

Art market



Huon Mallalieu

The riches of Maastricht measure up once more

Even after 40 years, TEFAF never fails to delight, with enticing works of art of every material, creed and age of antiquity



Fig 1: Gouache and watercolour by van Gogh of the Laakhaven windmill (1882). With Alon Zakaim

AS even a pickled shark would testify, there can never be a permanent stasis. For 40 years, I have watched TEFAF, the annual Maastricht antique and fine art fair, grow from an optimistic experiment to the world's greatest marketplace—from the 28 exhibitors at Pictura in December 1975 to the 274 at this year's TEFAF between March 13 and 22. Along the way, there have been many structural changes, some of which endured while others were abandoned, and change, without losing the essence, is essential to continuing success.

That first fair was heavily weighted towards Dutch Old Masters and 19th-century paintings, a notable exception being the display of French work from 1850 to the early 20th century shown by Arthur Tooth from

London, and it was only in 1991 that a separate Modern and Contemporary section was launched. At times, it has appeared to be the weakest area, because it is judged not only by the remarkable standard of older art here, but must also stand against established contemporary fairs elsewhere. As the whole of TEFAF has expanded, it has become much more difficult to get a general overview and it can seem as if two separate fairs, old and new, happen to be sharing the same halls.

One of this year's innovations, a section entitled 'Night Fishing', taking sculpture as its theme, will attempt to narrow this divide. Until I have seen it, I can only quote the organisers: 'Night Fishing' is a curated show of work by post-modern and contemporary artists designed to complement the TEFAF

Modern section. Artists have been chosen on the basis of a body of work that makes art historical references to the objects that are exhibited throughout the fair that between them represent over 7,000 years of art history.

'Ten galleries will each be invited to present a single artist exhibition in a specially designed area. Sydney Picasso will curate the way in which the works are exhibited in close collaboration with exhibitors.'

Mrs Picasso is an American-born art historian and author and the section's title refers to the 1939 painting *Night Fishing at Antibes* by her husband Claude's father, with its references to Raphael. She has her own piscatorial expertise as author with Anthony Meyer and Klaus Maaz of the splendid *Fish Hooks of the Pacific Islands* (Daniel Blau, 2011).

A serious treat this year will be the loan of drawings from the oldest museum in the Netherlands, the Teylers Museum, Haarlem, including two Michelangelo and a Raphael.

Herewith a selection of likely highlights.

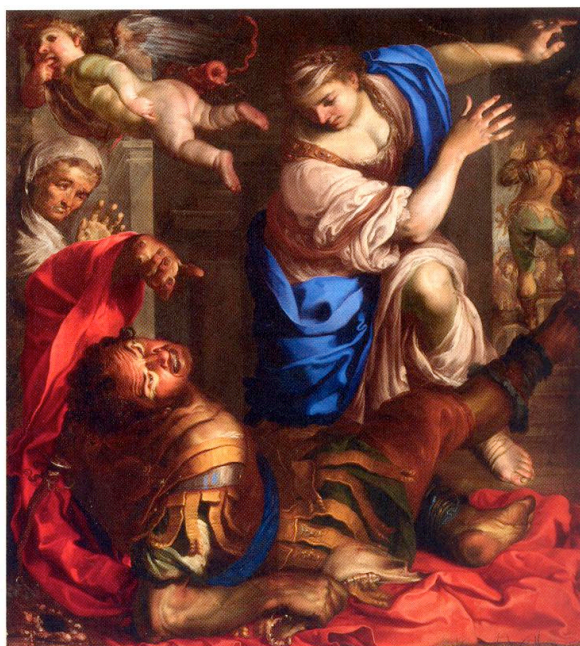


Fig 2: Bernardino Mei's *Samson and Delilah* (about 1657). With G. Sarti

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The German-born Caspar Netscher (about 1639–84) was a genre and small-portrait painter who worked mostly in The Hague. His enchanting 18½in by 14½in *Woman feeding a Parrot*, 1666, with **Richard Green** was owned by the Elector Palatine Johan Wilhelm II (1658–1716) and much later seized on behalf of Göring. It was restituted last year.

The London gallery **Alon Zakaim** makes an impressive showing with this early but assured 14½in by 22in gouache and watercolour by van Gogh (**Fig 1**), painted in 1882 when he had been studying with his cousin Anton Mauve. By chance, a van Gogh charcoal drawing of the same year will be at the Paris Salon du Dessin later in March. The windmill on the shores of Laakhaven was built in 1699.

The last time that the pair of carved giltwood chinoiserie torchères (**Fig 5**) by Thomas Johnson to be offered by **Mallett** was on the market was at Mentmore, the country-house sale of the 20th century, held by Sotheby's in 1977. At that time, their English origin was unsuspected and, although their quality was recognised, they were catalogued as German and some poor restoration needed to be attended to. Johnson, one of the finest Rococo carvers and designers, was later retrieved from obscurity by Helena Hayward and these are a welcome addition to his *oeuvre*—a word he would have objected to, being against French influences. He called Chippendale 'that damned plagiarist' for imitating French styles.

An example of Occidentalism, perhaps, is the Chippendale-style wood-and-ivory Vizagatapam chair of about 1760, also with **Mallett**.

Giovanni Sarti has a rare subject by the Sienese Bernardino Mei (1612–76), who worked in Rome. His 81½in by 71½in *Samson freeing himself after Delilah had tied him down by*

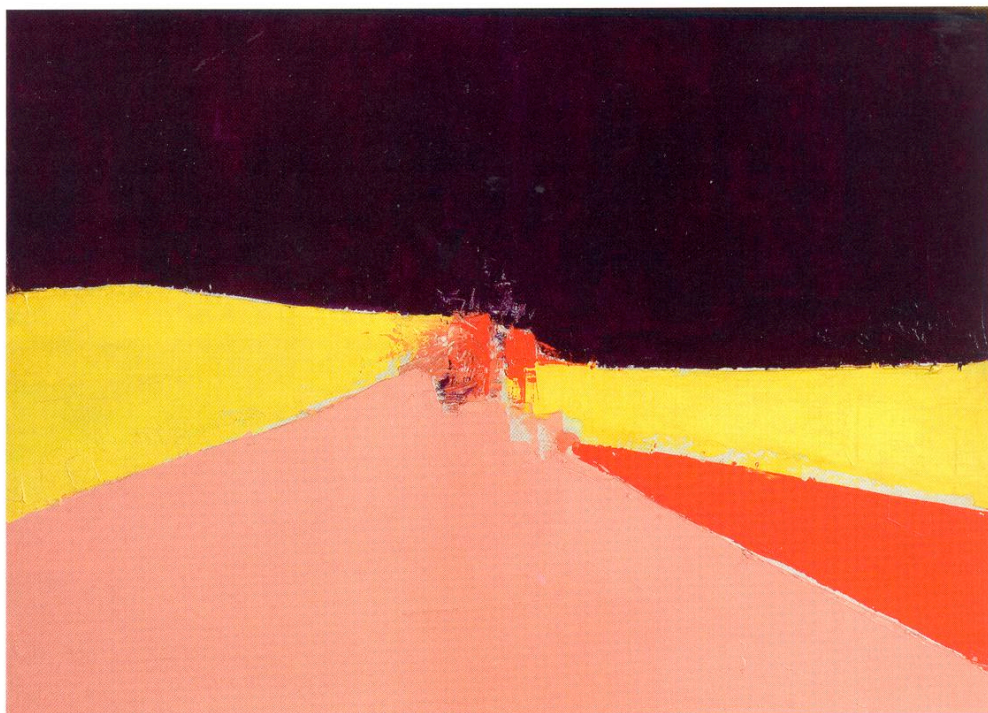


Fig 3 above: Agrigente by Nicolas de Staël. With Applicat-Prazan. Fig 4 below left: A portrait by Frans Pourbus the Younger. With The Weiss Gallery. Fig 5 below right: Thomas Johnson torchères. With Mallett



his hair, about 1657 (**Fig 2**), shows Delilah's abortive attempt to drain Samson's strength, rather than the usual hair-cutting. Another interesting detail is the inclusion of a pagan Cupid flying away to show the betrayal of the hero's love.

In 1953, Nicolas de Staël toured Italy with his family in a camper-van. He wrote: 'The culminating point was Agrigento and the museum at Syracuse.' He drew Sicilian landscapes on the spot, but, on his return to France,



This year, **Vandervan**, the 's-Hertogenbosch Oriental specialists, have produced a catalogue of enamel-decorated biscuitwares, which were particularly in fashion during the Kangxi period, 1662–1722. One figure represents Guandi, one of the early Han 'Five Tiger Generals', who heroically opposed a rebellion, but was executed in 220BC. In a manner reminiscent of canonisation, he was posthumously decreed a duke, prince and, ultimately, 'Emperor of God'. Now named God of War, he also symbolises justice, honesty, integrity and money-making—bankers take note—and his temples still attract pilgrims.

he painted their essence rather than literal facts. As the Paris dealer **Applicat-Prazan** writes: 'He adopted an explosive use of colour. He is never so abstract as when he depicts a subject, often classical (landscape, person, still life, seascape), and which is a mere pretext.' The gallery has his 23½in by 31½in *Agrigente* (**Fig 3**), dating from 1954.

Adrian Sassoon is known for contemporary and older ceramics and glass and, despite the unusual material, the work of Michael Eden fits his portfolio well. This example, *Flaubert*, 2014 (**Fig 7**), is a one-off made from a high-

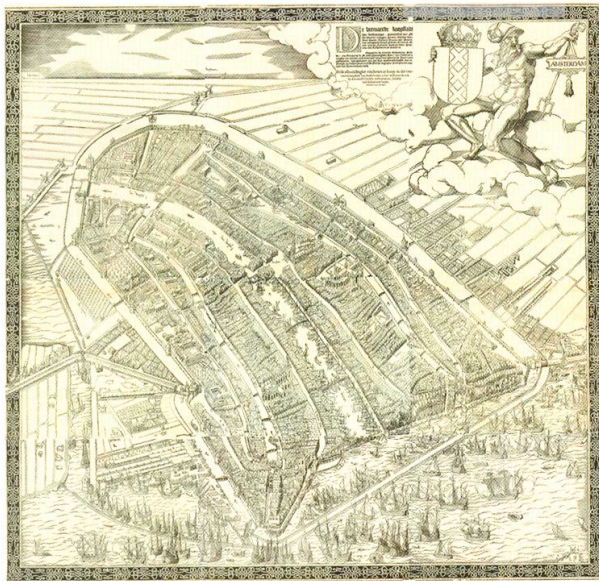


Fig 6: Cornelis Anthonisz map of Amsterdam. With Crouch Rare Books

quality nylon material encased in patinated copper and it is 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in high.

The Weiss Gallery offers eight portraits by the younger Frans Pourbus (1569–1622)—the largest group outside the Medici collection in the Uffizi and Pitti Palace, Florence. They come from different sources and include a 47 $\frac{1}{2}$ in by 38in three-quarter length of an unnamed man aged 56, which was described in the 19th century as ‘a masterpiece of truth and expression’ (Fig 4) and a 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in by 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ in half-length of Elisabeth of France (1602–44) aged about 10. She married Philip IV of Spain.

Among the antiquities with Charles Ede will be perhaps the oldest actual portrait at the fair. It is an early-2nd-century AD Roman-Egyptian funerary painting of a young woman (Fig 8). In tempera and encaustic, it measures 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ in by 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in and came from er-Rubayat, Fayum.

A 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ in-long bronze figure of a water buffalo with



pleasing 7in by 10in. A Capriccio of a ruined Classical Portico and a Villa by the Venetian Lagoon by Francesco Guardi (1712–92). A perfect postcard for a Grand Tourist.

James Butterwick is both a collector and dealer in Russian art, working

Fig 7: Michael Eden's Flaubert. With Adrian Sassoon

from a London gallery by appointment. Among his specialties is Alexander Bogomazov (1880–1930), a Russian-born Ukrainian who combined Italian Futurism and Cubism to produce Cubo-Futurism. His 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in by 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in watercolour Log rolling is a study for a panel of his 1928–29 triptych The Work of Sawyers. His career was short and he died of TB.

Crouch Rare Books specialises in atlases and maps and will have a number of suitable offerings for the Dutch market, among them Johannes Blaeu's folio Le Grand Atlas (Fig 10)—12 volumes, Amsterdam, 1663—and a large wall map by Cornelis Anthonisz (1499—about 1557),

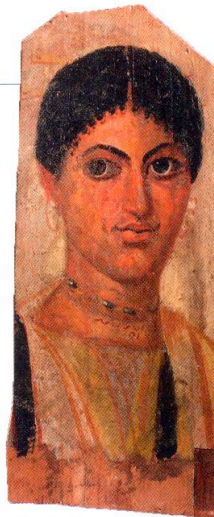


Fig 8: Roman-Egyptian 2nd-century AD funerary painting. With Charles Ede

Bird's-eye View of Amsterdam, a 42in by 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ in woodcut (Fig 6).

The Tomasso Brothers are best known for sculpture and works of art, often on a large scale. This time, two of their stars are the smallest items on the stand, 3in by 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in miniature portraits of the last Jacobite claimants: Prince Charles Edward (1720–88) and his brother, the future Cardinal Duke of York, Prince Henry Benedict (1725–1807), in watercolour and gouache on vellum by Jean-Etienne Liotard (Fig 9). Versions of the miniatures were not only sent to British supporters, but also to European rulers, perhaps to signal that the Princes were available for marriage. As it happened, neither brother turned out to be a good prospect.

Next week
Chelsea buns but Bath bull



Fig 9: Stuart miniatures. With Tomasso Brothers

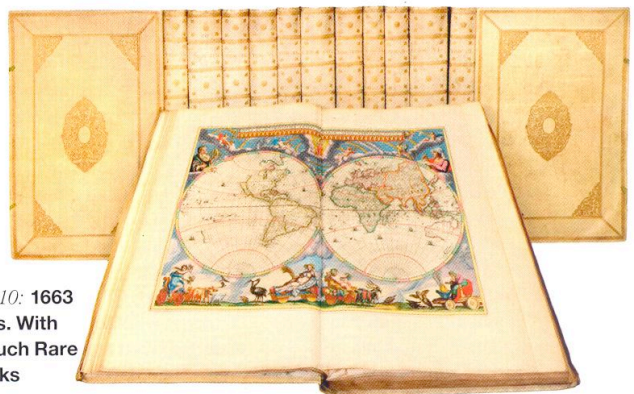


Fig 10: 1663 atlas. With Crouch Rare Books