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「BRAFA 2022 – A Luminous Edition」

Art Fairs

June 20, 2022

Elena Martinuzzi

For the first time under the single summer date **BRAFA** learned its shows once again confirming as a regular date on one of the most prestigious art fairs in the world. Moving to dryness hope for the best weather, the Belgian capital welcomed the art world with unusual quality, authenticity and exclusivity. No the change of venue brought a different spirit to the fair providing a spacious environment with a very high quality exhibition. Although the pandemic still remained, during the opening days the exhibitions around the highly-anticipated 'in-person' edition was palpable during the Preview.

While bringing remarkable surprises as each year the fair maintains the quality and the choice of the artworks in view Belgium's tradition and innovation, the line-up of galleries at BRAFA 2022 is truly rich with 'Modern and Contemporary Art', 'Design', 'Jewellery', 'Belgian and international exhibitions, including 36 newcomers' shows. Displayed in a circuit that promotes discovery and a mix of styles, bring up a great spectacular crossover that traces art history and archaeology down to our era the fair takes the visitors on a journey through the ages. Although the pandemic still remained, creating a continuous flow of visiting that broadens the horizons, the maker your preferences, BRAFA has something to offer to everyone, whether you are an art collector or simply an art enthusiast.

Despite its impressive size, BRAFA's once again drew the visitors with the quality of the exhibition. Among the highlights of the fair, the Belgian Art Gallery's stand, the dominance of BRAFA's Art Design Area (Aequipoint), thanks to their Belgian guest of honor **Arne Quinze** who brought the curtain of the garden in the fair The artwork is elegantly fluttered, covered with a footway, scented forest curated designed by Arne Quinze. Also, the Belgian Art Gallery's stand, the dominance of BRAFA's Art Design Area (Aequipoint), thanks to their Belgian guest of honor Arne Quinze

few years back. Originally, they offered me to curate that fair, but since it was an existing project with its own identity and legacy, I didn't feel like it was my place to get involved and mess that up. However, when we first met in Madrid, I knew I wanted to do something with them when the right opportunity arose. Eventually, in late 2021 Sergio hinted that he was in a conversation with different local agents in Ibiza about starting a new fair there, and having a tabula rasa to work with felt like that opportunity that we were hoping for.

Widewalls: What do you think sets CAN apart from other art fairs?

SB: I don't want to pitch it like it's something that nobody has ever seen cause it's conceived within a standard fair format. However, I do like to think that the galleries that were selected to be part of the inaugural year, and obviously, the work they will be presenting, will make it an exciting, coherent presentation that makes sense as a whole. On top of that, we're doing this in a dreamy location that is Ibiza, so in order to fit, the fair is open in the late afternoon, between 17:00-21:00, which is something we noticed both the collectors and the participating galleries are very supportive of.

Marrla Pratts – 4 CLOCK + 1 MUSHROOM. Courtesy of Ruttkowski gallery

The Curatorial Concept

Widewalls: CAN is a curated art fair. What was your curatorial process behind this year's selection?

SB: The idea behind CAN being a curatorial process was basically bringing over the type of works that I've been featuring over the years of working at Juxtapoz Magazine as well as in the shows I've been working on at galleries worldwide. I was lucky that my personal interest and appreciation for figurative painting matched what seems to be somewhat of a trend globally, and over the past few years, I built such a growing community of artists, galleries, collectors, supporters, and appreciators that enjoy that style of works. So the curatorial process doesn't have any theoretical aspect but is more focused on a certain aesthetic and the diverse technical approaches to working towards such.

Widewalls: This year, the fair will bring together around 30 international galleries. Are there some highlights you would like to mention?

SB: I never like to name my favorite works in the shows I'm putting together, and naming highlights in a fair feels about the same. But there are definitely galleries and artists that I'm especially excited about and works that I believe are worth watching out for.

Obviously, as a gallery that is regularly showing at Art Basel, NANZUKA will probably be one of the more popular booths for everyone visiting the fair. Madrid's VETA will also have a strong presentation with some great names. I'm also excited about Antwerp's Everyday gallery as they're building a reputation with their fair displays, as are their Antwerp neighbors PLUS-ONE gallery and Gallery Sofie Van de Velde. Droste gallery will have an extra-large booth, so I'm excited to see how they will present their work. I always enjoy the solo presentations, too, so I am looking forward to seeing Robert Pokorny with Johansson Projects, Canyon Castator with STEMS, Hesooo Kim with Afternoon, Stickymonger with WOAW, and also the custom-made presentation that Jacolby Satterwhite is working on with Lundgren Gallery.

Tomo Campbell – One Another, 2021. Oil in canvas, 200 x 250 cm © the artist, courtesy of Cob Gallery

The Highlights of the Fair

Widewalls: In addition to the gallery presentations, the fair will be accompanied by a program of parallel events. What can the audience expect from this section?

SB: Yeah, the team has been developing a five-day Collector Programme that aims at making or broadening the connection between the visitors and the island through exclusive opening day events, dinners, studio visits, private collection tours, and visits to museums and institutions. We are bringing collectors and visitors from across the globe to contribute to this, and we have planned a private visit to the Museum of Contemporary Art (Macei), a visit to the studio of Laura De Grinyo, a ceramist based in Ibiza, a visit to Ses 12 Naus, a private foundation focus on artistic residences, the preview of the new Eva Beresin exhibition at La Nave de las Salinas, the curatorial project of the collector Lio Malca, among other things.

Widewalls: Unlike other fairs, CAN will be open to the public only during the afternoons. What kind of advantages do you think this concept brings to the fair?

SB: With me being a child of the Mediterranean and the team behind the fair being the same, we are very fond of the local lifestyle and "tranquilo" attitude, so we wanted to do something to encourage that. A lot of fairs out there are in fact, quite tiring for everyone involved (if you can label doing something you love as "tiring"), so we wanted to step back a bit from that and provide more chances to enjoy the environment. The late afternoon opening times should give everyone enough time to fill their batteries through the day and experience the island in the best way possible before enjoying art and networking.

Widewalls: How do you see CAN develop and evolve in the future?

SB: I must say I'm taken by the great buzz that's already existing around the fair, and we didn't even start yet! This makes me very optimistic about the coming years and the possibilities that we have on the island. Primarily, we're hoping to be accepted well by the locals and, from there, grow into something that both the visitors and the local population will look forward to.

The fair location gives us big possibilities to grow in size, but besides that, we're hoping to spread our activity throughout the island and maybe even bring a taste of the island to others too. But as a "simple" guy that can only focus on one thing at a time, I'm now determined that we make CAN 2022 a great one, and that will surely set a strong base to grow and develop from.

Featured image: Portrait of Sasha Bogojev. Photo by Innekе Gebruers.

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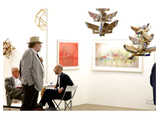

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