

## Opera on show

Crinolines dangle from the ceiling alongside intriguing installations by leading contemporary artists in **Opera: The Art of Emotion**.

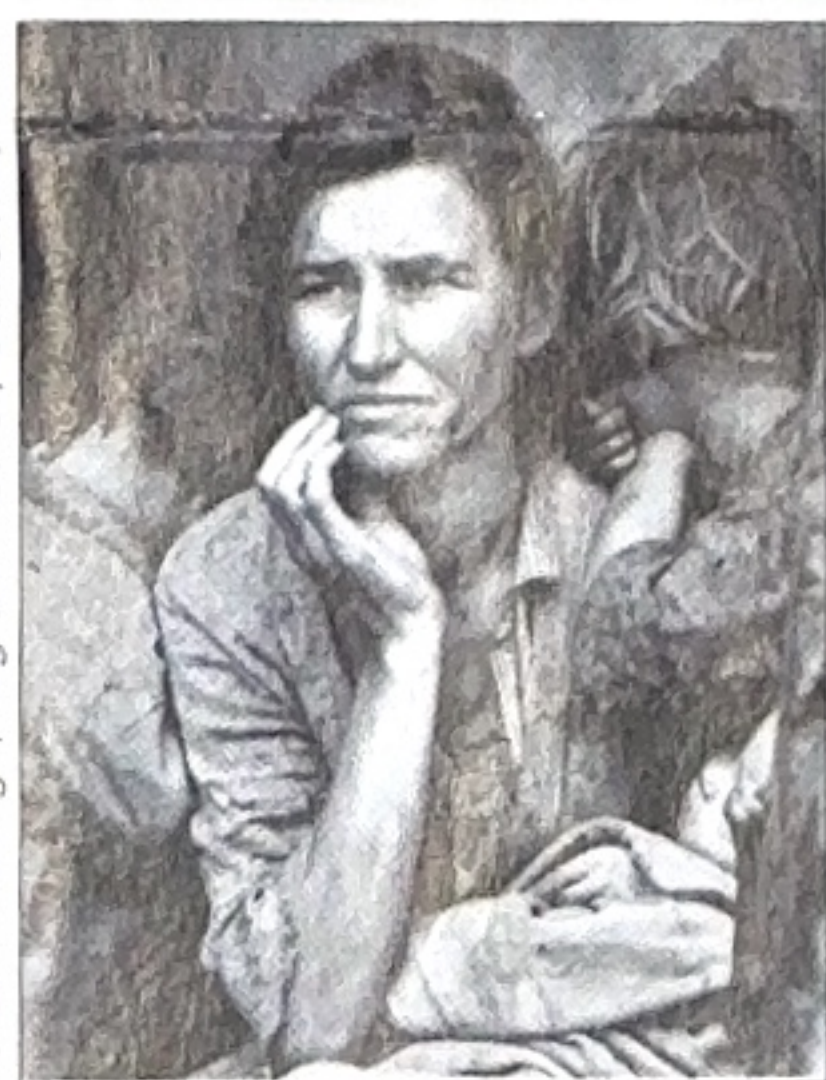
To celebrate its tricentenary, Brussels' opera house La Monnaie/De Munt has treated itself to a brand new rehearsal/storage space, the first two floors of which have been turned over to this exhibition.



© Philippe De Gobert

Evoking the magic of opera through the Monnaie's collection of costumes, scenery, stage machinery, posters and memorabilia, the show also includes music-inspired pieces by artists like James Lee Byars, Luciano Fabro, Peter Fischli & David Weiss and Thierry De Cordier. *Les Ateliers de la Monnaie*, 23 Rue Léopold, Brussels, until July 2, Tuesdays to Sundays from noon to 6 pm (Thursdays to 8 pm). Tel 02.210.85.58.

## Images of the Depression



Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, California, 1936

During the Depression, the Farm Security Administration (FSA) commissioned over 100,000 photographs as part of a study of rural poverty in the US. The project, which included such well-known photographers as Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Arthur Rothstein, remains the largest social documentation study ever conducted. It alerted public consciousness and helped fuel support for President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. **Des images pour convaincre**, an exhibition of these works will also feature early 20th-century Belgian photographers,

like Antony Neuckens, who chronicled the daily lives of the working classes. *Musée de la Photographie*, 11 Avenue Paul Pastur, Charleroi, until May 14. Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm. Tel 071.43.58.10.

## A country-wide celebration of pagan rites

The Carnival of Rio is more famous, but towns and villages throughout Belgium also like to let rip as the cold winter days give way to spring. Some places have religious traditions that go back to the Middle Ages; others have invented festivals to liven up the winter gloom. The most flamboyant is Binche's three-day extravaganza of masked dancing, dawn drinking and orange-throwing. Based on a



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parade held in honour of Charles V, it features straw-stuffed costumes believed to be modelled on Inca dress. The industrial town of Aalst has its own take on the Catholic rite with its transvestite parade, while Eupen in the German-speaking part of the country, puts on a parade on Rose Monday that has all the trappings of the Rhineland romps. The main Carnival parades are held on Shrove Tuesday, March 7 (Mardi Gras) and the two preceding days. *To find out more, call the Belgian tourist office on 02.504.03.90.*

## Alechinsky as printmaker

Widely celebrated as a painter since coming to prominence with the free-spirited Cobra group in the early 1950s, Pierre

Alechinsky is only now being recognised as one of the outstanding printmakers of our time. Indefatigably experimental, instinctively refined, the Brussels-born artist is as much stimulated by the intimacy of the printed page as

by the challenges of unconventional materials and monumental scale. He creates vast, pullulating mindscapes of archetypal forms with the same fluency and sensitivity that he calls upon to illustrate texts by contemporary writers. Below, *Gnomes and Gnoses*, 1974.

**Pierre Alechinsky:**

**50 Years of Printmaking** is the first retrospective devoted to this major aspect of the artist's work. It features over 300 engravings, woodcuts and lithographs, illustrated books and posters of events

ranging from Paris' Festival d'Automne to the Roland-Garros tennis championship. *Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image Imprimée*, 10 Rue des Amours, La Louvière, until April 23, daily from noon until 6 pm (weekends from 11 am); closed on Mondays and April 2. Tel 064/27.87.27.



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