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**WHAT'S ON**

The definitive guide to entertainment in Brussels and beyond

# Bringing art to the party

Fancy going out in Brussels but looking for something more interesting than a DJ with a laptop? **Hettie Judah** finds out about some parties with a difference

**T**here was no link between what I did in my real life and what I did when I was going out," says Big Willy, aka Wilfried, founder of Los Ninos. During the day he worked in fashion, looked after his health and ate organic food because he was concerned about the environment. He had been clubbing since the age of 15, and had partied his way around Europe, but as he creaked his way towards 30, he found it difficult to understand why he lived his life one way during the day, yet the world surrounding his beloved electro music was "necessarily all about Marlboros and Red Bull and Bacardi and Coke".

So Big Willy started his own parties with organic food and an organic bar. He decided to steer away from the big-name mass-produced mega-club idea and instead invited quirky bands and performance artists. His day job in fashion meant that style was automatically an important element, so he asked young designers to play a part: creating 'the sexiest outfit on earth' for the pizza boy or designing posters and flyers.

The Los Ninos parties started out small: mainly people Willy had met out and about, and they've grown up over time to become more like a community than an audience. "This is the party where everybody comes to have fun, not to be seen. People get dressed up but not in an arrogant way – if there's a theme, you get straight and gay people dressing up, and for the Priscillas last week some people wore rockabilly stuff."

In Brussels right now you can feel the growth of a scene that, like Los Ninos, reflects more of our day life in our night life. Instead of just drinks and DJs, a bit of art is being thrown into the mix. There are several reasons for the trend: the rising appreciation of the cabaret aesthetic, the fact that electronic music is crossing



Going wild at another Los Ninos event

over so strongly with sound art, that modern dance is so closely tied to club culture, and because so many people find the mainstream club scene impersonal and unsatisfying.

As a result, it is becoming de rigueur for arts organisations not simply to draw people in during the day and early evening, but to try to keep hold of them well into the night as well: KVS has been holding its Bal In De Box events for a while, Kaaiteater is planning new nightlife projects for the New Year and Théâtre de Poche hosts the Bar des Clandestins, an intimate event presenting theatre-like cabaret on Sunday and Monday nights every two months.

For Recyclart, the combination of high and club culture has always been an automatic thing. Their highly respected parties started as a way of funding the centre's cultural programme. "We always selected nights that were different from what else was going on in Brussels, things that were more than just pure entertainment," says Marc Jacobs, who

runs the events. "We don't only do club nights – our arts projects often mingle with other projects we do, so we like to present eclectic nights where different artforms meet."

### Some upcoming events

**October 14** Closing night of the Kaaiteater's Shuffle season, concert by Arab-Andalusian band Arabanda (€6, starts at 20.30), followed by free party from 22.30. Kaaiteaterstudios, 2 Quai des Péniches, Brussels (centre), tel 02.201.58.58.

**October 19** Vernissage for the Charlotte Beaudry exhibition, the first show in the Aliceday Gallery's new space near Rue Antoine Dansaert. From 18.00 to 21.00 – continues with a private showcase for the band Showstar at 21.30 in Café Central. Free. Aliceday Gallery, 1b Rue des Fabriques, 2nd floor, Brussels (centre), tel 02.646.31.53.

**October 20** Closing party for the exhibition of multidisciplinary Antwerp publication *Front Magazine* at Recyclart at 22.00. True to the style of the magazine, the party will involve performance, installations, dancers, live bands and DJs. (€8) Recyclart, 25 Rue des Ursulines, Brussels (centre), tel 02.502.57.34.

**October 21** The opening of the new season of Bar des Clandestins. *Théâtre de Poche*, 1a Chemin du Gymnase, Brussels (Bois de la Cambre), [www.clandestins.com](http://www.clandestins.com).

**November 17** Bal In De Box, the bi-monthly club night mixing live music and Djs. Check out the website for special themed events. From 22.00 until 5.00 KVS, 7 Arduinkaai, Brussels (centre), tel 02.210.11.12, [www.kvs.be](http://www.kvs.be).

For information on forthcoming Los Ninos parties, visit [www.losninos.be](http://www.losninos.be).

