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Impressions of BRAFA 2020 As Lush As Ever!



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BRAFA is a truly unique experience. It is an overwhelming one, due to the high quality and eclecticism of art presented as well as its impeccable organization. One of the longest-running and most prestigious fairs in the world, it is an unmissable Brussels event and a reliable barometer of the art market. BRAFA, unlike many other art fairs, draws you in with its warm, inviting and homey atmosphere and imaginative display, making your experience somewhat intimate despite its impressive size.

Balancing between stability and novelty, the line-up of galleries at BRAFA 2020 is rich and varied, but also more international than ever. Remaining true to its creed of eclecticism, quality and a mix of styles, the fair acts as a grand ephemeral museum that traces art history and archaeology down to our era. It is easy to get lost in this continuously engaging flow of variety, taking the visitors on a wonderful journey through the history of art, and its different periods and styles, on different continents. Set in a grandiose building of Tour & Taxis, it will not disappoint even the most exacting visitors, leaving them enriched, whether or not they've bought anything.

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Taking a different tone each year, the decoration at BRAFA does not disappoint as well. Beautiful lighting, splashes of gold and silver that run throughout the fair, curved, mirror-covered benches, installations comprised of scabiosa, bleeding hearts, dahlias, sweet peas, foliage and branches woven together – these all add to the fair’s warm, fluid and lush atmosphere while allowing the exhibited artworks to remain center stage. Each year since 2013, a master student of the [La Cambre Visual Arts School](#) design school is selected to design 16,000 square meters of carpet, especially for BRAFA. This year, visitors can indulge in an exquisite work of art under their feet designed by Lucie David, the happy winner for the 2nd consecutive year.

The year 2020 marks an important anniversary for BRAFA, celebrating the 65th year that the art fair is being organized. In the recent past, the fair surprised visitors with a different guest of honor every year. This year, the fair prepared something completely different and unexpected, hosting the charity auction of five original segments of the Berlin Wall. Another major change compared to previous years, the fair will last one day shorter, which should only have a limited impact on the number of visitors. The Art Talks are already promising to be yet another delightful program that will inspire curious minds.



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Modern and Contemporary Art at BRAFA 2020

It is not possible to overstate the quality of works presented at BRAFA. From Ancient and Tribal to Modern and Contemporary art, from Haute Epoque to 20th-century design, from ceramics to photography, the BRAFA exhibitors cover it all. When it comes to Modern and Contemporary Art, which was my focus, the selection is comprehensive, to say the least, covering everything from 20th-century [avant-garde](#) and 1950s [abstraction](#) to more contemporary movements such as [Minimalism](#), [Pop Art](#) and [Conceptualism](#). As you start walking, one’s attention immediately gets caught by a large-scale sculpture by [Alexander Calder](#) presented at the entry of the De Jonckheere’s booth. In this eclectic booth, the visitors can also see works by [Lucio Fontana](#), [Giuseppe Penone](#) and [René Magritte](#), but also the Follower of Hieronymous Bosch and [Pieter Bruegel the Elder](#). Just across the hallway at Galerie von Vertes, there is an exquisite selection of contemporary artworks by artists such as [Damien Hirst](#), [Keith Haring](#), [Yayoi Kusama](#), [Andy Warhol](#), as well as by [Sam Francis](#). The popularity of this Abstract Expressionist continues to soar in the art market, the impression of which you can clearly get at BRAFA, as his works could be seen in many of the gallery booths throughout the fair, including Boon Gallery, the Osborne Samuel Gallery and Guy Pieters Gallery.

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Osborne Samuel Gallery is also presenting beautiful works on paper made of pencil, charcoal, wax crayon, pen, ink and wash by Henri Moore, alongside a selection of his sculptures. Alongside Francis, the Boon Gallery also brought works by Lee Ufan, Hans Hartung, Pol Bury, Fernando Botero, Victor Vasarely, and Joan Miró, among others. As you walk towards the Guy Pieters Gallery's booth, you are immediately captivated by a stunning large-scale Nana sculpture by Niki de Saint Phalle. Inside, the gallery unveiled a series of 12 preparatory drawings by Christo, the last year's Guest of Honor at the fair, who will be installing a temporary artwork in Paris entitled L'Arc de Triomphe, Wrapped in September 2020. Within its labyrinth exhibition space, the visitors can also see seminal pieces by Alighiero Boetti, Jean Dubuffet, Yves Klein, Julian Schnabel, Robert Rauschenberg, Serge Poliakoff and Enrico Castellani, among others.

This year, Samuel Vanhoegaerden Gallery presents an important collection of works by the Belgian painter and printmaker James Ensor, gathered together after 10 years of careful assembly. The visitors will have a unique opportunity to get a valuable insight into the artist's world through thirteen paintings and over twenty drawings. There is also a fine selection of Ensor's works at Galerie Jamar, alongside other Belgian artists such as Jef Geys and Marcel Broodthaers, but also Panamarenko, Andy Warhol, David Hockney, and Fontana.

If you are looking for works on paper for your collection, be sure to visit the booth of Galerie Maeght, presenting works by artists such as Miró and Calder, and the booth of Galerie Schifferli, presenting a stunning series of works in India ink by artists such as Zao Wou-ki, Chu Teh-chun, Pierre Tal Coat, and Henri Michaux, rare surrealist drawings by Hans Bellmer and one stunning piece by Victor Brauner, among other works. For unique ceramics, check out the booth of Bailly Gallery, bringing together ceramic pieces by Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Other highlights include booths of Galerie de la Béraudière, showcasing a number of works by [Keith Haring](#) and a wonderful painting by [Max Ernst](#), Colombe blanche from 1925; Gladstone Gallery, featuring a psychedelic painting and an anthropomorphic sculpture by [Ugo Rondinone](#) and a selection of works by [Carroll Dunham](#), among other works; Rodolphe Janssen, featuring a selection of pedestal sculptures by artists such as [Miguel Berrocal](#), [David Adamo](#) and [Gert & Uwe Tobias](#), alongside other works; Opera Gallery, with the highlight being a stunning embroidery work by Alighiero Boetti; CLEARING, showcasing a denim canvas by Thai artist [Korakrit Arunanondchai](#), alongside pieces by contemporary artists such as [Koenraad Dedobbeleer](#), Jean-Marie Appriou and [Sebastian Black](#), all complemented by the ice cream pink design of their booth; Galerie des Modernes, featuring a trully stunning selection of modern artists such as [Andre Derain](#), [Erro](#), [Fernand Leger](#), [Sonia Delaunay](#), [Dora Maar](#), Hans Hartung, [Wassily Kandinsky](#) and [Jean Cocteau](#); and BERNIER/ELIADES GALLERY, featuring a stunning piece by the dramatist, artist and collector [Robert Wilson](#), a special guest at the Brafa Art Talks 2020.

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Segments of the Berlin Wall in Auction

Celebrating its 65th anniversary in a highly original manner, BRAFA is hosting the exclusive exhibition and sale of five segments of the Berlin Wall. These pieces that have witnessed a tragic period of history welcome the visitors at the main entrance of the fair, making a striking impact with their presence and solemnity. The proceeds from the sale will be split among five beneficiaries (associations and museums) in the areas of cancer research, the social integration of people with disabilities and the preservation of art heritage.

One of the most famous events in recent history, the fall of the Berlin Wall, began in November 1989. In the following days and weeks, thousands of people traveled to Berlin in hope of acquiring or even breaking off their own wall fragment as a souvenir. Nowadays segments of the wall can be found all over the world, in symbolic places or private collections. The large segments that BRAFA will be exhibiting and auctioning off have become quite rare.

Already acquired in 2018, in anticipation of the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 2019, they belonged to the Hinterlandmauer, or the 68-km "inner wall" that blocked off the border strip to East Berlin. The segments, which are 3.8 m tall and 1.2 m wide, weighing 3.6 tons each, feature graffiti on both sides by anonymous street artists from different periods. This unique auction, which was declared open during the inaugural gala dinner and will end on the last Sunday of the fair, will provide a chance for collectors to simultaneously own a piece of history and contribute to important causes.

BRAFA 2020 opens for the public in Brussels on January 26th and remains on view until February 2nd, 2020

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