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# Growing art fair Art Antwerp expects 12,000 visitors (Antwerp)

“We had just under 10,000 visitors at our first edition last year. But judging by the many requests for the VIP opening, we expect at least 12,000 visitors this year. We also expect a greater influx from neighboring countries now that it is possible to travel smoothly again,” says trade fair manager Nele Verhaeren.

The first Art Antwerp in 2021 was created in response to the emergency caused by corona. Because traveling became too much of a risk, Art Antwerp provided the most important Antwerp and Belgian art galleries with a forum close to home. Some galleries from neighboring countries were also happy to be present. Antwerp immediately received its own fair for contemporary art for the first time. “Rightly so, because Antwerp has all the important trump cards due to its fascinating art scene, fashion and gastronomy,” believes Nele Verhaeren.

## Second edition

The second edition of Art Antwerp maintains the manageable scale of the first edition and offers space for 68 carefully selected galleries. A quarter comes from Antwerp, a quarter from Belgium. The rest comes from neighboring countries, but also for the first time from England, Italy, Spain and Switzerland.

The great asset of Art Antwerp is that it does not offer an endless succession of identical stands, but that the exhibitions are spacious and naturally flow into each other. Most gallerists also chose to show only a few artists so that the visitor has the opportunity to gain a better insight into the practice of their artists. For example, De Zwarte Panter divides its stand into three separate rooms for Fred Bervoets, Tom Liekens and Nick Andrew. Maurice Verbaet presents lavish ensembles by René Guiette, Paul Van Hoeydonck and Hugo Claus. Valerie Traen generously makes way for the rediscovery of Ingrid Castelein.

Nick Andrews will have a separate room at gallery De Zwarte Panter — © FH



Maurice Verbaet brings an ensemble by Paul Van Hoeydonck from the fifties. — © FH

Quite a few galleries chose to launch their youngest artists or new acquisitions. For example, Base-Alpha selected work by Veronika Pot and David Boon, who will be given a solo in the gallery in the course of 2023. Keteleer presents new work by Floris Van Look and Valgerdur Sigurdardottir, whose solo exhibitions are in preparation. The Antwerp gallery Ponti itself has only been in existence for two years and profiles itself exclusively with young people, who experience their debut together at an art fair.



Ponti's gallerists present paintings by Witold Vandenbroeck and concrete sculptures by Jef Meyer. — © FH



Wilfried Keteleer shows new work by Floris Van Look. — © FH

Art Antwerp also provides extra events. Plus-One Galerie had Victor Verhelst make a complete stand in virtual reality. Tim Van Laere Gallery will spoil the public on Friday between 3 and 4 pm with a signing session by Rinus Van de Velde and Ben Sledsens, who each have a new book out.

Art Antwerp takes place at Antwerp Expo until Sunday 18 December.