

Antique Jewelry & Gemology

Antique Jewelry to Be Worn and Loved All Over Again

by Mary Ann Brown
Photos courtesy Sworders

There is a wealth of antique jewelry to be found “across the pond,” and Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers’ sale of fine jewelry and watches, held live online on July 27 in Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, U.K., had stellar examples in its 493-lot auction.

Because so many of the results exceeded estimates, I asked Catriona Smith, jewelry specialist and head of department at Sworders, whether any of the prices realized were surprising. Smith replied, “None of the prices achieved were that much of a surprise. All the lots had full condition reports available to read online, but requests for additional images and details always give an indication of interest, so I was aware of the lots that were going to do well. I had a nice selection of good period jewellery with the addition of some interesting mid-20th-century pieces, more modern diamonds and fancy diamonds, with a small selection of unworn Rolex watches.”

“There is a strong market for good quality antique jewellery.”

Smith said there was a lot of interest in many of the antique offerings. An 18th-century suite containing an enamel portrait miniature necklace, earrings, and a pair of clasps, in a later (circa 1950) fitted case with a glazed lid, sold with buyer’s premium for £11,750 (\$16,259 U.S.); a circa 1870 Austro-Hungarian garnet, diamond, gold, and silver beetle brooch brought £3000 (\$4151 U.S.); and a Victorian diamond five-star tiara, 1870-80, together with a Victorian diamond-set star brooch/pendant and a collection of alternative fittings, in a box for the Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company, 112 Regent Street, London, realized £18,750 (\$25,945 U.S.).

A circa 1870 Victorian Archaeological Revival Etruscan-style gold and enamel hinged bangle that sold for £900 (\$1245 U.S.) was Smith’s personal favorite. She said it is “a very wearable example of an Archaeological Revival bangle with very fine Etruscan decoration, but with the unusual addition of a black enamel border to each side. The condition was also very good, with no losses or damage and still with its original bloom.”

A circa 1880 Austro-Hungarian diamond-set, reverse-painted crystal intaglio brooch with three polychrome painted swallows on a branch, in silver and approximately 14k gold, was “diminutive in size, but very sweet and romantic, and so desirable because of this,” according to Smith. It sold for £1375 (\$1903 U.S.).

A pair of circa 1890 Austrian sapphire and old-European-cut diamond cluster earrings in 18k gold, 14k gold, silver, and platinum, together with a circa 1900 matched French synthetic sapphire and old-European-cut diamond brooch in 18k gold and platinum, brought £13,750 (\$19,026 U.S.). A circa 1915 sapphire, diamond, and platinum bracelet, in a later case by Boodle & Dunthorne, realized £6000 (\$8302 U.S.).

Two American Art Deco bracelets fared well: a circa 1920 diamond and enamel bracelet in approximately 18k white gold faced with platinum, with a series of pierced rectangular plaque links, realized £2375 (\$3286 U.S.); and a circa 1925 bracelet in approximately 18k white gold faced with platinum and 18k yellow gold, assorted gemstones, and Swiss-cut diamonds brought £2625 (\$3632 U.S.).

The top price in the sale was for an 18k gold, 70.51-carat Paraiba tourmaline, and diamond pendant, accompanied by a Gübelin report stating that it is a natural Paraiba tourmaline, with indications of heating. It sold for £33,750 (\$46,700). Paraiba tourmalines were discovered in Paraiba, Brazil, in 1989.

Another highlight that saw a high degree of competition among bidders was also more contemporary—a pair of fancy pink diamond and diamond cluster earrings set in approximately 18k gold, with a total estimated weight



The top price was for this 18k gold, Paraiba tourmaline, and diamond pendant, with a stated tourmaline weight of 70.51 carats. The tourmaline is surrounded by two stepped rows of graduated brilliant-cut diamonds. The pendant was accompanied by a Gübelin report stating that it is natural Paraiba tourmaline, with indications of heating, and it sold for £33,750, \$46,700 U.S. (est. £30,000/40,000). A catalog note said, “Discovered in 1989, Paraiba tourmalines are amongst the world’s most prized gemstones and named after the location where they were first found. They have since been located in Nigeria and Mozambique. These rare gems are renowned for their colours, including Caribbean blue, peacock copper-green and neon aquamarine.”

of 2.24 carats. The lot was accompanied by a report from Gemmological Certification Services describing the characteristics of each pink diamond (one is fancy intense pink, and the other is fancy intense brownish pink). The pair sold for £20,000 (\$27,674 U.S.).

I told Smith that U.S. auctions we’ve been following during the pandemic have been steadily achieving solid results and asked what she attributed this particular sale’s strong prices to. She said, “Whilst the public have not been able to visit shops due to lockdown, they have been buying online and have subsequently discovered auction houses. They have discovered that we are very easy to deal with and always available to provide a professional opinion on a piece of jewellery.”

When asked about segments of the antique jewelry market that are doing better than others, Smith replied, “There is a strong market for good quality antique jewellery in good condition with the original fitted cases. Named pieces or those that are signed will always fetch a premium.”

Smith commented about what she finds most appealing about managing auctions: “For me the cataloguing and research are the most interesting factors in putting together a sale like this. We are always learning, but when faced with an item of jewellery that you are unfamiliar with, or may have an interesting story behind it, to have the time to research it properly is what fascinates me.”

She has good advice for U.S. buyers interested



This lot, including a pair of circa 1890 Austrian sapphire and old-European-cut diamond cluster earrings in silver and approximately 14k gold with Austrian assay marks for Vienna and the maker’s mark E.K., together with a circa 1900 matched French synthetic sapphire and old-European-cut diamond brooch set in 18k gold and platinum, sold for £13,750, \$19,026 U.S. (est. £2000/3000).



In the weeks before the sale, Sworders posted a few lots on its Facebook and Instagram pages. The caption for this item said this circa 1870 “Austro-Hungarian garnet, diamond, gold, and silver beetle brooch is one of our favourite lots in the sale!” With carved garnet elytra, the approximately 30 mm x 18 mm brooch brought £3000, \$4151 U.S. (est. £800/1200). Unfamiliar with beetle anatomy, I searched online and found this Amateur Entomologists’ Society’s description on its website: “Elytra (singular elytron) are the tough fore wings of beetles and earwigs.”

Late Victorian citrine and diamond boat-shaped carved head ring in approximately 18k gold and silver, with an oval Madeira citrine claw set to the center, an old-European-cut diamond claw set at each side, and pairs of diamond-set points, £3000, \$4151 U.S. (est. £800/1200).



in bidding. “I would stress that it is vital to read the condition report on any item you are considering buying at auction, and to be aware of the dimensions and weight. You should be careful to check any CITES laws with regard to protected species and import laws relating to the movement of gemstones.”

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services International Affairs explains the CITES laws on its website: “The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international treaty to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct because of international trade. Under this treaty, countries work together to regulate the international trade of animal and plant species and ensure that this trade is not detrimental to the survival of wild populations.”

Lizzie Lardner, public relations, said, “Sworders host twelve jewellery auctions throughout the year, including two flagship fine jewellery and watch auctions in July and November.” For further information and to peruse online catalogs, visit the website (www.sworder.co.uk).

Smith leaves us with this sentiment. “I consider it a privilege to be able to handle the items of jewellery that belong to our clients, on occasion pieces that have been in their families for many years but that have been sitting unworn for decades in safes and vaults. I love the fact that they are going on to a new owner to be worn and loved all over again.”



This Victorian diamond five-star tiara, 1870-80, together with a Victorian diamond-set star brooch/pendant and a collection of alternative fittings (not shown), came in a cardboard box by Goldsmiths & Silversmiths Company, 112 Regent Street, London, and realized £18,750, \$25,945 U.S. (est. £6000/8000).



Victorian diamond crescent brooch or hair ornament, with a row of graduated old-European-cut and rose-cut diamonds, in approximately sterling silver collets backed in 9k gold, with a two-pin detachable brooch fitting with roller catch, in a later fitted case by J. W. Benson Ltd., £3250, \$4497 U.S. (est. £1000/1500).



This circa 1860 gold and enamel Archaeological Revival Etruscan-style fringe brooch by Fortunato Pio Castellani was probably originally from an earring. The shield-form plaque has a central daisy-style flower head with radiating petals. There are concentric rows of twisted and plain wire to a graduated bead border and foxtail chain swags in the "Campana" style, with turquoise enamel ivy leaves, small flower heads, lapis lazuli blue enamel disks, and decorated urn pendant drops. In a later case by J.C. Vickery, Regent Street W., the 59 mm x 20 mm brooch sold for £5750, \$7956 U.S. (est. £2200/2500).



This suite consisting of an 18th-century enamel portrait miniature necklace, earrings, and a pair of clasps, with later scroll wire ends and a trace chain, in a circa 1950 fitted case with a glazed lid, was purchased by the consignor's father from Albert Amor before 1945. It sold for £11,750, \$16,259 U.S. (est. £6000/8000).



This single-row graduated natural saltwater pearl and 18k gold necklace, with 83 pearls measuring 4.1 mm to 7.8 mm, strung-knotted to a white gold box clasp claw-set with a row of four brilliant-cut diamonds, was the "much better example of a row of graduated natural pearls" of the two in the sale, according to Catriona Smith. The necklace was accompanied by a report from Gemmological Certification Services stating that they are natural saltwater pearls, with no indications of treatment, and it sold for £7750, \$10,724 U.S. (est. £1400/1600). A purchase receipt from Mozafarian dated 6/12/04 was on view for interested parties.



This circa 1920 American Art Deco diamond and enamel bracelet in approximately 18k white gold faced with platinum, with a series of pierced rectangular plaque links, 165 mm long, realized £2375, \$3286 U.S. (est. £800/1200).



Circa 1925 French Art Deco natural saltwater pearl, diamond, and platinum plaque brooch, with a 9.1 mm taupe-colored natural pearl, accompanied by a report from Gemmological Certification Services stating that it is a natural saltwater pearl, with no indications of treatment, £3750, \$5189 U.S. (est. £2000/3000).

Circa 1915 sapphire, diamond, and platinum bracelet, 182 mm long x 6.20 mm wide, in a later case by Boodle & Dunthorne, £6000, \$8302 U.S. (est. £2500/3000).



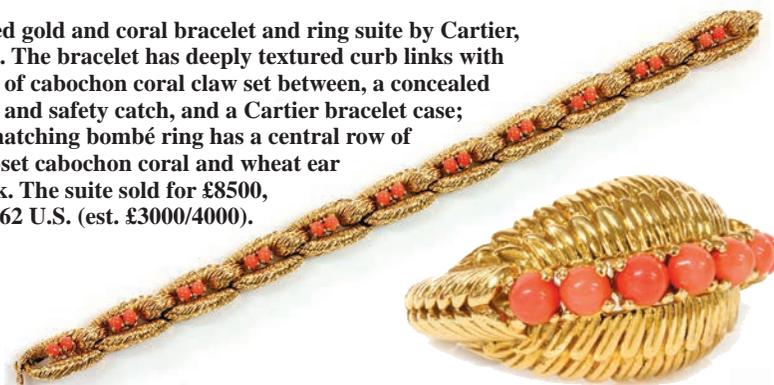
This circa 1880 Austro-Hungarian diamond-set, reverse-painted crystal intaglio brooch with three polychrome painted swallows on a branch, in silver and approximately 14k gold, is "diminutive in size, but very sweet and romantic, and so desirable because of this," according to Smith. With an Austrian assay mark for Vienna and an unidentified maker's mark, it sold for £1375, \$1903 U.S. (est. £400/500).

This circa 1945 diamond, platinum, and 18k white gold double clip waterfall brooch/pendant, approximately 50 mm x 52 mm, with baguette-cut and brilliant-cut diamonds and a detachable brooch fitting with a roller catch, a clip brooch with a hinged double pin fitting, and two later jump ring style concealed pendant bails, realized £6125, \$8475 U.S. (est. £2000/3000).



Signed gold and coral bracelet and ring suite by Cartier, Paris. The bracelet has deeply textured curb links with pairs of cabochon coral claw set between, a concealed clasp and safety catch, and a Cartier bracelet case; the matching bombé ring has a central row of claw-set cabochon coral and wheat ear shank. The suite sold for £8500, \$11,762 U.S. (est. £3000/4000).

Circa 1925 American Art Deco assorted gemstone and Swiss-cut diamond bracelet in approximately 18k white gold faced with platinum and 18k yellow gold, with six principal rectangular mixed-cut gemstones, including garnets, pink tourmaline, and zircon, 177 mm long x 7.10 mm wide, £2625, \$3632 U.S. (est. £400/600).





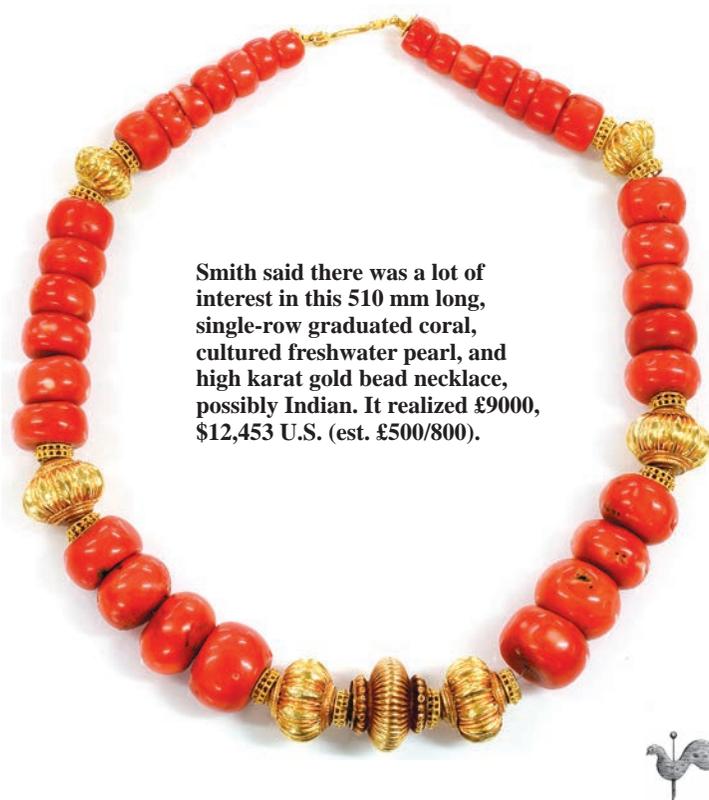
This pair of fancy pink diamond and diamond cluster earrings set in approximately 18k gold was a crowd favorite. With a total estimated weight of approximately 2.24 carats, the pair was accompanied by a report from Gemmological Certification Services stating that one of the diamonds is fancy intense pink in colour, clarity SI1/SI2, and size 0.45 carats; and the other diamond is fancy intense brownish pink in colour, clarity SI1/SI2, and size 0.50 carats. The earrings sold for £20,000, \$27,674 U.S. (est. £10,000/15,000).



Circa 1880 Victorian diamond, ruby, and pearl spray brooch in sterling silver and approximately 9k gold, with a pin and later roller catch, £2312.50, \$3200 U.S. (est. £500/700).



Smith's personal favorite was this circa 1870 Victorian Archaeological Revival Etruscan-style gold and enamel hinged bangle, 8.60 mm wide, with an interior dimension of 51 mm x 54 mm. She said it is "a very wearable example of an Archaeological Revival bangle with very fine Etruscan decoration, but with the unusual addition of a black enamel border to each side. The condition was also very good, with no losses or damage and still with its original bloom." It sold for £900, \$1245 U.S. (est. £300/500).



Smith said there was a lot of interest in this 510 mm long, single-row graduated coral, cultured freshwater pearl, and high karat gold bead necklace, possibly Indian. It realized £9000, \$12,453 U.S. (est. £500/800).

Art House to Open in New York City

by Julie Schlenger Adell

New York City will welcome a new venue at the former Barneys flagship store at 660 Madison Avenue in Manhattan in November when Art House takes over five floors of the marble-covered, wood-paneled, windowed space strategically located between 60th and 61st Streets.

"We knew that New York has the highest concentration of art collectors and wealth in the world," said Michael Plummer, a cofounder of Artvest Partners, an art advisory and investment firm, who along with his Artvest cofounder, Jeff Rabin, and Geoff Fox of Touchstone Event Management brought TEFAF (The European Fine Art Fair) to New York City. The Artvest partners subsequently sold their stake in the fair, which debuted in October 2016 at the Park Avenue Armory.

"Dealers have to be global, even the smaller ones, and have access to clients in Europe and Asia. No one is jumping on planes. We believe in bringing art to collectors," said Plummer. That was the premise of TEFAF New York when the Artvest partners bought their stake in the Maastricht art fair.

Yet the partners always sensed there was a need for dealers to have access to collectors in a different kind of a venue, not only at an art fair. Feedback from dealers suggested a need "for the right crowd, successful events, a decrease in the number of fairs, and less of a real estate footprint," Plummer noted.

To that end, they had identified another location for their concept, but once COVID-19 hit in 2020 and businesses closed and the art fair shuttered, they hit "pause" and waited to see how best to proceed.

They were approached by Authentic Brands Group through a mutual friend in April 2021, Plummer explained. Authentic Brands, a brand development, marketing, and entertainment company, acquired the bankrupt Barneys in

2019 and closed the stores.

"We have a good relationship with them," said Plummer. The concept of Art House is "to give back to New York, reenergize the neighborhood, and use the arts to bring economy back to New York."

Art House will present an array of programs on "topical issues," produced in partnership with cultural institutions. Linda Lees, who led the programming at TEFAF New York, along with some of her former staff will head up that initiative.

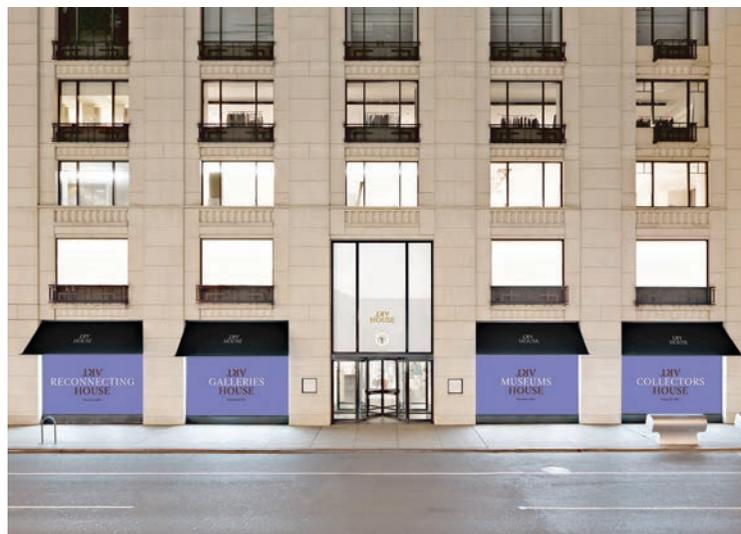
Barneys' former restaurant, Fred's, will become a private club for VIP clients, said Plummer, and will be by invitation only. Two senior members of a dealer's staff will also get memberships, he pointed out. The ninth floor will house offices, viewing rooms, and meetings by appointment, and will be open year round. "That's where dealers will hang their shingles."

Downstairs, on the lower level, the street level, and the second and third floors, there will be fair-like events, timed to follow the auction house calendars, said Plummer. "We'll do events around what's happening and will piggyback and enhance" the schedules, listing January, March, May, September, November, and December as the most active months. During less active times, Art House will function in a modular way, similar to how auction houses utilize their spaces, he noted.

"We're auction friendly," he said, and he replied "maybe" when asked whether Art House might collaborate with an auction house. "It's a big tent." Both Plummer and Rabin have auction house backgrounds.

Asked whether Art House might rent space to other event producers, he replied, "We've been approached and are open to it." He emphasized, however, that the team is currently focused on 2021 and 2022.

Art House will hold its inaugural event



November 4 through 14. The ten-day event will overlap with Salon Art + Design, November 11-15, and The Art Show, sponsored by the ADAA (Art Dealers Association of America), November 4-7, both of which will take place at the Park Avenue Armory.

A full roster of programming, a list of member galleries, and event details will be released in the fall. The first exhibition and accompanying programs will feature 50 works of art, *Women Who Dared*, an art collection donated by Sandi and Bill Nicholson in support of Nurse Heroes, a philanthropic organization that raises awareness and funding for scholarships to train the next generation of nurses and nurse educators.

WHY Architecture, founded by Kulapat Yantrasast in 2004, will head up the "architectural refresh."

Art House has chosen Third Eye, a strategic marketing, communications, and brand evolution agency based in New York City and Los Angeles, to handle its account. Some of Third Eye's other clients include the Winter Show; the Armory Show; the Aspen Art Museum; the Broad; Gagosian; Getty; Gucci; La Prairie; Bottega Veneta; the Museum of Arts and Design; the New York Botanical Garden; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Palm Springs Art Museum; and the Contemporary Austin.

Further information is available online (www.arthousenow.com).