



Palais  
des Beaux-Arts  
de Lille

26<sup>th</sup> april  
1<sup>st</sup> september  
2025

# *Flemish festivities*

Brueghel, Rubens, Jordaens...

Grand Palais  
Rmn

PALAIS  
BEAUX-ARTS  
LILLE

LOUVRE

Musées royaux  
des Beaux-Arts  
de Belgique

FESTIVAL  
DES ARTS

Exposition  
d'intérêt  
national  
REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE



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# *Flemish festivities*

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Festivals and celebrations serve two key purposes: they are both social occasions, which aim to create and maintain a sense of belonging to a community, and celebratory events. Through the prism of collective entertainment, this exhibition aims to explore the Flemish festivals of the 16th and 17th centuries, from royal balls, formal and urban feast days to fêtes and King's Days.

## *Festivals as an outlet*

In a hierarchical and corporative society, festive events served as both a social ritual and an opportunity to decompress. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the people of the Netherlands were affected by a series of epidemics, while also suffering the ravages of the Eighty Years' War. Festivals and celebrations were therefore crucial for easing tensions and strengthening the social fabric.

## *Festivals as a moral and political force*

The exhibition will explore the meaning behind festive imagery. Depictions of such events as the "Kermesse", or fête, and King's Day represent pictorial genres in their own right, their popularity reaching far beyond national borders. The "entertainment state" of the Netherlands drew abundantly on local customs, using formal occasions as a means of negotiation between different levels of authority. The numerous representations of these celebrations also show how the state and the church attempted to regulate the festive excesses of the time. Despite this, the fun and entertaining aspect of festivals endured.

## *An exhibition to experience and celebrate festivals*

The exhibition will highlight the collections of the Palais des Beaux-Arts and the Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse, enhanced by prestigious loans from the Musée du Louvre and the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. It will bring together a body of paintings, albums, engravings and drawings from the 16th to 17th centuries, as well as various objects (musical instruments, ceramics, etc.).

The exhibition will immerse visitors in the world of Flemish festivals, a rich intangible heritage that lives on to this day, embodying values such as diversity, togetherness and a sense of community.

Concerts, banquets and other gatherings will enrich the event programme, making the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille an unmissable place to visit during this lille3000 season.

Conceived by the Palais des Beaux-Arts/City of Lille, this exhibition is supported by an exceptional double partnership with the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium and the Louvre, Paris. It is co-produced with the GrandPalaisRmn as part of Fiesta, the 7th edition of lille3000.

The exhibition has been awarded the 'Exhibition of National Interest' label by the French Ministry of Culture, offering all audiences the fruits of the most recent research.

It is supported by the European Metropolis of Lille, the Flanders Delegation in France and the Franco-Belgo-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce.

It is supported by the Fondation Crédit Mutuel Nord Europe and Beobank, and by DEME.

It is produced in partnership with Hello Lille, TGV InOui/SNCF Voyageurs and Ilevia, as well as Le Monde and France Culture.

### *Chief curator*

Juliette Singer, Director of the Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille and the Musée de l'Hospice Comtesse, chief curator

### *Scientific curators*

Blaise Ducos, Chief Curator, Head of Flemish and Dutch paintings at the Musée du Louvre  
Sabine van Sprang, Curator of Flemish Painting, 1550-1650 at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

### *Scenography*

Nathalie Crinière Agency (ageNCe)

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