

# ANTIQUES TRADE gazette

THE ART MARKET WEEKLY

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## Save Gillows collection, say specialists

■ Museum closure puts future of furniture archive in doubt

Frances Allitt  
reports

**LEADING specialists in antique furniture have joined a campaign to preserve a touchstone collection of Gillows furniture ahead of multiple museum closures in Lancashire.**

Following a decision by Lancashire County Council to close the museum at Lancaster's oldest townhouse, Judges' Lodgings, concerns have arisen over the future of the collection of predominantly 18th and 19th century cabinetmaking housed there.

Susan E Stuart, author of the

monumental work *Gillows of Lancaster and London 1730-1840*, issued a call to action after hearing the council's plans in November.

"It's so depressing," she said.

"The Gillows collection is absolutely outstanding, the best in the country if not the world.

"There are questions about the future of pieces in the collection. Will they be consigned to a store room in another museum and never see the light of day again? Or will they be sold off?"

The museum closure, one of five proposed by the council to save £1.13m, is scheduled for April with the building expected to be redeveloped as a hotel.

Judges' Lodgings collection highlights both the quality of the Gillows craft and the longevity of the company.

Its current placement in the Grade I-listed Judges' Lodgings means the collection is located just across the street



## Monkey business

A MUSEUM in Switzerland has acquired this extraordinary monkey band automaton at an online-only auction conducted by **East Bristol Auctions**, in Hanham, Bristol.

The sale ended on the evening of December 28 when bidding had reached £16,000 (plus 18% buyer's premium).

A fabulous reminder of French engineering in the 19th century, the design features an orchestra of nine monkeys performing in a Georgian-style music room.

A total of 23 separate moving parts and a selection of tunes are controlled by complicated mechanism involving bellows, pipes and wires concealed with a two-part 5ft 10in (1.8m) rosewood cabinet. It has no maker's name but similar pieces by Alexandre Theroude were shown at international exhibitions in the third quarter of the 19th century.

It had been acquired by the vendor for £10,000 as part of the Roy Mickleburgh collection in nearby Bristol Auction Rooms in June 2003 and had since been partly restored.

Auctioneer Evan McPherson says: "It is very rare to see such a large example, and rarer still to find one in England. It deserves to be in a museum."

continued on page 4



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## international events

## Brussels' winter season

■ Belgian capital gears up to welcome international crowd for its big art and antiques fair



Anne Crane  
reports

**BIGGER** and with a clutch of new exhibitors, the **BRAFA Art Fair in Brussels** opens its doors for its latest staging next week, an early harbinger of the international fairs calendar with a nine-day run from January 23-31.

A new configuration to the entrance area of the Tour & Taxis exhibition hall, the early 20th century renovated industrial building where the fair is staged, has allowed the organising committee to fit in an extra 15 exhibitors, taking the number to 136 this year.

"For several years now, we have had a waiting list of galleries wishing to participate, whom we have unfortunately not been able to accommodate due to insufficient space," says **BRAFA** chairman Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke.

"It is partly to respond to that demand that we are trying out this formula this year, hoping that it will meet with success and the involvement of as many people as possible."

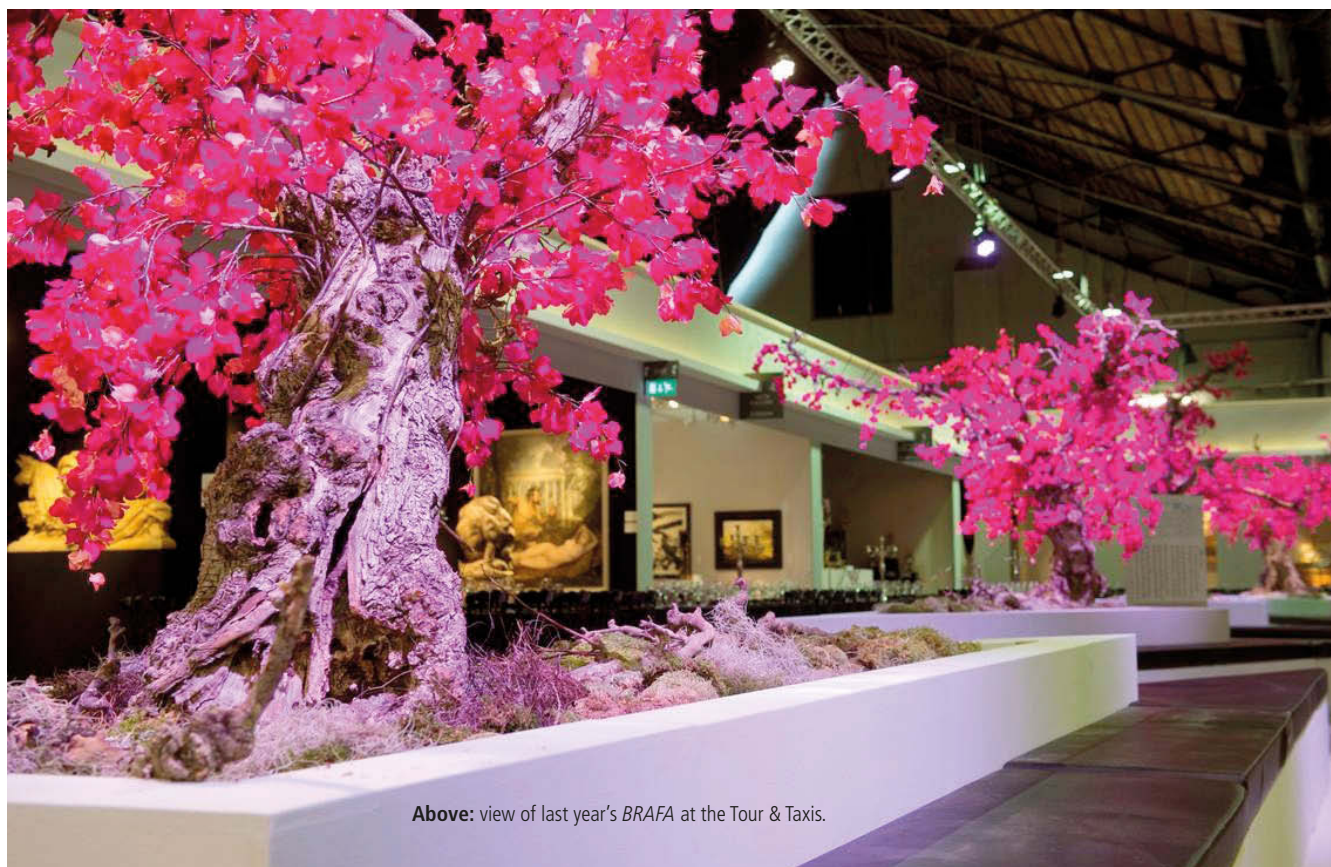
Several first-time exhibitors have joined this year. Like the majority of **BRAFA's** exhibitor list, most of the new names hail from Continental Europe.

Domestic and Parisian dealers head the list but there are also two new German names – Frank Landau from Frankfurt with 20th century design and Günter Puhze from Freiburg with antiquities – while the Dierking Gallery from Zurich bring tribal art and antiquities specialists Safani Fine Art arrive from New York.

**BRAFA** is multi-disciplinary. Having grown out of a traditional Belgian fair that was heavy on classic antiques such as early medieval works of art and furniture, these still have a strong presence but so too do Art Nouveau and Deco, modern paintings, antiquities and tribal art (a Brussels speciality with so many resident tribal dealers in the Sablon area of the capital).

The nine-day run is accompanied by the **BRAFA Art Talks**, the daily annual lecture series that is seen as part of any self-respecting fair's schedule these days.

■ brafa.be



Above: view of last year's **BRAFA** at the Tour & Taxis.

## BRAFA Art Fair – Antiquities in the spotlight

**ANTIQUITIES** is a field with an increasing presence at **BRAFA**. For 2016 around a dozen specialists will be coming to the Tour & Taxis and several other exhibitors include a selection of ancient material as part of stand displays that mix the old with the relatively recent. **ATG** spoke to three of these specialist dealers to ask them what attracted them to show at this fair.

### GÜNTER PUHZE

"I've known of **BRAFA** for 20 years and was on the vetting committee four or five years ago, but I visited last year and it was successful. I think it has improved," says Freiburg dealer Günter Puhze, explaining what prompted him to take a stand himself this year.

The gallery will be focusing on Egyptian and Classical antiquities for their visit to Brussels and one of the highlights of their display will be this Roman marble portrait head of a man of the Trajan era (early 2nd century AD).

The 10in (25.5cm) high carved head has an early 20th century provenance to a French private collection and will be priced at €48,000.



Roman marble portrait head from the Trajan era – for sale with Günter Puhze at **BRAFA**

### SAFANI FINE ART

"We chose **BRAFA** because we wanted to have a footprint in a European art fair that has a wide range of art periods and offerings," says Alan Safani of New York's Safani Fine Art, who make their debut this year. "**BRAFA** has gained international acclaim as a growing, exciting venue for exhibiting museum quality works of art that have been scrupulously vetted."

Asked what the gallery would be taking to Brussels, Safani says: "We will bring Classical and Egyptian art works as well as examples of armour."

"We will be offering objects for individuals who are unfamiliar with our field as well as masterpieces that enhance any collection."

Among the rare pieces on display will be a grey mottled granite figure of the warrior goddess Sekhmet (**above right**), depicted as a lioness, which carries a seven-figure price tag. The 15in (38cm) high carving which dates from the New Kingdom, XVIII dynasty, has an early 20th century provenance to an English private collection.