

Solidarity or Solo

# Solidarity or Solo (Atlases)

*Niels Schrader, Lauren Alexander*

Essay – July 20, 2014

**Solidarity or Solo** is a research and design project executed by third-year Graphic Design students at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK) in The Hague, initiated by the tutors Niels Schrader (Graphic Design), Lauren Alexander (Interactive Media) and Maarten Cornel (Philosophy). The project encouraged students to investigate their own relation to, and opinions about, the European Union by using mapping, archiving and referencing methods to formulate a refreshing and articulated view of what the EU means to a younger generation.

## The Atlas of #Europe

Alyar Aynetchi, Sara Risvaag, Marinus Schepen & Sepus Noordmans

*The Atlas of #Europe* is an extensive collection of Instagram photos with EU-related hashtags that presents the new visual gestalt of digital Europe. Based on a radar chart, the authors developed a data visualization that combines 20 image characteristics to redraw the borders of the 28 current member states. By choosing Instagram with its self-curated user content as a source for visual research, this project's aim was to present a collective "autoportrait" – or selfie – of the European Union.



## FINDING THE DIGITAL EUROPE

The project took off with an interest in the cultivation of contemporary European culture by participation in social media services like Instagram. An accommodating platform for millions of people who frame moments of their lives, culture and personalities in square format images. Which are accompanied by a palette of filters that emphasize specific characteristics in the users chosen context.

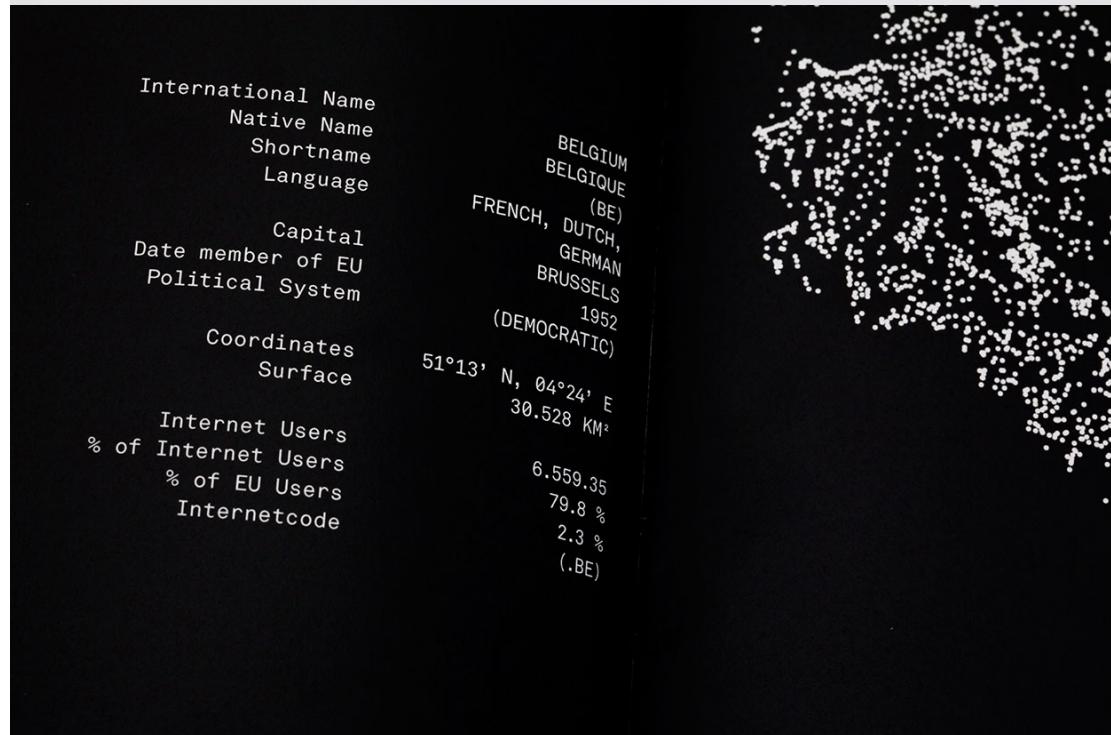
Considering the aim of a service like Instagram, and it's success at paralleling and blending our culture in such a way that there is no longer a

division between online and offline. Likewise follows an interest in measuring polyphony, and how to measure the differences that coincide within Europe and the fragmentation of public spheres that keep the continent from becoming completely unified. There are multiple platforms and factors that can function as public spheres like: Governments, Newspapers, Demonstrations, Municipalities, Literature, but also the presence of the Internet. By looking at Instagram with it's wide reach around Europe, and a potential of self-curating, it is not always a platform for social discourse, but rather a platform where what is truly regarded as fragments of current culture, will be exhibited and reflected by users and the European populous.

The twenty-eight countries in the European Union are presented with individual profiles attached to each country regarding general geograph-

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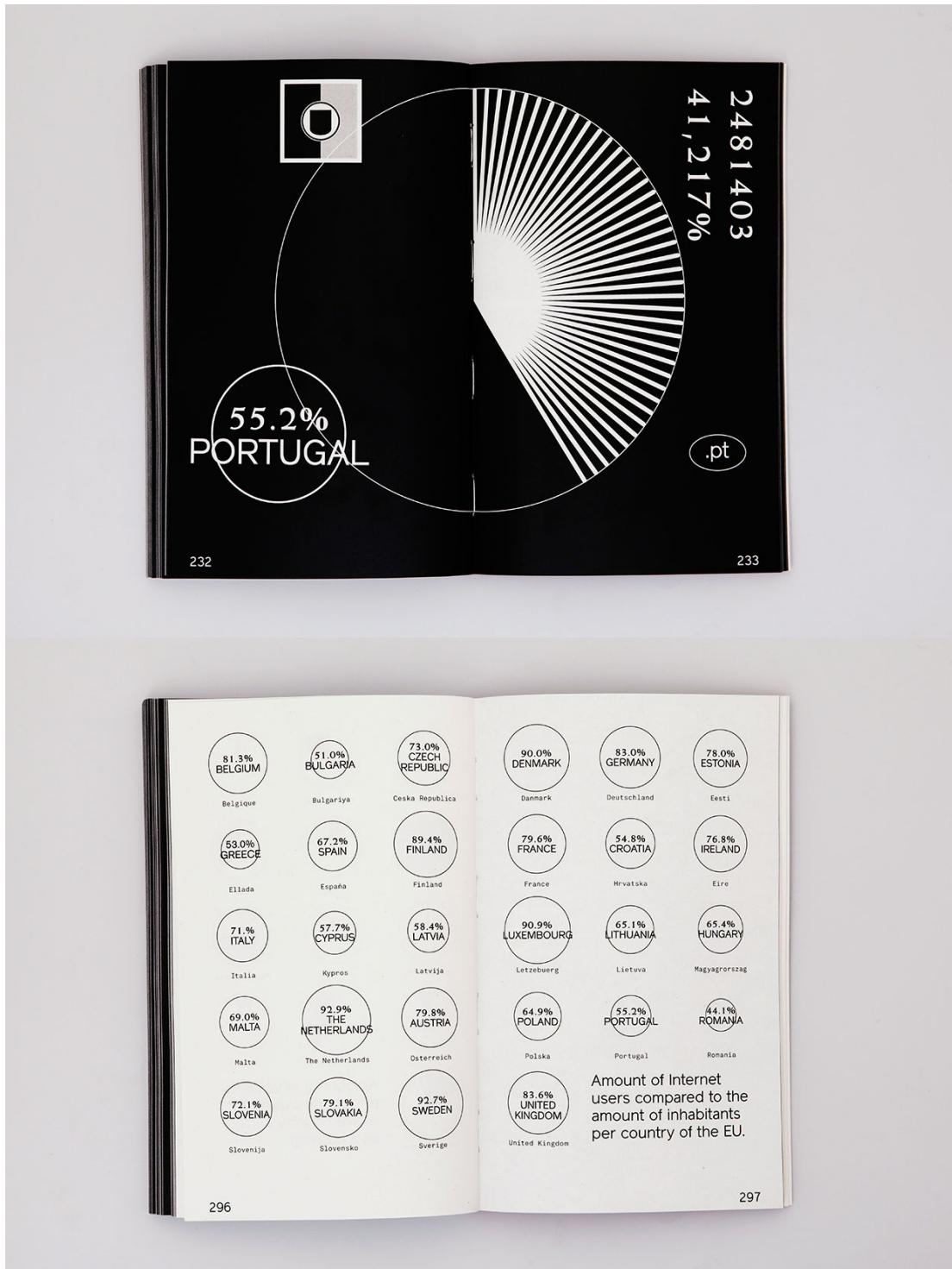




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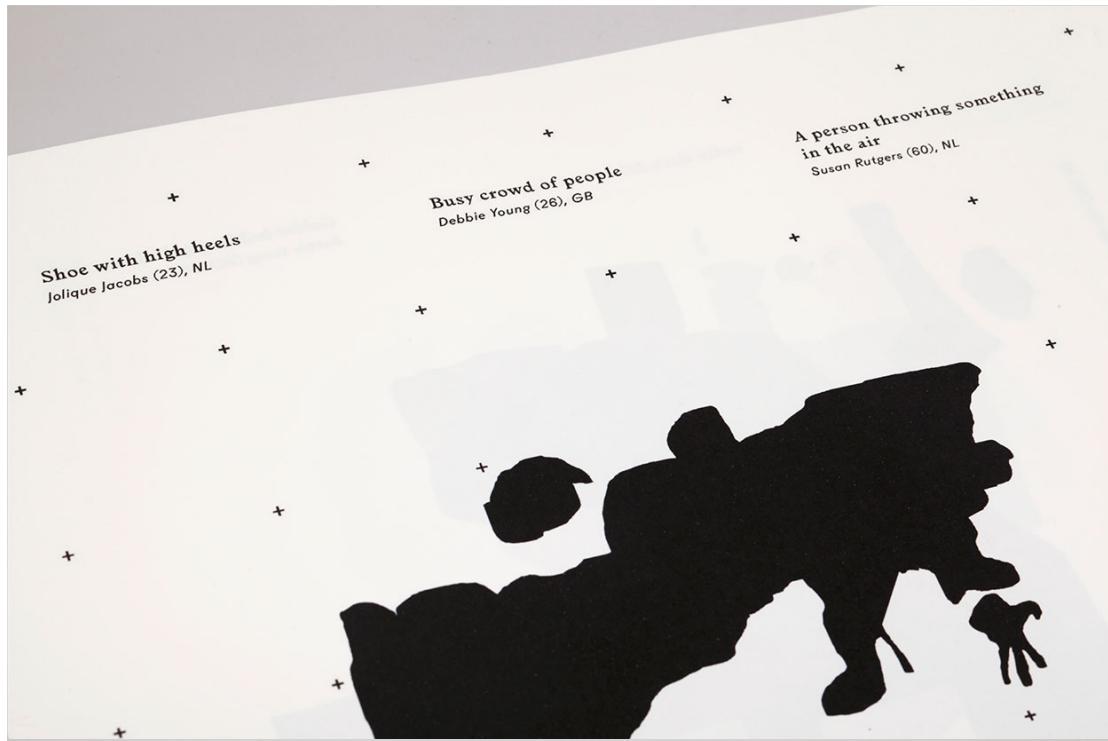
## The Dissociative European Atlas

Sanne Groenendaal & Max Lennarts

The *Dissociative European Atlas* is a collection of psychological tests that, similar to the Rorschach test, examine the distinctiveness of EU country shapes. Groenendaal and Lennarts asked randomly selected people to draw the EU's borders as well as those of individual member states from memory. Naturally, this resulted in many unique and imprecise versions of the geographical space and disclosed the personal relation that interviewees have with the European Union. The authors then playfully re-analysed the drawings and were able to capture imaginative and striking revelations about the way the EU is perceived.









## What if Ukraine Would Join the EU?

Nina Couvert

*What if Ukraine Would Join the EU?* is a thought-provoking atlas that evaluates the hypothetical scenarios of Ukraine either joining the European Union or the recently created Eurasian Economic Union. Couvert investigated the current political crisis in Ukraine by interviewing a fellow Ukrainian student and then juxtaposing her personal observations with what the Western public generally reads in the news. The question arises: Which viewpoint comes closer to the actual truth that of the individual testimony of a witness or the statistical data published by the media.



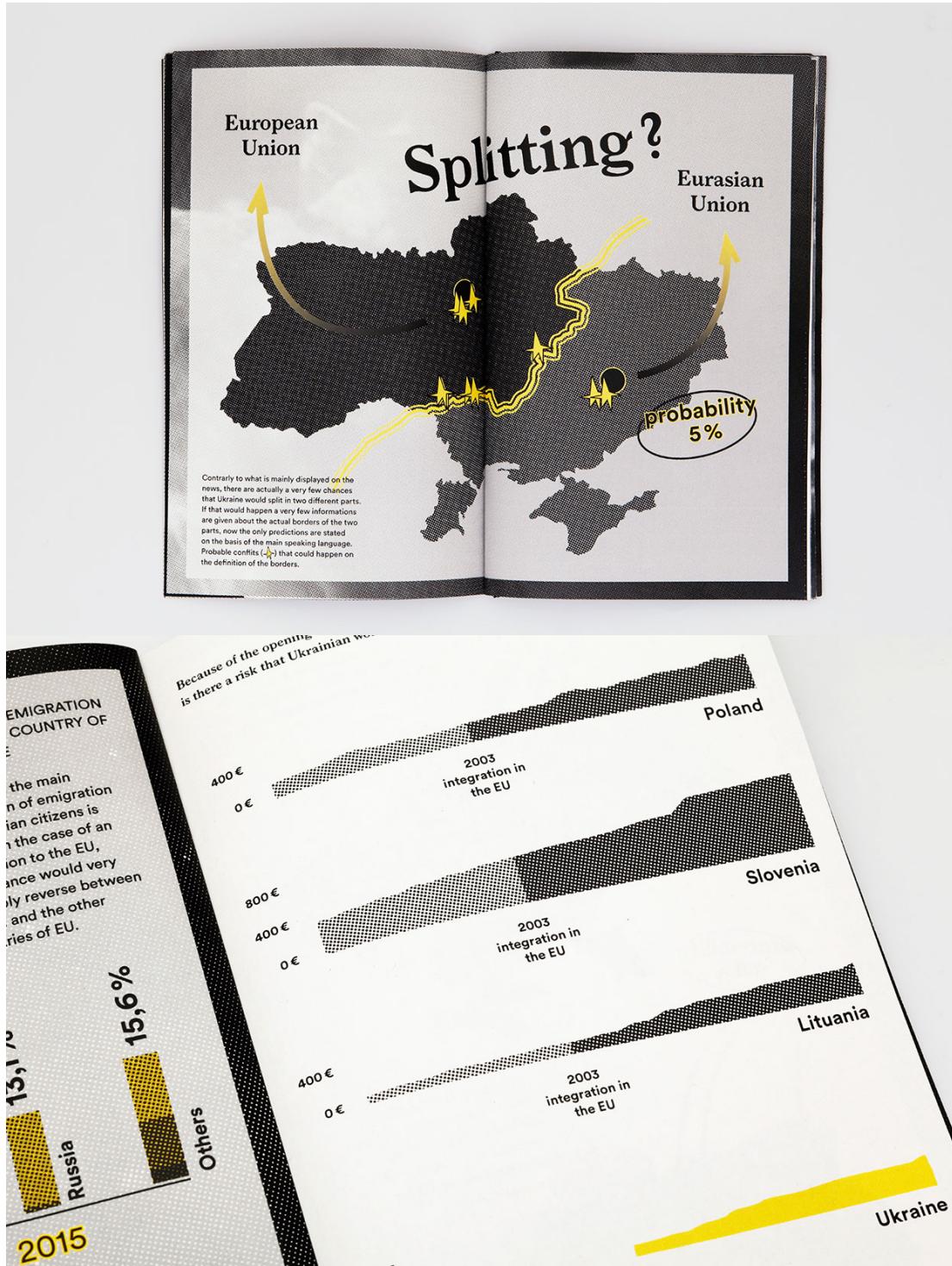
This atlas is displaying a speculative view upon the future of European Union based on the hypothesis of Ukraine becoming one of its member state. Thanks to the help of Elena Shkarupa, the atlas is constructed according to a discussion we have been having together, exploring numerous aspects of a possible union between Ukraine and the European Union.

Hilary Clinton,  
December 2012

"Whoever doesn't regret the USSR has no heart. Whoever dreams of bringing back the USSR has no brain. Whoever doubts that we will create a new union is just a fool."

Vladimir Putin,  
November 2011



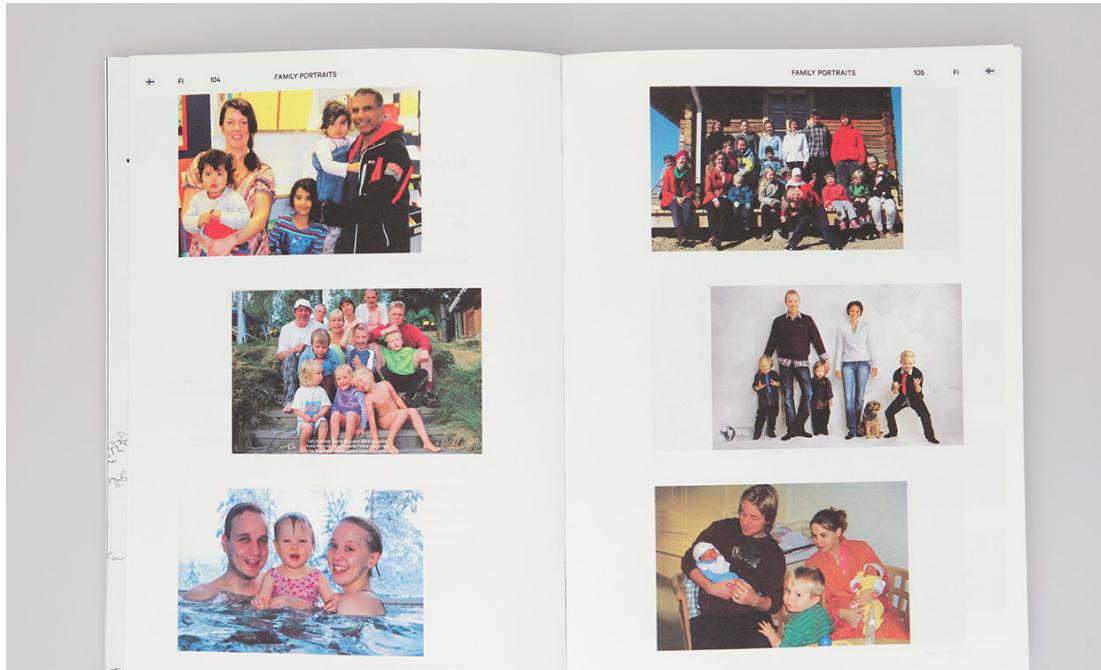


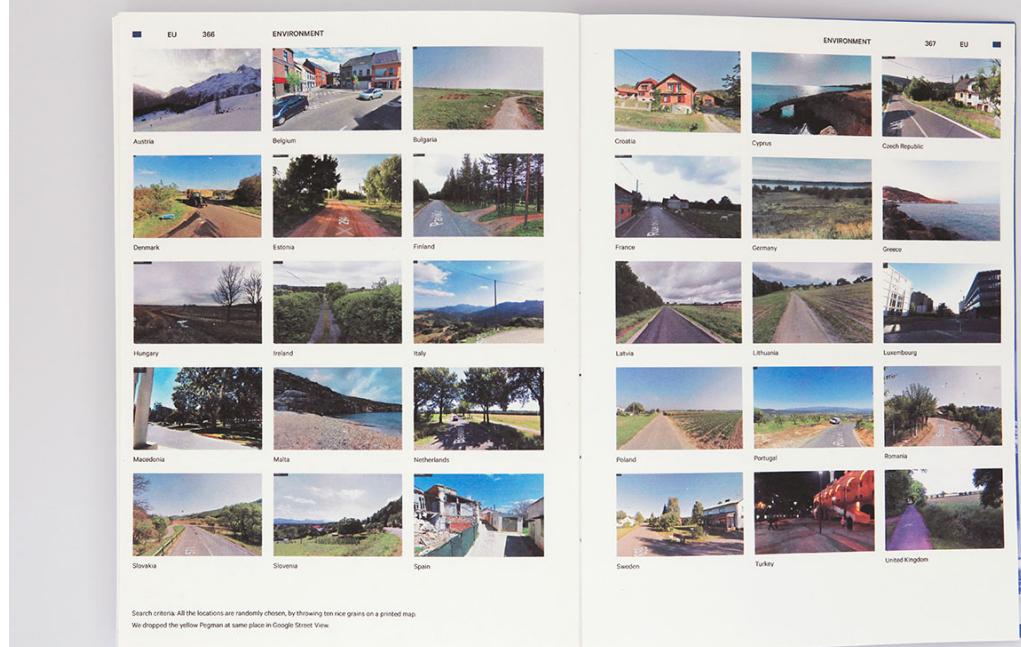
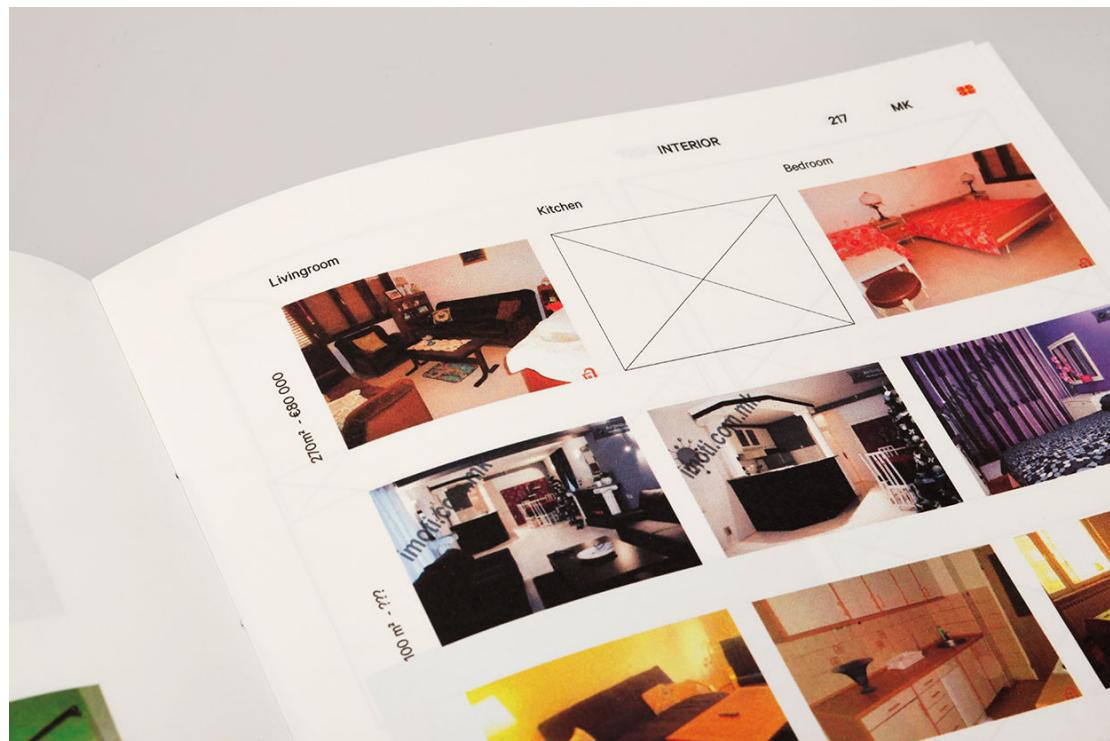
## We All Live in Europe

Janine Terlouw & Eline van der Ploeg

Terlouw and van der Ploeg's compendium *We All Live in Europe* investigates the cultural similarities and differences between European Union member states. Their extensive research was conducted entirely online to focus on the virtual presence of the EU. This Internet-specific data from image-based platforms like Flickr, Tumblr and Instagram then allowed the duo to compare factors such as the wealth, ethnicity, age and income of the EU member states. Family portraits, photographs of interior furnishings, food images and street views served as reliable indicators for such characteristics as e.g. social status and lifestyle choices.







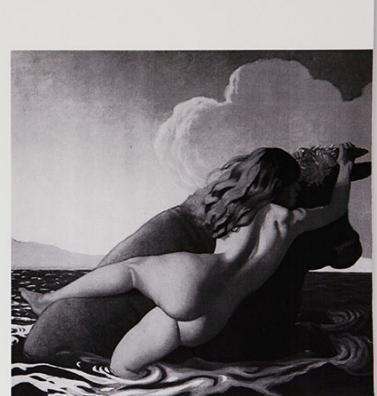
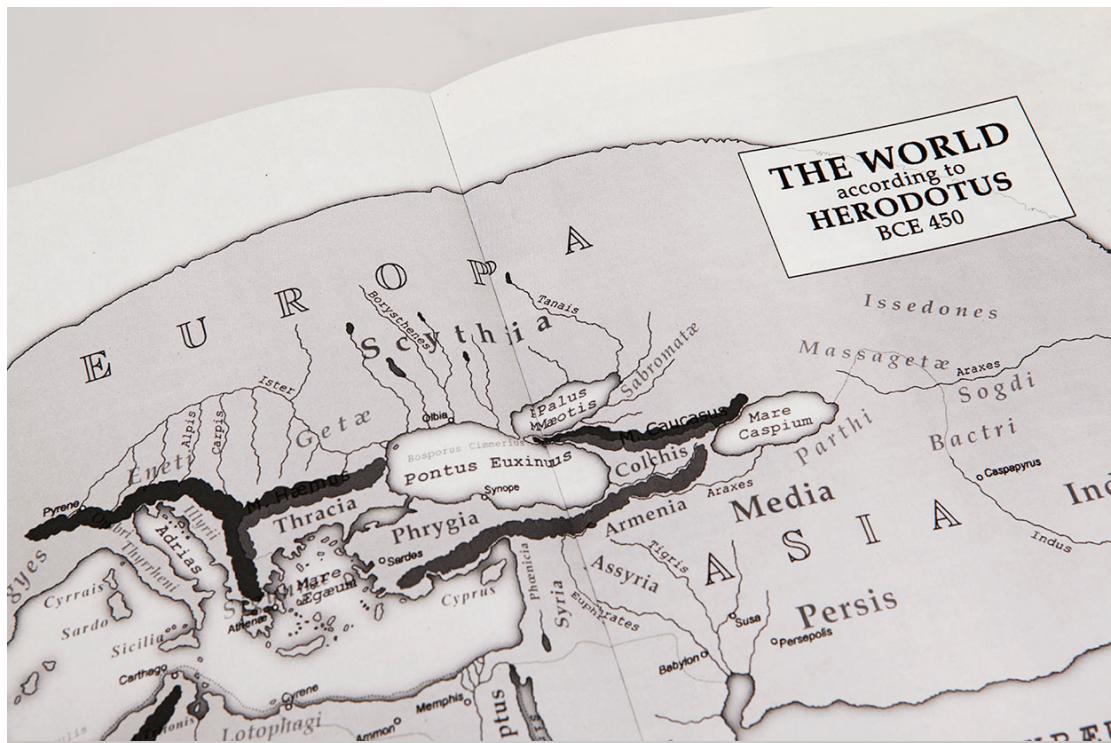


## Europa

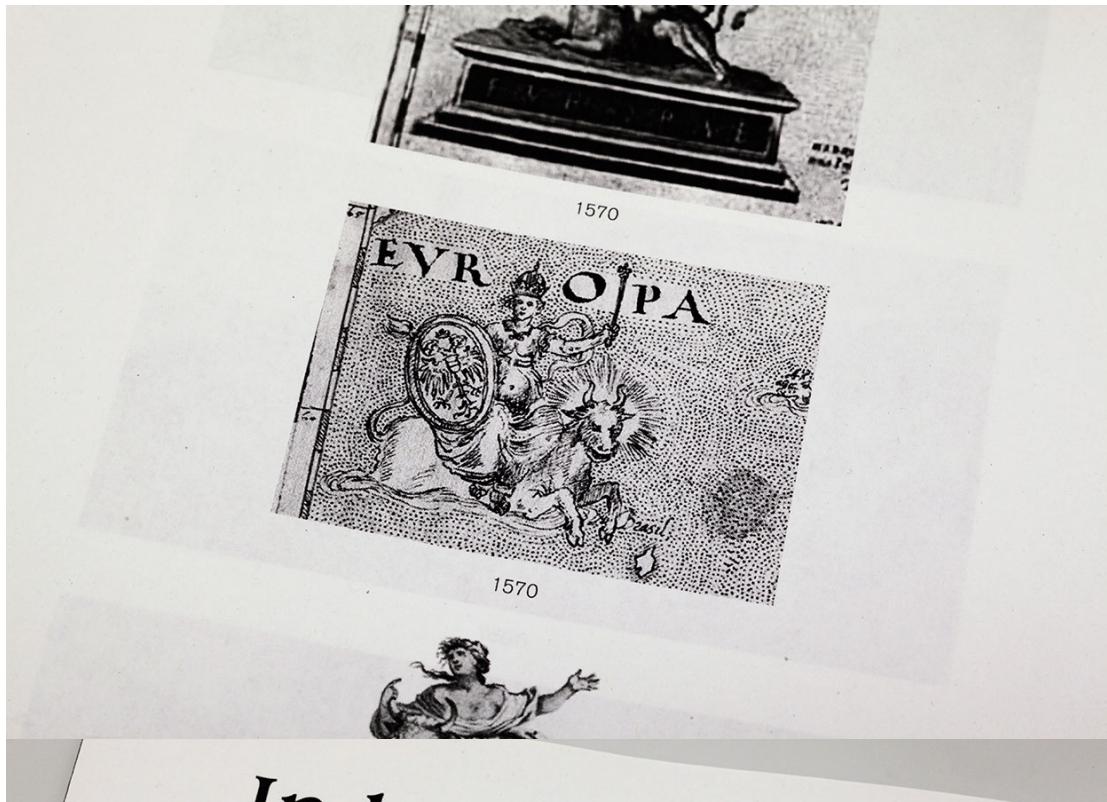
### Wilco Monen

Wilco Monen's *Europa* documents the semantic evolution of the word "Europe". He collected references to the word in images and texts over time, and then presented them in form of a logo gallery. The word originates from the Greek myth of Europa, the lover of Zeus and has since turned into a fashionable buzzword. Its positive and pristine connotations have, in recent times, led to its overuse in company slogans, mission statements, marketing communications and corporate branding. As a result words like "Euro", "Europe" and "Europa" have become empty placeholders that have exacerbated Euroscepticism and have served as a backdrop for the projections of ultra-nationalists.









# Index

**Europa:** The Rape of Europa (1562) is a bold diagonal composition which was admired and copied by Rubens. In contrast to the clarity of Titian's early works, it is almost baroque in its blurred lines, swirling colors, and vibrant brushstrokes. pag 10

**Europa:** The Abduction of Europa is a 1632 painting by Rembrandt, now in the J. Paul Getty Museum. It is one of his rare paintings on mythology. pag 10

**Europa:** Europa and the bull - oil on canvas - 1948 - 90 x 100 cm. pag 12

**Europa:** The rebuilding of Germany after the Second World War also included new regulatory measures for the monetary system. US and British legislation abolished the Reichsmark currency and established a central bank in their western occupation.

**Europa:** This is Germany 1997 10 Euro fantasy coin, Europa and the Bull in Capsule 40mm in diameter pag 19

**Europa:** Carl Milles was the first non-British artist to be given an exhibition at the Tate Gallery. Milles was a Swedishborn sculptor who was best known in his day for public sculpture and large monuments. His traditional subject matter and classical style seem barely touched by the radical developments in modern sculpture which were happening around him. It may be for this reason that he was considered a suitable, if conservative, choice for an exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1927. Europa and the Bull was on display in this exhibition and was bought by ...

## Crisis Situations and Unrest in Europe

Ieva Valule & Fedor Velyaminov

*Crisis Situations and Unrest in Europe* maps European conflicts over the past decade. Not only does it shed light on Europe's current political flashpoints of a more global nature, but also offers insights into regional European disputes. Valule and Velyaminov compiled a total of 45 conflicts and documented them with the help of timelines, newspaper articles and encyclopaedic information.



# SPANISH PROTESTS

Location: Spain

Date: 15 May 2011 –

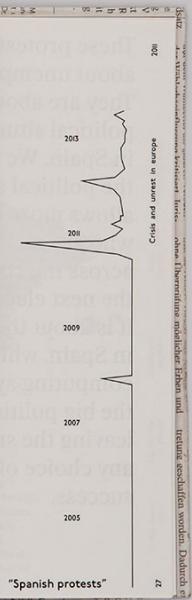
ongoing

Causes: unemployment, economic conditions, welfare cuts, political corruption, patriarchy, democratic deficit

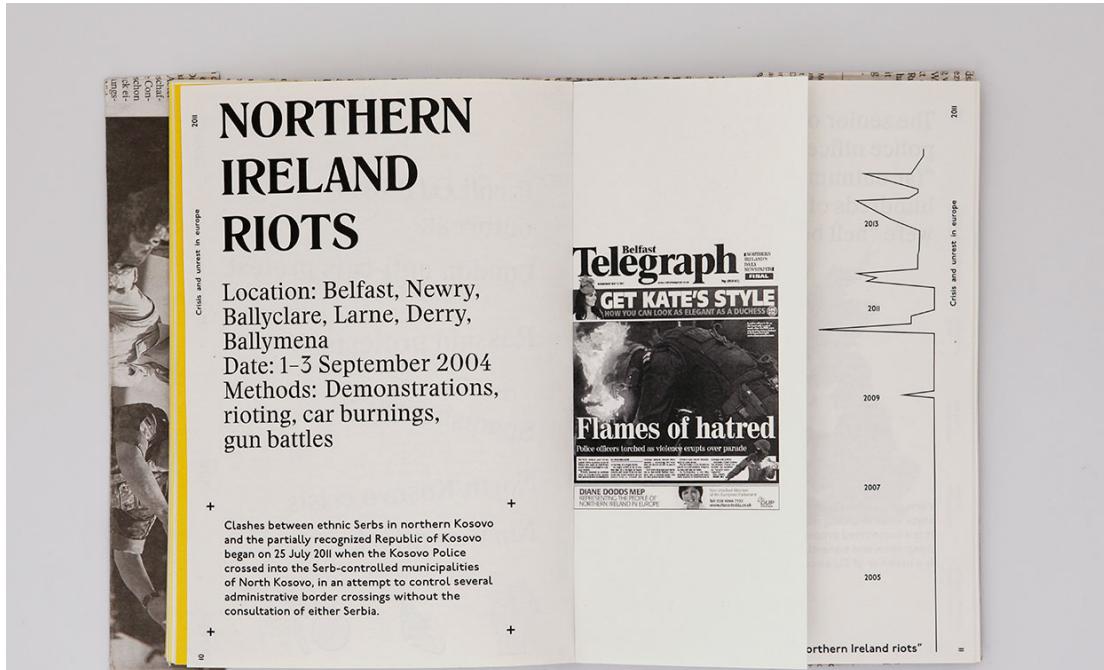
+ The 2011-present Spanish protests, also referred to as the 15M Movement (Spanish: Movimiento 15M), the Indignants Movement, and Take the Square #spanishrevolution, are a series of ongoing demonstrations in Spain whose origin can be traced to social networks such as Real Democracy NOW (Spanish: Democracia Real YA) or Youth Without a Future (Spanish: Juventud Sin Futuro) among other civilian digital platforms and 200 other small associations. The protests started on May 2011 with an initial call in 58 Spanish cities.

These protests are not only about unemployment. They are about the unfair political situation that exists in Spain. We protest against the political situation that allows more than 100 people who are accused of corruption across the country to stand in the next elections. Moreover, it is about the electoral law in Spain, which has a vote computing system that benefits the big political parties, leaving the small ones without any choice of achieving any success.

Milena Almagro García  
Protestor



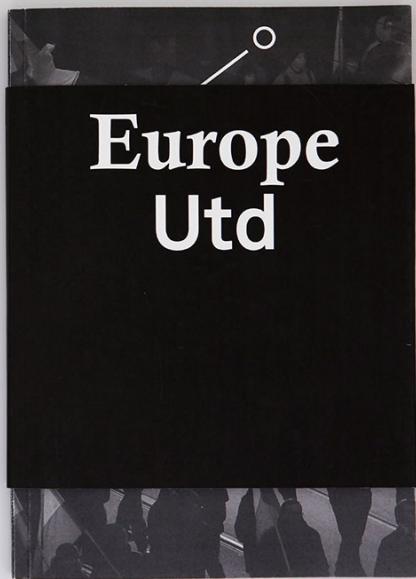




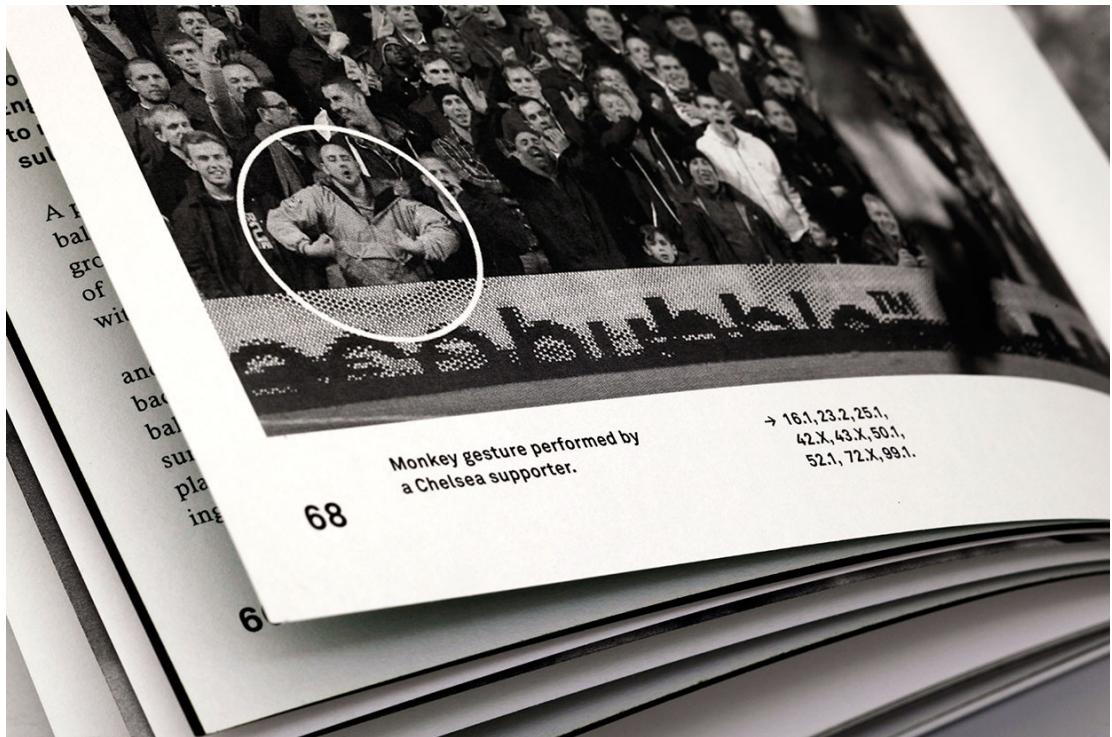
## Europe Utd.

Menno de Bruijn & Kasper Pyndt

*Europe Utd.* is an album of soccer-related imagery that deals with socio-economic issues such as nationalism, xenophobia, hooliganism, corruption and religion. According to De Bruijn and Pyndt, soccer creates a common ground of understanding that allows for a comparison of the highly diverse cultures of the European member states. In their atlas, the authors illustrate the overlapping values of sports-related communities and lay bare the interconnections between soccer teams, executives and supporters around the world. These connections were then added to the selected imagery in the form of page links, which create a dense network of thematically related topics.



◦ <b>Identity</b> 06-17	◦ <b>Politics</b> 18-27	◦ <b>Economy</b> 28-37	◦ <b>Ideology</b> 38-45
◦ <b>Violence</b> 92-101			◦ <b>Migration</b> 46-53
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# Political football: Silvio Berlusconi

Channel 4 News  
07 April, 2008

Speaking from his study, Italy's most recognizable man why he was entering politics. "I have chosen to take part in politics on several Italian television channels at once, 'because I don't want to live in an illiberal country, governed by immature forces.'

As Paddy Agnew notes in his book on Italian football, the 61-year-old 'is taking the field'. Berlusconi, owner of AC Milan, was co-opting the language of football. Politicians from Bettino Craxi to Nelson Mandela had tried to use football to build their world's first football polity.

That started a trend, of which he himself is becoming a part. In the Italian elections of 13 and 14 April, he is expected to become prime minister for the third time. It's enough for us to name him prime minister again.

Berlusconi first dabbled with football way back in

1980, when his TV channel bought the Italian rights to the World Cup. He then bought football clubs in Uruguay. His success helped him appreciate that in Italy, you build an empire on football.

It's not just football that unites Italy. It's the only language that unites Italians is that to do with football.

That's why he is supposedly an Inter fan - indeed, he once tried to buy the club - in 1986 he took over their rivals Milan. At the time, they were still recovering

from a bribery scandal, but Berlusconi soon made them champions of Europe. By 1991, when the Italian one was mired in its own bribery scandal, 'Tangentopoli', he pledged to do the same for Italy.

Voters were won over by Berlusconi's traditional political party, and Berlusconi founded Forza Italia, a party named after a football chant. ("Would you vote for a party that's not a football team?" he asked a political scientist. He thought for a bit. "Yeah, probably," he said.) Berlusconi named his condottieri "azzurri", the blues players in Italy's national team, and called them "the blues of Italy".

None of this was an accident. Footzine is the history of football in Italy. After losing his Berlusconi, his advisers came to the conclusion that the only language that unites Italians was that to do with football. Half the electorate agreed with them.

After the cold war, old ideological divides ceased to matter. Voters no longer identified their parties from left to right. They identified them with people with new heroes: in particular, sponser and club owners.

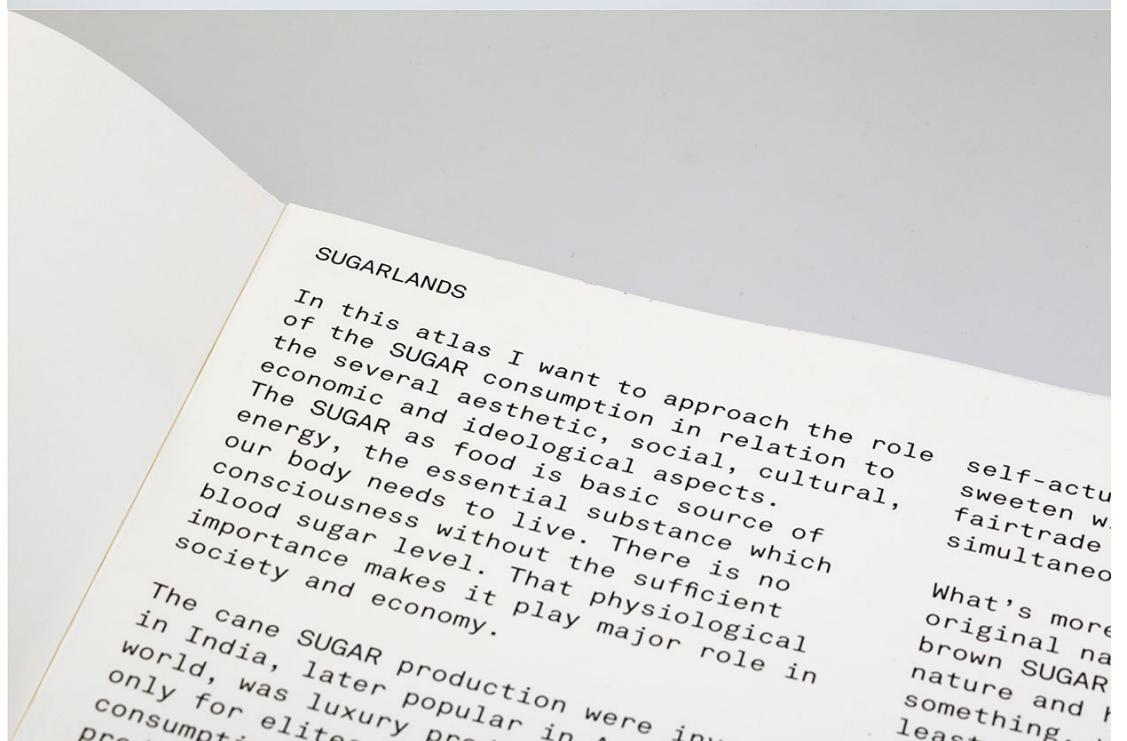
For example, in 2006 Berlusconi was again prime minister. That gave him control of the three strategic heights of Italian life: politics, football and bad television.

Berlusconi was subjectively odious (that is, odious to us Internazionali and to others scattered throughout Italy), but objectively he was a good man. He was in becoming objectively odious, i.e., independently of the team you support.

For example, in 2006 Berlusconi was again prime minister. That gave him control of the three strategic heights of Italian life: politics, football and bad television.

Yannickob / Getty Images

<img alt="A black and white photograph of Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian politician and media mogul, holding the UEFA







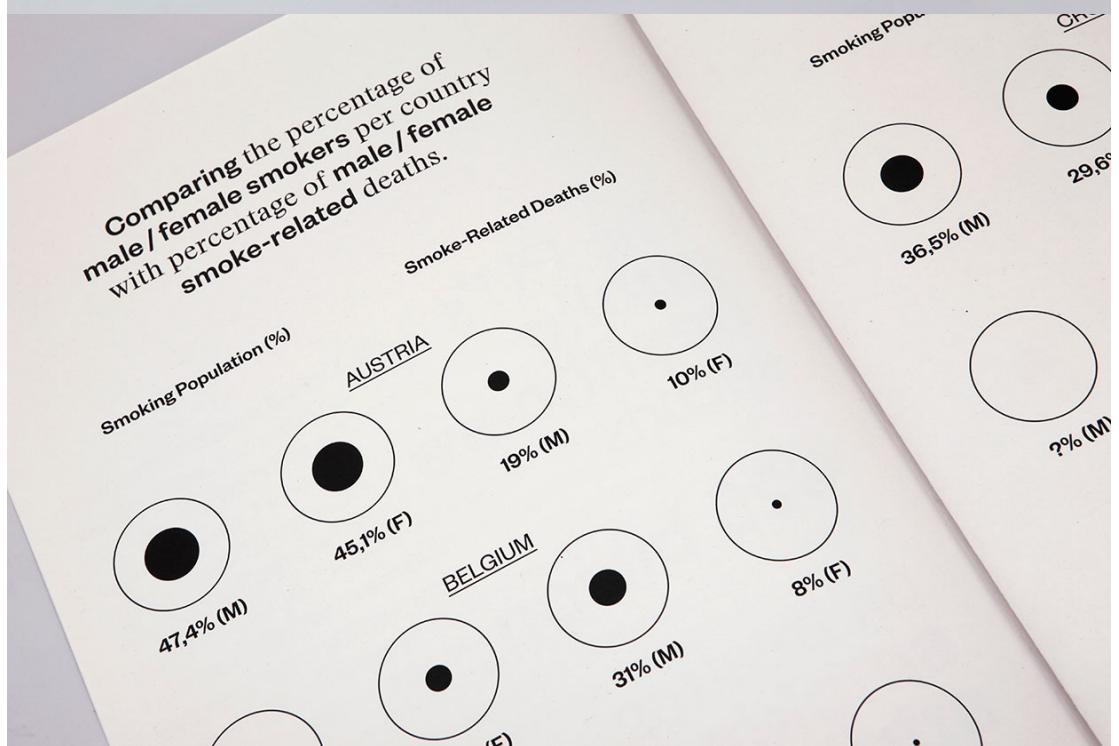
## A Look Into the Politics Behind the Tobacco Industry

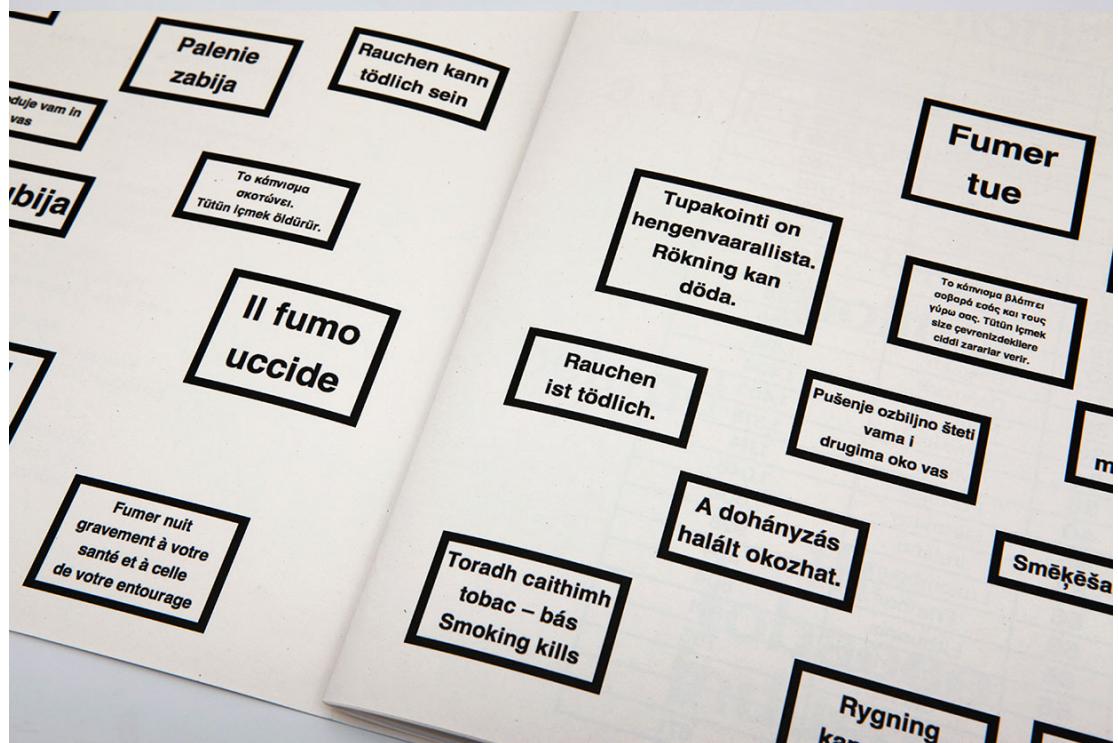
Ines da Costa

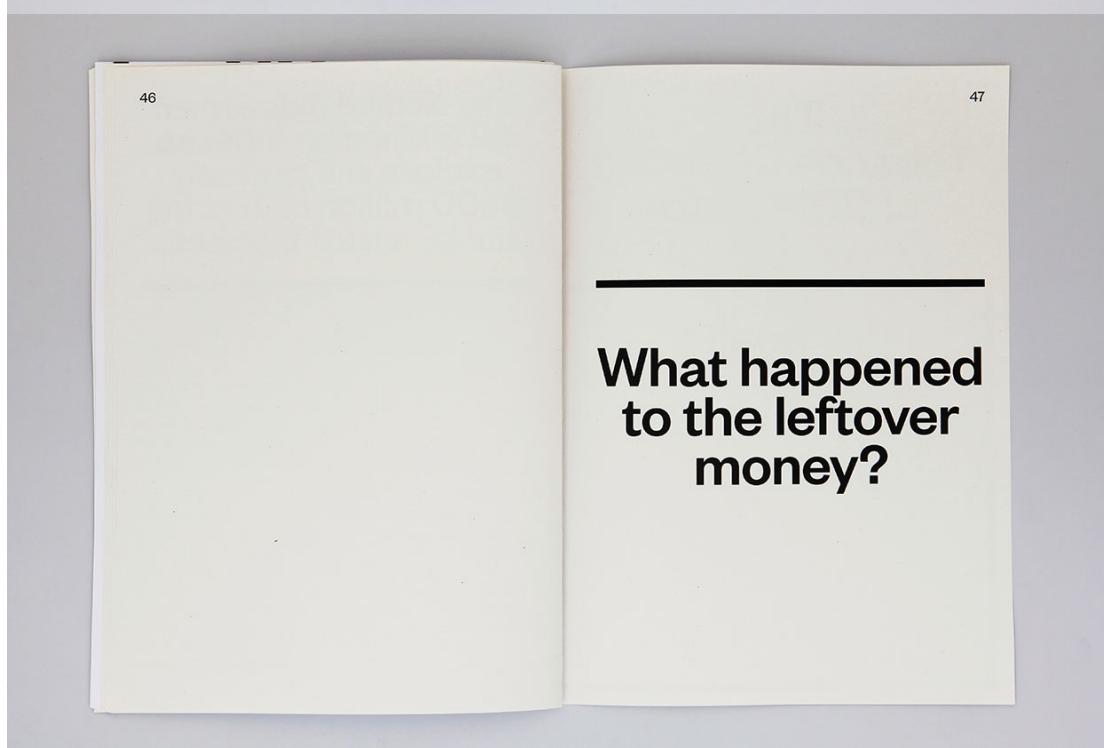
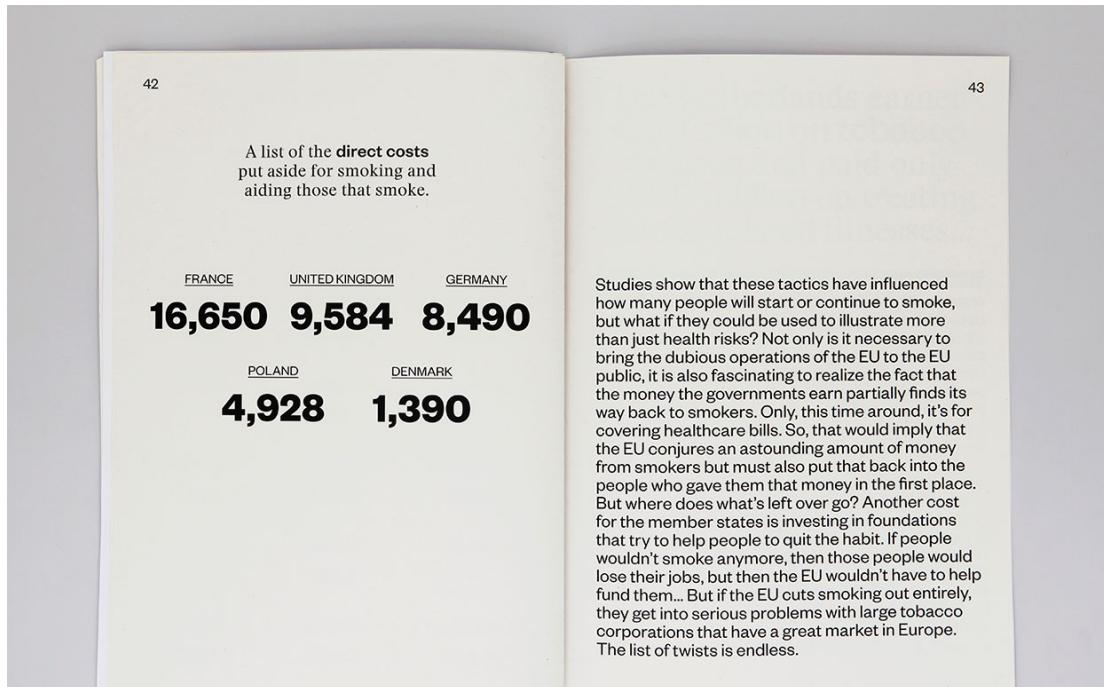
What happens to the tax revenues that governments collect from the tobacco industry? *A Look Into the Politics Behind the Tobacco Industry* offers a peek into European smoking ban regulations, tobacco taxation, health-related spendings and hidden political agendas. Da Costa's documentation is an eye-opening example of how the EU's primary ambition of providing first-class health care for its citizens can turn into an over-regulated, bureaucratic dilemma.

The  
European  
Union:

a look into  
the  
politics  
behind  
the  
tobacco  
industry.





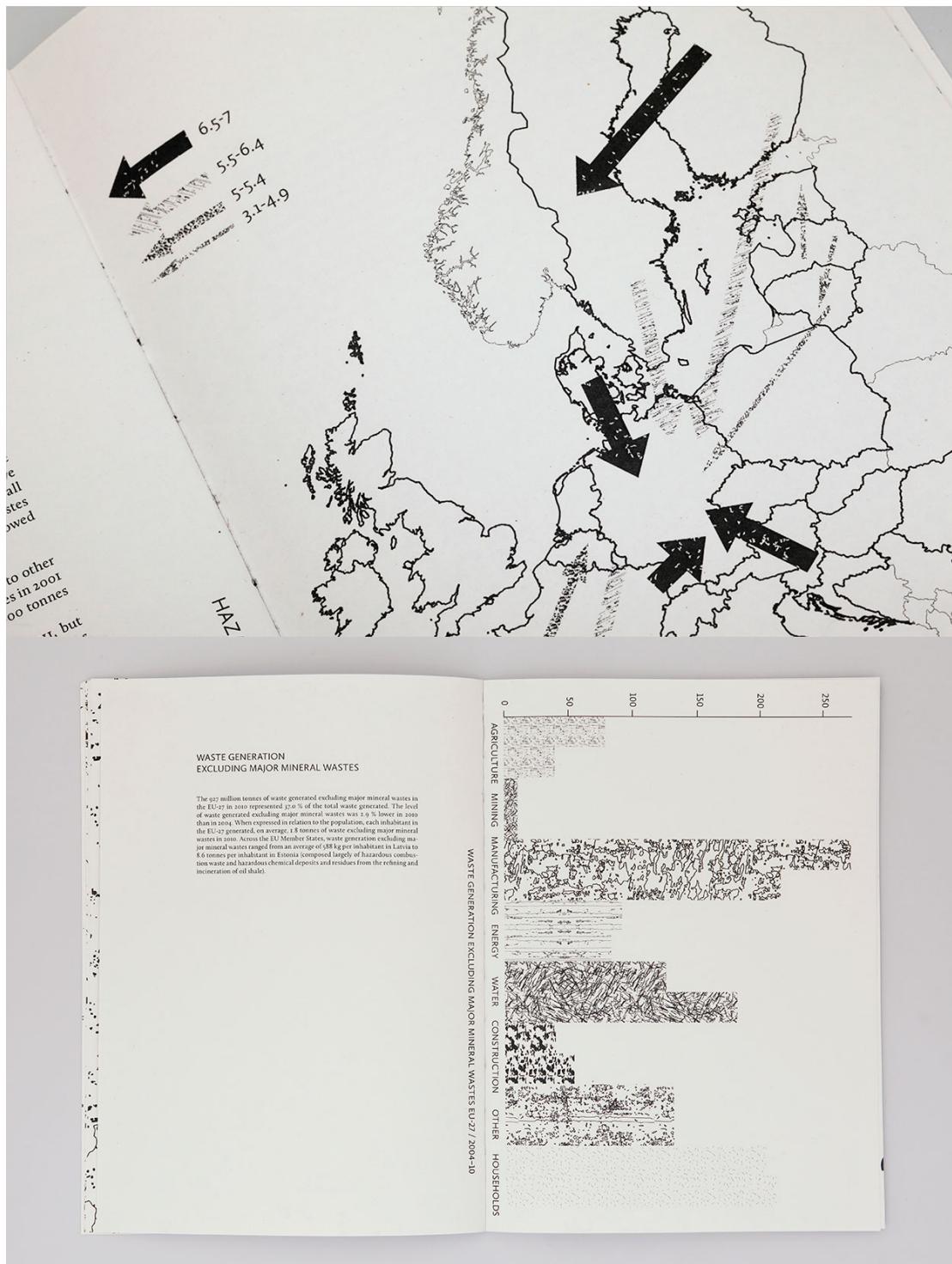


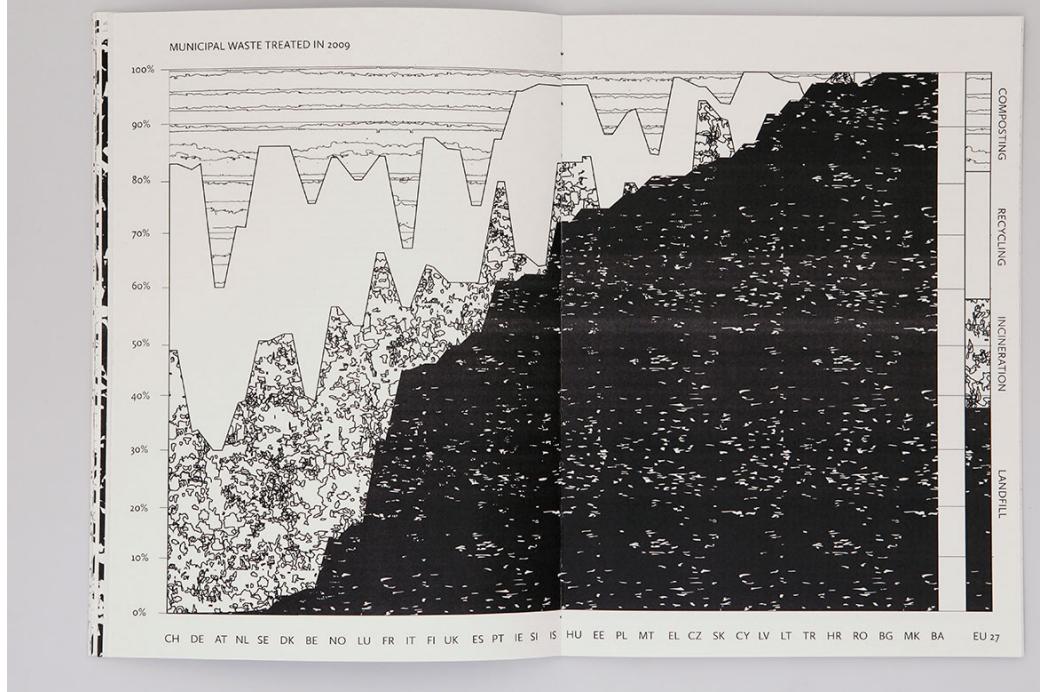
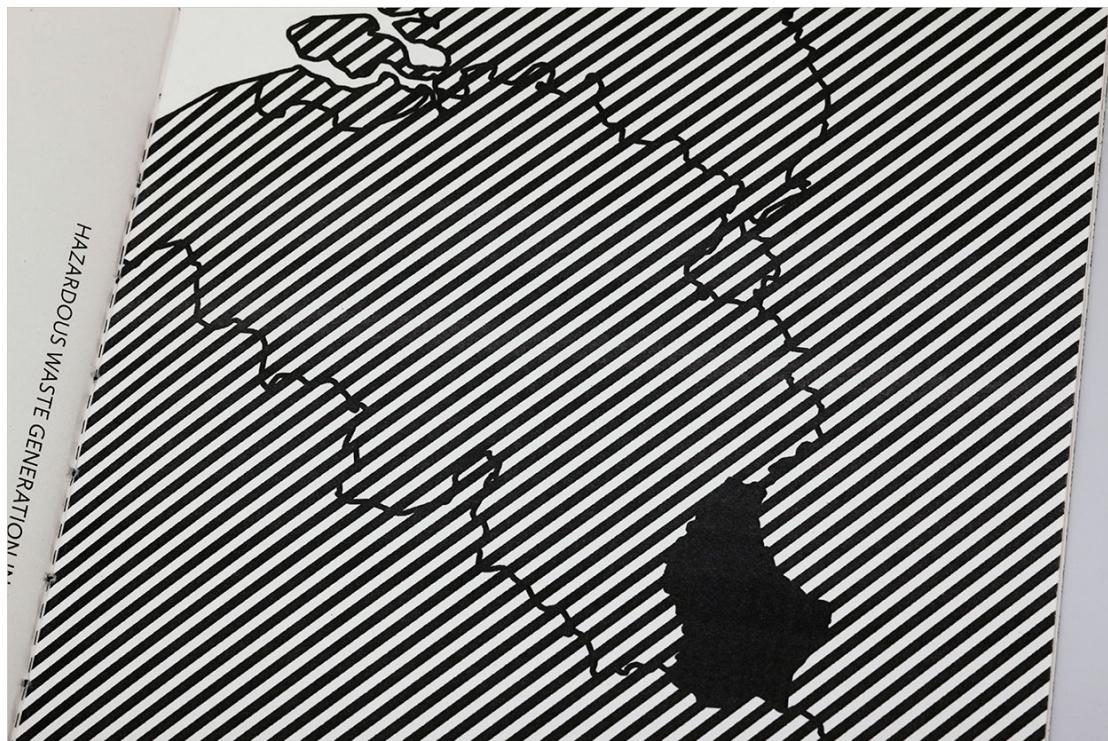
## Unwaste

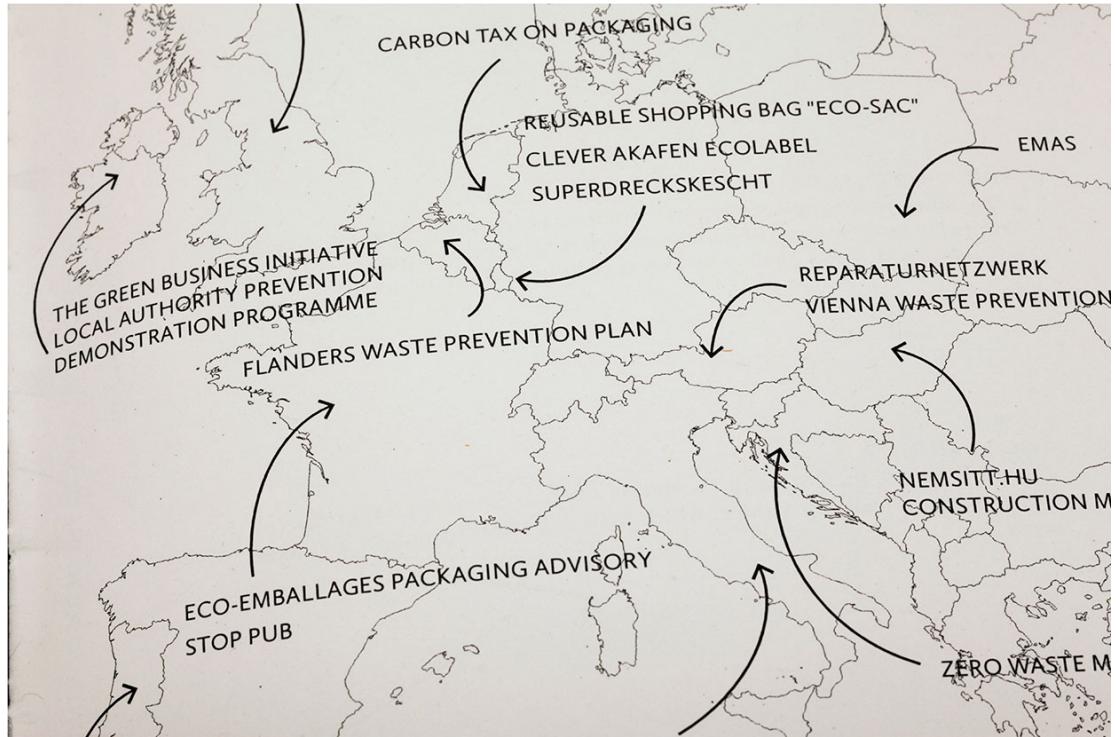
Martyna Wyrzykowska

*Unwaste* presents a thorough investigation of waste generation in the EU, including what waste consists of and what happens to the waste we produce. Wyrzykowska compares recent statistics to discover that the financial crisis has actually led to an increase in waste production in the European Union. However, what is even more shocking is to discover that many EU member states continue to use landfill to dispose of their waste. The author documents waste treatment throughout Europe, in various industries and offers an overview of the environmentally friendly plans that are currently being implemented to combat the production of new waste.









### In Varietate Concordia

Ilse Modder

This passport-sized atlas discusses the true meaning of the EU's official motto "United in Diversity". By using heraldic symbols, the atlas reveals both the importance of integration for peace and prosperity, and the necessity of autonomous, national decision-making to conserve distinctive cultural identities. Modder's book reminds us that the European Union operates on the premise of any healthy democracy, that of maintaining a balance between giving and receiving. Freedom for the one implies commitment to the other, while privilege for the one implies responsibility to the other.



## UNITED IN DIVERSITY

Europe is at a crossroad. It is not just a matter of which road we'll choose to come out the euro crisis. The euro crisis above all sets the debate about the future direction of the European Union on edge. Most European leaders formulate a vista or final destination, but they are now planning a clear path forward to a 'genuine economic and monetary union'. Participants in this debate often take extreme positions: super state or nation state, Euphilia or Europhobia. In a Christian-political vision of the EU, we do not need to cling to the nation state, but neither to euro-centralism. There is indeed an alternative. This vision combines the importance of integration with a commitment to cultural diversity amongst Member States. It is about finding the right balance between unity







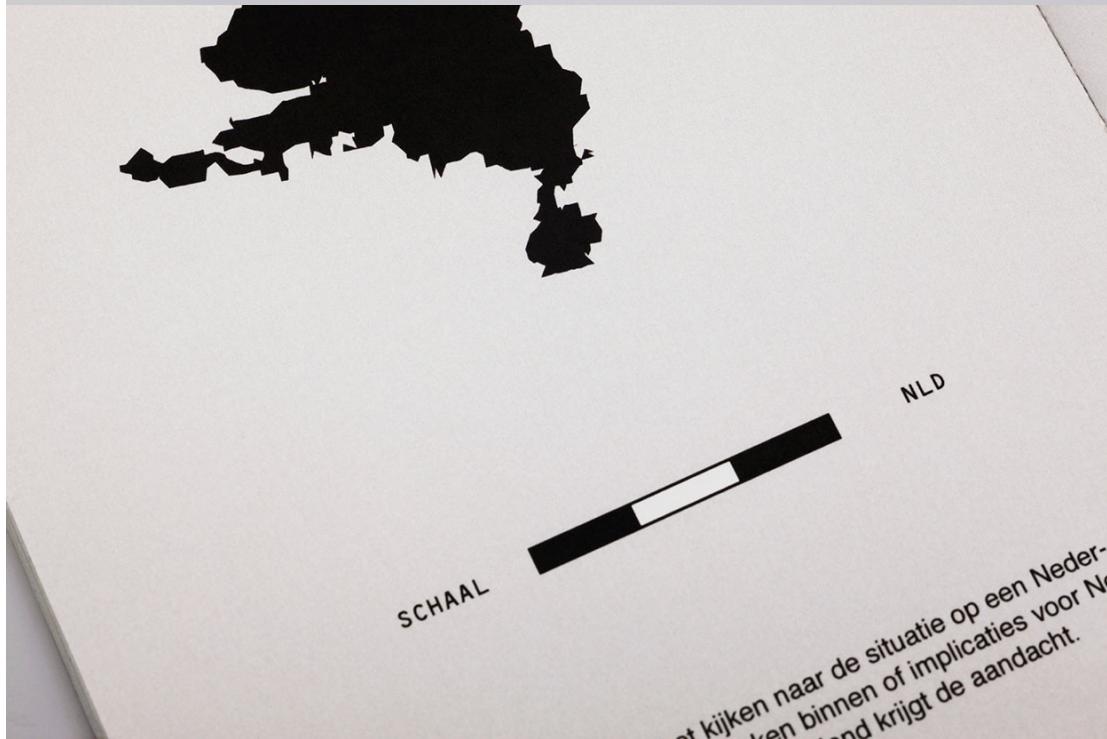
### Een eenheid van verscheidenheid

Mike Kokken

*Een eenheid van verscheidenheid* (A unity of diversity) is a flip-over atlas that can be read from both front to back and vice versa. In one direction it displays news events related to the Netherlands while in the opposite direction it displays current affairs that affect the European continent as a whole. Kokken's layout emphasises the interconnections between micro and macro levels, how incidents such as the eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano can lead to a total paralysis of European air traffic and how the increasing popularity of low-cost airlines affects cannabis consumption in Amsterdam.









**Niels Schrader** (1977, Caracas, VE) is a concept-driven information designer with a fascination for numbers and data. He is founder of the Amsterdam-based design studio Mind Design and member of the AGI – Alliance Graphique Internationale. Next to his design practice Schrader has been lecturing at the Delft University of Technology, ArtEZ – Academy of Art & Design in Arnhem and Willem de Kooning Academie in Rotterdam. Since January 2013 he is co-head of the Graphic Design department at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. In his work, Schrader plays the role of both a mediator and a designer. He considers communication to be an interactive process that requires participation through questioning. See further: [www.minddesign.info](http://www.minddesign.info).

**Lauren Alexander** (1983, ZA) is a designer and artist. She teaches in BA and MA Graphic Design at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK) and in 2019 she was a member of the KABK Research Group chaired by Alice Twemlow. Her collaboration with designer Ghalia Elsrakbi (1978, SY) initiated in 2009 has informed her practice and teaching. As Foundland Collective Lauren and Ghalia explore under-represented political and historical narratives by working with archives via art, design, writing, educational formats, video making and storytelling. The duo critically reflects upon what it means to produce politically engaged work from their position as non-Western artists working between Europe and the Middle East. Foundland Collective was awarded the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship for research in the largest Arab American archive in 2015, the outcome of which was presented as a video installation at Centre Pompidou in Paris (2017) and their short video, 'The New World, Episode One' premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival (2018). The duo have lectured and exhibited internationally including at ISPC, New York, Ars Electronica, Linz, Fikra Biennial, Sharjah and Tashweesh Feminist Festival, Cairo and Brussels. Their work has been shortlisted for the Dutch Prix de Rome in 2015 and Dutch Design Awards in 2016.

Photography: Roel Backaert

## Tags

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