



Fair play

There's no shortage of great picks at this year's TEFAF Maastricht, the Netherlands, including a Barbara Hepworth sculpture, a pastel portrait by Dora Maar and two sections of 4th-century Roman mosaics



Cash boost: the TEFAF award will provide funding for conservation work on Rubens's *The Boar Hunt* (1615–17)

EACH year at the Maastricht fair, the art business acknowledges its debt to the museums that are so important to it, with an award for the conservation or research of a significant work. In 2026, the recipient is the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany, and specifically its monumental *The Boar Hunt* by Rubens. This was probably bought from the artist by the Duke of Buckingham, before entering the Imperial and Royal Saxon collections. Conservation should answer a number of questions about it, particularly concerning an upper extension. Early evidence suggests that this may have been made under Rubens's direction, with contributions from artists in his circle, perhaps Jan Wildens, Lucas van Uden, or Anthony van Dyck.

The fair (held from March 14–19, with previews on March 12–13) has also provided stands for four other museums and cultural organisations, Switzerland's Kunsthhaus Zürich, the Centraal Museum Utrecht and the Prince Claus Fund of the Netherlands, and the Belgian King Baudouin Foundation, to present loan exhibitions. This year, there will be 276 exhibitors from 24 countries (and five continents). The offerings chosen for these pages have yet to be assessed, but it would be more than surprising were any to fall foul of the vets.



↑ Could the Neapolitan Giuseppe Bonito (1707–89) have known Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*? His 66¼in by 92½in canvas *The Painter's Studio*, which dates from 1738–40, seems to suggest it. I don't know whether he visited Spain, but, as he worked for Charles VII of Naples, who later transferred thrones as Charles III of Spain, he should have been familiar with Spanish art. The composition echoes Velázquez at several points, as do incidents such as the boy and dog to the bottom right. This painting is with Galerie Canesso of Paris.



← Thomas Coulborn & Sons of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, has a multicultural work of art that perfectly suits this international fair. It is an 18½in by 31¼in Chinese export reverse glass painting dating from about 1800. The subject is taken from a print originally by a Flemish publisher, Theodore de Bry, working from a drawing of a Pictish man and woman

by a 16th-century French Huguenot, Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, who worked with an English artist, John White. The last two were among the first European artists in America and based their ideas of the Picts on the inhabitants of Florida and Virginia.



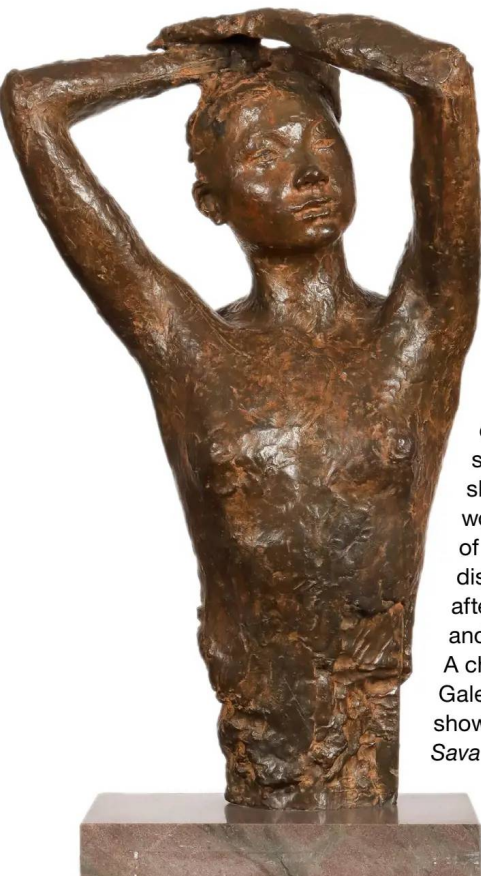
← Adrian Sassoon is one of the most successful London dealers in balancing a stock of old and new, in his case 18th-century French porcelain and contemporary ceramics and glass. Among the gallery's glassmakers is South Korean artist Joon Yong Kim (b. 1972), whose blown, carved and polished vessels are reserved for ceremonial use by some owners, and by all prized for form and colour.



← ↓ In the past few years, Stuart Lochhead Sculpture of London has been one of the most successful exhibitors in selling major objects to leading museums. This will no doubt continue this year, with a terracotta study (*below*) by Tommaso Righi (1722–87) and a charming Rodin plaster study (*see Art & antiques, page 132*), but the gallery will also offer paintings including a 22¾in by 34½in canvas of the Piazza della Signoria, Florence (*left*), by Giuseppe Zocchi (1716–67), which is very Canaletto-like—but perhaps with more lively figures.



→ In his earlier life as a financier, Ayo Adeyinka was a collector and he brought these sides of his life together in 2013 when he launched his Tafeta Gallery in London for modern and contemporary African art, particularly from his ancestral Nigeria. At the truncated 2020 TEFAF, he was one of the Showcase intake for promising new galleries, soon afterwards graduating to full exhibitorship. In Northern Nigeria, incised and glazed coil-built pottery is a traditional craft among women and one of the most distinguished potters of modern times was Ladi Kwali (1925–84), who worked with Michael Cardew at Abuja, touring America with him in 1972. Tafeta has one of her 15in-high stoneware waterpots from 1968.



← In the 1950s, some people were so shocked by Germaine Richier's bronze *Crucifixion* for the church at Plateau d'Assy, Haute-Savoie, France, in which the figure has no face and suffering has fused corpus and cross, that the bishop ordered it to be hidden away. The sculptress (1902–59) defended its unusual features, saying God is spirit and should have no face, and her work is now restored to a place of honour. She herself largely disappeared from view thereafter, but in time retrospectives and a postage stamp followed. A champion is the Parisian Galerie Malaquais, which will show a 32½in high proof for her *Sava Alexandra*, 1944.



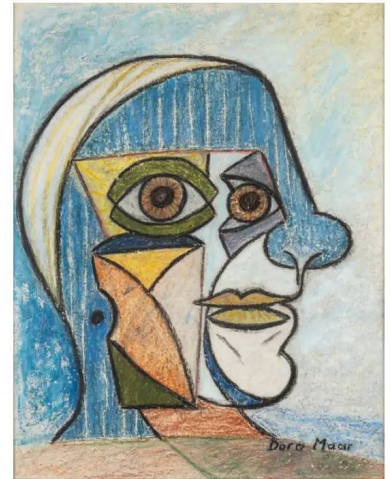
↑ Who, you might ask, was the O. Monet by whom a 7in by 11½in panel of *Paysage-Usines* with the Texan Gallery C19 is signed? It is an early work by Claude Monet, whose first name, used by his family, was Oscar. It is a view near Le Havre, where he was brought up, painted in about 1860, and it shows that he had grasped the artistic possibilities of fog and pollution well before his encounter with Turner's work, when he took refuge in London during the Franco-Prussian War.

Art market

→ Brimo de Laroussilhe is one of my favourite Parisian galleries for medieval sculpture and works of art. Every now and then, there will be a painting that sits well among them, as here, a 16½in by 58½in panel in tempera of *The Abduction of Antiope by Theseus*. It is by the Florentine Domenico di Michelino (1417–91), whose name is not a patronymic, but honours his master, Michelino di Benedetto, a painter of *cassoni*, by whom nothing is known to survive. This 1440s panel is from such a chest and its pair is in the Indianapolis Museum of Art.



→ A poetic effort that I am quite proud of is a clerihew: ‘Pablo Picasso/ Acquired a canvas, so/ He threw away his guitar/ To portray Dora Maar.’ Famously, she herself said: ‘All his portraits of me are lies. They are all Picassos—not one is Dora Maar.’ That is not entirely fair, but it is true that when she portrayed him, Picasso is immediately recognisable. They met at the end of 1935 and, shortly afterwards, she drew the 22½in by 17¾in pastel portrait offered by Galerie Boquet, Paris. It featured in the 2019–20 retrospective at the Pompidou Centre and Tate Modern.



↑ This year, Georg Laue of Munich is launching a catalogue book of works of art in wax, *The Beauty of Mankind: from the Kunstkammer to the Modern Panopticon*. One of the earlier examples is a relief portrait of Hieronymus Baumgartner (1538–1602), who was a town councillor in Nuremberg, by Matthäus Carl, a medallist and jeweller active between about 1584 and 1608. This 6½in by 6in portrait is modelled in wax, on glass plate, fabric and sheet copper, and is in its original ebonised frame with sliding cover.



← Piano Nobile of London has an impressive display of Modern British art, including Barbara Hepworth’s lovely 9in-high alabaster *Two Rotating Forms II*, sculpted in 1966.



↑ After a frustrating search, it is tempting to say of Sir William Cory (1857–1933) that nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it, as the internet offers little more than photographs of his impressive cortège at Fullerton, Hampshire, where he bought land in the 1890s and built a manor house. In the course of operations, mosaics from a 4th-century Roman villa were uncovered in a field and two sections with a geometric pelta pattern are with Charles Ede of London, framed together (4ft 1¼in by 14ft 6in).



← Dr Jörn Günther, the rare-book seller of Basel, Switzerland, has one of the most appropriate offerings for this fair, a 12th-century manuscript known as the *St Pantaleon Legendarium*. On vellum bound as a book, it contains lives of saints and is illustrated in tempera and ink. One of the saints is Servatius, first bishop and patron of Maastricht, who was the focus of medieval pilgrimages and whose relics are still in the cathedral treasury. A profitable legend made him a distant cousin of Jesus. 🐉

Next week *Rus in urbe*



↔Vandervren, the Oriental ceramics and works of art dealer from 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands, is launching a valuable catalogue of *famille-verte* Chinese porcelain with a fitting display, but among other wares the gallery has a very rare pair of 20½in-high Japanese Arita 'birdcage' vases dating from about 1700. They are extraordinarily complex creations, with panels left unglazed and then decorated with gilt lacquer, also used for the wire cages. Meissen tried to make 50 reproductions in about 1730, but succeeded with only a few.



→ Carlo Zen (1851–1918) was a furniture manufacturer, rather than a designer or maker, but, like Liberty or the earlier-generation Heals, his name became synonymous with a style, the Italian version of Art Nouveau—which was also sometimes named *Stile Liberty*. His elegant furniture used mother-of-pearl and other inlays and was said to appeal particularly to feminine tastes. His son and successor Piero (1879–1950), who was a designer, retained the elegance, but with simplified, more geometric patterns. The Galleria Rossella Colombari, a Milanese specialist in international design, has a rare 1902 example of Carlo's production, a double body cabinet with showcase in walnut with nacre inlays and gold, silver and brass threading.



And another thing

William Mitchell of John Mitchell Fine Paintings, London W1, is currently holding his 25th 'Peaks & Glaciers' Alpine exhibition (until March 20). A late entry to this is sadly topical, as a trial in Austria concerns a recent climbing tragedy. This somewhat untypical grisaille painting by Gustave Doré celebrates the first successful ascent of the Matterhorn by Edward Whymper in 1865. Unfortunately, four of his party died during the descent.