

## Art Jewelry Draws the Crowds to New York's TEFAF Fair



Preview days at art fairs are typically well attended by serious collectors, but seeing a line that stretched around the corner at TEFAF New York as the doors opened at 1 p.m. was surprising.

The invitation-only preview on May 11 preceded the art, antiques and design fair's public days, which took place from May 12 to 16 at the city's Park Avenue Armory. TEFAF New York is one of two fairs operated by The European Fine Art Foundation (TEFAF), which is best known for the [TEFAF Maastricht](#) fair in [The Netherlands](#).

As the preview got underway, people continued crowding through the entrance to the main showroom. This activity spread to the exhibition spaces of the three contemporary jewelers and two jewelry dealers at the event. These preview events normally become busy in the early evening, when people leave work. Seeing this type of activity early on

shows the market for collecting jewelry, as well as art, antiques and design, remains strong.

The official press release from the first day cited multiple sales by high art jeweler Hemmerle, based in Munich, Germany, and New York jewelry dealer FD Gallery, which, in addition to its collection of 20th- and 21st-century pieces, had several by contemporary jeweler Alessandro Sabbatini, who goes by the name Sabba. Visiting both spaces, it was easy to see why. Hemmerle, with a room by the entrance of the fair, was filled with collectors from the moment the doors opened.

The husband-and-wife team of Didier and Martine Haspeslagh, owners of London jewelry gallery Didier Ltd, deal in pieces created by modern artists acquired on the secondary market. Their space was located at the far end of the entrance hallway past the entrance to the main showroom. It's the same space they had the prior year, and they said people had difficulty finding them previously. This year, fair officials improved signage and were holding special events in meeting rooms just outside.

It must have paid off, as the business sold a number of pieces to American and Middle Eastern collectors, TEFAF reported. Among the items sold were a double-headed gold, enamel and gemstone bangle by Franco Cannilla, circa 1950; a gem-set gold brooch with an abstract landscape with palm trees by Afro Basaldella; and a pair of white and yellow gold kinetic earrings by artist Sebastiano Balbo. It also sold a "unique" necklace with a lupin flower designed by Claude Lalanne in 1972 and cast in 18-karat gold by the Greek jeweler Zolotas.

Geneva-based Swiss jeweler Boghossian was in a room on the second floor. It was a bit quieter than the other spaces, but as this reporter was being shown around, two well-dressed young women were intently looking at its pieces. It didn't take long for them to request a private showing.

One of the jewelry exhibitors' staff members told me TEFAF was looking for more contemporary jewelers to exhibit at the show. The difficulty, the person said, is finding true artist jewelers. Jewelers who have exhibited at past TEFAF New York and Maastricht fairs include Wallace Chan, Cindy Chao, Glenn Spiro, Anna Hu and Ana Khouri.

*Image: The May 2023 TEFAF New York show. (TEFAF)*