

MADE BY NATURE

THE POETRY OF THE BEE

IRIS ROMBOUTS

It has long been a dream of art director Iris Rombouts to produce an art book that sheds new light on our familiar surroundings and our daily food in particular. And what better way to do that than with the bee, the most important creature to humans on earth? Not only is this small insect indispensable to our food chain - it pollinates over 80% of all flowering plants and 70 of the top human food crops - but it is also a source of inspiration for architects, writers, artists and even whole cities. This book celebrates the bee in all its humble glory, and does so in a completely original way. With a preface by author **Jeroen Olyslaegers**.

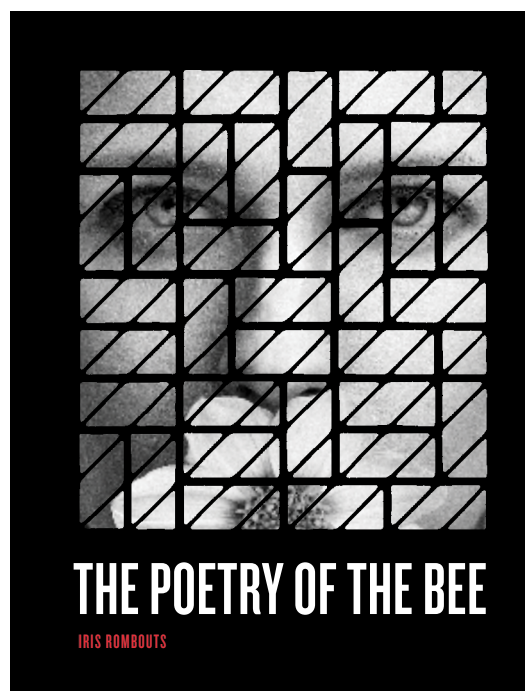
We see the bee represented by old masters and contemporary artists, by insect-obsessed Renaissance man **Jan Fabre**, by **Joseph Beuys** and his Honey Pump and by **Tomáš Libertiny** with his beeswax sculptures. There is the ceramic piece of art 'The Wall' by **Carla Arocha and Stéphane Schraenen**, with its repetitive structure that reminds of a honeycomb. Fashion, too, is represented: designer Harm Van Zwolle chose the bee as his muse, proving that the beekeeper's outfit can become a covetable piece of clothing.

The book is as multi-faceted as the eye of the bee. It pays homage to **Maurice Maeterlinck**, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, who tells the most inspiring tales about the life and death of the bee. It explores the mythical powers of the *Apis Mellifera*, and invites passionate beekeepers from all over the world to share their vision and show that there is much more to the bee than honey. The book also explains how the beehive inspired architects **Le Corbusier** and **Frank Lloyd Wright** to create stunning buildings that will impress many generations to come. As readers, we explore the feather-light steel building 'The Hive' by **Wolfgang Buttress**, and travel to **Manchester**, the city that chose the bee as its symbol and has shown to be every bit as courageous and resilient as the insect itself. We even climb the roof of the cathedral there, where the resident beekeeper looks after his hives and uses them for social work as well as honey.

All these weird and wonderful stories are accompanied by the work of talented photographers such as **Stephen Mattues**, **Diego Franssens**, studioEAST, Mark Haddon, Stephen Goodenough, Joao Sousa, **Filip Van Roe**, **Wout Hendrickx** and Iris herself. With this book, Iris Rombouts has created a joyful, brilliant mix of stories, photography and art, with the bee as the well-deserved star of the show.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE BOOK

Iris Rombouts has 20 years of experience in the world of publishing. During those years, she has put her stamp on the Flemish media landscape as a designer of upscale magazines. Over the past nine years, she has created concepts and projects for her company Image Boulevard, specialising in art direction, photography and graphic design for art, fashion and lifestyle publications. In 2014 she created the digital platform 'Les Petits Belges' an influencer magazine about art, fashion, architecture and lifestyle.



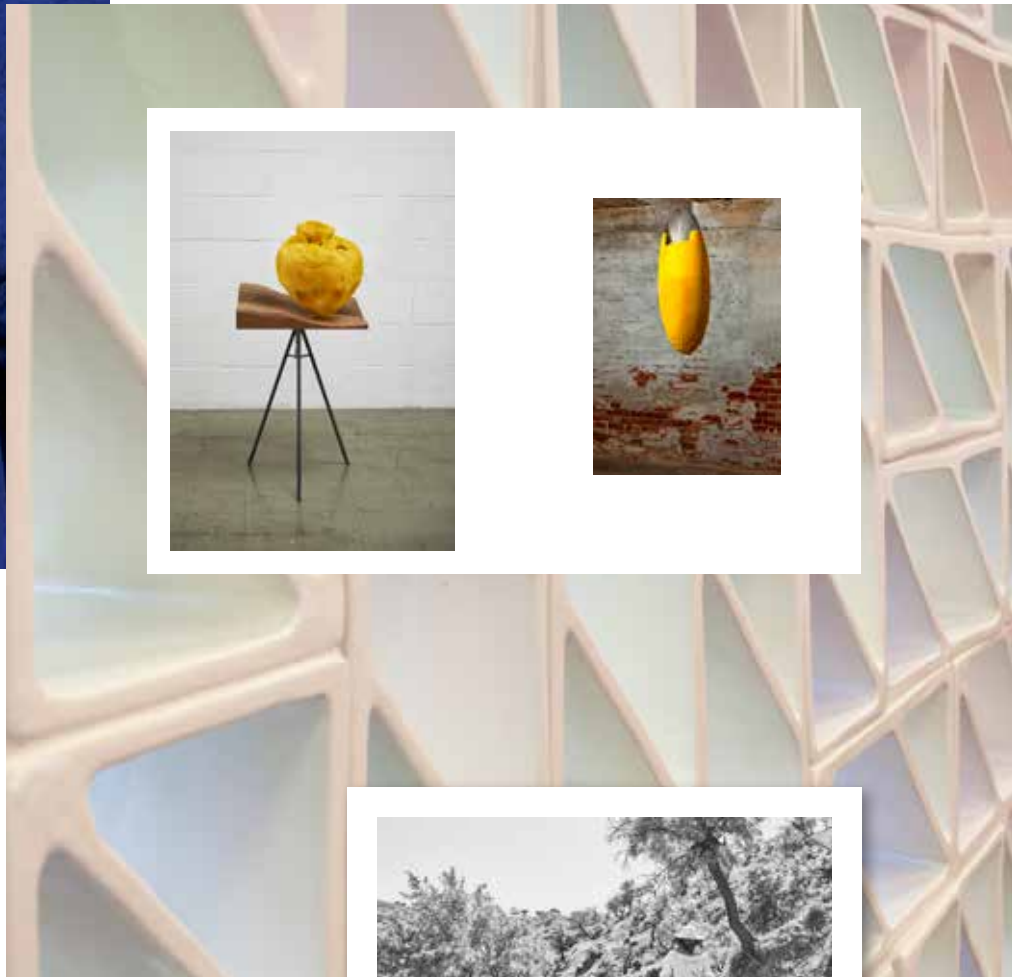
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WHAT THE BOOK IS ALL ABOUT



CONTEMPORARY ART

Jan Fabre, a stroke of genius

Jan Fabre (1958) is a Belgian multidisciplinary artist, playwright, stage director, choreographer and designer. He is possibly most famous of all for his Bic-art (ballpoint drawings), which often extend far beyond a piece of paper. In 1990 he covered an entire building in ballpoint drawings. This book shows Bic-art self-portraits of the master as a beekeeper.

Carla Arocha & Stéphane Schraenen: a landscape of beauty

The collaboration between Belgian artist Stéphane Schraenen (1971) and Venezuelan artist Carla Arocha (1961) began in 2005. Their work has close connections with modernist art movements such as minimalism, and 20th century Op Art, amongst others. Their work, which can be seen in the collections of MoMA in New York, MCA in Chicago, MUHKA Antwerp and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, often uses repetitive patterns that are similar to the honeycomb. Therefore, their 'Wall' ceramic sculpture and their 'Landscape Meadow 2015' in double-sided Perspex are right at home in this book.

Tomáš Libertiny and his wax art

As a student, Tomáš Libertiny (1958) was already intrigued by beeswax candles. Over ten years later, he is still fascinated by wax and by the bee. He has recently helped build the world's largest beeswax sculpture in Brussels. In this book, we ask him about his sculptures and his passion for the bee.

Beuys and the bees

Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) was a German artist who was part of the Fluxus movement and created happenings and performances, but he was also a sculptor, installation artist, graphic artist, art theorist and educationalist. His extensive work is rooted in concepts of humanism, social philosophy and anthroposophy and culminates in his 'extended definition of art' and the idea of social sculpture as a Gesamtkunstwerk. He has played a creative role in shaping society and politics. Professor Jody Stokes-Casey wrote an essay on Beuys and the Bees, which is illustrated with pictures of the 'Honey Pump'.



VISIONARY BEEKEEPERS

Louis De Cordier and the art of beekeeping

Beekeeper Louis De Cordier is also known for his art works, which can be interpreted in several different ways and which combine architecture, nature, art, technology and science. His modules and installations are closely linked to nature. An interview and stunning photographs of the man with the bees.

Andrew Wright, the sting in the tale

Beekeeper Andrew Wright specialises in apitherapy, using bee venom to cure and treat people. A tale about the sting, set in Malindi, Kenya, with intimate portraits.

Michael Van Lent and the spirit of the hive

Beekeeper Michael Van Lent is part of the new generation of urban beekeepers. He works with beekeepers in different towns in Belgium and together, they make gin with the pure urban honey from bees that thrive in the city. They also create a stable habitat for bees in our urban society. In this interview Michael tells all about his passion for bees-and spirits.

WHAT THE BOOK IS ALL ABOUT



ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

The bee, master builder

Are bees better architects than people? You might think so, if you realise how bees build their honeycombs: they produce their own building material and can decide what essential properties it should have. No wonder, then, that Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright used the building techniques and methods of bees as inspiration for their own radical and stunning architecture. And then there is 'The Hive' by Wolfgang Buttress, a steel building in the shape of an abstract beehive, inspired by the vibrations that bees send each other to communicate. Stunning photographs complete the picture.

Manchester, city of bees

The city of Manchester has long had the bee as its symbol, because its inhabitants are hardworking, with a warm heart for the community. But never has this symbol been more poignant than since the attack in Manchester Arena in 2017. Bees can be seen everywhere: on trams, on dustbins, and in murals remembering the victims. The same sense of community can be felt on the roof of the cathedral, where Canon Apiarist Adrian Rhodes tends to the hives – and helps people who have been out of a job for a long time to get back on track. The photographs tell their own story.

LITERATURE

Maurice Maeterlinck and the poetry of the bee

Maurice Maeterlinck (Ghent, 1862 - Nice, 1949) is a Flemish author and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature who had a deep fascination for bees. He owned three beehives and studied the behaviour of the insects extensively, conducting numerous experiments. In 1901 he published 'Het leven der bijen' (the life of the bees), an illustrious work on the life cycle of the bee. Not only can it be considered a real 'bee bible', its poetic language makes it a touching, fascinating piece of literary art.

In your face

Iris Rombouts has selected poems dedicated to the bee by various authors. She used vintage photographs of 'Bee bearding people', sporting thousands of bees as a living beard, to create a fun but slightly creepy tale.

LIFESTYLE

Beekeeper Fashion

Harm Van Zwol has always had a soft spot for workwear and when he designed his second-year collection he chose the beekeeper's outfit as his inspiration. Fashion for him & her, photographed where the wild bees roam.

The beauty of honey

It's been known for centuries: honey does wonders for your skin. But it's only in the last few years that scientists have begun studying its benefits. The beauty of honey, from the time of Cleopatra until now, and everything you need to know about its benefits for the body. With gorgeous photographs.

A taste of honey

Five delicious recipes with honey, from a tantalizing cocktail to succulent roasted lamb with local honey. Illustrated with mouth-watering photography.

Blossom Time

An Rikkers pays tribute to nature and the bees with her wonderfully colourful flower illustrations.

