

Dei Bardi Art

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Jacopo Ligozzi, Captain of the Arabs - Young Man on Horseback - Man with rosary - Janissary and the Bear, c. 1610-20, tempera on glass, 40,4 x 26 cm each.

Cultural Encounters in European Art at the 70th Edition of BRAFA

Brussels, January 26 – February 2, 2025 – In celebration of the 70th edition of BRAFA, the Dei Bardi Art Gallery will showcase an exhibition that explores the intricate interplay between European visual culture and the “Other” during the medieval period and Renaissance. This compelling presentation, held at Brussels Expo, will feature a carefully curated selection of artworks from the 13th to the 16th centuries, illuminating the profound cultural exchanges that have shaped identity and fostered appreciation for diversity throughout history.

The exhibition traces the evolution of racial representations, from early medieval depictions of Black Africans to the complex interpretations of interconnected identities in the early modern era. It examines how these diverse cultural encounters influenced European visual identity and contributed to contemporary conversations about identity and representation.

Highlighting significant milestones in Western art, the exhibition will include a rare 13th-century Romanesque capital from Apulia, which showcases four intricately carved heads of Black Africans. This artwork reflects a cosmopolitan atmosphere unique to 13th-century Southern Italy, driven by the Hohenstaufen emperors' interest in diverse cultures.

Additionally, we will present an adaptation of Maerten de Vos's "Allegory of Africa," which exemplifies how Europe began personifying continents during the age of exploration. Unlike other representations that perpetuated stereotypes, this painting emphasizes human unity, reflecting the complex and evolving nature of identity in the context of colonialism.

A highlight of the exhibition will be the painted glass works by Jacopo Ligozzi, including "Janissary and the Bear », « Man with the Rosary », « Captain of the Arabs » and "Young Man on Horseback." These pieces capture the fascination and ambivalence of Western artists towards the Ottoman Empire, portraying its figures with a blend of admiration and curiosity, while addressing the cultural complexities brought about by military and colonial encounters.

The exhibition not only celebrates the positive aspects of cultural exchange between European artists and the "Other," but also invites visitors to reflect on the nuanced dynamics of these interactions. Through these selected works, attendees will explore the multifaceted representations of identity and the rich tapestry of artistic influences that have shaped European art.

Join us at BRAFA as we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of cultural exchange and identity through the lens of historical art, revealing how European art has continually redefined itself in dialogue with other cultures.



BRUSSELS EXPO | 26 JAN – 2 FEB 2025

BRAFA ART FAIR 70th edition

GUEST OF HONOUR: JOANA VASCONCELOS

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