

Single-Owner Fine Jewelry Collection Exceeds Expectations in Seattle

by Mary Ann Brown

Photos courtesy Mroczek Brothers Auctioneers & Associates

The February 15 auction of a single-owner 142-lot fine jewelry collection held by Mroczek Brothers Auctioneers & Associates, also known as MBA Seattle Auction House, was a white-glove sale (all lots sold, none passed). The results, Michael Mroczek said, “doubled our expectations.” I chatted with Mroczek after the sale on the telephone and via e-mail. He said, “We are a small family-run company, and the oldest auction house in the Seattle area, established in 1966.”

“I’ve been doing auctions since I was seven.” He has served as a jack-of-all-trades—from cataloging to auctioneering and everything in between. Michael’s father, Lawrence C. Mroczek (Larry), is a founding partner who also grew up in the business, started by his own father.

Mroczek said, “The auction as a whole was very strong due to the fact that it was an incredible collection being offered with no reserve, which is really unheard of.”

The consignor did not just walk in off the street with this group of stellar pieces. Mroczek said the company had “been working on it for a couple of years” and that it took “about four months to get everything appraised and then to GIA [Gemological Institute of America] and back.” Because of the insurance values of the jewelry, Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) couldn’t take the whole group at once. “We were shuttling it back and forth, three or four pieces at a time. It was a very lengthy process, but, at the end of the day, it yielded very, very high results.”

Colored Diamonds at the Top

Mroczek said the colored-stone pieces that were the top lots “were all purchased in the 1990s and early 2000s” and came with appraisals from NGL. Mroczek said, “I relied heavily on the appraisals. I’ve dealt with a lot of fine jewelry but never at that length. So it was a learning experience for us as well.”

At \$262,500 with buyer’s premium (est. \$60,000/80,000), the top lot of the sale was a 1.2-carat natural fancy intense blue diamond ring accompanied by a GIA report and an NGL appraisal. Mroczek said there were six phone bidders for the ring and that several people “flew in for the sale.” The blue diamond sold to a buyer on the floor. Most of the buying activity was in the room, where there were about 30 people in attendance.

Second to the top was a fancy pink-and-white diamond necklace with three natural-colored stones, accompanied by three GIA reports and an appraisal from NGL, that sold for \$112,500 (est. \$6000/9000); third to the top was a 1.54-carat natural fancy pink diamond ring, accompanied by a GIA report and an NGL appraisal, that realized \$87,500 (est. \$10,000/20,000).

Mroczek said the general consensus of what drew people to the sale, and to competitive bidding, “was just the rarity of the natural stones. Natural-colored diamonds are very rare in the market, very strong right now, particularly. But those are—for the carat size—some record prices, from what we could find.”

Antiques in the Sale

The collection included a number of antique and vintage pieces, most in excellent condition, that also brought strong prices. An Art Deco moonstone, diamond, and platinum jabot pin/brooch was a crowd favorite, selling for \$6875 (est. \$1500/2500). “It was just beautiful. It very well could’ve been unmarked Cartier. Some of the early Cartier isn’t marked. It was very pretty, and it was period.” The jabot was pictured, along with the blue diamond ring, and a tsavorite and diamond ring (see photo and caption accompanying this column), as “cover lots” in the LiveAuctioneers online catalog.

Other Art Deco pieces that achieved notable results included an emerald, diamond, and platinum bracelet accompanied by an NGL appraisal that sold for \$8125 (est. \$3000/6000); an emerald, diamond, and 14k white gold bar pin that realized \$3750 (est. \$400/800); and a diamond, black onyx, and platinum brooch that brought \$1750 (est. \$500/1000).

Several Edwardian items also sold well above estimates. A platinum, sapphire, and diamond brooch realized \$4687.50 (est. \$1000/2000); a demantoid garnet and diamond necklace in platinum-topped 18k yellow gold, accompanied by an appraisal from NGL, brought \$4062.50 (est. \$1000/2000); and a demantoid garnet, diamond, and 14k gold brooch sold for \$2000 (est. \$400/800).

MBA will be offering more from this consignor in an upcoming sale, probably later this year, though it won’t be as jewelry-centric. It will be an estate luxury sale. “It’s mostly glass, and couture, and several Louis Vuitton bags.” There will also be “huge pieces of Lalique, Daum, and Moser, and more jewelry, but not of that quality—some very nice things, but no colored diamonds, I believe.” A sale date has yet to be set. There are three auctions scheduled in advance of that.

Auctions at Mroczek Brothers include a range of items—from fine art and antiquities to Asian art and artifacts, Western art, photography, collectibles, and more. Northwest estate auctions are regularly on the schedule and often include jewelry and timepieces. Mroczek said, “We’ve seen everything. We sold a Chinese Imperial vase a couple of years ago. It was drilled into a lamp. We sold it for \$270,000. We see it all.”

Visit the website at (www.mbauction.com) for updated information and online catalogs.

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The top lot of the auction was this 1.2-carat diamond ring, accompanied by a 2017 Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) appraisal and a Gemological Institute of America (GIA) grading report stating that its color is natural fancy intense blue and even, clarity I-1. It sold for \$262,500 (est. \$60,000/80,000).



This signed George Peyrot Inc. 2¼" x 2½" custom 18k gold and platinum koala bear brooch, with approximately 12 carats of diamonds, 16 medium-dark green carved emerald beryl stones, and four round cabochon-cut medium-dark purplish-red ruby corundum stones, sold for \$6250 (est. \$2000/4000). It came with a 2017 appraisal from Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL).



This 7.95-carat natural sapphire and diamond ring with an oval mixed-cut sapphire was accompanied by an American Gemological Laboratories (AGL) report stating that the sapphire originated in Madagascar and that there is no gemological evidence of heat treatment. Also accompanied by a 2017 Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) appraisal, it brought \$40,625 (est. \$20,000/30,000).



This 8.0-carat natural emerald and diamond ring with two triangular step-cut and four baguette-cut diamonds weighing approximately .66 carats total was accompanied by a 2017 appraisal from Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) and sold for \$43,750 (est. \$15,000/25,000).



Mroczek said that the tsavorite in this ring “is a green garnet found in Russia” and that the 9.5-carat tsavorite and diamond ring set in platinum and 18k gold “was special because of the size and quality of the stone,” which was flanked by two triangular brilliant-cut diamonds, weighing approximately 1.2 carats, and two round brilliant-cut diamonds, weighing .26 carats total. The ring was accompanied by a 2017 appraisal from Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) and brought \$31,250 (est. \$6000/12,000).



This 1.54-carat diamond ring was accompanied by a Gemological Institute of America (GIA) report stating that the colored diamond is natural fancy orangey-pink, even, with VS-2 clarity. Two half-moon brilliant-cut diamonds weighing a combined .62 carats flank the center stone. Accompanied by a 2017 Northwest Gemological Laboratory (NGL) appraisal, the ring sold for \$87,500 (est. \$10,000/20,000).



This unmarked Art Deco 2¼" long emerald, diamond, and 14k white gold bar pin with a central square step-cut emerald weighing approximately 2.0 carats and ten round brilliant- and square-cut diamonds weighing approximately 1.8 carats sold for \$3750 (est. \$400/800).