

Large-Scale Contemporary Artworks Astound At TEFAF-Maastricht

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Sean Kelly at TEFAF Maastricht, March 11–19, 2023, MECC Maastricht, The Netherlands, Stand 465. In ... [+] PHOTO: PIETER DE VRIES, COURTESY: SEAN KELLY.

Clad in a pale blue Converse jumpsuit adorned with a lapel pin of a baby and exposing a neck tattoo, American YouTuber Tarek Ali Ellis cradles Michael Morgan in his arms. Ellis gazes at the viewer, conveying heroism with his embrace of a vulnerable Morgan. The pose amplifies Ellis' own life triumphs over adversity and precarity. The openly gay man with a passion for theater overcame childhood poverty and homelessness, and has struggled with body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) despite his prime form. At age 16, Ellis founded the LGBTQ non-profit

organization CaringColors.org. He graduated from Georgia State University in 2020, with a bachelor's degree in biology, and planned to be a doctor. He interned at Howard University and Columbia University Dental Clinics, and conducted research at National Institutes of Health (NIH) for several years.

The stunning, monumental *Portrait of Tarek Ali Ellis and Michael Morgan* (2023) oil on linen painting signed and dated by the artist commands a careful exploration into inimitable contemporary master Kehinde Wiley's unrivaled oeuvre celebrating Black and born people from around the world. The figures are positioned in the lower half of the canvas, leading our eye through the elaborate decorative background and our mind on an art historical journey. Wiley reimagines a depiction of the Virgin Mary supporting the body of the dead Christ.

Flanked by two bronze busts, *Mame Kéwé Aminata Lô*, 2020 (cast in 2021), and *Barthélémy Senghor*, 2020 (cast in 2021), the display underscores Wiley's fluidity across genres and his subversion of Old Masters by restaging classic paintings with contemporary figures. Meticulous curation by [Sean Kelly of New York](#) for the gallery's inaugural participation at TEFAF Maastricht creates a dialogue with the surrounding Old Master paintings and antiquities sections, featuring masterpieces by an array of diverse and dazzling artists including Marina Abramović, Laurent Grasso, Rebecca Horn, Idris Khan, Shahzia Sikander, and Janaina Tschäpe.

Galleries expressed enthusiasm over the quality of visitors asking detailed questions during the first two invitation-only Preview Days at the 36th edition of The European Fine Art Foundation at the Maastricht Exhibition & Conference Centre (MECC). Showcasing historic rediscoveries, unparalleled works of art, and museum-standard collectibles, TEFAF Maastricht is open to the public tomorrow and runs through March 19.

“Some dealers were ecstatic, and you could tell when you walk past if they're smiling and their body language tells the story. I went past one stand and people were laughing their heads off,” said Bart Drenth, global managing director of TEFAF. “There's a lot of institutions here from all over the world I've been told they have been buying. Some are unhappy because something that they wanted was snatched away by another museum with more means to be able to get in there faster.”

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Feng Mengbo (Beijing, China, 1966) *Astronaut*, 2023 Afghan pink onyx 110cm long, 30cm wide, 130cm ... [+] [LITTLETON & HENNESSY ASIAN ART](#)

We're drawn into the barrel of a ray gun and navigate every angle of Feng Mengbo's Afghan pink onyx *Astronaut* (2023), a delightful surprise displayed alongside ancient Bronze figures by [Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art](#) of London. A pioneer of computer technologies in the 1990s, Feng invites us into his sensational fantasy world inspired by his fascination with computer games.

Feng, who deconstructs Chinese history and present-day realities, blasted into the international art scene in 1993.



JONATHAN MEESE UFO VOLL!, 2020 acrylic on canvas, 3 parts 210,5 x 421 x 3,3 cm
COURTESY TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY, ANTWERP.

Our invigorating space age dream continues as we gravitate toward Jonathan Meese's *UFO VOLL!* (2020), a massive triptych of brazen red and white acrylic on canvas at the [Tim Van Laere Gallery](#) of Antwerp booth. The story unfolds through "RICHARD DADDY'S TRAUMA" scrawled atop a hybrid creature, with "YEAH" emblazoned on the face to our left and "UFO" identifying the protrusion to our right.



Michel Majerus Untitled, 1990 paint on canvas 221 x 437 cm GALLERI K OF OSLO

We're transported to an emotional realm via [Galleri K](#) of Oslo's spectacular debut of Michel Majerus' *Untitled* (1990). The

colossal mixed media on cotton fabric tryptic is on exhibition for the first time, restored by the gallery which used an expert to mount it onto a stretcher with an underlying thin cotton fabric years after purchasing it years earlier at Lempertz Auctions Cologne in 2015. Previously in a private collection in Germany, the artwork was confined to storage during the auction as it was impossible to hang. The left panel features a lively interaction between three figures executed in deliberate black lines, while the middle gray scale and right black canvases bleed into abstraction. The Luxembourgger artist died in a plane crash in 2002 at the age of 35.



Stéphane MANDELBAUM Luis Buñel ha ha 1983 Oil on canvas mounted on canvas 130 x 118 cm Frame: 139 x ... [+] GALERIE ZLOTOWSKI OF PARIS

We can't help from giggling as we encounter Stéphane Mandlebaum's *Luis Buñel ha ha* (1983), the oil on canvas mounted on canvas presented by [Galerie Zlotowski](#) of Paris. Hailing from a private collection in Belgium, the portrait conveys the magnitude and revolutionary spirit of a man who is widely regarded as one of the best and most influential filmmakers of all time. His bright crimson pout pops from the white background, welcoming us into a titillating conversation with Buñel's unmistakable persona, wit, humor, and style.

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