

The Art Market **Collecting**

Audubon birds to take wing for \$12.5mn at Tefaf Maastricht fair

Richard Saltoun opens in New York — which gets a new art fair; affordable studios open in London



An American flamingo from John James Audubon's book 'Birds of America' (1827-38)

A four-volume edition of John James Audubon's celebrated *Birds of America* (1827-38) will be a notable rarity at this year's Tefaf Maastricht fair, priced at \$12.5mn, available through London-based rare books specialists Daniel Crouch and Stéphane Clavreuil. The volumes incorporate 435 etched and coloured plates showing 1,065 individual birds representing 489 species. There are believed to be fewer than 200 copies of this magnum opus in existence.

The dealers' catalogue for the fair notes that Audubon was the illegitimate son of a French sea captain and a sugar plantation servant, speculated to be a housekeeper in Saint Domingue (now Haiti), where he was born. Audubon was later known to have traded enslaved people to support his business activities, the catalogue states, before being briefly jailed for bankruptcy in 1819 and then embarking on his birding expeditions across the US. He met South Carolina naturalist Maria Martin, who painted some of the flora and insects in *The Birds of America*, in 1831.

Audubon's journals show a conservationist's mindset. He writes in 1826 that "A century hence . . . nature will have been robbed of many brilliant charms." At least five of his depicted species have since become extinct, the catalogue notes, including the Carolina parakeet (in 1918), "to some extent because it was friendly".

The Tefaf volumes have been on loan to Washington's Smithsonian Institution, latterly from the Terra Foundation collection. "It's not entirely impossible that its new buyer would lend it back there," Crouch says. Tefaf runs March 9-14.



Jan Wade's 'Mama Story' (1996) © Jan Wade | Richard Saltoun Gallery

London dealer Richard Saltoun opens his first US gallery on May 2, during New York's Frieze Week. The new space will be on the third storey of the Upper East Side building that formerly housed Blum & Poe gallery, which now operates as Blum in Tribeca. Saltoun says he was not tempted to "follow the herd" downtown. "Being near the Met [Museum] is a dream," he says of the 1920s townhouse, plus "uptown is cheaper". Being in New York is as much for his staff as his artists and collectors, he says.

The gallery, focused on female artists since it opened in 2012, will open in Manhattan with the mixed-media Canadian artist Jan Wade, whose work will be priced between £5,000 and £30,000, with installations going into six figures, Saltoun says. Wade became the first Black woman to have a solo show in the 90-year-old Vancouver Art Gallery with her retrospective *Soul Power* (2021-22), which travels to the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario in late June.



Esther, a new art fair, will run in the Estonian House, in Murray Hill, Manhattan

Also timed to coincide with Frieze New York is a new art fair, Esther, which runs in the Estonian House in Murray Hill, May 1-4. Its founders are gallerists Margot Samel, who runs an eponymous space in New York, and Olga Temnikova, co-founder of Temnikova & Kasela in Estonia's capital, Tallinn. A further 20 galleries have already committed to participate, nine with spaces in New York, including Andrew Kreps Gallery, and others from around the world such as Gathering from London, Glasgow's Kendall Koppe and Shanghai's Bank.

The rooms in the four-storey Beaux Arts building will dictate the look and feel of the fair, in which the art will be displayed without booths. They compare the vibe of the initiative to the popular and alternative Basel Social Club, founded in 2022 with an informal and more inclusive feel than traditional art fairs. Basel Social Club co-founder Robbie Fitzpatrick of Fitzpatrick Gallery also joins the fray at Esther. For this initial fair, galleries are charged \$1,500 to participate, a level at which they can "afford to be experimental", Temnikova says, while entry will be free. "Esther" was chosen "as an international name with an air of mystery", says Samel.



Alice Billings House in Stratford, east London

Artists have begun to move into studios in Stratford’s Alice Billings House in east London, former firefighter lodgings renovated through the Creative Land Trust initiative (CLT). The charity brings together a constellation of public and private funding to buy or lease buildings and aims to offer 1,000 affordable studio spaces for artists and makers, initially in London, over the next five years.

“Leaders are beginning to recognise the long-term issue of maintaining London’s global success as a hub of creativity,” says CLT chief executive Gordon Seabright. He estimates that there are about 30,000 art and design graduates a year in the UK and about 11,000 studios available. “Many artists are giving up,” Seabright says.

CLT caps rent at £19 per square foot per year, including service charges, equating to about £300 a month for a typical studio — comfortably below London market rates. Seabright says CLT is also committed to long-term tenancies, to avoid the inevitable price hikes of gentrification that force artists out of the areas they have helped to improve.

The Stratford building, whose new tenants include a photographer, a filmmaker and a basket-weaver, is CLT’s second project after one in nearby Hackney Wick, which opened last year, with another due in Acton, west London, later this year. The charity was founded with the mayor of London, Arts Council England, Bloomberg Philanthropies and Outset. Seabright says that funding increasingly comes from private trusts, investors and philanthropists.



Marina Abramović's 'The Spirit in Any Condition does not Burn'

Independent curators Jane Neal and Fru Tholstrup are organising a selling show based on the colour red that goes on view at Phillips London (March 16-24). "Red presents a dichotomy. It can be desire, love and passion while also warfare, blood and losing your temper," Neal says.

Seeing Red will bring together 40 artists including Marina Abramović and Dale Chihuly, as well as lesser-known names, with prices starting at around £7,000. Painting, photography, ceramics and textiles are among the works, many of which have been made for the show. A perfume, inspired by the natural phenomenon known as a red rainstorm, has been created by Azzi Glasser.

“We want to delight the senses,” Tholstrup says. The curators are coy about another advantage: experts have long found red to be a winning colour on the art market.

Find out about our latest stories first — follow @FTWeekend on [Instagram](#) and [X](#), and subscribe to our podcast [Life & Art](#) wherever you listen

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2024. All rights reserved.
