

Press kit

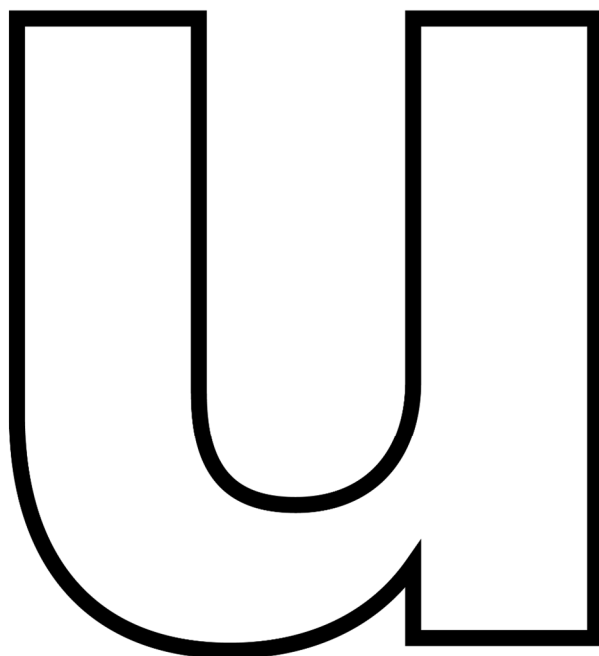
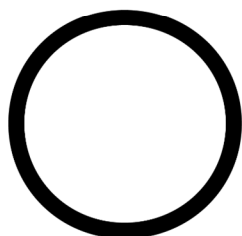


Illustration: Axel Serveaux ©
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Heritage Days 2024

Nouveaux patrimoines
Nieuw erfgoed
New heritage

**Event**

Heritage Days 2024 –
36th edition

Organised by

Urban

When

14 and 15 september

Where

Everywhere in Brussels province

Website

Heritedays.urban.brussels

Contact

jdp-omd@urban.brussels

Intro

For 36 years, Urban has offered visitors the chance to rediscover and appreciate cultural heritage in Brussels over a weekend through the Heritage Days. What began in France in 1984 as 'Les Journées Portes Ouvertes' has, due to its enormous success, grown into an annual event in which 49 countries now participate. Belgium joined this initiative in 1989 and, along with the Netherlands, Sweden, and Malta, has been one of the pioneers of this event ever since.

Today, the Heritage Days have become the largest cultural event in the country. Although the three regions each organize these days in their own way, the main goal remains the same: to introduce as many people as possible to the richness of our heritage, which often opens its doors to the public specifically for this occasion. And it works—our audience proves it year after year. Last year, 45,000 people, both from within Belgium and abroad, visited more than 125 activities during the Heritage Days in Brussels, undoubtedly contributing to the broader awareness of monument preservation in the fullest sense of the term.

Heritage Days
2023
A. de Ville de
Goyet ©
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Jonathan Ortegat © urban.brussels



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The theme

For this 36th edition, Urban has carefully selected a theme that, despite its rich heritage, is still little-known to the general public, the period of **1970 to 2000**.

These days will be an invitation to look at a near past that is still very present in our daily lives: the city that was built and transformed from the 1970s until the beginning of the 21st century. Half a century of upheaval following successive crises, the effects of which we are still suffering, but also half a century of a city showing its resilience and a specific materiality we have inherited today.

Bety Waknine, General Manager of Urban:

“This “New Heritage” theme aligns with our awareness-raising policy and meets the need to inform and reflect on the past, so that we can better understand the future. It also integrates into the theme of “materiality” - the common thread running through Urban’s various actions throughout 2024 - which aims to reflect on our relationship with materials, our environment and the nature of our connection with architecture.”

Materiality: the annual theme of Urban's cultural programme

Focusing on the materiality of the city, its materials, and their surroundings means studying, analyzing, and becoming aware of their presence, intrinsic characteristics, history, and often multifaceted—social and cultural—meanings, as well as their potential for more diverse and improved use in the future.

Learn more about Urban's annual theme for the cultural program here:

<https://urban.brussels/en/articles/2024-sous-le-signe-de-la-materialite>



Boulevard Simon Bolivar 1980
© Min. OW, nr. 198496, Regie der
Gebouwen



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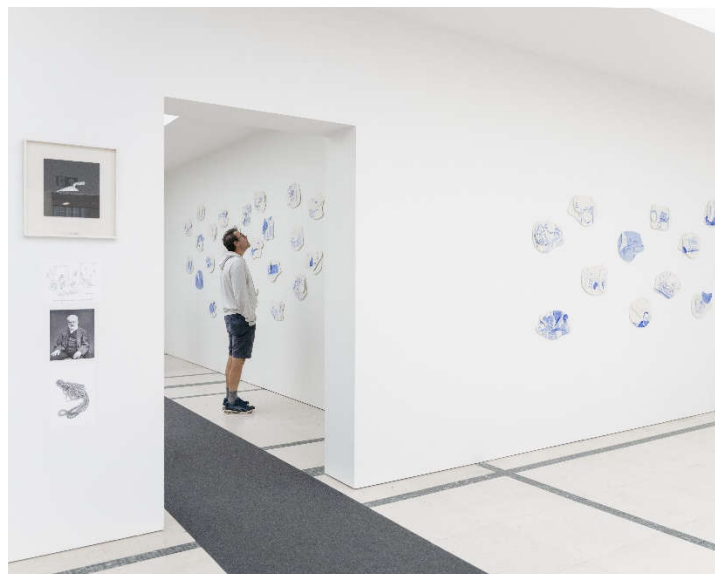
"Europe, a common heritage"

The Heritage Days are organized within the framework of the European Heritage Days, an initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Across Europe, numerous sites and monuments, many of which are usually not accessible, are opened to the public free of charge during the weekends of September each year. This gives European citizens the opportunity to discover and better understand their shared cultural heritage. They are also encouraged to actively participate in the protection and valorization of this heritage for current and future generations under the motto *'Europe, a common heritage'*.



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Themed activities

This year's program includes approximately 180 different activities, including exhibitions, performances, films, debates, treasure hunts, and visits to emblematic buildings in no fewer than 18 different municipalities.

Featured on the program are rich and surprising stories about Brussels neighborhoods, such as the participatory architecture of the Louvain-en-Woluwe campus and the influence of protest movements. The controversial history of the now-demolished working-class neighborhood of Noordwijk and the North-South connection, a railway link considered an example of 'Brusselization,' is also explored.

Additionally, the various subcultures and communities that continue to have a significant influence on the city of Brussels are highlighted. Listen to the stories of the LGBTQIA+ community and the relocation of 'the Rainbow Village,' visit an exhibition on the Belgian hip-hop scene from the 1990s to the present, learn how migration shaped the city at MigratieMuseumMigration or join a feminist tour of the Solbosch campus.



Guided tour La Mémé
Philippe Braquenier ©
urban.brusselsParliament



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Brussels: seat of the European Union

This year, visitors can participate in exclusive guided tours of iconic buildings in the heart of Europe. The public will have access to the main entrance, the visitors' center, meeting rooms, and other strategic areas of the Charlemagne Building, allowing them to view the glass facade and structure from the inside.

During the tour of the Van Maerlant Building, visitors can also climb the marble steps of the rotunda to discover the original architecture from the early 1980s, as well as the most recognizable part of the building: the two-story pedestrian bridge over Rue Belliard. For those who can't get enough of impressive glass structures, a visit to two key buildings in the European Parliament complex—the Paul-Henri Spaak Building and the Altiero Spinelli Building—will be a visual feast. Here, you can not only explore architecture but also appreciate several artworks.



The Paul-Henri Spaak-building © European Parliament

Brussimmo

The former Brussimmo building, specializing in real estate development, was constructed between 1989 and 1993 by the architectural firm Samyn & Partners. This unique, transparent office building, located in the heart of the European district, is bathed in abundant natural light thanks to its floor-to-ceiling glass facades. Visitors can marvel at the distinctive self-supporting upper floors, which, with a span of nearly 11 meters and without beams or columns, offer a completely free layout. This will be done in collaboration with Brussel Babbelt and Klare Lijn.

Marquis x Reset Atelier

On the occasion of the Brussels Gallery Weekend, the Marquis will open the doors of its 'Reset Atelier' space, where a major exhibition will be held that visitors can explore on their own or during a guided tour of the building. This new space, conceived by the non-profit organization Arty Farty Brussels, aims to promote social cohesion and artistic vibrancy through a dynamic and inspiring program. The Marquis building itself was constructed between 1985 and 1989 by ELD Partnership from Antwerp and Atelier d'Architecture from Genval, the pioneering firm for postmodern architecture in Belgium.



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Brussimmo
© Ch. Bastin & J. Evrard
© urban.brussels



The Marquis building
© Philippe Braquenier ©
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Arlon 53

This office building is part of a complex of three buildings designed by architect Jean Verschuere between 1964 and 1968. The original structure is currently being renovated and will be visible during the Heritage Days on the 4th floor, where a model of the future complex will also be displayed. The project, led by the architectural firm ATAMA, includes the creation of nearly 20,000 square meters of office and retail space, while preserving the brutalist facades. The disused parking garages will be converted into conference centers, and a major greening program is planned.



Arlon 53
© urban.brussels

Plan Alpha

To facilitate economic and social expansion across the various regions of the country, Plan Alpha was conceived in the 1960s. However, this plan was never approved and was eventually abandoned amid the contentious debates surrounding Brussels' urban development. For the Heritage Days 2024, the exhibition—produced by Urban and organized by Perspective—will present, for the first time, the original project documents and several preliminary overview maps. These documents, preserved by Urban, provide valuable insights into the modernist vision for Brussels, which sought to steer the city's transformation into an international business hub.



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Forum Jean Cosse

Brussels is rich in rare buildings, and Forum Jean Cosse, with its postmodern exterior and brutalist interior, is a prime example. Visitors can opt for a guided tour or a self-guided visit to experience the spectacular interplay of space, light, and texture.



Forum Jean Cosse
© A. de Ville de Goyet © urban.brussels



VUB-campus
Philippe Braquenier © urban.brussels

The VUB-campus

In the early 1970s, Willy Van Der Meeren, with his unique and inventive approach, designed 352 student residences in the heart of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) campus in Ixelles. His aim was to create a pleasant living environment where generations of students could have a memorable experience. Today, these former student residences are considered a valuable part of VUB's architectural heritage, but they also present significant challenges in terms of energy efficiency and comfort. In response, two projects have been initiated in recent years: the Circular Retrofit Lab and the WVDM Living Lab. During the Heritage Days, tours will be offered that detail both projects within the broader context of the history and future of these former student residences.



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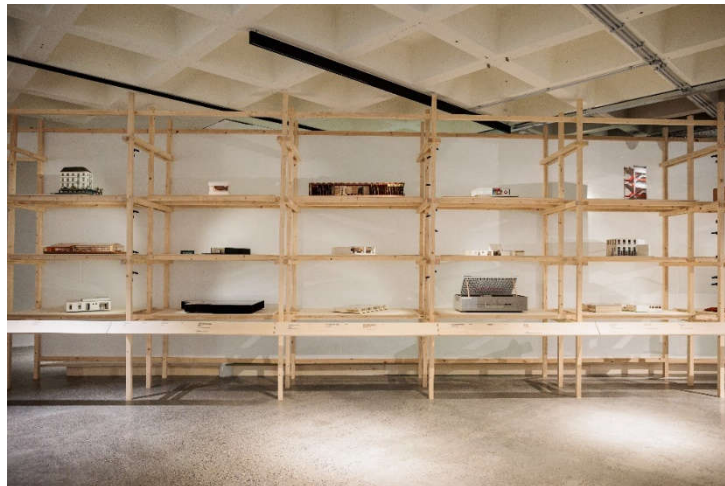
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Making its first appearance on this year's program: movable and intangible heritage

Brussels is not only rich in architectural heritage but also in art, traditions, and craftsmanship. Therefore, this year's Heritage Days program will, for the first time, include activities focused on movable and intangible heritage.

Design Museum Brussels

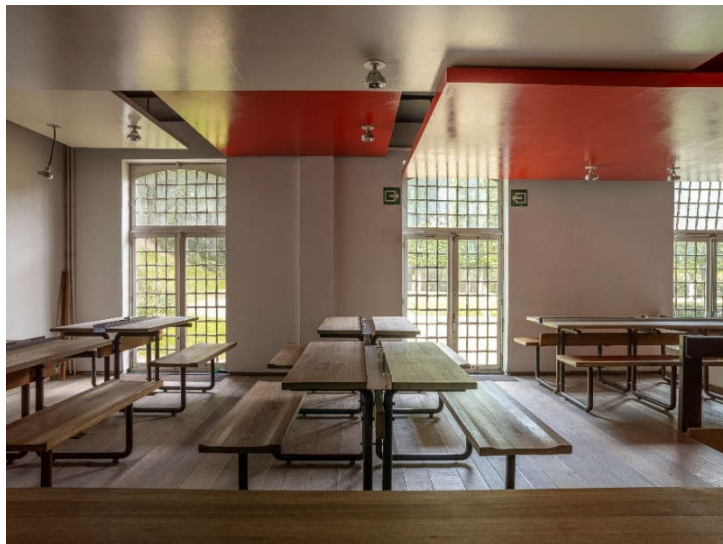
To make the most of the wealth of movable and documentary archival material from the Christophe Gevers Fonds at the Design Museum Brussels, visitors can admire the creative process of a key figure in Belgian design and interior architecture in the new documentation center during the Open Monument Days.



Archival material
Christophe Gevers
Fonds
© Antoine Rassart

La Cambre Cafeteria

Enthusiasts of functional modern furniture can, during a self-guided visit to the cafeteria of La Cambre, the Higher Institute for Decorative Arts, try out the ingeniously curved seating designed by architect and designer Christophe Gevers to experience their comfort.



La Cambre Cafeteria
© Jean-Pierre Gabriel



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Jean Glibert's Artworks

As a significant figure in the Belgian art scene, Jean Glibert (1938-2024) realized numerous projects combining space, light, color, medium, and material. Through various routes in the public space, visitors can discover Jean Glibert's monumental and generous works, which he often described as a collective good. The tours are organized by Cécile Vandernoot, an architect and friend of the artist.



Belmont Court, Jean Glibert
© Marie Noëlle Dailly

The clubbing culture of Brussels

New yet historical: Fuse celebrates 30 years of influence on Brussels' electronic scene and club culture. Within the walls of the nightclub, a panel of Brussels clubbing veterans and specialists will discuss how to safekeep the legacy of Brussels' club culture. For those curious about the clubbing scene of the 1980s, the iconic documentary *Mirano 80: L'espace d'un rêve*, which will be screened at the Mirano itself, is a must-see.



Film still from the documentary 'Mirano 80 l'espace d'un rêve' © 2021, Image Création production



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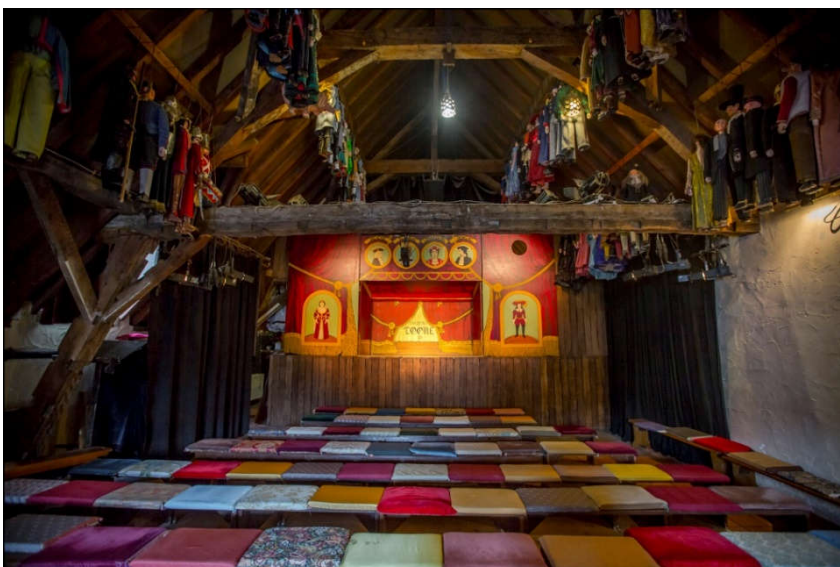
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Folklore in Brussels

In addition to Brussels' oldest UNESCO-recognized tradition, the planting of the Meyboom, celebrated for over 700 years as a folk festival, visitors this year can enjoy even more folklore. The program includes an exploration of the gastronomic and folkloric values surrounding Brussels endive, presented by the Confrérie des Compagnons du Witloof from Evere, and a celebration of the remarkable yet delightfully joyful tradition of 'zwanzen' by the Fanfare des Chasseurs de Prinkères.

Historical Puppet Theater

Royal Theatre Toone: Who doesn't know the traditional Brussels puppet theater that has been around since 1830? The theater is housed in the attic of the Toone house, which was protected in 1997. It is here that the public can attend a performance of "Les Trois Mousquetaires" (The Three Musketeers) during the Heritage Days. For toddlers and dreamers of all ages, Théâtre du Ratinet, created in the 1960s by Théâtre de l'Enfance, will present a show full of comedy and mischief during the Heritage Days.



The attic of the Toone house
© Eric Danhier



Visitors becoming acquainted with the tradition of the Meyboom at the Heritage Days
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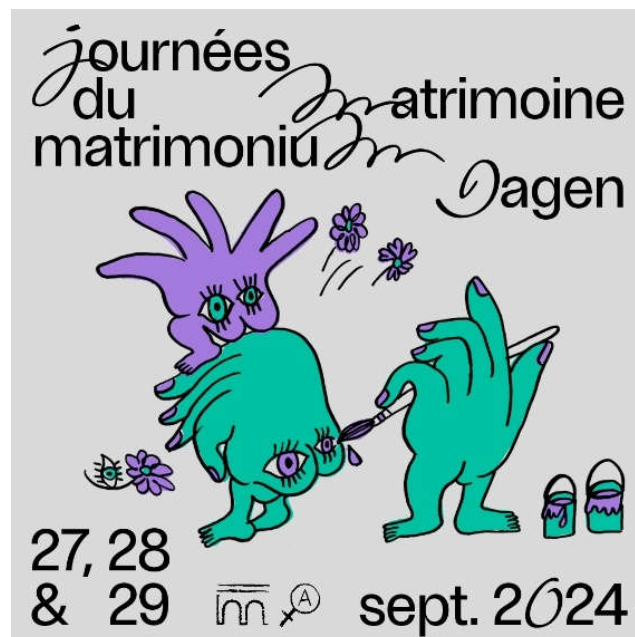
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The Matrimonium Days

The Matrimonium Days offer visitors a wonderful opportunity to explore Brussels' current artistic, political, and feminist heritage on September 27, 28, and 29.

Organized in Brussels since 2019 by the non-profit organization L'architecture qui dégenre, the Matrimonium Days highlight both the historical, architectural, sculptural, urban, and social aspects of Brussels' matrimonium.

Additionally, the Matrimonium Days serve as a crucial moment to address the fundamental issue of property rights for women and related professions. Through workshops with experts and tours led by women actively working in the field, a picture is formed of the participation of women* and gender minorities in various matrimonium-related professions.



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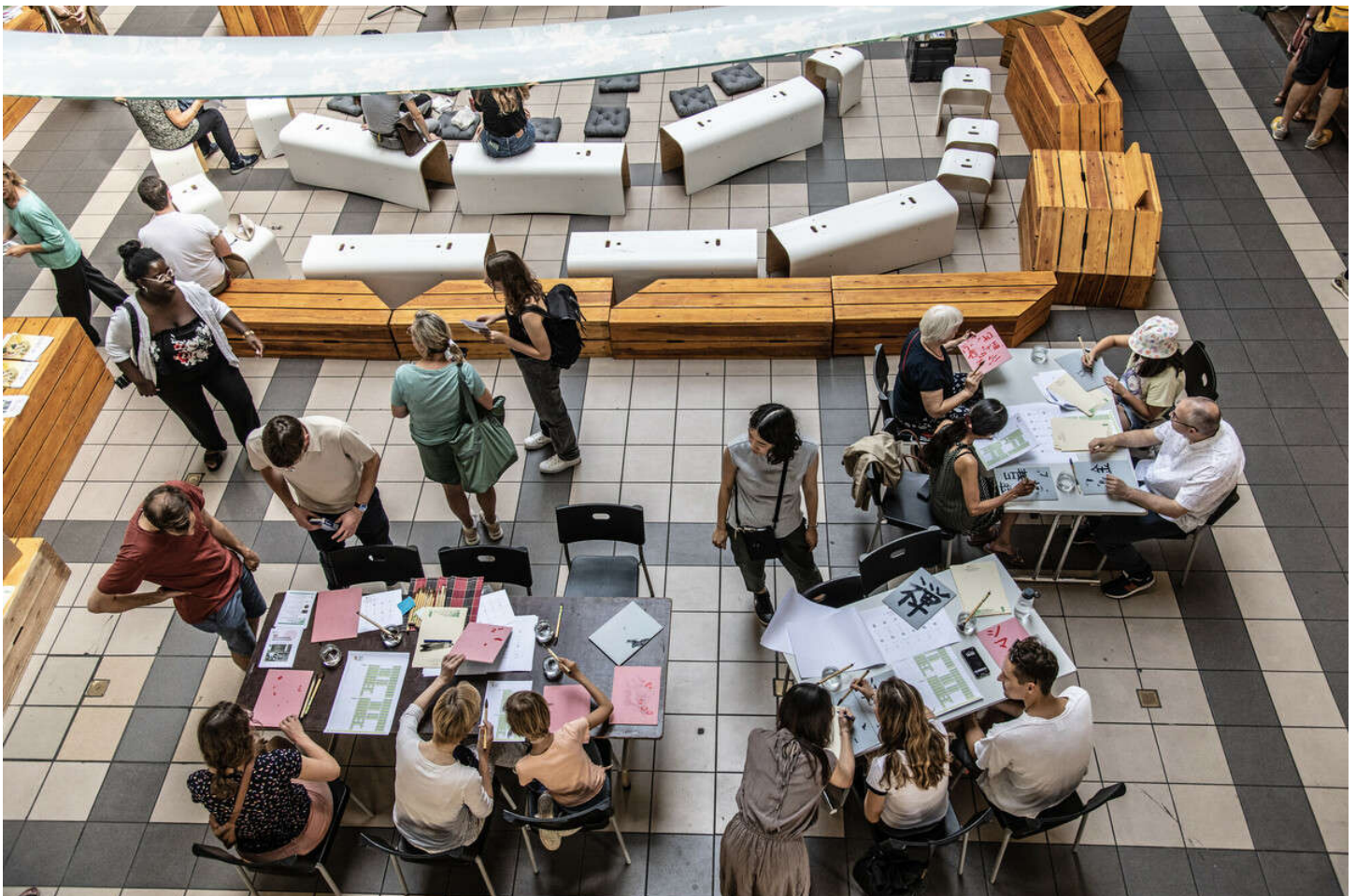
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Practical

This year, a leaflet with the summary of the programme is available in numerous locations (urban.brussels, Halles Saint-Géry, local authorities, tourist offices, libraries and participating venues).

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and culture
for the city.**