

JEWELRY

Bonhams to auction former Cartier owner's personal collection

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The Danziger family once owned Cartier Paris. Image courtesy of Bonhams

By STAFF REPORTS

Bonhams New York has been appointed by the former owners of Cartier Paris to auction a collection of fine jewelry during its September sale.

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During Bonhams' sale Sept. 19 in New York, the auction house will put the personal collection of Gloria "Gigi" Guggenheim Danziger under the hammer. Due to the lots' connection to Cartier's heritage and the collection's provenance, Bonhams expects the pieces to capture buyers' interest, as those with interesting backstories often sell best.

Gigi's jewels

Ms. Danziger was the wife of film producer Edward J. Danziger, who, along with his brother Harry Lee, created more than 140 feature films during the 1950s and 1960s. The brothers also produced television for London's Elstree Studios.

In 1958, the Danziger brothers acquired London's Mayfair Hotel and Grosvenor Hotel as well as the Metropole Hotel in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

A decade later, the Danzigers secretly became the owners of French jewelry maison Cartier Paris. As part of the 1968 deal, the brothers also acquired Cartier's boutiques in Monte Carlo, Cannes, France and Switzerland.

Up until that point, Cartier had been a family-run business and the Danzigers intentionally worked to keep their involvement quiet.



Edward and Gigi Danziger in Monaco. Image courtesy of Bonahms

Although the Danzigers only owned Cartier for four years, the brothers expanded the French jeweler's footprint, opening stores in Hong Kong, Geneva and Munich.

During this time, Ms. Danziger amassed a large collection of jewelry, which she continued to add to during the 1960s and 1970s.

"My mother adores jewelry and always appreciated exceptional craftsmanship," said James Danziger, son of Gigi Guggenheim Danziger, in a statement. "All the jewelry in this collection was given to her by my father who had impeccable taste and always loved to see her wearing the jewelry from Cartier Paris, the business he owned.

"As a result, the Cartier pieces in her collection have a special significance and have literally traveled the world, being worn by my mother at many of the glamorous events she and my father attended in Paris, Monte Carlo, Gstaad and Hong Kong," he said.

Some of Ms. Danziger's collection will be auctioned off at Bonhams New York Sept. 19. The full auction lot list can be found [here](#).

The featured collection features 32 pieces of fine jewelry, with the earlier lot dating back to 1957. The collection also has a number of signed Cartier pieces created in the 1960s and 1970s when Ms. Danziger's family owned the jeweler.

Auction highlights include a Cartier diamond necklace and a ruby and diamond Cartier brooch that Ms. Danziger wore for the London premier of "The Godfather." Both pieces are estimated to sell for between \$30,000 and \$50,000.

A second brooch of sapphires and diamonds, also Cartier, has sale estimates of \$30,000 to \$40,000, while another diamond Cartier necklace, said to be one of Ms. Danziger's favorites, has pre-sale estimates of \$30,000 to \$50,000.



A sapphire and diamond brooch is included in the lots. Image courtesy of Bonhams

"We are honored to be appointed by the Danziger family to sell this important collection which has wonderful provenance given the family's ownership of Cartier," said Susan Abeles, head of jewelry at Bonhams US, in a statement.

"These jewels, just like its owner, have lived a very glamorous life and are charming and hold a special place in her history and also Cartier's," she said. "The late 1960s and early 1970s was a time of change in fashion and jewelry.

"Fashion was short and maxi long, colorful and patterned and flowing, the colorless diamond classic jewelry of the early 1960s was replaced by gold jewelry toward the ends of the decade. Colorful gemstones were used in contrast, and the overall size of creations increased. Several examples of this period are found in this collection."

Of all the international auction houses, Bonhams sells more jewelry lots per year and has more dedicated jewelry auctions annually than its peers ([see story](#)).

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