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**Preview of the 2016 Brussels Furniture Fair**

Early November is a regular feature in the calendar of the European furniture sector. The dates from 6 to 9 November 2016 are filled with one single fixture: the Brussels Furniture Fair. Year after year it is an event that never disappoints. Quite the opposite in fact! And things are already looking good for 2016. A glance at the list of high-quality participants shows that this year it will definitely be worth dropping by at the Furniture Fair. The fact that Brussels is also the most agreeable fair in the sector makes the visit not only interesting, but a real pleasure too!

A trade fair owes its strengths in the first place to the exhibitors and the range of products. For the furniture trade in Belgium, the Netherlands, France and all our neighbouring countries, the Brussels Furniture Fair is an important opportunity to put together their collections for the following year. But this fair is also an exciting event for more distant European countries. Brussels is traditionally the prime showcase for Belgian furniture manufacturers. They save the launch of their latest collections for this fair. In this way, Belgium, a great exporting country, attracts a great many visitors from abroad: out of each 10 visitors, no less than 6 are from outside Belgium! And of course the range of high-quality international products plays an important part in this. Just as with the visitors, 60% of exhibitors are also from abroad. Brussels is able to count on loyal exhibitors and major international names that take part in the fair every year. Nevertheless, this year several surprising new names are turning up, or are returning after one or more years’ absence.

**A crystal-clear layout**

The fair is divided into six segments that have evolved with the spirit of the times. This clear organisation of the range makes it possible to visit the fair efficiently and to obtain an immediate overview.

‘City’ presents contemporary furniture and seating, taking in Halls 3, 4 and 5. This is the largest segment at the Furniture Fair and both major players and smaller niche producers from Belgium and abroad will be presenting the best of their wares. From Belgium, for example, there are the Mecam group, Recor group, Karel Mintjens, Rom, Passepartout, Meubar, Unic Design, Theuns, DEZ, up2date, Gerlin, Perfecta, D&D, Neyt, Varam, Mobitec, MDR Decruy, Dekimpe and Vipack. Several German manufacturers are also back on parade, including Himolla, Rauch, Nolte, Polipol, Hukla, Gwinner, Païdi, Wiemann and Wimex. Willi Schillig has once again opted to come to Brussels, and K+W and Trend Team are two new German exhibitors. Ada of Austria is returning too. The Netherlands are also abundantly represented, for example by IMS Benelux, De Toekomst/Sitting Vision, Het Anker, Sit Design and Easysofa. As always, Italy’s presence is above all in seating, with Calia, Max Divani, Egoitaliano, Bardi, Corium Italia and others. As far as general furniture is concerned, Calligaris is back after a few years away; Nardi Interni, Orme and Status are the Italian newcomers. From France there is Gautier, which is showing its Gami collection, Demeyere, and the newcomers Mark Mobilier, Inter Link and Alsapan. Scandinavia is represented by Hjort Knudsen, Lifetime and the newcomer Skovby, and Portugal and Spain are also sending some fine envoys, including Aleal, ARC, AC Moura, Mobliberica and Vym. HTL, Poldem, Primavera and Cilek complete this list of the main ‘City’ exhibitors.

‘Brussels by Night’ in Hall 6 is the place for the bedroom specialists, with brilliant innovations on the technical side and in mattresses, and there is also a fine range of superbly upholstered box-spring beds and even bed linen. So there are more than enough possibilities for tasteful decoration in the bedroom. Belgium is well represented, with exhibitors including Veldeman Bedding, the Revor Group, LS Bedding, Polypreen, Van Landschoot, Kreamat, Nill Spring, Boone, Mathy by Bols and Van Houdt. Elsach has also decided to return to Brussels again. But Recor Bedding are to be found on the Recor Group stand in Hall 5. The Netherlands also have a strong presence, with such big names as Avek, Norma, Napco Beds, Perzona, M-Line and Dico Beds, plus the bedroom furniture by Bijnen Juvo. But some smaller manufacturers are also joining in, such as Mahoton, Ultima, Mexx Bedding, Boxspring Design, Royal Dreams, Keywest Bedding and Van Os. Fine bed linen and a completely new collection of boxsprings can be found with Van Dyck. Brussels by Night is given an international dimension by Serta, Yatsan, Viking Beds of Sweden, Lourini, Isbir and Brinkhaus, to name just a few. Lastly, Denmark’s Innovation will also be showing several sofa-beds.

‘Square’ is a zone in Hall 3 with striking, innovative products with a contemporary design and at affordable prices. It offers a great alternative to the big design brands, and includes the Belgian Joli, Neococoon and Debrah’s, Domitalia, Nicoletti, Dienne, Delta Salotti, Devina Nais and Munari from Italy, Coesel, Bree and Bert Plantagie from the Netherlands, Akante from France and Machalke and Jan Kurtz from Germany.

‘Mosaic’ is the collective name for colourful, multifaceted collections at basic prices, to be found in Hall 9. Hima, Bauwens, Zijlstra, Girardeau, Idea, Alcos, Divaco, Young Line, Enbe, Meubelco, Karintrad, HM Helvetia and Jakobsen Home are just a few of our loyal exhibitors. This year, B-Seated by BSM will be showing its chair collection here rather than in Hall 8. Confortluxe is back after a break, and Chairz Classo, Rousseau and Monte are newcomers.

‘Holland à la Carte’ in the Patio will have a new look. This platform for Dutch manufacturers will among others present Cartel Living, Kluskens, Jess Design, Chita, Nouvion, BKS, Spinder, Jamé, Ztahl by Dijkos, Sumisura, HE Design, Carpet Creations, De Kussenfabriek and Leclercq&Bouwman. The Brussels Furniture Fair is the most important trade fair for the sector in the Benelux, and so our northern neighbours feel perfectly at home there!

It’s all atmosphere and animation at ‘Fusion’ in Hall 8: rustic and romantic collections with the addition of decoration and attractive home accessories. In addition to numerous Belgian companies there are also a lot of Dutch exhibitors. To start with the Belgians, Vandecasteele, Pro Arte, Demuynck, Demtre, Micheldenolf, Leda, Dekorattex, KDB Furn, Vips&Friends, G&S, DV D’Sign, Daatti and Prieels always respond to the call. Lee&Lewis are back after a year’s break, and Foda is a new Belgian exhibitor.

Just like last year, several Dutch exhibitors are grouped around their own bar under the heading ‘Brussels Lifestyle’: Richmond, Eleonora, NixDesign/PMP, DTP, Vermeer, Mattzz and Sevn will be making a party of it. The other Dutch stalwarts include Maxfurn, Bodilson, Nijwie, RV Design and Ruby Fires, as well as the newcomers Hoogendam, PTMD, Quality Oak Furniture, European Furniture and Periglass. And there is also a major British manufacturer, Tetrad.

**BE Magazine, trends and Balthazars**

As a Belgian trade fair, we are proud of our indigenous furniture industry. This year, we are creating the twelfth edition of BE Magazine to preview its new collections. The magazine gives potential visitors to the Furniture Fair a clear and sometimes surprising overview of what to expect in Brussels. BE Magazine is a lively illustration of the fact that Belgians always love a challenge. They react assertively, with creativity and flexibility, but also continue to do those things they do best.

There is also a great deal of creativity to be found in the trend passages that run between the halls. Once again, Art Director Siegrid Demyttenaere has identified three key trends, this year with the common subject “We Care!”. These are illustrated with striking products from exhibitors, which visitors see as they pass through the passages.

Just like in previous years, the Balthazars will be presented on the evening of Tuesday 8 November, followed by a celebratory drink. These awards recognise innovation and originality with a certificate and a coveted 12-litre bottle of champagne.

**The fair as a meeting place**

A trade fair is an important event in every sector’s annual calendar, and this is certainly the case for the Brussels Furniture Fair. This year’s campaign image expresses this splendidly. Four different images, one for each of the fair’s working languages: Dutch, French, English and German. Before the fair starts, the visitor only sees his own language, just as he sees his own shop. But at the fair he also sees the other languages, and other visitors. As the capital of Europe and melting pot of languages and cultures, Brussels is a central meeting place for the European furniture world.

This year, the Furniture Fair would once again like to live up to its reputation as the most pleasurable fair in Europe by welcoming visitors with great hospitality. A visit to this fair need not cost a fortune. The core elements of this fine fair are encounter, discover and purchase. And when the setting is so agreeable, that is all made so much easier!

Lieven Van den Heede

2016 Brussels Furniture Fair

6 – 9 November

9 am – 7 pm

[www.furniturefairbrussels.be](http://www.furniturefairbrussels.be)