

BRAFA '15 – destination: art!

Brussels, Tour & Taxis – from 24 January to 1 February 2015

The 60th edition, 126 exhibitors including 51 Belgians and 75 from 15 different countries, with 12 new participants among them, 15,000 m² exhibition space, 9 lectures, thousands of art works covering nearly 4 millennia of artistic creation, as well as 1,500 LED light bulbs creating the light cloud at the entrance... All the ingredients are present to make Brafa 2015 a memorable fair. In each artistic discipline there are rare, authentic, precious and unexpected marvels, patiently assembled by the gallerists for presentation to the avid, curious gaze of the thousands of collectors and art lovers who are expected to attend.

The top international meeting of the art market each year, the Brafa (Brussels Art Fair) is eagerly awaited by many people, whether professionals or not, since the Brussels event offers a first indication of the health and mood of an art market that is currently undergoing enormous change, and that has become much more diverse in recent years. The great era of trading in galleries has given way to the major gatherings where art lovers can find numerous specialists in a given field gathered under one roof, as well as others who help keep their curiosity alive and can encourage them to turn their attention to other disciplines.

The internet and social networks today make possible an ultra-rapid dissemination of information about artists and their works, even though users must proceed with great caution.

In this symphony of different voices, it is a challenge to make oneself heard. The exhibitors at art fairs have got the message, as they seek ever more innovative ways from year to year to offer carefully designed, sophisticated stands that highlight the beauty of the artworks. At Brafa, they all have one thing in common: the need for the highest quality, which has come to be expected over the years as one of the hallmarks of this event on which the fair builds its reputation as well as its future. In order to further reinforce this essential feature, the organisers have this year set up a specialised laboratory where x-ray and thermoluminescence tests are made available to the experts responsible for examining the works on display – this is a first.

Here is a brief overview of a few remarkable works that, along the corridors of Brafa 2015, will harmoniously blend the various styles, eras and countries ...

Tribal art

- An exceptional plaque with the figure of a dignitary or of a young Oba (King), the Edo people, Nigeria, Kingdom of Benin, dating from the mid-16th / early 17th century (**Didier Claes** – stand no. 24).
- A statuette of Senufo representing a mother and her child, from the Ivory Coast, exhibited by **Pierre Dartevelle** (stand no. 111).

- A ceremonial shield from Ndoma, the Kikuyu people, Kenya, High Plateau region, exhibited by **Jacques Germain** (stand no. 82).
- Statue of an ancestor seated, the Téké people (Congo), displayed by Bernard Dulon (stand no. 91)
- **Serge Schoffel** (stand no. 17) has put together a thematic exhibition devoted to the Belgian artist Joseph Henrion (1936-1983) drawn principally from the artist's family's collection.

Old Masters

Numerous paintings by Flemish and Dutch old masters will come together on the walls of various galleries, including:

- *Venus and Adonis* (dating from 1605-1610) by Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625), exhibited by **Klaas Muller** (stand no. 15).
- *Portrait of a young child wearing a black dress* by the Dutch master Jan Claesz (1570-1618), exhibited by **Floris Van Wanroij** (stand no. 46).
- *A River landscape* on copper by Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601-1678); *The Flight into Egypt* by Lucas Gassel (circa 1480/1500-1570); a pair of landscapes by Isaac Van Oosten (1613-1661) exhibited by **Florence De Voldère**, whose stand (no. 98) will feature the city of Antwerp at the peak of its triumphant economic prosperity, around 1570.
- *A Wooded landscape with a vista and various birds* by Hans Savery the Younger (1589-1654), exhibited by Douwes Fine Art (stand n°62).

Belgian painters

Two exceptional oil paintings by James Ensor, both directly from private collections, will be on display at **Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke** (stand no. 92) and **Francis Maere Fine Arts** (stand no. 55). The first is titled *La Mort Coquette* [Wanton death] (1923) and the other is a *Still Life with Vegetables and a Parrot* (1920). A great supporter of the Latem School and of Belgian painters, **Oscar De Vos** (stand no. 26) brings several paintings of museum quality, including *The Horse-drawn cart* (1928) by Constant Permeke (1886-1952), *The Lovers* (1921) by Gustave De Smet (1877-1943) and *Deeske in the Fields* (1908) by Gustave Van de Woestyne (1881-1947). At the **Lancz Gallery** (stand no. 100), a delicate oil painting on canvas titled '*Les Pommes A*' [Apples A] by Rik Wouters and a fine set of smaller works by artists of the Belgian avant-garde (Floris Jespers, Karel Maes, Jules Schmalzigaug...) complete this carefully chosen sample of top Belgian painters. Alongside works of Panamarenko and Alechinsky, **Jos Jamar** (stand no. 61) also presents a remarkable series of etchings by James Ensor. Finally, **Whitford Fine Art** (stand no. 57) presents a collection of works by the abstract painter Joseph Lacasse, supplemented by works of the ZERO movement artist, Paul Van Hoeydonck.

Medieval art

Worth noting at **Elmar Robert Medieval Art** (stand no. 31) is a *Virgin and Child* in polychrome wood, probably from Cologne dated to the first half of the 14th century, and at **Mullany** (stand no. 110), a *Saint Agnes* with the original gilding and polychrome (Salzburg, circa 1420), both fine representations of medieval art, as well as an oil painting on panel representing the *Death of the Virgin* from the Master of the Eggelsberger Altar (Passau, circa 1481). Also noteworthy, at **De Backker Medieval Art** (stand no. 34), a Byzantine marble lintel from the 6th or 7th century, while Bernard de Leye (stand no. 86) is showing a regal from Nürnberg (circa 1600), originally from the Monastery of Berlaymont.

Finally, a unique example of 15th-century Florentine art: a folding beechwood table that can be admired at **Chiale Antiquariato** (stand no. 21).

Jewellery and gemology

Amateurs of ancient and designer jewellery will be well represented: at the stands of **Epoque Fine Jewels** (stand no. 80) they can admire a very rare Etruscan-style necklace signed by Carlo and Arthur Giuliano from the second half of the 19th century, and a rare and exceptional pair of 'girandole' earrings of gold, silver and diamonds (2nd half of the 18th century). In addition to a flexible white gold necklace and bracelet depicting a serpent whose head is adorned with a pear-shaped diamond and the eyes are of emerald cabochons (circa 1970), while **Chamarande** (stand no. 118) presents a set of 8 monumental allegorical sculptures in limestone on an ancient theme, originally from the Château of Izeghem, designed and made by the Bruges sculptor Jean-Robert Calloigne (1775-1830). The house of **Leysen** (stand no 65) and **BOGH-Art** (stand no 27) for their part, present contemporary creations in fine jewellery, some of which were made specially for Brafa! Finally, a great discovery: the works of jeweller Dickson Yewn, a native of Hong Kong, who will be exhibiting in Europe for the first time on the stand of **Galerie Lamy** (stand no. 120).

Archaeology

On display at **Phoenix Ancient Art** (stand no. 88) is a Greco-Roman table of bronze and silver with inlay (1st century BC – 1st century AD) and a posthumous portrait Greco-Roman portrait of Alexander the Great in black marble (1st c. AD). At **David Ghezalbash** (stand no. 81), a statuette of a bull in bronze and silver, with glass eyes (late Hellenistic period, 1st c. BC). **J. Bagot Arqueología** (stand no. 128) exhibits a series of Roman mosaics of the 3rd century BC and a Greek 'Pentathlon crater' vase from around 480 BC. **At the Galerie Harmakhis** (stand no. 74), an extremely fine pendant in the shape of a 'Ba' bird from the Ptolemaic era (305-30 BC) in cloisonné gold, lapis lazuli and turquoise. To be discovered at **Chenel** (stand no. 63) is an extremely rare marble relief representing a mule, originally from Rome, 1st century BC. – 1st century AD; at **Axel Vervoordt** (stand no. 70), a remarkable capital in sandstone with four carved faces, representing the Egyptian goddess Hathor, from the Ptolemaic era (332-30 BC); and, finally, at **Cybèle** (stand no. 96), an imposing sarcophagus cover from the 25th dynasty (751 BC), previously exhibited in 1970 at the Historical Museum of Rotterdam.

Turning to Pre-Columbian art, **Mermoz** (stand no. 2) is exhibiting a rare object depicting a kneeling priest, of beige limestone, from the Guastec culture (Mexico circa 1300-1500 AD) as well as a large sculpture representing Cihuateotl, goddess of women who died in childbirth, from the Veracruz culture (Mexico, circa 900-1300 AD).

Icons

Pause for a moment to discover a rare 17th-century icon of Saint Elijah, who is rarely represented in art, in a state of exceptional conservation at the **Brenske Gallery (stand no. 97)**,

Asian art

Along with delicate Japanese prints, the **Galerie Tanakaya** (stand no. 11) is presenting a highly refined 'Shibayama Kodansu' cabinet with drawers made of silver with delicate floral and bird motifs and pearl and ivory inlay from the Meiji era (19th century). At **Il Quadrifoglio** (stand no. 42), an

imposing 2-metre high altar in lacquered wood with ivory inlay, likewise from the Meiji era (19th century), is a work of great finesse and technical virtuosity.

The **Galerie Jacques Barrère** (stand no. 67) is exhibiting an extraordinary, complete set of 18 Luohan monks in lacquered stucco from China during the Tsing dynasty (17th century), marked by a great sense of freshness as regards their polychromy. The exhibit includes a tall (103 cm) and slender wooden sculpture of a horse from the Han dynasty (3rd century BC – 3rd century AD), a rare and particularly attractive example.

At **Eric Pouillot** (stand no. 105), your gaze will be drawn to a remarkable terracotta boat of substantial height (83 cm) from China, Han dynasty (25-220 AD) another extremely rare object of which fewer than 10 examples are currently known to exist.

Furniture and objets d'art of the 18th and 19th centuries

Set within a décor made up of a series of natural oak furnishings of the Regency period (Paris, circa 1710-1720) from the London residence of Sir Philip Sassoon, the **Galerie Steinitz** (no. 90) is presenting a pair of monumental cornet vases with the family crest of Gilles Le Brun (1667-1745), in hard-paste porcelain with 'Imari' decoration (China, Kangxi era, before 1705). **François Léage** (stand no. 68), the newest exhibitor at Brafa, features lacquer corner cupboards by Coromandel with Louis XV era varnish, and the **Galerie Tanakaya** (stand no. 11), an early 19th-century lacquer cabinet from the island of Ryuku (Japan). At **Costermans** (stand no. 32), 'Bonheur du jour', an refined oval piece of furniture by Charles Topinot, a late 18th-century master cabinetmaker in Paris of the Transitional era, the shape and marquetry of which (rosewood, sycamore, violet wood, maple, etc.) are of great delicacy and represent every day objects.

Antiquarian books

The **Sanderus Antiquariaat**, (stand no. 122) bookstore is showing a 12-volume series of large Blaeu atlases dating from 1667 as well as a coloured manuscript map on vellum from Messina, Sicily, dated 1640. Also to be noted at the **Librairie Signatures** (stand no. 12) is an autograph letter by Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, which mentions Benjamin Franklin.

Sculpture

An exhibition devoted to Olivier Strebelle can be seen at the **Galerie Martel-Greiner** (stand no. 47). A large decorative fountain by Raphaël Peyre (1872-1949) is on display at **Univers du Bronze** (stand no. 54). At **Victor Werner** (stand no. 3), be sure not to miss the superb panther by Alberic Colin, exceptional for its small size, as well as a scale model of the elegant sculpture of 'La Victoire' by Victor Rousseau dating from 1911, the monumental version of which reigns from the cupola of the library of the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels. **Marc Heiremans** (stand no. 64) presents a retrospective of works created by the Belgian woman sculptor Lieve De Pelsmaeker (1936-1984), including some of the 'Sonomobiles' that have made her famous.

Faïence, porcelain and ceramics

Worth mentioning in the area of Asian porcelain is a figure of a Dutch woman (Dutch East India Company, China, 18th century) at the **Galerie Lamy** (stand no. 120), and a vase representing the Eight Immortals (China, 17th century) at **Marc Michot** (Pavillon de la Céramique, stand no. 29).

Paintings

Kasimir Malevitch (1879-1935), Vassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and Tamara de Lempicka (1898-1980) dominate the **Kunstberatung** stand (no. 28), where the works of other Russian painters can also be seen, including Grigory Gluckmann (1898-1973). To celebrate its 30th anniversary, the **Galerie Boon** (stand no. 77) has put together a substantial selection of French 19th and 20th-century painters, including Cassigneul, Boudin and Helleu, as well as Delvaux, Van Dongen, etc. Worth noting is a monumental *Vue de Venise* [View of Venice] by Jean-Baptiste Van Moer (1819-1884) dated 1884. Great figures from the North and the South will be juxtaposed among one of the new participants this year, **Die Galerie** (stand no. 131), which is offering a selection of CoBrA painters (Asger Jorn, Karel Appel, Corneille, K.O. Götz), and **Alexis Pentcheff** (stand no. 52), which is paying tribute to southern painters via an exhibition titled *L'esprit du Midi* ('Spirit of the South').

In addition to exhibiting a series of Andy Warhol drawings, the **Galerie des Modernes** (stand no. 72) has split its stand up into 'cabinets' dedicated to the Impressionists, the Cubists, the Surrealists and the 'Ecole de Paris'. A very rare work by Cy Twombly, made for Serge Vandercam, dominates the stand of **Samuel Vanhoegaerden** (no. 51). To be discovered at Stern Pissaro (stand no. 30) is a highly elegant portrait of Madame Van der Velde, 1920-23, by Kees van Dongen as well as a still life by Severini.

Twentieth-century Decorative Arts and Design

At **Carpenters Workshop** (stand no. 25), the stand is dominated by a pair of armchairs, titled 'It is yesterday', made in 2011 by the American artist Wendell Castle. Another object to be discovered, the 'Director's Desk' by Erwin Wurm, made in 2014 of blonde wood and steel and that draws its inspiration from the door of a wardrobe. At **Robertaebasta** (stand no. 39), the visitor's attention is drawn to an extraordinary cabinet by Eugène Printz made in collaboration with Jean Dunand out of rosewood and bronze panels, France, circa 1940. At **Futur antérieur** (stand no. 14), one is struck by a double-sided desk-bookcase set in lacquered wood, plexiglass and metal, a one-of-a-kind object made for Casa Fontana by one of the most renowned Italian designers of the 1950s, Ico Parisi, Lake Como, 1967.

A lovely bronze Art Deco horse by Marie-Louise Simard from the 1930s, whose original ornamentation was made using pastilles of red and black lacquer, also known as the 'Cheval de Troie' [Trojan horse] captures the visitor's attention at **Galerie Mathivet** (stand no. 60). Finally, three inlaid tables by the famous Belgian designer Ado Chale can be admired at **Galerie Pierre Mahaux** (stand no. 20).

Clocks

Jacques Nève (stand no. 5) is displaying an object with an astonishing history that merits a visit: a scientific and observation chronometer (1913) made by the famous French watchmaker Louis Leroy, the timepiece was used in experiments with radio transmission and thus played a part in sparing the Eiffel Tower from proposed demolition during the First World War. At **La Pendulerie** (stand no. 130), a magnificent Louis XVI style 'Petit Planétaire' (circa 1785) by Antide Janvier, 'Royal Clockmaker' in Paris in 1784, is worthy of note.

Textiles and carpets

An interesting selection of Tibetan carpets to be discovered at **N. Vrouyr** (stand no 102).

Curiosities

A very fine Celtic votive head of a man from between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD, as well as a scale model in bone of the sadly famous guillotine used during the French Revolution, late 18th-early 19th century await you at stand no. 114 of Finch & Co. At **Dario Ghio** (stand no. 9) features a spectacular wax sculpture from the second half of the 17th century, titled *Study of Human Decomposition*, by Gaetano Giulio Zumbo, who worked for Louis XIV and at the court of the Medici. And to finish, at the **Porfirius Kunstammer** (stand no. 123), a late 16th-century cabinet from Augsburg is a must-see, its exceptional marquetry depicting hunting scenes, landscapes and romantic ruins.

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From 24 January to 1 February 2015, between 11 am and 7 pm; evening opening on 29 January until 10 pm

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