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Scramble to ship art before Brexit deadline

Pavilion commissioners allow extra transport time for Venice Biennale, as "huge ramifications" dawn

LONDON. British institutions and galleries are rushing to ship works to and from the European Union (EU) before the Brexit deadline of 29 March as uncertainty mounts over the free movement of goods in the event of a no-deal scenario.

The British Council is sending all works for Cathy Wilkes's Venice Biennale exhibition in Italy "well ahead of the 29 March deadline to avoid any possible disruption", says a spokeswoman. Wilkes, who is based in Glasgow, Scotland, has been selected to fill the British Pavilion this year.

The organisers of the biennial's Irish pavilion are also transporting works from Eva Rothschild's London studio early to avoid any delays at British ports. "We don't know what's going to happen after 29 March but it's not worth the risk of things getting held up at customs. The ramifications are huge," says Mary Cremin, the commissioner and curator of the pavilion and director of the Void Gallery in Derry, Northern Ireland.

The pavilion is using Italian shippers who are "concerned about where the work is coming from and whether it's within EU circulation", Cremin says. She notes that the early deadline has created "a lot of pressure" for Rothschild, who has had less than a year to conceive and fabricate new sculptures for the exhibition.

Confusion over the so-called Irish backstop could create further problems. After Venice, Rothschild's work is due to be toured throughout Ireland, starting at the Visual Centre for Contemporary Art in Carlow and ending at Void Gallery. The Republic of Ireland will remain part of the EU after Brexit; Northern Ireland will not. "That may impact whether the works come to Derry or not," Cremin says. "It all depends if it's a hard or soft border and what the implications are customs-wise."

The prospect of hefty EU import taxes is already disrupting exhibition programmes in the UK. Tomahsoni Arte in London is closing its show of paintings by Alberto Burri and Lucio Fontana two weeks early and transporting the works back to Italy to avoid a potential multimillion-pound reimport bill. Italy's import rate stands at 10%.

"We are covering our backs because no decision has been made yet, but we are

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THIS WAY UP

"When once the earth becomes a common treasury again, as it must... then this enmity in all lands will cease, for none shall dare to seek a dominion over others, neither shall any dare to kill another, nor desire more of the earth than another... And now the common enemy is gone you are all like men in a mist, seeking for freedom and know not where nor what it is; and those of the richer sort of you that see it are ashamed and afraid to own it, because it comes clothed in a clownish garment... For freedom is the man that will turn the world upside down, therefore no wonder he hath enemies."
Gerrard Winstanley 1649

As the great British political crisis deepens over Brexit, the British artist Mark Wallinger is turning to the protest medium of the fly poster (above). The Art Newspaper has been given an exclusive preview of *This Way Up* (2019). For more on the campaign, see p11.

Tehran museum art is 'missing'

TEHRAN. A growing number of artists claim that their works in the collection of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMoCA) have gone "missing" and may have ended up on the market without their knowledge. Rokni Haerizadeh, who was born in Iran and is now part of an artist collective in Dubai, has accused TMoCA of buying one of his paintings at a reduced rate and then selling it at a premium. Haerizadeh says his canvas, *N 361 Ab 2* (2000-03) was consigned to Tehran Auction, selling on 12 January for 3.6 million rials (\$86,680), a sum significantly over the price at which it was acquired.

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Meanwhile, Barbad Golshiri, an Iranian artist based in Paris, fears that his work in the TMoCA collection, *Bahram Doesn't see a Right Wing* (2003), may have also been disposed of. "TMoCA confirmed that my work is indeed in the collection, yet when I ask them to say this in writing, they turn tail. I no longer have any motivation to find my work. It is as if it never existed," he says.

Sami Azar, a former director of the museum, says that TMoCA did not "technically acquire" the works but that they were bought by a separate government-funded

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Celebrating the Chinese New Year with a diamond and ruby pendant in the form of a pig with integral mesh purse, c.1915

Tefaf Maastricht

Savoy-Sarr fails to dent tribal market

Despite fears that the so-called Savoy-Sarr report could dampen the trade of African art, Didier Claes, a Brussels-based tribal art dealer and Tefaf Maastricht exhibitor, who was consulted for the study, says that the restitution debate is in fact invigorating the market.

Commissioned by the French president Emmanuel Macron and written by the academics Bénédicte Savoy and Felwine Sarr, the report recommends the "swift restitution" of colonial-era artefacts from French museums to Africa. There has been concern that the report, published in November, will discourage private collectors of tribal art from buying and donating to museums.

Claes, though, says he has not seen any signs that the report will hit business at Tefaf Maastricht this

month, where tribal art is a small but important specialism – six exhibitors focus on the field. "Quite the contrary," he declares. "With these debates about restitution, we have never spoken so much about African art."

Claes concedes that collectors "were a little worried at first", but now "new clients are showing up". He adds: "This debate will even increase the craze [for African art] and we will see a stronger market grow."

Claes has, however, criticised the report for being "too negative" and for suggesting that everything acquired during the colonial period was stolen and therefore should be returned. Fellow Belgian dealer and Tefaf Maastricht exhibitor Bernard de Grunne agrees.

"To say colonisation was a crime against humanity, as Macron did, is absurd," he says. "Claims that all of these pieces were stolen is a complete lie." He estimates that 80% to 90% of pieces in



Part of the tribal art tribe: dealer Didier Claes (below) and pieces from specialist dealer De Grunne on display at Tefaf Maastricht



private and public institutions were sold legitimately. "This is the secondary market; these works have come down through four or five collections."

Describing the report as a "French problem", De Grunne says it raises more questions than it answers: "Who are the legitimate owners? How much do we give back? Is it not reverse racism to say that only African countries should show African art?"

As for the market, De Grunne says the report is "not having a dramatic effect". The Paris auctions in December "did ok", while the Brafra fair in Brussels in January was "in between". The issue now is clarity. "As long as there is uncertainty it will have some sort of effect," he says.

Claes says the Savoy-Sarr report was prepared in just six months – "it serves as a basis for debate".

One of the proposed solutions is that questionable pieces should be shared rather than restituted. "Sharing is important," Claes says. "No matter what it's called, Africa needs to have access to its heritage." However, he cautions that African nations need to first develop "a real cultural political will around art – not only on the issue of restitution".

Anny Shaw



How to gain the Maastricht inch

A fortnight of client dinners, champagne, questionable Dutch canapés and cheese, lots of cheese, can mean only one thing – the Maastricht inch, that inevitable toll on the waistlines of many a Tefaf exhibitor. But where to gain it?

Nowhere quite beats Café Sjiké. Rowdy, crowded, full of dealers – get there early and wait for a table while

nursing one or three fishbowl gin and tonics in this cosy spot near the university. For the full experience, get a bottle of red and a hearty plate of zoevleis (horsemeat stew) washed down with spoonfuls of brie. Martin Clist, the director of antiquities specialist Charles Ede, says Sjiké is "without doubt my favourite place to be in Maastricht... The staff are all

amazing, their friendliness makes one immediately feel like a member of a very special family."

Later, louder and the other side of the Maas from Sjiké is Café Zondag. Shiver on the street with the smokers for the best gossip. It is a favourite of Andreas Pampoulides of Lullo Pampoulides who also loves "the private dining experience at Le Salonard [a deli-restaurant known for its bread, wine and cheese]."

Another cheese shop that moonlights as a restaurant is 't Rommedoeke. "Dutch cheese really is amazing, and this is the best shop for it in Maastricht," says Tom Davies, the director of Daniel Katz gallery. "They also do a pretty remarkable pop-up restaurant upstairs during Tefaf."

Maastricht, with its winding medieval cobbled streets, is a small city, claustrophobic after a fortnight of Tefaf, so dealers are often secretive about their boltholes. "There is one other place – possibly

the best restaurant in Maastricht – but there is no way I'm going to share that with you as it is a guaranteed art world-free haven," Pampoulides says. And while Davies says everyone "will tell you Café Zondag is a great bar", he claims to know "far better and less well-known ones" – but won't name names as he wants to keep them that way.

For something more civilised, Clist recommends the restaurant Le Virage, "a comforting place with good food and charming staff", while the Russian art specialist James Butterwick says: "I do love Restaurant O."

The golden ticket is a private dinner in the caves of a Michelin-starred Château Neercanne in an idyllic spot just outside the city.

Ruinously expensive – remember to forget your wallet.

Stephen Ongpin, the works on paper dealer, prefers the simpler life. He says: "My single favourite restaurant in Maastricht is a cheap and cheerful but very good Chinese



ADDRESS BOOK

- Café Sjiké, Sint Pieterstraat 13
- Café Zondag, Wycker Brugstraat 42
- Le Salonard, Maastrichter Heidenstraat 2A
- Specialiteitenhuis 't Rommedoeke, Wycker Brugstraat 43
- Restaurant O, Rechtstraat 76
- Le Virage, Cortenstraat 2, 2B
- Château Neercanne, Cammerweg 800
- Wen Chow, Spoorweglaan 5
- Thermane 2000, Cauberg 25-27

restaurant just opposite the train station, called Wen Chow."

To sweet out all that wine, cheese and chow mein, Clist heads to the Thermane 2000 spa in Valkenburg. "Some of the spas are outside, along with a cold swimming pool, so when it's frosty or even snowy the visit is astonishingly invigorating. The only curious thing is meeting other dealers or clients stark naked. Much breathing in and averting of eyes – English prudishness."

Anna Brady

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