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Impressions: Belgium's Fashion Fair

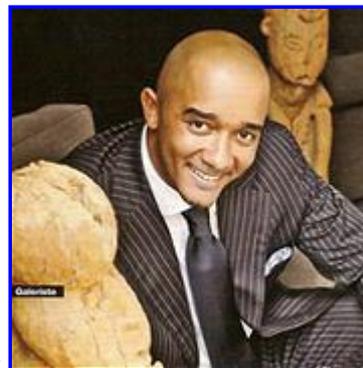
Posted By [Andrew Myers](#) On January 25, 2011 @ 8:05 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [No Comments](#)



[1]The 56th edition of the [Brussels Antiques and Fine Arts Fair](#) [2] (BRAFA), January 21-30, saw streams of crowds at its collectors' preview last Thursday, January 20, including Princess Mathilde (pictured right at the fair). Mathilde counts Duchess of Brabant among her handles, is wife to the heir apparent to the Belgian throne, and is unafraid of fuchsia, as her color choice at BRAFA makes clear, in particular her not-made-for-walking fashion forward suede boots.

All of which underscores that Belgium—long a mecca for beer and chocolate and, increasingly, Michelin-starred restaurants such as Brussel's celebrated [Sea Grill](#) [3] — is also one of the world's most influential design hothouses.

There's decorative arts god [Axel Vervoordt](#) [4], a.k.a., father of a thousand knock-offs, as the current Restoration Hardware catalog makes clear (as I mentioned in my BRAFA preview piece). As usual, his stand was full of chiaroscuro lighting and filled with negative space alongside decorative objects spanning millennia, all off set by a Lucio Fontana slash painting. This year, however, Axel was absent, reportedly in New York with clients, and the stand was manned by Boris Vervoordt, Axel's son, who is playing an increasingly large and visible role in his father's house.



Then there is Patric Didier Claes (pictured right [5]), the stylin' proprietor and connoisseur behind [5][Galerie Claes](#) [6], one of the Belgian capital's most prestigious galleries for Central African art, a category in which BRAFA has long excelled. Claes's stand was the talk of the preview, both because he chose to display only

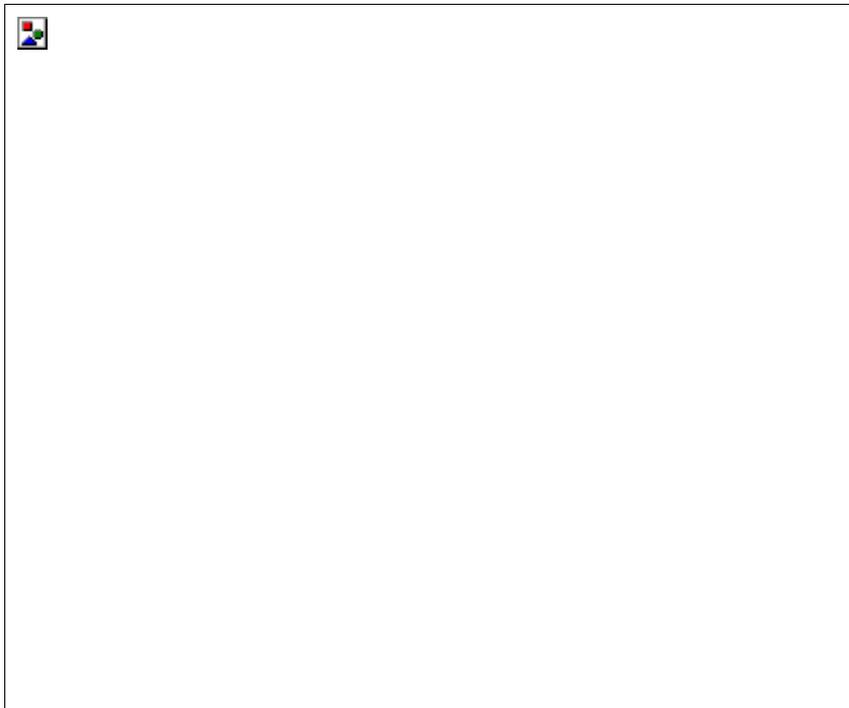
one object—a rare Central African “fetish” sculpture (pictured below) dramatically lit on a pedestal in the center of the otherwise entirely black-cloth-covered space; and because it sold before the fair officially opened for over one million euros to a Belgian collector.



[7]

In the decorative arts, however, there is nothing more illustrative (and entertaining) than the fashion *defilé*, or parade. Strutting, swanning or gamboling up the aisles, the crowd at the preview underscored that Belgium has more than a mere somethin'-somethin' to say in terms of style. Rather, it's here to stay ... and play.

For iPhone impressions, please click below (and please note the soundtrack is *Seasons in the Sun*, Terry Jacks's English-language adaption of Belgian singer-songwriter Jacques Brel's song *Le Moribond*, a worldwide smash from 1974).



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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: http://thefastertimes.com/decorativearts/files/2011/01/IMG_0995.jpg

[2] Brussels Antiques and Fine Arts Fair: <http://www.brafa.be/>

[3] Sea Grill: <http://www.seagrill.be/>

[4] Axel Vervoordt: [http://www.axel-vervoordt.com/avpublic/\(S\(zbnlp5i1jhiso5n5mibufm55\)\)/defaultPage/indexMiddle.aspx?IMGPATH=wHb8LxnWc4O2rMiK4A+SnSXaxKKVnRJbWICrYFBDAMcwwwXFIDJN2MHAsd6UYjpY&TITLE=rAShUszrDLhBqQI/MXxJVA==&GUID=c/IsPiwbBFw=](http://www.axel-vervoordt.com/avpublic/(S(zbnlp5i1jhiso5n5mibufm55))/defaultPage/indexMiddle.aspx?IMGPATH=wHb8LxnWc4O2rMiK4A+SnSXaxKKVnRJbWICrYFBDAMcwwwXFIDJN2MHAsd6UYjpY&TITLE=rAShUszrDLhBqQI/MXxJVA==&GUID=c/IsPiwbBFw=)

[5] Image: <http://thefastertimes.com/decorativearts/files/2011/01/ClaesDidier.jpg>

[6] Galerie Claes: <http://www.didierclaes.com/>

[7] Image: <http://thefastertimes.com/decorativearts/files/2011/01/024.jpg>

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