

At the Tefaf Fair, Old Masters and Powerful Women

Objects that were made for kings and queens and remarkable examples of American art lead the exceptional displays here.

By Martha Schwendener

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The fifth installment of [Tefaf New York](#), the art fair that started in Maastricht, the Netherlands, is just as grand and impressive as its previous versions. There are objects here that were made for kings and queens, emperors and pharaohs, and representatives of the avant-garde. Everything on view has been vetted by expert curators and conservators, since the fair was historically a shopping mart for museums. There are 93 booths presented by “experts” (as Tefaf calls them, rather than “art dealers”) and an all-star lineup of [programming](#). On Saturday you can learn about modern art in India; on Sunday, Delacroix or the black figure in art from the 19th century to the present, while Frick Collection officials will discuss plans for their renovation on Tuesday. In the meantime, here are some of the exceptional displays.

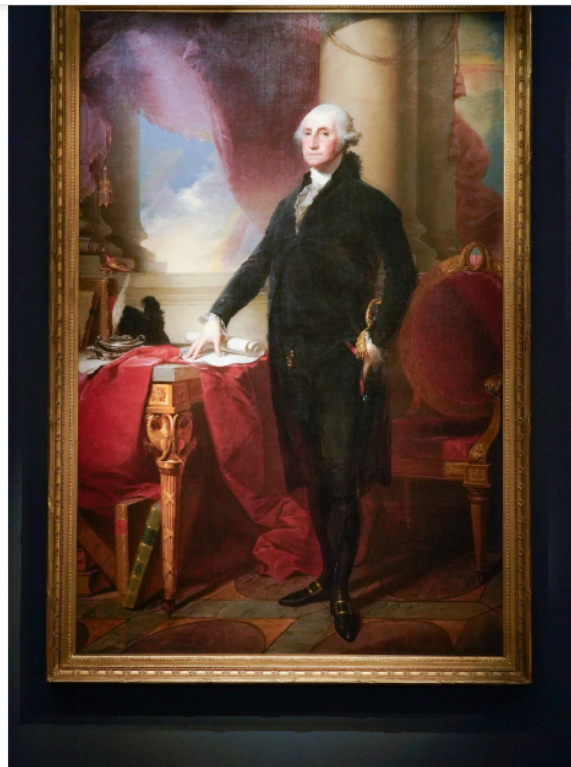
American Masters



From left, "August Afternoon in the Alleghenies" (1959-61), and "Trilliums and Rock Ledge" (1919), both by Charles Burchfield, at the Bernard Goldberg booth. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times



"Shot in the Hand," portfolio plate 133, from 1908, copper photogravure printing plate by Edward S. Curtis at the Bruce Kapson booth. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times



"The Munro-Lenox Full-Length Portrait of George Washington," by Gilbert Stuart, at the Hirschl & Adler booth. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

Appropriate for the New York version, Tefaf has some remarkable examples of American art. [Hirschl & Adler](#) (Booth No. 370) has a full-length portrait of George Washington, painted around 1800 by the great American portraitist Gilbert Stuart. Part of a series of seven Gilbert paintings of the first president, this one is filled with details borrowed from classic European portraiture, and includes the artist's signature peeking from under a drapery. [Bruce Kapson](#) (104) has an extraordinary display of copper photogravure printing plates by Edward S. Curtis, created for his project "The North American Indian" and completed in 1928. Many of these images of indigenous Americans from west of the Mississippi River will be familiar to visitors but not in this unusual form. Another American master and a favorite among contemporary painters is Charles Burchfield. A collection of his gorgeous, large-scale visionary watercolors created from 1915 to 1965 — many painted at his home near Buffalo, N.Y., and depicting the local landscape — are on view at [Bernard Goldberg](#) (202).

Notable Women



A 1520s Flemish wool and silk tapestry with the coat of arms and initials of Christine de Lechy, at the Mullany booth.
Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

In historical art shown at Tefaf, women are more often patrons than artists (unless they were models). But there are some superb examples of how women wielded power in earlier ages. [Mullany](#) (373) has a 1520s Flemish wool and silk tapestry with the coat of arms and initials of Christine de Lechy, a wealthy widow from the province of Limburg and the mother of two abbesses of a Cistercian Abbey in the southern Netherlands. The well-preserved tapestry (it was rolled up and only displayed on special occasions) includes rich foliage, animals and gargoyle-like human heads. Two important women are also connected with illuminated manuscripts on display at [Heribert Tenschert](#) (203): a Book of Hours from around 1503 to 1507, thought to be made for Catherine of Aragon, the first wife of King Henry VIII, and another Book of Hours in a jeweled binding of gold and enamel, from the 1520s, made for Claude of France, queen consort and daughter of King Louis XII.

Old Masters



"A Bouquet of Flowers in a Decorated Vase," by Jan Brueghel the Younger, at the Haboltd Picture booth.
Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times



Detail of "Portrait of Cardinal Carlo Rezzonico," from 1758, by Anton Raphael Mengs, at the Benappi/Mehring booth.
Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times



"Portrait of the Cardinal Marcantonio Da Mula," (circa 1562-63), oil on canvas, by Jacopo Tintoretto, at the Rob Smeets booth.
Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

European old master paintings and sculptures, Tefaf's core staples, are predictably strong. The upstairs rooms in the Armory provide spaces not unlike chapels in Christian churches or nooks in a dusty chateau. [Rob Smeets](#) (209) has a Tintoretto portrait of a cardinal who was also an ambassador. Coinciding with an exhibition of [Tintoretto drawings](#) at the Morgan Library & Museum, this painting has Tintoretto's signature dramatic lighting, but with modern details like incising done with the stick-end of the paintbrush. [Benappi/Mehring](#) (205) is showing a neo-Classical portrait from 1758 by Anton-Raphael Mengs of another powerful [cardinal](#) who was also a nephew of Pope Clement XIII. Downstairs at [Haboltd Pictura](#) (341) is a still life painted in Antwerp by Jan Brueghel the Younger around 1625, depicting a decorated vase stuffed with flowers and crawling with insects. As in most northern European paintings of that period, the bugs and flowers are markers of some moral or philosophical principle.

Gun Crazy



Percussion pistols and matching accessories that were presented to the Duke of Valencia, from 1847, by Eusebio Zuloaga, at the Peter Finer booth. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times



Detail of a wheel-lock gun from King Louis XIII's cabinet of arms, circa 1620-30, attributed to Jean Henequin, at Peter Finer. Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

The next King Louis of France was something of a gun aficionado, as well as an avid hunter. (According to experts at [Peter Finer](#) (306), Louis XIII already owned almost a dozen guns by the time he was 6 years old.) The London-based Finer is showing a wheel-lock gun made from 1620 to 1630 by the celebrated designer and gunmaker Jean Henequin of Metz. It was made for an official of Louis XIII and kept in the king's cabinet of arms — and probably looted during the French Revolution. (Arms were stored in the fated Bastille.) The wooden gun, which carries markings that identified its origins — and a marvel of details in steel, gold and brass — was used to hunt animals like stags.

Famous Furniture



“The Bocket Hall Saloon Chairs,” a pair of George III giltwood open armchairs by Thomas Chippendale, at the Ronald Phillips booth.
Rebecca Smeyne for The New York Times

Less lethal objects can be found at [Ronald Phillips](#) (357), which is celebrating the 300th anniversary of the birth of the English furniture designer Thomas Chippendale (1718-1779). Photographic wallpaper lining the booth captures the interior of Bocket Hall, owned by the first Lord Melbourne — and now, like many grand English estates, is available for weddings and golf. Lord Melbourne commissioned a set of chairs from Chippendale and two are here, which gain additional interest (and value, presumably) because they were once owned by a different branch of British royalty: Elton John, who was knighted by the queen in 1998.

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