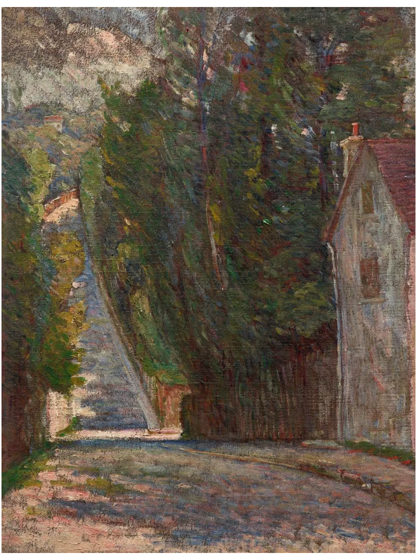
Highlights Of TEFAF Maastricht: African Modernism, Art Deco, Rediscovered Masterpieces And Women Artists

A sumptuous selection of showstopping artworks spanning seven millenia can be found at TEFAF Maastricht 2025, while the TEFAF Cultural Heritage Summit returns for a second year and explores philanthropy and public funding in the fine arts sector.

By Lee Sharrock , Contributor. ⓘ My mission is to spotlight great art and culture... Follow Author

Published Mar 18, 2025 at 07:52am EDT, Updated Mar 18, 2025, 09:39am EDT



Marie Bracquemond at Galerie Pauline Pavec. GALERIE PAULINE PAVEC

Rediscovered Masterpieces including a lost Madonna and Child painting by Titian and Klimt's portrait of an African Prince are among the artworks stealing the show at the 38th edition of TEFAF Maastricht, which also shines the spotlight on African Modernism and overlooked women artists, and celebrates the centenary of Art Deco.

Established in 1988, The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF)–a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the art market and the preservation of cultural heritage–is widely regarded as the world's preeminent organization for fine art, antiques, and design. 273 dealers from 22 countries are exhibiting at TEFAF Maastricht, and visitors can expect to discover a vast curated selection of the finest paintings, sculptures, drawings, antiquities, jewellery, manuscripts and objets d'art spanning a 7,000 year period of art history from ancient to contemporary.

Some dealers at TEFAF are worried about the new EU Regulation 2019/880, which applies to antiquities and artworks more than 200 years old and valued over €18,000 ($19,500), which was introduced recently as an anti-terrorist policy and means stricter import controls. However, the atmosphere at the 2025 Maastricht edition of TEFAF feels buzzy and buoyant, with visitors posing for photos under the epic floral installation at the fair's entrance–which is an artwork in itself–before flocking to experience museum-quality booths presented by dealers from all over the world.

Flower Wall Jitske Nap © Loraine Bodewes © LORAINE BODEWES

Will Korner, Head of Fairs, TEFAF told me at the fair: "At TEFAF, our global community of exhibitors–leading experts in their fields–present the finest examples of art, design, and antiquities. Each presentation is meticulously curated to reflect the finest and most beautiful examples of their specialism. TEFAF Maastricht is always a space for rediscovery and connoisseurship. The 2025 edition continues this tradition, with extraordinary new finds across centuries and disciplines. From museum-quality Old Masters to modern and contemporary works, TEFAF continues to be the premier destination for collectors, institutions, and art lovers seeking the rare, the exceptional, and the truly timeless."

The TEFAF Summit returns to TEFAF Maastricht for a second year–in association with the Netherlands Commission for UNESCO and partner organizations including ICOM Belgium Flanders–and explores topics related to public funding and philanthropy in the non-profit fine arts sector. Notable speakers at the Summit included Kathleen Ferrier (Netherlands Commission for UNESCO), Adama Sanneh (Moleskine Foundation), Jenny Waldman (Art Fund), Wim Pijbes (Stichting Droom en Daad), and Barbera Wolfensberger (Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science).

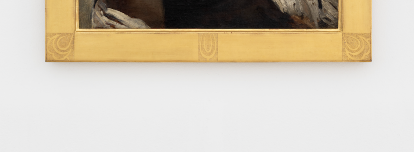
Two special loan exhibitions–from the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimente in Naples and KMSKA, Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp–demonstrate TEFAF's commitment to encouraging dialogue between institutions and collectors.

Here are some highlights to look out for at the 2025 edition of TEFAF, which runs until Thursday 20th March at the MECC in Maastricht.

Rediscovered Masterpieces

There are several exciting discoveries and rediscovered Masterpieces on display for the first time in many years at TEFAF Maastricht.

A breathtaking 1897 portrait by Gustav Klimt of Prince William Nii Nortey Dowuona is exhibited at Wienerroither & Kohlbacher for the first time after disappearing from public view since 1928. Klimt painted the exquisite oil on canvas of the Ghanaian Prince–an important representative of the Osu (Ga)–during the Vienna Volkerschau. Klimt expert Prof Dr. Alfred Weidinger verified the painting as the lost painting of an African Prince, which he had spent two decades searching for. The rediscovered painting offers insights into Klimt's early style and shows the historical connections between Africa and Europe in the 19th Century.



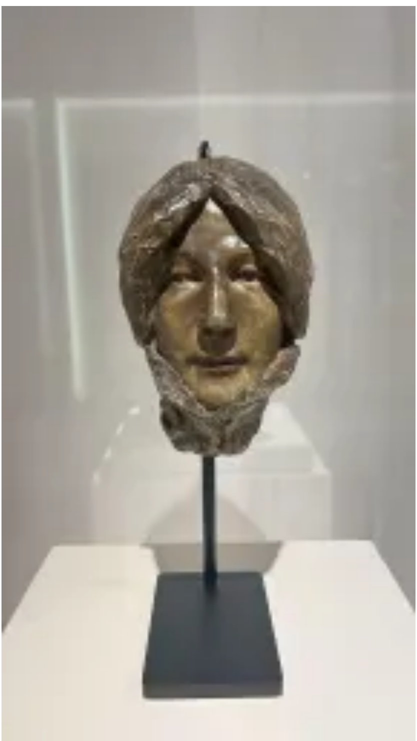
Gustav Klimt portrait of Prince William Nii Nortey Dowuona at Wienerroither & Kohlbacher WIENERROITHER & KOHLBACHER

Titian's magnetic masterpiece *"The Madonna and Child with St. Mary Magdalen"* takes center stage at Trinity Fine Art after being hidden for more than two centuries. The painting by Titian and Girolamo Dente is dated between 1555 and 1560 and last surfaced in 1937 at Christie's. After X-ray analysis it was discovered that the artist had at some point made significant alterations, removing a halo and window and adding a coral necklace, and transforming a bearded male figure into the beatific vision of Mary Magdalen.

Titian "The Madonna and Child with St. Mary Magdalen" at Trinity Fine Art. © Loraine Bodewes. © LORAINE BODEWES

A rediscovered Jules Bastien-Lepage portrait of French stage actress and artist Sarah Bernhardt is exhibited at Patrick Bourne, and an *Autoportrait* (c. 1885) is a highlight of theBowman Sculpture booth. Bernhardt starred in some of the most popular French plays of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including *La Dame aux Camélias* by Alexandre Dumas fils, *Ruy Blas* by Victor Hugo, Fédora and *La Tosca* by Victorien Sardou.

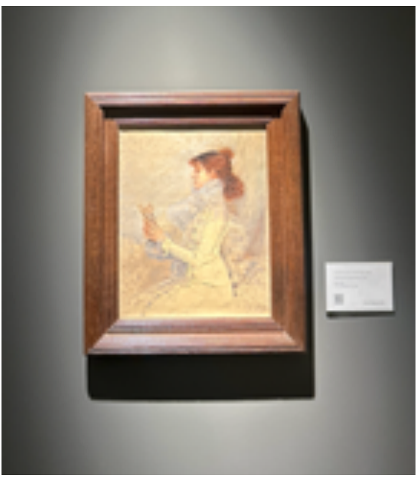
Bernhardt's *Autoportrait* at Bowman Sculpture offers a rare glimpse into the artistic side of the legendary actress, capturing her distinctive presence in plaster. Bowman Sculpture director Mica Bowman said at the fair: "Essentially what's special about this piece is that–she was very well known for being an actress and was also a director and an artist, predominantly a sculptor–but her sculptures usually have a bit of a mythological twist to them. She was an eccentric–she slept in a coffin to prepare for particularly dramatic roles, lost a leg to gangrene and refused a prosthetic, but continued to act and dance. What's interesting about this (*Autoportrait*) piece in particular is that it is a self-portrait, but it's a very intimate, very introspective self-portrait."



Sarah Bernhardt's Autoportrait (c 1885). Courtesy of Bowman Sculpture. COURTESY OF BOWMAN SCULPTURE.

Thomas Podd at Patrick Bourne said: "This painting by Bastien-Lepage of Sarah Bernhardt is a sketch of the finished Salon portrait, which was exhibited in the same year that they were both painted. Lepage and Bernhardt had met at a party in Paris, and he had fallen head over heels in love with her and asked to paint her portrait. This painting–unlike the Salon portrait–was given directly to Bernhardt after Lepage painted. It remained in her family for a long time and was in a private collection in France. Its rediscovery was a very significant moment."

The Bastien-Lepage portrait of Bernhardt was exhibited alongside the finished Salon portrait at the Petit Palais in Paris in 2023, in an exhibition dedicated to Bernhardt, while the *Autoportrait* on display at Bowman Sculpture was also featured in the same exhibition.



Jules Bastien-Lepage portrait of Sarah Bernhardt at Patrick Bourne © Lee Sharrock © LEE SHARROCK

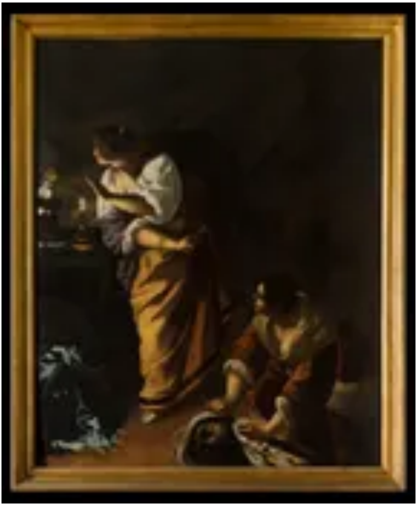
Other important rediscoveries to be found at TEFAF include Stuart Lochhead Sculpture's presentation of a newly discovered 25 cm high bronze corpus of Michelangelo's *Crucified Christ*–after a model by a late 16th century model by the master sculptor– and a portrait by Velázquez of Jerónima de la Fuente.

Spotlight on Overlooked Women Artists

The representation of women artists at TEFAF has grown in recent years, and this year more than 500 works have been submitted by over 100 dealers. Old Masters specialist Mercè Valderrey Art and the Athena Art Foundation compile a map of the fair which spotlights where to find women artists.

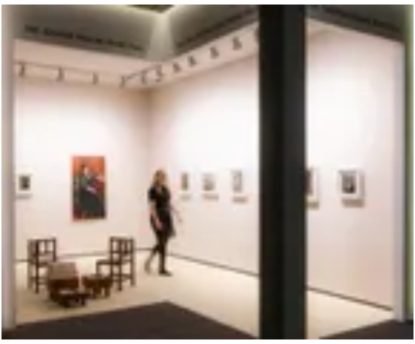
Unmissable highlights include Marie Bracquemond at Galerie Pauline Pavec, Juliana Seraphim at Richard Saltoun Gallery and *Artemisia Gentileschi at the* Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte special loan exhibition.

A powerful 17th Century painting by Italian Old Master artist Artemisia Gentileschi–titled *Giuditta e la fantesca 1640-45*–is exhibited in a landmark loan exhibition from the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte in Naples and demonstrates the 17th Century artist's mastery of Chiaroscuro.



Artemisia Gentileschi, Giuditta e la fantesca, 1640-45, oil on canvas. Credit Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples MUSEO E REAL BOSCO DI CAPODIMONTE, NAPLES

Impressionist Marie Bracquemond trained in Étampes before refining her skills in the studio of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and–along with her husband Felix Bracquemond, she associated with the leading figures of Impressionism including Monet, Degas, Manet and Gaugin. Nine exquisite paintings by Bracquemond are exhibited at Galerie Pauline Pavec, of which six have sold to private collections and institutions in the US, Netherlands, France and UK. Unusually the gallery chose to present the canvases in contemporary white frames, a bold choice which further highlights Bracquemond's mastery of light and color.



Pauline Pavec © Loraine Bodewes. © PAULINE PAVEC

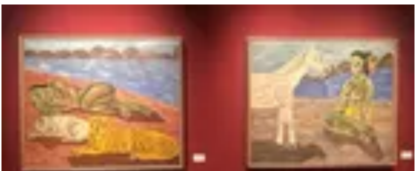
Lebanese Surrealist Juliana Seraphim is the star of Richard Saltoun's booth in the Focus section, which is dedicated to the mystical paintings of the 20th-century Middle Eastern modernist and showcases her Surrealist paintings and works on paper from the 1950s-1990s. Seraphim developed a unique iconography and politics of her own, rooted in the relationship between spirituality, nature and femininity, making her an early pioneer of contemporary eco-feminist discourse. Seraphim was forced to flee Jaffa in 1948 and then settled in the cultural epicenter of Beirut. A pioneer of the Middle Eastern art scene of the period, she was recently included in *Arab presence: Modern Art and Decolonisation, Paris 1908-1988* at the Museé d'Art Moderne in Paris (2024) and *Beirut and The Golden Sixties*, Biennale de Lyon, (2022).

Juliana Seraphim exhibition. Courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery London Rome and New York. COURTESY OF RICHARD SALTOUN GALLERY LONDON ROME AND NEW YORK.

An Appreciation of African Artists

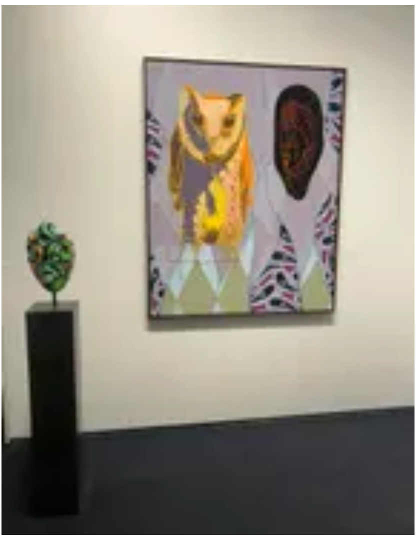
African Art has a strong presence at TEFAF Maastricht this year with a solo exhibition of Salah Elmur at Mariane Ibrahim and a group exhibition of 20th century and contemporary African art at TAFETA. Notable African works can also be found at Yann Ferrandin, Lucas Rattan, Bernard de Grunne, Serge Schoffel – Art Premier and Voyageurs & Curieux.

Mariane Ibrahim's inaugural exhibition at TEFAF is dedicated to the work of Egyptian artist Salah Elmur and features a suite of five works centered on the Blue Nile in Khartoum. Sarah Elmur (b. 1966, Khartoum) draws inspiration from his upbringing near the Blue Nile and Sudan's rich cultural history.



Salah Elmur at Mariane Ibrahim © Lee Sharrock © LEE SHARROCK

TAFETA is showcasing six African artists who featured in the 2024 la Biennale di Venezia–Ben Enwonwu MBE, Uche Okeke, Malangatana,Twins Seven Seven and Susanne Wenger–alongside contemporary African artists. Another highlight of TAFETA's booth are linocuts and etchings and a metal repoussé panel on board by Nigerian master Bruce Onobrakpeya, who was one of first African artists to exhibit in the Venice Biennale in 1990. These esteemed 20th Century African artists are juxtaposed with contemporary African artists including Venice Biennale alumni Yinka Shonibare CBE, Enam Gbewonyo and Babajide Olatunji.



TAFETA Gallery at TEFAF Maastricht © Lee Sharrock © LEE SHARROCK

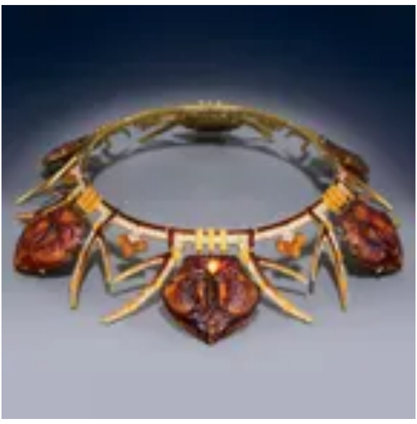
Ayo Adeyinka, TAFETA director says: "All the artist in our 20th century section were featured in Venice last year, apart from Bruce Onobrakpey whose first showing was at a presentation by the Studio Museum Harlem at the 1990 edition. African "Modernism" is certainly getting a long overdue focus, with current or future exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern and MoMA NY."

Celebrating the Centenary of Art Deco

Many dealers at TEFAF Maastricht this year are celebrating the centenary of the Art Deco movement since the1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes. Art Deco furniture of note can be found at Viennese gallery Belle Atage. who are presenting a first-class examples of Viennese Secessionist furniture by Dagobert Peche. Parisian Galerie Marcilhac are presenting a display honoring Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann's 1925 pavilion and featuring a Pleyel piano by Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann alongside a unique collection of furniture and objects created by Ruhlmann.

Galerie Marcilhac © Loraine Bodewes © LORAINE BODEWES

Some exquisite examples of Art Deco jewellery can be found at Wartski, SJ Philips and Epoque Fine Jewels–who are exhibiting a choker by René Jules Lalique, who is considered one of the driving forces of Art Deco.



René Jules Lalique at Epoque Fine Jewels. RENÉ LALIQUE

TEFAF Maastricht is at the MECC Maastricht until 20th March, 2025.

Editorial Standards | Forbes Accolades

By Lee Sharrock. I'm a London-based writer and curator who loves to travel and am the founder and editor of Culturalee https://culturalee.art, an arts platform celebrating the rich global tapestry of culture. I contribute to...

Read More

Follow Author

Forbes

© 2025 Forbes Media LLC. All Rights Reserved.