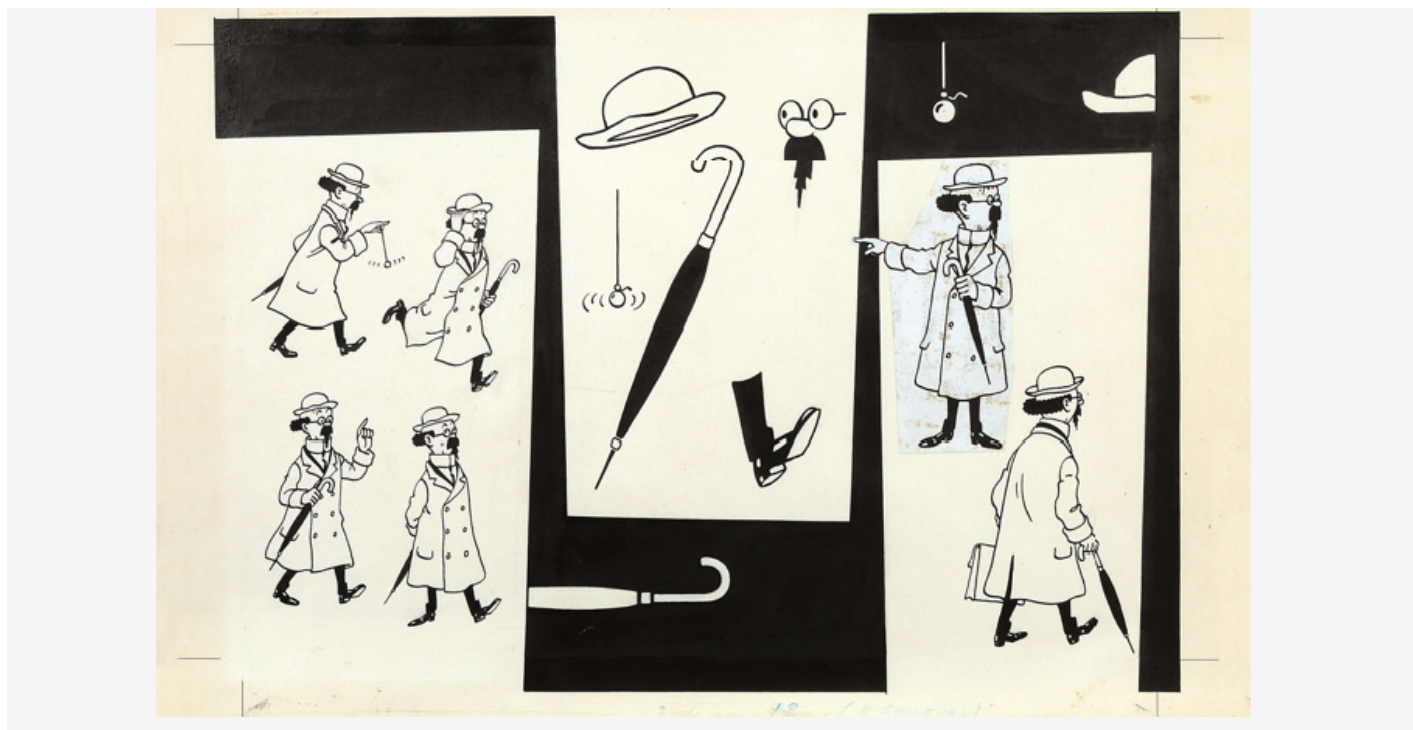


5 Outstanding Highlights: Brussels Art Fair 2017

Written by Guest Writer on 24 Jan 2017, 10:00

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Over the years, the BRAFA (Brussels Art Fair) has established itself as one of the leading European art and antiques fairs. The 2017 edition, which takes place at the Tour & Taxis in Brussels (Belgium), will feature more than 130 galleries from 16 countries. From January 21-29, an incredible variety of art historical disciplines and specialities such as archaeology, painting, photography, sculpture, furniture, jewellery, clocks, glassware and original cartoon plates are represented on the fair. We have selected five outstanding pieces that you do not want to miss out on.

Described by one critic as “a kind of Great Gatsby from the Low Countries”, the artist Kees van Dongen is known for his stylized, sensuously rendered portraits of the fashionable beau monde in France. His depiction of women with large eyes and red lips, worked out with vivid colours and expressive lines, became his signature style in the 1920s, clearly visible on the *Portrait of a Spanish Girl* (fig. 1).

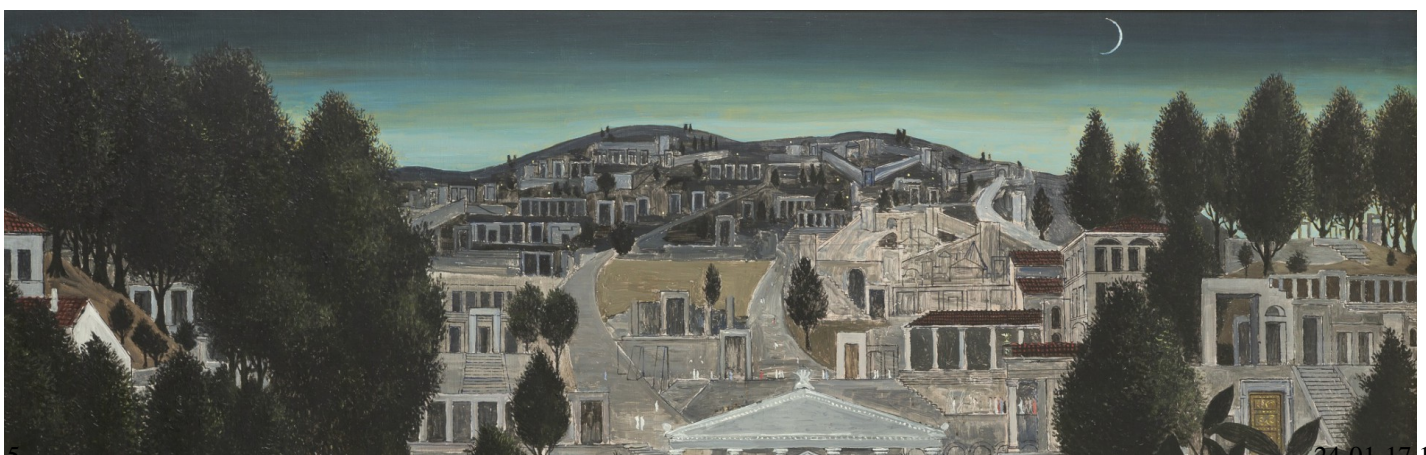


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(fig. 1) Kees van Dongen (Delftshaven 1877-1968 Monaco), *Portrait of a Spanish Girl*, Goache on paper, 48,5 x 41,5 cm. Galerie de la Béraudière.

In Paul Delvaux's painting *The Gardens of Alexandria* (fig. 2) several Neo-Classical women, nude or semi-nude, are represented in an Arcadian garden at night time. In the distance lies an ancient city, in which various figures can be seen wandering through Classical architecture. This beautiful work is typical of Paul Delvaux's surrealist paintings, often featuring idealized nude women that are surrounded by ancient buildings.



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(fig. 2) Paul Delvaux (Antheit 1897–1994 Veurne), *The Gardens of Alexandria*, Oil on panel 100 x 125 cm. Harold t'Kint de Roodenbeke.

Before René Magritte began developing his characteristic surrealistic style about 1925, his work was heavily influenced by Cubism, as can be seen on his painting *Nocturne* (1923, fig. 3). According to the Cubist style, the shapes of the two women have been fragmented and the jagged black planes in the background represent vague silhouettes of houses. The title *Nocturne* was probably derived from the black Venetian mask worn by the figure on the left, usually worn to a (nocturnal) masked ball.



René Magritte (Lessines 1898–1967 Brussels), *Nocturne*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 75 x 50 cm, Stern Pizarro Gallery.

Sivas rugs are some of the most decorative room-sized Turkish rugs available. These antique rugs from the city of Siva are based on traditional Persian designs. The elegant small-scale repetition of patterns are just a few of the Persian designs that can be found in Sivas carpets. This finely woven antique silk Siva rug from about 1880 (fig. 4, available at [N. Vrouyr](#)) is decorated with traditional Persian motives like arabesques, palmettes, flowers, vine scrolls and it also has a delicate soft golden colour.





(fig. 4) Sivas rug, wool on silk, symmetrical knot, sivas, central turkey, circa 1880, 298 x 92 cm. [N.Vrouyr](#), stand 31c.

Finally, the work of the Belgian cartoonist Hergé, the pseudonym of Georges Remi, should not be overlooked when visiting the BRAFA. Hergé is of course known as the creator of the celebrated series of comic albums called *The Adventures of Tintin*, emerging for the first time in 1929. The characters from these series – the boy reporter Tintin, his faithful terrier Snowy, the mercurial Captain Haddock and the brilliant Professor Calculus – have been captured in our collective memory. The *Artistic portrait of Cuthbert Calculus* (1968, fig. 5), in which the professor is shown in different poses, displays Hergé's characteristic *ligne claire* style.

Main Image; (fig. 5) Georges Remi alias Hergé (Brussels, 1907–1983), *Artistic portrait of Cuthbert Calculus*, 1968. Indian ink on drawing paper, 24.6 x 34.5 cm, Belgian Fine Comic Strip Gallery.

Written by Pieter-Paul Hensels



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