

# Meet the Maastricht movers and shakers

It's the dealers who are in the frontline – fresh faced or regulars

As befits the world's top art and antiques fair, *TEFAF Maastricht* attracts a wide range of dealers hoping to do good trade with the masses of visitors. Here, *Frances Allitt*, *Laura Chesters* and *Anne Crane* talk to the new faces, the fresh Showcase exhibitors and a 'graduate', the fair stalwarts and a returning dealer.

## The newbie

### Donald Ellis

Ellis is managing his anticipation as he makes his first foray into exhibiting at *TEFAF Maastricht*.

He set up his New York business dealing in North American Indian works in 1976, focusing on the art of the Eskimo, north-west coast and eastern woodlands cultures.

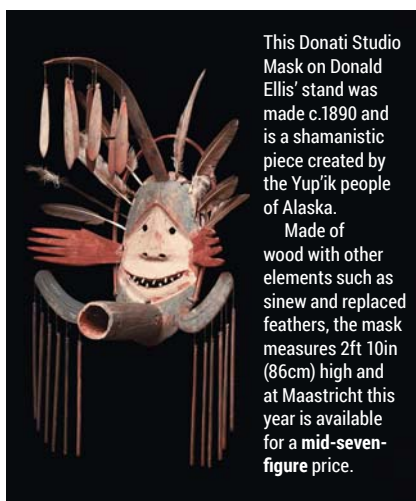
He's been a frequent visitor to the Maastricht fair in past years and holds with the view that it is the world's "pre-eminent" art and antiques fair.

It's due to the current political situation in the US and Europe that Ellis says he finds it difficult to forecast sales and that he's going into the fair with "modest expectations".

Still, nothing ventured, nothing gained, and now could be the perfect time to start pushing the gallery's stock to a wider audience.



Left: Donald Ellis.



This Donati Studio Mask on Donald Ellis' stand was made c.1890 and is a shamanistic piece created by the Yup'ik people of Alaska.

Made of wood with other elements such as sinew and replaced feathers, the mask measures 2ft 10in (86cm) high and at Maastricht this year is available for a mid-seven-figure price.

Ellis is the first Native American-focused exhibitor ever to stand at the venerable fair.

Though he says it still trails African and Oceanic art by a good distance, "Native American art has been increasing its audience in Europe in recent years and we are hoping to expand that interest further".

Adding the event to the gallery's growing roster of fairs at home and abroad seemed a logical next step, and there is always the hope of enticing a new audience.

"TEFAF has a strong reputation for attracting museum groups from the US and Europe and we are looking forward to speaking to new people from that sector."

The gallery has also taken part in the *Armory Show*, *Art Toronto*, *Parcours des Mondes* and the *Seattle Art Fair*. It also appears regularly at *Frieze Masters*, where Annabelle Selldorf of Selldorf Architects designs the stand.

She has also completed the stand design for *TEFAF*, where Ellis brings around 40 items with a focus on sculptural work from the north-west coast and the Yup'ik peoples of Alaska.

In pride of place will be an old headline-grabber, the Donati Studio Mask, which Ellis sold in 2010 to a collector for more than \$2.5m, setting a record for US indigenous art.

[donaldellisgallery.com](http://donaldellisgallery.com)



**Native American art has been increasing its audience in Europe in recent years and we are hoping to expand that interest further**



Above: this 7½ x 6in (19 x 15cm) figure of a mounted horseman by Federico Zuccaro, in chalk on laid paper, will be shown by Artur Ramon at *TEFAF Maastricht*. It is priced around €90,000.

## The regular

### Artur Ramon

The Artur Ramon Art from Barcelona has exhibited at *TEFAF Maastricht* since 2010 when the works on paper section was founded.

Ramon describes the fair as "really magical", with the best dealers and collectors from all over the world.

Asked what nationalities are his main customers at Maastricht, he says "mostly Spanish but also Americans, French and Dutch". He meets clients here from the global international market who don't often come to Barcelona, where the market is much more local, and also Spanish clients who do not visit the gallery.

In more recent *TEFAF* editions he has also encountered something that didn't happen in the past – new clients for local Spanish artists.

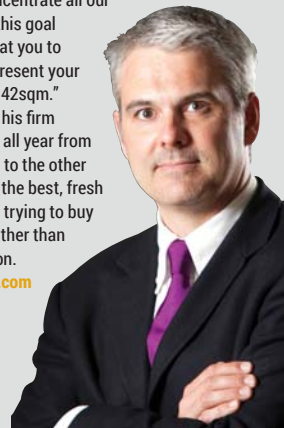
"We sold a beautiful watercolour by Ramon Tusquets to a Turkish customer and a drawing by Josep Taipo to a Chinese client."

Asked how he attracts the visitors' attention and makes his booth stand out, Ramon says "it's not easy", adding: "*TEFAF* is a challenge and we have to concentrate all our energy on this goal knowing that you to have to represent your firm in just 42sqm."

He says his firm works hard all year from one edition to the other looking for the best, fresh new works, trying to buy privately rather than from auction.

[arturamon.com](http://arturamon.com)

Right:  
Artur  
Ramon.



## The Showcase dealers



### Elisabetta Cipriani

The Showcase section at *TEFAF Maastricht* allows five recently established galleries a chance to get their feet wet at the fair without the potentially prohibitive full stand fees.

Among the participating dealers this year is Elisabetta Cipriani, a London dealer in artists' jewellery, who says "there isn't a fair in the world like *TEFAF*. Variety, quality and presentation are important aspects of a good fair, and at *TEFAF* you won't so much see galleries exhibiting their stock as a series of very thoughtful curatorial booths."

She set up her gallery in Mayfair in 2009 and collaborates with contemporary artists such as Ai Weiwei, Carlos Cruz-Diez and Jannis Kounellis on pieces of jewellery. In the past she has exhibited at *Design Miami/Basel* and *Design Miami*, but in preparation for the showcase she is updating the aesthetics of her stand, displaying them in 12 x 12in (30 x 30cm) glass and iron boxes.

Cipriani says: "I am expanding the artists' jewellery market and I want more and more people to be aware of these extraordinary, wearable art pieces. *TEFAF* has intellectual and sophisticated visitors. I am positive they will thoroughly enjoy trying these pieces."

Among the jewellery she is bringing are works on which she collaborated with Cameroon-born artist Pascale Marthine Tayou. *Gri-Gri* (above right) features seven rings made of white and yellow gold, Sought Sea pearls, coloured threads and African cloth. Each contains a shaman potion. The 18ct rings are available for €10,200 each.

[elisbettacipriani.com](http://elisbettacipriani.com)



Image: Elisabetta Cipriani Gallery and Galerie Continua, San Geronamo/Beijing/Les Moulins/Habana

Right: Renaud Monméat is bringing this Nepalese Chandra Mandala to *TEFAF Maastricht*. The distemper on cloth painting shows the moon god on a chariot drawn by seven geese. The 16½ x 12 ½ (42 x 32cm) piece dated to 1460 is priced €200,000.



### Renaud Monméat

Another Showcase exhibitor is Renaud Monméat, whose Paris gallery, Renaud Monméat Art d'Asie, specialises in Indian, Himalayan and south-east Asian art. "My hope is to meet European customers. My market is oriented to China but since I am based in Europe I would also like to establish a clientele here," he says.

He founded the gallery in 1999 and since then has become a regular exhibitor at events catering to his field such as *Asia Week New York*, *Asian Art in London* and *Parcours de Mondes* in Paris. *TEFAF* offers a distinctly European platform from which to sell.

"I have visited the fair before and it is the best event for ancient art," Monméat says. "The best dealers exhibit there and very important collectors come. There is such a special atmosphere at *TEFAF*." To court these top-end dealers he plans to give his stand a light, modern look with white and grey walls.

Among the objects he is bringing are south-east Asian statues, several Nepalese pieces and a group of Gandhara schist pieces.

[montmeat-asianart.com](http://montmeat-asianart.com)



Above: Benjamin Proust brings this terracotta sculpture by Vadim Androusov (1895-1975). He was born in St Petersburg, the grandson of the famous archaeologist Schliemann, and later moved to Paris. He frequently worked in terracotta, plaster and wood creating classically inspired figures. This *Variation* piece, 15 x 13in (39 x 33cm), is available for €22,000.

[antiquetrade gazette.com](http://antiquetrade gazette.com)

## The Showcase graduate

### Benjamin Proust

The *TEFAF* Showcase is often a step on the path to a full stand at the fair, but it's not a guarantee of a future space.

It's easy to imagine the delight of New Bond Street sculpture and works of art dealer Benjamin Proust when he was invited back the year after his appearance at the Showcase. "I'm very happy. Usually they give you some purgatory years and I was expecting to have to wait, but no, they gave me a stand straight away and in a good location."

Positioned at one of the new entrances to the fair, he reflects happily that his corner stand will be the first thing many visitors see as they come in and the last as they leave.

He's taking the position as an opportunity to give something back: "I'm going a bit mad with the stand design even though it's not that big, but it's *TEFAF*, my first *TEFAF* as a proper exhibitor. It's a thank-you for them putting their faith in me after just one fair."

Proust describes the stand as a tribute to the Italian architect Carlo Scarpa, citing

the architect's ground-breaking designs for museums in the 1950s and '60s such as the Museo di Castelvecchio as his point of reference.

It's a labour of love ("I'm spending too much money again," Proust says with relish) and he speaks with exasperation about the dealers who don't bother to invest in their presentations.

A previous appearance has also taught the dealer about time management. Despite the length of the event, it's busy right through and "you have a little bit less time to explain everything to the public".

He adds: "I love to answer questions, but when I'm being asked every 30 seconds, I'll have to learn to be a bit more straight-to-the-point and not give each person a lecture on the history of art."

Proust is bringing a mix of objects, from 15th century marbles to 20th century sculpture, offering new and old clients – and the fleet of international museums he hopes to meet – plenty to choose from.

[benjaminproust.com](http://benjaminproust.com)





## The stalwarts

### François Laffanour

Galerie Downtown is the Paris left-bank gallery of François Laffanour (below left) specialising in furniture by 20th century European and American masters of design.

The gallery shows at many of the pre-eminent art, antiques and design fairs including *Design Miami/Basel*, *PAD Paris* and *ZONA Maco* in Mexico City as well as the *Paris Biennale*, and has taken part in *TEFAF Maastricht* since 2005 in the design section. It will also be taking part in the inaugural *TEFAF New York Spring* in May.



© Franck Perrin

For this year's Maastricht, Downtown's stand will focus on the work of Charlotte Perriand with a display of around 60 pieces by the sought-after and influential French Inter-war and Mid-century designer.

These are a mix of selected individual private commissions plus two or three pieces that she designed in 1959 for the Maison Borot in Montmartre.

Laffanour discovered the interior of the Borot house in the French magazine *Aujourd'hui, Art et Architecture* in the 1970s. With the co-operation of Borot's family, 30 years later he acquired the furniture and published *Charlotte Perriand, une maison à Montmartre* in 2012.

The gallery says its Maastricht display will recreate "both the atmosphere of the Borot house and the universe of Charlotte Perriand that we find nowadays in contemporary interiors". The

price range will be **€10,000-650,000**.

Laffanour says the gallery's clientele are predominantly private, many of them long-standing customers along with some new international collectors. The majority hail from France, Belgium and the US, followed by clients from Asia and Latin America.

He adds: "At Maastricht we sometimes meet new clients but mainly we meet collectors we have known for a long time."

[galeriedowntown.com](http://galeriedowntown.com)



Below: an 8ft (2.4m) square Charlotte Perriand wall storage of 1959 in oak with sliding doors to the upper and lower sections and a blue-tinted interior, one of the pieces by the designer that Galerie Downtown will show at *TEFAF Maastricht*.

© Marie\_Clerin\_Laffanour\_Galerie\_Downtown\_Paris



Above: this year, among Johnny Van Haeften's highlights at Maastricht is a pair of Frans Hals portraits which he says are rare to find together.

The provenance of the paintings is that Comte de Thiennes, Kasteel Rumbeke, Belgium, acquired them in the 19th century. In recent years they were with Robert Noortman Gallery and were bought by a Belgian private collector in 1996. They were offered but unsold at a Sotheby's sale in New York on January 29, 2009, but were later acquired by Van Haeften in 2016.

### Johnny Van Haeften

The Old Master specialist has been going to Maastricht for 40 years.

He jokes: "I have spent one and a half years of my life in the Crowne Plaza in Maastricht."

This year he has downsized his business and moved from St James's to the coach house next to his home in Richmond.

"I am still enjoying work. We are very busy. I am even busier than when I was in the gallery," he says.

Even now in what he describes as "semi-retirement" he will be showing at Maastricht this year.

But he has stepped down from the venerable art and antiques fair's executive committee: "I decided it was time to give young talent a chance."

This may be his last show as an exhibitor: "I am still in discussions with my wife about whether we do it next year. We have not quite decided."

He remains on the board of trustees at *TEFAF*.

Despite concerns that the fair is losing its buzz in its 30th year in its current incarnation, Van Haeften says: "People bring new and fresh things every year. There will always be innovations at the fair, always tweaking and changing. Opening in New York was a successful innovation."

[johnnyvanhaeften.com](http://johnnyvanhaeften.com)



I have spent one and a half years of my life in the Crowne Plaza in Maastricht



Right: Johnny Van Haeften.



**Left:** this double portrait shows Ippolito della Rovere, the natural son of Cardinal Giulio della Rovere, with his wife Isabella Vitelli. The 3ft x 2ft 7 in (92 x 78cm) oil on canvas by Federico Barocci (1535-1612) is at the *TEFAF Maastricht* stand of Matthiesen Gallery. It is available for \$1m-2m.

## The returning dealer

### Patrick Matthiesen

One stand returning to *TEFAF Maastricht* after a break is The Matthiesen Gallery, and though Patrick Matthiesen says that the one-year absence was nothing personal, he's returning with some trepidation.

A regular at the annual fair for more than 20 years, Matthiesen has dipped out on several occasions – in 2016 it was due to commitments to his charity, The Matthiesen Foundation – but he keeps coming back.

It is the major fair in his field of Old Masters, a fact which he acknowledges, and is the only one the St James's gallery attends. But that doesn't mean it ticks all the boxes.

Matthiesen isn't a fan of fairs at the best of times and feels that changes to *TEFAF* over the past few years have not been for the better necessarily.

"It was a smaller fair in the days when I started exhibiting there," he says. "Now it's much too large and too diffuse as a result."

And with the pool of Old Master collectors apparently constricting, it's getting increasingly difficult to make a stand-out sale. He adds that the classic visitor from the Benelux



**I spend no time on stand design – I put up the pictures and don't spend a lot of time with elaborate fabrics**



**Above:** Patrick Matthiesen.

countries might go for the Dutch 16th and 17th century paintings but his mainly Italian paintings can feel like less commercial options in this environment.

But, Matthiesen says, his gallery's works are "top of the range", making them attractive to the raft of museums that appear in Maastricht.

And these are pictures that speak for themselves, to the point that Matthiesen "spends no time at all on stand design. I put up the pictures and don't spend a lot of time with elaborate fabrics, which is the way stands seem to be going over the past couple of years."

This year the gallery has a piece of prime real estate with a corner stand, previously the regular site of 19th century and Old Master paintings gallery Otto Naumann.

Matthiesen notes that the absence of the New York gallery and similar specialists such as Galerie Sanct Lucas is a shame for a fair trying to stay true to its roots as it diversifies.

[matthiesengallery.com](http://matthiesengallery.com)



**Above:** Bernard Shapero.

## Freshness in a finite world

In its 30th year, how can *TEFAF* remain relevant in a world always craving something new?

Jorge Coll of Colnaghi says: "It's a place where all the most important dealers and collectors gather.

"Many of the best dealers hold back their best finds, so it can be a really rich environment for information and networking, as well as acquisitions."

*TEFAF* regular Johnny Van Haeften, agrees, adding that "dealers will save things for *TEFAF* to make what we show special, often works not exhibited before."

Much of the power of the event is down to the freshness of the objects it offers.

But "it's not always easy", says Artur Ramon, reflecting on the pressure of attracting visitors' attention when they're surrounded by stunning objects.

With all the dealers trotting out their newest and best stock, some find it can pay to get a bit creative. Many exhibitors have started to mix up their selection, incorporating different datelines and even

contemporary works into their offerings.

Works on paper dealer Stephen Ongpin, for

example, brings works from the 14th to the 20th centuries, spreading the net wide at a fair where he estimates that 80% of his sales are to new clients.

### Stand out

Others use stand design to catch viewers' eyes.

James Roundell of Dickinson Fine Art says the trick is creating flow: "When people pass your stand you want them to go in. Once they're in you want them to go around."

"It shouldn't make them claustrophobic, but if it's too open there's no sense of discovery and people like to feel they've discovered something. It pleases their imagination."

"Maastricht is such a powerful brand but it still has to be careful of fair fatigue," said London antiquarian book dealer Bernard Shapero.

"The market is flooded with fairs. The question is, will there be enough collectors to go around?"

"New York is fantastic because it is new and fresh. But Maastricht is not new so can it keep its buzz and keep to such a high level?"

"I really hope it does and we are 100% behind it. It must stay fresh and exciting."



**It can be a really rich environment for information and networking, as well as acquisitions**



**Left:** Jorge Coll.