

Hale from the Cotswolds

■ Family archive of Arts and Crafts pioneer shines in Boston



Roland Arkell
reports

FRANK Gardner Hale (1876-1945) proved a key figure in the American Arts & Crafts movement – in part thanks to his Cotswolds training.

Born in Norwich, Connecticut, he graduated from Norwich Art School and the Boston Museum School in 1906 when he promptly moved to Chipping Campden, in The Cotswolds in England.

There he studied silversmithing and enamelling under Charles Robert Ashbee at the Guild of Handicrafts before moving to London to work alongside Frederick Partridge. He then set up shop in 1907 in Park Square, Boston, where he played a key role in establishing the Jewelers' Guild of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts.

A remarkable archive of his work was sold in 33 lots by **Skinner** of Boston on September 9. In addition to nearly two dozen pieces of jewellery and a group of plaques demonstrating Hale's prowess as an enameller, it included many original drawings for jewellery designs.

It was more material by the designer than the market typically sees in a year so it will come as no surprise to learn that such a cache came from a family member.

The tone for this section of the sale was set by the response to the first lot, the piles of studio ephemera that together told the story of Hale's long career. Three plaster models, an album of lecture notes, personal and professional correspondence were accompanied by photographs of the Boston studio and numerous original pen and watercolour drawings for jewellery designs – each annotated in the designers' hand. As not everything Hale produced



carries his signature (roughly half of the jewels offered here were unmarked), the latter are of particular importance. Estimated at \$3000-5000, the archive sold as a single lot for \$28,000 (£17,700).

The guides for an array of clips, buckles, rings, pendants, brooches, necklaces and earrings were set at equally conservative levels – particularly with the knowledge that a striking gold, coloured stone and enamel pendant and ear clips by Hale had sold for \$26,000 at Sotheby's New York in February this year.

While a coral clip carved as a spray of flowers with a pearl accent took \$700 (£450) and a gold and enamel scarab pin \$350 (£200), the more commercial forms sold well into four figures.

There was particular interest in those pieces that related directly to original drawings seen in the paper archive. These included an unmarked carved jade pendant with its russet and spinach inclusions suspended from paperclip chains with scrolling links sold at \$2300 (£1450) and a signed foliate gold and silver pendant set with circular-cut sapphires that topped out at \$7500 (£4750), close to ten times its estimate.

The series of enamel plaques, most of them around 5½ x 3½ in (14 x 9cm) and signed in the enamel, ranged in price from \$1700 (£1070) for that depicting a knight on horseback to \$3500 (£2200) paid twice for particularly appealing plaques depicting tropical fish in an aquarium.

A selection of highlights from the Frank Gardner Hale archive sold by Skinner of Boston on September 9.

1. a gold, silver and sapphire pendant, signed *FG Hale* – \$7500 (£4750).

2. a pair of carnelian ear pendants with silver and gold mounts, 2½ in (6.3cm), unmarked – \$3000 (£1900).

3. one of numerous original drawings from an archive of ephemeral material sold as a single lot – \$28,000 (£17,700).

4. a silver and enamel box with butterfly motif to the lid, 6 x 4 in (15 x 10cm), signed *FG Hale* – \$5500 (£3500).

5. a silver and enamel buckle with galleon motif, 3¼ in (8.3cm), signed *FG Hale* to left element – \$2500 (£1600).

6. a gold, aquamarine, pearl and black enamel pendant and chain, signed *FG Hale*, accompanied by an exhibition photograph – \$3750 (£2400).





ZUCKER'S LIFE CYCLE

Cycles of Life: Rings from the Benjamin Zucker Family Collection is the title of a remarkable selling exhibition of over 40 exceptional rings from the celebrated private collection of one of today's leading gem dealers and connoisseurs.

They will be on public display together for the first time and for sale at **Les Enluminures'** New York gallery from October 31 to December 6.

Zucker began assembling his collection in 1969, when he bought a gold, enamel, and filigree 17th century Jewish marriage ring, which was part of the Melvin Gutman collection of antique jewellery sold at Sotheby's Parke Bernet.

Prepared to commit his entire savings to win this one lot (the ring remains with the Zucker family), Benjamin, who was 29 at the time, was in fact able to afford five of the six similar rings offered at that sale.

Since his first purchase, he has assembled one of the largest collections of Jewish marriage rings in private hands along with, as noted by jewellery historian Diana Scarisbrick, "a collection of diamond jewellery that is unrivalled anywhere, even by De Beers".

All but a few of the 40 rings in the exhibition have been on loan to the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore since 1985. Spanning from the 3rd century AD through to the later part of the 19th century, many boast sterling provenances to Europe's most prominent families, including the de Clercs and the Rothschilds, and celebrated collectors such as Dame Joan Evans, Ernest Guilhou and Ralph Harari. Prices range from about \$15,000 to the low seven figures.

Finger rings are the only type of jewellery worn continuously through the ages. Rather than presented chronologically, the Zucker rings – accompanied by a £35 fully-illustrated catalogue with contributions from a stellar raft of jewellery scholars – will be displayed in sections organised according to timeless themes that form the cycles of life: birth, love, betrothal, marriage, mourning, and death.

www.lesenluminures.com



Above: "Of course I see a beautiful ruby and diamond, very clear in colour, and then the intricacy, but what tops all that is the philosophical statement made by this ring that life does not continue forever, and it's sound to think of one's last days throughout one's life," says Zucker. Gimmel rings (from the Latin *gimmel* meaning twin) were popular during the Renaissance era – this German example inscribed to the hoops with the names *Jacob Sigmund von der Sachsen* and *Martha Wurmin* and the Latin inscription from the marriage service, *What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder*. It includes an ornate double bezel set with a lustrous diamond and a deep pigeon blood red, Burmese ruby but it was the hidden memento mori underneath each bezel – one containing the figure of a baby, the other a skeleton (**above left**) – that so captivated Benjamin Zucker. It was formerly part of the Rothschild collection. Price on request.

Above left: this medieval sapphire and gold ring, from the collection of Ralph Harari, speaks volumes as to the long and varied history of the gemstone trade. The mount is 14th century Italian Gothic and bears the inscription in Lombard lettering translating as *For love thou wast made and for love I wear thee*, but the large, cabochon Ceylon sapphire was carved perhaps four centuries earlier much further East. An inscription in Arabic carries the name of a former 19th century owner *Abd As Salam Ibn Ahmad*. Price on request.

Left: a gold 4th century Roman key ring with inscription in Greek meaning *Belonging to Pulchra*. The keys to the domestic stores were given to a Roman woman when she first entered her husband's house after marriage and had to be surrendered on divorce. Key rings were a long Roman tradition but in time became more symbolic and ornate than functional. Priced at \$95,000.



Above: this rock crystal, diamond and enamel jockey stick pin carries an estimate of £500-1000 at **Duke's** of Dorchester on December 5-6. It was consigned from a West Dorset family whose father worked for the Rothschild family in Tring during the first half of the 20th century. Leopold de Rothschild (1845-1917) established the strong racing brand of the family. Wearing the blue and yellow family silks, their most famous and successful jockey was Joseph Childs (1884-1958), whose portrait this pin resembles.

BUYER'S PREMIUMS

Bonhams, Edinburgh, 25/20/12%
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Ewbanks, Send, Surrey, 25% inc VAT
Fellows, Birmingham, 20/10%
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Skinner, Boston, 23/20/12%
Sotheby's, London, 25/20/12%
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Woolley & Wallis, Salisbury, 22/12%

NB: premiums may not apply or have been set at different levels where prices from sales of previous years are quoted. Exchange rates are bank selling rates in effect on the day of sale.

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