

Triennale Brugge 2015



Posted on [24/07/2015](#) by [Belgian Foodie](#)

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Do you need another reason to visit Bruges?

Yesterday I went to Bruges to see the [Triennale Brugge 2015](#), a Contemporary Art and Architecture exhibition taking place there until 18 October 2015. If you need an excuse to visit this enchanting medieval city, the [Triennale](#) may just be it.

Artists from around the world contributed works for the [Triennale](#) exhibition. Fourteen works of art are displayed in different spots around the city, guiding the visitor from the train station to the other side of Bruges, passing through the center. The art trail for the exhibits will lead you to some of my favorite spots in Bruges, like the Beguinage, the Jan Van Eyckplein, and the Groenerei (see below for photos).

Although I've been in the Beguinage at least 50 times, I always appreciate its silent beauty as an ideal place to gather my thoughts, except during the busy visiting times when tour groups come through. The Beguinage is even more attractive now with the [Tree Huts in Bruges](#) by Tadashi Kawamata (Japan) built in the trees of the courtyard.



Tree Huts in Bruges by Tadashi Kawamata

Most of the works are outside so visitors can enjoy them any time of the day. My favorite works in the exhibition are the [Tree Huts in Bruges](#) (above) and [Wu Wei Er Wei \(Doing Nothing Doing\)](#) by Song Dong from China.



Doing Nothing Doing by Song Dong

A few of the works are placed in water, the perfect setting for Bruges. For example, the [Canal Swimmer's Club](#) by Atelier Bow-Wow (Japan) features a dock set up along the canal so people can enjoy the good weather while cooling off by the water.



Canal Swimmer's Club by Atelier Bow-Wow

Another work, the Cataract Gorge by Romy Achituv (Israel/USA), symbolizes Bruges' current economic stagnation despite its past glory. The artist suggests that Bruges today exists merely for the purpose of entertaining its tourists.



Cataract Gorge by Romy Achituv

However, a couple of the exhibits are hosted indoors by local institutions so opening hours need to be respected. One of these indoor works, called [Quiet is the New Loud](#) by [O+A] (USA/Austria), encourages visitors to experience the quiet of the city by participating in various fun exercises. One of the tools offered at this stop is a map of Bruges indicating sights all over town and highlighting the sounds you should experience at each spot. It's unfortunate that visitors receive this map at mid-point of the art trail after most visitors will have already passed many of the spots indicated on the map. Day visitors will surely not go back to experience the sounds at the spots behind them.

Walking through Bruges is always wonderful. In the center of Bruges, however, crowds of tourists horde around the two main squares, the Markt and Burg, as well as the surrounding canals. I understand why they come to enjoy these remarkable sights, but frankly I wish they would move aside so I can take my photos and enjoy them in tranquility. Bruges is at its best in silence: in the winter, in the Begijnhof (Begijnage), and along the canals a little bit away from the center squares. There is something reflective and spiritual about the town of Bruges that makes it an ideal place to wander aimlessly. I was therefore very pleased that the [Triennale](#) exhibition leads visitors to some of the outlying areas so they can see a side of Bruges they might not ordinarily see on a tour.

As much as I enjoy Bruges, I find the lunch options fairly disappointing. Most restaurants are either on the higher end or the lower end of the scale, with very little in the middle. The prices for lunch are higher than in other cities in Belgium for food that is no better and even mediocre, with few exceptions. I was therefore thrilled to discover a new place called [Blackbird](#) open for breakfast, lunch and tea-time at Jan van Eyckplein 7. See my review of the [Blackbird](#) by clicking on this [link](#). For visitors of the [Triennale](#), the [Blackbird](#) is located at mid-point of the art trail, making it an ideal place to have lunch or to enjoy a break.



Jan Van Eyckplein

I recommend going to the [Triennale](#) exhibition before it ends on 18 October 2015. It is family-friendly and free of charge. Visitors can stay as long as they like at each site as well as at other places they like along the way. Here are photos of some of the places you will see as you follow the art trail.