

COLLECTORS GALLERY

Brafa 2023 | Stand #10
Press Release

COLLECTORS GALLERY at BRAFA ART FAIR

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Brussels Expo Heysel

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About the Collectors Gallery

In 2005, Betty De Stefano founded the Collectors Gallery in Brussels' Sablon neighbourhood. Housed in a distinctive Brussels-style, 19th century corner townhouse, the gallery exclusively specialises in 20th and 21st century jewellery and wearable artworks by such artists and designers as Pol Bury, Sophia Vari, Louise Nevelson, Giorgio Facchini, Georg Jensen, Vivianna Torun Bülow-Hübe, Line Vautrin, Ettore Sottsass, Fernand Demaret, Claude Wesel, etc.

“ Bask in Collectors Gallery's atmosphere where Glenn Sestig's signature sleek architecture plays on sophistication with a laid back approach and alluringly highlights the collection on show. ”

Booth Design by Glenn Sestig
www.glennsestigarchitects.com

Brafa 2023

Jewellery by artist and Designers

We will present a selection of jewellery and artworks by the above-mentioned international artists. These pieces fall under the heading of “wearable art”.

After 1945, artists started surveying the boundary between an art object and a piece of jewellery. Seeking the limits between the two, the human body as an interface between the two disciplines.

Brafa honours Art Nouveau

The sheer scale of this artistic movement was an inspiration in the arts and in countless other fields through the use of colours, composition, but also innovative techniques.

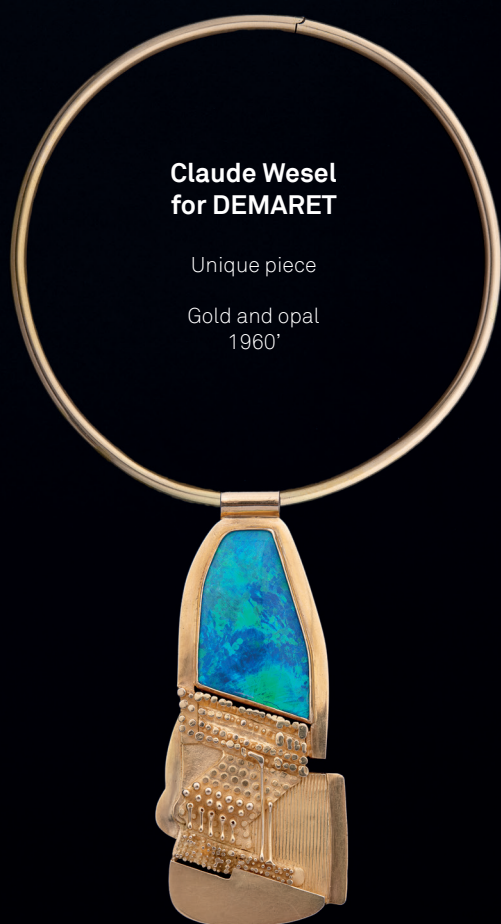
In a tribute to the optimistic spirit of the early 20th century, when innovative techniques – particularly botanical research – were paving the path to the future, the Collectors Gallery invites you to discover a magnificent garden of Botanical Didactic models manufactured in that period by the German company R. Brendel.





Pol Bury
"Sphères"

18ct gold kinetic bracelet | 1985 (Edition Artcurial)
With original box and certificate



Claude Wesel
for DEMARET

Unique piece

Gold and opal
1960'

Highlighting Belgian jewellery artists and designers

Since its participation in 2022, the Collectors Gallery has been promoting the work of Belgian jewellery designers spearheaded by goldsmith Fernand Demaret.

For the 2023 edition, the gallery will be presenting the works of Claude Wesel, who is regarded as one of the most accomplished and productive goldsmiths of his generation.

Claude Wesel (Brussels 1942- 2014)

Claude Wesel trained at the prestigious Maredsous Abbey School from 1959 to 1961, where he was a student of sculptor Félix Roulin and painter Marcel Warrand.

From 1963 to 1969, he worked in the Demaret workshop. In 1970, he opened an independent studio along with fellow goldsmiths Bernard François and Michel Louwette.

Claude Wesel also used the lost wax technique. Gradually, he moved away from the Demaret style to develop what he termed a “bio-mechanical style” and started incorporating rubber, Plexiglas and wood.

Constantly researching new materials and finding new ways of handling them to fuel his insatiable creative urge, he showed very little interest in stones.

He defines his creations in these terms: ‘Putting technique at the service of art through my techniques and art at the service of technique through my inspiration... such is the goal that I have set myself in my role of man and artist.’



Claude Wesel
“Lame”

Unique piece

Plexi, 18ct gold
and silver
1983



Claude Wesel
“Maya”

2004
18ct yellow gold and coral
15.7 x 1.6 cm (pendant)
Unique piece
Provenance: Claude Wesel's
estate with certificate
Literature: Belgian Modernist
Jewellery,
Ed Collectors Gallery
pp. 50-51

The Maredsous School

With its Maredsous School, Belgium stood tall amidst the international avant-garde of jewellery in the 1960s and 1970s.

While Belgian jewellers and designers never wanted to be associated with a movement, it is obvious that their education brought them together, despite themselves, in a style that today can be described as the “Maredsous School”.

The broad lines of this style of jewellery prioritises metalwork over stone, which remains anecdotal. The metal is crushed, pleated and printed. Lost wax casting reigns supreme. In their approach, the followers of this style are all extremely rigorous insofar as meticulousness is the key requirement for small-scale work. The advanced technicality and abstract nature of the motifs express, in spite of themselves, a certain “masculinity” far removed from the romanticism of certain periods.

Claude Wesel's words perfectly encapsulate the approach: ‘...isn't genuine creativity about developing ideas rather than rejecting the achievements of the past? Just being ahead of those who are behind.’



Sophia Vari
“Artémis” brooch/pendant

1990
 Ebony and 18ct gold
 H 8 x W 7 cm
 Limited edition of 6 + 2 EA,
 marked: Vari 5/6
 Provenance: the artist's studio



Sophia Vari
“MATERNITE 2”

2007
 Material: bronze patine
 Dimensions: l 20 x p 19 x h 104 cm
 Edition of 6 and 2 AP
 Edition 2/6

The wonderful everlasting garden
of the Botanical Didactic



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In a tribute to the optimistic spirit of the early 20th century, when innovative techniques – particularly botanical research – were paving the path to the future, the Collectors Gallery invites you to discover a magnificent garden of Botanical Didactic models manufactured in that period by the German company R. Brendel.

Originally used to teach science in European universities, these three-dimensional plants and flowers resemble jigsaw puzzles with interlocking pieces. Their large size means that they can be assembled, manipulated and admired from all angles, thus revealing the astounding complexity of nature's architecture.

These stunning and colourful objects, with their strange constituents, were originally intended as teaching materials. Over the years, they have become collectors' items, crossing the threshold from science to the art world. Their fantastic character and surreal dimensions give these naturalistic objects a strong poetic and oneiric power, turning them into genuine sculptures.

Today they are widely regarded as important and valuable artworks and are the focus of restoration and conservation programmes, as well as exhibitions. Just recently, an important collection from the University of Lyon was presented at the Palais de Tokyo as part of the exhibition *Reclaim the Earth* (15/4 - 4/9/2022).

About the R. Brendel Company

Robert Brendel founded the R. Brendel company in 1866 in Breslau (currently Wrocław in Poland).

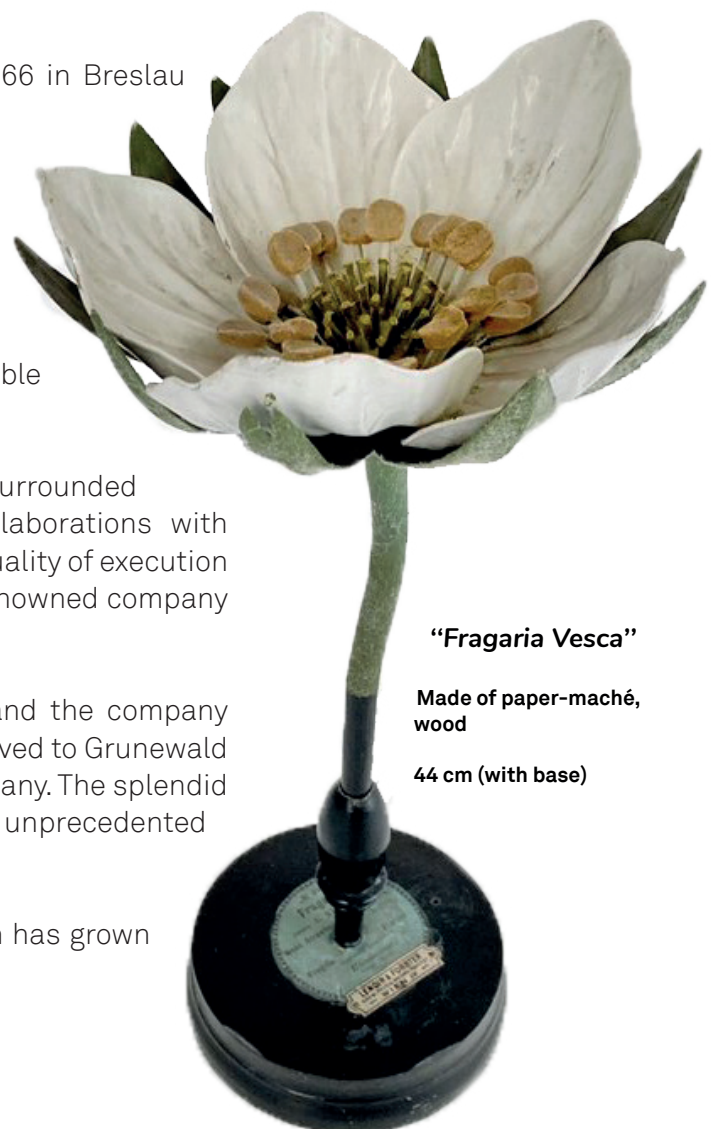
The factory specialised in the production of anatomy, mineralogy and botanical models for teaching purposes. Their botanical models were enlargements of plants and flowers made out of papier mâché, wood, cotton, bamboo, glass beads, feathers and gelatine. The models, which could be dismantled and reassembled, are remarkable for their precision and their overtly large size.

Since the launch of his company, Robert Brendel surrounded himself with qualified craftsmen and scientists. Collaborations with various renowned scientists, precision and the highest quality of execution have been the guiding principles of an internationally renowned company awarded with plethora of prizes from all over the world.

Later, Robert's son Reinhold helped his father to expand the company before taking it over upon his death in 1898. Reinhold moved to Grunewald near Berlin, where he further honed his knowledge of botany. The splendid quality of the models produced at that time reached an unprecedented level.

While in 1866, only 30 models were listed, the collection has grown over time until it reached more than 225 models in 1925.

The company permanently closed its doors in 1927.



"Fragaria Vesca"

**Made of paper-maché,
wood**

44 cm (with base)

>> PRESS KIT

Download the PDF of the Belgian Modernist Jewellery catalogue & HD Images of some of the jewellery presented at Brafa 2023

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