

PRESS RELEASE

BRAFA 2016 – Flower power!

Say it with flowers ... After long months of preparation, Brafa 2016 will arrive in a burst of colour between 23 and 31 January 2016. Under the auspices of the Ghent Floralties, guest of honour at this 61st edition, the glass ceilings of Tour & Taxis will be turned into a greenhouse where various eras and artistic styles form a harmonious blend, like so many perfumes to seduce its visitors and guide them from one discovery to the next. A unique occasion to admire several millennia of artistic creation thanks to 137 renowned art galleries.

Brafa 2016 will host a record number of galleries - 137 in all, which is almost 10% more than in 2015 (126). They come from 17 different countries: Belgium (55); France (48); Switzerland (8); Germany (6); Great Britain (6); the Netherlands and Italy (3); Monaco (2); Austria, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, Russia and the USA (1). This increase in the number of exhibitors reflects a growing demand on the part of new participants that we were unable to meet in the past due to lack of space. The decision to move the brasserie to an adjacent external structure has given us the beginnings of a new aisle, thus gaining some 660 m² to accommodate around a dozen new stands. As a result, the entrance will be redesigned slightly, rearranging the reception space and orienting the visitors a bit differently so that they will enter the middle rather than the beginning of the building.

Among the 21 new galleries that will take part in the 2016 edition are **eight returnees** (**Alexis Bordes**, Paris: drawings and paintings from the 17th to the early 20th centuries / **Eric Coatalem**, Paris: French and Italian old master paintings, drawings and sculptures from the 17th to the 20th century / **De Jonckheere**, Geneva, Paris and London: Old Masters / **K. Grusenmeyer**, Brussels: Asian and tribal art – antiques and medieval / **Francis Janssens van der Maelen**, Brussels: 18th and 19th-century, Art Nouveau and Art Deco silverware / **Pascal Lansberg**, Paris: modern and contemporary art / **Galerie Perrin**, Paris: Furniture, works of art and paintings of the 17th, 18th and 19th century / **Michel Rooryck**, Kortrijk: 19th-20th century paintings, drawings, and sculptures), and **thirteen new participants** (**Albert Baronian**, Brussels: contemporary art / **Galerie Boulakia**, Paris – London: Impressionist, modern and contemporary paintings /

Burzio, London: Antique decorative arts with a focus on fine continental furniture, sculpture, textiles, ceramics and bronzes / **Jean-Christophe Charbonnier**, Paris: Japanese weaponry, armour and art objects / **Deletaille**, Brussels: traditional and pre-Columbian art / **Dierking Gallery**, Zurich: drawings, modern and contemporary art, Pre-Columbian and tribal art / **Frank Landau**, Frankfurt: 20th-century art objects and design / **Galerie Le Beau**, Brussels: 20th-century decorative arts and design / **Meessen De Clercq**, Brussels: contemporary art / **La Patinoire Royale**, Brussels: visual arts and design from the second half of the 20th century / **Günter Puhze**, Freiburg: archaeology / **Safari Gallery Inc.**, New York: archaeology / **Thomas Salis Art & Design**, Salzburg: art and design: 20th-century European art).

"We are delighted to be able to present such a list of participants in Brussels", stated Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke, President of Brafa.

"It represents an ideal combination of traditional exhibitors whose loyalty deserves mention and who have been the backbone of this event, while at the same time remaining open to prestigious new names that we are particularly proud to welcome. We look forward to this edition with great anticipation!"

A few general trends seem to be emerging for the 2016 edition.

The **archaeology section**, already rich in established specialists such as J. Bagot, Chenel, Cybèle, Roswitha Eberwein, David Ghezelbash, Gilgamesh, Harmakhis, Mermoz and Phoenix Ancient Art, is undoubtedly further reinforced by the arrival of the German Günter Puhze gallery and the American Safari Gallery Inc. (New York). The latter is one of the oldest art galleries in the United States (founded in 1946), which includes among its clientele museums such as the Metropolitan and the Louvre as well as major private collections. At Brafa it will exhibit a few of its rare Roman and Near Eastern objects. On the occasion of its first participation in the fair, the Belgian Deletaille will unveil a Lord Maya, an impressive terracotta from Alta Verapaz, the highlands of Guatemala, dating from AD 300-500.

The range of **Old Master paintings** on display will be enhanced by the De Jonckheere gallery, of Belgian origin and now based in Geneva, Paris and London. Alongside the masters of Flemish painting, whom they have exhibited for many years, their walls will also be adorned by works of more recent artists, such as René Magritte. A gallery that had impressed viewers in 2015 with a stand devoted exclusively to Russian artists, the Kunstberatung Zürich, now promises us a stand given over entirely to Old Masters. Definitely worth discovering, alongside the always well thought out exhibits of Eric Coatalem, Costermans, Jocelyne Crouzet, Douwes Fine Art, Jan Muller Antiques, Klaas Muller, Florence De Voldère and Floris van Wanroij.

Another traditionally strong suit of Brafa, the **tribal arts section** – comprising dealers such as Didier Claes, Pierre Dartevelle, Bernard Dulon, Yann Ferrandin, Jacques Germain, Galerie Monbrison, Serge Schoffel and Schoffel de Fabry – once again has fascinating surprises in store this year. Thus, Serge Schoffel has gathered series of exceptional objects exploring particular themes from within the age-old artistic traditions of Africa, Oceania and America. He will, most notably, be exhibiting an extremely rare 19th century Grebo mask (Liberia) representing an elephant, as well as a Maori sculpture of a Manaia dating from 18th century New Zealand).

Brafa has built its reputation partly on its predilection for **eclecticism**, for breaking down barriers between different specialities in favour of marrying different styles and eras. Axel Vervoordt, a loyal exhibitor at Brafa, stands as a pioneer in this domain, where he has made his mark worldwide. Nor will he be departing from his style this year, creating a dialogue among archaeological objects from different areas and periods, and the creations of contemporary artists such as Günther Uecker and Lucio Fontana.

Presents for the first time at Brafa, the trio composed of the Dierking (Zurich) / Frank Landau (Frankfurt) / Thomas Salis (Salzburg) galleries will unveil a much anticipated conceptual stand where fine furniture and works of the 20th and 21st centuries will be integrated into a display of African and Asian art. Sure to be a must for the 2016 edition!

While **Ancient art** continue to be widely represented at Brafa (to wit, the large section devoted to medieval and Renaissance art with exhibitors such as De Backker, De Pauw-Müller, Desmet, Mullany, Rainer Jungbauer), it is clear that modern and contemporary art is gaining ground each year, although the organizers ensure that a balance is maintained. In the latter area of speciality, the arrival of the Albert Baronian, Meessen De Clercq and Patinoire Royale galleries attest to the growing influence of contemporary art in Brussels, a city that has become the a key centre for this market.

Brafa is pleased to welcome the **Ghent Floralties** as its guest of honour in 2016, in recognition of this Belgian event of international renown first held in 1809, well before the birth of Belgium itself! The next edition of the Floralties will take place from 22 April to 1 May 2016 and will cover four different themes spread across four sites in the Arts Quarter in the centre of Ghent. The scenography it has designed for Brafa has been placed in the skilful hands of the Antwerp florist Mark Colle, who has come to be known for his bold designs for the fashion shows of Dries Van Noten, Jil Sander and Dior.

“The wintry floral creation by Mark Colle is a fine foretaste of the 2016 Ghent Floralties, where flowers and plans will engage in dialogue with sublime urban sites. The brand-new edition of the Ghent Floralties will, moreover, devote special attention for the first time this year to the inclusion and interpretation of flowers and plants in modern art installations. The Floralties are proud to be the guest of honour at the prestigious Brussels Art Fair in 2016: both eclectic events set great store by the finest quality and authenticity”, states Dirk De Cock, CEO of the event.

The overall decorative concept for Brafa marks the return of the talented architectural firm Volume Architecture, which will work closely this year with the guest of honour to create an atmosphere inspired by floral and land art.

The 2016 fair also marks the 10th anniversary of the partnership between Brafa and Delen Private Bank, a fruitful cooperation that has seen the partners grow and evolve side by side.

Equally fruitful but of more recent vintage is the competition open to students of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre (La Cambre Higher National School of Visual Arts), which has made it possible this year for the third time to create a unique and original motif for the carpets in the aisles. Come and discover the winning design....

Last but not least, the cycle of daily lectures known as the ‘Brafa Art Talks’ will this year again bring together a wide range of specialists from the art world, museum directors, conservators, collectors and experts. The talks will enable visitors to learn more about topics such as the collections and masterpieces of prestigious Ethnographic Museum of Geneva and the Egyptian Museum of Turin, the most valuable ancient coins (which happen to be kept right here in Brussels), carbon 14 dating techniques, and not forgetting a round table on the most appropriate subject of investing in art!

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