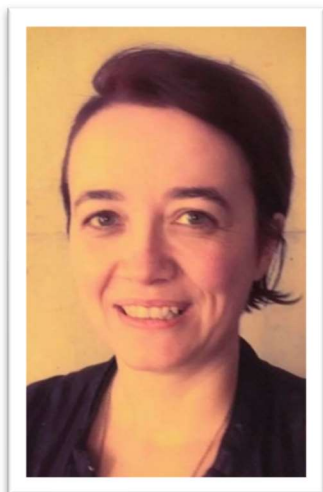




The Belfius Art Collection: Five Centuries of Belgian Art



Bénédicte Bouton
Head of Culture,
Belfius Bank & Insurance

ABSTRACT

The Belfius Art Collection includes some 4,300 objects of Belgian art within three sections: Flemish masters of the 16th and 17th centuries, Modern art from 1860 to 1960, and contemporary art from 1960 through to the present day.

Every year, a new selection of some 60 works of the collection are presented in the Belfius Art Gallery in a thematic exhibition.

Belfius' support to Belgian art is also expressed by the loans of works from the art collection to Belgian museums, as well as through the purchase of works by young Belgian talents.

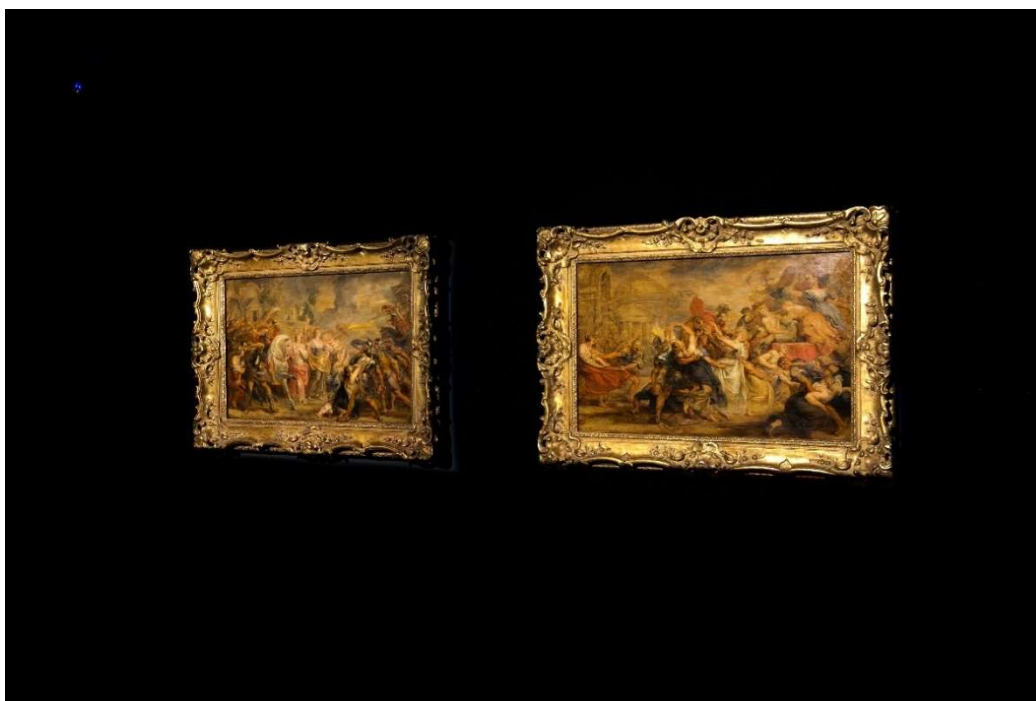
Origins of the collection

The origins of the Belfius Art collection date back to immediately after the Second World War, when Crédit Communal (founded in 1860) and the Belgian branch of Banque Paribas (founded in 1872) began to acquire significant works of Belgian national heritage to ensure they remain in the country. BACOB Banque's collection (initiated in 1980), finally, focused on international contemporary art. The three collections now form one single ensemble, focusing on Belgian art and spanning five centuries.

The collection

Today, the Belfius Art Collection includes some 4,300 objects of Belgian art within three sections: Flemish masters of the 16th and 17th centuries, Modern art from 1860 to 1960, and contemporary art from 1960 through to the present day.

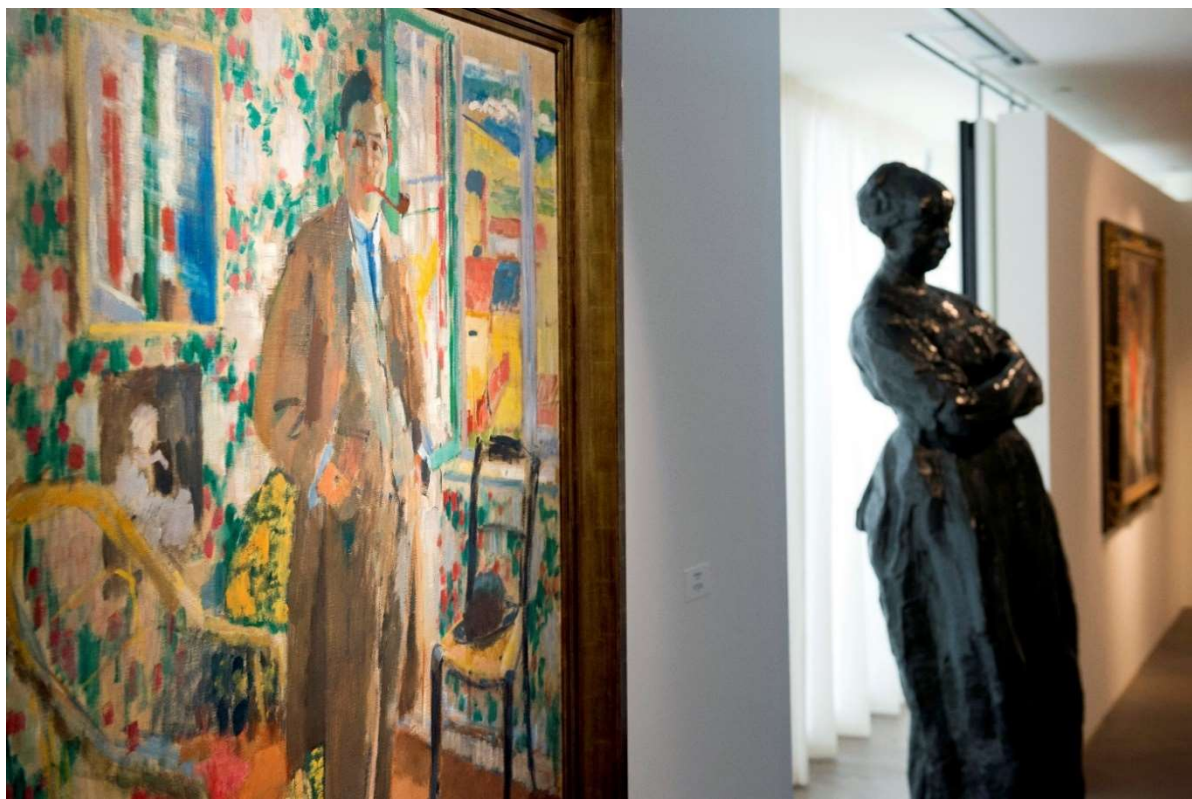
Among the extensive collection of works by Flemish masters are two exquisite oil sketches from 1640 by Sir Peter Paul Rubens purchased in 1969: “The Reconciliation of the Romans and the Sabines” and “The Rape of the Sabine Women”, originally commissioned by Philip IV of Spain shortly before Rubens’ death. These works are complemented by a magnificent painting by Jan Brueghel the Elder entitled “Fruit Garland with Offering to Ceres” (circa 1618), purchased in 1969, and other major paintings and sculptures by, among others, Sir Anthony van Dyck, Jacob Jordaens, Roelant Savery, Pieter Pourbus and Frans Snyders.



Pieter Paul Rubens

The Rape of the Sabine Women and The Reconciliation of the Romans and the Sabines, 1640, Belfius Art Collection

A comprehensive survey of mid-19th and 20th century Belgian Modernism comprises works by the likes of such key figures from Realism and Expressionism to Symbolism and Surrealism and beyond, notably including paintings and works on paper by James Ensor, Léon Spilliaert, Fernand Khnopff, Charles Degroux, Xavier Mellery and Rik Wouters. The most important Surrealists are also represented with significant works, namely Paul Delvaux, René Magritte, Marcel Mariën, Jane Graverol and Rachel Baes.



Rik Wouters

Portrait d'Ernest Wijnants, 1912 and Soucis domestiques, 1913, Belfius Art Collection

The section on contemporary art from Belgium features works by such highly acclaimed global players as the enigmatic conceptual artist and poet Marcel Broodthaers and Roger Raveel, one of the most important protagonists of New Figuration, as well as the internationally acclaimed painter Luc Tuymans, the sculptor and installation artist Jan Fabre, represented by several works such as his famous sculpture, "Mur de la montée des Anges" (1994), a stylized Victorian dress composed of thousands of shining iridescent jewel beetles. Also included are the sculptress Berlinde De Bruyckere, the photo and video artist Marie-Jo Lafontaine, the British-born light artist Ann-Veronica Janssens, who lives and

works in Brussels and the internationally renowned painters Michael Borremans and Rinus Van de Velde.



Jan Fabre

Mur de la montée des Anges, 1994, Belfius Art Collection

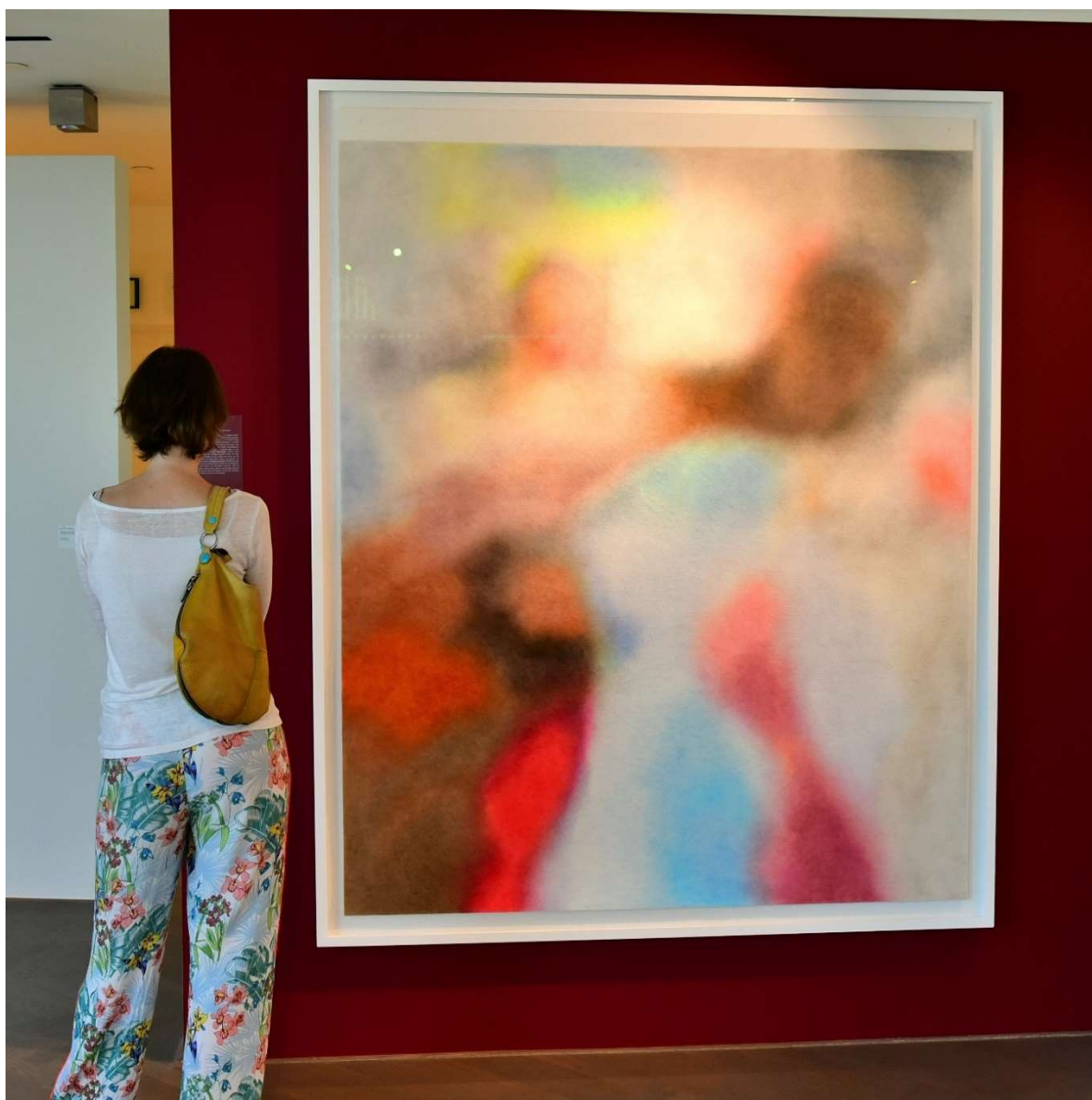
Art @ Belfius

Works by these and numerous other Belgian artists spanning nearly five centuries can be viewed at the Belfius Art Gallery on the 32nd floor of the company's headquarters in Brussels. Works are also found in the headquarters lobby, offices and VIP meeting rooms, as well as in various regional offices. Site-specific works of art and monumental outdoor sculptures, such as a wall mosaic by Jan Fabre or a monumental installation by Arne Quinze, can be found in the headquarters lobby, as well as in the reception areas.

Eager to practice an active lending policy, a selection of paintings can also be viewed in various museums, with whom Belfius has established partnerships or to whom Belfius grants loans for temporary exhibitions. Among the closest partners for temporary exhibitions are the top Belgian museums such as BAM, KMSK/MRBA Brussels, Mac's, M



Museum, Musée Magritte, Mu.ZEE and museums of Fine Art in Ghent, Tournai and Liège, as well as institutions in neighbouring countries such as the Royal Academy of Arts in London and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, both of which will be hosting a major exploration of Spilliaert's works in early 2020.



Léa Belousovitch

Peshawar, Pakistan, 22 septembre 2013, 2019, Belfius Art Collection



Belfius' longstanding and highly active cultural policy is an integral component of its corporate social responsibility. Eager fully to assume its social role and to provide real added value to society, Belfius aims to protect this unique artistic heritage and grant the widest possible access to its art collection by frequently opening the doors of its art gallery to the general public. During these events, the public can discover temporary exhibitions based on the Belfius collection. Specific tours are also organized for those with impaired vision. Furthermore, guided tours are also organized for Belfius staff members; these tours inspire those staff members to discuss art in the workplace and aim to trigger their creativity.

The bank also supports cultural initiatives and invests in promising Belgian talents in line with its strategy of support to young starters. Hence the latest acquisition of the work *Peshawar, Pakistan, 22 septembre 2013* by the young artist Léa Belousovitch (b. 1989). In this work, created using colour pencils on industrial felt, she transposes press photographs in order to minimize their dramatic impact. She always chooses pictures of vulnerable people. Through a clever blurring effect, the characters she chooses regain their anonymity. She also deliberately chooses felt, an insulating, soft and protective material.

All information on the collection and the gallery as well as a virtual tour of our past exhibitions are to be found at www.belfius-art-collection.be.