

## History of the Belfius Art Collection

With more than 4300 items, the Belfius Art Collection is the largest collection of Belgian art in the country and, according to the catalogue of Global Corporate Collections, is among the 100 most important art collections in the corporate world.

In actual fact, the history of the collection dates back to the beginning of the 1960s, when both Crédit Communal (established in 1860) and the Belgian arm of Paribas Bank (founded in 1872 as Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas) began to collect items of national heritage importance to prevent valuable pieces of art from disappearing abroad. Initially, Crédit Communal placed the emphasis on Belgian art from 1860, and in 1963 had the opportunity to acquire part of the collection belonging to Gustave Van Geluwe, which included work from the most representative Belgian artists from the first half of the 20th century. In 1995 this collection was supplemented by part of the De Graeve collection.

Paribas Bank Belgium began with the purchase and restoration of a number of historic buildings, where it initially housed art from the 16th to 18th centuries. Subsequently, Paribas also bought work by expressionist artists such as Constant Permeke and Frits Van den Berghe, which marked the beginning of the bank's own collection of modern Belgian art. Bacob began its collection in 1980, focusing exclusively on contemporary art.

Today, these three collections form a single whole, with Belgian art as its common theme.



This Belgian art collection encompasses works from five centuries and covers three sections:

- **'Flemish masters of the 16th and 17th centuries'**, including fine examples of work by painters such as Antoon Van Dijck, Jacob Jordaens, Pieter Pourbus and Herri met de Bles. In particular, there are also two unique oil sketches by Peter Paul Rubens and a wonderful painting by Jan Breughel I, all three of which are included in the list of masterpieces contained in the Art Decree of the Flemish Community. This section of the collection also includes tapestries, antiquarian books, furniture and sculptures.
- **'Modern art from 1860 to 1960'**: this part of the collection covers all movements from realism onwards. The important figures here are Charles Degroux, James Ensor, Constant Permeke, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Paul Delvaux and René Magritte.
- **'Contemporary art from 1960 to the present day'**, with works by acclaimed artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Roger Raveel, Luc Tuymans, Jan Fabre, Pierre Alechinsky, Berlinde De Bruyckere and Ann Veronica Janssens.

The Belfius Art Collection in its current form is the result of the combination of the art collections from three corporate entities: Crédit Communal, Bacob Bank and Paribas Bank Belgium.



## Rubens and the Flemish Masters

Among the many masterpieces in the Belfius Art Collection are **The Rape of the Sabine Women and The Reconciliation of the Romans and the Sabines**, two oil sketches by **Peter Paul Rubens**, painted in 1640 during the last year of the artist's life. These two sketches illustrate two legendary episodes from the birth of Rome and were painted as preparatory sketches for two huge canvases commissioned by King Philip IV of Spain for the Alcázar in Madrid. Unfortunately, these paintings subsequently sustained irreparable damage when the palace was destroyed by fire in the early 18th century.

Kept until recently at the Osterrieth House in Antwerp, these two unique pieces can now be viewed again by the general public on a temporary and exceptional basis in the section of the Belfius Art Gallery dedicated to Flemish art of the 17th century.

In addition to these two sketches by Rubens, visitors can also admire a selection of works by six other Flemish masters at the gallery: **Jacob Savery** (Saint Paul on the road to Damascus), **David Vinckboons** (Landscape with peasants returning from village merrymaking), **Jan Fyt** (Still life with hunting scene, game birds and basket of fruit), **Jacob Jordaens** (Marsyas played by Apollo), **Roelandt Savery** (Separating the flocks of Laban and Jacob) and **Daniel Seghers** (Garland of flowers with Virgin, Child and the infant John the Baptist).

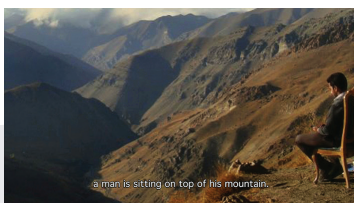
## Three promising Belgian artists join the Belfius Art Collection

As part of its aim to fully assume its role in the community, Belfius intends not only to share its collection with as many people as possible, but also to manage it professionally like in a museum, while at the same time supporting young artistic talent. With this in mind, three works by Thomas Lerooy, Meggy Rustamova and Rinus Van de Velde respectively were acquired very recently by the bank and will shortly rub shoulders with the great names in Belgian art on display at the brand-new Belfius Art Gallery.



THOMAS LEROOY  
**Nest**  
2012

Sculpture  
Bronze, polished metal, patina,  
bodywork paint



MEGGY RUSTAMOVA  
**Waiting for the secret**  
2014

Video, 6'



RINUS VAN DE VELDE  
**I've been in a similar position  
before: attacked by a personified  
outside...**  
2015

200 x 390 cm  
Charcoal on canvas