

TEFAF New York Fall

Susan Moore selects her highlights of the fair

1. Book of hours for the use of Paris, c. 1407-08, Limbourg brothers, most likely Paul (c. 1386/87-1416). Illustrated manuscript on vellum with 30 large drawings, 15 x 10.5cm. Heribert Tenschert



What are we to expect when the greatest art and antiques fair in the world opens its doors in New York? According to Patrick van Maris, chief executive of the European Fine Art Foundation, 'a fair completely different to anything that has been seen in the US before'. The inaugural TEFAF New York Fall, which runs at the Park Avenue Armory from 21-26 October, offers a first taste of the collaboration between the European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF Maastricht) and Artvest, the art advisory firm behind New York's Spring Masters. The event takes the place of the longstanding Haughton International Show at the Armory and presents, as it did, fine and decorative arts from antiquity to the early 20th century. A second show, TEFAF New York Spring, focusing on modern and contemporary art and design, will use Spring Masters' slot at the Armory (4-9 May 2017).

According to Artvest's principal and co-founder Michael Plummer, negotiations to take over the International had already concluded when Artvest was approached by van Maris. 'When we took over the May Spring Show NYC it was struggling,' Plummer says,

'We rebranded it, made it international and raised its profile. We thought it would be a good stepping stone for bringing TEFAF to New York, but we did not anticipate being able to persuade TEFAF so quickly that a joint venture was the logical next step.'

'The idea that TEFAF should have satellite fairs has always been in the mind of the board and exhibitors,' van Maris elaborates. Indeed, they had already experimented with the idea with TEFAF Basel in the 1990s. The much-vaunted recent project for the Beijing, however, was abandoned - for the time being at least. 'It was too complicated,' says van Maris, 'and the dealers thought it was too early to move into China, but I still believe that at some point there will be a fair in either Beijing or Shanghai.' New York and Washington had also been mooted for a US edition in 1997. 'At that time we were looking for a big venue, it is very difficult to find the right space at the right time, which is why we saw the Artvest venture as a golden opportunity for us and why we acted so quickly.' The deal was done in February, which gave the team only nine months to put together an

event that would wow what Plummer describes as 'still the most vibrant collecting community in the world'.

Attracting that community is key. After 28 years, the once pioneering International Show looked tired and underfunded, and many of its leading exhibitors had drifted away. That there is an appetite for the very best of older art was revealed by the response to the spectacular show staged at the Academy Mansions by dealers Nicolas and Alexis Kugel, Brimo de Laroussilhe and Alessandra di Castro last October. 'Everyone has been extremely supportive,' Plummer assures me. 'They feel that New York needs a fair of TEFAF quality.' Big collectors have been invited to join an advisory board and, no less usefully, the Opening Night Reception will maintain the International's support of the cancer charity, the Society of Memorial Sloan Kettering.

Instead of one vast fair with around 270 exhibitors, this will be one of two fairs with around 90, but both events will incorporate the Armory's upstairs period rooms, some but not all of which have been completely restored. As for Tom Postma's design for the



3. Bust of Amenhotep II, Egyptian, 18th dynasty, (1427-1400 BC), granodiorite, ht 14.5cm, Daniel Katz

2. Bombe commode, c. 1760, Pietro Piffetti (1701-77), briar walnut, ebony and boxwood with ornolu-mounted handles, 83 x 125 x 57cm, Burzo



dark and cavernous Drill Hall and entrance, van Maris says: 'You won't even recognise them. They'll be light and airy and look much more contemporary.' They will have Maas-tricht's 'elegance and class' - and also the fair's spectacular flowers. He sees the greatest challenge as logistical - getting the fair up and vetted in just 72 hours.

Curiosity will bring collectors to this first New York outing. What will ensure their return - and, van Maris hopes, encourage more of them to visit, Maastricht - is the quality of the best dealers in their category in the world, and the right amount of dealers per category.' Van Maris adds: 'There will be some really spectacular stands. All the dealers want to make an impression. Some are returning to New York for the first time in years, and others have never shown there at all.'

The roll call of exhibitors is certainly impressive. Some, like Swiss antiquarian book dealer Heribert Tenschert, take their inaugural bow in the city by offering the most extraordinary works of art. This recently discovered unfinished medieval book of hours

contains drawings made around 1400 by the peerless Limbourg brothers (Fig. 1). It is incredibly rare, and revealing, to see manuscript illuminations before they were painted - and the virtuosity and invention of these are remarkable. Price €12m.

Another newcomer, London-based dealership Burzio, unveils as its stellar piece something not seen for more than 60 years. Pietro Piffetti, *ehatisia* to the king of Sardinia, lays claim to being one of the greatest and most innovative cabinetmakers of the 18th century, and here is one of a pair of bombe commodes made around 1760 for his own use (Fig. 2). Veneered in briar walnut, it is striking for its bold and looping ebony and boxwood 'C' scrolls. Unlike its pair, it retains its original gilt-bronze lion mask handles. Price on request.

London sculpture dealer Daniel Katz returns to New York with a real rarity in terms of quality and condition: a granodiorite Egyptian bust of Amenhotep II produced in the royal workshops at the end of the first half of the 18th dynasty (1427-1400 BC; Fig. 3). Just 14.5cm high, this is a small gem - sharply

carved, delicately rooled and with much of its surface intact. Price on request.

Koopman Rare Art has been a long-time exhibitor at both TEFAF and the International, and director Lewis Smith has high expectations of the Fall show. 'TEFAF is undoubtedly one of the world's leading art fairs and there is no reason why this should be any different in New York,' he comments. Among its offering is a sumptuous pair of Paul Storr silver dessert bowls of 1838-48, ornamented by tritons blowing their conch horns. Price £245,000.

Somehow, the fair could not be TEFAF without Dutch painting. Bob Haboldt obliges with a subtle, near monochrome panel by the Haarlem master, Pieter Claesz, of 1638. *A Tobacco: a Still Life with a Berkmeyer, Matches, clay Pipes, a Tobacco Box, and a Brazier* comes with a price tag of €1.65m. **B**

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TEFAF New York Fall takes place at the Park Avenue Armory from 21-26 October (www.tefaf.com).