

## Didier Claes

With so many tribal art galleries concentrated in Brussels it is no surprise to find 10 specialists in the field showing at BRAFA, six of them from the Belgian capital.

They include Didier Claes, whose gallery in the Avenue Louise district specialises in African art.

This late 19th century 7½in (19cm) carved wooden figural comb from the Chowke people of Angola is one of the pieces he will be showing at BRAFA. It has a provenance to the Irwin Smiley collection, New York, 1928-2001, and is priced at €25,000.



## Xavier Eeckhout

Another returning BRAFA exhibitor is the Paris dealer Xavier Eeckhout, who specialises in animalier sculpture from 1880-1950. He has stood at the fair for 10 years and his display nearly always includes a selection of bronzes from the Antwerp school, based around Rembrandt Bugatti, and often focused on exotic animals at the Antwerp Zoo.

Pictured below is one of them, a model of an ostrich by Thierry van Ryswick signed and inscribed *1ère épreuve* (first proof) with a Susse Frères foundry mark.

It is priced around €35,000.



antiquetrade gazette.com

## Finch & Co

Finch & Co from London has been showing at BRAFA for 12 years. "We regard it as one of the most successful and well-organised art and antique events in Europe," notes the firm's Jan Finch.

"It is held where there are some of the most important, knowledgeable and ardent collectors in the world. The organisation succeeds in getting interested people through the fair so we are able to find buyers both new to us and who we have met before."

Finch's eclectic stand is always a veritable cabinet of curiosities which repays a closer look. This year's exhibits include a set of carved 12 ivory caricature portrait reliefs from the late 17th-early 18th century, in old wood frames, priced at €32,000.

They depict some of the leading Catholic clergy responsible for the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and implicated in the subsequent persecution of the Protestant Huguenots. The reliefs are based on a set of engravings published anonymously in 1691 titled *Héros de la Ligue ou la Procession Monacale par Louis XIV pour la Conversion des Protestants de son Royaume*.

The set was probably carved in London by an exiled Huguenot from the Dieppe workshops and each portrait has an ink label to the reverse naming the character portrayed. They have a provenance to the private collection of Victorian industrialist WB Buddicom, then by descent, then sold at auction in 1989 and subsequently in a London private collection.



## More to see in Brussels

BRAFA is a big draw for the visitor in late January but as well as enjoying all that Brussels has to offer in general cultural terms there are other art and antiques-related events on at the same time.

Late January is also the time for *Winter Bruneaf*, a tribal art gathering of 19 dealers based largely in the network of streets in the Sablon district, running this year from January 23-27.

Participants include resident dealers in their own galleries and guests who rent space in the area, such as a group show featuring five dealers (two from Paris, two from Brussels and one from the US) staged at the Ancienne Nonciature building on the Rue des Sablons.

A must-see for ethnographic enthusiasts is the newly reopened African Museum in Tervuren near Brussels. An ambitious five-year restoration project has resulted in a transformation of the layout and presentation of Belgium's ethnographic art collections.

➤ [bruneaf.com](http://bruneaf.com)  
➤ [africamuseum.be](http://africamuseum.be)

Brussels has its own contingent of auction houses which will be in action during January. They include Horta, holding a mixed-discipline, two-day auction on January 28-29 featuring plenty of Belgian art of all ages as well as furniture, ceramics, jewellery, silverware and carpets.

Among the works on offer will be this 6ft 6in (2m) high Black Forest coat stand, **right**, carved with two bears, estimated at €3000-4000.

➤ [horta.be](http://horta.be)

During *Winter Bruneaf*, **Native Auctions** will be holding a 137-lot Tribal Art, Modern Art and Design sale on January 26.

➤ [native-auctions.com](http://native-auctions.com)

**Galerie Moderne** is holding two auctions over the period: a mixed-discipline sale on January 29-30 and auction on January 31 devoted to Asian art.

Included in the latter is this 21in (53cm) long polychrome porcelain opium pipe, **below**, decorated with palace scenes separated by bands of auspicious symbols and with a bowl enamelled with a poem and decoration of ducks in the branches of a cherry tree. It is dated to the late Qing dynasty, with a provenance to a collection of Asian art belonging to a Brussels-based enthusiast (1920-84) and then by descent.

It has an estimate of €1000-1500.

➤ [galeriemoderne.be](http://galeriemoderne.be)



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