

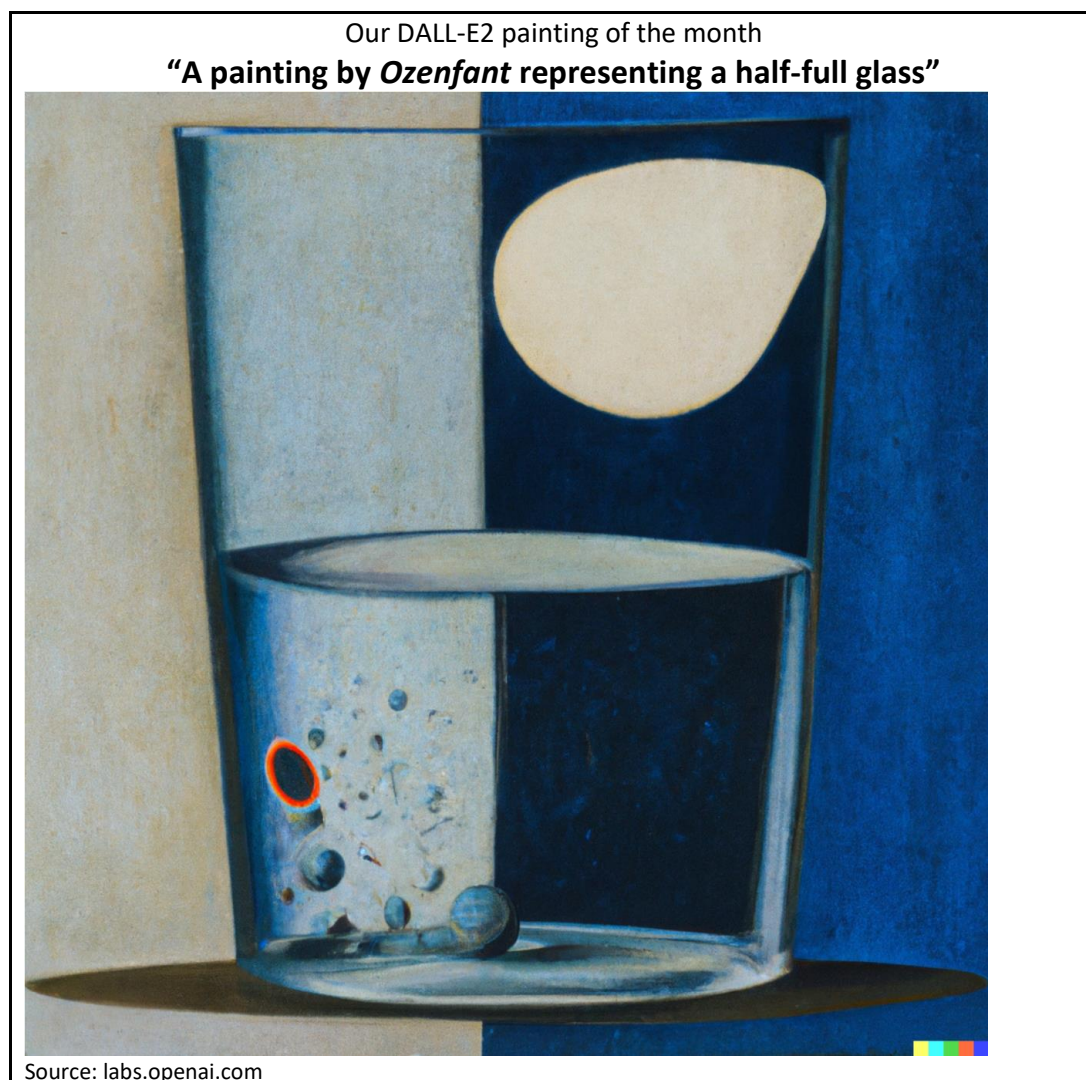
Communication for Professional Investors in Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Singapore and Portugal.

Dear Clients and Investors,

We are continuing our initiative of illustrating our quarterly investment letters with an unusual painting. As you know, I am anything but an artist, however AI nowadays is so advanced that Open AI DALL-E 2 Neural Nets are able to generate incredible artworks with simple text prompts. This shows how advanced AI systems see and understand our world, and applications are endless. ChatGPT has also been very popular this quarter, but we are not there in terms of letting it do the work of the investment letter, or not just yet!

The painting below has been generated using the caption “A painting by Ozenfant representing a half-full glass”. Ozenfant of course never painted this glass, and like I said, I am not an artist, but it took DALL-E less than 30 seconds to generate it. Have a look, try it, enjoy it, and tell us what you think!

Equity markets have chosen to go with the story of a glass half-full in the fourth quarter, focusing on pre-empting a Fed pivot.



About DALL-E 2: As the generic phrase states, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” But thanks to breakthrough technology from Open AI Labs, now with a few words in a caption, you can generate incredible ‘million words’ pictures and artworks. In April 2022, Open AI enhanced its technology generating more realistic images at higher resolutions that can understand the nuances of concepts, attributes, and styles (DALL-E 2). In late Q3 2022, DALL-E 2 has opened to anyone with waiting list requirements removed. DALL-E 2 relies on CLIP models (Contrastive Language-Image Pre-training) and Diffusion Model training. The breakthrough technology DALL-E 2 brings is one of many examples of how advanced AI models are changing the world in which we live.

About Amédée Ozenfant: Ozenfant (15 April 1886 – 4 May 1966) was a French cubist painter and writer. Together with Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (later known as Le Corbusier), he founded the Purist movement. (Source: Wikipedia)

As we close the fourth quarter of the year with equity markets sharply up from the September lows, I will review the quarter's market performance and then examine how our fund fared during this period. I will also drill down into the contribution by stock, followed by insight into our outlook and how we are positioned for the new year. I hope you find this letter helpful and, as always, feel free to reach out to us with any questions.

Performance¹

RETURNS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022 (% , net of fees)

	2022	2021	2020	Since Inception
Fund ²	-16.21	28.73	11.13	6.34
Benchmark ³	-9.49	25.13	-3.32	3.10
Relative Performance	-6.72	3.60	14.45	3.24

The tightening cycle: a Glass Half-Full

“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Winston Churchill

MSCI Europe Daily Net TR EUR Index closed sharply up +9.55% this quarter, which is a top 10 percentile quarterly performance for this index since 2001. The CPI miss in October proved to mark the lows for equities for the quarter and the year. It staged a sharp rally driven by a) increasing willingness to pre-empt a Fed pivot, b) rapidly deflating European gas prices, and c) receding systemic and geopolitical risks (UK LDI, GBP, Ukraine, China/Taiwan), as well as d) rising Chinese credit impulse and signs of a sustained re-opening.

As the peak inflation and rates narrative became increasingly supported in the quarter, the US 10 year reached its quarterly and indeed annual high on 21st October. None of the +75bps hike by the ECB on 27th October nor subsequent FOMC meetings were perceived hawkish enough to derail the market rally, especially post the US CPI beat on 10th November.

Banks benefitted from higher rates. Industrials benefitted from an elongated cycle which allowed them to post results above expectations and led to double digit outperformance of Cyclical versus Defensives⁴. It is worth noting that strong market performance was accompanied by a significant short-squeeze. In Q4, the three best

¹ Past performance does not predict future returns. Where the reference currency of the fund differs than yours, returns and costs may increase or decrease as a result of currency and exchange rate fluctuations.

² The Fund = The Aperture European Innovation Fund (ticker APEIIE LX)

³ Benchmark = the Fund's Benchmark, MSCI Europe Net Total Return EUR Index (ticker MSDEE15N Index) Indices are unmanaged and do not include the effect of fees. One cannot invest directly in an index. The performance of the Benchmark does not predict future performances of that Benchmark and of the performance of the Fund.

⁴ GSPECYDE Index +9.3% in Q4.

performing stocks in Stoxx 600 Index were also among the more frequently shorted stocks as flagged by Prime Brokers⁵.

As a result of the strong rally this quarter, the Benchmark Index MSCI Europe Daily Net TR EUR recovered almost half of its peak-to-trough drawdown and closed the year down -9.49%.

How did we do this quarter?

The Aperture European Innovation Fund (Ticker: APEIIE LX) closed the quarter up +4.74% (net of fees). This is -4.81% behind its benchmark MSCI Europe Net Total Return Index. This brings full year performance of the fund to -6.72% versus its benchmark. During the quarter, most of the underperformance came from the months of October (-3.18%) and November (-1.16%). Performance was held back by our overweight Defensive positions (for more information, please see our single stock commentary below), with some of our Cyclical exposure failing to outperform during the quarter. For example, in October, our semiconductor stocks underperformed on mixed guidance messaging and US export restrictions. Consequently, they were shrunk or trimmed in the portfolio. In the single stock commentary below, Capgemini, a cyclical stock, failed to participate in the strong market bounce in Q4.

As for the whole year: part of our process is being humble and learning what we could improve in an effort to achieve better outcomes, and this is particularly true during the periods of drawdowns. We found it interesting that the fund could have outperformed its benchmark this year by as much as 6% should we have held the stocks in our portfolio at equal weight each day throughout the year! We find this reassuring in terms of our stock selection, but disappointing that we did not hold them at the right weighting.

This is of course a purely theoretical exercise and pinpointing precisely when to dial down your sizing is extremely difficult to achieve or to capture fully. Going forward, our research and deep dive analysis will continue to inform our sizing as we believe that sizing plays an important role in the portfolio's potential for long term alpha generation. That said, we have also taken into consideration the potential benefits of a near term equal sizing awareness.

Lastly, we have noted the unfortunate timing of our conviction in Banks benefiting from an equal playing field vs their Fintech competition early in the year, given the rate environment. We were quick to react protecting to the downside on the week of the Ukraine invasion. Later in the year, we remained cautious, held back by the prospects of systemic risks and windfall taxes. This is another area where with hindsight, should we have kept an average sizing approach throughout the year, we may have potentially managed a similar downside capture but with a better upside one.

Single stock commentary⁶

Stocks that helped and detracted

⁵ ZAL GY + 64%, SB3B SS +63%, ENR GY +54%.

⁶ Holdings / Allocations subject to change. This document does not constitute an investment advice to buy or sell the presented securities. There is no guarantee that an investment objective will be achieved or that a return on capital will be obtained. The Fund does not benefit from any guarantee to protect the capital.

Given the adverse performance this quarter, we focus on the top 5 detractors. These included **Roche Holding AG** (ROG SW), **Deutsche Boerse** (DB1 GY), **Capgemini** (CAP FP), **Sartorius** (SRT3 GY), and **Compass Group** (CPG LN).

Shares of Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche Holdings underperformed the Benchmark by 13% in November as their key pipeline drug Gantenerumab in Alzheimer disease failed to slow cognitive decline in clinical trials.

Deutsche Boerse, the German stock exchange and Data & Analytics provider's stock price underperformed the index by 8% in October. The price was dragged down by de-rating post a solid Q3 reporting, but the company's usual conservatism in guidance was perceived negatively by the market.

Shares in French listed IT consulting group Capgemini underperformed throughout the quarter after the company's guidance was perceived as indicative of a demand slowdown in the next few quarters, a message that seemed to be echoed by their US peer Accenture in their reporting later in December. This put additional pressure on the stock price.

German Life Science Equipment manufacturer Sartorius surprised negatively by reporting a 15% decline in its order book mid-October, sending the stock down -18% on the day. The fund exited the position after the profit warning.

UK-based, global catering firm Compass Group's share price fell by 5% on 11th November after a milder-than-expected US CPI release triggered a sharp Cyclical relief rally. Compass Group reported later in the month full year results that came ahead of expectations, but its conservative guidance failed to push the stock higher. Compass Group is the world's #1 food service company by market share and is leading the industry in digitalisation. We view part of the reaction in Q4 as a pullback given its shares have strongly performed this year (+17.7%) and the stock is relatively expensive at these levels.

What have we done?

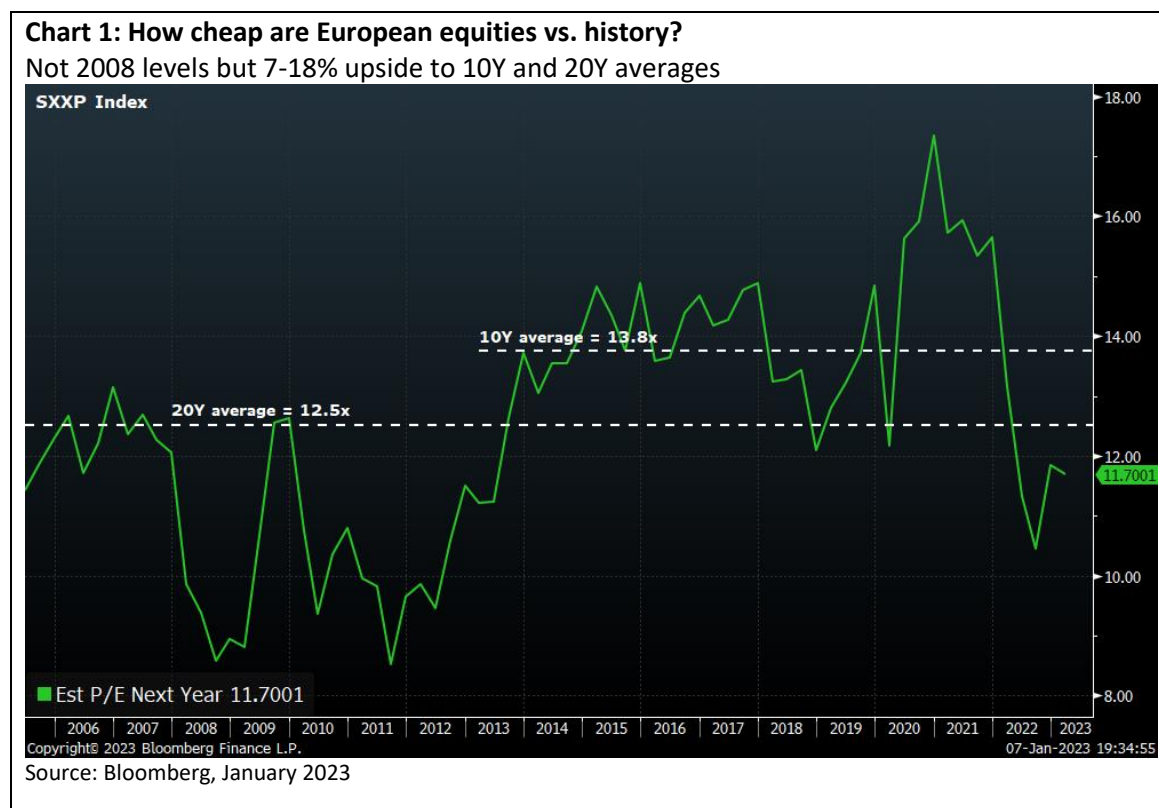
Since the slowing CPI release in November, we have **gradually been adding back some strongly capitalised Banks/Financials with scope for large cash returns benefiting from an increasingly level playing field with their fintech competitors**, some of which we held earlier last year prior to the war in the Ukraine. We have also **gradually added some bombed-out Cyclical**, favouring stocks with **order visibility and/or strong pent-up demand**. Admittedly, this was too late to offset the negative performance of the quarter. Going forward, we believe that the negative sentiment, which we shared before, and which is based on the expectation of negative earnings revisions, may well be either not materializing immediately and/or not with the magnitude implied in cheaper valuations. Finally, we have been looking to reinforce our stocks with a favourable exposure to China as the reopening of the Chinese economy seems to be gathering strength. Overall, this left our annual churn this year on track with our long-term annual average of 1.5x.

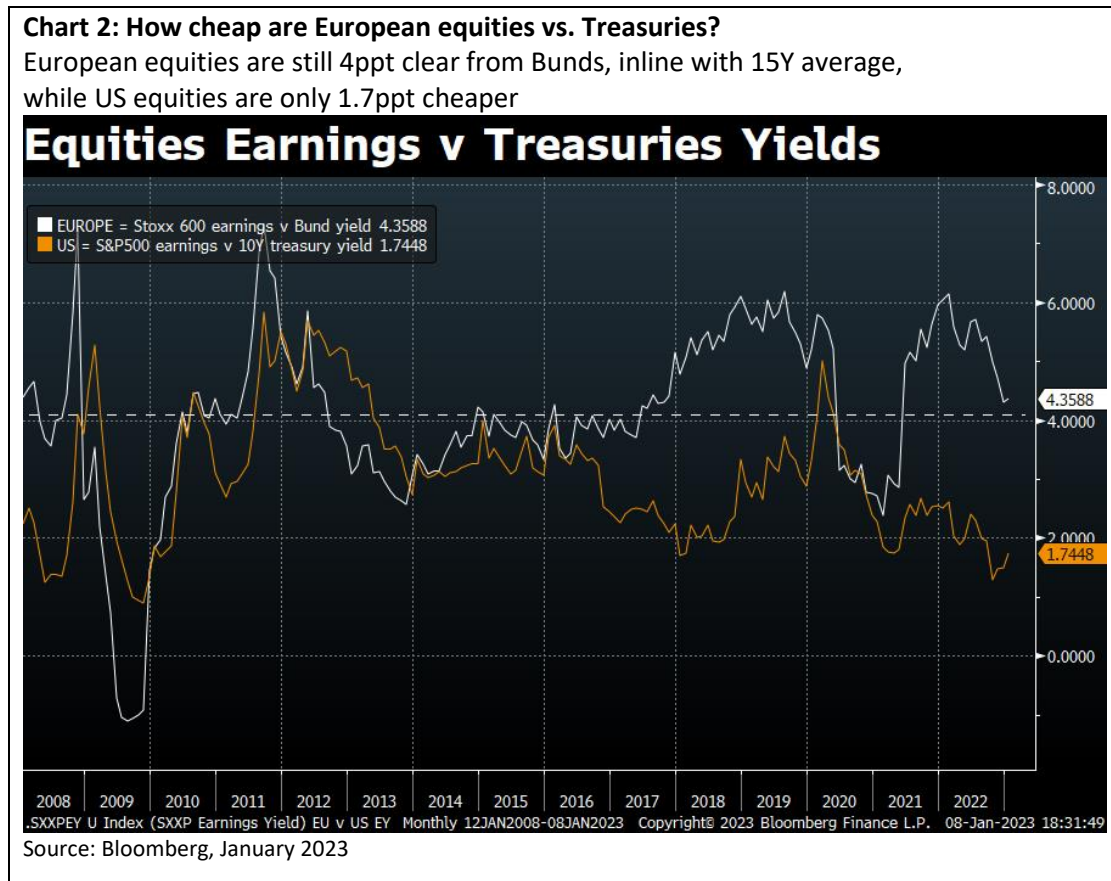
How do we think about the outlook?

Of course, there is no shortage of risks as financial conditions continue to tighten and geopolitics remain highly uncertain. However, as explained in part earlier, **we would rather look at the glass half-full from there**. There are more and more signs that **inflation/rates/dollar have peaked, and the Fed pivot is in sight**. A major **energy crisis** during the 2022-23 winter in Europe is now looking **increasingly averted**.

We understand that part of this argument is already captured in the strong price action of the fourth quarter and that ahead of us lies a delayed response to the Fed’s restrictive interest rate action in terms of economy slowdown. Credit defaults are extremely low, and they will naturally accelerate. With European equities still counting on a 7.5% EPS growth in 2023 according to Bloomberg, we hear the argument of an EPS reset yet to come with pockets of slowdown looming.

Where we are constructive is that we believe the nominal revenue growth will still drive operational leverage and that **the earnings reset is unlikely to be anywhere similar to 2000 or 2008 precedents, nor drive stock prices when the central banks pivot is increasingly within sight**, at least in the near term. We are also taking into consideration global investor **positioning which remains light in international/non-US assets and risk** and bodes well for more easing in risk aversion and European equities asset class, where **valuation remains very supportive**, even in comparison with higher yields in domestic treasuries.





Within European equities, **we continue to believe in the long-term benefits of investing in innovation assets as adoption curves continue at a pace.** Anecdotally, the world famous CES tradeshow in Vegas just concluded early this year, with over 3,000 exhibitors showcasing innovations in AI, mobility, wearables, VR etc. is a timely reminder of that. From an equity market point of view, more than any point in time, **positioning could provide a helpful tailwind to smaller, less owned, more discounted European innovation players.**

In our portfolio, we are **constructive on the barbell of Innovation and Cyclicity helped by China re-opening and higher-for-longer rates.**

We continue to be excited by the **exponential prospects of Applied AI** penetrating more than the art-cover of our investment letter. We see every day new applications for GPTChat in schools and universities, and we are merely scratching the surface. This is a strong support for our long-term investment case in **ASML**, the world #1 enabler for leading edge compute and AI, which has erased in 2022 a minimum of 2 years of P/E valuation, while its total addressable end-market has been substantially expanded, not just by the Technology Sovereignty decoupling East/West recently, but also by an underlying Applied AI market growing exponentially. We believe this was evidenced in part in ASML's Capital Markets Day in November. The company unveiled a forecast of 15% EPS CAGR over the next 9 years, and there could be more to it as their roadmap unfolds.

In Life Sciences, we continue to be excited by the prospects of better drugs that not only help normalise the life of Diabetic and Oncology patients but also pre-emptively deal with Obesity and prevent the devastating and costly

complications that most often result from this widespread health issue. This is reflected in our positions in **Novo Nordisk and AstraZeneca**.

We are taking into consideration the potential for improvement in the business cycle should inflation peak, as was hinted by the CPI numbers in November and December. While this does not mean that we expect interest rates to come down to a low level, we may have seen the peak to Fed hiking and higher-for-longer rates give us comfort in a more sustained re-rating in cheap asset where we have been adding positions, especially in the Financials complex.

We have written this before: **“Big Lows” are the ideal opportunities to take advantage of lower valuations. We are one step closer now, and perhaps even closer than our opening quote from Winston Churchill “the end of the beginning”**. European and US markets have already corrected by 20-25% peak-to-trough. **The glass is half-full**. Catching the lows is always challenging as we have experienced in the fourth quarter, but we may still have a good window ahead of us. Have a fabulous year!

All my best,

Anis Lahlou

CIO, European Equities

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Derivatives Risk: The strategy may use derivative instruments, such as options, futures and swap contracts and enter into forward foreign exchange transactions. The ability to use these strategies may be limited by market conditions and regulatory limits and there can be

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