

42 18th January 2014

## international events

## Brafa and Bruneaf make

**BELGIUM, and more specifically Brussels, is the place to be on the European art scene for the second half of January. The country's main international antiques fair and a specialist tribal trail in the Sablon district offer plenty to divert and attract enthusiasts. Anne Crane previews some of the pieces that will be on show and on sale.**

## BRAFA

ONE of the earliest harbingers of the European fairs scene is Belgium's premier art and antiques fair *BRAFA* (the Brussels Fine Art and Antiques Fair), staged in the capital from January 25 to February 2.

This is the 59th staging of the long-established event and the tenth to be held in the fair's home at the Tour & Taxis exhibition centre; a former mail sorting goods station built in 1903-4.

In this year's event, 131 exhibitors are standing: 51 from the home base and 80 from outside, principally France but also many other European countries and from as far afield as Japan.

Traditionally *BRAFA* had a strong showing of Haute Epoque and early silver, a legacy from its early days as a Belgian national antiques fair.

While these continue to be a feature

**Below:** one of the highlights that Belgian early works of art dealer **De Baacker Medieval Art** is bringing to *BRAFA* is this 15th century Spanish triptych altarpiece of St Michael from Valencia or Granada. Painted with scenes in tempera on gesso showing Arabic influence, each panel measures 2ft 3in x 4ft 9in (70cm x 1.46m). It is priced at €480,000.



with a core of Belgian specialists such as **De Baacker, De Pauw** and **Bernard de Leye**, there has been an increased emphasis on other fields in more recent years.

Modern Art, Art Nouveau and Deco and 20th century design are well represented and increasingly there is a growing number of specialists in antiquities.

Tribal art is another strong Brussels speciality (highlighted by the concurrently running *BRUNEAF* trail, discussed on the facing page) and by *BRAFA*'s Guest of Honour this year: The Royal Museum of Central Africa at Tervuren. A selection of masks, jewellery, statues and other ethnographic items from their vast collections will be on display prior to the museum's closure for a major restoration that will last until 2017.

Innovations in the fair's format for this year include a new simplified website complete with mobile apps and news broadcast via Facebook and Twitter, a *BRAFA* privilege card allowing galleries to offer clients a range of benefits at temporary exhibitions museums, restaurants and hotels in Brussels, and a new lecture programme.

**Left:** Tribal/Ethnographic Art is another *BRAFA* feature, with around ten exhibitors including **Galerie Serge Schoffel** of Brussels, who will be showing this 15¾in (40cm) high late or 19th early 20th century *bochio-kenessi*, ritual figure from Benin which is priced at €35,000.



The *BRAFA* Art Talks, which are free of charge to all visitors, comprise a daily lecture at 2.30pm by internationally known speakers on art market topics

ranging from Tribal Art (the iconography of a Luba Masterpiece); through unearthing a rediscovered painting by Magritte to the treasures yielded by salvage from ancient shipwrecks. After the fair the talks will also be available on video from the end of February.

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

**Left: Mullany** are one of the UK dealers who are exhibiting at *BRAFA*, where their particular brand of Haute Epoque sculpture and works of art fits in well. Among their exhibits this year will be an early 14th century, 2ft 11in (89cm) high limestone figure of the Virgin and Child from the Aube region of France guided at around €260,000 and this unusual early 17th century carved limewood figure of the Christ Child by Martin Zürn, from Germany, probably from the Lake Constance (Bodensee) area. The 12in (30cm) high seated figure, which retains much of the original polychromy, is guided at around €90,000.