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# THE ART NEWSPAPER

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**TATE MODERN AT 25**  
Artists and curators reflect on museum's achievements and challenges



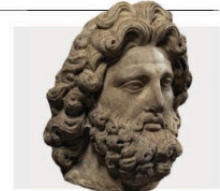
**MUSEUMS**  
PAGE 30

**POPE FRANCIS**  
How the late pontiff extended the Vatican's collection of contemporary art



**OBITUARY**  
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**TEFAF NEW YORK**  
From a Roman bust to a Magritte collage, Stateside edition will delight any collector



**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**

## 'It's much more extreme': US institutions and artists enter a new culture war

The Trump administration's efforts to slash funding and influence programming have pushed cultural workers to organise. By Helen Stoilas

**T**he fight over America's cultural soul has begun. In the few short months since US President Donald Trump took office, swathes of the country's cultural infrastructure have been dismantled and efforts are being made to reshape what remains as instruments of White House policy. The impact has been swift and shocking to many in the cultural field, raising questions about what the arts will look like under Trump and spurring calls for a co-ordinated resistance.

"There's a significant loss of jobs and a loss of revenue going to support arts and culture in the country, which will have an impact for the bottom line in our communities. And there's a lot of uncertainty about what the long-term impact of this is going to be," says Erin Harkey, the recently installed chief executive of Americans for the Arts, a national advocacy group that is collecting data to understand the broader implications of the administration's actions. "We can help to build the [sense of] urgency if we're collectively communicating the story."

"One of the things that is important to communicate about public funding and why it's so important is that it has an ability to get into parts of this country that are difficult to reach otherwise," Harkey adds. "So, when we're talking about who is going to be most significantly impacted by this, it's the smaller non-profit organisations that are more reliant on this kind of support."

Over the past three months, either by executive order or through the Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) run by the billionaire Elon Musk, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), two of the main

federal funding bodies for arts and culture, have had their staff slashed and grants cancelled. Trump replaced the leadership of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, as a means to get himself appointed chair of the board, and has suggested a similar fate for the Smithsonian Institution, through vice-president J.D. Vance's position on the board of regents. And a team from Doge visited the National Gallery of Art in mid-April, reportedly to discuss the museum's "legal status".

As we went to press, Doge had turned its attention to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), with major cuts expected to its grant programmes and staff. Its \$207m annual budget is about the same as that of the NEH (\$207m) and IMLS (\$294.8m) – a cost of around \$2 per American every year combined – but the NEA manages ten times the number of grants, covering disciplines from film and design to folk arts and literature. Around 40% of the NEA's budget is directed to state arts agencies and regional arts organisations, which provide funding for arts communities in all pockets of the US.

"For the NEA to have their funding cut substantially starts creating a real question around the arts ecosystem in the whole country; there are just so many ripple effects that it's really of concern," says Susie Surkamer, the president and chief executive of South Arts, a regional arts organisation. "For a lot of communities without a lot of resources, it's going to mean a lot less access for people". The US South, Surkamer adds, has been historically underfunded and there are no major national foundations based in the region to fill the gap in arts funding if NEA partnership grants are lost. "It's very hard



The altarpiece (around 1500-10) features an unusually fierce dragon—unlike any other depiction in Northern art at the time

## A \$20m symbol of US friendship: the mysterious altarpiece bought for London's National Gallery

■ The American Friends of the National Gallery London fund the purchase from British private collection of early 16th-century work known to the museum's leaders for "decades". **Full story, page 11**

■ National Gallery to unveil collection rehanging. **UK News, page 10**

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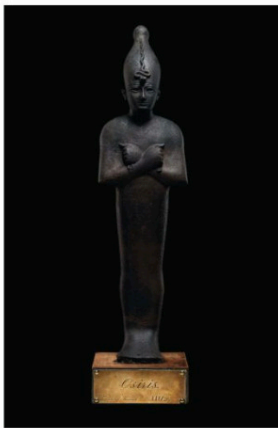


**TEFAF NEW YORK**  
*Special Report*

# The wish list

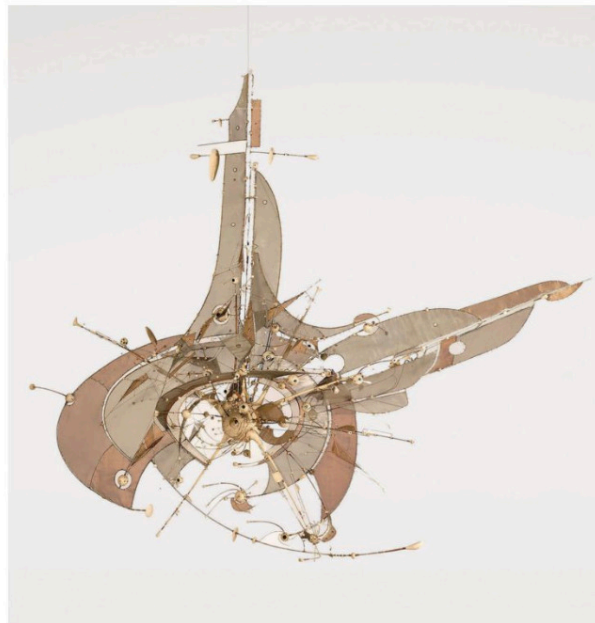
*Objects and treasures to suit every collector's taste*

A bronze Osiris, a late sculpture by Lee Bontecou and Magritte's first collage to feature his bowler-hatted man are among the finds at this year's fair.  
**By Osman Can Yerebakan**



**The Blanchard Osiris**  
Around 664-332BC  
£475,000  
DAVID AARON

A British family acquired this bronze statue of Osiris in 1911 from the American dealer Ralph Huntington Blanchard, who operated a Cairo-based antiques business called Blanchard's Egyptian Museum. The god of the afterlife, death and resurrection measures 55cm tall—a rare comparison in scale to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's own Osiris. In relatively pristine condition, except for a missing false beard, the figure wears the White Crown of Upper Egypt and is depicted with facial traits characteristic of a statue of this period, such as thin eyebrows over oval eyes and accentuated contours. The London gallery David Aaron, which makes its Tefaf New York debut this year, acquired the statue from the family that owned it for three generations; in-house conservators subsequently undertook its delicate restoration. "Conservation techniques in the 1910s were much more intrusive," says the gallery's director, Salomon Aaron, of the work's previous condition, which included a lacquer coating. The restoration revealed that the original bronze surface was in perfect condition—"extremely rare today for Egyptian materials in this size".



**Lee Bontecou, *Untitled***  
1980-2001  
PRICE ON REQUEST  
ORTUZAR AND MARC SELWYN FINE ART

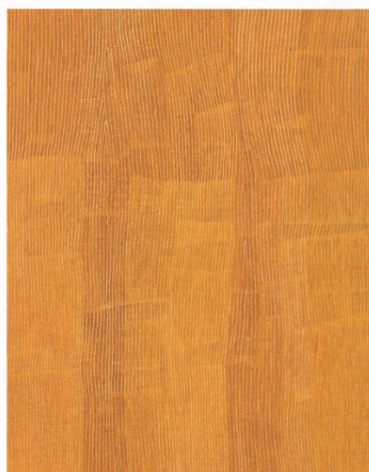
It took the American sculptor and printmaker Lee Bontecou two decades to create this meticulously realised *tour de force*. Measuring around 2m wide, the hanging steel, porcelain, mesh, silk and wire sculpture was first shown to the public in the artist's 2003 retrospective at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Two of the artist's similarly sized late-period sculptures are in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. This work can

be seen as a culmination of several lines of inquiry for Bontecou, whose father invented the first all-aluminium canoe and whose mother worked with submarine transmitters in the Second World War. In 1956-57, the award of a Fulbright scholarship allowed Bontecou to work in Rome, where she experimented with terracotta and wire mesh and was introduced to the work of the Futurists. Noting a growing interest in the artist's sculpture from institutions and private collectors, Ortuzar and Marc Selwyn Fine Art are showing the piece together with smaller works by Bontecou in a range of materials, including a graphite drawing on paper from 1965 and a welded steel, canvas, wire and velvet wall relief from 1959.



**René Magritte, *Untitled***  
1926  
AROUND \$4M  
DI DONNA GALLERIES

This pasted paper, gouache and watercolour on paper comes fresh from the exhibition *Histoire de ne pas rire. Le Surréalisme en Belgique*, at Bozar, in Brussels. It marks the first time René Magritte included his bowler-hatted male figure in his collage practice, having started experimenting with paper collages only a year earlier. Once owned by the Belgian Surrealist's brother Raymond and then his niece Arlette, the diminutive work left the family in 1993, going to the Belgian collector and dealer Maurice Keitelman. The tree-cum-bilboquet motif was also a newly developing theme in Magritte's paper-based practice, but perhaps the biggest hint of what was to come was the artist's use of music sheets to render the male silhouette and the outsized child's cup-and-ball toy. The artist's *catalogue raisonné* shows that most of the pasted music sheets in the works from this era came from *The Girls of Gottenberg*, an Edwardian musical comedy by George Grossmith Jr and L.E. Berman. The collage will be included this November in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp's survey, *Magritte. La Ligne de Vie*.



**Mantua Nangala, *Untitled***  
2024  
AROUND \$80,000  
SALON 94

Aboriginal art has a growing presence at the Tefaf fairs. In Maastricht in March, the Melbourne and New York-based D'An Contemporary made fair history with a stand entirely dedicated to work by First Nations artists. Collectors responded well; the gallery reported total sales of \$1.4m, including an Emily Kam Ngurraray painting, which sold for \$600,000. (Tate Modern opens Ngurraray's first European museum exhibition in July.) In New York, Salon 94 exhibits a selection of paintings by Mantua Nangala, a Papunya Tula artist known for her meticulous acrylic on linen dot paintings. Nangala—a key figure in the Western Desert art movement—is an influential member of the organisation Papunya Tula Artists, which has 80 members and a gallery space in Mparntwe/Alice Springs. Born around 1959, she started painting in 1998 with a focus on visualising the oral histories of Marrapinti, a rockhole site considered to be a sacred place for women. Dots have narrative powers in Nangala's gentle handling, often in a creamy tone over a darker earthy background, and the artist passes on stories of displacement and defiance against systematic erasure.



**Roman head of a bearded god**  
Around AD 2nd century  
\$100,000  
CHARLES EDE

The subject of this modestly sized marble head of a Greek god has divided researchers. Some say it is either the almighty Zeus or Poseidon, the god of the sea; others believe it is the lesser known god of medicine, Asclepius. What is not in doubt is the mastery of the carving. Some repairs have been made to the tip of the straight nose and a section of the hair, although Martin Clist, the managing director of Charles Ede, says that this is what gives antiquities—the majority of which have some degree of damage—their "uniqueness". The bust's oldest recorded owner is the Cologne-based dealer Axel G. Weber, who sold it to its most recent owner in the autumn of 1977 during the German Art and Antiques Fair in Munich. The Charles Ede stand also draws attention to the male physique with a marble torso of a youth from the same era, valued at \$850,000.

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