

May 2025

Neuvième Art

Fair & exhibitions of original comics, manga & BD artworks

From **26.09.25** to **28.09.25**

Location:
**l'Hôtel des Douanes
on the Tour & Taxis site**

The inaugural edition of **NEUVIÈME ART** will be held from September 26th to 28th 2025 in a unique venue temporarily open to the public: the Hôtel des Douanes on Tour & Taxis - Brussels. As a one of its kind event, **NEUVIÈME ART** will offer a series of events promoting the discovery and support of ninth art in Brussels.

For its first edition, **NEUVIÈME ART** will be inviting professionals, art lovers and enthusiasts to discover the first art fair devoted to the ninth art in Europe, as well as thematic and original exhibitions of works, and a series of conferences. It will also feature a networking area reserved for professionals.

« **NEUVIÈME ART** will be a recurring, committed and multi-faceted event offering an original exploration of the ninth art. We want to establish and build an annual event capable of offering a wide-ranging, uninhibited look at the vitality of the ninth art in Brussels », says Gilles Parmentier, co-founder of the event.

With the support of Nextensa, the property developer behind the Tour & Taxis site, **NEUVIÈME ART** will be held for 2 years in the Hôtel des Douanes, a restored historic building that embodies the architectural grandeur of the early 20th century and benefits from plenty of natural light. The event will take place at the same time as the BD Comic Strip Festival organised by Visit Brussels, which attracts nearly 60,000 visitors* to the Tour & Taxis Maritime Station from September 26th to 28th (*attendance figures for 2024). The proximity and complementary nature of these events will encourage synergies between them and further enhance Brussels' reputation as the Capital of the ninth Art.

NEUVIEME ART: a unique hybrid format

" Through our programme, we'll be looking at comics well outside of the box! With contributions from Europe's leading galleries, we'll be offering a panorama reflecting the quality and diversity of narrative drawing practices (comics, illustrations, ...). Through the organisation of our exhibitions and the series of meetings, we will be further opening the field and lifting the veil on the influence of the ninth art in the heart of contemporary creation", explains Jean-Marc Dimanche, co-founder of **NEUVIEME ART**.

The event will take place on 2 floors of the Hôtel des Douanes (covering an area of almost 4,000 m2) and will feature a programme based on 2 pillars:

- **Europe's first ninth art fair (FAIR):** The fair will bring together proposals from some fifteen art galleries, presenting a remarkable selection of original works from the world of comics, manga, comic books and illustration. With its unique positioning, this pioneering fair aims to become the benchmark event in Europe capable of supporting the market and encouraging the discovery and acquisition of works in the field of narrative drawing. The fair will take place on the ground floor of the Hôtel des Douanes, covering an area of over 2000 m2. The entire list of participating galleries will be announced by the end of June, and will include Huberty & Breyne (Be - Fr), Galerie Barbier (Fr) and La galerie de la Bande Dessinée (Be).
- **Thematic and original exhibitions (EXHIBITIONS):** of original works from the world of ninth art, organised in collaboration with partners and institutions. The exhibitions are currently under development and will be accessible on the 1st floor of the building. The final programme will be announced by the end of June 2025.
 - o **“Brussels”, an exhibition curated by the artist David Merveille.**
The exhibition will bring together around a hundred works by artists who have illustrated Brussels in all its forms. Each artist has their own perspective, offering a mosaic of interpretations that place Brussels at the centre of the story. A strong anchor that highlights the richness and diversity of representations of the City in contemporary narrative drawing.
 - o **“Nouveaux récits”, an exhibition curated by Sophie Toulouse and Barbara Soyer, the French duo behind The Drawer magazine.** For NEUVIEME ART, The Drawer is taking a fresh, contemporary and plastic look at comics. Focusing on new ways of telling stories in drawing, without boxes, plates or even paper, the exhibition brings together a dozen contemporary artists and cartoonists whose work refer to the comic-book culture that inspired them, in its style, iconography and narrative, and then renew it. In 2D or 3D, sculpted or animated, often pictorial, a comic strip reinvented, with multiple expressions.

NEUVIEME ART will also be offering the public and professionals:

- **a series of conferences (TALKS)** (programme to be announced at the end of June 2025)
- **a space for meetings and exchanges (SHARE)** to enable professionals to share their experiences and encourage the introduction of an off-site programming starting from September 2026.

Brussels, guest of honour 2025

" In the middle of the 20th century, Belgium established itself in Europe as the leading country for comic strips, thanks to the inventiveness of its artists and the dynamism of the Belgian publishing world¹".

As the birthplace of iconic figures such as Hergé, Franquin and Peyo, Brussels has naturally established itself as the Capital of the Comic Strip...

Today, this unique heritage is supported by the vitality of a fast-growing scene that includes internationally reputed art schools, dedicated centres and museums, festivals, specialised galleries, drawing paths in the city and a community of passionate artists and collectors.

Building on this living heritage, Brussels continues to innovate and to host an ambitious and abundant programme for the years to come. This includes the inauguration of François Schuiten's monumental Moby Train sculpture in 2026 (Van Praet roundabout in Schaerbeek), the opening of the Musée du Chat (rue Royale in Brussels) in 2027, and many other remarkable initiatives to come.

"It was artist François Schuiten who came up with the idea of making Brussels the guest of honour at this inaugural edition... an idea that was immediately obvious! Brussels is a city driven by both the great names that have shaped its identity and by new generations of artists, and more than ever it is affirming its central place in the world of comics", explains Gilles Parmentier.

*"Through **NEUVIEME ART**, it is possible to build an ambitious initiative in Brussels - as attractive as the one in Angoulême in France - with a different programme that draws links, looks at and demonstrates the multiple influences and relations between narrative drawing and other artistic disciplines", enthuses Jean-Marc Dimanche.*

"Our aim is to gradually build up an international programme spread over a month of activity - from the end of September to the end of October - and to develop a multi-faceted event that takes a different approach to the ninth art in the heart of Brussels", concludes Gilles Parmentier.

About the ninth art

First used in the 1960s, the term 'ninth art' refers to comic strips.

The expression was coined in 1964 by film critic and historian Claude Beylie and popularised by Morris, the creator of Lucky Luke, and Pierre Vankeer in their magazine 'Neuvième art - Musée de la bande dessinée'.

Today, the term is used to describe the wide universe of comics as an artistic discipline, like film, photography and drawing.

The ninth art is now recognised by institutions and museums. Original drawings and comics have also found their place in the art market, driven by auction houses since the 2000s. It has also become structured around several quality galleries, committed to defending their artists and positioning them in the field of contemporary art.

To date, however, there has been no large-scale event to showcase this vibrant artistic universe and offer a major event capable of gradually developing a multi-disciplinary programme and establishing the first reference fair.

¹ Presentation of the « un siècle de BD belge » exhibition, Belgian Comic Strip Center

Management duo

NEUVIEME ART is an initiative of the Franco-Belgian duo Jean-Marc Dimanche (FR) and Gilles Parmentier (BE). Involved in artistic projects, the duo founded ceramic brussels, the first international contemporary art fair devoted to ceramics in Brussels (January 2024).

- **Gilles Parmentier (BE)** : has directed the Art on Paper fair (from 2018 to 2024) - an international drawing fair in Brussels - for six editions. He also initiated the Brussels Drawing Week, in collaboration with Brussel's cultural institutions. He co-founded ceramic brussels, the 3rd edition of which will be held in Brussels from 21 to 25 January 2026. Together with Jean-Marc Dimanche, he is also developing Manifest Paris by ceramic brussels, a capsule exhibition to be held from October 20th to 25th 2025 during Art Week in Paris.
- **Jean-Marc Dimanche (FR)** : an independent curator, he is notably co-curator of the Grandeur Nature biennial, a tour of contemporary sculptures in the gardens of the Palace of Fontainebleau, and co-founder of ceramic brussels. After setting up and running the design agency V.I.T.R.I.O.L. for 20 years, he and Florence Guillier-Bernard founded Maison Parisienne in 2008, a gallery dedicated to French arts and crafts. Since 2016, he is general curator of the De Mains De Maîtres Luxembourg Biennial, which he launched at the initiative of HRH the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. From 2019 to 2022, he directed ELEVEN STEENS, a private space in Brussels dedicated to Art and Matter, and collaborated on the Revue de la Céramique et du Verre.

NEUVIEME ART / Fair & exhibitions of original comics, manga & BD artworks
Hôtel des Douanes (Tour & Taxis, Brussels), 3 rue Picard 1000 Brussels

- **September 25th 2025** -- VIP & media preview
16h00 – 21h00 - by invitation only
September 26th to 28th 2025 – Public days - entrance : 20 €
Saturday 10h00 – 19h00
Sunday 10h00 – 18h00

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