



Designing better futures

Kortrijk UNESCO
Design Region



Paradise Kortrijk 2021



Welcome to Kortrijk, UNESCO Creative City of Design

Dear Reader,

November 30, 2021

Four years have passed since we got the fantastic news that our city was granted membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the field of design. Since then, we have taken a deep dive into the incredible opportunities this Network has to offer.

Prior to the designation, we had already been using creativity and design as leverage for a sustainable transformation of our city and region. The UCCN membership, however, has enabled us to step up our efforts in a substantiated way. Even though the COVID-19 pandemic overshadowed almost two out of the four years of our membership, our local creativity has been given a major boost.

This is reflected in the ever-growing number of ambassadors of design and creativity in our region. Citizens, designers, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, students and academics alike have been proudly promoting the UCCN label and advocating for positive change through creativity.

This is even more reflected in the sheer volume of creative and innovative initiatives that have popped up in the past few years, in spite of, or even because of the coronavirus crisis. This was beautifully illustrated in the past few weeks during the second edition of the Kortrijk Creativity Festival WONDER. The first edition was launched in 2020 to address the need for connection in times of physical distancing. This year, it has grown into an abundant celebration of the positive impact of design and creativity, supported by more than 15 organisations and attracting over 5,200 visitors.

Hence, we could not be prouder to be part of the dynamic UCCN community, and we are already looking forward to another four years of inspiring visits, knowledge sharing, active collaborations, and making an impact together.



Kind regards,

Ruth Vandenberghe
Mayor City of Kortrijk

Kortrijk Creativity Week 2019



The impact of UCCN in facts & figures, maps, and people

Measuring creativity is never easy. Yet, the following selection of facts & figures from the past 4 years already indicates the sheer number of initiatives and people that were moved by the positive impact of design and creativity, even in times of physical distancing:

11,300 people
standing in the awe of the creativity showcased at festivals like Kortrijk Creativity Week 2019 and WONDER 2020 & 2021.



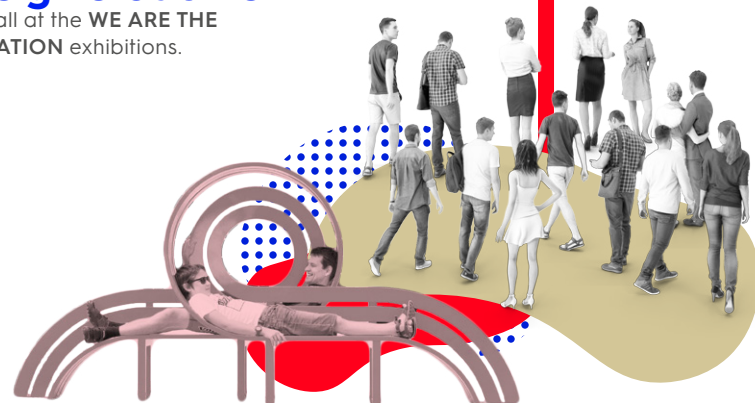
283 artists
in residence at arts center buda.



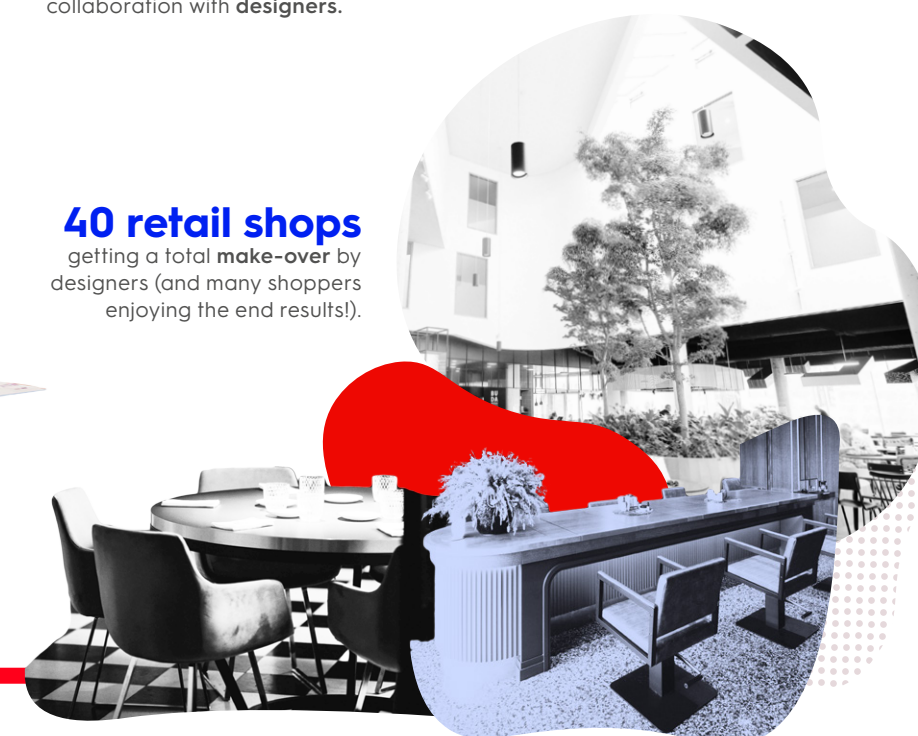
46 innovative products & services
developed by local companies in collaboration with designers.



220 design students
giving it their all at the WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION exhibitions.



40 retail shops
getting a total make-over by designers (and many shoppers enjoying the end results!).



16 illustrators and designers
transforming the K-fotem and making people smile (or think).



568,000 visitors

enjoying the arts festivals
PLAY, PARADISE,
Contrei Live and NEXT.



2,000 listeners

who are inspired by
the Hello Innovation
podcasts.

50 designers
debating and sharing
knowledge at the international
Designer Clubs.



600

creatives, entrepreneurs,
citizens, policymakers,
students, etc. taking part
in the Creativity Summits.

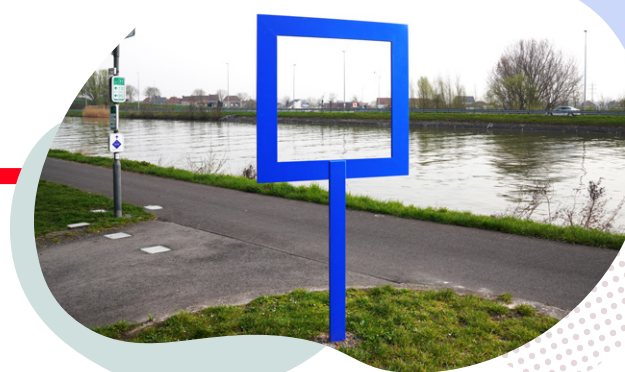
120 start-ups

contributing to the positive vibes
of the Hangar K cocreation hub.



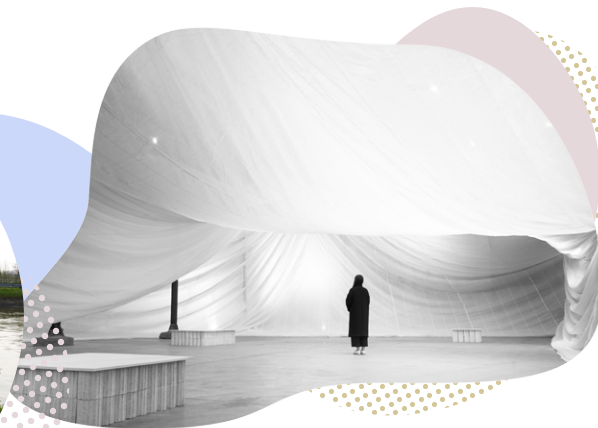
7 new designs

for public space, cocreated by local administrations,
citizens, designers and manufacturers.



12 international designers

in residence, engaging in dialogue
with the Kortrijk community.





Montréal Canada
Howest inspiration tour 2019
Exchange visit 2020



Kaunas Lithuania
Exchange visits 2020-2021
Inspiration tour 2022

Detroit USA
Cluster meeting 2019
Coordinator 2018-2020
Keynote @ Creativity Streaming 2021

Saint-Etienne France
Inspiration tour 2019
Automotive workshop Kortrijk 2021

Kolding Denmark
Keynote @ Creativity Summit 2021



Dundee UK
Cluster meeting 2018

Turin Italy
Visit Torino Design Week 2019
Automotive workshop Kortrijk 2021



Graz Austria
Inspiration tour 2018
Automotive workshop Kortrijk 2021



Singapore
Visit Singapore Design Week 2019



Geelong Australia
Visit Geelong Design Week 2019
Online cluster meeting 2021

Cape Town South Africa
Keynote @ Creativity Streaming 2021

Wuhan China
Deputy coordinator 2020-2022



Marcos Simões

Choreographer, performer and
resident arts center buda

Proud ambassadors

Since Kortrijk was granted UCCN membership, a whole network of 'brand ambassadors' has been created: citizens, entrepreneurs, creatives, students, decisionmakers, academics, etc. who are all proud to be part of UCCN. They have not only been witnessing the city's and region's transformation but taken an active role in it, one way or another:



"I have been coming here for years now and it is surprising to see how quickly the city is changing; there is always something new to discover. You feel an openness to new, modern things, but with respect for the past. Industry and trade were, and still are, very much alive. I would call the vibe dichotomous: small and big, old and new, quiet and dynamic."

Exchanging best practices

Detroit Design in Shops & Design Guide Real Estate Development

Montréal Commerce Design

Kaunas 5X5® innovation track & K-Totem

Saint-Etienne workshops & exhibition 'Future of Automotive'

Thanks to UCCN, it feels as if the whole world is coming to Kortrijk and vice versa. Inspiration tours, designers in residence, international conferences and network meetings, mind-opening keynotes

from fellow member cities, working visits, sharing knowledge and best practices: the power of the Network has definitely broken down barriers and opened up the world.

the Kortrijk region

General information



Biennale Interieur 2018

Name of the city	Kortrijk
Country	Belgium
Creative field	Design
Date of designation	2017
Date of submission of the current report	November 30, 2021
Entity responsible for the report	Designregio Kortrijk
Previous reports submitted	-
Focal points of contact	Stijn Debaillie, Managing Director stijn@designregio-kortrijk.be Liaison officer within the city government: Rita Agneessens, Head of the Mayor's Office, rita.agneessens@kortrijk.be

Contribution to the programme's global management

Number of UCCN Annual Conferences attended

Kortrijk has attended all Annual Conferences organised since its designation:

- 2018, Krakow-Katowice
- 2019, Fabriano
- 2020-2021: the Annual Conferences were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Hosting of a previous or future UCCN Annual Conference

None so far

Hosting of working or coordination meeting(s)

Kortrijk hosted a working visit from October 18 to 21, 2018, following the cluster meeting of the design cities in Dundee. 7 cities participated: Brasilia, Detroit, Dundee, Graz, Geelong, Montréal, and Saint-Etienne. The programme included an architecture & design bike tour, a visit to INTERIEUR City Festival (showcasing the 5X5® innovation track end results), a meet & greet with the Designers in Residence, dinner with local key players in the field of design and a visit to TEXTURE, museum of flax and textiles.

The perfect blend

Filip Joos

Motion Designer Whojo

"Here we can find the perfect blend of creativity and entrepreneurship for our company. The region is also characterised by a typical go-getter mentality. In many areas, the Kortrijk region is taking on a pioneering role. Time and again, the region resolutely focuses on innovation, which makes it extra appealing to the creative industry."



Annual Conference Krakow-Katowice 2018



Annual Conference Fabriano 2019



Design & Architecture bike tour Kortrijk 2018

Hosting of international conference(s) or meeting(s)

As the UCCN 2020 Conference in Santos had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, the design cluster decided to organise an online meet-up with the cities of design from July 13 to 15. The cities of Detroit and Kortrijk took the lead in this. 31 design cities participated, discussing among other things the power of design in responding to the global crisis and in affecting change.

Management

Apart from serving as deputy coordinator and cluster coordinator (see 3.6), Kortrijk also participated in the Steering Group and in the strategic framework workshops held by UNESCO in Paris on 15/05/2019 and 17/07/2019, and online on 06/12/2019.



Biennale Interieur 2018



Communication and visibility

To advocate the Network and the positive impact of design and creativity, a campaign was set up in 2018 (see also www.designregio-kortrijk.be/en/unesco).

This resulted in, among other things:

- The launch of a **think tank** with experts from varying domains to explore the opportunities of UCCN and of design and design thinking as leverage for regional development
- Local companies and organisations using the **Kortrijk UNESCO Design Region Proud Ambassador label** in their own communication channels and tools
- The presentation of the UCCN objectives and community at national and international stakeholder meetings and conferences, such as **Design Fusion** and the **Creativity Summit**
- The publication of a **magazine** and three versions of a creative city tour, showcasing the creativity of the region and the impact of UCCN
- The organisation of documented **inspiration tours** to fellow member cities of UCCN:
 - 2018: Graz
 - 2019: Saint-Etienne
 - 2020-2021: postponed due to COVID-19
 - 2022: Kaunas

- The Creativity Streaming programme, presenting inspiring stories of both local and international creatives and entrepreneurs from, e.g., Detroit and Cape Town

Serving as cluster coordinator or deputy coordinator

- Kortrijk served as deputy coordinator from 2018 to 2020 (cluster coordinator: Detroit).
- Kortrijk serves as cluster coordinator from 2020 to 2022 (deputy coordinator: Wuhan).

Participation in the evaluation of applications and/or Membership Monitoring Reports

- Kortrijk evaluated 9 applications in 2019 and 6 in 2021.
- Kortrijk evaluated 5 membership monitoring reports in 2019, 6 in 2020 and 5 in 2021.



Major initiatives implemented at the local and city level to achieve the objectives of the UCCN

Arts & design all year round

Although several events had to be cancelled in 2020-2021 due to COVID-19, the citizens of the Kortrijk region still had ample opportunity to discover and enjoy the power of design and creativity.

Biennale Interieur, WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION and ... WONDER

In the autumn of 2018, **Biennale Interieur** celebrated its 50th anniversary with a 5 day-event, turning the giant exhibition halls of Kortrijk Xpo into an archetypal city with squares, alleys, etc. The over 51,000 visitors were thus invited to 'take a stroll' and explore the latest trends in the field of design and interior, and life, work & leisure environments. Simultaneously, in the city centre, Biennale Interieur, Howest, music hub Wilde Westen, and Designregio Kortrijk transformed an abandoned hospital into a platform for upcoming talents and creatives, triggering visitors to rethink the concept of interior design. 44 Belgian and international design and arts students were selected to showcase their work at the **WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION** exhibition.

For the 2019 edition of WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION, 160 design and arts students applied, 44 of which were selected. Alongside these young creatives, established businesses and senior designers also demonstrated their creative talents at the DesignX50 expo, an overview of the 50 most innovative and sustainable products and services designed and developed in West Flanders. In 2020 Biennale Interieur had to be postponed due to COVID-19. Fortunately, numerous cultural organisations and creatives stepped in to create a COVID safe, brand new city festival, **WONDER**. Creativity, design, arts, music and above all wonder and optimism were put at the centre of an inspiring programme for people of all ages. WE ARE THE NEXT GENERATION of course, showcased young talents again, but citizens and visitors could also enjoy outdoor concerts and movies, visit a retrospective exhibition on 20 years of publicly commissioned architecture, participate in the Circular Travelling Experience Lab or take the Kortrijk Creative City Tour. This impromptu festival turned out to be such a success that it was followed up by a second edition

in the autumn of 2021, next to the new event **Please, Have a Seat** launched by Biennale Interieur. WONDER 2021 was again a combination of exhibitions, music and media arts, art installations, workshops, etc. This second edition attracted 5,200 visitors, and a third edition is already in the making.



Please, Have a Seat 2021



Art festivals PLAY, PARADISE and ... Contrei Live

The first edition in 2018 of the new interactive art festival PLAY immediately hit the mark. From June to November, **PLAY** transformed the city of Kortrijk into a playground of contemporary artworks, made by 40 international artists. Over 175,000 people of all ages and from all walks of life entered the playground and felt inspired, charmed, confronted or surprised, but above all, energized.

Given the success, the city council decided to turn PLAY into a triennial for contemporary art. From June to October 2021, the second edition, **PARADISE**, took place. This time, 31 international artists presented their utopian dream of paradise through 44 installations in over 20 indoor and outdoor locations, attracting 250,000 visitors.

In summer 2020, in between PLAY and PARADISE and in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, Leiedal, the intermunicipal cooperation for regional development, and its partners managed to pull off another new outdoor festival, **Contrei Live**. Through this landscape art festival visitors were invited to explore the 13 municipalities of the Kortrijk region, reflect on the importance of water, and enter into a dialogue on sustainable transformation. Leiedal launched an open call, supported by the UCCN, to artists and designers all over the world. From the 211 submissions, 16 artists and designers were selected. Their site-specific art works presented an intriguing mix of land art, landscape architecture, sound art and kinetic installations. From July to October 2020, more than 100,000 people visited Contrei Live, most of them on foot or by bike.

5X5[®] innovation track in the public space

From 2017 to 2021, public administrations, designers, companies and end users joined forces to create sustainable and creative solutions for public space, using design thinking as a catalyst. Though COVID-19 did hamper the cocreation process, bringing together varying stakeholders proved to be a highly enriching experience and, more importantly, resulted in 5 concrete solutions. Thus, for instance, the management of urban green spaces is now being transformed, innovative smart rubbish bins are being produced and multimodal commuting is given a boost. 13 municipalities, 5 designers and 20 companies participated in this intense cocreation process. Their experiences and methods are documented in a public space design manual that will hopefully inspire other municipalities to systematically involve a whole variety of stakeholders in the decision making on urban public spaces.

www.publicdesign.guide

“This process has enabled us to achieve a concrete result that we could never have accomplished with a traditional approach.”

Laurent Hoornaert

City of Kortrijk



Kortrijk Weide

In the past 4 years, the urban area Kortrijk Weide, near the railway station, has been totally transformed. It is now a vibrant area, housing among other things an ecological city park, a public swimming pool, an urban sports centre, a party venue, a picnic area and an adult education centre. This formerly neglected urban area, is now even in the running for the Green Cities Europe Award 2021.

“This region is the perfect environment to stimulate our creativity as game developers. With Hangar K, the Howest training programme Digital Arts & Entertainment, and many innovative companies nearby, new ambitious designers can find everything they need right here.”



Gilles Vancoillie

Game designer
Moonmonster Studios

At the heart of all this, is Hangar K, a brand-new cocreation hub that opened its doors in April 2018. Anno 2021, the hub is home to a booming society of student-entrepreneurs, start-ups, scale-ups and corporates, with a focus on (game) design, digitization (EdTech) and the creative manufacturing industry. The Start@K programme, launched in

“We want to have our own workshop in the long run, but Hangar K is a great place to start and build our business. You can meet all sorts of interesting people here over coffee or lunch.”



Marie Van den Broeck

Most promising Entrepreneur 2021 (UNIZO & Markant)
My Add-On (innovative solutions for people with disabilities)

September 2020, has already coached 50 student-entrepreneurs, even throughout the pandemic. All workspaces in Hangar K are now taken, and together with Leiedal, Hangar K has opened a new branch in the city centre, to support even more creatives and young entrepreneurs.

www.hangark.be



Kortrijk Weide





Well-being and inclusion

Well-being and inclusion are key criteria throughout all of the above-mentioned initiatives and projects, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic they have come even more to the foreground. That is why several new initiatives were launched, focusing on design thinking for social innovation.

In 2019 the project **MakeAbility** was launched by the interdisciplinary living lab Design for Everyone Howest, Budalab Open Makerspace (community +3,000 makers), and residential care home Heilig Hart to develop tools for people with a specific need, for example playing volleyball while sitting.

In January 2021, another new programme **Design Thinking for the Care Industry** was launched by Designregio Kortrijk, Voka - Chamber of Commerce West Flanders, and the residential care home Heilig Hart. Through cocreation with all stakeholders, they are currently developing solutions for residents of a

care home to make their menu choice in an intuitive way.

Designregio Kortrijk and Voka - Chamber of Commerce West Flanders together with intermunicipal Leiedal are also partners in the new **Circular COcreation HUB (CICO HUB)**, bringing together the manufacturing industry and sheltered workshops while at the same time addressing waste management. The idea is to first identify and explore residual flows from the manufacturing industry. In the next step, design students of the University of Applied Sciences Howest and professional designers will cocreate win-win solutions together with the manufacturing industry and sheltered workshops: innovative products and business models leading to security of employment for the sheltered workshops, valorisation of residual flows for the manufacturing industry and to long-term trusted business relationships between both sectors.



CICO Hub participant Fluvius

Thanks to design thinking, we can make education future-proof

Joos Van Cauwenberghe

School Group RHIZO

"Thinking like a designer teaches pupils to develop innovative solutions to complex problems and challenges in daily life."



Beneficial to all citizens

Vincent Van Quickenborne

Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister Belgium

"We are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network to inspire each other and to learn from each other, as all the region's inhabitants will benefit from this. Thanks to UNESCO, we now have access to cities such as Singapore, Detroit, and Montréal, which creates a wealth of opportunities. We are truly proud to be part of this Network."



Kortrijk Creativity Week 2019



EMKO, participant of 5X5® Kaunas

Harvard University on MyMachine:

"The brand of I-can-do-that supported by MyMachine resonates with the Agency by Design's concept of maker empowerment. Central is the ability to see the world as malleable. As the students of MyMachine understand, if one sees the world as malleable, then one can better affect change and shape one's world. One can become the maker of one's experiences, not just the consumer of his/her experiences. But to see the world as malleable,

one first has to understand the designed nature of the world, by developing a sensitivity to design, supported by three integrated maker capacities: looking closely, exploring complexity, and finding opportunity. These capacities are at the heart of MyMachine."

Major initiatives implemented through inter-city and international cooperation to achieve the objectives of the UCCN



5X5® innovation track goes international

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't stop the successful **5X5® concept** from being implemented within UCCN. As of spring 2021, this concept, that brings together 5 designer duos and 5 companies to work on 5 sustainable innovations for 1 year, is being implemented in Kaunas, fellow member city of UCCN. 5 companies and 5 designer duos have already been selected and are now ready to embark on a year-long design thinking process together.

MyMachine Global

MyMachine, founded in 2008 in Kortrijk, is a unique collaboration of students in primary, university and vocational/technical secondary classes. Together, they co-create a "Dream Machine" invented by the primary school children. Through franchising, there are now 11 MyMachine Chapters on 3 continents (The Americas, Europe, Africa). Plus, the annual MyMachine DreamsDrop Campaign reaches schools on all continents. MyMachine established over 730.000 Student-Hours of impact, showing students the power of their ideas, and how to bring those to life, by collaboration, respect for each other's talents, persistence, and resilience.

MyMachine is endorsed and honoured by a.o. Sir Ken Robinson, HundrED, The New York Academy of Sciences, Harvard, Sir Richard Branson, UN, Reimagine Education, The Qatar Foundation, Designmanagement Europe, Forbes, and is Recognized by Fast Company as World Changing Idea.

www.mymachine-global.org



MyMachine



Innovative higher education initiatives

In addition to supporting MyMachine, the University of Applied Sciences Howest has developed several initiatives to provide students with an enriching international experience. Thus, the training programme Sustainable Development, a joint postgraduate course by Howest and VIVES, has been expanded with new internships abroad, **inviting** students to collaborate with local communities worldwide to address global challenges such as poverty and climate change.

"This postgraduate programme was the perfect fit for both my educational needs and personal interests. Taking up this challenge not only gave me the opportunity to learn about sustainability, but it also broadened my horizon. During an international internship in Ghana, I was asked to set up a sustainable tourism programme, as well as training young people to become guides."

It turned out to be an unforgettable experience! This programme is not only an added value on a professional level, I also made friends for life during classes and during my internship. It opened many doors, for which I am enormously grateful."



Joyce Bosmans
Graduate 2021

Howest also set up a collaboration with School of Arts HOGENT to upgrade the bachelor programme Devine (digital design & development) with an entrepreneurial and artistic component. In the past 4 years, 300 students already followed the programme. In the next few years, the programme will be further enhanced with high level masterclasses, linking students and creative experts from fellow member cities of UCCN.

Implementing best practices from UCCN

Though COVID-19 complicated international exchange, Kortrijk still managed to successfully introduce best practices from fellow UCCN member cities, specifically in the field of retail. Kortrijk collaborated with the cities of Detroit and Montréal to roll out the **DESIGN IN SHOPS** project, encouraging and supporting local retailers to give their shop a make-over in cocreation with local and international designers. 40 retailers from the Kortrijk region have already successfully redesigned their shops.



"Thanks to the make-over, our hair dressing salon now really interacts with the neighbourhood. Every single customer is enthusiastic about the concept. The dynamics of our central 'flipping' dressing table is fantastic, offering plenty of room for chit chat while you're getting a haircut."



Nico Desmet
Ton sur Ton

Through the **Montréal initiative** Commerce Design Award, local retailers are also awarded for their creative efforts. At the first **Kortrijk** edition of the Award Show in 2020, 12 local retailers (on a total of 32 candidates) won a Commerce Design Award. Winners included a hairdresser, a florist, a chocolate shop, and a sustainable interior design shop for children.



Commerce Design Kortrijk Award Ceremony

Proposed action plan for the forthcoming mid-term period of four years

The first 4 years of membership have been an exhilarating experience. On a local level, the designation highlighted the positive impact of design and design thinking, triggered a whole range of creative initiatives, and made inhabitants take extra pride in their city and region. On an international level, the membership provided varying opportunities for inspiring encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in best practices from UCCN cities being implemented in Kortrijk and vice versa.

In the years to come, Kortrijk wants to build on this positive energy and continue and expand the initiatives that were launched during the first years of membership. In this way, the Kortrijk creativity festival

WONDER and the Triennial for Contemporary Art will again engage citizens and visitors in design & arts, city councils will further use the 5X5® method to transform public space, MyMachine will continue its journey around the world, design thinking for social innovation will be carried forward, etc.

Naturally, Kortrijk will also be creating room for new, participative and creative initiatives. Thus, 4 new key concepts have been launched that will again use design and design thinking as leverage for regional development. They are again a powerful mix of local and international initiatives, infrastructure investments and small-scale community projects, artists and entrepreneurs, upcoming talents and established names, tradition and innovation.



DURF2030 community activities

Main initiatives, programmes or projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network at the local level

DURF2030

In the preparation of its candidacy for European Capital of Culture 2030, the City of Kortrijk has instigated DURF2030 ('durf' stands for 'dare'), a platform of citizens, creatives, entrepreneurs, cultural organisations, young people, (higher) education institutions, innovators, change agents, etc. Together, they are leading a movement to increase the region's resilience, daring all local citizens and organisations to imagine and realize the city and region of their dreams.

By using art and creativity as tools, breaking old patterns, sharing knowledge and experience, and combining strengths, DURF2030 wants to launch by 2030 in total 2,030 creative and community service projects that will turn Kortrijk into a resilient region, embracing changes and challenges with an open mind and a large dose of creativity.

The rounds of public consultation and discussion were kick-started by inspiring keynotes from among others, Jūratė Tutlytė, 'designing happiness curator' at Kaunas, UCCN member city and European Capital of Culture 2022, and Eberhard Strempf from Graz, UCCN member city and European Capital of Culture 2003.

Key partners of DURF2030 include Designregio Kortrijk, University College Howest and VIVES, web radio Quindo made for and by young people, arts center buda, the City Theatre, sociocultural organisation Avansa, youth welfare organisation Ajko, Next Festival, and the Regional Development Foundation West Flanders.

www.durf2030.eu

Groeninge Abbey Art and Exhibition Space

By the end of 2024, the City of Kortrijk wants to turn the historical Groeninge abbey site into an innovative, open, high-quality exhibition site, using 'identity' as the common thread. Groeninge Abbey will be an art gallery, museum and a 'living room' for the entire city, all in one. Through innovative design and scenography, a thought-provoking programme and creativity as a universal language, Groeninge Abbey will investigate what defines and connects people, across borders, generations, and cultures.

International top architects Barozzi Veiga, Tab Architects and Koplamp Architects will be redesigning Groeninge Abbey into a timeless, sustainable architectural landmark, while respecting the soul and history of this site at the city centre. The new site will hold two state-of-the-art exhibition halls, which will be the 'showcase' of both regional and international artistic and creative talents from, among others, fellow member cities of UCCN. The site will also include a large, open 'lounge area', where citizens, creatives, entrepreneurs, students, etc. can meet and discuss global challenges and trends in an atmosphere of trust, building respect and understanding and countering polarisation.

www.groeningeabdij2024.be



Main initiatives, programmes or projects aimed at achieving the objectives of the Network on an international level

UNWRAP

In the autumn of 2021, University College Howest (home to the Best Game Design & Development School in the World 2021), cocreation and acceleration hub Hangar K (one of the main local initiatives realised within the UCCN action plan 2017-2020, see above) and the Kortrijk music hub Wilde Westen joined forces to kick-start a new festival, UNWRAP, bringing together the entertainment industry (music, film & games) and building bridges between different sectors.

In the years to come, this first, successful event will be expanded into a high-level interdisciplinary international festival, inviting keynotes and best practices from all over the world and, in particular, from fellow member cities of UCCN. This must also lead to a thriving ecosystem of students, start-ups, artists, international studio's, citizens, etc., driving and creating 'the future of entertainment' together.

www.unwrap.be



Please, Have a Seat

In the autumn of 2021, Biennale Interieur likewise launched a brand-new design event, 'Please, Have a Seat'. This event took over an abandoned manufacturing site, offering a curated, interactive exhibition exploring the history of seating design, from historic designs by Danish designers Verner Panton and Arne Jacobsen to more modern objects by Dirk Wijnants, Nendo, Jasper Morrison and Barber Osgerby, among others. At the same time, Please, Have a Seat also acted as an inspiring gallery of young, innovative design, showcasing future talents and trends in seating.

Citizens and visitors were invited to discover over 200 chairs, to sit on, to hang out in, to relax in or simply to admire the design. Please, Have a Seat thus also created a dynamic meeting place, where people can gather, for business or pleasure, and enjoy design in all its aspects: culture, entrepreneurship and innovation. The first edition has proven to be highly successful, attracting over 5,200 visitors and 118 participants from 20 different countries. In the years to come, Biennale Interieur and its partners would like to expand and roll out this concept to fellow member cities, showcasing historical and innovative design and inviting citizens to engage in the local and international design community.



Hub for creativity

Julie Lietaer

Ariadne innovation

“Entrepreneurship along the river Lys flows and grows abundantly. Its roots lie in the flax industry, where my roots lie as well. With our spin-off, we have deliberately chosen this region as a hub for creativity and cocreation. This has already resulted in various collaborations, with other companies and with designers and academia.”

Estimated annual budget for implementing the proposed action plan

The actions mentioned above are estimated at 1,3 million euros per year (75% international) as part of a collective budget of 2,6 million euros for design and creativity, brought in by the City, socioeconomic agencies, higher education institutes, creativity organisations, the private sector and public funds.

This includes the actions of Designregio Kortrijk and the collaborations with its founding partners. The City also invests 15 million euros in the Groeninge Abbey Art and Exhibition Space. 18 people will manage the recurrent and the new actions proposed. The City and its partners will provide the necessary infrastructures and facilities.



The transformation of a region

Sep Verboom

Livable designer & Designer of the Year 2020 awarded by Biennale Interieur

“The regional transformation is very interesting for designers. I believe that thanks to the UNESCO membership, the openness to change will continue to have an impact. I see similarities with Cebu in the Philippines, where I was staying for my thesis. That region underwent a similar evolution and is now also part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.”



Designregio Kortrijk was founded in 2005 as a cooperation between the City of Kortrijk, Howest, VOKA West-Flanders, Stichting Interieur and Intercommunale Leiedal.

The model was very progressive even then. It was the first time that forces were combined in Flanders to bring innovation, creativity or simply fresh ideas to a broader field, from business to non profit.

When the Kortrijk region was recognized as a UNESCO Creative City of Design at the end of 2017, our pioneering story was opened up to the whole world. For us, it was the ultimate appreciation for the many efforts we had been making for years, often in the shadows, to bring Designregio Kortrijk to where it is today.

My thanks therefore go to all partners from the very beginning, all the companions who -over the years- built this story with us, everyone who has believed in us from the start, but also to everyone who still shapes the future of Designregio Kortrijk.

The UNESCO-network has undoubtedly increased our international focus. The impressive network of expertise and exchange of experience that we can now fall back on, does not only provide us with additional oxygen. We also get the chance to introduce a number of international success formulas into the Kortrijk area. On top of that, we are happy and proud to spread a number of Kortrijk concepts like 5X5® or the K-Totem all over the rest of the world.

It is therefore no coincidence that we see that the label is generating a growing pride and stronger self-awareness in our region.

Commitment to innovation and design is no longer considered an extra, but is correctly seen as a fundamental way of working. And we can only applaud that.



Dominiek CALLEWIER
Chairman of the Board of Design Region Kortrijk

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Executive Summary

The first 4 years of membership have been an exhilarating experience for the Kortrijk region. On a local level, the designation highlighted the positive impact of design and design thinking, triggered a whole range of creative initiatives, and made inhabitants take extra pride in their city and region.

On an international level, the membership provided varying opportunities for inspiring encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in best practices from UCCN cities being implemented in Kortrijk and vice versa.

In the years to come, Kortrijk wants to build on this positive energy and impactful international network and continue to use design and design thinking as leverage for regional development.

This report showcases what Kortrijk UNESCO Design Region stands for and is an open invitation to all stakeholders in the city, region and the world to join us in designing better futures.



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