



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



• Designated
• UNESCO Creative City
• in 2017

10 things to know about

Kortrijk

UNESCO City of Design

July 2018

1 | The Biennale Interieur brings 70.000 design enthusiasts to Kortrijk

'Interieur' is an international fair for contemporary design, which was first organized in 1968. The fair takes place every two years during the month of October in Kortrijk Xpo. During this biennale, designers and manufacturers show their new products to both a professional and the general public. 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the Biennale Interieur and its 26th edition. INTERIEUR 2018 opts for a new, five-day formula. From 18 until 22 October, Kortrijk Xpo will be home to more than 200 national and international brands, presentations and product launches, installations and talks, the Interieur Awards and the Designer of the Year competition. At the same time, the centre of Kortrijk will host the Interieur Festival featuring a wide range of workshops, exhibitions and young, pioneering talent.
www.interieur.be

2 | Are 29 of the 100 Belgian manufacturing companies in the Kortrijk region?

The Kortrijk region consists of a dynamic network of SMEs and large manufacturing companies. Of the top 100 Belgian manufacturing companies, no fewer than 29 are located in the Kortrijk region. Important sectors are textiles and plastics, but the region is also known for its mechanical engineering and mechatronics, and its communication and visualization technology.

From the smallest SME to the largest multinational, all companies have somehow introduced and implemented design and design thinking within their business and manufacturing processes. They are doing particularly well in terms of innovation and often avail of an in-house R&D or designers' team.

Thanks to their excellent quality and unique expertise, the companies in the Kortrijk region have gained an excellent reputation with their customers as well as with the industry itself, both on a regional and an international level. The Henry van de Velde label, Red Dot Award or the Architizer A+Awards: You will find international labels and statuettes proudly showcased in quite a few number of offices and workshops in the region.

3 | Kortrijk has the best gaming school in the world

In Kortrijk alone, there are more than twenty-five secondary schools, fifteen campuses for lifelong learning, an academy of fine arts and an urban conservatory of dance and music, two universities of applied

sciences and two campuses of Ghent University and the Catholic University of Louvain. Add to that the formal educational institutes in the other twelve cities and municipalities of South West Flanders, as well as the many private schools, and you end up with a grand total of thousands of young people and students who are immersed in knowledge and 21st century skills such as creativity and design thinking. In 2017, West Flanders University of Applied Sciences (Howest) was ranked by The Rookies, an international leading organization in the games sector, as the n°1 school for game design and development in the world. <http://www.digitalartsandentertainment.com/>

4 | That Kortrijk flax is included in the American dollar bills?

If you get a US dollar bill and wonder why the feeling is so special: that may not only have to do with the iconic nature of the dollar, but also with the flax that has been incorporated into it. Flax that has been supplied to the USA by the company Vervaeke Fiber for many years. Vervaeke Fiber in Kuurne (region Kortrijk) is the world's oldest flax company. Since the beginning of the sixties the company supplies flax to the United States that is used in the famous 1-dollar notes.

It all started in the Middle Ages, with the flax industry that gained a worldwide reputation for excellence. In spite of numerous setbacks, or perhaps because of them, the textile industry in the Lys region survived and managed to transform itself into a creative manufacturing industry in a whole variety of sectors such as new materials and communication technology.

5 | Kortrijk has a makerspace since 2012

“...life is about the people you meet, and the things you create with them. so go out and start creating...” ([The HOLSTEE manifesto](#))

BUDA::lab is an open maker space in Kortrijk where makers, designers, students, schools and creatives can come to make things, take workshops, meet, be challenged and inspire each other. BUDA::lab was founded in 2012 within the European project PROUD around co-creation. Through a large collection of analog and digital machines, BUDA::lab unites newbies and experts from different sectors and disciplines to create synergies.

BUDA::lab, 2th ground Budafabriek, Dam 2a Kortrijk, www.budalab.be

6 | Kortrijk is a breeding ground for musical talent

The Kortrijk region also boasts a lively music scene, with internationally renowned bands such as Ozark Henry, Goose or Balthazar. In the proximity of the railway station, the city and its partners have invested in a large music campus, combining rehearsal studios, production areas and state-of-the-art concert halls. The urban conservatory, the concert hall De Kreun and music center Track are housed there, as is the 'Wilde Westen', a concert and festival organizer leading in the field of sound art, contemporary, jazz, classical, pop, rock and cross-fertilization with everything in between.

Kortrijk also had a city tune developed. 'A strong brand is not just a logo, color or flag, but also a sound', says the mayor Vincent Van Quickenborne.

7 | 7 unique bridges that determine the city's skyline & view

In order to make the Leie navigable for larger ships, it was necessary to straighten and widen it in the centre of the city. The extensive works have given Kortrijk a facelift and the city now boasts a widened Leie, seven new bridges and riverbanks with spacious paths, delightful parks and a renewed relationship with the water. The Leie banks are the place to be! An outstanding strip of greenery where young and old gather to enjoy the setting in peace and quiet, and that in the middle of the city, no less! Around the King Albert Park, the famous Skatebowl was erected, the quays were upgraded, and Kortrijk now boasts its own city beach with Buda Beach.

A new Leie needs new bridges. Seven impressive examples redraw the Kortrijk skyline and afford it a distinctive, imposing appearance. No boring or identical copies, but seven distinctive bridges that will help both visitors and locals orientate themselves. Sometimes majestic big city structures, at other times bold zigzags. They are all suspended seven meters above the surface of the water.

8 | Something about the buda island: island of creation

Between the arms of the Leie you will find the Buda island. An island for the artistic visitor to the city. In the Kortrijk entertainment district, you will find the Budatoren, a platform where artists from all over the spectrum can do their thing and in the Budascoop you can enjoy the better non-commercial films. BUBOX is a space for contemporary visual art that resolutely opts for artists who want to deal with space and their environment in a wayward and artistic way. Buda Beach invites young

and old to relax in the beautiful setting of the Leie. In the summer, this park is transformed into a beach with sunbathing area. The Budafabriek is an imposing place where designers, entrepreneurs, artists, students and active citizens work together. The old building was taken care of by the architects' office of Flemish Government Architect Peter Swinnen. Along the street side a pentagonal volume was added to give the building a more striking façade. The 3,000 m³ factory houses a maker space, the Digital Design and Development courses by Howest, and exhibitions, workshops, lectures and events.

9 | The megascreens at the U2 shows are made in Kortrijk

The textile traders of the Middle Ages have grown into top companies in the creative manufacturing industry. Bekaert, Barco, Van de Wiele, Verilin et cetera are all experts in using design and design thinking in their sector, from mechanical engineering to steel wire applications.

Barco, a global leader in creative LED technology provided the transformable LED screens at the U2 world tours. Barco is the global market leader - with about 50 percent of existing cinema projectors. Barco designs and develops visualization solutions for a variety of selected professional markets, with a team of 3,500 employees, located in 90 countries, whose passion for technology is captured in 400 granted patents.

10 | Collaboration is key

Kortrijk has 76,000 inhabitants, South West Flanders almost 300,000 inhabitants. Though small in size when compared with world cities, the region is significantly big when it comes to creative capital. Every day again, the region's dynamics are stimulated by people who dare to color outside the lines, in entrepreneurship as well as in education, arts and in public space.

The region Kortrijk excels at bringing together people and organizations that at first sight have very little to do with one another. At second sight, however, they can make a big difference for one another. Students and experienced entrepreneurs, artists and manufacturing companies, residents and designers, civil servants and architects et cetera: Crossovers in every possible way are stimulated and cherished.

Entrepreneurs find each other per sector, via organizations such as Agoria, essenscia and Fedustria for the manufacturing industry or Flanders DC for the creative industry. Or across sectors, via for instance

Voka, UNIZO and ETION. Start-ups are matched with each other through initiatives such as the West Flemish Start & Go, or they are matched with experienced entrepreneurs and investors through networks and projects such as Hangar K, the Business Angels Network or Protopitch.