

Maureen Dougherty

Les Collectionneurs

02.12.2025
13.12.2025

MASSIMODECARLO Pièce Unique is very pleased to present *Les Collectionneurs* by American painter Maureen Dougherty, shown for the first time in Paris.

Dedicated to the figure of *The Collector*, this body of work, which began as portraits subsequently completed by the collections surrounding them, follows the same compositional structure: one figure, facing the viewer, stands in the foreground surrounded by multiple sets of objects displayed on the shelves behind them.

Each collection is strikingly specific, ranging from trinkets galore in *The French Collector*, to impressive ancient roman relics in *The Antiquities Collector*, or again to Picasso-esque ceramic plates in *Geisha Collector* and finally to mysterious grey sealed boxes and wooden masks in *The French Pacific Collector*.

In each case, the pairing of *collector* and *collection* is surprisingly harmonious, almost candidly sincere, perhaps revealing something more about the person than mere personal taste. Grids of objects create a mass of meaning—an ordered chaos that reveals sensitivity, empathy, theatre and the sense of an internal explosion held in place. Indeed the objects, which occupy most of the paintings' surfaces, appear to be as important as their owners, not to mention effectively giving them all the legitimacy to reclaim the title of "collector" itself.

In her recognizably naïve, gestural figurative brushstrokes, Dougherty synthesizes each portrait to preserve what matters most: the collector, clad in what appears to be their most elegant attire, surrounded by the things they love - regardless of their value - gloriously displayed to physically frame their identity on the canvas.

For some, collecting is a memory preserved on a shelf; for others, an insatiable desire to be consumed by beauty. And then comes the discerning collector, whose refined eye speaks in quiet abundance.

As the artist explains, her practice is an invitation to feel before we think—to be seduced by the surface, then unsettled by what lies beneath. In her hands, painting becomes both mirror and threshold: a record of seeing, and of being seen.

If the viewer feels the work before they understand it—if they are drawn in by its surface and then confronted by its depth—then, as she explains: "the painting has done its job".

Be it a subtle critique of materialism and its endearing futility, or a wholesome celebration of personal identity and obsession, the disarming clarity of each portrait leaves little doubt to the fact that our only certainty facing her paintings, whether her characters are real or fictional, that we will never truly know who others really are.

With her *Collectors*, Dougherty invites viewers to consider their own attachments and the stories we build through the things we choose to keep.

Maureen Dougherty

Maureen Dougherty studied painting at Carnegie Mellon University (1976) in Pittsburgh and the New York Studio School (1979), where she developed a lifelong engagement with the expressive possibilities of paint. Moving fluidly between figuration and abstraction, her work explores the emotional intelligence of color, gesture, and form.

Early influences include the soft luminosity of Raphael and the vivid color of Toulouse-Lautrec, whose fearless approach to painting opened Dougherty to a more direct, intuitive language. In recent years, the human figure has reemerged in her canvases—not as subject, but as presence—marking a renewed dialogue between body and abstraction. Her paintings inhabit that threshold where emotion and surface, intimacy and space, coexist in balance.

Maureen Dougherty works in her New York Chelsea studio, a large room filled with North Light and the quiet persistence of painting itself.

Artworks

Maureen Dougherty
Geisha Collector, 2025
Oil on linen
116.8 × 94 cm / 46 × 37 inches

Maureen Dougherty
The Antiquities Collector, 2025
Oil on linen
116.8 × 101.6 cm / 46 × 40 inches

Maureen Dougherty
The French Pacific Island Collector, 2025
Oil on canvas
149.8 × 149.8 cm / 59 × 59 inches

Maureen Dougherty
The French Collector, 2025
Oil on linen
162.5 × 121.9 cm / 64 × 48 inches