

PRESS RELEASE

BRAFA'15 – call it *Miss Sixty!*

It's a lively, youthful woman born in 1956 who will greet visitors to Tour & Taxis between 24 January and 1 February 2015, like a mother seeing her many children again at a family reunion. In top form after a record 2014 fair (more than 55,000 visitors), for this 60th anniversary edition she will gather together 126 exhibitors, from a dozen countries, who will display their finest and most recent discoveries in archaeology, tribal art, furniture, paintings, drawings, sculpture, design, jewellery and other art objects and curiosities. As an anniversary gift, this edition will include a special exhibit, conceived by the King Baudouin Foundation as a tribute to collectors, of works drawn exclusively from private Belgian collections. Art lovers will most certainly delight in 'Brusseling' again next January!

For several years now, BRAFA has placed quality front and centre in its development strategy. The quality of the exhibitors, of the works, of the hospitality and of the design of the fair as well as the quality of its organization. This long-term endeavour has enabled it to climb patiently up the rungs to attain its present reputation and to make its way onto the calendar of major art fairs in Europe. It is now on the radar of the market players, prized by art lovers, and valued for its eclecticism and the richness of what is on offer.

This policy and sustained effort have convinced numerous galleries who in the past had neglected Brussels, and Belgium in general, to come and exhibit here. Belgian and foreign exhibitors together constitute a solid base on which to build for future growth. Thus, out of the 126 participants in 2015, only 12 are coming for the first time, and 4 are returning after an absence (**Charly Bailly Gallery**, Geneva; **Jacques Barrère**, Paris; **Pierre Darteville**, Brussels; and **Galerie Montanari**, Paris). The new exhibitors for 2015 include both well-known names from the major international fairs and promises of delightful surprises. They are Belgian (**Gallery Desmet**, Brussels; **Porfirius**, Neerijse), German (**DIE GALERIE**, Frankfurt), Dutch (**Douwes Fine Art** and **Frans Jacobs Fine Art**, Amsterdam), French (**Alexis Lartigue**, **François Léage**, **La Pendulerie**, **Clara Scremini Gallery**, Paris; **Galerie Alexis Pentcheff**, Marseille), Swiss (**Opera Gallery**, Geneva) and English (**Stern Pissarro Gallery**, London). The geographical distribution is in the vicinity of 40% from Belgium and 60% from the rest of Europe.

As regards the offer, BRAFA 2015 will once again provide an **extremely attractive range** in classical archaeology and pre-Columbian art, tribal art, old masters, modern and contemporary paintings, sculptures and art objects, drawings, engravings and vintage comic strips, Asian art, gold and silver work, antiquarian books and signed copies, art objects and curiosities, and numismatics. After having passed through the three aisles of the fair, visitors will have had the opportunity to contemplate several millennia of artistic creation and a voyage around the world in 126 stands.

By way of a symbolic celebration of this 60th anniversary year, the King Baudouin Foundation has created a **new and exclusive exhibition** titled '*Le Collectionneur belge*' ('The Belgian collector'), which presents a selection of artworks from all periods and styles, drawing exclusively on Belgian private collections. This exhibition will pay tribute to the person of the collector, who both safeguards and transmits heritage and who in many cases have been the custodians of some of the most beautiful collections that today constitute the pride of the great museums.

In conjunction with this visual tribute, the cycle of daily lectures known as the **Brafa Art Talks** launched in 2014, will also give pride of place to artistic heritage and its preservers and defenders. These will feature, notably, a lecture by the King Baudouin Foundation, another devoted to the restoration of the Ghent Altarpiece (the Adoration of the Mystic Lamb) and yet another on a more unusual topic, the impact of the steamboats of the 1930s on design and decor. The cycle invites listeners to veritable journey through precious stones to the Musée du Quai Branly, the British Museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Vitra Design Museum, before ending on a lighter note with *Picasso érotique*, presented by par Dominique Labbé, Chief Conservator of the French Museums.

As one of BRAFA's hallmarks, the general **decor** of the Fair, designed by the Volume Architecture firm, once again strives for an airy, suggestive atmosphere. The modernist, stripped-down entrance alludes to the *Factory* of Andy Warhol, with a cloud of 1500 light bulbs floating above an ethereal silver space. **In the exhibition space itself and in the restaurants, a variety of floral elements evoking the visual style of Japanese ikebana will combine to create an environment that suggests freshness and light.**

The 2014 Fair ended with a record of more than 55,000 visitors. A target for this year's 60th edition? *"Not really, we should not fall into the trap of making numbers the main objective",* replies Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke, President of BRAFA. *"Our wish, above all, is to be able to offer our exhibitors and our visitors a privileged opportunity for encounter; to ensure that our exhibitors do well and our visitors, of course as many as possible, leave satisfied. That is the challenge we must meet – that of quality, which we have made our credo and our guiding principle!"*

A little heads up: Admission will be free to anyone celebrating his or her 60th birthday between 24 January and 1 February 2015.

BRAFA – Brussels Art Fair – 24/01 - 1/02/2015

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www.brafa.be

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