



INNOvating policy instruments for preservation, transformation and exploitation of heritage CASTLEs, manors and estates

Study Visit Flanders, Belgium  
26-29 April 2022

REPORT

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# STUDY VISIT OVERVIEW

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This document is the report of the Innocastle study visit to Flanders in the end of April 2022. More than five estates were visited and several debates / workshops were organised.

30 months, that is the period that the partners of Innocastle had not met 'in person' due to the Covid-19 measures. On Tuesday the 26th of April 2022, the partnership came back together in the beautiful city of Bruges to kick off the study visit to rural estates and castles in West and East Flanders.

The long delay of the visit into the second phase of the project turned out to be a blessing in disguise because it felt like a real treat to visit all these beautiful places and hear the inspiring stories of progress that all the partners, despite Covid-19, made on their Local Action Plans in the past two years.

The visit to the provincial estate park Bulskampveld on Wednesday the 27th of April showed how a regional approach contributes to the activation and positioning of a large green historic area into an important place of agriculture and leisure between Bruges and Ghent. The relevance of this estate landscape for citizens and visitors is growing every day. Also, the visit to Poeke estate showed how relevant the involvement of governmental organisations is in maintaining

and revitalising rural estates.

Visit Flanders, the Flemish Department for Tourism, has developed a new tourism policy and is acquiring different historical sites, among them Poeke estate, as part of a new narrative for the area. Involvement of 'passionate communities' consisting of locals and other committed communities is a key element in this policy.

**The visit introduced the partners to the diversity of historic castles, manors and estates in West-Flanders and the good practices use to engage this diversity.**

Visits to privately owned estates Lakebossen, Menas and Bellem showed the different approaches that private owners give to their estates. Lakebossen is looking for a new future for the estate while dealing with local policies that do not always support the plans of the estate. Whereas Bellem estate finds new functions through experimenting and research.

In the meantime, it hosts a Ukrainian family. A workshop on a more than human approach, taking into consideration nature and all lifeforms, created interesting ideas for this estate. Menas is a beautiful example of turning an estate into a place for quiet and simple retreat for target groups that normally do not have the possibility to visit these beautiful places.

The field visit underlined the effect of Innocastle on local policymakers. The Flanders Heritage Agency was delighted about the constructive and decisive effect of the Innocastle project on designing the new regional Heritage Masterplan. During the partner meeting, other partners demonstrated the positive influence that the exchange of experiences within Innocastle has had on their regional situations and policies.

This booklet introduces the different sites we visited, summarizes the different workshops and gives an impression of the visit through a photographic collection.

Further information on request. See the Innocastle website or contact Bert.deroo@hogent.be.

# AGENDA

## Tuesday April 26th

Afternoon  
18:00 Individual arrival Bruges  
Welcome dinner 'de Republiek' Bruges  
Sint-Jakobsstraat 36, 8000 Bruges

Night  
Individual hotel in Bruges

## Wednesday April 27th

08:15 Pick up in Bruges  
Bargeplein at Minnewaterpark.  
Walk across the bridge from Minnewaterpark to meet Sylvie.  
Gathering around public toilets.

### PROVINCIAL DOMAIN BULSKAMPVELD

Personeelsparking thv VOC en hoeve Colpaert.  
Inrijden thv Heirweg 14, 8730 Beernem

09:15 Official welcome at visitor center Bulskampveld

10:00 Bike ride in the provincial domain and adjacent private estate  
Organized by Province of West Flanders  
Please bring adapted clothing, in case of rain we will walk.

12:45 Picnick

13:30 Departure

### ESTATE LAKEBOSSEN

Lakebossendreef 4, 8020 Oostkamp

14:00 Arrival and welcome at estate Lakebossen  
Short presentation and guided walk on the estate

16:00 Departure

### ESTATE MENAS

Blekkervijverstraat 20, 9880 Maria-Aalter

16:30 Arrival and welcome at estate Menas  
Introduction to the site  
Free walk, check in

18:30 Dinner at estate Menas

19:30 Evening debate and Pecha Kucha presentations partners  
Organized by Flanders Heritage Agency

21:30 Closing campfire (free to join)

Night Group stay at estate Menas  
Basic accommodation, no individual bathroom  
Each Innocastle partner is responsible for his own hotel costs.  
Cost 42€/pp which need to be paid during the visit.



# AGENDA

## Thursday April 28th

07:30 Breakfast at estate Menas  
08:45 Check out  
09:00 Departure

### ESTATE BELLEM

09:30 Mariahovelaan 2, 9811 Bellem  
Arrival and welcome at estate Bellem  
09:45 Exchange of experience action plan.  
11:45 Book presentation: 'the future of estate landscapes in Europe'  
12:30 Walking lunch and exploration site  
14:00 More-than-Human workshop  
17:00 Departure Bellem

### GHENT

17:30 Arrival at KASK  
Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2, 9000 Ghent  
18:00 Free, check in individual hotels  
19:30 Dinner at Bompa  
Oudburg 21, 9000 Ghent  
Night Free  
Individual hotel Ghent

## Friday April 29th

08:30 Pick up in Ghent  
Jozef Kluyskensstraat 2, 9000 Ghent

### ESTATE POEKE

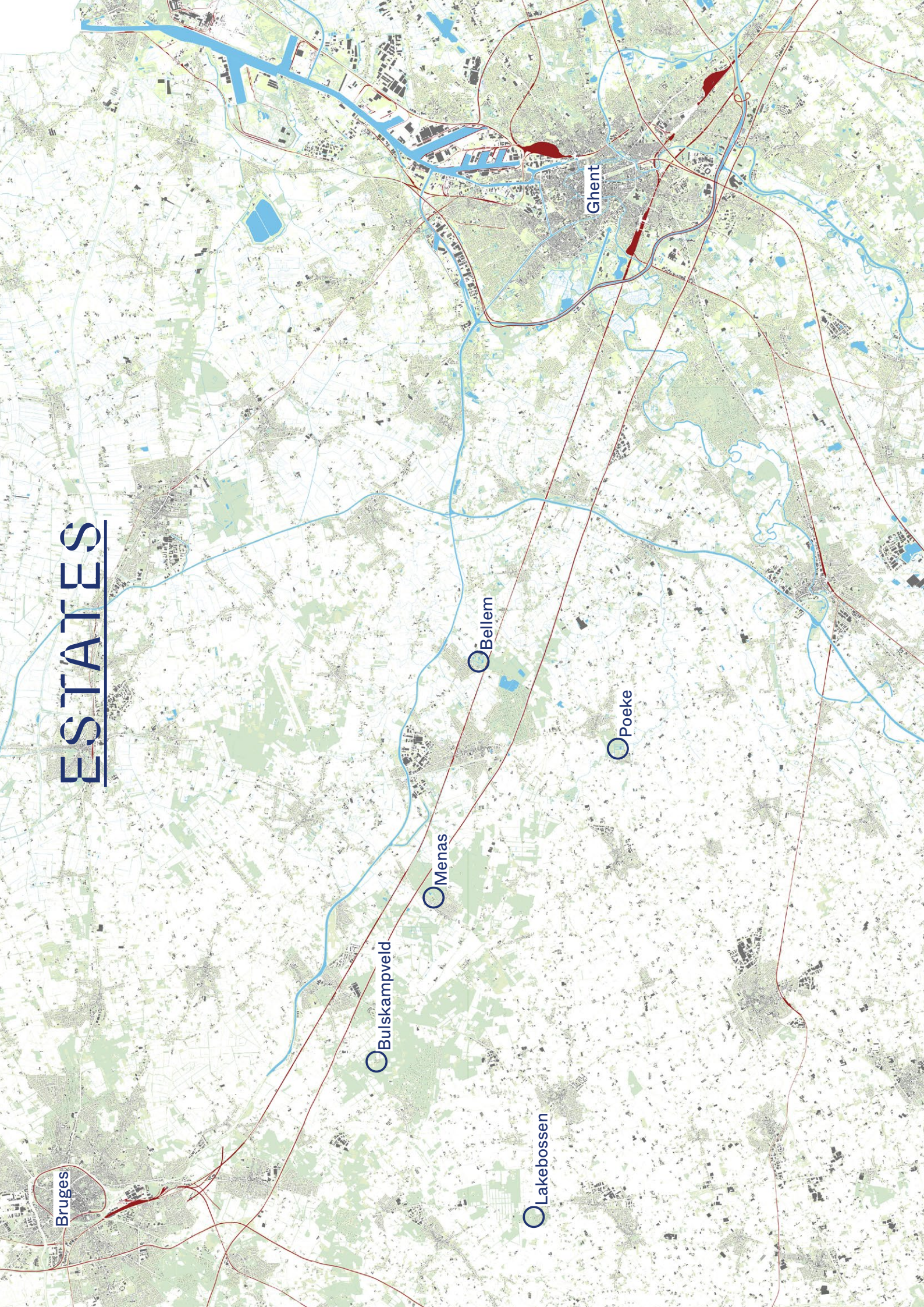
09:00 Kasteelstraat 38, 9880 Poeke  
Arrival at estate Poeke  
09:15 Guided walk  
11:00 Lunch debate on participative redevelopment  
Organized by Visit Flanders.  
13:00 Departure

### GHENT

13:30 Kiss and Ride train station  
Sint-Denijslaan 203, 9000 Ghent  
Drop off train station  
Earliest train possible 13:45



# ESTATES



Bruges

Bulskampveld

Menas

Bellem

Lakebossen

Poeke

Ghent



## PROVINCIAL DOMAIN BULSKAMPVELD



The provincial domain Bulskampveld is a large public parc at the center of the Bulskampveld region. It is managed by the province of West-Flanders and functions as a recreational hotspot and gateway to the larger Bulskampveld region.

The domain is situated in between Bruges and Ghent at the boarder of the municipality Beernem. West-Flanders is an important agricultural region and although this is no different for the Bulskampveld region it is as well the largest forest area in West Flanders.

This is partly due to the estate which consists of 230 hectares. Large forested areas alternate with moorland and meadow. It is a varied cultural-historical landscape in which the natural assets are supplemented with built heritage. It has a visitor center, a working farmstead, a walled garden, a bird rescue center, a herb farm, a restaurant and so forth.

The last 10 years the region has undergone big changes. Several regional, provincial and national institutions have invested in the recreational facilities and nature quality of the domain.

During our visit the province of West Flanders introduced their regional approach. This was followed by a guided bike tour to several elements within the domain and adjacent region. Guide Pauwel Bogaert (RL Houtland) introduced us to the investmens done in the region the last 15 years.



## ESTATE LAKEBOSSEN



Estate Lakebossen is a privately owned and used estate. Its main building has been demolished partially. A redevelopment halfway the twentieth century has consolidated the structure. This excentric architectural intervention has resultated in a challenging building for contemporary use or redevelopment.

The estate is situated in the midst of an agricultural region and is not directly connected to a vilage center or public transportation. Its fairly isolated position is a challenge while as well being an important asset.

The estate consists of the partly demolished castle, large historical stables, some smaller (temporary) structures and a landscaped park. The estate is not a protected heritage site.

Only one resident is currently living on the estate. The recreational potential of the site is being explored amongst others through a local colaboration providing unique seasonal accommodation.

The family is currently exploring the redevelopment possibilities of the site but is confronted with an economic reality and challenging policy limitations.

Winnewald Dejonckheere, one of the family memebers, gave us an introduction to the history of the site and explained us the potential of the site and the challenges, the family is confronted, to activate that potential. Els Van Lancker (municipal spatial planning) and Evelyne Vercauteren (provincial spatial planning) joined the introduction and explained their point of view. Kika & Tobias (Boomkamp, local tourist provider) showed how their temporary rental tents are perfect to start exploring touristic exploitations on such a historic site.



## ESTATE MENAS



Estate Menas is part of the network of 'Brothers of Charity', a congregation of the Catholic Church. The domain functioned as a novitiate closed to the public, until it was redeveloped in 2014. Today it is a place of silence and retreat for groups and individuals while still having five brothers as permanent residents. The park is open to the public. The estate is home to the famous village festival 'Blekkerbosfeesten'.

The domain is situated next to the center of the small municipality of Maria-Aalter. The domain is part of a larger forested area encircling the

municipality. The highway is dividing the former estate into two smaller estates which are now owned and managed independently. The estate is not protected as heritage.

While the estate has a long history, most of the current buildings are mid twentieth century constructions. There is a chapel, several smaller meeting rooms and basic infrastructure for 54 guests.

Filip D'Hooghe, the manager of the estate, and Ine Soenen from the province of West-Flanders explained us the redevelopment process of the estate. Combining

a place of silence with the public use of the park is not always straightforward and since Covid-19 the public use of the park has increased tremendously.

But with good attention and some small interventions, the site, together with the municipality and province, succeeded in finding a balance.



## ESTATE BELLEM



Estate Bellem is a privately owned estate and has been recently reacquired by the family with a +200 year history to the site. For 50 years it was owned by the diocese of Ghent. The estate is currently not open to the public. Several smaller and informal activities however unite the estate with the surrounding community.

The estate is situated in the center of the town Bellem and a traintrack is separating the current estate from its former forests and farming grounds which are now partly protected as Natura 2000. The trainstation, with hourly trains

to Ghent and Bruges is next to the estate.

In many ways it is a typical Flemish estate with a central castle, multiple outhouses and servant buildings all positioned within a landscaped park of roughly 25 hectares. The estate is heritage protected and is in a good state.

Two buildings currently have a residential function, one building is transformed into a hotel but has never had an active exploitation.

The estate functions as a testing ground for the research project

‘A new approach to estates’, of Kask & Devine HOGENT-Howest, which explores estates from a more-than-human perspective.

During the visit a workshop took place in which the Innocastle team were asked to rethink the European landscape convention and Faro convention, making it fitting for the more-than-human community of these places.



## ESTATE POEKE



The monumental estate Poeke has a history going back to at least the 12th century. The municipality Aalter acquired the estate in 1977 for which it served several purposes. In 2021 Visit Flanders took over ownership and is currently in the first phase of a participatory redevelopment proces. For several years a group of volunteers is continuing the traditional forest management on the site.

The estate is situated in between the small municipalities of Poeke and Lotenhulle. The estate is heritage protected and has a size of 56 hectares. It exists of a main castle, stables, farmstead and an elaborate park

with forests.

The estate is currently open to the public. The different buildings are in urgent need of redevelopment and currently do not have a fixed function.

Visit Flanders, the Flemish department for tourism, has developed a new tourism policy and is acquiring different historical sites in order to gain hands on experience in the execution of this policy. Part of this new strategy, is the development of different narratives of which historic estates is one. Estate Poeke, and several other estates, function as pilot cases in this proces.

During our visit we explored the park, guided by volunteer and heritage expert Koen Himpe and current estate manager for Visit Flanders Bruno Paternoster. Following this inspiring tour we ended the Innocastle study visit with an introduction to Visit Flanders tourism policy by CEO Peter De Wilde and Jullie Rutgeers followed by an informal group discussion on participatory redevelopment strategies.



# FHA-WORKSHOP

In the context of the heritage master plan, developed by the Flanders Heritage Agency, an evening workshop was organised on the question: how to reconnect estates with their environment through a focus on the spatial, economic and socio-cultural network?

In a short PechaKucha style presentation, each partner introduced us to a good practice from their region. Divided in different groups, the participants of the workshop debated these examples to answer four questions.

- 1/ Which element of this case inspires you the most?
- 2/ What currently enables or restrains your region to have similar cases?
- 3/ What can governments do to make this generally applicable in the future?
- 4/ Do you have knowledge of similar splendid cases in your region?

In what follows, the report is added drafted by the Flanders Heritage Agency.

## Evening debate: Estates + Environment

Innocastle study visit, 26-29 April 2022  
Synthesis

Wednesday 27 April 2022 @ Enas estate




### Why?

- ▶ Heritage master plan on rural estates
  - Preservation through development
  - Participatory visioning
  - Steering group
- ▶ Sequential phases
  - Values on rural estates
  - Strategies & methods to integrate values
  - Set of shared ambitions + action program
- ▶ Benchmarking
  - Collection + evaluation of good practices

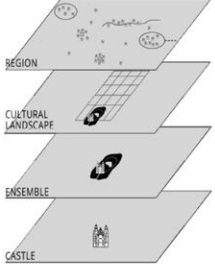


Signature of statement of intent (21/02/2022)




### What?

- ▶ Evening debate:
  - Theme: An area-based approach offers opportunities to revitalize rural estates.
  - How to reconnect estates with their environment?**  
(Estates as focal point of spatial, economic socio-cultural networks...)



(© Innocastle baseline survey)



### How?

- ▶ Planned course of debate
  - 4 x presentation of good practice (5')
  - 4 x discussion per table (15')
    - What can we learn from each case?
    - What enables/restrains other regions to have similar cases?
    - What is needed to make cases more generally applicable?
  - General debate (20')





**CASE 1: SPAIN**

- ▶ **Medellincastle**
  - Roman theatre cleaned and used (festival) by locals
- ▶ **Alconchecastle**
  - Castle in night (open area) sky is central theme, activities at night
  - Agroforestry with sheep & pigs in fruit meadows
- ▶ **Hornachoscastle**
  - Old irrigation system for vegetable garden: explaining use of water (at rural estate?)



**CASE 2: NATIONAL TRUST**

- ▶ **Ham House & Garden (London)**
  - 17th century mansion, now office
  - × Architecture hasn't changed heritage preservation
  - × Grass = flowers (tulips)
- Vineyard community (Richmond)
  - × Taking care of people in crisis (volunteer association)
  - × Kitchen garden, vegetables & flowers for food bank and/or people in crisis



**CASE 3: ROMANIA**

- ▶ **Florestiestate**
  - Poor village with a lot of unemployed people + children not going to school
  - Restoration: inventory, together with children & combining it with schooling
  - Connection between estate (with owner from Bucharest) and the local community



**CASE 4: NETHERLANDS**

- ▶ **Schouwgroep Sonsbeekestate**
  - With experts from different fields of study (nature, heritage, climate, spatial planners...)
  - 2x/year: visit to the estate, on 1 theme
  - Only advise no decision making
  - Long-term engagement
  - How to make this group more diverse?



## CASE 1: SPAIN

### ► What was the good practice in this case?

- Connecting the immovable heritage with historical practices and cultural events
- The collaboration of all levels of government
- How a low cost solution promotes the current authenticity of the site bringing added value (no need to bring other ideas or technologies to promote or preserve)
- Public archaeology people taking part in (re)discovery
- Enjoying the stars by yourself (simplicity of project) + the idea of giving the castle a function at nighttime
- Working with unemployed
- Link between heritage and gastronomy

### ► What are similar good practices (in other countries)?

- Landgoedcoöperatie Veluwezoom (NL)
- Gelderlandestate festival
- Festival at Medellín
- Romania. Bontida, made known by a festival 'electric castle', also restored castle (Banffy)
- Not really similar/more complex: astrolabs
- Icehouse (ijskelder) explaining while excavating?
- Kruiderie
- National Trust (redegat) garden maintenance
- Festivals in Romania at castles attracts more people & working with locals (hospitality)
- Food archaeologist working with local restaurants



## CASE 1: SPAIN

### ► What are the critical factors for this good practice?

- Positive factors:
  - × Recognition of the value of the heritage
  - × Organisation
- Negative factors:
  - × Light/noise pollution + cloudy weather (BE/NL)
  - × Too hot for festival at daytime (ESP)
  - × Lack of infrastructure, accommodation (RO)
  - × Crowdy areas if it gets very popular, it will have a negative effect on the experience
  - × Castles are still in private hands, some projects are not possible with private owners (legislation)
  - × Gastronomy & high end cuisine difficult (to combine with a heritage site?)

### ► How can governments make this good practice generally applicable?

- Give incentives to engage social enterprises / Empower individuals and organisations
- Take away legal barriers
- Facilitate with grants for small touristic development (or bigger), e.g. camp sites (RO)
- Provide facilities
- Use volunteer groups to maintain sites



## CASE 2: NATIONAL TRUST

### ► What was the good practice in this case?

- The social mix with volunteers etc. / Volunteering as a base of working (vineyard community)
- Heritage as a tool to engage local communities
- Adaptation to the visitors
- Charity element: food & flowers
- Demonstration horti / agricultural practices
- Environment where you can relax, come at ease

### ► What are similar good practices (in other countries)?

- Kruiderie (BE)
- De Ommuurde Tuin in Renkum (NL)
- Cloisters (e.g. Abdij van het Park (Leuven), Sint Pietersabdij (Gent))
- Vineyards orchards, vegetable gardens trained in green heritage (NL)
- Meridavegetable garden (ESP) => volkstuinten?
- Holiday Participation System Flanders
- Discounts for social organizations (Visit Flanders)
- Kruiderie
- Project in rural areas involving local people
- Heritage being open to everyone not only the well-educated
- Heers Castle community building



## CASE 2: NATIONAL TRUST

### ► What are the critical factors for this good practice?

- Positive factors:
  - × Accessibility
  - × Inspiring project managers
  - × You need different profiles in volunteers
  - × How to start community building as a passion in relation to heritage => working together, volunteering, attention for people in crisis
  - × Visitor attraction (business model) subsidise the community
- Negative factors:
  - × Difficulty to gather volunteers
  - × Not enough awareness of the possibilities both from the side of the castle owner and the volunteers
  - × Often car parkings in kitchen garden
  - × Supervising necessary
    - Training
    - Good educational skills
  - × People don't want to pay to visit (some vegetable gardens)
  - × Rural inhabitants are too poor to volunteer

### ► How can governments make this good practice generally applicable?

- To recognize volunteer work in terms of labor legislation (ESP/RO) see it as a real experience in CV's insurance...
- Insurance for groups/companies
- Make connections between partners
- Teach/train people
- Empower NGOs and leave responsibilities to them



## CASE 3: ROMANIA

### ► What was the good practice in this case?

- Enrolling the local people
- Engaging children as way to engage the community (and not through schools)
- Excavation + restoration to arouse interest of community
- Locals get free entry; owner pays and gets funds
- Problem with vandalism solving it with the youngsters
- Not always thought of this as a solution

### ► What are similar good practices (in other countries)?

- No real examples where children to cooperate in research/inventory etc.
- "Erfgoed Gezocht" inventory of activities by volunteers
- Bultskampveld Kruiderie



## CASE 3: ROMANIA

### ► What are the critical factors for this good practice?

- Positive factors
  - × Need for link between private owners and NGOs
  - × You need expert knowledge for restoration/excavation
- Negative factors:
  - × School programmes usually already determined and full, no room for something new
  - × Distrust & prejudice towards these target groups
  - × Private proprietors often not interested in social projects (what's in for them)

### ► How can governments make this good practice generally applicable?

- Adapt regulation: education, labor...
- Integrate this kind of activity in school programs (on a local level)
- Mix children who go to school and who don't (e.g. Roma children)
- Create a framework for participation: different layers in participation of governments
- Provide space (and resources) for social ideas and projects = community building



## CASE 4: NETHERLANDS

### ► What was the good practice in this case?

- The showgroep engages for a long period of time
- Advice and decision making are disconnected
- The idea that politicians need to be involved in the advisory process
- Multidisciplinarity of the showgroep
- Talking and finding solutions by walking through the estate

### ► What are similar good practices (in other countries)?

- UNESCO site/village with parliament, but still lacking the political presence (Viscri, RO)
- Kwaliteitskamers (BE)
- Working on it in Albuquerque (ESP)
- Drongengoed (BE): experts + users
- Beheerscommissie & beheersplannen (BE)
- Urban development Badajoz people involved in planning
- Economic Board in Romania (Timisoara)
- Structure of landscape park Bultskampveld
- Monfragüe (Spain) working with participants and stakeholders



## CASE 4: NETHERLANDS

### ► What are the critical factors for this good practice?

- Positive factors
  - × Funding Rules for funding are not always suitable for all levels of government?
  - × Experts ↔ open solicitation procedure
  - × (enough) political engagement
- Negative factors
  - × A lack of civil involvement (RO)

### ► How can governments make this good practice generally applicable?

- Improve the communication between experts and politics
- Communication to the public: "you can be part of it"
- Encourage maintenance plans (BE)
- Be selective in participation: define beforehand when to have participation and when not, and what the purpose is
- Provide time & money



### What were the good practices about?

1. (Re)engaging the social environment around the estate / using the estate as a catalyst for society building (ESP, GB, RO)
2. Restore historical practices for current purposes (food production) / use qualities of domain to connect with environment (ESP)
3. Engage locals (social environment) to advice on the maintenance of the estate (NL)
4. Engage less straightforward social groups (children, lower incomes) in an estate community (RO, GB)



### What are similar good practices (in other countries)?

1. [De Kruiderie Bultkampveld](#) (BE): social project on one of the farms at Bultkampveld, producing spices, flowers, vegetables for local consumption
2. [Monfragüe](#) (Spain): working with participants and stakeholders
3. [Erfgoed gezocht](#): citizen science project for archaeological research in the Netherlands
4. [Landgoedcoöperatie Veluwezoom](#): owners sharing resources for maintenance of their estates (also opening up to social economy)
5. National Trust ([Tredegar](#)): garden maintenance and [allotments](#) for food production by locals
6. [Electric castle](#) (Banffy castle, Bontida): music festival as a resource for restoration projects at the castle



### What are the critical factors for the good practices?

1. Be selective in participation: define beforehand when to have participation and when not, and what the purpose is
2. Infrastructure and accommodation to host events at estates (without affecting the heritage values on these sites)
3. Cooperation and support from private owners and local community: what's in for them?
4. Training and supervision of volunteers is (sometimes) necessary
5. Communication between experts/ administration and politics
6. Long-term engagement from different groups (e.g. school children) via school programs etc.
7. Awareness of possibilities to connect with communities



### How can governments make these good practice generally applicable?

1. Provide enough money (subsidies) and resources
2. Take away legal barriers / less regulation: best solutions are the ones that are not translated into legislation (flexibility and tailor-made solutions)
3. Encourage (integrated) maintenance plans to relate historical values to other values at rural estates
4. Invest in communication, exchange of experiences, creating trust between actors and communities
5. Give incentives to engage social enterprises / Empower individuals and organisations





# MTH-WORKSHOP



The research project into a more-than-human approach to estates takes its cue from the growing realization that we humans are not the only ones with a point of view on this planet. Animals do too

Animals develop meaningful relationships with the landscape they inhabit, scaffolded by their own history, culture and individuality. Just like with humans, these meaningful relationships congeal into material reality: animals do not only connect passively with a world ready-made and out there, but actively build and shape their environment. They do so in relation to us and all other creatures: the worlding of the world is always a 'becoming-with', a multispecies achievement in which the reverberating actions of myriads of creatures continuously give rise to the world.

However, living in the anthropocene means that we are living in a human-centered world, a world where most (design) decisions are informed by human needs. It is essential that we reconnect with nature

and start thinking about consciously living toward the post-anthropocene: a world where more-than-human entanglements are permanently and undoubtedly taken into account.

In our project we explore how to engage with this insight as researchers, designers and artists and unravel the potential it brings. How can we start a journey that strengthens the entanglements between us and all the other species?

Our primary medium is that of the typical Flemish estate. Estates have always been places where humans and animals meet: they are prime interspecies interfaces. However, traditional narratives tend to overlook the important role animals have always played in helping to maintain and shape estates. Subsequently

estate management decisions more often than not fail to be beneficial for the more-than-human networks that sustain them. Transversing methodologies from landscape architecture, interior & digital design, the arts as well as various other disciplines, our research seeks to redress the balance.

By developing new multispecies narratives, we want to shift attention away from the idea of the estate as a fixed object and foreground the more-than-human network that sits at its core. Central to this movement is a decentering of humans and human experience, in order to open up a creative and collaborative space on which we can start coshaping more-than-human narratives. Specifically, we asked students and artists to intervene in a bat network at a local estate of bats to gauge their interest in starting a cross-species communication and to translate bat experience of the estate. Our next step will be to look how the bats can lead the way in devising a new, entangled future for the estate.

# PRESENTATION EXCERPT

Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FTD — Forum Futura

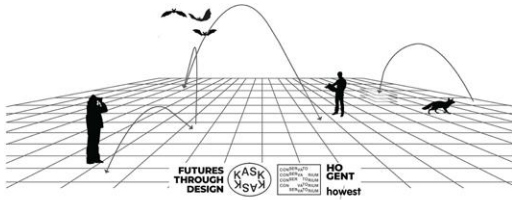
Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FTD — Forum Futura

Futures through Design

## Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FORUM FUTURA



Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FTD — Forum Futura

Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FTD — Forum Futura

## New European Bauhaus Concept Paper

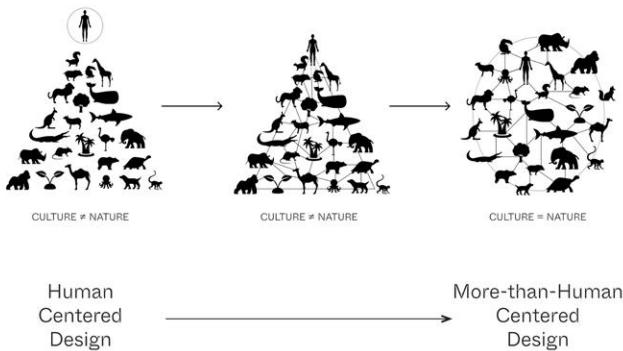
### 1. VISION

#### 01. Sustainability

Climate justice is predicated upon radically inclusive social and cultural relationships and interactions, both human and more-than-human.

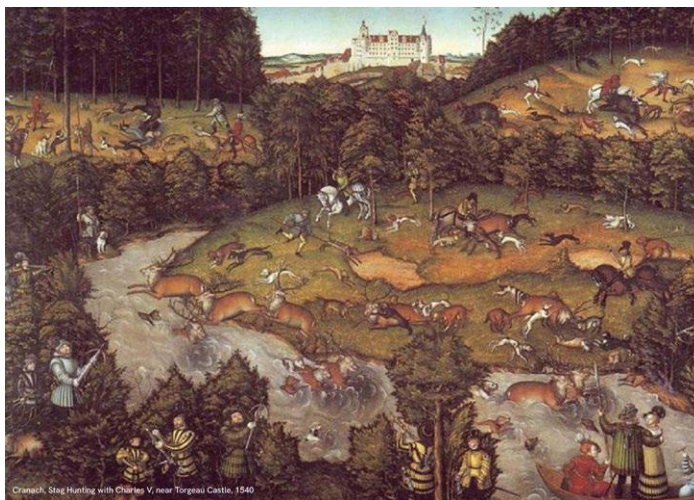
#### 02. Inclusion

Inclusion requires more-than-human perspectives.



That is, the human in a non-anthropocentric approach does not disappear: it becomes one entity among many entities, all of which are granted legitimacy in a kind of radical pluralism among objects and things, human and otherwise.

(DiSalvo, Lukens: 2011)



Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

FTD — Forum Futura

Estates & More-than-Human Centered Design

## Fresh look at spatial design of estates



### ATTIC HOUSE

Many of our constructions are being used by bats as shelters and places to rest. For instance they make a noise that alerts any passerby they like to visit, mainly because it is a space rarely occupied by humans. Bats are indeed considered as invaders that invade the place far from the home. We propose as first to listen to their desire to be rid of the human bothering them. We just need to take these construction models that bats already use and make them unusable by humans.

Therefore we take away the main part of the house and keep only the attic with a new dedicated to bats and high up on four feet, making it inaccessible for non-flying beings.

**PERIOD OF USE**

**ENTRANCES**

**RESIDENTS**

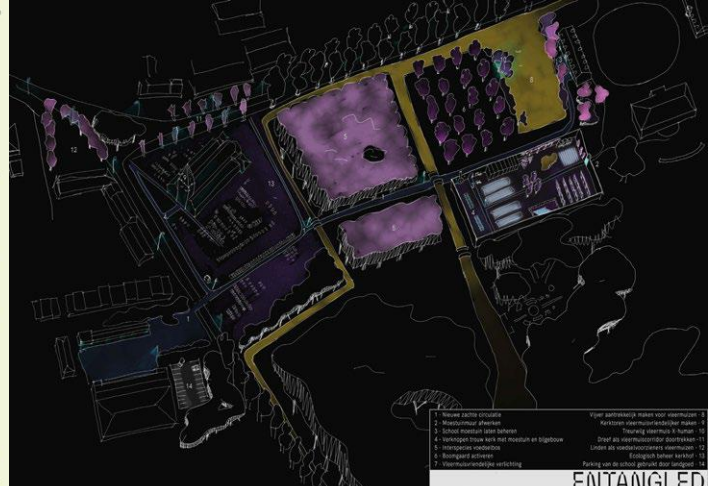
**SHACKLE POINT** **APPROACH POINT**

**TAIL DOWN** **HEAD DOWN**

**SINGLES OF THE DAUNTMENT HUNTING TECHNIQUE**

**INSIDE**

Their faces would also drop on the water directly because of their location, and would facilitate the spread of bacteria and underwater plants and lure more insects to the place that closes the circle.





## **PART 1: REWRITES**

In part one of the workshop the participants are asked to rewrite certain definitions stated in the ‘European Landscape Convention’ and the ‘Faro convention on cultural heritage’. By identifying, analysing and taking out the human-centeredness in these policy texts the participants come to understand that notions such as ‘landscape’ and ‘heritage community’ have meaning beyond a human point of view.

**“Landscape” means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.**

“Landscape” is an area whose identifiable character is the result of the action or interaction of living organisms.

“Landscape” means an area, whose character is the result of the actions and interactions of natural – including human – factors.

**“Landscape protection” means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.**

“Landscape protection” means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, valued for its natural configuration and how that has been shaped by the different species living there, including human activity.

“Landscape protection” means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value\* derived from its natural configuration of which human activity is part.

\*Humans as part of nature make heritage value.

**“Landscape quality objective” means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings.**

“Landscape quality” is aiming to cover the needs of all living creatures.

“Landscape quality objective” means, for a specific landscape, the determination by the competent public authorities, through an integrated, co-creative process of the needs of all ecosystems connected to the landscape qualities.

**A “heritage community” consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.**

A “heritage community” consists of all the elements that interact and compose the cultural heritage of a specific area, to be sustained and transmitted to future generations.

A “heritage community” consists of people who value specific aspects of inherited environments and behaviours of living organisms which they

wish within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations, in order to strike (?) a balance in the ecosystem.

**“Cultural heritage” is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.**

“Cultural heritage” is a group of resources from the past which are a reflection of the constantly ending behaviour, needs and interactions between species and spaces.

“Cultural heritage” is a network of resources inherited from the past which people identify, while taking into account the needs of all living organisms, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving behaviours, values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between living organisms and places through time.

## **PART 2: SPECULATIVE FUTURES FOR THE CASE STUDY ESTATE**

In part two of the workshop the participants were asked to develop a speculative future for Bellem Castle. What could the estate look like in 2050 when positioning the more-than-human and the rewrites from part one central in its future development.

### **Speculative future 1**

Bellem Castle in 2050 is a living and learning lab for the human and non-human community. Bellem is the beating heart of its surroundings and has reinstated the kitchen garden through permaculture. The walled garden is full of vegetables, fruit trees, animals and bees. There is zero emission use of land. The front lawn is full of wild flowers and grazed occasionally by sheep. You can often find a grass snake there!!! The living surroundings for the foxes and bats are optimal and the field and meadow birds enjoy their natural living conditions. The ancient trees are full of birds and insects.

### **Speculative future 2**

We felt free as a bat and tried to find an economic solution by connecting the activities of the estate to the bat community. Educational and recreative activities around bat-experiences will be created. At the same time, the estate is trying to enhance the connection to the broader landscape by initiating cooperations between nature departments, the municipality, private owners and the railway company in order the allign different measures sustaining the bat population.

### **Speculative future 3**

Ideas for a more-than-human economy on Bellem Castle: We use the park as an animal graveyard, connecting to the existing graveyard around the

church. Ceremonies for pets can take place in the castle or one of the other buildings. People can buy (...) place for their pet at one of the (...) in the '(...) graveyard park' of Bellem Castle. With the train station nearby, people from the neighbourhood can visit their beloved animal quite frequently.

### **Speculative future 4**

Bellem 2050 is a place for a new definition of cultural heritage. It focuses on the interactions between humans and more-than-humans both inside the estate and surrounding landscape. From a social-cultural perspective it is connected to the surrounding more-than-human communities like farms, villages, animals etc. The owner sees his estate as a flagship for change and exchange, to this regard, the transfer of knowledge and expertise about the new definition of cultural heritage is central.

### **Speculative future 5**

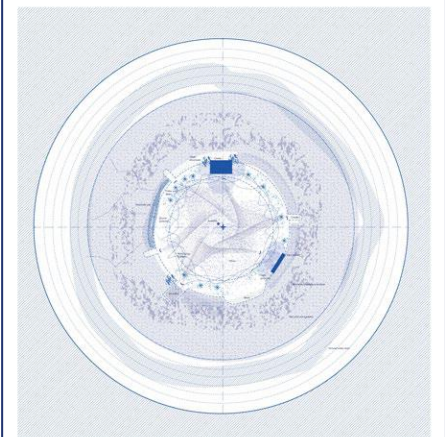
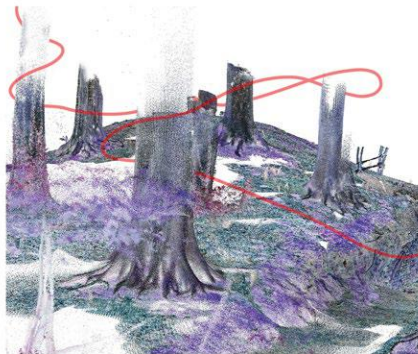
Bellem Castle will become a living lab and showcase of a regional and regenerative diverse food producing ecosystem, employing both historic estate traditions and new opportunities such as food forestry or aquaponics, in balance with all living organisms in order to supply the local restaurant, inspire farmers, involve the local community and to sustain the estate and its ecosystem.



The more-than-human is that which both includes and exceeds humanity: it represents the many entanglements of human existence with other living and non-living entities.

It recognises that humans are part of nature and must adopt a more-than-human-centric perspective on human-led activities, cultivating awareness and empathy for the rich worlds of other species and entities.

Within our systems of conception, production, and dissemination, we can support the ecological turn toward Earth as a shared space for multiple species and natural systems, defined by interdependence, and not merely a reservoir of natural resources to be extracted by humans.



## SOME THOUGHTS

The objective of the workshop is to make the participants aware of the human centeredness of our thoughts, actions and policy instruments. What possibilities and questions arise when we are forced to eliminate this human centeredness for a short moment?

It is one thing to take into account the mth-other as an equal actant in shaping heritage and the landscape, it is something else to as well accept the voice of the mth-other in the valuation, protection and decision making relating these landscapes and heritage values. All groups have introduced the mth community in the shaping proces. Some have eliminated the direct reference to humans in the decision making process. None have explicitly introduced the mth-community as 'the' community responsible for the decision making.

The position of domesticated animals is questioned by a group. One could categorise animals in three groups. Domesticated animals conform to the societal norms and rules existing in human society. Liminal animals do not confirm to these rules but are dependent of humans (and their byproducts) for their survival. Seagulls largely depend on human food spill-offs for example. Wild animals have no direct or indirect relationship with human society. From a mth-perspective these categories are less relevant.

What is the meaning of the notion 'landscape' when the dichotomy nature-culture disappears?

Who are the stakeholders of these definitions when the focus on humans disappears?

How to accurately identify the needs of non-humans?

Who is authorized to take decisions when everything is approached from a more-than-human perspective?

It is hard to always find a balance resulting in a win-win for all actors involved.

A mth focus automatically results in an integrated and inclusive thought process in close relation to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Human and non-human are not opposits, but part of the mth-community.

Thinking of the more-than-human in this workshop instantly initiated deep philosophical questions in the different groups. What is the meaning of 'landscape'? What exactly is the value of

'protection'? Why do we protect and for whom?

The participants often use the notion 'more-than-human' and 'ecosystem' interchangeably. The word 'ecosystem' refers to a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment. The world is one large ecosystem which is rapidly transforming due to human actions. However we seldomly act or organize human society with the idea that humans are undeniably part of this ecosystem. This is exactly the point of focus of the 'more-than-human' which explores the consequences and possibilities when humans are understood as merely one actant among a multitude of other actants.

How much human is in the more-than-human? When shifting the focus from the human to the mth, we suddenly lose our dominant position. But what position do we take? The human surely does not disappear, it becomes one entity among many entities, all of which are granted legitimacy in a kind of radical pluralism among objects and things, human and otherwise.





# PICTURES







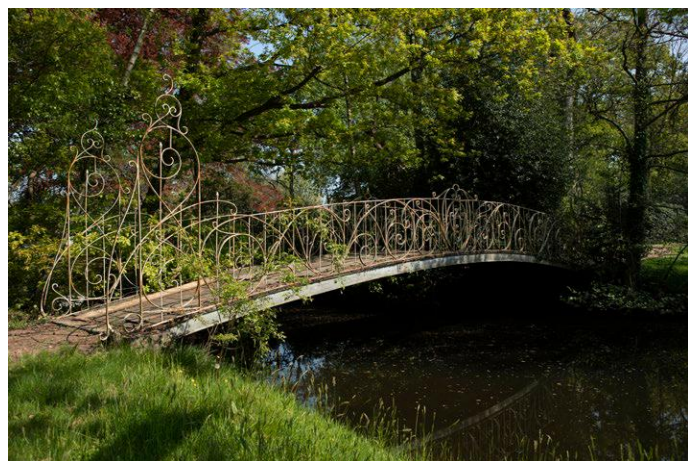




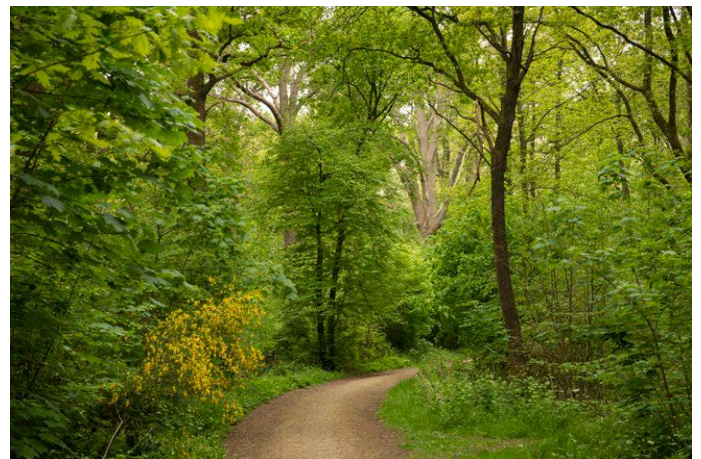














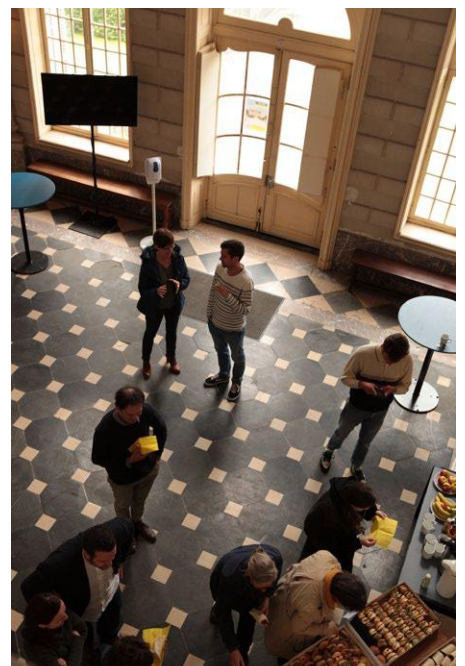
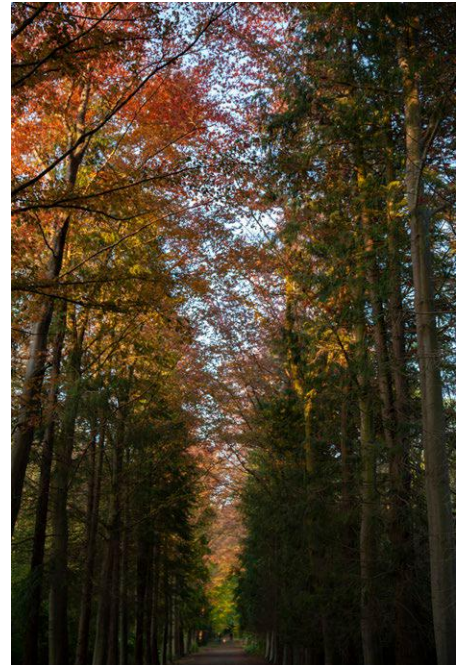
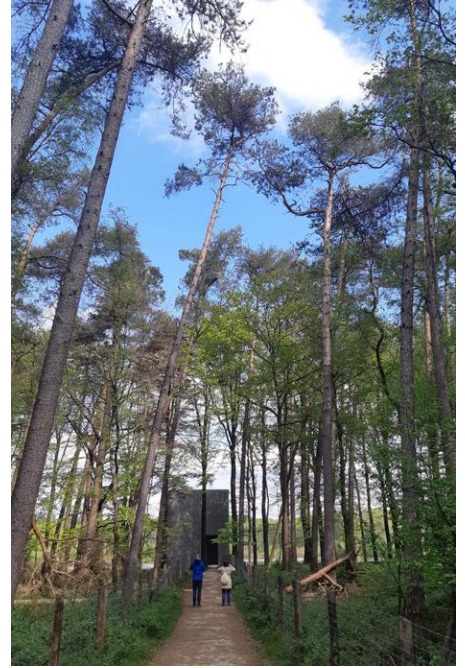




The more-than-human is that which both includes and exceeds humanity: it represents the many entanglements of human existence with other living and non-living entities.

NEW EUROPEAN BAUHAUS

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