

BELGIAN FEDERAL SCIENCE POLICY OFFICE - BELSPO

The Belgian Federal Science Policy Office – BELSPO - (www.belspo.be) represents no less than 30% of the total budget invested by different Belgian authorities in scientific research.

The Belgian federal Science Policy Office coordinates major research programmes and provides the Federal government with all the data needed to make decisions about sustainable development, the effects of climate change, biodiversity, energy, health, mobility and aspects concerning the information society. The Belgian Federal Science Policy Office is also involved in research carried out in our country's universities and research centres.

Furthermore, the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office manages the incredible federal cultural and scientific heritage conserved in the Federal Scientific Institutes. The conservation and intelligent enrichment of this heritage is one of BELSPO's priorities. This heritage is constantly made available to the general public via exhibitions, archives, libraries and documentation centres, as well as, more recently, its digitalisation.

It is within this context that the “ Wonder ” exhibition, a BELSPO initiative, has been organised as part of the summer event “ Science and Culture at the Royal Palace.”

VERWONDERING
ÉMERVEILLEMENT
VERZAUBERUNG
WONDER

TENTOONSTELLING - EXPOSITION
22.07.2018 > 02.09.2018
10:30 - 17:00

Wetenschap en Cultuur op het Koninklijk Paleis te Brussel
Science et Culture au Palais Royal de Bruxelles

KONINKLIJK PALEIS - PALAIS ROYAL
Paleizenplein, Brussel - Place des Palais, Bruxelles
(laatste ingang 15u45 - dernières entrées à 15h45)
Gesloten op maandag - Fermé le lundi
Gratis toegang - Entrée gratuite

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SCIENCE & CULTURE AT THE ROYAL PALACE 2018

BELSPo “ Wonder ” exhibition

From 22 July to 2 September, the Royal Palace of Brussels will organise the thirteenth *Science & Culture at the Palace* event. In this context, the FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister, the FPS Science Policy Office (BELSPo) and the Federal Scientific Institutes (FSI) are presenting to the public "Wonder", an exhibition that promotes Belgian cultural and scientific heritage through a magnificent selection of objects and works of art that combine what are sometimes very different disciplines.

Organised by the Federal Science Policy Office, “ Wonder ” is a tangible expression of one of BELSPo's key missions, namely making the Belgian and international public aware of the research activities carried out, whilst also revealing the superb federal heritage kept in its scientific establishments. Science and culture come together around the theme of wonder, with an original selection of works of art, scientific instruments and astonishing natural phenomena, whose study or creation stems from the wonder of artists or scientists expressing their vision of the world and their desire for greater understanding.

The Partners

“ Wonder ” brings together the ten Federal Scientific Institutes: the General State Archives (ARA-AGR), the Royal Library of Belgium (KB-BR), the Royal Belgian Institute for Space Aeronomy (BIRA-IASB), the Royal Meteorological Institute of Belgium (KMI-IRM), the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA), the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences (KBIN-IRNSB), the Royal Museum for Central Africa (KMMA-MRAC), the Royal Museums of Art and History (KMKG-MRAH), the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (KMSK-MRBAB) and the Royal Observatory of Belgium (KSB-ORB). They are joined by the National Geographic Institute (NGI) and the War Heritage Institute (WHI), who were both invited to join the project, and by the “ Space Research and Applications ” department and the Belgian Co-ordinated Collections of Micro-organisms (BCCM consortium) of BELSPo.

Together, thanks to the dynamism of the relevant scientific staff and the pooling of their various experience, they have created this exhibition to reveal the brilliant facets of our rich federal heritage.

Wonder - a fresh look at the world

What do the northern lights, a split objective heliometer, a satellite photo, an engraved silver binding, celestial objects, a seven-bell trumpet and a chromium steel sculpture have in common? The curiosity, admiration, astonishment and delight they arouse in people's eyes; they all make our eyes sparkle with wonder.

Wonder is a state of mind and a way of perceiving reality, whether we are considering the beauty of nature, the brightness of the stars or the discovery of a scientific principle. It involves

taking a creative, questioning look at the world, so we can better understand it, constantly develop an original interpretation and give it meaning. Enlivened by the senses, wonder evokes an emotive reaction that allows us to discover the unknown, see beyond what is real and thus acquire fresh knowledge and dare to do something new.

Wonder arouses the desire to perceive the world differently, to learn and dig deeper, leaving our day-to-day lives behind us; this attitude is similar to the process of the scientist or the artist.

The “ Wonder ” exhibition

Several selection criteria were used to choose the objects for the exhibition: aesthetic criteria, originality, value, rarity, interest and ingenuity.

Visitors can admire carefully selected items that include a curious gilded brass sun clock (KMKG-MRAH), an equestrian seal and its counter-seal with silver moulds dating from the 18th century (ARA-AGR), a superb engraved silver binding covering an 1880s *Testamentum Novum* and a split objective heliometer that scans the vault of the Royal Palace (KSB-ORB).



They can also admire magnificent specimens of minerals, beetles and butterflies brought together in original compositions (KBIN-IRNSB); strange micro-organisms (BELSPO, BCCM), the model of the *ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter* (BIRA-IASB), suspended from the ceiling in the Grande Galerie, curious meteorological measuring instruments such as an ozone probe (KMI-IRM), a very precious copper plate from the famous Ferraris map (NGI) and a silver ink pot.



Some works express the wonder of artists, such as *Reflets (Reflections)*, an oil on canvas by E. Laermans (KMSK-MRBAB) and an ivory figurine of King Albert I (KMMA-MRAC), from North

Kivu. The film illustrating the restoration of *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* by the Van Eyck brothers (KIK-IRPA) reveals the incredible specialist work carried out to return this polyptych to its original colours.



All these items and works of art, and many others, are presented informally and echo the theme of wonder. They call out to each other, to the visitors, touch them to the core, revealing their curiosity and evoking wonder. Each one highlights a specific field of science and art, studied at federal scientific institutes: from art history to astronomy, including the conservation of archives, meteorology, natural sciences, space research, geographic sciences, the study of micro-organisms, history and the restoration of works of art.

Wonder is an art that can be cultivated with passion over time, leaving the spectator's eyes sparkling. Why not allow nature, science and works of art to amaze us. They constantly surprise us. We just have to take a fresh look, driven by our dreams and the magic of the moment!

