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INPUT 1983 - Liège, Belgium

"INPUT 1983 returned to Europe and established itself on the banks of the Meuse in the Belgian industrial city of Liege. Robert Stephane and Marcia Lerner coordinated the conference for the host organization, RTBF, Belgium's French-language network. The conference headquarters occupied the impressive and modern glass-walled conference centre, the Palais de Congrès. Delegates, weary of watching German documentaries or self-indulgent experimental videos from the U.S., could find respite in gazing at the slowly flowing Meuse below the Palais' windows.

Liege's opening reception in the Palais was otherwise conventional but for one thing; the cocktails served to puzzled delegates. It was a small glass of sweet liqueur in which a black prune floated. Only later did we learn that it symbolized Liege's principal industry: coal mining. An irreverent American journalist, himself from a coal mining region in Pennsylvania, dubbed it an Anthracite Martini. When it wasn't raining, which was seldom, many delegates sought out the sights of Liege, a mid-sized city of steel mills, arms boutiques, and a calorie laden ice cream dish known as Café IL. The real excitement, however, was in the screening rooms where the BBC's animated Jane titillated and amused; Germany's The Axe of Wandsbek managed to interweave with moving result both drama and documentary; and an independently-produced U.S. documentary, Pick Up Your Feet, captured with breathless editing the fast-moving rhythms and color of a rope-skipping contest."

- From "INPUT at 20" by James Day.

