

PRESS RELEASE
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Brussels, home to artists

Brussels is a true breeding ground for creativity. Not only is the Belgian capital a hub for artists from Belgium and abroad, it also makes art remarkably accessible to the public. A capital city that is a melting pot of cultures, a breeding ground for original creation and a springboard for its dissemination. When it comes to the visual arts, the diversity of exhibition venues provides an ideal showcase for emerging artists to introduce the public to their works and their practice. With a view to bringing the local arts scene closer to its residents, artists' trails are organised across several communes and are attracting ever-growing crowds, as are the local art schools. visit.brussels has joined forces with Brussels' communes to bring this wealth of artistic talent and initiatives together under one banner: *Brussels, home to artists.* This first instalment focuses on the visual arts before branching out into other disciplines.

Brussels has long been a major hub for the arts. Artists from Belgium and abroad find a cosmopolitan environment in the Brussels-Capital Region that provides **fertile ground for artistic creation**. With its internationally renowned art schools and its openness to contemporary practices, the capital offers **a fertile ground for creativity** and regularly hosts numerous artists in residence. Brussels is home to around 5,500 artists and 550 exhibition venues. The cultural and creative sectors account for a total of 5.4 per cent of regional value added and provide 90,000 jobs, representing 13% of employment in Brussels. For a number of years now, Brussels' communes have been working together to make art more accessible by bringing artists and residents closer together through the creation of the *Parcours d'artistes*, which offer both art at affordable prices and the opportunity for every local artist to exhibit their work. For their part, the art schools, which are open to all, are proving hugely popular and, at the end of each term, exhibit their students' work. With its numerous galleries, museums and repurposed derelict sites, Brussels exudes boundless and accessible creativity, as well as a vibrant arts scene that attracts visitors from all over the world.

Internationally renowned art schools

Brussels' art schools have trained artists whose fame has spread far beyond the country's borders. La Cambre was, most notably, the creative incubator for **Pierre Alechinsky**, a pioneer of the avant-garde CoBrA group, and **Ann Veronica Janssens**, a leading figure in contemporary art. The ERG, meanwhile, trained conceptual artist **Michel François**. The renowned **Hans Op de Beeck** and **Luc**



Tuymans, for their part, attended the LUCA School of Arts... and there are so many others whose work has travelled the world, cementing Brussels' prominent position on the international art scene. Illustrator and comic-book author **Judith Vanistendael** can attest to this: "*Brussels is a hyper-diverse, multilingual city. A small world city with a complex and unusual history. This unique combination creates an extraordinary sense of freedom in which artists can truly thrive. The city's many layers and its sometimes-elusive character constantly create new possibilities and unexpected encounters. Creativity can emerge freely here, without anyone telling you what to do. Brussels is also relatively affordable, exceptionally well connected, and home to a remarkable network of top-level art schools. All of these factors matter, but in the end, I believe it is above all this creative chaos that makes Brussels so appealing to artists."*

Art and artists in the communes: artists' trails and art academies

The first artists' trail dates back to 1988 in the commune of Saint-Gilles. Its aim at the time was to forge links and bring artists and local residents closer together. Following Saint-Gilles' example, the majority of the Brussels-Capital Region's communes have developed their own trails, making art increasingly accessible. The next event will take place **from 6 to 8 November** in Ixelles. Other events, such as *Extra Small* in Schaerbeek, organised throughout the year, offer the opportunity to discover and purchase works by local artists.

Furthermore, local **art schools** are enjoying growing success. Accessible thanks to their affordable fees, they enable Brussels residents of all ages and levels to discover art in all its forms or to hone their skills. The range of courses on offer is both rich and extensive. At the end of each season, the academies open their doors to the public to showcase their students' work, as well as their wide range of courses and training programmes.

Residences and collectives

The Carrefour des Arts Foundation, KULT XL, Ateliers Mommen, Decoratelier and Atelier Bardaf are just some of the artist residencies and studios dedicated to artistic production in the Brussels-Capital Region. They bring together hundreds of artists who live and work side by side, collaborate and regularly showcase the fruits of their labour to the public. They are an essential source of artistic production and dissemination.

As are the artists' collectives based in the region's communes. As a European capital, Brussels is both singular and multifaceted. It promotes encounters and encourages artists to create and collaborate.



This vibrant energy spills out onto the city's streets, where walls are adorned with works by local artists and collectives who help shape Brussels' identity.

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To celebrate and boost this thriving arts scene, visit.brussels has decided to bring it together under the banner: 'Brussels, Region of Artists'. An initial collaboration with the communes of Etterbeek, Ixelles, Auderghem, Schaerbeek, Anderlecht, Ganshoren, Saint-Gilles and Uccle has been launched, and visit.brussels intends to further expand this collaborative network. The aim is to shine a spotlight, throughout the year, on these local initiatives centred around local artists. The focus will initially be on the visual arts, before opening up to other disciplines from 2027 onwards. All this creativity, born of exchange and diversity, characterises and nourishes the great richness of Brussels' art scene. This project was launched in consultation with RABKO and NICC, two major arts federations.

Want to find out more? Check out visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/brussels-home-to-artists

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