

GALERIE FLAK

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PRESS RELEASE

BRAFA ART FAIR

January 26th – February 2nd, 2025
Brussels Expo, Brussels, Belgium
Galerie Flak, Booth 92

A focus on Mumuye art from Nigeria



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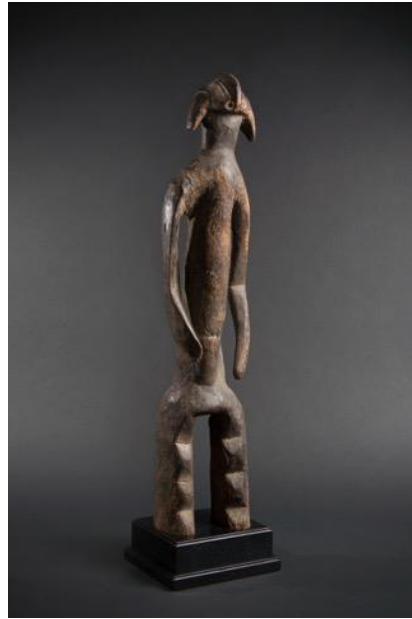
Ancient Arts of Africa, Oceania and North America

On the occasion of the 70th edition of BRAFA in January 2025, the Galerie FLAK, located at 8 rue des Beaux-Arts in the 6th arrondissement of Paris, France, will present an exceptional collection of about twenty Mumuye sculptures from northeastern Nigeria.

The late discovery of Mumuye art in Europe at the end of the 1960s was nothing short of a revelation. Mumuye statuary continually pushes the boundaries of its treatment of the human form, offering a captivating sense of movement, rhythmic disruptions and elongations, and a masterful interplay of negative and positive spaces. These qualities have drawn comparisons to the work of major 20th-century artists such as Henry Moore and Alberto Giacometti.

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“Everything is anatomically wrong. But it works. It’s visually successful and is a complete piece because abstraction dominates over anatomy.” American artist Nancy Graves

Nancy Graves, *Perspectives: Angles on African Art*, 1987, p. 100

Nearly 20 years after a previous 'Mumuye' exhibition and an eponymous publication by François Neyt, the Galerie Flak will present a selection of around twenty iconic sculptures from this major Nigerian culture at BRAFA 2025.

Mumuye Art in its cultural and religious context

The Mumuye, a people of farmers numbering approximately 400,000 individuals, inhabit the foothills of the Shebshi Mountains in a remote region near the banks of the Benue River in northeastern Nigeria near the border with Cameroon. In their religious practices, the Mumuye used figures known as 'Igalagana,' examples of which will be showcased at BRAFA.

Jacques Kerchache in *L'Art Africain*, 1988, notes: "[Mumuye] statuary does not depict ancestors but rather incarnates tutelary spirits. Yet, statues reinforce the status and prestige of their owner who, as he holds them in his hands, has a dialogue with them and thus ensures his personal protection."

According to Belgian anthropologist Jan Strybol ("see Les Mumuye" in *Arts du Nigeria: Collection du Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie* - 1997), figurative sculpture enhanced the influence and reputation of leaders and religious specialists in Mumuye society by furthering their efforts to predict the future, heal the sick, and make rain fall.

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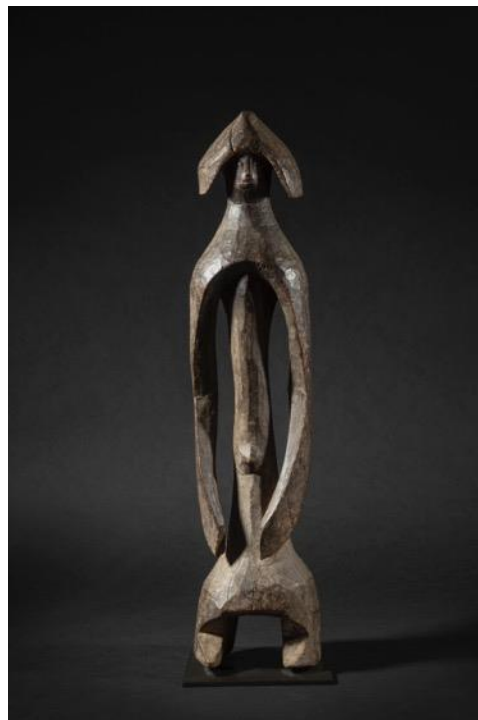


Recognition and Appreciation of Mumuye Art

Today, Mumuye art is featured in the collections of major international museums (Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac in Paris, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Beyeler Foundation in Basel, British Museum in London). Celebrated by prominent artists (Henry Moore, Robert Mapplethorpe, among others) and showcased in notable private collections and exhibitions over the past 50 years (including "Primitivism' in 20th Century Art" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1984), Mumuye art has captivated audiences since its discovery.

« There is no hesitation between the concept and the gesture. [The artist] has found extraordinary harmony, in the movement, in the use of space, in the articulation [...] everything is dynamic. It is like architecture ».

Jacques Kerchache, *Portraits Croisés*, Musée du quai Branly, Paris, 2003



BRAFA (Brussels Art Fair)

BRAFA is one of Europe's most prestigious art fairs, attracting over 65,000 visitors annually from around the globe for an eight-day extravaganza. With 130 international galleries showcasing all styles

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and eras from ancient to modern painting, tribal art, jewelry, silverware, and design, BRAFA is “the place to be” in the art world every January.

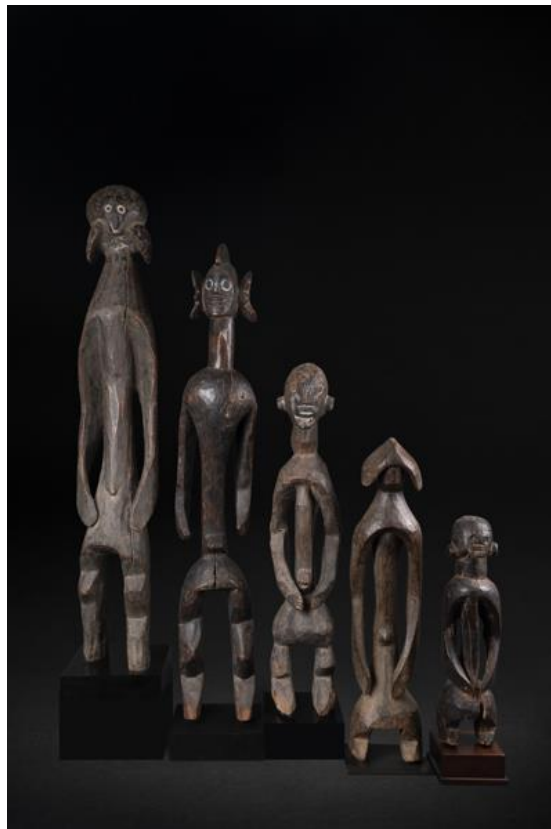
The Galerie Flak is delighted to participate once again in 2025, showcasing a selection of ancient arts from Africa, Oceania, and North America. This year, we are placing a special focus on Mumuye statuary.

Practical information

BRAFA booth 92

26 January - 2 February 2025

Brussels Expo, Brussels, Belgium



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