

LE QUOTIDIEN *THE ART DAILY NEWS* DE L'ART

BRAFA 2017

JULIO LE PARC,
GUEST OF HONOUR
P.14

BRAFA 2017

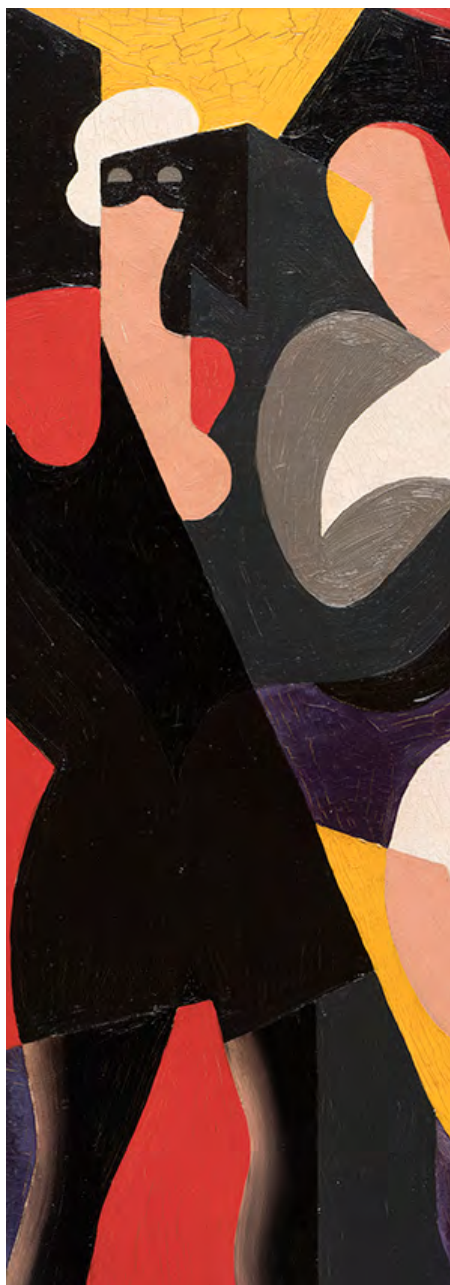
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DE ROODENBEKE,
CHAIRMAN OF BRAFA
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HAROLD T'KINT DE ROODENBEKE, chairman of Brafa

'Brafa is for all generations'

Brafa is the first fair to kick off the year. In Brussels from 21 January – the day of the official public opening – it brings together 132 dealers from sixteen countries, spanning archaeology to contemporary art. The chairman of the fair introduces us to Brafa 2017. *By Alexandre Crochet*



Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke.
Photo: Emmanuel Crooy_MD.

Alexandre Crochet Brafa appears to resonate with Axel Vervoordt's once visionary concept, the idea of a contemporary curiosity cabinet combining, with no exceptions, various specialities where people come to 'shop around'.

Does this positioning match the profile of its present connoisseurs?

Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke I know that over six decades, through the many developments of the former Belgian Antiques Fair that turned into Brafa, we have always reviewed its strategy and attempted to anticipate what our clients want. Some of them have highlighted the bold avant-garde aspect of Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé, their collection stylishly combining all kinds of masterpieces. To a certain extent, like a huge *cabinet d'amateur*, they have showed us the privilege of having a passion for art in general, for living with it. Brafa incorporates the pursuit of today's collectors, through a persistently modern and revised presentation. It provides all forms of creation, aimed at all generations who can appreciate the synergy between the various periods and specialities. This blend is now part of our way of living; our interiors reflect a taste for travel and other cultures.

In spite of competition from other fairs, modern art and contemporary art appear to be enhanced this year...

The aim is to balance the specialities. We did not have a purely 'primary' contemporary art market and I wanted this section to have a strong, representative footing to be able to provide eclecticism and a variety in terms of the periods as well as the areas represented. The contemporary section of some ten galleries is now homogenous. Until two years ago, 'modern' art alone, the secondary market, was represented at Brafa. Our intent is to encompass the market to the maximum extent possible, from archaeology to contemporary creation. Of course, this is not our primary speciality, and therefore our selection will focus on leading galleries with reasonably established artists, contemporary art that will integrate better with the other forms of art at the fair.

To our knowledge, Brafa is the only fair of this level to have already for several years exhibited comics, now a considerable field in the art market...

Yes, Brafa is the only fair to exhibit work by the authors of comics and for some ten years already. This decision may have seemed amusing at the time, but today it is clear how substantial this market has become. The 9th art is an integral part of our daily life. We were fortunate to have Hergé reigning over comic strips with talent equal to that of Magritte in his genre, but Belgium has since unveiled many other talented people in this field. The recent 'Tintin' exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris confirms our desire to display this very Belgian style of art. It is also clear that contemporary authors are venturing beyond the scope of the 'bubble' to take an active part in other sectors.

Tefaf Maastricht places great emphasis on the quality and care of the vetting, particularly in a period when several specialisms are seriously affected by cases and trafficking. What about Brafa?

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HAROLD T'KINT
DE ROODENBEKE,
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OF BRAFA

OUR STRATEGY
IS FOCUSED
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AT EUROPEAN
FAIRS

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Vetting remains a complex and skilful procedure. Fortunately, tricky cases are extremely rare. Some people like to highlight these cases, but in reality out of the thousands of objects exhibited they can be counted on one hand. We call upon the best specialists in all areas, often the same as at Tefaf. Indeed we were the first worldwide, two years ago, to introduce a French radiology service to the *vetting process* so as to supplement certain fields of expertise through scientific analysis. The majority of the experts are not exhibitors, they work through commissions made up of several members and their decisions are always made collectively. Every attempt is made to ensure the greatest objectivity.

As previously seen during the last Biennale des Antiquaires in Paris, non-European collectors are reluctant to travel, a trend that has been accentuated by terrorist attacks. Have you instigated measures to reach out to Americans, South Americans, Russians and Asians to encourage them to come?

Of course, geopolitics plays a certain role in the willingness of clients to travel. Luckily we do not depend on the American market. Our representatives, especially in Russia, deal with encouraging and inviting enthusiasts. Nonetheless, our strategy is focused above all on European countries, the main purchasers these days at European fairs. There is no point in becoming involved too far afield, it is better to master one's own environment first of all. We have organised presentations, events and conferences in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France and England, etc. It is a long-term endeavour that is increasingly bearing fruit.

Art Basel, as well as Tefaf, has expanded abroad. Would it be a good idea for a fair like Brafa to be implemented in cities other than Brussels?

It is a huge advantage that our structure is a non-profit association of dealers. We do not seek to make a profit as an organisation and each euro paid by an exhibitor is reinvested for his or her own benefit. Our vocation is not in the short-term to develop our Belgian concept abroad. We advocate Belgium's hospitality and unique atmosphere, remaining attentive to possible synergies or projects with other major European or international events.

BRAFA, from 21 to 29 January, Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 86 C, Brussels, Belgium,
www.brafa.be

Julio Le Parc
in his studio near Paris
with works that will be
exhibited at Brafa.
Photo: A. C.



JULIO LE PARC, GUEST OF HONOUR AT BRAFA 2017

> This year's Brussels fair showcases the Argentinian artist Julio Le Parc. Several of his monumental and colourful works will be placed within the aisles, with an ad hoc layout, including a large mobile that was exhibited at the retrospective at the Palais de Tokyo in 2013. For this veteran of kinetic art, who cofounded GRAV (Research Art Group) in the 1960s alongside François Morellet, this is further recognition of his work, in tandem with the exhibition at Galerie Perrotin New York this autumn, as well as the one devoted to him at the Pérez Art Museum in Miami until 19 March.



By Alexandre Crochet

Our selection at Brafa



Louis Süe and
André Mare,
armchair,
mahogany, circa
1920. Galerie
Mathivet, Paris.

When Art Deco Meets Australian Aborigines

Galerie Mathivet, Paris

We owe this elegant lady's seat to the architect and decorator Louis Süe

(1875-1968) and painter André Mare (1887-1932), co-founders of the Compagnie des Arts français (French Arts Company) in the 1910s. Specialists in Art Deco, the Paris-based Galerie Mathivet presents the big names of this movement on its stand together with canvases by Australian Aborigines. And, for the first time, contemporary furniture-sculptures with botanical forms by the designer Franck Evennou, specially created for the gallery.

Jewellery Showcase

Epoque Fine Jewels, Kortrijk

This high-priced Art Nouveau corsage chain composed of eleven different pieces comes from an American collector. It is part of the set of jewellery jointly created over three years by Georges Fouquet and Alphonse Mucha. The famous Czech poster designer had indeed designed the jeweller's collection for the 1900 World's Fair.



Italian Classicism - Robertaebasta, Milan

At a time when design stands and trade fair exhibitions tend to resemble each other and always present the same names, the Milanese gallery run for thirty years by Roberta Tagliavini - to whom we owe the droll gallery name - and Mattia Martinelli, introduces a transalpine spirit imbued with originality. As is the case here, she does not hesitate to show - in order to better reconsider - sculptors situated between classicism and modernity, who navigated the troubled period of Italian fascism.

La Fede e la luce (faith and light), 1934,
Arturo Martini, bronze,
72,5 x 71 x 66 cm.
Robertaebasta,
Milan.



Figurative Art in the Spotlight

Galerie Claude Bernard, Paris

Paul Rebeyrolle,
Soldes (Série Le
monétarisme), 1999,
painting on canvas,
180 x 180 cm. Galerie
Claude Bernard, Paris.

While half of the Galerie Claude Bernard stand will be dedicated for the first time to Ronan Barrot, with original oil paintings, the other half is reserved for artists the gallery supports, such as Sam Szafran, Gao Xingjian or Paul Rebeyrolle (1926-2005). Does the viewer of this materialist and satirical work really want to pounce on the promised "sales"?

Art Nouveau corsage
chain, Georges Fouquet
and Alphonse Mucha,
circa 1900. Epoque Fine
Jewels, Kortrijk.



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Bosch Engraving - Lex Antiqua, Ulbeek

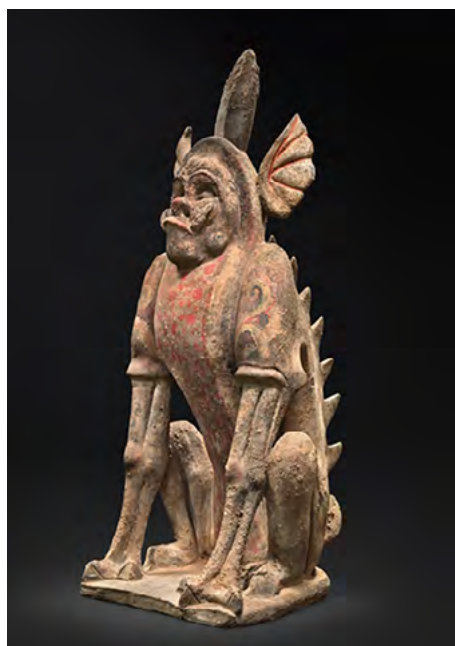
This engraving on the stand of the Belgian Antiquarian Booksellers Association for old and modern booksellers (CLAM) dates not from Bosch's lifetime but from subsequent decades. The son of one of the Flemish artist's followers produced it. According to the Lex Antiqua gallery, Bosch did not produce engravings himself. This one is in remarkably good condition.

Bosch, *The Last Judgment*, 1548-1570, engraving, 132 x 33,3 x 48,8 cm. Lex Antiqua, Ulbeek.

Statue of Hérius, Egypt, Ptolemaic Period, h. 103 cm. Harmakhis, Brussels.

Eternal Egypt - Harmakhis, Brussels

Ancient Egypt is one of the specialties of the gallery Harmakhis, established at the Sablon in the heart of Brussels for almost thirty years now, and present in all major international fairs. Busts of Egyptian personalities often represent the star pieces on their stands. An example on show here is this priest of Greek origin, Egyptianised with the well-preserved torso.

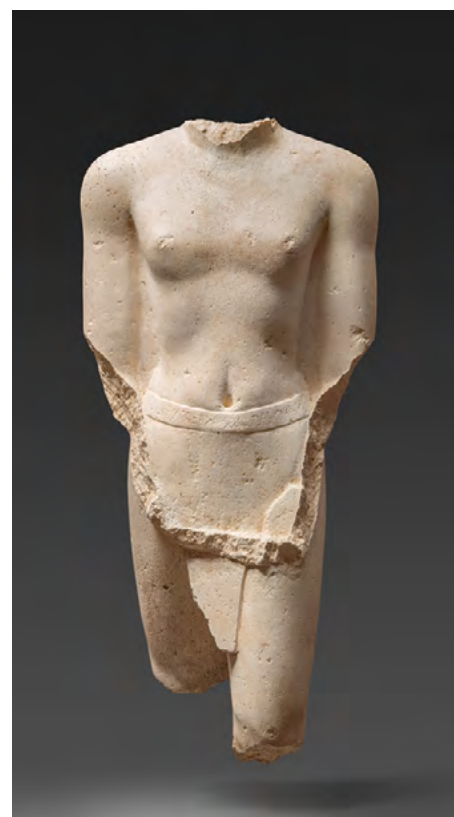


Asian Curiosities

Jacques Barrère, Paris

For Brafa 2017, Galerie Barrère has composed a cabinet of Asian curiosities, centred on decorative and funerary art but also Buddhist statues, one of the specialties of this Parisian establishment. Featured among the stand's important pieces is this frightening Chinese chimera, its polychrome transcending time, making this a rare piece.

Chimera, grey terracotta with traces of polychromy, China, Six Dynasties Period (220 - 281), 49,5 x 22 x 26 cm. Jacques Barrère, Paris.



Dominique Corbasson, *NY River*, 2016, gouache on paper, 78 x 118 cm. Huberty & Breyne Gallery, Brussels and Paris.

Comic Book Aficionados

Huberty & Breyne Gallery, Brussels and Paris

For a quarter of a century, in their Brussels and Parisian headquarters, Marc Breyne and Alain Huberty have supported the emergence of the market for the so-called 9th Art in their gallery, featuring everybody from the biggest names like Hergé to the rising stars of illustration. Always spectacular and extensive, this year's stand showcases the artists François Avril, Jean-Claude Götting, Denis Deprez, and Philippe Geluck. Also present is the French illustrator Dominique Corbasson, fond of urban scenes in Paris or New York.



Belgian art at its height

This year's Brafa is full of gems by the masters of modern Belgian art from Ensor to Michaux, including Spilliaert and Magritte. *By Alexandre Crochet*



Emile Claus,
Young peasant girl,
1903, oil on canvas,
61 x 75 cm.
Galerie Oscar De Vos,
Sint-Martens-Latem.

HOWEVER,
IN THE EARLY
1900S BELGIAN
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How has Belgium, this flat country that is modest in size and population, been able to generate these heights of modern art? How does what it has produced cross boundaries so easily? One answer is undoubtedly connected to the rise of the young nation (1830), to the blossoming in the 19th century of art that was at the very least particularly mental and geographical, if not identitarian. Still little known in France, the school of Sint-Martens-Latem, the Belgian Barbizon, supported by Galerie Oscar de Vos (based in the small eponymous Flemish town), was the melting pot of an impressionist vein around Émile Claus, an artist also found at the Francis Maere Fine Arts Gallery in Ghent. However, in the early 1900s Belgian art mainly focused around a paradigm, interiority, and a prolific means of expression, symbolism. One of his fellow travellers was the famous poet and critic Émile Verhaeren to whom the Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent has just paid tribute. At Brafa the Brussels gallery Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke is exhibiting a park perceived by a master of the genre, Léon Spilliaert (1881-1946), renowned for his silhouettes lost in endless perspectives. He is joined by another key figure from the period, James Ensor (1860-1949), the grittiest of Belgian painters. Verhaeren commented that his monumental drawings '*called to mind oversized Rembrandts (...) executed during hallucinations*'. There are two scenes returning from (victorious) battle displayed at the stand and another, in black pencil, depicting Napoleon at the bleak lowlands of Waterloo... The recent world record obtained by *Squelette arrêtant masques* at Sotheby's in December in Paris (7.3 millions euros), while the artist is entitled to a retrospective at the Royal Academy of Arts in London (until 29 January), is judged '*a particularly high price*' by Harold t'Kint. The same dealer also bought at auction several works by Delvaux (1897-1994), including a painting from 1960 that is, '*interesting as it is not a classical Delvaux, but a*

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BELGIAN ART AT
ITS HEIGHT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17 *maze of gardens and naked women immersed in a Magrittian nocturne*', he admits. Allow for between 700,000 and 1 million euros to buy yourself this enigmatic painting originally bought directly from the artist, and that has never re-entered the market since. London gallery Stern Pissarro, for its part, is fittingly exhibiting *Nocturne*, a painting by René Magritte (1898-1967) from a British collection, a work worthy of opening the



Henri Michaux,
Untitled, ink on paper,
1965, 76 x 106 cm.
Galerie AB, Paris.

exhibition on the artist at the Centre Pompidou in Paris concluding on 23 January. The work dates from 1923, just before the artist's turning point towards surrealism. *'These initial works are a rarity on the market, Nocturne highlights the influence of cubism on his style, while showing on the legs the delicate blend of colours that was one of his hallmarks'*, explains the gallery, demanding 625,000 euros for it. Delvaux appears again at Galerie AB. The Parisian gallery is exhibiting a 1933 watercolour, *La Famille*, which was part of two exhibitions about the artist, one in 1977 at the Royal

Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, in Brussels, the other in 1973 at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Fast-forward to post-war the same gallery is exhibiting four ink drawings by the writer, poet and artist with French citizenship, Henri Michaux (1899-1984). The price of each sheet, produced between 1965 and 1980, is less than 30,000 euros. Those attracted to the less beaten path will linger on the stand in front of a large abstract oil painting by Joseph Lacasse (1894-1975), an artist for whom Agnès Aittouarès observes, *'an international buzz with purchases by the English'*. Dated 1946, it recalls the contemporary work of Poliakoff, at 'only' 35,000 euros... Lastly, the Galerie des Modernes (Paris) is presenting just one Belgian work, a painting by Corneille, at less than 150,000 euros. The painting *Le Lent Soleil Noir* neither belongs to the famous CoBrA period nor to the more recent endless figurative cycle, but to the so-called 'geological' one, marked in the middle of the 1960s *'by a spirit of innovative research, the palette and style of which are quite similar to those of Dubuffet'*, evaluates the gallery's co-director, Vincent Amiaux. In terms of modern art, many paths undoubtedly lead to Belgium.

IN TERMS OF
MODERN ART,
MANY PATHS
UNDOUBTEDLY
LEAD TO
BELGIUM

James Ensor,
project for "Cortège
représentant Maurice
de Nassau à Ostende
après la Bataille
de Nieuport I",
watercolor, colored
wax crayons and
pencil on joined
paper, laid down on
card, 23,5 x 89,5 cm.
Signed lower center.
Executed circa 1904.
Gallery Harold t'Kint
de Roodenbeke,
Brussels.



Celebrating the Tribal Arts

Featuring a dozen or so dealers, African, but also Oceanic art, forms one of Brafa's strong points. A general survey of this year's event reveals some rare gems as well as tempting pieces to suit all budgets. *By Alexandre Crochet*



Baule Figure,
Ivory Coast, wood,
glass, fabrics, metal,
h. 57 cm. Gallery
Didier Claes, Brussels.

— The tribal arts have never been so well represented at Brafa. The fair attracts many of the best dealers in the Belgian capital, including Darteville, Deletaille, Serge Schoffel and now Sarah, Alain de Monbrison's daughter, established at the Sablon since 2013. But their Parisian colleagues are also present such as Bernard Dulon, Yann Ferrandin or Schoffel de Fabry, and a renowned Montreal dealer, Jacques Germain. This constitutes a total of ten professionals specialising in this field, not to mention some galleries presenting tribal art on their stands mixed with other areas.

"Located only one hour and twenty minutes from Paris on the Thalys train, Brafa remains the international art and antiquities fair best supplied with tribal art," confirms Didier Claes, vice-president of the event, and one of the most prominent Brussels dealers in the field. *"And yet,"* he continues, *"before I first exhibited here fourteen years ago, only Darteville and Bernard de Grunne were present. It was also thanks to the support of the latter, a member of the organising committee, that I was able to gain admittance."*

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DIDIER CLAES**

Proof of the strong attendance at Brafa, Bernard de Grunne, who had concentrated on Tefaf Maastricht, made a reappearance here this year. Didier Claes (Brussels), who decided to *"wager on Brussels"*, presents a beautiful private collection constituted over a ten-year period by a Belgian businessman, also a follower of contemporary art and design. Among the thirty pieces on show, mainly from the Congo but also from the Ivory Coast or Nigeria, is a large Songye figure with double head *"never before exhibited, procured hand to hand"*, available for several hundreds of thousands of euros, or also an important Hemba statue. Besides these *"absolute masterpieces,"* as affirmed by the dealer, the collection also includes more affordable pieces, such as a pretty Kuba box for less than 4,000 euros. His Brussels colleague Serge Schoffel dedicates his catalogue to the collector Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller, who recently bought a few pieces from him before passing away in late December. Schoffel offers an Igbo mask with spectacular headdress, for 75,000 euros: *"a good bargain for this mask, one of the most beautiful I know of its kind, because this tribe's art is not what most collectors are looking for,"* says Serge Schoffel. Not confining himself to West Africa, he will also show objects

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CELEBRATING
THE TRIBAL ARTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19 from East Africa, less frequented by collectors, while not neglecting to feature a dozen pieces from the Gulf of Papua in Papua New Guinea, with a Hei Tiki, a jade Maori pendant, or a rare magic statuette from the Namau people.

Among the Quebeckers, Jacques Germain, the custodian of a Kota Shamaye reliquary from Gabon, not exhibited since 1965, awaits visitors. He points out that *"the pieces attributed with certainty to this subgroup of the great Kota family are very rare"*. The other "highlight"

comes from East Africa. The dealer wants to maintain the mystery until the opening surrounding this piece priced at a little over 100,000 euros. But he does inform us that it's mentioned in the catalogue for the historical 1984 exhibition "Primitivism in 20th Century Art" organised at MoMA in New York by William Rubin, which underscored the links between tribal art and modern art. For less well lined wallets, the Nigerian pieces start at 8,000 euros. Finally, the Galerie Grusenmeyer (Brussels) presents several high-quality tribal art pieces associated with Asian works, such as a Maori chief's ceremonial axe, which



Tiki, Stone bust
Marquesas Islands,
h. 56 cm. Gallery
Darteville, Brussels.



Harp, The Mangbetu
people, wood.
Democratic Republic
of the Congo,
19th century,
h 62.5 cm. Gallery
Bernard Dulon, Paris.

belonged to the American magnate Nelson Rockefeller, or a Biwat flute stopper. Here too, pieces less than 10,000 euros will be exhibited to attract new buyers. To enquiring minds, the vast field of non-Western arts contains many avenues. *"Of course, a Fang remains a Fang, but at the moment the market for tribal art is very liquid and mobile,"* assures Damien Woliner, one of the gallery partners. *"Better to buy with the eyes and not the ears."*



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