




Brand SCULPTURA
Publication www.brusselstimes.com
Printrun 1105
Audience 0

Product
Date of Pub. 15/02/2024
Periodicity Daily
Value 1208 €

The art and events to look out for in Brussels and beyond

 brusselstimes.com/art-culture/924751/the-art-and-events-to-look-out-for-in-brussels-and-beyond-2

The Brussels Times selects some of the best exhibitions currently on show in museums and galleries.

Thursday, 15 February 2024

By Helen Lyons



BANAD FESTIVAL

The BANAD Festiva is the definitive introduction to the capital's Art Nouveau and Art Deco gems, for which it receives international acclaim.

It allows visitors to explore this dazzling architectural heritage of Brussels through guided outdoor tours, concerts, lectures, events and activities for families and people of all ages.

Unique to the BANAD are guided tours of interiors usually closed to the public, making this a rare chance to lay eyes on exclusive sights even the most determined tourists will miss.

Events across Brussels

March 9 to 24

RETHINKING COLLECTIONS



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The Africa Museum has a controversial history to say the least as the home for the art and artefacts plundered on behalf of King Leopold II in his bid to showcase Belgium's colonial grandeur.

Today, the museum recognises its dubious background and has begun looking into the origins of its collection, as it considers restitution of items obtained forcefully or illegally.

ReThinking Collections, is part of the process: a series of objects on display, including shields, statues and masks, along with detailed analysis how they were made and how they were taken.

Africa Museum

Until September 29

Weekdays from 10am to 5pm, weekends from 10am to 6pm

Leuvensesteenweg 13, 3080 Tervuren

€13 admission, groups and seniors €10, students and people with disabilities €5

DON'T CALL IT ART BRUT



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This eclectic museum on the rue Haute has dedicated an entire collection to the fringes. Art brut, or outsider art, is defined by the genre's French founder Jean Dubuffet as art created outside the official boundaries of culture, in particular by artists outside the established scene: hermits, spiritualists, even patients in psychiatric hospitals.

In a 1984 letter, Dubuffet warns "You will have to find another designation." This exhibition features an explosion of shapes and colours that Art & Marges promises visitors they never knew existed.

The Art & Marges Museum

April 6 to 21

Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm

Rue Haute 314, 1000 Brussels

€4 admission

WINDOW ON INFINITY

Antwerp welcomes back one of its own with an exhibition dedicated to Jef Verheyen (1932-1984), a Flemish artist celebrated in the European art world and yet largely unknown in his native Belgium.

This is the first-ever solo exhibition to be held in Verheyen's hometown and illustrates the modern master's interplay of light and dark, form and colour.

This special exhibition describes Verheyen as the "engine of the avant-garde" and places the pictures in dialogue or confrontation with his predecessors and contemporaries, putting the Antwerp artist into an international context.

Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp



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March 23 to August 18

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 5pm, Thursdays from 10am to 10pm, weekends from 10am to 6pm

Leopold de Waelplaats 1, 2000 Antwerp

€20 admission adults, €10 for ages 18 to 26, free for all under age 18

EARLY WORKS, LITA ALBUQUERQUE

Multidisciplinary Lita Albuquerque is one of the few women artists associated with the 1960s Light and Space art movement and the Land Art of the same period, making this exhibition on her early works a window into the origins of both movements.

Featuring a carefully curated selection of sculptures, photographs and installations from ephemeral works produced in the 1970s and 1980s, the collection includes some of Albuquerque's monumental works.

Albuquerque weaves geometric forms and natural elements, inviting visitors to reflect on their relationship with the environment, the duality between earth and sky, and the transience of light and space.

Galerie La Patinoire Royale Bach

February 3 to March 30

Tuesday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm

Rue Haute 314, 1000 Brussels

€4 admission

BIENNALE DE L'IMAGE POSSIBLE



This exhibition is held in an unexpected and extraordinary space: the former provincial library of Les Chiroux. With 7,000 square metres of vast reading rooms, offices and storerooms, the location in the heart of the city plays host to a collective event featuring



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13 artistic partners.

Called MUTANTX, the aim is to encourage encounters with a series of performances, installation activations, meetings with artists, workshops, debates and screenings.

“The public are invited to bring this space to life,” the collective says, “to be or become MUTANTX and to question their role in the profound transition of the city and, more broadly, of the world.”

Former Chiroux library

March 16 to June 1

Wednesday to Sunday from 11am to 6pm

Rue des Croisiers 15, 4000 Liège

€5 admission, greater donations welcome

KLARAFESTIVAL

The largest classical music festival in Belgium, Klarafestival features a series of concerts and performances during March.

Top musicians from around the world are welcomed in venues in Brussels and Bruges, and this edition’s theme is one of reflection: classical musicians will engage with other artistic disciplines and genres as part of a programme that spans from the earliest years of classical music, through the romantic repertoire, to challenging contemporary and new creations.

While live concerts are at the festival’s core, innovative digital projects join the programme thanks to a close collaboration with VRT and private and cultural partners at the Flemish, Brussels, federal, European and international level. Klarafestival’s concerts are also broadcast by the European Broadcasting Union.

From Flanders Festival Brussels

Performances throughout March

Multiple venues across Brussels and Bruges

Admission prices vary by event

SCULPTURA #2



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Sculptura #2 intends to be even more ambitious than its successful debut last year. With 40 artists from over 20 European countries, the sculpture and installation art will transform the grounds of Tour & Taxis in Brussels, offering visitors diverse perspectives, styles and cultural backgrounds. Wander, and be inspired.

Gare Maritime at Tour & Taxis

January 19 to March 10

From Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm, weekends from 11am to 6pm

Rue Picard 11, 1000 Brussels

Free admission

DA VINCI - L'ARTISTE, L'INGÉNIEUR, LE GASTRONOME





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Breaking ground as an inventor, architect, theorist, painter, anatomist and mathematician, Leonardo da Vinci undoubtedly fulfilled his intention to leave “an indelible memory in the minds of mortals.” This exhibition from Europa Expo explores why 500 years after his death, he is still considered one of history's greatest geniuses.

Set in the museum area of Liège-Guillemins station and spanning over 2,000 square metres, installations focus on three aspects of his life: art, engineering and, perhaps surprisingly, gastronomy. Anyone with an appetite for learning will find something to take away from the exhibition.

Europa Expo, Gare Liège-Guillemins

February 24 to June 30

Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 7pm

Place des Guillemins 2, 4000 Liège

€17 admission

GENERATIONS OF RESILIENCE

An exhibition of several generations of photographers from war-torn Ukraine, this collection places the modern conflict in its historical context while demonstrating that such distinctions are often blurred for the people struggling in the ‘spiral nature’ of the struggle for Ukraine’s independence and democratic development.

Cyclical processes, historical events and unity erase the borderline between these generations, Hangar’s exhibition asserts.

Photos date from the 1970s to the present, the images recording and archiving war and conflict – as well as survival and resilience.

Hangar

January 26 to March 23

Tuesday to Sunday from noon to 6pm

Place du Châtelain 18, 1050 Brussels

€9 admission, €5 students

MIMA’s new Popcorn exhibition is a group show of 15 artists who are all noted for their colourful, offbeat, dreamlike and surreal imagery.

Part-humorous, part-shocking, curator Raphaël Cruyt says they are a riposte to the prevailing “black mirror” view of the world in crisis. “There is a universal antidote to gloom: art. In all its forms and at all times, art has been an outlet for our anxieties,” he says.

MIMA

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Wednesday to Friday from 10am to 5pm, Saturday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm

39-41, Quai du Hainaut, 1080 Brussels

€13.50 standard admission, €7.50 students, seniors, jobseekers

VW GOLF AT 50



A compact car with a cool look and plenty of pep, the Volkswagen Golf became an instant automotive icon when it was launched in 1974 as the successor to the Beetle. Its shape was considered revolutionary for its time, but creator Giorgio Giugiaro's straightforward design was popular too. Fifty years on, it has sold 37 million units and counting, and over its eight generations, the VW Golf has become the bestselling European car of all time.

Autoworld Museum Brussels

March 1 to April 24

Weekdays from 10am to 5pm and till 6pm on weekends

Parc du Cinquanteaire 11, 1000 Brussels

€15 admission for adults, €7 for children aged 6-12
