



Marco Voena

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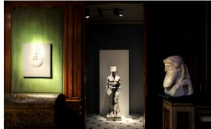
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Marco Voena
Fine Art Agent and Dealer

ART AT ITS BEST

On the eve of The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF), and following on from my recent interviews with Scott Schaefer, Fabrizio Moretti and Letizia Treves. I meet Marco Voena in the lounge of the Suvretta House hotel in St. Moritz on a Saturday at lunch time. At the moment he is showing an exhibition in partnership with Gian Enzo Sperone, where every work of art is white. From Fontana to Castellani, to Manzoni, to ancient Greek and Roman sculptures... Many friends, collectors, and also young people have come to view it.



"WHITE, Marble and Painting from Antiquity to Now"

After 17 years of exhibiting at TEFAF in Maastricht, the most prestigious art fair of its type, how do you feel about it on the eve of its opening?

When you go into TEFAF you have the impression that you are entering into a vast Museum; and only after a while do you understand that everything is for sale. The fair is so encyclopedic that it is impossible not to find what you are looking for. From paintings and sculptures to furniture, jewelry, collections of corals, marble, Chinese or Indian art. In other words, every kind of art from all over the world is represented.

A sort of small Metropolitan Museum?

Somehow, yes.

Can one find masterpieces?

The answer is simple. The buyers at the fair are mostly the Directors of the most prestigious Museums in the world; from the Getty to the National Gallery in Washington, from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam to the Prado in Madrid....

How is the selection of the objects on display made?

The "Vetting", the commission of experts, is the most serious and important in the world. The Vetting has the Directors of the greatest museums, some specific experts in various fields. For Old Master paintings there are 20 experts, for every country and provenance. There are also the best restorers, because conservation of the works of art is one of the requirements of the fair. Nothing can be restored more than 10%.

All that is a guarantee for the quality of the works of art on sale?

Yes, Maastricht is like a guarantee of top quality.

How many dealers exhibit there?

They are more than 200 and, generally speaking, in the best years there are around 80,000 visitors.

People come and buy?

As Maastricht is not a very easy place to reach people who come on purpose feel psychologically obliged to buy something, even if it is only a pair of cufflinks...

What are you showing this year?

This is a special year for us, because, after 10 years, the board of TEFAF has changed the location of our booth. Because our gallery, Robilant - Voena has expanded its activity into modern art, into Italian art of the sixties; from Fontana, Buni, Bonalumi, Castellani, Manzoni....



ENRICO CASTELLANI
Superficie Bianca 1965
Acrylic on shaped canvas

Why did you change?

We did not change. The gallery is well known for Italian art from the Renaissance to Baroque, and now also for the eighteenth century. We have had exhibitions in the London gallery of Morandi and Fontana, and last October a retrospective of Bonalumi.

But what will you have in Maastricht?

A St. Peter by Guercino, the portrait of his wife by Carlo Maratta, a famous view of Torre Marghera by Canaletto, two of Boldini's portraits; and a very rare mirror painting by Michelangelo Pistoletto.



GIOVANNI FRANCESCO BARBIERI
detto il GUERCINO
Cento 1591 - 1666 Bologna
San Pietro penitente

Do you buy for yourself in Maastricht?

Yes, the day before the opening we go around the Fair like any other collector; sometimes also to buy for our clients.

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Is it always a surprise?

Yes, and it is an amazing moment to see when they open the crates and they put the booths together. One feels like being in a Spielberg movie! Everyone tries to be as secretive as possible before the Fair.

How is the Market today?

There is a sophisticated group of collectors from South America, USA and Europe; they really are collectors and not "speculators." They are lovers. As experts, as dealers, they have a real passion. For many of them, even if they have very important professional activities, it has become their second job. There is a sort of competition in order to possess unique pieces. Later on some of them give their collections to Museums.

For instance?

For the new display of the Old Master paintings at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (over 20 new rooms) one can see that, for this display, collectors have given or lent at least 40 masterpieces to the Museum.

Antique paintings are worth much less than contemporary ones today?

The Internet World has created brands that changed the rules of the game. In modern and contemporary art there are names that have become stars, like Picasso, Matisse, Van Gogh, Manet, Degas, Renoir, Toulouse Lautrec, Bacon, Mondrian, Klee, Brancusi, up to Jeff Koons, Andy Warhol, Jean Michel Basquiat and others. The Old Master stars are much fewer: Rembrandt, Rubens, Goya, Caravaggio, Velasquez, El Greco, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Vermeer. The Internet World and auctions have become a sort of marketing place, because the new buyers in the new societies do not have the same similar background. The fair in Maastricht is still very close to the world of Museums, Art Historians and sophisticated collectors.

St. Moritz, March 5th 2014

<http://www.robilantvoens.com>

<http://www.tefaf.com>

<http://alainekaminterviews.com/2014/02/19/scott-schaefer/>