

DEVALS

TEFAF MAASTRICHT 2026

SHOWCASE STAND SC7

MINERAL SOURCES

Andy Goldsworthy, Michael Heizer, Nobuo Sekine, Alan Sonfist, Victor Vasarely



Fig. 1 Michael Heizer, *Matchdrop Dispersal*, 1971 (detail)

“It is an immense honor to be taking part in TEFAF for the first time. I have always loved coming to Maastricht for the diversity and exacting standards of its presentations, for the connections forged across centuries, and above all for the deep respect for the *métier* shared by exhibitors and visitors alike. TEFAF approaches the art market and the act of collecting as a genuine craft: a discipline grounded in expertise, a cultivated eye, and a rigorous commitment to selection, research, and presentation that rises above passing fashions. Because art belongs to its own time while at the same time transcending it, it is able to enter into dialogue across the centuries. We are honored to be part of this story.”

Alexandre Devals

For its first participation in Showcase (stand SC7), the gallery pays tribute to artists' enduring fascination with stone.

"I sought to align the gallery's program, comprising historical and seminal works from the postwar avant-gardes, with that of TEFAF, an event grounded in the long view of history. Our booth, dedicated to the mineral sources of sculpture, acknowledges the 7,000 years of history represented at the fair by evoking archaeological vestiges, ancient sculpture, and carved stone blocks from every period. As the original material of sculpture, stone is presented here as a raw substance. Through seminal works by European, American, and Asian artists associated with Land Art and Mono-ha. The historical significance and emotional resonance of these movements are confirmed fifty years after their creation."

A.D.

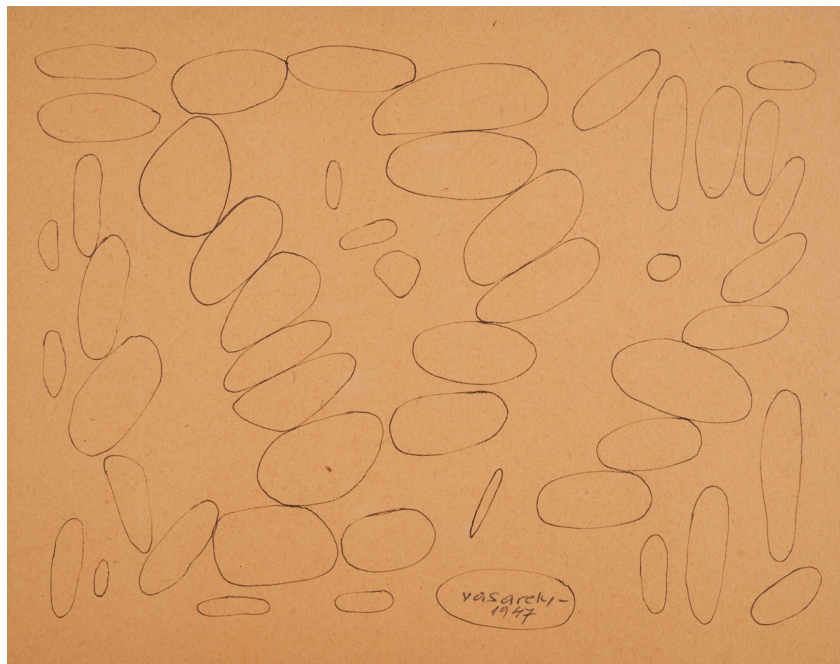


Fig. 2 Victor Vasarely, *Les Cailloux – Belle-Île*, 9 × 12 in., 1947

Thus, we begin with **Victor Vasarely** and his depiction of pebbles in 1947. In response to the deafening surge of violence sweeping across Europe and the wider world, Vasarely countered with a gesture of rare, quiet intensity: a slow, attentive encounter with the landscape. On Belle-Île-en-Mer, his meticulous observation of the pebbles, their rhythm and organization, became for him a genuine compositional procedure.

Far from merely transcribing their outlines, Vasarely approached these stones as learned entities, bearers of internal laws, relationships, and variations. *Les Cailloux – Belle-Île* embodies this foundational matrix, in which each form contributes to the emergence of a sensitive alphabet destined to structure his work in a lasting way.

At a time marked by an almost schizophrenic tension between the inherited brutalization of the world and the rise of mechanization within consumer society, this intimate experience serves as a reminder that "art is the language of sensations, whether it is expressed through words, colors, sounds, or stones."¹

¹ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?* (Paris : Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991), 166. Original citation : « l'art est le langage des sensations, qu'il passe par les mots, les couleurs, les sons ou les pierres. » (our traduction)

Matchdrop Dispersal (1971) by **Michael Heizer** is one of his rare seminal works still remaining in private hands.



Fig. 3 Michael Heizer, *Matchdrop Dispersal*, 98 1/2 x 57 x 4 in., 1971

Michael Heizer, now recognized as one of the most ambitious figures of Land Art, particularly through his monumental installations held at Dia Art Foundation (Dia Beacon), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Glenstone Museum, and through his extraordinary *City* in the desert valley of Lincoln County, Nevada, first came to prominence with his participation in the landmark 1969 exhibition “When Attitudes Become Form”. His intervention took place outside the museum, on the sidewalk, and led to Harald Szeemann’s dismissal. In 1970, *Double Negative* became a manifesto of his engagement with monumentality and with the interplay of positive and negative space.

Our *Matchdrop Dispersal* was created in 1971, at a pivotal moment when Heizer’s formal language was taking shape. It stands at the confluence of *Adze* (1968–1971), now in the collection of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, and the works from the *Nine Nevada Depressions* series of negative sculptures, now lost, though three re-created versions made between 1978 and 1982 are held at The Menil Collection, Houston.

The work extends the intervention realized on Düsseldorf’s Grabbeplatz and resonates with a now-vanished piece executed in 1972 on the sidewalk in front of Sam Wagstaff’s residence. A major collector and legendary figure in the world of photography, Sam Wagstaff owned our sculpture before bequeathing it to Robert Mapplethorpe.

“The matchsticks were employed as a dispersing device; they were dropped from two feet above a sheet of paper and taped down. The photograph of this dispersal became the drawing for Dissipate. (Matches are always applied to disintegrative tasks; the original drop drawing could catch fire at any time).”

Michael Heizer²

Heizer’s interest in archaeology, influenced by his father’s career, is evident in his choice to extract and display a large horizontal granite block. The surface of this stone reveals engraved matchstick shapes, as if they have emerged after being buried for thousands of years. Through this approach, Heizer creates a fictional history within the stone itself, highlighting the mysterious essence that comes with remnants from the past.



Fig. 4 Michael Heizer, *Matchdrop Dispersal*, 1971 (detail)

² Michael Heizer, “The Art of Michael Heizer,” *Artforum*, December 1969, cité dans Gilles A. Tiberhien, *Land Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Architectural Press, 1995), 23.



Fig. 5 Alan Sonfist, *Rock Monument of New York*, 26 × 29 in., 1971

Alan Sonfist extends this almost archaeological inquiry with *Rock Monument of New York City*, extracting, from a depth of thirty meters, stone cores taken at nine distinct sites across Manhattan, from Wall Street to 122nd Street. Composed of schist, mica, and granite, these borings reveal New York's subterranean geological landscape.

In 1966, with *Time Landscape*, Sonfist created in the West Village a primordial forest, replanting the species, trees and vegetation, that predated European colonization. Supported by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the intervention recalls the site's original condition prior to urbanization and uncovers a buried history, just as *Rock Monument* brings to light the city's underground reality, concealed beneath its architecture.

Counter to the vertical thrust that marked the early phases of globalization, an era defined by the proliferation of skyscrapers and the compression of time and distance, the work refuses to equate urban history with speed, growth, or elevation. Instead, it conceives of the city as a stratified body, where heterogeneous temporalities collide: the inertia of deep geological time set against the accelerated logics of infrastructure and capital flows. What appears stable and foundational proves to be the very substratum upon which regimes of circulation, extraction, and accumulation relentlessly assert themselves.

Sonfist's sustained attention to geological materials situates his practice within a long American tradition of reflecting on the often fraught relationship between nature and urban modernity. What distinguishes his approach, however, is the direct integration of geological matter into the work itself, foregrounding the largely invisible processes of transformation that shape urban landscapes. Nowhere is this tension more manifest than in New York. The creation of Central Park, initiated in 1857 under the impetus of Frederick Law Olmsted, was conceived as a pastoral antidote to industrial expansion; yet it relied on extensive

excavation, engineering, and displacement. Unlike Olmsted, Sonfist brings the city's geological substratum back to the surface, revealing the historical depths and material foundations usually obscured by urban development. The 'fabrication' of nature in Central Park, carefully superimposed upon a reworked terrain whose violence was softened by landscape design, continues to shape our perception of urban green spaces.

A century later, the city underwent transformations of a different order. The highway projects led by Robert Moses from the 1930s through the 1960s, foremost among them the Cross-Bronx Expressway, cut through neighborhoods and bedrock alike, privileging circulation, speed, and efficiency over continuity. These infrastructures compressed space and time, aligning the city with the accelerated rhythms of capital, while burying beneath concrete and asphalt older material and social strata.

After exhibitions with Leo Castelli and Marian Goodman in the 1970s, as well as participation in Documenta 6, Sonfist gradually withdrew from the art world. Works from this series are now held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Pérez Art Museum Miami, the Albright-Knox Art Gallery (Buffalo), and the Museum Ludwig (Cologne).

Today, his work is undergoing renewed recognition, as its subtle and sensitive engagement with nature proves strikingly prescient in light of contemporary concerns.



Fig. 6 Alan Sonfist, *Rock Monument of New York City*, 1971 (detail)



Fig. 7 Nobuo Sekine, *Phase of Nothingness*, 27 1/2 × 21 × 10 1/2 in., 1970

Within this panorama, the work of **Nobuo Sekine** occupies a singular position, geographically as well as conceptually. Far removed from Western ethnocentrism, Sekine co-founded, together with Lee Ufan, the Mono-ha movement. Its emblematic works, created from natural materials found at the exhibition site, are now known primarily through photographic documentation, most notably the iconic *Phase–Mother Earth* (1968), which shows a circular hole dug into the ground alongside the extracted mass of earth, shaped in the same form. This articulation of positive and negative space anticipates Michael Heizer's projects, particularly *Double Negative*, realized two years later.

From that period, however, the *Phase of Nothingness* sculptures endure. A monumental version represented Japan at the 1970 Venice Biennale. Other examples are now held in the collections of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, which dedicated an exhibition to Sekine in 1978, the Hakone Open-Air Museum, and the Raschofsky Collection.

We are presenting three exceptionally rare maquettes from 1970, in which the artist explores the typology of his “floating stones.” Their slender supports, in steel or mirror-polished stainless steel, seem to defy the weight of volcanic or sedimentary stone. Knud W. Jensen, director of the Louisiana Museum and curator of Sekine’s 1978 exhibition, remarked that this impression of a levitating stone would not have displeased René Magritte. The uncanny sensation experienced before *Phase–Mother Earth* thus converges with a distinct note of science fiction in these interventions upon natural elements.

Despite the evident force of gravity inherent in its construction, the stone appears to hover, creating a visual paradox that unsettles expectation and reveals gravity not as a fixed constraint but as a dynamic interaction. This condition, *gravity without gravitas*, proceeds from a rigorous ontological logic, rooted in Mono-ha’s refusal of representation, in Sekine’s interest in topology, and in a conception of matter as self-revealing rather than as a vehicle for expression.

The term *Phase* (相, sō) is essential to understanding Sekine’s practice. It designates a state of relational existence. According to Mono-ha theorists, a phase describes a condition in which matter, space, time, and perception mutually constitute one another. Nothing exists in isolation; each thing appears in and through relation.

Sekine repeatedly returned to the origins of *Phase of Nothingness*, drawing inspiration from dry landscape gardens in which stones seem suspended while remaining anchored to the ground. He sought to transform this illusion into reality, using steel and cement to produce an actual suspension, not as a defiance of gravity, but as a momentary suspension of its self-evidence. As he explained: “As I couldn’t go against gravity, I decided to use stainless steel to reflect the surroundings and create the feeling of the stone floating in the air.”³



Fig. 8 Nobuo Sekine, *Phase of Nothingness*, 1970 (detail)

³ Nobuo Sekine (the archives of the artist)



Fig. 8 Andy Goldsworthy, *Untitled*, 43 1/4 × 11 3/4 in., 1993

Finally, echoing the silent pebbles of Victor Vasarely, the work created by **Andy Goldsworthy** shifts the question of the mineral toward that of process. Composed of stones gathered in the river's immediate vicinity, it arises from a direct engagement with the site and with the forces that animate it. Goldsworthy reminds us that he is "not just trying to understand a rock as if it has been delivered to my studio. (...) [but] understand why it is there and the time it has spent there, the way it has effected that place."⁴

⁴ Andy Goldsworthy, An interview first broadcast on The Third Ear, BBC Radio, 30 June 1989

Each stone carries within it the duration of its own formation, the trace of the currents that have rolled, struck, and polished it. The artist intervenes at the end of an already long history; his gesture inscribes itself within a continuity rather than inaugurating a form. The sculpture thus appears as a moment within a cycle, a temporary concentration of natural energies still in motion.

The arrangement retraces the course of the riverbed, restoring its inflections. The line follows the logic of the current, its accelerations, its slowings, its eddies. It is this circulation that the work renders perceptible. The pebbles, smoothed by water, seem still inhabited by the flow that shaped them. The stone retains the memory of the liquid; solidity reveals the slow action of time. The work thus gives form to a river of stone, in which the mineral becomes the visible archive of continuous movement.

From archaeology to science fiction, from mysticism to concrete reality, from reality to the imaginary, from the experience of nature to the experience of poetry, their language opens compelling horizons, a journey beyond time.



Fig. 10 Andy Goldsworthy, *Untitled*, 1993 (detail)