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BRAFA 2025: a selection of wonders to discover at the 70th edition

From January 26th to February 2nd at Brussels Expo, BRAFA will be welcoming art lovers and collectors from all over Europe and beyond. 130 exhibitors from 16 countries will be presenting a selection of exquisite works from all eras and continents combined. Each of them, like all the other works on display, will be scrutinised by a hundred international experts before the opening of the Fair. More than 20 specialities, including paintings, furniture, sculptures and rare objects from Antiquity to the present day will be on offer at a wide range of prices, from a few thousand euros to seven figures.

[A sneak preview of 14 must-sees at BRAFA 2025](#)



Mearini Fine Art: *Crucifix*, circa 1490, alder wood, H 115 x W 92 x D 16 cm

This sculpture of exceptional technical skill is an absolute masterpiece within the fifteenth-century Venetian production of wooden crucifixes. The figure of the Christ has been obtained from two alder wood valves, which have been hollowed out and fit together perfectly. We can attribute it to around 1490, the golden age of the Venetian Renaissance. The attribution to Michele Linder from Hamburg, resident in the district of Santi Marcuola and Fortunato, has been strongly corroborated. Linder was one of the most esteemed wood carvers in Venice and the most famous sculptor of ivory crucifixes.



Dei Bardi Art: *The Martyrdom of Saint Barbara*.
Flemish tapestry, Bruges, circa 1525-1550. Wool and silk, 270 x 198 cm

This Flemish tapestry depicting *The Martyrdom of Saint Barbara* stands out as a remarkable example of sixteenth-century craftsmanship, distinguished by its exceptionally well-preserved colour palette. Bruges was a preeminent weaving centre during this period, with numerous tapestries documented in contemporary inventories. However, very few have survived, making this piece particularly rare and valuable. The depiction of the executioner brandishing a curved sabre serves as a powerful reminder of the historical context of the time, reflecting the Ottoman incursions into Central Europe. This detail aids in dating the tapestry to the second quarter of the sixteenth century.

This concave silver salver is a beautiful example of late sixteenth-century Portuguese silverware, which often served a utilitarian function in the homes of the great families of the time. Pieces like this one, richly decorated with geometric elements, scrolls and shell motifs, bear witness to the artistic sophistication and skill of Portuguese craftsmen of the period. The historical and artistic value of this object is also borne out by its presence in the collections of prestigious museums such as the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, the Lázaro Galdiano Foundation in Madrid and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



J. Baptista: Silver salver, Portugal, late 16th century.
Weight 1050 gr. Ø 33 cm



DYS44 Lampronti Gallery : Giovanni Antonio Canal (Venice, 1697-1768), *Capriccio of the Prisons of San Marco*, circa 1744. Oil on canvas, 105.5 x 127.5 cm

Giovanni Antonio Canal, known as Canaletto, was an Italian painter celebrated for his stunning depictions of Venetian landscapes and cityscapes. He gained popularity for his “vedute” – detailed and picturesque representations of city views – and “capricci” – imaginative architectural compositions that blended reality with fantasy. His work particularly resonated with British aristocrats on their grand tours of Venice. This work has a very fine provenance. It was painted for the artist’s great patron and agent Joseph Consul Smith, being part of a series of thirteen canvases, presumably intended to decorate the Palazzo Mangilli-Valmarana, Smith’s house on the Grand Canal just above the Rialto Bridge. In 1762, Smith sold the cream of his collection to King George III of England, including this painting.



Gallery de Potter d'Indoye: *Guéridon*, circa 1790.
 Attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire (Paris, 1751-1843). Gilt and patinated bronze, with a marble top, H 90.25 cm x Ø 62.25 cm

This pedestal table, attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, official chaser and gilder of the king Louis XVI, is one of a small group of similar ormolu pedestal tables with a patina finish on a griffin tripod base. One is in the Musée Nissim de Camondo in Paris, acquired from the supplier Seligmann, as being by Thomire, another was in the collection of Boniface de Castellane and Anna Gould at the Palais Rose, Paris, sold at Christie's Paris on 7 March 2017, lot 116. Another example was in the collection of Helena Rubinstein and John Dorrance and now belongs to Dalva Brothers, New York.

This “Magician book” is the only known automaton in the shape of a book with a question-and-answer mechanism, preserved in its original leather case with the original instructions. When the mechanism is activated, it reveals a magician standing on a terrace overlooking Lake Geneva and Mont Blanc. This book, described as the most astonishing automaton in the collection of Dr. Maurice Sandoz (1892-1958), was his personal favourite. He used it as a guest book, where visitors to his spectacular collection of automatons in his villa in Burier, Switzerland, could leave their impressions afterwards (*Revue de Voyages*, June 1958). Notable guests included Anna von Bismarck, Prince and Princess Frederick of Prussia, Prince and Princess Doria Pamphili, Clémentine of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Charlie Chaplin and his wife, among others. During his lifetime, Maurice Sandoz only lent the book once, for the 1950 exhibition at La Vieille Russie in New York.



Artimo Fine Arts: Magician question-and-answer automaton “album amicorum” book with original leather case and instructions for use.
 Signed Meussel et Fils, Geneva, March 1823.
 Gold, enamel and tortoiseshell, H 20 x W 15 cm
 (unique piece)



Galerie Marc Maison: Louis Malard, Monumental bed in Egyptomania style, 19th century.
Walnut with polychromy, H 271 x W 232 x D 260 cm

Presented at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, this bed was part of a complete bedroom set. This work is highly indicative of the Egyptomania that swept through the 19th century. Far beyond merely borrowing a few motifs from the ornamental repertoire of Ancient Egypt, as could be done in the Empire style at the turn of the century, its creator cabinetmaker Louis Malard multiplied the references in order to create a work with a unique style. This is reflected in the size of the bed, its architectural canopy and the life-size seated figures acting as bedside tables on either side, echoing the posture of the immense Egyptian seated statues.



Claes Gallery: Songye Mask, Democratic Republic of Congo, Katanga. Presumed period: late 19th century - early 20th century. Wood, pigments, H 31.8 cm

This mask is a female “kikashi” mask, as indicated by the two-tone white and black, the absence of a sagittal crest and the flat nose. Amongst Songye masks, a general distinction was made in reference to the function of male and female masks. Male masks (bifwebe balume) were used in rites of passage. On the other hand, female masks (bifwebe bakashi), which appeared on the occasion of the death or investiture of a chief and during lunar rites, were an integral part of the symbolic composition of these rituals, animating benevolent spiritual forces through dance.



Art Deco diamond tiara, Maison Chaumet, Paris 1909

This tiara was made in Paris in 1909 by Maison Chaumet for the wedding of the daughter of the Count and Countess de Heeren. It features a series of rounded Greek motifs, set with 2096 diamonds, mounted in platinum and gold, with a typical 'mille-grain' finish. While most tiaras of the period were in the guirlande or traditional style of the 19th century, this piece is an early example of the geometric aesthetic that was to define the Art Deco period, which reached its apogee in the 1920s. Founded in 1780, Maison Chaumet has designed more than 2000 stunning tiaras.



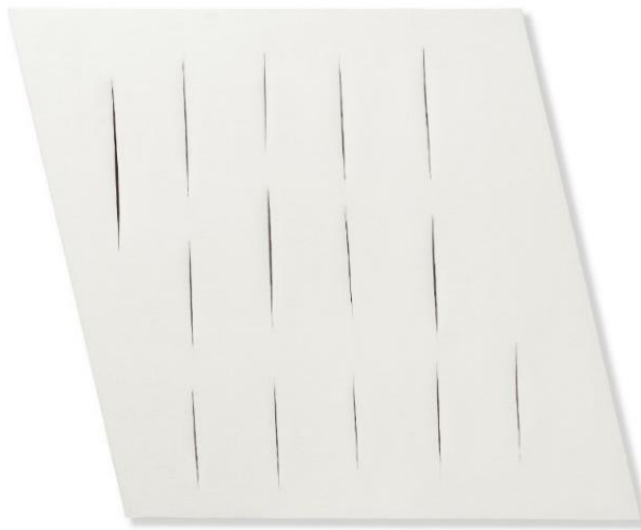
Kunstconsult 20th century art I objects: Set of five filetés-vases by Charles Schneider (Château-Thierry 1881-1953 Epinay-sur-Seine), circa 1925. Clear and opalescent glass in different colours, hand-blown and moulded, with applied vertical stripes.

This extremely rare, high-quality set comes from the Schneider factory, founded in Épinay-sur-Seine in 1913 by Ernest and Charles Schneider. Charles Schneider was one of the undisputed masters of French-style glass and crystal, and a member of the Nancy School, the movement behind the expansion of Art Nouveau in France and elsewhere. These works were discovered over a period of thirty years on the French and Dutch art markets.



Gokelaere & Robinson: Bodil Kjaer (Hatting 1932), *President desk*, 1959. Rosewood, steel, H 72 x W 210 x D 100 cm

This rosewood desk was created in 1959 by the Danish artist-designer Bodil Kjaer and manufactured by E. Pedersen & Son in Denmark as part of a project for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The design is pure with clear, refined lines. It is famous for having been used in several films, including three James Bond films. This desk model has featured in celebrity collections including those of the actor Michael Caine, the pianist Oscar Peterson and Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh.



Cortesi Gallery: Lucio Fontana (Rosario 1899-1969 Comabbio), *Concetto spaziale*, Attese, 1959. Water-based paint on canvas, H 81 x L 99 cm. Signed and inscribed on the reverse "l. fontana attese 1+1-AE2"

The rhomboidal canvas and the high number of incisions – fourteen – cut in three discreet bands on a white background, make this work a very rare example in Fontana's output. The movement and distribution of these incisions are a measure of energy and dispersion. The power of this work, which is irregular in form, is linked to its rejection of pictorial norms and its audacity in suggesting a new art form. This unique work could be seen as an anticipation of the artist's "Quanta" series, a group of works that Fontana created between 1959 and 1960.

Günther Uecker has for six decades developed his reliefs comprising dynamic arrangements of nails. In the 1950s, influenced by Eastern philosophy and Gregorian chanting, he began a ritual of hammering nails. These materials were synonymous with protection for the artist, who remembers nailing boards to the windows of his house when Soviet troops invaded after the Second World War. In 1957, he used nails on canvases to create an optical 'sundial' effect, projecting light and shadow in ephemeral patterns. In 1961, Uecker joined Heinz Mack and Otto Piene in the anti-expressionist movement Group Zero, which rejected the traditional dimensions of the canvas to explore kinetic, serial and participatory domains.



Boon Gallery: Günther Uecker (Wendorf 1930), *Wind*, 2005. Nails and oil on canvas laid down on wood, H 200 x L 160 cm



Galerie von Vertes: George Condo (New Hampshire, Concord 1957), *Female composition*, 2006. Oil on canvas, H 165.1 x L 152.4 cm

Like Giorgio de Chirico's 'Manichini' or metaphysical mannequins, which reject the face as a symbol of status and identity, *Female Composition* perfectly encapsulates Condo's concept of Artificial Realism. Through this portrait, he mocks the traditional representations of femininity as seen in the works by Rembrandt and Picasso. This ironic interpretation depicts a faceless woman with breasts, a cape, necklace, as well as a head topped with a hat and a carrot.

Practical information

From Sunday, January 26th to Sunday, February 2nd, 2025, from 11am to 7pm.
Brussels Expo – Halls 3 & 4
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