



PANORAMA de VRIES

The 360 degrees of Turnhout (Belgium)

by

Lau de Vries

&

Lieve Flour

(Fragment of Panorama de Vries)

HISTORY

In January 2011, Lau de Vries and his wife Lydie, from Turnhout (Belgium) paid a visit to the Panorama Mesdag in The Hague, the Netherlands. He had never heard of its existence before and was simply baffled by the sheer magnitude of the project and the quality of the painting.

Since his hometown was at that time preparing to host a variety of cultural events in 2012, the 800th anniversary of the municipal rights conferred to it in 1212 by Henry I, Count of Brabant, and its proclamation as Culture City of Flanders 2012, this seemed to be the perfect occasion to paint a panorama too.

After a few months of deliberation, he and co-painter Lieve Flour in May 2011 started painting a titanium buff coloured acrylic layer on the entire 30 m long and 2,10 m high roll of canvas he had bought earlier.

In August they began the real drawing and painting of the panorama, an image based on a carefully selected set of 6 photographs, embracing the full 360 degrees of Turnhout and its surroundings.

The pictures were taken from the roof of what was the highest apartment building in Turnhout at the time.

Yet they were still desperately looking for a suitable location to exhibit the fully deployed panorama. In June 2012 they finally opened the 30 m Panorama to the public. Thanks to the efforts of Würth, a German manufacturer of nuts and bolts with factories all over Europe, founded by the father of present owner and art collector Reinold Würth, the artists were offered the magnificent curved glass wall in the Forumcafé of the Turnhout factory museum to expose their giant painting.

From June 11 2012 to January 9 2013, Lau and Lieve continued working under the admiring eyes of more than 6,300 enthusiastic visitors.

For the moment Panorama de Vries is waiting to be exhibited again in the museum of Natuurpunt, an organisation for the protection and preservation of nature and the environment, also in Turnhout.

There is no final location yet where this overall view of Turnhout could be enjoyed by both the present and future generations of its inhabitants.

Though the Panorama de Vries was meant to be exhibited as a cyclorama from the beginning, it's very unlikely it ever will.

Lau de Vries and Lieve Flour almost certainly will have to live with the idea that it will continue to be shown in a museum setting.

BIOGRAPHY

Laurent (Lau) de VRIES

Born in Turnhout, December 17, 1946

Retired.

Married, 2 children, 3 grandchildren

Address: Gasthuisstraat 67/3
B-2300 TURNHOUT (BEL)
laurent.de.vries@telenet.be
<http://www.laudevries.be>

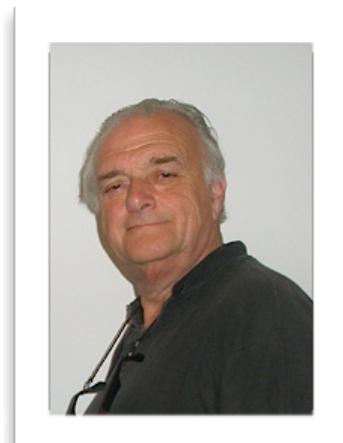
Panorama de Vries: <http://www.spandoek2012.be>

No previous artistic education, not even workshops

Member and boardmember of Akademie + 3, a society founded to bring together senior citizens who want to draw and paint in a group, where they can exchange tips and experience under the supervision of an experienced tutor.

Lau has been painting and drawing since 2006, the year he joined the group.

Favourite media: acrylic paint and, more recently, coloured pencils.



Godelieve (Lieve) FLOUR

Born in Huldenberg, July 9, 1944

Retired

Widow, 2 children from a previous marriage

Address: Heilig Hartstraat 4
B-2300 TURNHOUT
lieve.flour@gmail.com

<http://www.flourke44.be>

Panorama de Vries: <http://www.spandoek2012.be>

No previous artistic education, almost lifelong experience

Member, boardmember and one of the two tutors of Akademie + 3.

Joined the group in 2005

Has drawn since she was 6, started to paint in her teens

Media: pencils and colour pencils, ink, soft pastels, oil pastels, watercolour, oil and acrylic painting, markers, collage, mixed media and almost any twodimensional technique.

Asked permission to join Lau in his grand opus around April, 2011 and has participated since then.



TECHNICAL DATA

Category	Specifications
Measurements	Length: app. 30 meters (3 x 10 meters) Height: 2,10 meters
Canvas	Mixed fibers, partly natural (cotton and linen) partly synthetic
Vertical fixation of the canvas(studio at home)	Wooden frame (completed with a woodpanelling wall later on) and clamps 2 x 2,10 meters
Vertical Fixation of the canvas (Würth)	Special metal panels, joined in a curved wall. 30 x 2,40 meters Plastic Fixgrips (black) and rubbers 110 mm. (one p/meter) hooked into the perforations of the vertical supports.
Converting 3 rolls of 10 meters to 1 roll of 30 meters	Soudal silicone based Glaskit TS on a 100% cotton lining (0,25 m long and 2,10 m high) on the invisible side of the canvas. Bookbinders' gauze and acrylic heavy gel medium matt on the picture side.
Drawing	Transferring a projected picture with Cretacolor crayons (before the woodpanelling of the frame) and Caran d' Ache aquarel colour pencils (after the panelling)
Acrylic paint	Talens Amsterdam (400 ml. containers) Winsor & Newton (400 ml. containers)
Acrylic markers	Posca (for small details)

Category	Specifications
Colours	Titanium buff (light) Titanium buff (dark) Ochre Raw Umber Ultramarine Blue and a small touch of red All shades of yellow, brown, green, blue, black and grey were mixed using only the first five colours.
Palet	Self made stay-wet palet
Brushes	Different types and formats. Most half natural hair or bristle, half nylon.
Image	a full 360° view of Turnhout, based on a selection of 6 photographs taken on one of the so called “Anco-towers”.
Budget	Panorama de Vries was fully self sustained at the start. Later on private and commercial sponsoring was found to cover some of the costs. We also applied to the special Stimulation Fund of the City of Turnhout, where our project was accepted.
Useful links	http://mediagate.rtv.be/downloads/20121216_panorama_turnhout.wmv
Useful links (go to “de figuur”, then choose “Laurent”)	http://vrtpop.vrt.be/DownloadManager/download?id=oBuwOcOc
Useful links	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56P-63EChRg
Useful links	https://vimeo.com/60862885
Visitors at Würth’s (june-dec 2012)	6.300

THE MAKING OF

The measurements of Panorama de Vries were not chosen by chance.

The artists estimated the height in order to avoid the use of ladders or even more sophisticated technical equipment to reach higher than an average man can.

The length was equal to the inside circumference of the town's water tower, which was proclaimed both the symbol and the beacon of the Cultural Year 2012. That is the reason why Lau de Vries' original plan was to exhibit his panorama right there, in a full circle.

However, closer examination of the buildings' inside made him change his mind. Not only was the built-in metal staircase an unavoidable problem, but the huge cast iron pipes from the pumping installation emerged in the middle of the groundfloor, right on the ideal spot for visitors to admire the painting. Furthermore there was a brick built high tension electricity cabin that could not be dismantled and, last but not least, there was neither heating nor water supply.

After looking in vain for a suitable place to start the painting and time mercilessly ticking, Lieve finally measured the available height and length in her small studio and introduced it as an idea for a potential working station. Lau gratefully accepted almost immediately.

A rather primitive wooden frame was fixed against the only free wall in the room and the first two meters of the first roll were clamped to the frame.

This first section was soon covered with a titanium buff (dark) undercolour. Its purpose was to mime the patina of old postcards and photographs and to give the whole painting a yellowish somewhat antique look.

Having to leave the water tower, the artists were now desperately in search of a location that could harbour a 30 meters long and 2,10 meters high painting. They soon felt they had thoroughly considered every option, ranging from municipal buildings over cultural facilities to industrial or educational infrastructure and beyond, but unfortunately without result.

In the past Lieve already wrote to Wurth's factory museum but was politely rebuffed. It was therefore an unexpected and pleasant surprise to be invited there a fortnight later to an informal meeting concerning the future exposition of the Panorama de Vries. From that moment onwards potential practical problems were tackled with speed as well as efficiency. By the end of April 2012 there was a promise to assemble a vertical supporting wall of metal panels to stretch the canvas upon for as long a time as the artists would need to achieve the painting.

On June the 4th 2012 the panorama was built up in front of the magnificent curved glass wall of the Forumcafe at Würth's, where the artists worked till January 9 2013. That first date was also the first day Lau and Lieve saw their work to its full extend.

It was the start of a period of hard work for the retirees, not used anymore getting up early every day and biking back and forth to work. On the other hand the circumstances in which they painted at Würth were rather luxurious in almost all aspects, compared to the ones in the studio. And it was really nice working side by side with the three people in charge of the Würth museum in Turnhout.

On the first of June of this year, Panorama de Vries will be open again to the public at the museum of Natuurpunt, an organisation for the preservation of nature and environmental protection.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Rombout, Ton. "Het Fenomeen Panorama". Bakkum: Code, 2006.

Grieten, Stefaan; Verniers, Evelien. "Kijkparadijzen voor het volk, Panorama's en diorama's in Antwerpen. Erfgoedgidsen". Antwerpen: Provincie Antwerpen i.s.m. Openbaar Kunstbezit in Vlaanderen.

Storm ir., E.M. "Panorama Mesdag". Voorburg: artVISION, 2003

Leroy, Isabelle. "Le Panorama de la bataille de Waterloo: témoin exceptionnel de la saga des panoramas. Liège: Commission royale des Monuments, Sites et Fouilles et « Bataille de Waterloo 1815 » a.s.b.l., 2009

WEB SITES

www.panorama-mesdag.com

www.panorama-mesdag.com/educatie

www.tulipland.nl/web/PANORAMA'S/blauwe+tram/

www.simonbalyon.com/menu_simon_balyon_schilderij.htm

www.panoramacouncil.org