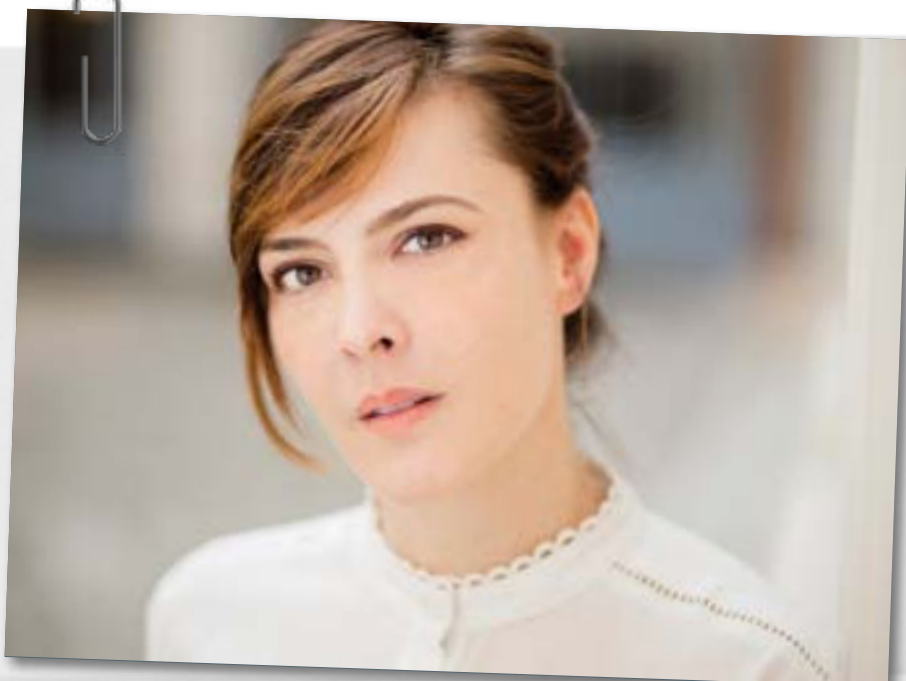


New kids on THE BLOCK

Four fresh faces at worldwide auction houses talk about their passion for jewelry and recall their most memorable sales.

BY MARIE CHABROL



EVA VIOLANTE
PHILLIPS, NEW YORK
SENIOR SPECIALIST AND NEW YORK JEWELRY
DEPARTMENT VICE PRESIDENT

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE AUCTION WORLD?

Four years. I was previously at Heritage Auctions, now at Phillips.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS SPECIFIC JOB?

Working for a traditional auction house that simply focused on monetary transactions with clients seemed boring to me. Phillips stood out because at its core, it is a community of creative people who are passionate about art. For

example, we host exhibitions to support emerging jewelry designers; we host a number of educational events throughout the year to keep the jewelry community informed and engaged; and we even forge partnerships with designers who donate jewels in order to raise money for different philanthropic causes. Phillips is an education center with a conscience, and we are also a major auction house.

WHEN DID YOU JOIN PHILLIPS?

I was hired one-and-a-half years ago.

IS THERE A PERIOD OF JEWELRY HISTORY YOU SPECIALIZE IN?

I am a generalist, having been taught how to value everything from loose stones

to finished jewelry, but my passion is for jewels from the Art Moderne period.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THE AUCTION WORLD?

I see the future of the auction world paperless, cryptocurrency-friendly, and even more transparent, as blockchain will be used to track provenance and authenticity. I also think that the demographic of people shopping at auction will broaden as more houses invest money in their online platforms.

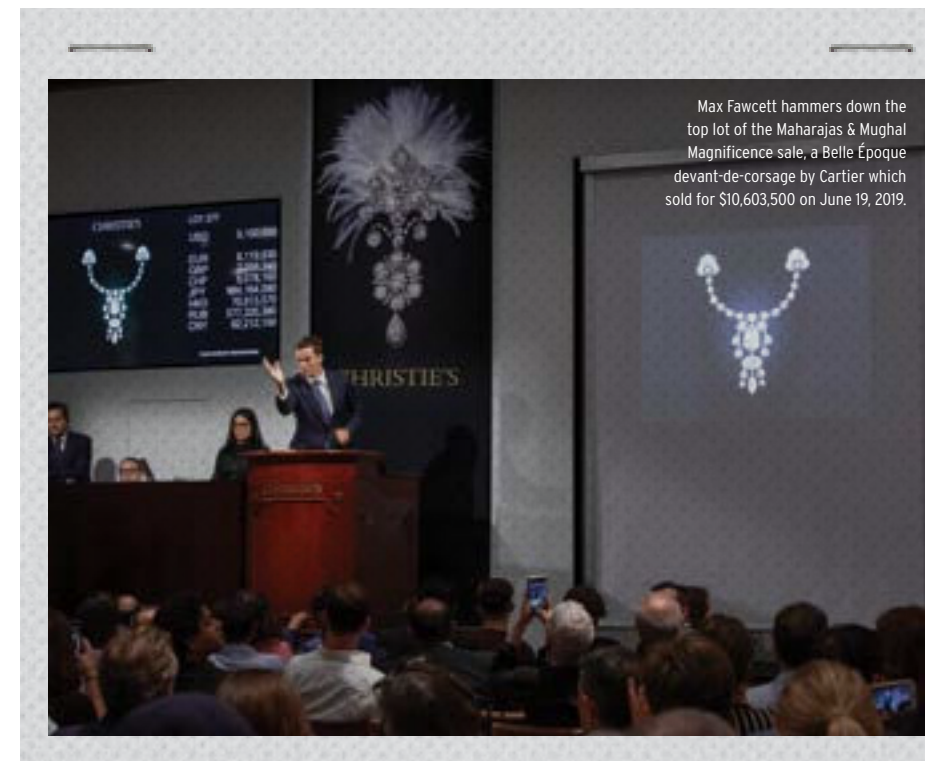
WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WANTING TO WORK IN THE AUCTION INDUSTRY?

Jump in. Find yourself a job, even if it's entry-level, and get involved in as many aspects of the department as you can. It's also very important to attend auctions of the competitors to learn an alternate perspective.

OF THE PIECES YOU'VE SOLD, WHAT'S THE ONE THAT EXCITED YOU MOST?

It was a wonderful Cartier tutti frutti bracelet.

"I SEE THE FUTURE [AS] PAPERLESS, CRYPTOCURRENCY-FRIENDLY, AND EVEN MORE TRANSPARENT"



Max Fawcett hammers down the top lot of the Maharajas & Mughal Magnificence sale, a Belle Époque devant-de-corsage by Cartier which sold for \$10,603,500 on June 19, 2019.

MAX FAWCETT
CHRISTIE'S GENEVA
SPECIALIST AND AUCTIONEER

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE AUCTION WORLD?

I began my career working as an antique-jewelry and stone dealer in Munich and New York before making the move to the auction world when I joined Christie's in 2015.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS SPECIFIC JOB?

There are so many aspects of being a specialist that I found intriguing, but I would have to say first and foremost was the opportunity to be part of a jewelry department that has led the market for 25 consecutive years. In my role, I have the privilege of working with the most prestigious jewelry collections and greatest gems, alongside talented colleagues and collectors. Each day brings new excitement, whether it is valuing a collection for a client, curating an upcoming sale, or being on the rostrum of a record-breaking sale such as the Maharajas & Mughal Magnificence auction [that took place in June].

IMAGE: CHRISTIE'S IMAGES LTD.

"USE THE OPPORTUNITY OF WORKING AT SUCH A MULTIFACETED COMPANY TO ABSORB KNOWLEDGE FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES"

IS THERE A PERIOD OF JEWELRY HISTORY YOU SPECIALIZE IN?

I have always been passionate about jewelry and am the third generation in my family to work in the industry. My specialist areas include pearls and colored gemstones, along with Art Nouveau and Art Deco jewels. There is so much to discover in jewels from these periods — the intricate and bold designs, innovative materials and entirely unique design principles [that] differentiate jewels of [these eras] from anything ever seen before.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THE AUCTION WORLD?

The jewelry market is global, and at Christie's, our aim is always to best serve the wishes of our collectors, whether

that is through live auctions, online sales or private sales. We strive to offer a comprehensive, multi-channel service adapted to the specific needs of each collector.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WANTING TO WORK IN THE AUCTION INDUSTRY?

Be passionate about what you do and use the opportunity of working at such a multifaceted company to absorb knowledge from your colleagues across the business. There is so much to learn and so many different paths to take.

OF THE PIECES YOU'VE SOLD, WHAT'S THE ONE THAT EXCITED YOU MOST?

I am extremely lucky to work with beautiful jewels daily, but one stone that really stands out is the Mazarin diamond, which Christie's sold in November 2017. A few years ago, we were asked to view an unspecified historic diamond. As soon as the client unwrapped a piece of old parcel paper to reveal this beautiful pink diamond in front of myself and my colleague, we were completely stunned. The gem was one of the famous Mazarin diamonds, bequeathed in 1661 by Cardinal Mazarin to Louis XIV. The perfect 19.07-carat pink diamond then passed through the collections of four kings, four queens, two emperors and two empresses. After spending 225 years as part of the French crown jewels, the stone was offered in an infamous 1887 sale that saw the royal treasury broken up and dispersed. It had not been seen at public auction since, and to hold such an important piece of French royal history in my hands was an incredible honor. The Grand Mazarin went on to sell for [\$14.3 million]. ▶



The Grand Mazarin, which sold at Christie's for \$14.3 million.



COVER

DOUDOU LUAN
BONHAMS, HONG KONG
JUNIOR CATALOGUER AND SPECIALIST

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE AUCTION WORLD?

I started my first work experience in the jewelry department at an international auction house in South Kensington, London, in 2014. This firsthand experience enabled me to have an insight into the fascinating world of auctions and specifically jewelry, as well as an understanding of how an auction house operates.

WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS SPECIFIC JOB?

What I really love about this job is that I am constantly exposed to the multiple facets and the fast-paced learning that the job offers — from cataloguing and evaluation to layout design and visual merchandising. Specifically at Bonhams, I am surrounded by a team of experienced jewelry specialists who guide junior staff to become specialists in the future. Building a relationship with clients is also something I find thoroughly rewarding, and I can apply what I studied about client relationship management from my university days in real life.

WHEN DID YOU JOIN BONHAMS?

I joined Bonhams in October 2015 as a junior cataloguer in the jewelry department in the Beijing office, then subsequently moved to Hong Kong in 2016 to join the jewelry team at their main headquarters in Asia.

IS THERE A PERIOD OF JEWELRY HISTORY YOU SPECIALIZE IN?

I specialize in period jewelry from the 1920s to 1930s, which has an emphasis on geometry in its designs, contrasts in color and bold streamlines. During this period, jewelry designers were influenced by diverse cultures from Egypt, China and Japan, and inspired by the exotic elements and motifs, such as jade, coral, lacquer and pearls, in themes of pagodas, bamboos and Taiji patterns. I find it is a brilliant combination of Eastern and Western cultures in jewelry history.

HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF THE AUCTION WORLD?

The auction business is, and will continue to be...about business and expertise, but equally about relationships. The human factor will always be prevalent, and at Bonhams, I have come to understand what being approachable and professional means to a client. The market might change from time to time, but these two factors will always hold true.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WANTING TO WORK IN THE AUCTION INDUSTRY?

The best advice I would give to young graduates is: Never give up on what you are truly passionate about; do your homework as much as you can to understand the auction business; spend as much time as possible studying the jewelry items either at jewelry shows or important exhibitions; and finally, communicate with the experienced specialists and dealers in the field.

OF THE PIECES YOU'VE SOLD, WHAT'S THE ONE THAT EXCITED YOU MOST?

The most memorable and exciting piece was from the Hong Kong Rare Jewels and Jadeite sale in May 2018, and I am amazed by its interesting provenance story. It was our top lot — a 12.92-carat, unheated Kashmir sapphire and diamond ring, which was sold for four times higher than the low estimate. The owner was unaware it was a Kashmir sapphire until our specialist spotted it and suggested sending it to a professional lab to check its origin. The sale result surprised the vendor, too.

MAGALI TEISSEIRE

SOTHEBY'S PARIS
HEAD OF JEWELRY DEPARTMENT

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE AUCTION WORLD?

I've been working in the auction industry for 14 years.

WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS SPECIFIC JOB?

I'd definitely say the desire to specialize in a field, as I was previously a generalist auctioneer. And I'm also passionate about gemology. So it was impossible to say no!

WHEN DID YOU JOIN SOTHEBY'S?

I joined Sotheby's Paris in July 2018 as a specialist in Romantic-period and Victorian jewelry.

OF THE PIECES YOU'VE SOLD, WHAT'S THE ONE THAT EXCITED YOU MOST?

For our first sale in Paris in 12 years, we have the joy of selling a wonderful Cartier mystery clock. It was so incredible to discover this piece and to offer it to our customers.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE WANTING TO WORK IN THE AUCTION INDUSTRY?

Specialize in a field you love and work a lot. It's the absolute key. ■

