



Mineral Sources: Devals Gallery at TEFAF Maastricht

At TEFAF Maastricht, Devals Gallery’s “Sources Minérales” traces how postwar artists—from Victor Vasarely to Andy Goldsworthy—have turned to stone as both material and metaphor, revealing deep connections between geology, perception, and time.

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At ***TEFAF Maastricht*** arguably the world's most intellectually ambitious art fair time operates differently. Works from across millennia share the same corridors: antiquities converse with Old Masters, and contemporary art finds itself in dialogue with the distant past. For its first participation in the fair's prestigious Showcase section, ***Devals Gallery*** has embraced this temporal breadth with an exhibition that turns toward one of the most primordial materials in the history of art: stone.

Titled "Sources Minérales," the presentation brings together seminal works by five artists ***Victor Vasarely, Michael Heizer, Alan Sonfist, Nobuo Sekine, and Andy Goldsworthy*** whose practices, though emerging from different continents and contexts, converge around the enduring fascination artists have long held for the mineral world. Through sculpture, drawing, and conceptual interventions, the booth traces how stone has served not only as a material but also as a conceptual anchor across the avant-gardes of the postwar era.

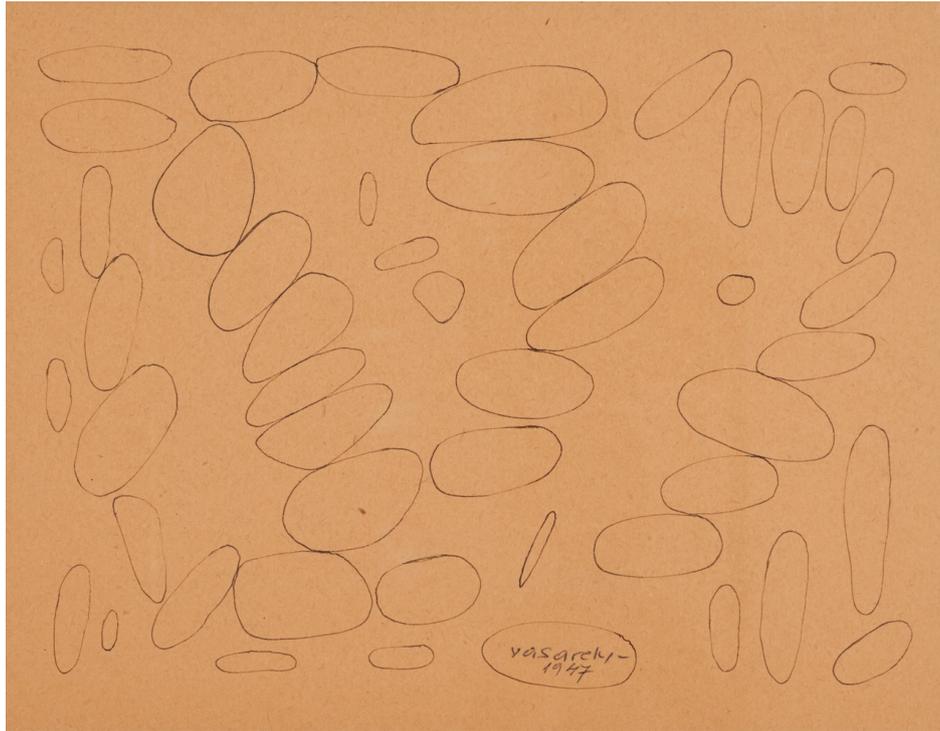
For **Alexandre Devals**, the gallery's founder, the project emerged from a desire to connect the historical depth of TEFAF with the intellectual genealogy of postwar sculpture. "The fair represents more than 7,000 years of art history," he explains. "I wanted to situate our program within that long timeline, and to reflect on the foundational material of sculpture itself."

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7,000 years of art history."*

Alexandre Devals

Stone, whether carved, extracted, assembled, or simply observed becomes the exhibition's guiding thread. What emerges is a meditation on geology, time, and the human impulse to interpret the natural world.

Victor Vasarely: The Silent Geometry of Nature



Victor Vasarely, "Les cailloux Belle Isle," 1947 (Copyright DEVALS, Photo by Fabrice Gousset).

The exhibition begins with an unexpected starting point: a delicate drawing made in 1947 by Victor Vasarely. Known today as the pioneer of **Op Art** and geometric abstraction, Vasarely spent the immediate postwar years studying natural forms along the coast of Belle-Île-en-Mer in Brittany. His work *Les Cailloux - Belle-Île* captures an arrangement of pebbles observed on the shoreline.

At first glance, the drawing appears deceptively simple. Yet Vasarely approached these stones not merely as objects of representation but as structures governed by underlying rhythms and relationships. Each pebble becomes a unit within a larger visual system, anticipating the modular vocabulary that would later define his abstract compositions.

Created in the shadow of **World War II**, the work can also be read as a quiet gesture of contemplation in a time of upheaval. Rather than respond directly to the violence of the era, Vasarely turned his attention to the slow organization of forms in nature. The pebbles on the beach become a kind of silent grammar a reminder that artistic language can emerge from careful observation as much as from invention.

Within the context of "Sources Minérales," Vasarely's drawing functions as a conceptual prologue. It introduces stone not as monumental sculpture but as a starting point for reflection: a modest element whose patterns reveal the deep structures of perception.

Michael Heizer: Archaeology of the Future



Michael Heizer, "Matchdrop Dispersal," 1971 (copyright DEVALS & Photo by Nicolas Brasseur).

If Vasarely represents an attentive gaze toward natural order, Michael Heizer embodies the radical transformation of landscape that defined the Land Art movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

At the center of the booth stands *Matchdrop Dispersal* (1971), a rare work from a pivotal moment in the artist's career. Today, Heizer is celebrated for monumental interventions such as *Double Negative* (1969) in the Nevada desert or the vast complex *City*, developed over decades in Lincoln County. Yet this sculpture reveals a more intimate but equally conceptual dimension of his practice.

The piece originated from a simple experiment: matchsticks dropped onto a sheet of paper from a height of two feet. The resulting scatter formed a drawing, which Heizer then translated into engraved marks on a massive granite slab. What appears at first like a random constellation of lines thus derives from an act of chance.

Installed horizontally, the stone evokes both an archaeological fragment and a geological artifact. The engraved traces resemble marks that might have emerged from centuries of erosion or burial, as if the sculpture had been excavated from some unknown civilization. This sense of temporal ambiguity reflects Heizer's longstanding fascination with archaeology, a discipline practiced by his father and with the monumental remnants of ancient cultures.

The sculpture's provenance further deepens its art historical resonance. It once belonged to the legendary collector **Sam Wagstaff** before entering the orbit of photographer **Robert Mapplethorpe**, linking the work to a remarkable network of artistic figures.

Within the narrative of the booth, Heizer's granite block becomes a kind of speculative relic: a contemporary object that already feels ancient.

Alan Sonfist: Unearthing the Hidden City



Alan Sonfist, "Rock Monument of New York," 1971 (copyright DEVALS & Photo Fabrice Gousset).



Alan Sonfist, "Rock Monument of New York," 1971 (copyright DEVALS & Photo Fabrice Gousset).

Where Heizer excavates imaginary histories, Alan Sonfist investigates the geological reality beneath modern urban life.

His work *Rock Monument of New York City* (1971) consists of core samples extracted from nine points across Manhattan from Wall Street to 122nd Street. These cylindrical stones reveal the geological strata underlying one of the world's most densely built environments.

Sonfist is best known for *Time Landscape* (1966), the pioneering ecological artwork in Manhattan's West Village where he recreated a pre-colonial forest using native plants that existed before European settlement. With *Rock Monument*, he extended this investigation underground.

The work invites viewers to reconsider the city not as a purely architectural construct but as a layered geological body. Beneath the towers and asphalt lies a much older landscape composed of schist, granite, and mica materials that shaped the island long before urbanization.

In doing so, Sonfist challenges the narrative of modernity as purely forward-looking. Instead, the city becomes a site of overlapping temporalities where deep geological time intersects with the rapid cycles of development and capital.

The piece also resonates with broader histories of American landscape transformation from the construction of Central Park in the nineteenth century to the massive highway projects of **Robert Moses** in the mid-twentieth century. Each intervention reshaped the terrain while obscuring the material realities beneath it.

Sonfist's work reverses that process. By bringing the underground to the surface, it reveals the hidden foundations of urban life.

Nobuo Sekine: The Philosophy of the Stone



Nobuo Sekine, "Phase of Nothingness," 1970 (Copyright DEVALS, Photo by Fabrice Gousset).

The exhibition then shifts geographically and philosophically with three rare maquettes by Nobuo Sekine, a central figure of the Japanese Mono-ha movement.

Emerging in the late 1960s, Mono-ha ("School of Things") rejected traditional sculpture in favor of simple arrangements of natural and industrial materials. Rather than shaping matter into expressive forms, artists explored the relationships between objects, space, and perception.

Sekine's iconic work *Phase-Mother Earth* (1968) consisted of a circular hole dug into the ground beside a cylindrical mound of the excavated earth a gesture that emphasized the relationship between positive and negative space.

The sculptures presented at TEFAF belong to his *Phase of Nothingness* series from 1970. Each features a stone balanced on a slender stainless steel support polished to a mirror finish. The reflective surface visually dissolves the base, creating the illusion that the stone floats in mid-air.

This apparent defiance of gravity is not simply a technical trick. In the philosophical framework of Mono-ha, the term "phase" refers to a relational state of existence. Matter, space, and perception are understood as mutually constitutive rather than independent.

The floating stone thus becomes a meditation on presence. It is not transformed by the artist but revealed through the conditions of its display.

Andy Goldsworthy: Sculpture as Process



Andy Goldsworthy, "Untitled," 1993, (Copyright DEVALS, Photo by Fabrice Gousset).



Andy Goldsworthy, "Untitled," 1993, (Copyright DEVALS, Photo by Fabrice Gousset).

The exhibition concludes with a work by Andy Goldsworthy, whose practice pushes the relationship between *art* and nature toward a more process-based approach.

Constructed from stones gathered near a river, the piece follows the contours of the water's flow. The arrangement echoes the curves and rhythms of the riverbed, translating the movement of water into a solid form.

For Goldsworthy, understanding the material means understanding its environment why a stone lies where it does, how long it has remained there, and what forces shaped it. Each pebble carries within it the memory of currents that rolled and polished it over time

A Dialogue Across Time

Seen together, the **works** in “Sources Minérales” propose an expansive view of sculpture. From Vasarely’s observational drawings to Goldsworthy’s site-responsive interventions, stone appears not merely as material but as a witness to time.

The exhibition moves fluidly between archaeology and speculation, science and poetry. It suggests that the mineral world often perceived as inert contains its own narratives of movement, transformation, and relation.

In the context of **TEFAE**, where antiquities share space with contemporary works, this perspective feels particularly resonant. The stones in Devals’ presentation evoke both the earliest artifacts of human culture and the most experimental gestures of modern art.

“The exhibition moves fluidly between archaeology and speculation, science and poetry.”

Across these works, the mineral becomes a bridge between epochs a reminder that beneath the shifting languages of art lies a material continuity that stretches far beyond human history.