

**ARTnews**



Danielle McKinney, *Lumen*, 2025.  
Courtesy Marianne Boesky.

## IN MAASTRICHT, DANIELLE MCKINNEY'S FIGURES COME OUT OF THE DARK

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At the opening of [TEFAF Maastricht](#) on Thursday morning, there were a few galleries that had traveled to the remote Dutch university town for the first time. While the fair is best known for Old Masters works and antiquities, first-timer exhibitor Marianne Boesky challenged the trend by bringing a group of small-scale figurative paintings by New York-based artist and photographer Danielle McKinney.

McKinney, 42, has seen her following surge over the last couple of years. Her paintings, many completed this year, are among a small handful of works that constitute the youngest works shown collectively at the city's exhibition center.

The works center Black women, often partially naked under dim lighting, at home or in bedrooms, styled like magazine shoots, their bodies often blending into furniture. Of the eight paintings shown at TEFAF, most were under 20 inches in height, around the size of a piece of paper. In *Lumen* and *Crimson*, each done in the last three months, the focus is on lone undressed women. One lays asleep on her stomach, partially lit by the beam of a table lamp; the other sits upright, hiding her body behind a red folding fan.

Each of the eight McKinney works that Boesky brought, ranging in value between \$70,000 to \$120,000, sold before the fair's opening because there's a growing waitlist for them, the dealer told *ARTnews* in the first hour of the fair. Bringing them to Maastricht was more about keeping in touch with an audience in Europe, adding onto the work of McKinney's Berlin-based gallerist Max Hetzler, who just had an exhibition for her in London.

Sharing the booth wall space is a 1926 drawing by Edward Hopper of a white summer home in Gloucester, Massachusetts. Boesky wanted to show the two artists side by side, since McKinney has had somewhat of a recent fixation on Hopper after seeing his work at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2023. According to Boesky,

Mckinney's background in photography, earning an M.F.A from Parsons in the medium in 2013, drew her to Hopper, seeing some elements of the works as adjacent to film.

Hopper, who died nearly 60 years ago, by contrast, notoriously only painted white subjects in upper-class East Coast spaces. His audience grew at a time in the country when nationalism was rising, a reality that art historian Gail Levin looked at in her 2021 essay: "Anglo-Saxon: Nationalism and Race in the Promotion of Edward Hopper," arguing that Hopper got popular because of his association with whiteness.

Both artists' works are not easy to get a hold of. "The Hopper was hard to find," said Boesky of the Gloucester image. Hard finds are perhaps the main draw at a European-focused fair like TEFAF, where the collector crowd is older and predominantly white, more so than other contemporary painting-heavy fairs. The collecting type abides by relatively traditional standards, several dealers told *ARTnews*, taking more time looking for items considered to have some rarity. But the collectors who bought the works by Mckinney before the booth went up this week are spread out geographically, some based in the U.S. and others across Europe, Boesky said. None of the works were acquired by museums this time, though one of hers was recently added to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection, which has brought her more interest.

For the small-scale paintings, being mysterious and also chic are only abetting sales. "They just want to be in their own little worlds," Mckinney said of the subjects she renders in [a recent profile](#) in the *New York Times* that tracked the rising attention on her. Boesky wanted to show what Mckinney's references were visually to collectors, rather than just explaining it. The pairing with Hopper adds another level to the images, she suggested: "There's a cinematic thing about them."