womens Questions?* and selected Kempens.
10. December 22, 2011. Katrien forwards my message to Jef. Zuccotti Park?
11. June 13, 2012. Letter from Jef to arrange meeting.
12. June 21, 2012. Katrien will take me to Balen. Contact Geertje for Siddhartha's room in Vorst.
13. July 8, 2012. Meet Katrien at Wiels. Walking tour of Bruxelles. I keep watch as she places anti-finance stickers on ATMs and a Belgian cultural institution. She tells me she is a train conductor.
14. July 10, 2012. Meet Dirk Snauwaert at Wiels. He stresses the importance of Jef's military background.
15. July 21, 2012. Three trains from Bruxelles to Balen. Katrien is waiting at the station's café. View Jef's sculpture *Schildwacht* (2007) in the town square. Katrien enters Balen's public library to talk to a man. "Is this Luke Cohen?" I shake his hand. He speaks in Flemish to Katrien and then asks if I understand what he is saying. I tell Jef that he said that he needs to go to the bank before we eat. Lunch at Arcade Center, then to his house, studio and archive in the attic. Subscription to the *Village Voice* in the '60s and '70s taught Jef everything about the USA. Seeing Andy Warhol and R. Crumb published on the same page was crucial for him. We say our goodbyes. Katrien takes me to a campground. Sheep and goats. Drop our things off at the trekkershut. We drink beer in the parking lot. Techno is playing at a nearby campground.
16. July 22, 2012. Roosters wake us. Leaving, a children's camp sings Flemish songs at us. Katrien says they are having fun. She drops me off in Antwerp.
17. July 24, 2012. My friends in Bruxelles, Lars Fischer and Elena Pankova receive a package from Jef Geys for their two sons.
18. October 26, 2012. Jef asks me about Peter Currie.
19. October 28, 2012. Hurricane Sandy. Emergency is declared. Communication is delayed.
20. December 5, 2012. Katrien sends me the Flemish Minister of Culture's speech.
21. December 6, 2012. Letter from Jef Geys. He was just visited by Peter Currie in Balen and will do a small exhibit with him in his apartment in New York City. Peter has never heard of me. I am asked to find a charity to donate the money from any sales from the exhibit.
22. December 13, 2012. Respond to Jef's request.
23. December 20, 2012. Katrien informs me Peter Currie's correspondence about a translator is published on Jef's blog.
24. December 28, 2012. From Los Angeles I send postcards with images of the iconic Hollywood Sign to Jef and Katrien.
25. January 13, 2013. I am Michael Sanchez's guest to Peter Currie's apartment on Lexington Ave. to view Jef's exhibit. Peter, "Oh, you are Luke Cohen. You are implied in this show."
26. April 8, 2013. Jef requests that Peter Currie and Alex Zachary donate the contents of his exhibit to Columbia University. I am the overseer.
27. April 8, 2013. Jef introduces himself by email to Michael Ryan of Columbia's Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
28. April 9, 2013. Caroline Busta tells me *Interview Magazine* features Alex Zachary and Peter Currie as art dealers to watch.
29. April 29, 2013. Michael Ryan receives a package from Jef.
30. May 15, 2013. Overextended by the Frieze Art Fair and his immanent departure to Cologne, Peter Currie cancels our meeting with Michael Ryan. I go to Peter's apartment to pick up the materials. He greets me in his boxers.
31. May 20, 2013. Meeting with Michael Ryan. We discuss the donation paperwork.
32. July 10, 2013. Jef picks me up at the Mol train station and drives me to Balen. Arcade Center, a bowling alley and café, was funded in part by the returns to a backer on investments in Jef's Martin Douven exhibit. On an Arcade Center placemat Jef diagrams the proximity of his hometown Leopoldsborg to international military bases during his youth. Jef became good with languages living there. I teach him the expression "shabby chic." We leave Arcade Center for his studio. Jef gives me a parcel for Columbia's archive. I recommend that he watch *Cisco Pike*. Jef tells me that he is camouflage. We talk about sabotage.
33. July 17, 2013. Viruses destroy Jef's Hotmail account.
34. August, 2013. I send Jef *Love and Rockets* comics and Tiqqun's *Théorie du Bloom*.
35. September 24, 2013. Columbia sends me to Dirk Snauwaert's lecture on Bar 900 at Cubitt Gallery, London.

36. September 26, 2013. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Bloomberg Philanthropies hosts a competition, "The Mayors Challenge 2013." Non-U.S. cities are asked to envision development of their cities and compete for funding and assistance. Jef wants me to enter his hometown of Leopoldsbury. My Columbia undergrad students are to aid. All the material will be donated to Columbia's archive.
37. October 8, 2013. Receive Jef's plans for Mayors Challenge at Columbia.
38. October 13, 2013. Jef appoints me "planning engineer." Suggests developer Jorge M. Pérez of the Related Group if we need additional support.
39. October 25, 2013. Discuss Columbia's official donation forms with Michael Ryan. Drop off more material.
40. October 30, 2013. Package received from Jef.
41. November 4, 2013. Jef writes from Holland. Sending "Catalogue Raisonné."
42. November 5, 2013. RSVP to Bloomberg's Mayors Challenge
43. November 23, 2013. Package received from Jef.
44. November 26, 2013. Receive Kristof Borreman's Leopoldsbury package.
45. December 12, 2013. In my classroom I trace the four projects onto vellum paper and translate the text into English using Google Translate. Five students show up. We discuss Leopoldsbury, Michael Bloomberg, New York City, and Jef Geys. I show them the plans and they comment in Columbia University blue books. Anonymity is requested due to Bloomberg's relationship to the police.
46. December 16, 2013. Michael Ryan resigns at Columbia to take a position elsewhere. He tells me he knows people at MoMA who are possibly interested in Jef Geys.
47. December 21, 2013. Gijs Van Doorn posts our Bloomberg proposal on Jef's blog.
48. January 31, 2014. Electronically submit the proposal to the contest. It includes my traced and translated plans and all of my students' blue book responses. Clare Newmann of Bloomberg Philanthropies responds that as a province we are ineligible to submit.
49. February 3, 2014. Clare Newmann: "Entries to the Mayors Challenge must be led by cities, rather than by citizens or other organizations."
50. March 24, 2014. Asked to transfer money from Jorge Pérez to Ellen Baxter Housing Communities on behalf of Jef.
51. June 10, 2014. Meet with Jane Siegel, who takes over Michael Ryan's responsibilities.
52. June 11, 2014. Mieke Meguro, Dan Graham and Alaina Claire Feldman are planning an exhibit at 3A Gallery. Elections in Belgium privilege center/right.
53. July 30, 2014. Stay with Lars Fischer and Elena Pankova in Bruxelles.
54. August 13, 2014. Jef picks me up at the Mol train station and drives me to Balen. For the exhibit at 3A Gallery I am to fly to Miami to pick up ten Martin Douven model paintings from the collection of Felipe Pérez, the ten-year-old son of developer Jorge Pérez. The "Donald Trump of the Tropics," Jorge is responsible for developing much of downtown Miami's impressive skyline. Jef gives me ten prints of installation shots depicting separate arrangements of ten Martin Douven model paintings. The ten prints are for immediate deposit at the archive at Columbia. I am to later take them out of the archive at Columbia and display them alongside Felipe Pérez's model paintings for the exhibit at 3A.
55. September 6, 2014. Jorge Pérez responds to my letter. I am invited as his personal guest to Miami to view Jef's work in his collection and the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM).
56. October 30, 2014. Columbia to LaGuardia Airport. Intercontinental Hotel in downtown Miami's façade is a screen broadcasting the silhouettes of gyrating dancers. My room overlooks the Port of Miami.
57. October 31, 2014. Anelys of the Related Group takes me to see Jorge Pérez's oceanfront penthouse in Hallandale Beach. Jef's Zaaadzakjes (1963-) hang in the kitchen. Natural light, ocean view. I am told that individual artworks are considered in the design process of the Related Group's luxury towers. After I am dropped off at PAMM. Herzog & de Meuron ecologically designed the building with subterranean parking space to spare the art in case of flooding. Halloween evening on Lincoln Road, everybody is out in costume. Kids and the intoxicated run in and out of Dan Graham's pavilion Morris (2008).
58. November 1, 2014. Patricia of the Related Group picks me up at Intercontinental to take me to the Venetian-style home of the Pérez Family in Coconut Grove. We eat gnocchi in front of an infinity pool opening out to Biscayne Bay. Jorge admires Jef's educational projects, and intuitively identifies with Jef as a "no bullshit kind of guy." I tell the Pérezes about our recent Bloomberg project and how Jef's work helped develop the Arcade Center bowling alley in Balen. Darlene comments on the excess of information in Kempens; she appreciates the humor of Kempens and loves to flip through it. I say "Capitalism isn't the same for an American intellectual in the 21st century as it was for a German following World War II." Felipe tells me Jef is his favorite artist and has made a drawing to send him. I sense he understands Jef better than I do. I pack up the ten Douven paintings from Felipe's collection for the exhibit at 3A. Parting, "I will tell Jef it was the day after Halloween in Miami and we all had our Jef Geys costumes on."
59. November 2, 2014. Translate Jef's text about systems. Leave the hotel for Miami International Airport.
60. November 3, 2014. Send Jef a report on Miami.
61. November 14, 2014. Meet with Dan Graham and Mieke Meguro at 3A Gallery.
62. November 28, 2014. Receive package concerning the Balen Social Welfare Office.
63. December 15, 2014. Contact Ina Vandebroek.
64. December 22, 2014. Sign the official deposit and donation forms with Jane Siegel at Columbia. Deposit all the Bloomberg material and Jef's ten prints.
65. December 28, 2014. Meet Dan and Mieke at Dan's studio in Nolita. Dan suggests I read Martin Short's autobiography. I tell Dan that Jef is designing an old folks home. We eat lunch at Fiat Café.
- 66.



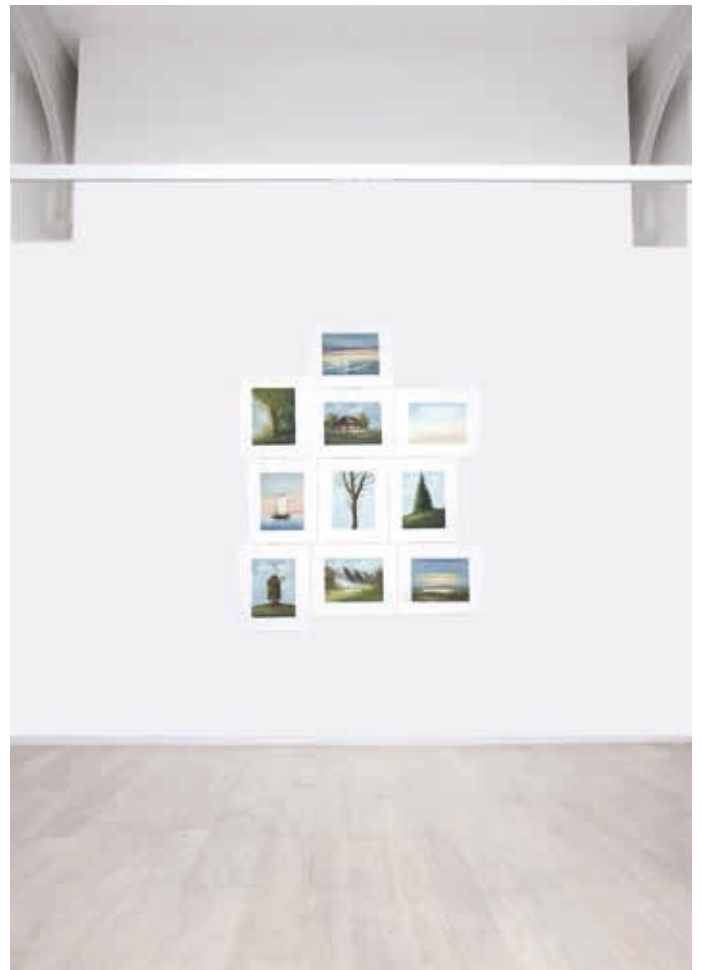
Brussel, Bozar 16.09.2011



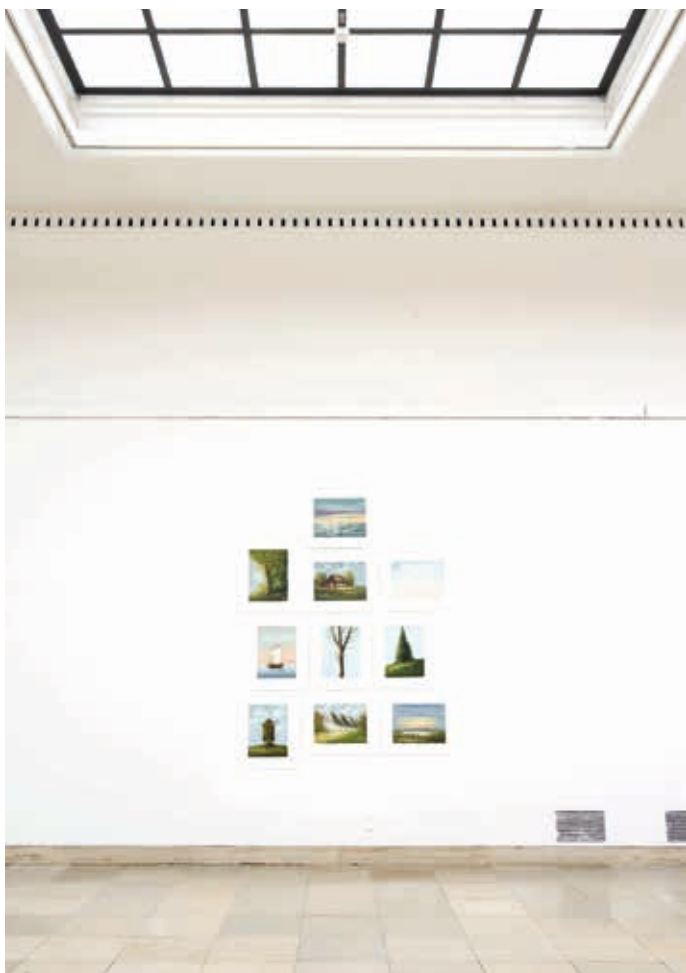
EINDHOVEN, VAN ABBEMUSEUM 30.08.10



Barcelona, MACBA 07.06.2011



London, Whitechapel Gallery 11.03.2011



München, Haus der Kunst 26.08.2011



Moskou, Zuyev Worker's Club (Kloeb, imeni zujeva) 26.10.2012



Parijs, Musée d'art Moderne 02.07.2012



Wilrijk, commandobunker (SK1) 05.10.2010



Porto, Serralves Foundation 21.03.2011



Miami, Pérez Art Museum Miami 10.06.2013



# ***Ocean Vuong***

## **Telemachus**

Like any good son, I pull my father out  
of the water, drag him by his hair

through sand, his knuckles carving a trail  
the waves rush in to erase. Because the city

beyond the shore is no longer  
where he left it. Because the bombed

cathedral is now a cathedral  
of trees. I kneel beside him to see how far

I might sink. Do you know who I am,  
ba? But the answer never comes. The answer

is the bullet hole in his back, brimming  
with seawater. He is so still I think

he could be anyone's father, found  
the way a green bottle might appear

at a boy's feet containing a year  
he has never touched. I touch

his ears. No use. The neck's  
bruising. I turn him over. To face

it. The cathedral in his sea-black eyes.  
The face not mine but one I will wear

to kiss all my lovers goodnight:  
the way I seal my father's lips

with my own and begin  
the faithful work of drowning.



## ***Ina Vandebroek***

**Matthew Calbraith Perry Assistant Curator of Economic Botany  
and Caribbean Program Director, The New York Botanical Garden**

Ph.D., Ghent University

Belgium

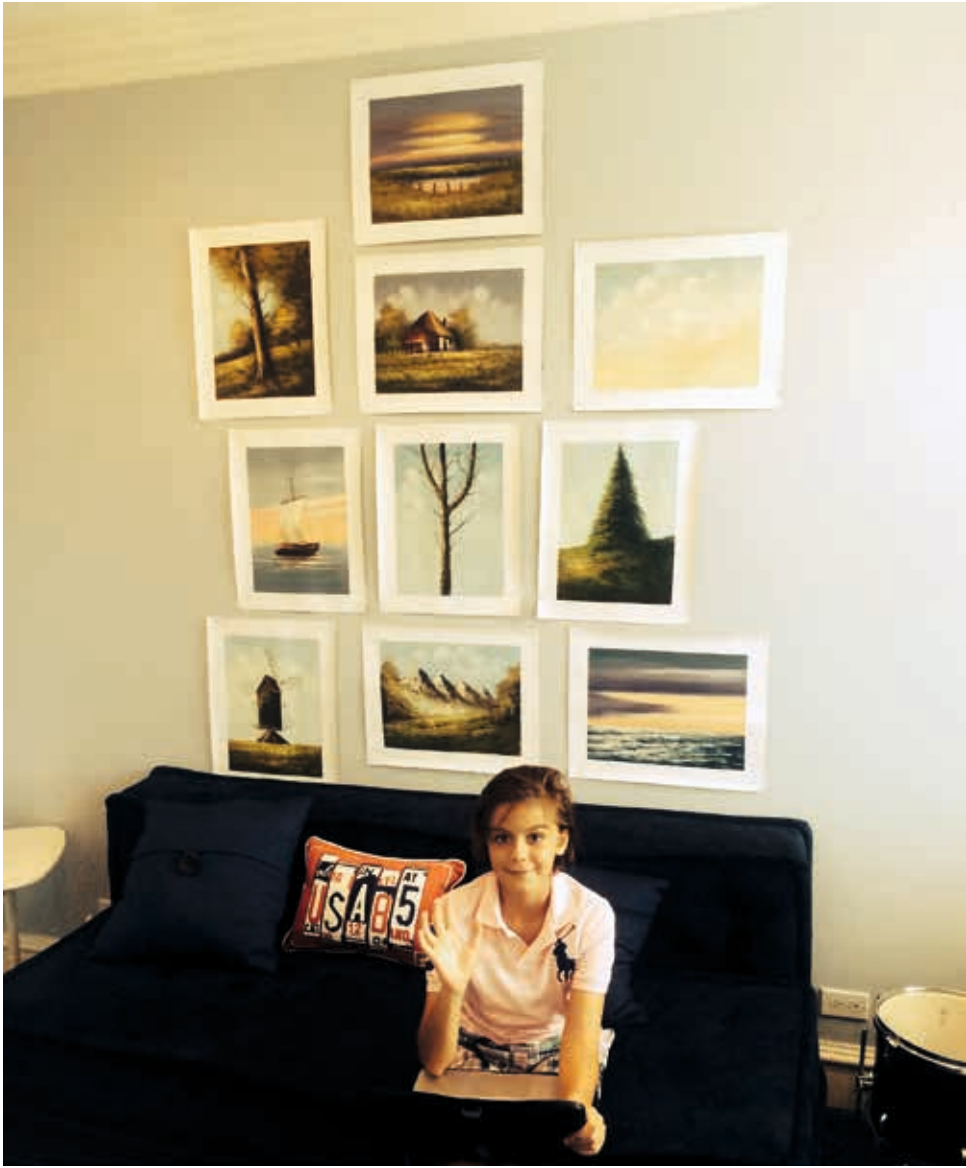
Expertise: Ethnobotany, Medical Anthropology, Community Health,  
Migrant Studies, Conservation of Biological Resources and Cultural Heritage

### ***Profile***

Dr. Ina Vandebroek's research is at the intersection of ethnobotany and community health. She has fifteen years experience in research and international cooperation projects in Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and New York City. Currently she conducts fieldwork in rural Jamaica. Ina studies the dynamics of medicinal plant knowledge and use for primary healthcare by local communities in remote rural areas, as well as by Latino and Caribbean immigrants in New York City. Her research shows that, even in times of general loss of biological and cultural diversity worldwide, the use of plants as medicines remains popular in many communities today. Her work with immigrants from the Dominican Republic in New York City has important implications for healthcare delivery to an underserved community. Ina uses the results of her research to develop training activities with healthcare providers in New York City to help establish a better dialogue and trusted relationship between providers and their Latino/Caribbean patients, and promote culturally sensitive healthcare for underserved communities.

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6. In the land of ackee and salt fish - 7. Ginger wine - 8. Dusk
9. Train D, Uptown and The Bronx - 10. Untitled I - By Ina Vandebroek

Telemachus - By Ocean Vuong



Felipe Perez, my youngest collector