



Born in the USA

With TEFAF at the helm, this year's autumn fair at New York's Armory is larger and offers more treasures than ever

HERE were fewer American collectors at the TEFAF Maastricht Fair than usual this year and, although there was American buying at LAPADA, I suspect that the same may be true of the early-autumn fairs in London and Paris. European dealers heading for New York to exhibit at the new TEFAF-organised event at the Park Avenue Armory from October 22 to 26 are trusting that 'not travelling' will not equate to 'not buying'.

As I have mentioned before, recessions and times of political turbulence are generally good for the traditional art and antiques trade and the USA is likely to be in a febrile condition even after November 8, so a certain degree of confidence is justified. In February, after 28 years, Anna and Brian Haughton, organisers of the autumn International Fairs at the Armory, transferred ownership to TEFAF, so this event is both a continuation and a new beginning.

With 94 exhibitors, it will be larger than for some time and many are Maastricht veterans, not all of whom have previously shown in New York. Others are returning after a time away.

Fig 1: Oval silver tureen (1799). With Koopman



About two-thirds are European, including at least 25 from London.

Like its predecessor, but not Maastricht, which includes a sometimes variable contemporary element, this fair will range from antiquity to the early 20th century and a second new event organised by TEFAF and its partner Artvest, a New York investment advisory service, will be launched next May to offer Modern and contemporary art.

Koopman, the Chancery Lane silver dealer, is always able to find pieces that tickle the palates of particular audiences and, here, it does so with a tureen by Paul Storr (1771–1844), who is one of the company's specialities. A group of pieces

Fig 2: Buffe (about 1586). With Peter Finer



by him will include the oval tureen on a stand (**Fig 1**), which was presented in 1799 by shareholders to Thomas Willing (1731–1821), the first president of the First National Bank of the United States in Philadelphia, then the infant country's capital. Although Willing had voted against the Declaration of Independence, his partner Robert Morris was known as the 'financier of the Revolution'. Sound banking practice, no doubt.

An item shown by the arms and armour specialist Peter Finer also has a tangential connection to Philadelphia. A buffe is a protector for the throat and lower face that fits between a helmet and cuirass. This one (**Fig 2**) was made in about 1586 as part of an armour garniture for the Elector Christian I of Saxony by the last of the great Augsburg armourers, Anton Peffenhauser (1525–1603). Most other elements of the garniture, including the helmet, are still in the Dresden Armoury (or, delightfully, in German, *Rüstkammer*) but one piece, a vamplate—the round plate that protects the hand holding a lance—is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

A marble bust of Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Taylor (1775–1839) (**Fig 3**), which will be with Tomasso Brothers, shows him, discreetly, in Roman armour, but he must have been as accomplished a diplomat as a soldier. He was aide-de-camp to the Duke of York, private secretary to George III and Queen Charlotte, military secretary to the Duke of Wellington, adjutant-general of the forces and private



Fig 3: Bust of Lt-Gen Sir Herbert Taylor. With Tomasso Brothers

secretary to William IV and aide-de-camp to the young Victoria. Despite the notorious difficulties of George IV with the rest of the family, Taylor also remained on good terms with him.

The bust is by Samuel Joseph (1791–1850) and the choice of proud Roman attire was not only professionally appropriate and fashionable, but personally, too, as, on retirement, it was in Rome that he died.

The current 12th Earl of Shaftesbury could be excused a touch of immodesty about his achievement in bringing back from near death St Giles House, the family seat in Dorset. Virtually abandoned in 1954, it was on the register of Buildings at Risk in 2001, but, 10 years after the Earl's accession in 2005, it won the Historic Houses Association and Sotheby's Restoration Award. Alas, over the decades of abandonment, much of the best furniture was sold off and, at today's prices, there could be little chance of getting much of it back.



Fig 4: A pair of Chinese lacquer commodes made in about 1765 (detail, left). They first featured in COUNTRY LIFE in 1915. With Ronald Phillips

In New York, Ronald Phillips will be showing a pair of Chinese lacquer commodes (**Fig 4**) supplied to the 4th Earl for the house, almost certainly by John Cobb, in about 1765. Cobb, with his partner William Vile until that year, worked almost next door to Chippendale in St Martin's Lane. He was said to be 'perhaps, the haughtiest man

in England', which, on one occasion, earned him an admirable lesson in courtesy from George III. The commodes are old friends of COUNTRY LIFE, first featuring here in 1915.

There is much happy argument to be had about the origins of the game of croquet and its descent from various medieval and 17th-century games.

However, it is generally accepted that the modern game was first played in Ireland and brought to England in the 1850s, there to be promoted by Jaques of London. For about 20 years, it enjoyed great popularity, partly because it could be played by both sexes, but then it was usurped by the new lawn tennis. However, there was a revival during the 1890s. Some of the earliest paintings are French, including an 1873 canvas by Manet, which shows a game on a challengingly rough field.

Among a selection of works by Renoir that Richard Green

is taking to New York is an 18 1/2 in by 21 7/8 in canvas, *Enfants dans le jardin de Montmartre: la partie de croquet*, painted in about 1895 (**Fig 5**). It is a truly Impressionist sketch, full of light and movement. There is much gossip, as there should be, thoroughly ignored by the boy taking his shot at the centre. Could this be the artist's son, Jean Renoir, who wrote that Montmartre was then 'a little paradise of lilacs and roses, whose inhabitants dwelt in a world apart'?

Next week PAD report with Olympia to come



Pick of the week

For his latest exhibition at Sladmore Contemporary in Bruton Place, off Berkeley Square London W1, Nick Bibby mixes the realistic sculptures of animals for which he is best known with equally realistic mythological creatures to produce 'A Bestiary of the Real and Imagined', which runs to October 28. Among the creatures is a writhing Midgard Serpent, the arch-enemy of the god Thor.



Fig 5: An Impressionist canvas by Renoir (1895). With Richard Green