

## PRESS RELEASE

# 50 YEARS OF THE KING BAUDOUIN FOUNDATION: GUEST OF HONOUR AT BRAFA 2026

## An anniversary celebrated through masterpieces and stories

*Two reasons to celebrate for the King Baudouin Foundation: the Foundation is not only turning fifty in 2026, but was also invited to be the guest of honour at the 71st edition of the prestigious BRAFA art fair. A remarkable accolade for the King Baudouin Foundation and its philanthropists, who have been dedicated to preserving Belgium's heritage for decades, and the crowning glory of the Foundation's long-term partnership with BRAFA.*



Owl hallmarked Antwerp,  
1548-1549.



Bruges workshop, *The Holy Blood ensign*, 1529.



Cornelis De Vos, *Portrait of Jan Vekemans*, 1624.

## Guest of honour at BRAFA 2026

The King Baudouin Foundation is deeply honoured to be featured as the guest of honour. BRAFA is the ultimate forum where private collectors, art dealers, museums, and public and private actors from the cultural sector gather to explore their shared passion for heritage and art. Together, we preserve, protect, and pass on our heritage to future generations.

As the guest of honour, the King Baudouin Foundation will be organising a series of lectures that zoom in on masterpieces from its collection and a series of short afternoon concerts by musicians who received support from one of the patronage Funds managed by the Foundation. These lectures and concerts will take place in the area behind the

Foundation's stand (n° 151), the KBF Forum, where visitors will also get to explore additional inspiring stories and some of the Foundation's transversal projects. A wonderful opportunity to experience how philanthropy, heritage and cultural preservation, and social welfare are intrinsically connected. Visitors will also get a behind-the-scenes look at the restoration of a recently acquired work: a painting by the Antwerp master Willem Key.

### On a mission for heritage and culture

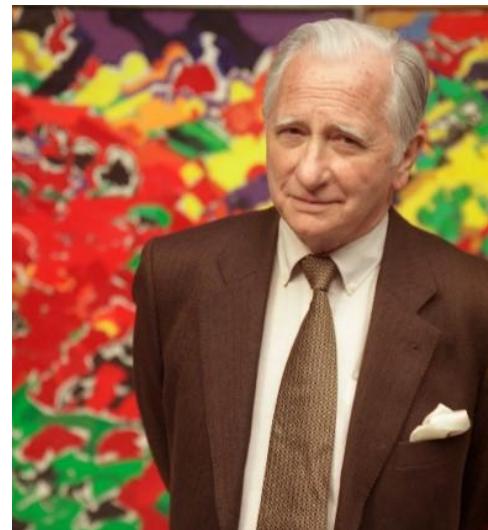
BRAFA is the perfect occasion for the King Baudouin Foundation to honour 50 years of giving. Since its creation in 1976, the Foundation has been working to strengthen solidarity and improve society. For decades, it has also been supporting donors who are passionate about heritage. The King Baudouin Foundation currently manages no fewer than 154 philanthropic Funds that are focused on heritage, art, and culture.

We should cherish philanthropists and donors that want to safeguard art and heritage: their donations are gifts for everyone, for the next generation, for the future. Thanks to these actors' generosity, the Foundation was able to acquire a sizeable and diverse collection these past decades, encompassing more than 29,000 works of art – from archaeological treasures to modern art, from lace and jewellery to paintings and design – and 31 archive funds.

Through its Heritage & Culture programme, the Foundation preserves and protects these exceptional works of art, documents, and objects. All of the Foundation's pieces are on long-term loan to over a hundred museums and public custodial institutions, to make them accessible to each and every one of us.

### Highlights of BRAFA 2026

The King Baudouin Foundation's stand at the fair will offer visitors unique insight into the Foundation's multi-faceted collection. To mark its anniversary, the Foundation will not only be showcasing some of its most recent acquisitions (as it usually does at the fair),



Thomas Neirynck donated his collection of approximately 700 works, mainly abstract paintings.



Urbain Mulkers, *Royal Horses of the Laurier Canal*, 1993.

but also a selection of masterpieces that became part of its collection at an earlier point and that are now part of Belgium's public heritage.

Some of the Foundation's recent acquisitions that will be on display include:

- **Pol Bury, Bracelet *Boules des deux côtes d'un carré*, 1968**

An iconic piece of art jewellery and prime example of kinetic art, acquired by the Christian Bauwens Fund.

- **Evelyne Axell, *L'égocentrique 2*, 1968**

A striking pop art painting that celebrates female subjectivity and liberty, acquired by the Isabelle and Philippe Dewez Fund.

- **Brussels, needle lace (point de gaze), ca. 1860–1880**

A 19th-century gem made of Brussels lace, acquired by the Marie-Jeanne Dauchy Fund.



Evelyne Axell, *L'égocentrique 2*, 1968.



Pol Bury, Bracelet *Boules des deux côtes d'un carré*, 1968.

Iconic acquisitions that will be featured at BRAFA:

- **View of Brussels** by Jean-Baptiste Bonnecroy, a unique cityscape of Belgium's capital city from 1664–1665.
- **The Silver Owl Cup**, the oldest known Antwerp creation made from coconut, is a true masterpiece from the Golden Age
- **The Holy Blood ensign** (Bruges, 1529), an exceptional, late-Gothic, richly symbolic sculpture.
- **Portrait of Jan Vekemans** by Cornelis de Vos (1624), entrusted to the Museum Mayer van den Bergh to complete a series of family portraits.



Jean-Baptiste Bonnecroy, *View of Brussels*, 1664–1665.

### BRAFA Art Talks

Once again, the King Baudouin Foundation will be hosting the BRAFA Art Talks. Leading figures from the art world, exhibition and museum curators, and art market experts will share their expertise and knowledge of fascinating fields. As the guest of honour, the Foundation will also organise a series of lectures, the KBF Art Talks, that zoom in on masterpieces from its own collection.



Alfred Hendrickx, S3 armchair for Sabena, 1958.

### Practical info:

#### BRAFA 2026

25 January, 27 January – 1 February

2026

Brussels Expo – Heizel (Halls 3 & 4)

Open from 11:00 to 19:00

Nocturne on Thursday 29 January

**King Baudouin Foundation: Stand**

**151**

[www.brafa.art](http://www.brafa.art)

### For further information:

King Baudouin Foundation: [www.kbs-frb.be](http://www.kbs-frb.be)

Programme 'Heritage & Culture': [www.heritage-kbf.be](http://www.heritage-kbf.be)

Instagram: @belgianheritage



King Baudouin  
Foundation

Together for a better society

### Images:

**High resolution photos of the works, with captions, can be downloaded here:**

<https://images.kbs-frb.be/RMScx1Rbyc>

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Elisabeth De Saedeleer, carpet in Art Deco style, 1880-1940.