

More decorative arts – and wallpaper – at this year's BRAFA

THE *Brussels Antiques and Fine Art Fair (BRAFA)* is always an early harbinger of Europe's annual fairs scene. This year's staging, the 57th, takes place, as it has done for the past eight years, at the large Tour & Taxis canal-side exhibition site just outside the city centre from January 21-29.

There will be 122 participants, a shade fewer than the 130 attending last year, with around 20 per cent of them new exhibitors. At the core are longstanding Belgian and French exhibitors such as **Bernard De Leye** (the fair's chairman), **Berko Fine Paintings**, **Axel Vervoordt**, **Galerie Bères** and **Galerie Mermoz**.

The division by nationality remains similar. Of the ten participating countries, the home nation understandably leads with 55 names, closely followed by neighbouring France at 44. The others are represented in single figures. This year the UK fields four, **Finch & Co** and **Whitford Fine Art**, both returning from last year plus, **Aktis Gallery** and **Mullany Fine Art**. Germany fields six exhibitors, Switzerland four, Italy and Monaco two, Canada, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands

and Hungary each have one.

BRAFA covers wide ground in the range of disciplines, from Old Masters to contemporary art and antiquities to deco furniture, but has always been well known for its haute époque and early European sculpture and works of art. Tribal art, a national strength, also continues to be well represented, with seven exhibitors. Meanwhile comic strip art, another speciality from a country where Tintin is a national hero, has three representatives. Two are from Brussels – **Galerie Champaka** and **Galerie Petits Papiers** – and one from Paris, **Galerie 9ieme Art**.

Changes this year include fewer Old Masters, but an increase in 20th century decorative arts, swelled by Parisian arrivals **Yves Gastou** and **Oscar Graf**, with **Futur Antérieur** from Brussels. The ceramics input is upped from recent stagings with three Belgian exhibitors, **Lemaire**, **Marc Michot** and **N Ikodinovic & Co** sharing a stand, and a fourth, **Art & Patrimoine**, on a solo stand with ceramics and works of art from the 16th to 18th centuries.

A new category at this year's fair will be



Above: **Finch and Co** return to the 2012 staging of *BRAFA* as one of four UK exhibitors bringing their eclectic mix that includes this mid-17th century German set of six pairs of knives and forks with boxwood handles carved with figures of *Adam and Eve*, *Faith and Hope* and bound slaves representing *Africa and Asia*, which is priced at around £28,000.

Right: tribal art is another *BRAFA* strength and **Adrian Schlag** from Brussels will be taking this 19th/20th century Pwo mask produced by the Tshokwe people of Angola, priced at €45,000.



provided by Paris-based **Carolle Thibaut-Pomerantz**, who brings her array of antique wallpapers.

The organisers have also reorganised the fair's layout. While they retain the three wide aisles that run lengthwise, by popular demand from visitors and exhibitors they have moved the main entrance next to the car park to give direct access to the stands.

Further information on the fair from www.brafa.be

Left: *BRAFA* is strong on early works of art and this pair of 13in (33cm) high terracotta studies of angels by the Belgian baroque sculptor Jean del Court (1631-1707) will be offered for sale priced at €100,000 by **Dr Rainer Jungbauer**, one of the half dozen German exhibitors in the fair.



Left: **Mullany Fine Art** from London, doing their first *BRAFA*, will include this Burgundian limestone *Vièrge de Calvaire* of c.1450 among the pieces they take to the fair. The 2ft (60cm) high statue, with traces of original polychromy, which has been published in Jacqueline Boccador's *Statuaire Médiévale en France de 1400 à 1530*, is priced at €110,000.



WHILE *BRAFA* draws visitors to the Tour & Taxis industrial heritage site by the Willebroek canal, the Sablon district in the heart of the city will be hosting a trail of dealer exhibitions in their galleries.

Winter B Sablon, organised by *BRUNEAF* with the collaboration of *Ars Antiqua Brussels*, features a total of 55 galleries in the streets around the Place du Grand Sablon for the second staging of this winter initiative which will run from January 18-22.

The mix focuses primarily on antiquities and tribal art but also includes Asian art and design. Around a dozen of the exhibitors are from other countries, having been invited by Brussels dealers to show as guests, like the Parisian Tribal art dealers **Olivier Castellano** and **Galerie Renaud Vanuxem**, who are both showing at **Galerie Luc de Ruyscher** in the Rue Van Moer.

For further information visit the website www.winterbsablon.com which features a map of the various locations on the Winter Sablon trail.

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