

BRAFA¹²

57TH BRUSSELS ANTIQUES & FINE ARTS FAIR

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PRESS RELEASE

BRAFA'12, the arts gathering at the heart of Brussels

From 21st to 29th January 2012, at Tour & Taxis

Across 9 days, 122 exhibitors will represent 11 countries in over 14,000 square metres of exhibition area; thousands of exhibits, and objects tracing several millennia of art history – from antiquity to contemporary art – will be presented to an expectant audience after a thorough vetting process carried out by 120 experts. With more than 40,000 visitors expected, BRAFA continues to consolidate its place as the flagship event in the Belgian art market, and its reputation has spread well beyond the country's borders. The 57th fair will take place from the 21st to 29th January 2012 on the Tour & Taxis site, with the King Baudouin Foundation as guest of honour.

How can an exhibition establish itself as a major international event without losing touch with its local audience? How can it maintain a relaxed atmosphere while working to achieve its growth objectives in terms of both quantity and quality over the years? How can an event that is already preparing for its 57th edition offer something new each time? How can you combine tradition with new horizons? These are just some of the challenges and subtle balances addressed each year by the organisers of BRAFA, the now established name for the former *Belgian Antique Dealers' Fair*.

The 2012 edition will be no exception to the rule and will be offering the expected 40,000 visitors a range of innovations, including a **completely reorganised exhibition area** featuring a reversed layout in comparison with previous events. As requested by many visitors and exhibitors, the main entrance will be located next to the car park and the new layout will allow more direct access to the stands. The stands will still be located along three wide aisles running lengthwise.

Having reached its balance in terms of exhibitor numbers, BRAFA is preparing to welcome 122 galleries from 11 countries. The majority are from Belgium (54) and France (45), followed by Germany (6), Switzerland (4), the United Kingdom (4), Italy (2), Monaco (2), Spain (2), Canada (1), Portugal (1) and Hungary (1). The repeat attendance of around 20% of participants, average for exhibitions of a comparable scale, is the result of both a deliberate choice by the organisers to encourage new traders and a natural rotation of exhibitors.

Trends 2012

The majority of the established names who help to raise the profile of the Fair will once again be attending (galleries **Bérès, Berko, Claes, De Backker, Bernard De Leye, Florence De Voldère, Manufacture Royale De Wit, Jean-Jacques Dutko, Ludorff, Mermoz, Phoenix Ancient Art, Steinitz, Ronny Van de Velde, Axel Vervoordt, N. Vrouyr**, etc.), along with other well-known traders, some of whom will be exhibiting at the event for the first time.

Among the trends in this new edition, we can point to a rather significant increase in XXth century decorative arts, in particular thanks to the arrival of **Futur Antérieur** (Brussels), **Yves Gastou** (Paris) and **Oscar Graf** (Paris). Primitive arts remain one of the highlights of BRAFA, once again featuring **Serge Schoffel** (Brussels). Admirers of XVIIIth century furniture will be delighted to see the return of **Perrin Antiquaires** (Paris), while the **Mullany Gallery** (London) will appeal to those whose taste tends more towards the 'Haute Epoque'. Slightly down at previous editions, earthenware, porcelain and ceramics are making a big comeback with **Lemaire s.a.** (Brussels), **Marc Michot** (Bruges) and **N. Ikodinovic & Co** (Brussels) on a shared stand, and **Art & Patrimoine** (Ath) exhibiting solo.

Once again, there will be a very attractive and diverse selection of paintings, with the return of **Oscar De Vos** (Sint Martens Lathem) and the arrival of **Jean-François Cazeau** (Paris) and **J. Bastien Art** (Brussels). Although there is a slight fall in Old Masters despite the arrival of **Copetti Antiquari** (Udine) and Geneva's **Charly Bailly Fine Art** and **Galerie Grand Rue** – the latter two focusing on engravings, watercolours and antique gouaches – enthusiasts will still be able to track down the perfect complement to their purchases among the antique frames on the **Galerie Montanari** (Paris) stand. After the successful appearance of comic books two years ago, antique wallpaper from **Antique Wallpaper** (Paris) and religious icons from the **Brenske Gallery** (Munich) win the title of *new speciality presented at BRAFA*, although comics are still well represented with three major exhibitors.

Guest of Honour: the King Baudouin Foundation

This year, the King Baudouin Foundation will be taking over from the Mayer van den Bergh museum from Antwerp as Guest of Honour at BRAFA, more specifically, the King Baudouin Foundation Heritage Fund, which will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in fitting style with an exceptional exhibition of a few key works from its collection of around 7,000 art works entrusted to 20 public institutions in Belgium: canvases by Henri Evenepoel, Fernand Khnopff and Jo Delahaut will be displayed alongside watercolours by Félicien Rops, silverware, sculptures and other antique tapestries.

A display focusing on light

Combining modernity with classic style, the decoration for the exhibition, entrusted once again to the capable hands of *Volume Architecture*, will focus on light, with a double visual effect. The Byzantine patterns on the carpets, inspired by the pavements of Amiens Cathedral, will vie with origami, giant birds and kites suspended from the roof, creating an eye-catching effect on both floor and ceiling.

A very 'tweet', 'app' and 'face' antiques fair

Contrary to popular belief, the antiques world gets on very well with new information technologies. Greater use will be made of the website, with the arrival of German, Russian and Chinese versions, as well as English, Dutch and French, helping to widen its audience. Already present on the Facebook social network, BRAFA will also be constantly accessible thanks to new *iPhone* and *iPad* applications. Finally, a virtual tour of the stands will be available from the first day of opening to the public, 21 January 2012, including the option of zooming in on some of the exhibits.

www.brafa.be