

# BRAFA's International Flair Kicks off the 2023 Art and Antiques Fairs

LUXURY*facts*

THE UNIQUE, THE EXQUISITE AND THE RARE

**The beauty of art has always been not just in technique, but in its interpretation, and what it reveals about the artist's thoughts. The innermost thoughts. BRAFA is one such exhibition, that reveals the evolution of world, through its exhibitors.**

By: Isabelle Kellogg

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Vetted, high-end fine art and antique fairs such as [BRAFA](#) (Belgian Fine Art Fair) are becoming scarcer. The recent news that Masterpiece and Olympia Summer, both in London, have cancelled their 2023 editions is a crushing realization of today's higher exhibition costs, fewer dealers and less interest in certain categories of collecting like antiques or the preservation of the past, and therefore, the spotlight is on a handful of international fine art fairs.

During the last decade, the challenge for fair organizers is to produce an event which engages and attracts new audiences in a perpetually changing art market in which social media plays a significant role and where forgeries are increasing.



BRAFA is considered by collectors (individuals and museums, for example) as the official kick off to the antiques and fine art (this term applies to the category spanning antiquities to contemporary) circuit. This year's 68th edition was eight days long, ending February 5 at the historic Art Deco exposition center outside the city center. The fair's theme reflected the city's celebration of Art Nouveau, an art movement accredited to Brussels-born Victor Horta, which is infused with colors, fluidity and forms from nature that seep into furniture, art, décor, architecture and jewelry. Even the carpet used throughout the exposition hall featured original drawings by Victor Horta!

We were invited to preview BRAFA the same day as the gala dinner took place which is several days before the fair opened to the public. Full disclosure, the people watching is seriously as grand as wandering the aisles filled with elegantly set tables for the dinner, browsing the stands artfully decorated to reflect each dealer's era of expertise and chatting with dealers. While this is taking place, a huge team of butlers continues to circulate the entire fair with silver trays filled with miniature pastries, canapes, beverages and Champagne. The overall impression is as if one has landed on a stage set for an haute couture fashion show film. We were graciously hosted by the luxurious five-star Hotel Amigo in Brussels, one block from the UNESCO designated Grande Place, a public square of public and private buildings dating from the 17th



### *Cavagnis Lacerenza Fine Art*

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At BRAFA, 130 renowned galleries and dealers showcased more than 10,000 items spanning centuries. As a vetted fair, BRAFA offers a remarkable perspective on the evolution of archeology and art history - from old to new - through dealers representing 20 different disciplines such as print works, maps, porcelain, illuminated manuscripts, tapestries, decorative art, furniture and more.

Every gallery deserves recognition but a few which really galvanized me on the spot included Douwes Fine Art B.V. with its glorious Rembrandt drawings and oil paintings, and Galerie Florence de Voldere with its stunningly displayed 16th-18th century Flemish masterpiece paintings, two dealers who are at the forefront of preserving collectors' interests in old world fine art.



### *Galerie Ary Jan*

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More contemporary era dealers were allowed to exhibit than previously which does reflect how society is, unfortunately, less interested in antiquities and old world fine art works. One outstanding gallery in this regard is Germany's Samuels Baumgarte Galerie with its Miro and Alexander Calder works. Another is Boon Gallery (no relation to Mary Boon, for those who remember her SoHo NYC gallery) from the wealthy Belgian resort town Knokke-Le Zoute with its spectacular 20th century masterpieces including Picasso, Rene Magritte and others. Other delights for collectors are 17th century pendulum clocks and antique tapestries.

An abundance of images and information, plus virtual tours of each booth, about each exhibitor is available on the official BRAFA website and is worth visiting to understand the scope and importance of this fair and we can't wait to return next year!