



# Sworders To Sell Douglas Fairbanks Family Collection Mar 2

STANSTED MOUNTFITCH-ET, UNITED KINGDOM — Hollywood royalty comes to Sworders in the spring. The stand-alone auction on March 2 includes more than 100 lots from the family collection of the legendary American actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr (1909-2000).

This archive of photographs, cinema posters, personal jewelry, objects of vertu, furniture, paintings and clothing was amassed over Fairbanks Jr's life as a film star, naval officer, producer and family man.

They have been consigned for sale by his grandson, Dominick Fairbanks, a film producer who inherited the collection from his mother Daphne (Fairbanks Jr's eldest daughter). He commented: "I have great pleasure in offering this collection of family items from my late grandfather's estate, so that they may be enjoyed by film collectors and Fairbanks admirers all over the world."

Douglas Fairbanks Jr was among the biggest names of his generation. The only child of the silent film-era swashbuckler Douglas Fairbanks (1883-1939) and his wife Anna Beth Sully (1888-1967), he first tasted box office success as a 16-year-old in the 1925 Samuel Goldwyn picture *Stella Dallas*. He went on to star in more than 130 motion pictures opposite the likes of Greta Garbo, Ginger Rogers, Cary Grant, Joan Crawford, John Wayne and Fred Astaire.

He was also a confirmed Anglophile. Fairbanks Jr first lived in Britain in the 1930s after Warner Bros asked its stars to take a 50 percent Depression-era pay cut. He refused, was fired, and instead



**A Swiss or German Hanau four-color gold snuff box, circa 1820, with a later Russian standard mark 1908-17. A later lift out minaudière insert, hand engraved "Fairbanks."**

took up an offer from the Elstree film studios to live and work in London. During World War II (his last film before enlisting was *The Corsican Brothers*, 1941), he was assigned to Lord Mountbatten's Commando staff and became well known in the highest social circles. Knighted by George VI in 1949 for his post war work in founding three hospitals for war wounded (the first American star to receive the KBE at the time) he spent much of his time in the United Kingdom from the 1950s.

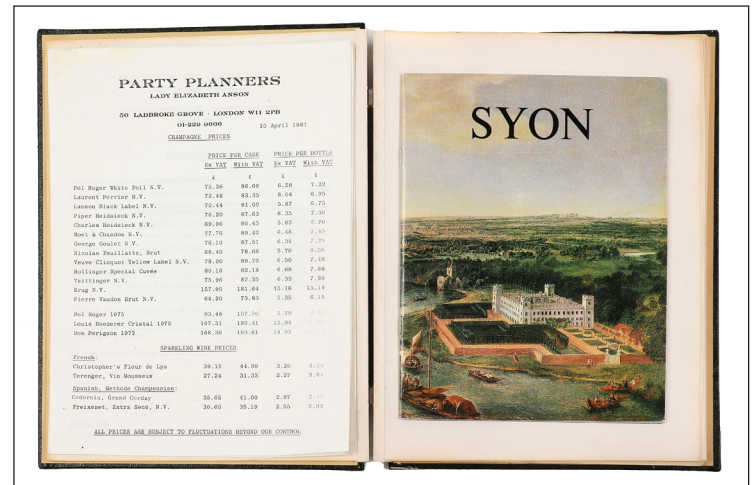
Key moments of Fairbanks family life are reflected in the collection. From the earliest period is an ivory and gold bound prayer book celebrating Douglas Fairbanks Sr's marriage to Ann Beth Sully on July 11, 1911, and an early Nineteenth Century four color gold snuff box hand engraved "Fairbanks." It had been a gift to Douglas Fairbanks Sr and his second wife Mary Pickford, who honeymooned in London in June 1920. Made circa



**Douglas Fairbank's gold signet ring by Cartier, circa 1960, with a flat section square head, intaglio engraved with the Fairbanks crest.**

1820 in Switzerland or Germany, it has been later fitted in the 1930s as a minaudière.

Many of the pictures and furniture lots can be seen in old photo albums showing various Fairbanks homes — among them a pair of tinsplate three-light branch wall lights formed as crossed swords, which were believed to have been created to celebrate Douglas Fairbanks Sr's 1921 film *The Three Musketeers* — one of



**Syon House Reception, July 2, 1981, hosted by Douglas and Mary Lee Fairbanks Jr, in honor of the new American ambassador and his wife, Mr & Mrs John Louis, a bound book of thank-you letters, including a copy of a letter from HM Queen Elizabeth II.**

two films from the silent era in which Fairbanks Jr was also given a small role as a boy (the other *American Aristocracy* in 1916).

A 1947 portrait of Douglas Fairbanks Jr shown seated in a grey suit by Dutch society painter Johan Van de Linde Jr (1887-1956) comes for sale as does a three-quarter length portrait of Mary Lee seated in a red dress dated June 1935 by American portrait painter Louis Betts (1873-1961).

They hosted a reception at Syon House in 1981 in honor of the new American ambassador. A bound book of thank-you letters (including copies of letters from HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Princess Margaret).

Fairbanks Jr has three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He

was also, in 1969, inducted into the Hall of Fame of the International Best Dressed List. His well-known sartorial elegance is reflected in a large quality of his clothing — ties, shoes, suits and overcoats — that comes for sale direct from his estate.

Among the most personal items is the 18K gold signet ring made for him by the London branch of Cartier circa 1960. To the face it is intaglio-engraved with the Fairbanks crest — the coat of arms symbolizing the uniting of the United States and Britain across the Atlantic awarded him by the College of Arms in London.

This and other highlights from the collection will be sold live in 129 lots from the firm's Stansted Mountfitchet auction rooms on Wednesday, March 2. For information, [www.sworders.co.uk](http://www.sworders.co.uk).

## Art Gallery Of Ontario Eyes \$42.3 Million Expansion

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA — The Art Gallery of Toronto (AGO) is planning a US \$42.3 million 55,000-square-foot expansion that includes a six-story glass tower dedicated to the display of contemporary and modern art. First reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, the ambitious projected undertaking points to the central role contemporary art plays in luring larger, younger and more diverse audiences.

The AGO, Canada's second-most-visited arts institution after the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, is already one of the country's largest museums. A 2008 Frank Gehry-led expansion added 97,000 square feet to its downtown facility; despite its already tremendous size, a new addition would likely aid in the storage and display of the roughly 20,000 works the museum has acquired in the past five years.

A request for proposals has been issued, with those competing urged to focus on a design incorporating "clean and simple finishes such as polished concrete floors, minimal walls, and modestly open ceilings" and on creating "highly flexible and well-proportioned spaces that can accommodate the media and materials artists are working in today and tomorrow."

Described by Andrea-Jo Wilson, public relations manager of the AGO, as "in its infancy," the expansion plan is part of the museum's broader initiative "to lead global conversations from Toronto, through extraordinary collections, exhibitions and programs, by reflecting the people who live here." As pointed out by Artnews, AGO has of late been increasing its focus on contemporary art, last year hiring Xiaoyu Weng away from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, to lead its modern and contemporary art department.

For more information, [www.ago.ca](http://www.ago.ca).

## Royal Air Force Museum Acquires Squad Leader's Medals

LONDON — Medal Auctioneers, Dix Noonan Webb (DNW) have negotiated the sale of the Second War campaign group of six medals awarded to Lancaster pilot Squadron Leader L.S. "Benny" Goodman to the Royal Air Force (RAF) Museum. Goodman, who died in July 2021 at the age of 100 was the last surviving RAF pilot of 617 (Dambuster) Squadron to attack the German battleship *Tirpitz*. He went on to be one of the few pilots to drop the 22,000-pound "Grand Slam" bomb, the heaviest ever dropped by the Royal Air Force, and by the end of the war he had flown on 30 bombing operations.

The medals were sold with Squadron Leader Goodman's brown leather Irvin flying jacket, five Royal Air Force Pilot's flight logbooks plus several photographs and photographic images of the recipient as well as a variety of books.

Goodman's son, Robert, also added: "I'm very pleased that my father's medals and artifacts will be purchased by the RAF Museum with the proceeds of the sale benefitting the Royal Air Force No 617 Squadron Association. I'm sure that he would have been thrilled that his legacy will be kept alive for the nation and shared with the world at the RAF Museum while giving back to No 617 Squadron, with which he fought so valiantly during the Second World War."



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Dr Peter Johnston, head of Collections and Research at the RAF Museum explained: "The museum is delighted to have acquired this wonderful piece of history which enables us to tell a unique part of the Royal Air Force story. We are planning that his medals and logbook will go on display in the Bomber Command Hall as part of its redevelopment in 2023."

For information, [www.rafmuseum.org.uk](http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk).