

# COUNTRY LIFE

EVERY WEEK

MARCH 4, 2026

What type  
of wedding  
guest are  
you?

Plus:  
Maastricht  
preview



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FUTURE

Flying high: the birds doing brilliantly  
Horse sense: how Stubbs changed landscape art  
Paddington Bear and British chances at Cheltenham



# Fair play

There's no shortage of great picks at this year's TEFAF Maastricht, the Netherlands, including a Barbara Hepworth sculpture, a pastel portrait by Dora Maar and two sections of 4th-century Roman mosaics



Cash boost: the TEFAF award will provide funding for conservation work on Rubens's *The Boar Hunt* (1615–17)



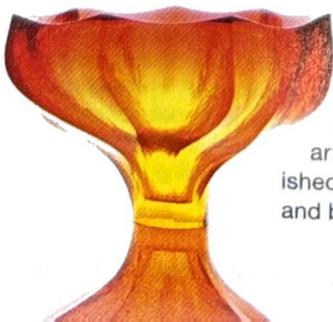
↑ Could the Neapolitan Giuseppe Bonito (1707–89) have known Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas*? His 66½in by 92½in canvas *The Painter's Studio*, which dates from 1738–40, seems to suggest it. I don't know whether he visited Spain, but, as he worked for Charles VII of Naples, who later transferred thrones as Charles III of Spain, he should have been familiar with Spanish art. The composition echoes Velázquez at several points, as do incidents such as the boy and dog to the bottom right. This painting is with Galerie Canesso of Paris.



← Thomas Coulborn & Sons of Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, has a multicultural work of art that perfectly suits this international fair. It is an 18½in by 31¼in Chinese export reverse glass painting dating from about 1800. The subject is taken from a print originally by a Flemish publisher, Theodore de Bry, working from a drawing of a Pictish man and woman by a 16th-century French Huguenot, Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, who worked with an English artist, John White. The last two were among the first European artists in America and based their ideas of the Picts on the inhabitants of Florida and Virginia.

**E**ACH year at the Maastricht fair, the art business acknowledges its debt to the museums that are so important to it, with an award for the conservation or research of a significant work. In 2026, the recipient is the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany, and specifically its monumental *The Boar Hunt* by Rubens. This was probably bought from the artist by the Duke of Buckingham, before entering the Imperial and Royal Saxon collections. Conservation should answer a number of questions about it, particularly concerning an upper extension. Early evidence suggests that this may have been made under Rubens's direction, with contributions from artists in his circle, perhaps Jan Wildens, Lucas van Uden, or Anthony van Dyck.

The fair (held from March 14–19, with previews on March 12–13) has also provided stands for four other museums and cultural organisations, Switzerland's Kunsthaus Zürich, the Centraal Museum Utrecht and the Prince Claus Fund of the Netherlands, and the Belgian King Baudouin Foundation, to present loan exhibitions. This year, there will be 276 exhibitors from 24 countries (and five continents). The offerings chosen for these pages have yet to be assessed, but it would be more than surprising were any to fall foul of the vets.



← Adrian Sassoon is one of the most successful London dealers in balancing a stock of old and new, in his case 18th-century French porcelain and contemporary ceramics and glass. Among the gallery's glassmakers is South Korean artist Joon Yong Kim (b. 1972), whose blown, carved and polished vessels are reserved for ceremonial use by some owners, and by all prized for form and colour.

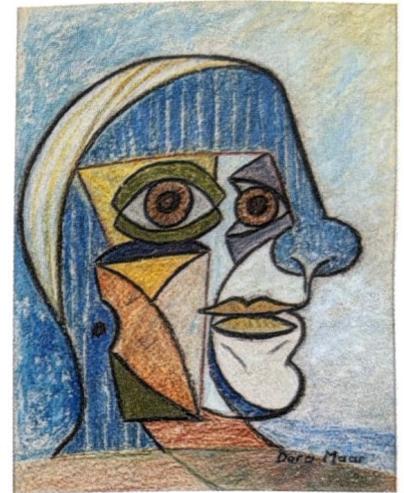
# Art market

→ Brimo de Laroussilhe is one of my favourite Parisian galleries for medieval sculpture and works of art. Every now and then, there will be a painting that sits well among them, as here, a 16½in by 58½in panel in tempera of *The Abduction of Antiope by Theseus*. It is by the Florentine Domenico di Michelino (1417–91), whose name is not a patronymic, but honours his master, Michelino di Benedetto, a painter of cassoni, by whom nothing is known to survive. This 1440s panel is from such a chest and its pair is in the Indianapolis Museum of Art.



↑ This year, Georg Laue of Munich is launching a catalogue book of works of art in wax, *The Beauty of Mankind: from the Kunstkammer to the Modern Panopticon*. One of the earlier examples is a relief portrait of Hieronymus Baumgartner (1538–1602), who was a town councillor in Nuremberg, by Matthäus Carl, a medallist and jeweller active between about 1584 and 1608. This 6½in by 6in portrait is modelled in wax, on glass plate, fabric and sheet copper, and is in its original ebonised frame with sliding cover.

→ A poetic effort that I am quite proud of is a clerihew: 'Pablo Picasso/ Acquired a canvas, so/ He threw away his guitar/ To portray Dora Maar.' Famously, she herself said: 'All his portraits of me are lies. They are all Picassos—not one is Dora Maar.' That is not entirely fair, but it is true that when she portrayed him, Picasso is immediately recognisable. They met at the end of 1935 and, shortly afterwards, she drew the 22½in by 17¼in pastel portrait offered by Galerie Boquet, Paris. It featured in the 2019–20 retrospective at the Pompidou Centre and Tate Modern.



← Piano Nobile of London has an impressive display of Modern British art, including Barbara Hepworth's lovely 9in-high alabaster *Two Rotating Forms II*, sculpted in 1966.



↑ After a frustrating search, it is tempting to say of Sir William Cory (1857–1933) that nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it, as the internet offers little more than photographs of his impressive cortège at Fullerton, Hampshire, where he bought land in the 1890s and built a manor house. In the course of operations, mosaics from a 4th-century Roman villa were uncovered in a field and two sections with a geometric pelta pattern are with Charles Ede of London, framed together (4ft 1¼in by 14ft 6in).