



Le Ciel vu de Belgique / De Lucht gezien vanuit België
The sky seen from Belgium

Guy Jungblut (b. 1944) and François de Coninck (b. 1969)

Published by Yellow Now. Collection 'Angles vifs', Crisnée, 2012
170 x 120 mm, 176 pp
105 colour photographs
Text by François de Coninck
Softcover with flaps, thread sewn, flat spine
French/Dutch edition

Over a period of six years, artist and Yellow Now founder Guy Jungblut took photographs of the sky from various places in Belgium, together with poet and editor François de Coninck. The result is this witty and fascinating book – the title translates as *The sky seen from Belgium* – published by Yellow Now in 2012. In his French and Dutch introduction, 'A few "foot-sky" notes', de Coninck explains that they started this project in reaction against the editorial trend of this or that 'seen from the sky', as exemplified by Yann Arthus-Bertrand's *Earth from Above* (1999). This surrealist reversal is, in fact, much more than a joke. Photographing the sky was a new way to discover their own country, to create an itinerary outside the tourist trails, in a succession of 'surprising' and 'fanciful' places. As if it was a performance, the whole process is documented at the end of the book with pictures of road maps with spots indicated and photographs of the two authors at work.

The result, presented in double-page spreads with dates and places in captions, makes use of contrasts: the sky seen from Gingelom on 23 September 2006 is very grey and cloudy compared to the sky taken from Houte-si-Plou a few weeks before, on 10 July 2006, which is a very clear sky with a plane crossing it. Even when the authors stay in Brussels, with the sky

photographed from the Japanese Tower and the Tour du Midi the diversity of the pictures strikes, even though you can only see the sky.

De Coninck and Jungblut finally fought the 'clichés that produce a country that is well-behaved and quiet between the pages of a beautiful book', as the preface states. The project even raises political issues because the sky finally appears as 'the last common place of the Belgians'.

Le Ciel vu de Belgique / De Lucht gezien vanuit België is part of Yellow Now's 'Angles vifs' series, overseen by Emmanuel d'Autreppe, which focuses on the idea of Belgium, its identity, its frontiers and its singularity. A.R.