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PRESS RELEASE
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The university quarter as seen by the people of Brussels

The university quarter in Ixelles is in full swing this autumn. The students are back in Brussels and ready to kick off a new academic year. A year crammed full of events, exhibitions and film screenings organised by the 'See U' site and the university campuses. In this back-to-school context, visit.brussels has decided to give the floor to the residents of the university quarter, so they can share their favourite Ixelles spots with us.

Brussels is a leading university city in Belgium, both in terms of student and staff numbers. Five universities (ULB, VUB, USL-B, UCL and KU Leuven Brussels Campus), 12 universities and 8 higher schools of art are established in the region, representing more than 86,000 subsidised students. It also enjoys an international reputation, both in terms of its stature and its outreach to foreign students*.

*source: Panorama de la vie étudiante à Bruxelles: pratiques urbaines et rapport à la ville (Agence de Développement Territorial non-profit association, October 2015)

Among others, the university quarter is home to the VUB and ULB campuses, and is located in the municipality of Ixelles. It goes without saying that it is the district of choice for students. But many Brussels residents also love the area for its dynamism and cosmopolitan character. It is full of trendy shops, cafés and restaurants catering to all tastes. It is the perfect destination to have a drink, enjoy the nightlife, immerse yourself in the cultural events of the moment or just go shopping or stroll along its wide open avenues.

It being the start of the academic year, **visit.brussels** has asked several actors from Brussels' student world to show us around their neighbourhood. Bjerne, a student at the VUB, Jonathan, in charge of the See U project, Carlos, a robotics researcher at the VUB and Léa, a student at the ULB, all give us a glimpse into their favourite spots in the university quarter.

The video clips were made by young director Julian Bordeau.

They will be broadcast one by one every week by visit.brussels via social networks. Here is a preview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjQQtuEefKQ&feature=youtu.be>

The university quarter in Ixelles is undergoing a major transformation, with the launch of the project to temporarily occupy the former barracks in Ixelles, called See U. This is a precursor to the launch of Usquare, which will see the conversion of an enclosed military complex from the early 20th century into an open living space geared towards the 21st century. It will not be a campus, but a full-fledged new part of the city, with all that this entails: a mixed and dynamic Brussels district for the future, urban and pleasant, university-based and international, sustainable and innovative.

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See U

See U, the largest temporary occupancy in Belgium, has welcomed more than 80 project leaders since spring 2019 to bring the historic Ixelles barracks site back to life. The projects that are livening up the 25,000 square meters of the site are dedicated to innovation, culture and sustainable development. See U is the lively precursor to the site which will become the Usquare.brussels student quarter from January 2021.

The "Kinograph" cinema. This temporary cinema took up residence on 1 May 2019 in the former auditorium of the Royal Gendarmerie Academy of Ixelles, as part of the temporary project See U. Until the end of 2020, it will offer an eclectic and accessible programme, with an emphasis on cult or classic films shown in a new light; thematic mini-festivals; new films, either when they are released or extended.

Information and programme: www.kinograph.brussels

The "U SEE - European Creative Street Art" initiative, created by See U, Atelier Louves and Tavu, and supported by the European Union. This project, with 14 frescoes spread across the site, is organised around the values shared by See U and the European Union: innovation, community, diversity, migration, tolerance, access to art and culture for all, sustainability and sharing. Each artist has illustrated one of these values on the walls of the former barracks with a fresco of their choice, which can be viewed for free.

"Feed U" - Tastings-Weekly market. Every Thursday from 3.00pm to 9.00pm in the heart of the city, from the site in the Food Hall, come and discover delicious local products to taste on site around our 'guinguette', or to take away. You will find local and seasonal organic fruits and vegetables, sold by the Agricover cooperative, alongside sustainable Belgian producers and craftsmen who are passionate about their craft. Other local, sustainable and organic craftsmen offer gourmet and quality products every week. This project is organised in partnership with Agricover, an ecological agricultural cooperative bringing together different producers with the main aim of selling their local products at a fair and sustainable price.

The ULB and VUB at Usquare

In a few years' time, Usquare will host an innovative ULB-VUB inter-university centre, designed to bring together the public, the city and knowledge, but it will also have an international scope. Supported by the Brussels-Capital Region and ERDF funds, this ambitious project will be launched in 2025. Nonetheless, the site is already bubbling with innovation. As part of its temporary occupancy, a series of activities were launched last spring with the inception of two Fablabs (Fablab ULB and Fablab Brussels).



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Ultimately, seven buildings will be converted on the site to accommodate ULB-VUB projects. They will host an Institute of Advanced Studies intended to house high-level foreign researchers, an interpretation centre as well as an interdisciplinary research centre dedicated to sustainable development, and an international reception centre for foreign students and researchers.

For more information: <http://usquare.brussels/fr>

Fablabs

Fablabs (Fabrication Laboratories) are part of a global network of local open source workshops, and reflect the new industrial revolution. They are aimed at students, researchers, doctoral students, teachers from various faculties of both universities (engineers, architects, physicists, etc.), and are also accessible to associations and Brussels residents, in a spirit of openness towards the city and its inhabitants.

More information: <http://fablab-ulb.be/> and <http://fablab.hylas.be/fablab-english/>

More information on the university quarter: <https://agenda.brussels/fr/article/decouvrez-le-quartier-universitaire>

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