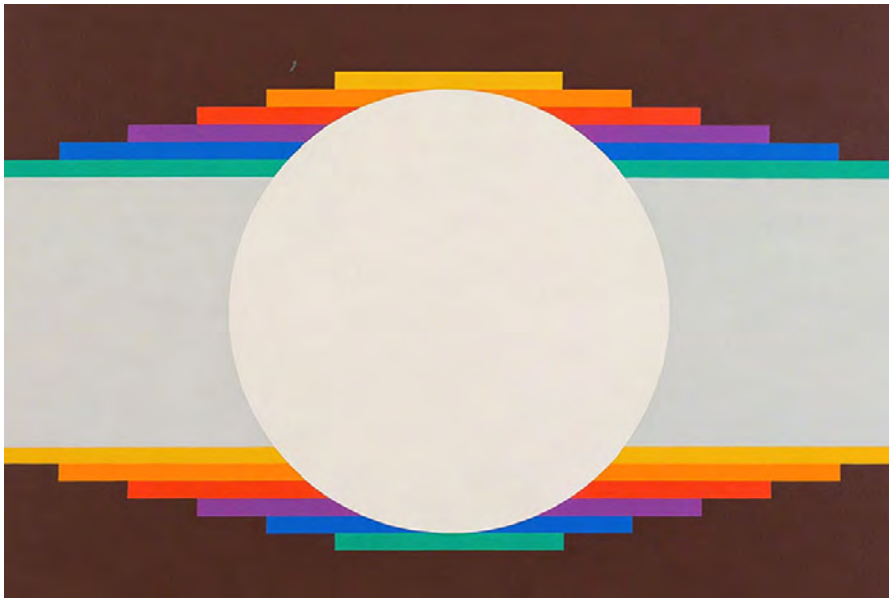


What to see at TEFAF New York

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27 APRIL 2023



Untitled (1973), Verena Loewensberg, Mayor Gallery (\$175,000). Photo: Bertrand Huet/tutti image; courtesy the Mayor Gallery; © Estate of the artist

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From the May 2023 issue of *Apollo*. [Preview and subscribe here.](#)

With interest in Old Masters and traditional art growing, spurred on by the blockbuster [Vermeer](#) exhibition in Amsterdam as well as the recent multi-million dollar auctions in New York of masterpieces amassed by Microsoft billionaire Paul Allen, the time could not be more ripe for TEFAF's return to Manhattan in May. TEFAF is known for the deep well of art history its exhibitors draw from, and the American edition brings a fresher perspective, leaning more toward modern and contemporary art. Dealers in the field seem to agree, however, that it is not enough merely to present beautiful objects with a pedigreed history: making new discoveries and telling forgotten stories are important. TEFAF New York offers many of these this year, particularly by women artists and designers.

Modern painters such as Picasso and Gauguin are known to have drawn on the work of Indigenous artists in their art, but borrowing from the opposite direction also occurred. New York's Donald Ellis Gallery is showing a pair of wooden lion statues, likely carved around 1840 by an anonymous Haida artist. According to the gallery, North-west Coast artisans were sometimes commissioned to create certain objects, and the artist who created these more friendly than fierce felines was probably working from a photograph or published illustration – perhaps a museum catalogue given the objects' resemblance to ancient carvings found across the Mesopotamian. 'The nose, whiskers, and mane are fairly naturalistic, while the stylisation of the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth most identify the North-west Coast origin,' the gallery says. 'They present a somewhat startling and engagingly benign personification of a powerful carnivore.'



One half of a pair of lions (c. 1840). Donald Ellis Gallery (price on application). Courtesy Donald Ellis Gallery