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What's on this week: 26 January to 1 February



CULTURE 11:51 25/01/2024



Brussels celebrates contemporary photography in shows across the city, while major art fairs compete for audience's attention. Discover our pick of upcoming cultural highlights...

The capital's month-long celebration [PhotoBrussels Festival](#) offers a staggering 55 exhibitions for its 2024 edition, showing off the work of 300 artists in galleries and venues across the city. It also counts a programme of events, including talks, workshops and artist presentations. The initiative was launched in 2016 by Hangar's Delphine Dumont to promote the work of amateur and professional contemporary photographers. Pictured: Delali Ayivi's *The Joy Of It All* at Galerie Gomis. *Until 25 February, multiple venues*



The comedy season continues with a night of stand-up thanks to [Brussels Belly Laughs](#). Five outstanding acts from the city's English-speaking comedy scene step up on stage for a night of multicultural humour. €12 online; €15 at the door. 26 January 20.00 (19.30 doors), La Plume Persée, Rue sans Soucis 51 (Ixelles)



At a time when Germans are taking to the streets to protest secret political meetings with neo-Nazis and likely presidential candidate Donald Trump saying that immigrants are “poisoning the blood of our country,” the House of European History launches the new iWalk [Hidden Children: Survivors of the Holocaust in Belgium](#). Accessible via a mobile app, it leads visitors to sites in downtown Brussels crucial to the survival of four children during the Second World War. With the help of the underground resistance, Michel, Sonia, Helene and Gilbert escaped certain death by hiding and taking on other identities. Download the app on [Google Play](#) or the [Apple Store](#).



Tribal, ancient and oriental works are spotlighted of the winter edition of the [Civlisations Brussels Art Fair](#). Located in the city's fine art area of the Sablon, it's yet another opportunity for art lovers to explore the vibrant quarter and appreciate some quality pieces on display by a host of international galleries. Free entrance. *Until 28 January, Sablon area*



A Belgian photographer with an eye for the extraordinary turns his camera on unique individuals both in the street and in his studio. [Jacques Sonck/Portraits 1977-2019](#) is a solo exhibition organised by [Gallery Fifty One](#) at Fondation A. It shows how the Ghent-based artist focuses on the physique of his subjects, whether it be an anomaly in their appearance or an extrovert attitude. Sonck's models are frequently from the streets of cities in Belgium; real people and original characters. The exhibition is part of [PhotoBrussels Festival](#). *Until 31 March, Avenue Van Volxem 304*



It's an artform that has long been neglected in the feverish world of contemporary art. But new fair [Ceramic Brussels](#) is committed to championing artists who are making waves in the creative discipline. Showcasing their work in solo shows are some 60 Belgian and international galleries and institutions. The event aims to encourage collectors to acquire ceramics, promote the art form at a European level and support young artists in a competition to be launched this spring. *Until 28 January, Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 86C*



From humble beginnings in 1956, [Brafa Art Fair](#) is now ranked as one of the top five art and antiques fairs in the world. It retains its conviviality and eclecticism with 132 leading galleries from 13 countries display a wide range of furniture and art objects dating from the Middle Ages to the present day. Among them are paintings, contemporary art, tribal and Asian art, porcelain, glassware, textiles, exquisite jewellery, original comic strips, engravings, rare books and photography. *28 January to 4 February, Brussels Expo, Place de la Belgique (Heysel)*



Once an offshoot event, Queer Mais Trash is now joining the larger Courts Mais Trash for one big [week-long extravaganza](#) of trash film shorts. Fans of cult filmmakers such as John Waters and Alejandro Jodorowsky will know just what to expect: a sometimes cringe-inducing mix of gore, violence and sex – lots of sex. While exploitation takes centre stage, a lot of this stuff adds up to more than shock value, with queer, feminist and politically relevant points of view banging about. *29 January to 3 February, Les Riches-Clares, 24 Rue des Riches-Clares*



The [Festival en ville](#) documentary film festival is all about territories – geographical, social and invisible – and the people who make them their own. You'll see stories short and long about people who had to flee their homelands, defend their countries from colonisation or listen to the natural world telling us it is worth saving. *29 January to 4 February, across Brussels*



It's the last chance to visit [Tim Burton's Labyrinth](#), the immersive experience that has already drawn some 125,000 visitors since opening in the autumn. A maze of rooms showcase different themes from the American director's work, displaying original artworks, special technology, lights, sound and scenography from his celebrated filmography. Visitors can wander freely around, following one of 300 possible routes. The duration of the visit is between 45 minutes and 1 hour. *Until 4 February, Wednesday to Sunday, Tour & Taxis, Avenue du Port 86*



Relax to an evening of evocative Celtic melodies at this [charity concert](#) celebrating the musical heritage of Ireland and Scotland organised by the [Association Femmes d'Europe](#). Traditional airs from both countries will be performed by Scottish musicians Muriel Johnstone and Ian Robertson. Tickets €35. *1 February 20.00, Protestant Church of Brussels, Place du Musée 2*



Book now [Flagey Piano Days](#) For its 11th edition, the festival invites star pianist Anna Vinnitskaya (*pictured*) - winner of Belgium's prestigious Queen Elisabeth Competition - as guest curator. The programme features internationally renowned talents such as brothers Lucas and Arthur Jussen alongside promising young pianists. As for the varied content, expect to be bowled over by classical works by Prokofiev and Rachmaninov, jazz and South African sounds, as well as contemporary compositions. *7 to 11 February, Flagey, Place Sainte-Croix, Ixelles*

OUTSIDE BRUSSELS



The [Ostend Film Festival](#) celebrates cinema from Belgian but also new international films, especially if Belgians are in front of or behind the camera. The festival opens with Wannes Destoop's feature debut *Holy Rosita* about a woman who can barely care for herself with a strong desire to have a child, closes with Gust Van den Berghe's *The Magnet Man*, set in a 1918 Belgian circus, and screens more than 120 shorts and features in-between. *26 January to 3 February, Kinepolis and other venues in Ostend*



[Le Semaine du Son](#) continues in Brussels this week and opens in Flanders and Wallonia. The festival focuses on the sounds around us – those we hear and those we don't – and explores the art of hearing and listening. Check out, for instance, a concert by the incredibly unique Belgian composer Jean-Louis Poliart, whose electroacoustic music uses technology to manipulate the sounds of acoustic instruments. Or immerse yourself in *The Song of Mothers*, a soundscape that conveys the patterns and rhythms of lamentation. *29 January to 4 February, across Belgium*



For the reopening of La Louvière's splendid [Centre of Engraving and the Printed Image](#), not one but three exhibitions are staged. Their thematic is *Nos géantes*, a nod to the Centre region's folklore giant heroes. The museum draws on its 16,000-work collection to offer these shows of large-format prints and graphic images. They include works by international artists, including Picasso, and local towering artists such as Pierre Alechinsky. *27 January to 2 June, Rue des Amours 10, La Louvière*