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Miró's Unique Bird Sculpture Flies Away Amid Brisk Sales as TEFAF 2011 Opens

MAASTRICHT , Netherlands -- 21 March 2011

([ArtfixDaily.com](#)) A unique wood sculpture by the Spanish artist Joan Miró sold within hours of the opening of [TEFAF](#) Maastricht as thousands of collectors and museum curators arrived at the world's most influential art and antiques fair. Oiseau lunaire, a 30cm high olive wood work dating from 1945, was sold for \$5 million to a private collector and was part of an entire room devoted to Miró by Landau Fine Art of Montreal. The sculpture had been out of sight in a private collection for almost 40 years.



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Dealers reported good sales across all sections of TEFAF with modern and contemporary art, antiquities and Asian art performing particularly well. The Fair held its preview, attended by more than 10,000 invited guests, on Thursday before opening to the public the following day. TEFAF will continue until Sunday 27 March.

Noortman Master Paintings sold four important works, three of them 17th century Dutch Old Masters. Gerrit Berckheyde's 1671 View of Haarlem had an asking price of €4.5 million, Willem Claesz Heda's Still Life with silver Tazza and a Roemer was on sale for €3 million and Ferry boat with the River Vecht by Salomon van Ruysdael for €2.5 million. Another Old Masters dealer David Koetser sold Willem van de Velde the Younger's A States Yacht and Other Vessels in Light Air, which had an asking price of €3 million, to a private collector.

One of the most extraordinary stories of a busy first two days at TEFAF was the sale of a 1st century AD Roman marble ornamental cinerary urn by Rupert Wace Ancient Art for a price in the region of €1 million. This superbly decorated masterpiece, which would have once contained the ashes of a deceased person, was bought by the Mougins Museum of Classical Art in southern France. But until recently it was being used as a lamp, with an added lampshade, in a house in Bath, England. The descendants of the collector who had bought it had no idea of its importance. The electrical wiring and lampshade have been removed and the urn fully restored.

Chinese buyers were much more in evidence than in the past and some of them purchased Japanese works of art as well as those from their own country. Japanese art specialists Malcolm Fairley and Grace Tsumugi Fine Art, both exhibiting for the first time, sold 20 pieces between them on Thursday and Friday. Chinese collectors bought four from Fairley, including a late 19th century hardwood Japanese vase for about €40,000. Tsumugi had a US buyer for an important Meiji period piece. The inlaid silver and copper incense burner depicting Raiden, the Thunder God, was priced in the region of €500,000.

Another Asian art specialist who had a good start to TEFAF was Ben Janssens Oriental Art who sold a mother of pearl inlaid lacquer incense box from the Ryukyu Islands, between China and Japan, to a European private collector for in excess of \$100,000. One of four pieces of jade that Janssens sold on the opening night went to a new client from China. A very early piece of Chinese export porcelain was sold by Jorge Welsh Oriental Porcelain and Works of Art to a European collector for a mid-six figure sum. The Ming Dynasty saucer, dating from 1515, bears the Portuguese royal coat of arms.

TEFAF covers some 7,000 years of art history and both antiquities and contemporary and modern works have proved popular with buyers at this year's Fair. Ben Brown Fine Arts sold four works to European and American private collectors, including Sgraeie Vertical, a 2005 mixed media on canvas piece by Miguel Barcelò, for €300,000. New exhibitor BlainSouthern's sales included Tim Noble and Sue Webster's 2009 work Yellow Phantasmagoria for a price around €200,000 to a Middle Eastern museum.

Twentieth century art sales included a group of five Man Ray portraits exhibited by Kicken Berlin and Juliette à la toque by Albert Gleizes for which Waterhouse & Dodd had three prospective private buyers. It sold for €220,000. A rare 1910 Auguste Rodin lifetime bronze cast Man with a Broken Nose was bought by a private collector from the Robert Bowman Gallery for a price in the region of €180,000.

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Epoque Fine Jewels from Belgium sold a c1900 art nouveau pendant by Rene Lalique to a French collector, while Perrin Antiquaires had an early success with the sale to a European collector of a polished steel armchair used as an early 19th century piece of campaign furniture. In the TEFAF Design section Bel Etage, Wolfgang Bauer had a very good start to the Fair selling five pieces to European collectors. Among these was a set of four side chairs designed by Josef Hoffman in Vienna in 1901.

By the end of the first weekend over 30.000 people had visited TEFAF and 125 private jets had landed at Maastricht-Aachen airport. On Saturday visitors included the World Chinese Collectors Conference from Shanghai with a group of 21 people, a party from the Museum of Fine Art in Boston, USA, and Wolfgang Heubisch, Minister of Culture in the Bavarian state government in Germany.

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