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Brussels Furniture Fair

emphasizes the value of human contact

The world we live in is highly digital and the end of professional fairs has been predicted more than once. Meanwhile though, it is becoming more and more clear this is the wrong kind of reasoning. When looking at the Brussels Furniture Fair (3 to 6 November in Brussels Expo) it is obvious how this is the all-important moment for the furniture trade to see and compare the newest collections for the next furniture year at one and the same place, visit the regular suppliers and make discoveries at the stands of new suppliers.

Not only visitors are taking advantage of this, however. Manufacturers from their side get direct feedback from buyers, something digital communication can impossibly cover, and which enables them to make adjustments to collections before the start of the production. Besides, there is also the physical aspect. The visitor is inspired, and the exhibitor gets a unique chance of personal contact with the (potential) customer.

300 exhibitors, seven halls

The numbers learn there are around 300 exhibitors, spread over seven halls. The fairgrounds themselves are subdivided into segments. For contemporary, modern furniture, there is City in halls, 3, 4 and 5. The first two halls are occupied by strong international manufacturers, while the latter is reserved for the top representatives of the Belgian furniture industry. For those who rather prefer the country or industrial look, there is Fusion in hall 8, where Holland à la Carte in the Patio makes both styles come together. Sleep specialists can be found

in hall 6, while those who are looking for price-conscious furniture will find what they need at Mozaïek in hall 9.

'How are you?'

Of further interest is that the trend passages, which received a fresh new concept last year, are once again developed by art director Siegrid Demyttenaere. She distinguishes three themes around the central question 'How are you?'. The key concepts are harmony, physical and mental wellbeing, and spirituality as a counterpoint to technology. Each theme is encapsulated in a character: the Essentialist, the Spiritualist and the Energist.

Good to know is that the organization offers a lot of tools. For instance: on the website, you will find all exhibitors of this edition. You can select them according to nationality, hall or segment, thus enabling a well-timed visit. Since the contract specialists appear on more and more to do lists, the manufacturers who are active in the project market are listed as well, with several possibilities to refine

your quest. Shortly before the fair opens its doors, a clickable floor plan will also be put online.

"A fair visit also deserves the right accompaniment when you are looking for a short breather", Lieven Van den Heede, general manager of the Brussels Furniture Fair concludes. "At the fair, we offer several surprising food concepts, where visitors can enjoy free snacks and drinks."

Balthazars on Tuesday evening

"I specifically want to point out what's happening on Tuesday evening 5 November. That evening there is the festive ceremony in which the yearly Balthazars are handed out. This award has four categories in which the jury turns the spotlight on an exceptional innovation, an original design, or a stylish collection. The winner goes home with a certificate and the Balthazar: a giant bottle of champagne containing no less than 12 litres." ■