

Press release



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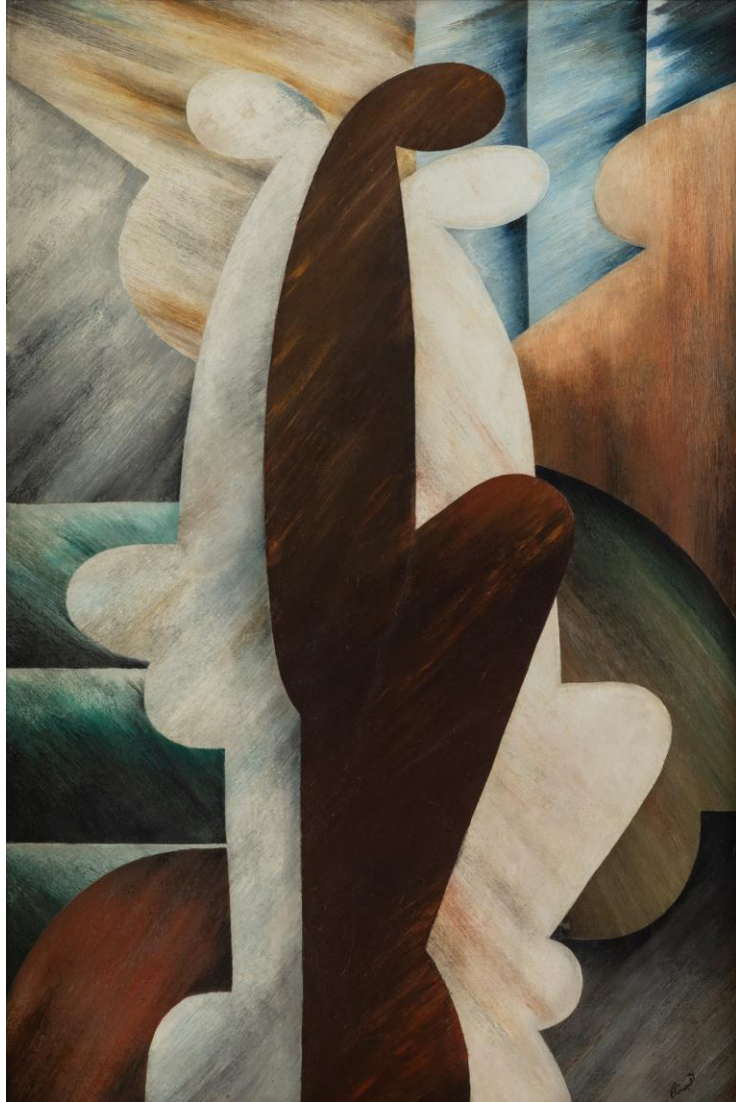
Active for more than 25 years in the art world, Virginie Devillez is recognized as an expert and dealer in Belgian and international art based in Brussels. Recently, she has sold works by Anna Boch to the Musée d'Orsay (Paris) and Mu.ZEE (Ostend), by Marthe Donas to the Centre Pompidou (Paris), and by Evelyne Axell to the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (Brussels).

She holds a Doctorate from the Université libre de Bruxelles (2001), published under the title *Le Retour à l'Ordre. Art et Politique en Belgique (1918-1945)* and awarded the Suzanne Tassier Prize by the Royal Academy of Belgium. Curator at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium from 2001 to 2013, Virginie Devillez was the project manager of the Magritte Museum, inaugurated in 2009. She was simultaneously a member of the Acquisition Committee of the Musée d'Ixelles.

Virginie Devillez then managed internationally renowned contemporary art galleries (Daniel Templon, Micheline Szwajcer) before joining Sotheby's, where she worked as an expert in Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary Art from 2016 to 2023. At Sotheby's, she was responsible for the sale of a large number of works by René Magritte and Belgian collections. Virginie Devillez is also a member of the René Magritte Authentication Committee, a research associate at the Université libre de Bruxelles and an independent curator, including for the Anna Boch exhibition at the Ostend and Pont-Aven Museums (2023-2024). She is currently curating a René Magritte exhibition at the Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence (2028).

VIRGINIE DEVILLEZ
· FINE ART ·

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Pierre-Louis Flouquet (1900-1967), *Féminités*, oil on canvas, 125 x 87 cm, ca. 1923-1925.

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BRAFA ART FAIR
25 January- 1 February 2026

BOOTH 48

In January 2026, the gallery will exhibit for the first time at **BRAFA Art Fair**, where it will present a selection of artists including Georges Lemmen, James Ensor, Rik Wouters, Victor Servranckx, Pierre-Louis Flouquet, René Magritte, Paul Delvaux, Gustave De Smet and Jean Brusselmans.

Excerpt from the BRAFA Art Fair press release, September 2025

19 new galleries for a growing fair

BRAFA will celebrate its 71st edition in January 2026, continuing its steady growth with 19 new dealers, carefully selected by the Board of Directors, joining the fair. Nearly half of these new galleries are Belgian or have an exhibition space in Belgium. The others come from France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, United-Kingdom, Brazil and the United States.

The **Antiques** and **Old Masters** section of BRAFA will be enhanced this year by Petworth located **Vagabond Antiques** (UK), whose founder Joe Chaffer has a rich collection of sculptures, paintings and objects dating from the second century AD to the nineteenth century. Also joining the list of participants in the field of **ancient art** are **Arte-Fact Fine Art** (BE), a gallery specialising in Old Master paintings (BE), and **Pelgrims de Bigard** (BE), renowned for its expertise in fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century Flemish paintings. **Carlucci Gallery** (IT), located in the prestigious Via del Babuino in the heart of Rome, will be exhibiting paintings by Old Masters, antique furniture and sculpture at the next edition of the fair.

Amongst the exhibitors specialising in decorative art, BRAFA will now include **unforget Decorative Arts** (BE), a Brussels-based gallery devoted to twentieth-century decorative art, with a particular focus on post-war design, furniture and iconic glass and metal creations. For its first participation, the gallery will be presenting Murano glass, mirrors and bronzes by Line Vautrin, as well as key pieces of French, Italian and Belgian design. In the same category, **Galerie Haesaerts-le Grelle** (BE) will be offering an overview of the decorative arts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as a sample of Arts and Crafts production through works by W.A.S. Benson, Liberty and Co, and William Morris.



Virginie Devillez Fine Art : René Magritte (Lessines 1896-1967 Brussels), *Le Prince charmant*, 1948. Gouache on paper 37 x 46 cm. Signed lower left 'Magritte'

Virginie Devillez Fine Art (BE) will also be joining the ranks of BRAFA exhibitors in **modern art** section. In addition to bringing together works by major 20th-century painters such as René Magritte, Pierre-Louis Flouquet, and Gustave De Smet, her distinctive focus lies in highlighting women artists, long overlooked in mainstream narratives, by giving them greater visibility.

At the crossroads between **modern and contemporary art**, visitors will be able to discover treasures from **Pron** (FR), a Parisian gallery which will be presenting ceramics by Jean Cocteau and Fausto Melotti, glass sculptures by Max Ernst and Pablo Picasso, paintings by the Belgian artist Gommaar Gilliams, and tapestries by Maurizio Donzelli. Another new exhibitor specialised in modern and contemporary art is **Beck & Eggeling International Fine Art** (DE). Dr. Ute Eggeling and Michael Beck founded their gallery in 1994. They offer works by major names from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as well as by emerging contemporary artists. The gallery is highly regarded both in Germany and internationally.



Maisonjaune Studio : Ingo Maurer (Germany, 1932-2019), *Hana Chandelier* (Uchiwa collection), 1970s. Bamboo, paper

Beck & Eggeling International Fine Art : Manolo Valdés (Valencia, 1942), *Perfil sobre fondo azul*, 2016-2017. Collage, mixed media on canvas 122 x 93 cm

Almine Rech (BE/FR/UK/USA/CN/MC/CH), a key figure on the international contemporary art scene, will be amongst the galleries exhibiting at BRAFA 2026, as will **Galerie Greta Meert** (BE), an iconic Brussels-based gallery that has significantly contributed to establishing contemporary art in Belgium. In the same section, the **Mulier Mulier Gallery** (BE) will be exhibiting a selection of works by Panamarenko. BRAFA is also delighted to welcome **Martos Gallery** (US), a New York-based gallery. It will be presenting a series of works by Keith Haring, of whom it is a world-renowned expert. **Martins&Montero** (BR/BE) will also be joining the contemporary art section of the fair 2026 edition. The gallery runs exhibition venues in São Paulo and Brussels.

In terms of **design**, visitors will be able to discover **Maisonjaune Studio** (FR) for the first time at the fair, offering furniture and objects from the 1950s to the present day, as well as **Laurent Schaubroeck** (BE), great enthusiast of rare pieces by Brazilian, American, and Japanese designers from the mid-20th century. **MassModernDesign** (NL) specialises in furniture that has marked the history of design and objects of true historical significance.

FERNAND KHNOPFF

The Belgian painter Fernand Khnopff (1858–1921) is regarded as one of the most refined and enigmatic masters of European Symbolism. For BRAFA Art Fair, Virginie Devillez Fine Art presents one of his most intimate and distinctive landscapes. Bruges and Fosset are two central themes in Khnopff's work: his youthful years in Bruges and summer holidays in Fosset had a profound impact on the artist's personality. He translated these impressions into a highly personal figurative language. It is not the depiction of reality that takes precedence, but rather its sublime and poetized memory. *À Fosset. L'entrée du village ou Le pont de Fosset* (At Fosset. The Entrance to the Village or The Bridge of Fosset) is quite exceptional in its dimensions, ranking among the largest landscapes Khnopff ever painted. He is thought to have executed it from a photograph, as a contemporary postcard seems to correspond point for point to the state of nature depicted in the painting: the trees are the same size, only the angle of view appears slightly altered and cropped. *À Fosset. L'entrée du village* also stands out for its remarkable use of color: warm ochre underlayers emphasize certain compositional elements, revealing a carefully constructed vision in which every tree, house, and path is deliberately placed. Mauve and lilac tones bathe the scene in an unreal light, blending impressionistic touches in the foliage with the static presence of the architecture. *À Fosset. L'entrée du village* remains arguably Khnopff's most Symbolist Fosset landscape, its chromatic harmonies recalling the work of Gustav Klimt, as well as Paul Sérusier, Maurice Denis, and William Degouve de Nuncques.



Fernand Khnopff, *À Fosset. L'entrée du village ou Le pont de Fosset*, oil on canvas, 46.5 x 65,5 cm, 1897.
© Photo Vincent Everarts

RIK WOUTERS

The work of the sculptor and painter Rik Wouters (1882–1916) demonstrates an uncommon vitality. He displayed a prodigious activity over a career spanning less than ten years. Wouters was profoundly inspired by James Ensor, whose bust he would later sculpt, and by Paul Cézanne. From the French artist, his true master of inspiration, he learned the study of color, used in its full intensity and confronted by form to preserve its purity. In 1908 Rik Wouters modeled his first dressed female sculpture, *Attitude*, a portrayal of his eternal muse, his wife Nel. Wouters explored new spatiality, freedom of movement and construction of form. Poised between grace and quiet determination, *Attitude* captures more than a moment in movement — it carries the very story of its own making. In 1912, Rik Wouters signs a contract with brand-new Galerie Georges Giroux in Brussels, this one orders for additional bronze casts of his sculptures, including *Attitude*. Following the artist's death, his wife Nel extended this contract, until it was terminated in 1932. After that date, she obtained the exclusive right to cast bronzes from the plaster she retrieved from Giroux. From 1932 onwards, Nel produced six bronze examples (all by Verbeyst), of which four were complete and two were incomplete, missing a fold of the skirt. The only plaster available to Nel broke around 1952, which explains why later casts show this peculiarity. The version of *Attitude* presented by Virginie Devillez Fine Art is unique, as it is a rare edition with the complete skirt.



Rik Wouters, *Attitude*, bronze, 91 x 53 x 52 cm, 1908.
(from the Tony Herbert Collection)
© Photo Vincent Everarts

AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

Before moving to Paris in 1906, the Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani (1884–1920) received his artistic training in Italy. During these formative years, he developed the technical foundations that he would later transform into his own distinctive artistic language. The drawing *Femme nue s'appuyant sur l'avant-bras gauche* (Three-quarter nude woman, leaning on left forearm), predates the famous nudes that Modigliani would create a few years later, yet it already displays many of their characteristic features. It highlights the artist's inventive approach, showing how he reinterpreted the feminine ideal with his own unmistakable style. In his work, nudes displayed Modigliani's greatest originality in composition, following in the footsteps of Edgar Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec, who freely experimented with cropping, bird's-eye or low-angle views, oblique perspectives, and distortions. *Femme nue s'appuyant sur l'avant-bras gauche* embodies the defining features of Modigliani's major female nudes: almond-shaped eyes, exaggerated volumes, a sense of serenity and sensuality, and a pose entirely free from obscenity. One can still discern his admiration for Cézanne, whose major retrospective he attended in Paris in 1907. From Cubism, he retained a certain geometric rigor. Modigliani's sculptural practice and his interest in non-European art are also evident in the softly rendered, stylized face, structured around an elongated nose.



Amedeo Modigliani, *Femme nue s'appuyant sur l'avant-bras gauche*, graphite and greasy pencil on paper, 43 x 26,7 cm, ca. 1910. (from the Paul Alexandre Collection)
© Photo Vincent Everarts

EDGARD TYTGAT

Edgard Tytgat (1879–1957) is a multifaceted artist who spent most of his life in Brussels and is best known for developing a style entirely his own. In the 1920s, Tytgat embraced a deeply personal form of Expressionism, strongly inspired by folk art. A passionate admirer of music, theatre, and the circus, he drew from these worlds to shape his visual language. Each of his paintings tells a story — his art remained resolutely narrative and illustrative. During this period, Tytgat exhibited at the Galerie Le Centaure in Brussels, a time marked by artistic stability and the support of several patrons. In 1927, Tytgat painted *Réunion clandestine du tiers* (Clandestine Meeting of the Third), partly a self-portrait, containing references to his personal life and the artistic environment. The work humorously recalls an episode in the brief existence of Les Neuf (1926–1928), an initiative founded by lawyer Frans Thijs and several patrons — including Thomas Braun, Max Gevers, and Henry Le Boeuf — to promote nine contemporary Belgian artists: Hippolyte Daeye, Gustave De Smet, Oscar Jespers, Willem Paerels, Constant Permeke, Frits Van den Berghe, Gustave Van de Woestijne, Ramah, and Tytgat himself. But numerous internal disagreements soon emerged in the group. Thus, in June 1927, Tytgat humorously painted the secret meeting of three members of Les Neuf; in the painting, Daeye, in suit and spats and carrying his ever-present umbrella, is brought in by Van de Woestijne's wife to the Academy of Mechelen, where her husband served as the director. The latter is depicted with a glass of liqueur in his hand, while Tytgat, who was “director of nothing at all”, portrayed himself barefoot.

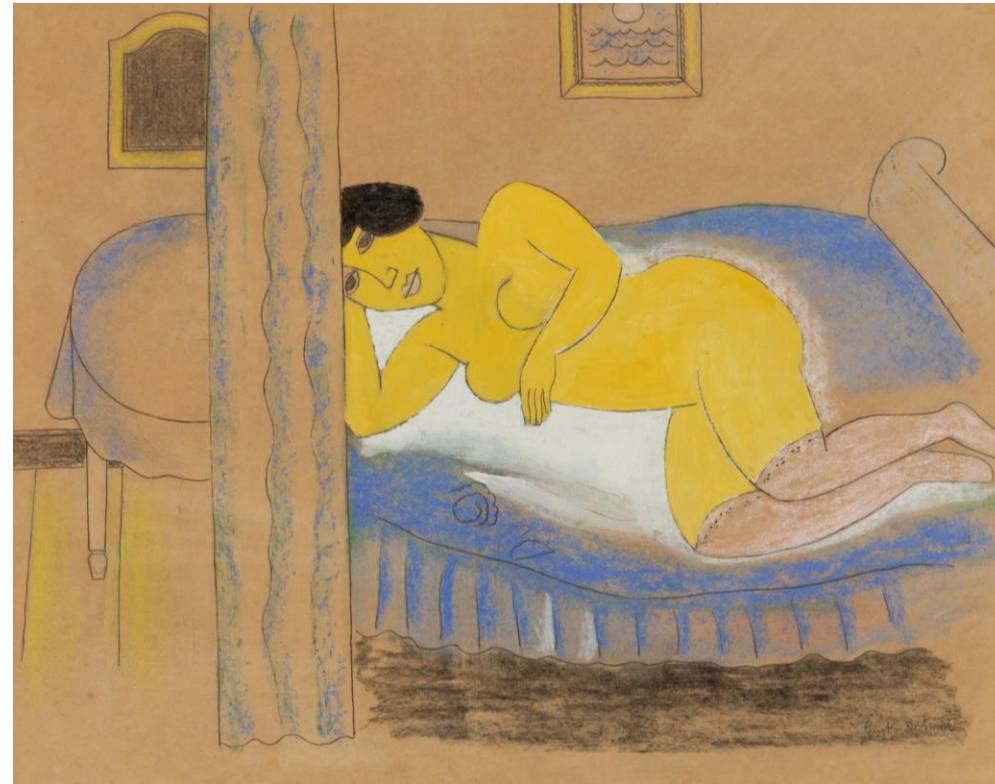


Edgard Tytgat, *Réunion clandestine du tiers*, oil on canvas, 81 x 100 cm, 1927.
(from the Tony Herbert Collection)

© Photo Vincent Everarts

GUSTAVE DE SMET

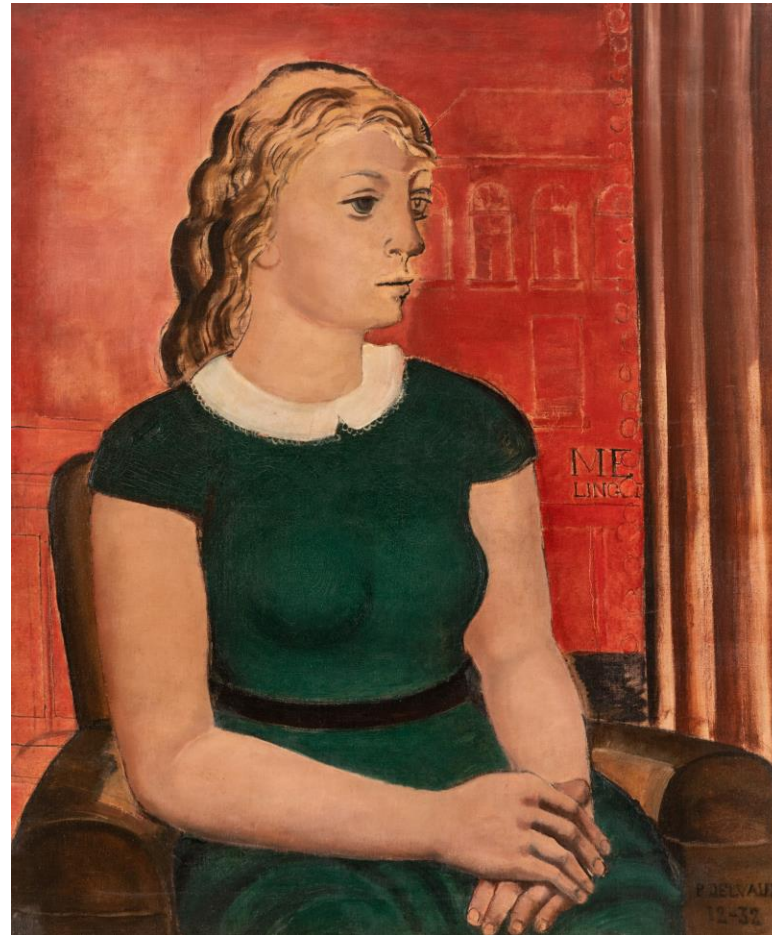
Gustave De Smet (1877-1943) was a key figure in the second generation of the Sint-Martens-Latem School. The early compositions of De Smet reveal the influence of Émile Claus who led him toward an emotional luminism grounded in the interplay of color and form. His Dutch experience during the war-years proved essential because here he encountered Expressionism, through the Cubist Henri Le Fauconnier, as well as Futurism, and, above all, the German Expressionists. At the beginning of the 1920s, De Smet's art moved toward abstraction. Geometric lines dominated the scene. Over these years De Smet evolved toward a new style. His canvases were no longer populated with simple rural scenes, but with urban subjects. Men and women in moments of lighthearted amusement at the circus, cabaret or at a restaurant. The work on paper *Nu couché* (Reclining Nude) certainly belongs to a series of drawings and canvases he created in 1928, all depicting women — often nudes or close-up studies. Spatial depth tends to vanish; the images appear flat and two-dimensional. The woman depicted in *Nu couché* turns toward the viewer, supporting her head with one hand while her body lies uncovered in serene vulnerability.



Gustave De Smet, *Nu couché*, pencil, pastel and oil on paper, 37 x 43,5 cm, 1928.
(from the Tony Herbert Collection)
© Photo Vincent Everarts

PAUL DELVAUX

The beginnings of Paul Delvaux's (1897-1994) artistic journey were marked by numerous explorations that would eventually lead him to his own personal pantheon: antiquity, death, women, trains, and the world of Jules Verne. After a brief period at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels, he continued his training as a self-taught artist. Without a studio, he drew inspiration from his everyday surroundings, painting from life outdoors to capture the immediacy of light. Gradually, the human figure became the central focus of his work. Toward the end of the 1920s, Delvaux discovered Pablo Picasso's work. The connection between the two artists lies in their shared interest in the classical academic model, emphasizing compositional balance and visual harmony. *Portrait de femme* (Portrait of a woman) reflects Picasso's early-1920s period of moderation and prosperity, during which he practiced a "Retour à l'Ordre" — a revival renewed classicism following the radical experiments of the avant-gardes. In this portrait, Delvaux adopts the monumentality and classical poise of Picasso's female figures, while already hinting at his forthcoming encounter with Surrealism and René Magritte. The red curtain—a quintessential Magrittean motif—combined with the lightly sketched house in the background, introduces a subtle sense of strangeness, leaving the viewer unsure whether the seated figure is indoors or outdoors, an ambiguity reinforced by the uniform reddish backdrop. *Portrait de femme* thus anticipates the Surrealism that Delvaux would fully embrace in 1935.



Paul Delvaux, *Portrait de femme*, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm, 1932.

© Photo Vincent Everarts

RENÉ MAGRITTE

The Surrealist artist René Magritte (1898–1967), within his extensive body of work, went in 1948 through a phase known as the “Période vache”, marked by a deliberately crude style and grotesque subjects. Magritte alternated freely between gouache and oil, creating no visual distinction across the two media. He revisited earlier themes and redirected them through bold brushwork and deliberate distortions. The jubilation of the “Période vache” was short-lived. André Breton and his circle detested these works, and the press largely ignored them. Magritte found himself standing alone against a united front of critics, intellectuals, collectors, and dealers. Magritte created two ‘vache’ versions of *Le Prince charmant* (The Prince Charming), playful and vividly colored: one belonged to his friends Louis Scutenaire and Irène Hampir, and is now held by the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium; the other is the one we are presenting here. Both “vache” versions adopt a deliberately fauvist style, with bold yellows and reds and energetic brushstrokes bringing the veiled bird to life. Crowning the bird’s head is a tiny fairytale castle, further blending the whimsical and the absurd. The image brims with irony, fusing the Prince — embodied by the bird — and the castle into a single, inseparable entity. The veil that the Prince wears also hints at the Princess, adding yet another twist. In this way, Magritte crafts a humorous, imaginative image that tells an entire story in a single frame.



René Magritte, *Le Prince charmant*, gouache on paper, 37 x 46 cm, 1948.
© Photo Vincent Everarts

JEAN BRUSSELMANS

The painter Jean Brusselmans (1884–1953), who spent most of his life in Dilbeek, near Brussels, remained dedicated to his art, producing a remarkably diverse body of artworks. From 1920 until his death in Dilbeek, Brusselmans painted Flemish Brabant landscapes, still lifes, and rigid, highly organized compositions. Despite the influence of the French Impressionist and of Fauvism, it is almost impossible to trace specific influences in Brusselmans' work. Depth was irrelevant, while the size of each object occupied a deliberate and carefully measured place. His painting technique was also unique: overpainting — together with the use of sand and plaster mixed into the paint — creates a visible trace of his process. Brusselmans embraced a visual language that was non-academic and stylized, a concise and pitiless realism, somewhat like the icy winter depicted in *Neige en Brabant* (Snow in Brabant). It was a subject he explored repeatedly from 1936 until 1950. Brusselmans was a very specific landscape painter; his gaze rarely extended beyond what he could see with his own eyes, sometimes simply from his window. Paradoxically, despite the title and the snow clearly suggesting a cold and merciless winter, the sky is an assemblage of warm colors: red, yellow, ochre. These are not colors normally associated with winter, for which cooler tones would usually be preferred. Other brushstrokes in the painting echo the rust-red of the sky, tree trunks, and branches. Life goes on, even in the coldest period, suggested by the presence of small birds animating the frozen landscape.



Jean Brusselmans, *Neige en Brabant*, oil on canvas, 82,5 X 99 cm, 1950.
(from the Tony Herbert Collection)
© Photo Vincent Everarts

Practical informations

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BRAFA Art Fair

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