

Sighs of relief at Tefaf

Plus: accused jeweller's art for sale; mixed results for George Michael's collection



Antonio Ricci's 'Juana and Isabel de Aragón y Pernstein' (c1598-99), at Tefaf Maastricht

Melanie Gerlis MARCH 22, 2019

It was difficult to avoid discussion of Brexit at this year's [Tefaf art fair](#), held in Maastricht, where the treaty that founded the EU was signed in 1992. "Parliament voting was happening throughout the set-up and preview days [March 13-15]. If there had been indications of a hard Brexit, that would have affected the mood," says Patrick van Maris van Dijk, chief executive of Tefaf. As it was, he says, once a no-deal exit was rejected, "sterling immediately went up and everyone breathed a sigh of relief" — there are 71 UK dealers among Tefaf's 279 exhibitors this year.

Elsewhere, the upgraded Modern art section proved a winning draw as more VIP visitors than usual seemed to turn right on entry this year (the Old Masters paintings dealers, normally the first port of call, are on the left). Older works are still the fair's more distinct offering, though, and highlights this year include a jewel-like painting of two young sisters, Juana and Isabel de Aragón y Pernstein, by Antonio Ricci, dated to about 1598-99, partly by using the clothes and hairstyles of the sitters (Rob Smeets, €220,000). A gold Renaissance marriage necklace (c1583-91) that originally belonged to Friedrich Wilhelm I, Duke of Saxe-Weimar, sold from Les Enluminures

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