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**PREVIEW BRUSSELS FURNITURE FAIR 2023**

**A continuation with new features**

The Brussels Furniture Fair continues to be the platform of choice for furniture manufacturers to connect with the furniture trade. With an offering in line with the prevailing market, a clear segmentation and a total surface area on a human scale, the Furniture Fair continues to be a place where business can be done efficiently. That’s why last year we launched the slogan ‘bubble up your business’. After an exceptional period where the pause button was pressed on the whole world, it was necessary to look forward again and focus afresh on the (furniture) business.

With the new campaign visual, the Furniture Fair continues to look to the future in 2023, but this time with a focus on the other core elements of the furniture and design business: aesthetics, inspiration and future-focused trade. Nature plays a cohesive role in this. It is a source of inspiration for design, a supplier of materials, and serves as a regulator in the face of growing climate challenges. In a constantly changing context, it is even more important for every professional to carefully frame the core of their activities, and to develop innovations, with nature firmly in mind.

That’s why it’s not only the Furniture Fair campaign visual that’s getting a makeover, but various facets of the event are being re-examined too. Because although furniture continues to be part of the skeleton of every household, as a sector we are noticing a rapid evolution in technology and sales techniques, but also in expectations and consumer buying behaviour.

**New in Brussels**

**Exhibitors**By early September, the Furniture Fair has already sold significantly higher more square metres of stand space than in November 2022. In Hall 4, every last square metre has been sold out for the first time since 2018. Admittedly, we were helped in this by two of our most loyal exhibitors: Passe Partout and Recor Group. They are leaving their customary place in Hall 5 after more than 20 years in order to be able to better welcome visitors with more space and a new stand concept. Also this year, we’re pleased to welcome two new names in Hall 5: Beka and Saunaco. In Hall 3 we also note a marked increase in surface area for ‘traditional’ exhibitors. We spotted a comparable phenomenon a few months before the fair in Hall 6 too, where the number of exhibitors from the sleep segment is currently lower than last year, but where considerably more surface area is now being taken up. Finally, we are also delighted 2 months before the start of the fair, and for the second year in a row, to be welcoming a substantial increase in the number of exhibitors from the Scandinavian region: Ecolife Beds, Dan-Form, Tenzo, Innovation Living and Torpe.

**Decoration of the halls**

For the 2023 edition, the Furniture Fair has paid extra attention to the general decoration of the halls and entrance zones. There is a nature-themed decor in the entrance halls, floorplans and signage drawn by an artist, artworks that evolve on the different days of the fair, the chair from the campaign visual as a selfie-spot, etc. Even more than before, the Furniture Fair wants to inspire visitors by extracting them from the outside world and immersing them in a festive furniture Valhalla.

**Square zone (Hall 3)**We mentioned earlier that Hall 3 is increasing in surface area. The Square zone, which in recent years has evolved into *the* location for finding inspiration and for discovering new things, has decreased in surface area slightly this year, but has made a big step forwards in terms of offering and relevance! For example, Design Street and Design Academy have been merged to create Design Academy ‘Masters & Scholars’. The visitor will find a great range of products from established names from the design world in combination with creations by the most promising furniture design students. In addition, in Square you’ll also find the concept we launched last year ‘Bubble up your Store’, a kind of futuristic furniture store, where retailers can meet suppliers of goods and services who will assist them in optimising their retail space. Square is also the place where from this year you’ll be able to find information about a specific theme on physical display panels. This year, we have chosen to put the theme of ecology in the spotlight. On these display panels, the visitor will also find useful information about different actors in the furniture sector who are neither manufacturers nor retailers. A few metres further on, we are also providing a nicely decorated relaxation zone, where as a visitor you get the chance to sit back and enjoy the printed magazines of our press partners. For those exhibitors wanting extra visibility, at the entrance to the Square (as well as at the two other entrances) we are providing a stage on which they can put a piece of furniture in the spotlight.

**Both digital and paper**Just like for the entire furniture sector, it is important for the Furniture Fair to find the right balance between physical and digital. Last year, the paper BE-magazine was transformed into a newsletter with blog. We can once again use this to inform our visitors this year about what there is to see and experience, also beyond the 4 days of the fair. The transition to a digital format also allowed us to extend the fair period. But this year, the Furniture Fair has decided to also distribute a free paper newspaper at the fair. This is quite simply the best way to inform visitors about how to get the most out of their visit in a relaxed and efficient manner.

**ECO-Stories**We’ve already said it: this year ecology was placed centre stage in our campaign. That’s why this year we’re launching an ‘ECO-Stories-label’, with which the visitor can see at a glance on the floorplan which exhibitors are actively working on and seeking out environmentally-friendly solutions. Calculating a clear return on ecology continues to be a huge challenge today. The label will allow for the sharing of experiences and know-how.

**Always worthwhile**

**Efficiency**As well as the innovations, the Brussels Furniture Fair will of course stay true to itself. Efficiently doing business in a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere of course remains the absolute core purpose of the event. We find this efficiency in the price-per-square-metre, which remains highly advantageous by comparison to competing fairs, but also in the entrance price for visitors. Although the price for an entrance ticket has risen this year for the first time in years, the price of 28 euros for a 4-day ticket is still well below the average price for comparable events. In Brussels, the visitor arrives at a clearly-segmented fair, with stands on a human scale showcasing an offering that’s in line with the prevailing market.

**Hospitality**Although recent years have inflicted deep wounds on many fairs and event organisers, up to now the Furniture Fair has managed to limit the impact on its organisation. This is primarily thanks to the close links with its clients and suppliers. But what does this mean in practice for our visitors? We have just mentioned the small price increase of the entrance ticket. In addition, snacks and drinks will still be free of charge in the open bar zones, but from now on alcoholic drinks must be paid for. Besides, there will be even more for visitors to see. Several new catering points will now be opened.

**Contract signage – Trend corridors – Balthazar Awards**The Furniture Fair will continue to provide its exhibitors who are active on the contract market with contract signage, so that contract visitors can immediately plan out their most efficient route on the floorplan. What’s more, the Brussels Balthazar Awards will still take place on Tuesday evening, although the well-known awards ceremony will be given a makeover. And this year, the trend corridors will again be the go-to place for discovering the latest trends, and above all how these are being incorporated by the exhibitors into their products.

**See you in Brussels!**

Once again, the Furniture Fair is presenting a balanced mix of exhibitors and interesting new products. In recent years, Brussels has been focusing on certainty on the one hand, and efficiency for visitors and exhibitors on the other. We continue to walk the same path, but this year we also want to place additional emphasis on the experience and the emotional aspect that are undeniably connected to furniture. With the Brussels Furniture Fair, we are above all supporting the trade, and we want to be a day of celebration for all actors from the sector.

**Glenn De Maeseneer**

**Brussels Furniture Fair – 5 - 8 November 2023, Brussels Expo**

**Downloads: www.furniturefair.be/press**