

Galerie

ART & CULTURE

Discover the Most Extraordinary and Rare Objects on View at TEFAF Maastricht 2025

Open through March 20, The European Fine Art Fair, now in its 38th edition and offering work spanning 7,000 years, is still the grande dame of art-world events

BY CAROLINE ROUX

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The grand floral display at the entrance of TEFAF in Maastricht.

PHOTO: LORAINÉ BODEWES

From the enormous flower display, suspended at the entrance to the fair, TEFAF—the annual art and antiques fair in Maastricht, Holland—packed its usual punch. The European Fine Art Foundation, now in its 38th year and offering work spanning 7,000 years, really knows how to put on a show from the off. It's still the one to beat.

This year, visitors were greeted by an astonishing 1750 Sicilian brocade tapestry, embellished with silver thread and a million coral beads; a swaggering 1788 painting of Frances Cooke by George Romney; and a painful post-operative self-portrait by Tracey Emin—fresh from last year’s White Cube exhibition. And that was just in the first three minutes. Kapow!

The shimmering tapestry, at chic Parisian antiquarian gallery Perrin, was catnip for anyone currently reveling in the decorative beauty of 19th-century Sicily thanks to Netflix’s *The Leopard*, and came at the equally dazzling price of €1.2m.



Via Jorge Welsh : The Dutch Tribute and West Lake Kuancai, so-called Coromandel, Lacquer screen, our main highlight for this year’s TEFAF Maastricht. This extraordinary 17th century screen, Qing Dynasty, Kangxi (1662-1722) seems to be the only recorded example bringing together scenes of the Dutch tribute on one side and the West Lake in Hangzhou [...]

PHOTO: LORAINÉ BODEWES

Other works of extravagant luxury were to be found at French maximalists Steinitz, whose Paris home is an 18th-century mansion in the eighth arrondissement. “We try to outdo ourselves every year,” confessed Benjamin Steinitz. “We are deeply invested in the French tradition of *savoir faire*, and feel it’s our duty to show the rarest pieces, that have always suited French tastes.” Next to him were two Louis XV gilt framed chairs. “The rest are in the collection at the Getty,” said Steinitz, signaling their quality.

While the fair’s remit includes very ancient works—among them this year, a bronze pin made in western Iran in the early first millennium BC—there is a necessity for it to evolve, admits the Head of Fair, Will Korner. “What we really want to offer is an increasing dialogue between the archaeological works and antiques and the modern and contemporary pieces,” he said. “Perhaps we should make more of the fact that we’re the best 20th-century art fair around.”

There was plenty of that to prove his point. At Kamel Mennour, a delightful 1941 Kandinsky watercolor was situated next to a fabulous salon hang that included a single-stroke Richard Serra, an Agnes Martin gouache and a Francis Picabia pencil drawing of a woman. Not the most important works, maybe, but truly covetable. Skarstedt was offering a great George Condo, *Widow's Watch*, from 1995—a Goya infanta in a helicopter hat; an impeccable Joseph Beuys sleigh; and a night-time view of Paris by Nicolas de Stael (1954), an artist under refreshed scrutiny since the Musee d'Art Moderne's monographic show in Paris last year.

The other 20th century emphasis was, of course, Art Deco, a movement currently celebrating its 100th year (L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs took place in Paris in 1925 and eventually gave the style its name). A number of galleries exhibited top-ranking works from the era, by designers including Jean-Michel Frank and Andre Sournay, but none more so than Parisian specialist Marcilhac who stole the show thanks to its recreation of a fully furnished Art Deco salon featuring exceptional examples of the movement's master—Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann.

See more highlights below:



A sculpture by Stuart Lochhead.
PHOTO: JARON JAMES

1. Bronze Crucifix by Michelangelo Buonarotti and Portrait of Mother Jeronima de la Fuente by Diego Velasquez at Stuart Lochhead

In a clever historical pairing, British gallerist Stuart Lochhead presented an exquisite bronze Christ on the Cross, modeled on an original design by Michelangelo. This one had been cast by the master Jacob Cobaert in the late 16th century. The same Michelangelo model figures in the

accompanying painting by Velasquez, held tightly in the hand of Mother Jeronima. “These objects travelled across Europe,” said Lochhead. “It’s a fascinating part of history.” Though the crucifix was available for acquisition, the painting was not.



A late 17th century Venetian glass mirror encrusted with rock crystal at Steinitz.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF STEINITZ

2. A late 17th century Venetian glass mirror encrusted with rock crystal at Steinitz

There was nothing more glittering in the fair than this superb example of a late-17th century Venetian mirror. “Another was acquired at the time by the Spanish court,” said Benjamin Steinitz. This one had spent over a century in the possession of the Rothschild family—a peerless example of their maximalist taste—and once hung in the Hotel Lambert in Paris. It was on offer for €1.6 million.



La pêche aux écrevisses , Circa 1870-1880
PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAULINE PAVEC



Paysage à la ruelle, Circa 1885-1895
PHOTO: COURTESY OF PAULINE PAVEC

3. Paintings by Marie Braquemond at Pauline Pavec

Pauline Pavec runs a small gallery in the Marais district of Paris, where she concentrates on enhancing the reputation of over-looked female painters. To this end, at TEFAF she focussed on the work of Marie Braquemond (1840-1916), who was one of a handful of female Impressionist painters in Paris around the turn of the last century. Braquemond studied briefly under Ingres, whose influence is clear in a 1892 self-portrait showing the artist with her bulldog, Bob. This was acquired at the fair by a soon-to-open museum in France, while another smaller Renoir-ish picture was snapped up by Liverpool Museums.



An Art Nouveau Gold, Diamond, Enamel and Glass "Thistle Flower" Choker Necklace by
René Lalique, Paris, c. 1905
PHOTO: COURTESY OF EPOQUE FINE JEWELS

4. Lalique necklace and Nymph pins at Epoque Fine Jewels

“We brought our major Lalique pieces,” said Patricia De Wit, the second generation dealer at Epoque, a fine jewelry gallery established in Kortrijk, Belgium, in 1958. One substantial necklace really stood out—a radical piece with its combination of carved glass, fine diamonds and enamel showing every skill in the Lalique canon and dating from 1905. “It’s on the cusp of Art Deco, with its introduction of strong geometric lines,” said De Wit. “It was considered quite shocking at the time.” Meanwhile two exquisite dragon fly pins demonstrated the very best of Lalique’s Art Nouveau output.



Grand piano by Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann at Marcilhac
PHOTO: LORAIN BODEWES

5. Grand piano by Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann at Marcilhac

Designed for Pleyel in Paris, the grand piano was at the centre of Marcilhac’s stand that had been turned into a complete Art Deco salon. The piano, from 1929, had been made to commission for the private residence of Francois Ducharne, a successful silk manufacturer from Lyon. Made in ebony macassar, walnut and violet wood, gilt and gilded bronze, it is a perfect example of Ruhlmann’s love of sumptuous materials and carefully considered lines.



An Untitled painting by Keith Haring.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF GALERIE RETELET

6. Keith Haring *Untitled* painting at Galerie Retelet

Keith Haring started painting on tarpaulin in 1981, when the New York dealer Tony Shafrazi asked the artist for something he could actually sell. Showing a classic falling figure, its contemporaneous with his famous “Subway Drawings” which he started to make in the New York subway over expired adverts in the same year. Previously in one private collection, the work is on offer at Monaco’s Retelet for €4.5 million.



Kachina 16, 2006
PHOTO: ERIK & PETRA HESMERG; COURTESY OF FRIEDMAN BENDA
AND ETTORE SOTTASS



Kachina 14, 2006
PHOTO: ERIK & PETRA HESMERG; COURTESY OF FRIEDMAN BENDA
AND ETTORE SOTTASS

7. Glass works by Ettore Sottsass 1995-2006 at Friedman Benda.

There were twenty exceptional examples of Ettore Sottsass's work in glass at Friedman Benda, with prices ranging from \$40,000 to \$90,000. In a display of totems and objets, created by the Belgian Ernest Mourmans, who had strongly supported Sottsass's career over 25 years, the Italian's irreverent way with the material was writ large. Sottsass combined glass with anything from ceramic to stone. "There was no one like him," says Mourmans, who was on the stand on day one of the fair. "He was an artist. He kicked down all the barriers, using metal and glue with glass in a way that would horrify Venetian traditionalists."



Sarah Myerscough Gallery, Christopher Kurtz Desk and Chair, 2025.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST



Sarah Myerscough Gallery, Ian Collins Stone Bench, 2024
PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

8. Christopher Kurtz Sheet desk and chair and Ian Collins Onyx bench at Sarah Myerscough

In his Upstate New York workshop, Christopher Kurtz fashions furniture that wouldn't look out of place next to its Art Deco antecedents. It is classical in its construction and material choices, but contemporary in its organic sensibility. For the Sheet desk, a smooth walnut top floats on stacks of flat wooden "pebbles." (Kurtz is often inspired by skimming stones.) Next to it, the Californian Ian Collins' bench, fashioned from a single piece of onyx, attracted the attention of the President of the Friends of Versailles. Visiting the stand, the eminent art historian remarked on its innovative use of a material that is so familiar in the traditional grand French setting.

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