

CARTIER

Marjorie Merriweather Post's Dazzling Gems

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[Hi-res images available upon request](#)

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Exquisite Cartier jewelry and luxury items from the collection of Marjorie Merriweather Post highlight the importance of the renowned jewelry firm to one of its most ardent American collectors

CARTIER: MARJORIE MERRIWEATHER POST'S DAZZLING GEMS
On view at Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens
June 7–December 31, 2014

WASHINGTON—Elegant and exotic, stylish and sophisticated, some of the most remarkable pieces by the renowned jewelry firm Cartier, created for one of its most devoted American clients, are on view in a special exhibition opening this summer in Washington, D.C. [Cartier: Marjorie Merriweather Post's Dazzling Gems](#) will be on view at Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens from June 7 to December 31, 2014.

Marjorie Post and a selection of her Cartier pieces from Hillwood were featured in *Cartier—Style and History*, this past winter's sweeping exhibition on the history of the famed jeweler at the Grand Palais in Paris. This selection of jewelry and luxury objects has been expanded and refined for **Cartier** to offer a new perspective on the taste and refinement that characterized Post's style, her criteria for collecting, and her way of life. Cartier's exceptional hand craftsmanship, its roots in refined French style, and the exquisite beauty of its pieces made the jewelry maker a perfect match for the discerning Post when she first started collecting in the 1920s, and she remained one of Cartier's most important clients for the rest of her life. Today, Post's holdings at Hillwood represent one of the best examples of Cartier patronage in the 20th century. The most important pieces in the collection, including an exotic brooch made of seven carved Indian emeralds and considered to be one of Cartier's finest creations, will be rejoined with several prized jewels that Post donated to the Smithsonian in 1964, including the brooch's companion Indian-style emerald necklace and the



famous Maximilian Emerald ring, on loan from the National Museum of Natural History for ***Cartier: Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Dazzling Gems***.

“Though the astounding jewels were statement makers for Marjorie Post, these and her whole collection of Cartier luxury objects really speak to her impeccable way of life,” explained Hillwood executive director Kate Markert. “Marjorie didn’t just purchase jewelry off the shelf. She was a connoisseur who knew gems and chose only those of the highest quality. She recognized great design and knew how to wear her jewelry to show it to its best advantage,” Markert continued.



Post also commissioned picture frames of the highest quality to coordinate with her miniature photos and paintings. The marriage of beautiful materials and highly skilled, of the moment design with these deeply personal images is evidence of Post’s unsurpassed attention to detail. A selection from this extensive collection of Art Deco jeweled frames at Hillwood, along with other personal luxury items, including a silver and enamel dressing table set and bejeweled evening cases as well as glamorous portraits, paintings, historic photos, design drawings, and correspondence, will also be part of the exhibition to illustrate the persistent presence of Cartier in Post’s life and in her collections.

Marjorie Post and Cartier

Cartier: Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Dazzling Gems will include show stopping jewels, precious frames, jeweled boxes, paintings, and personal documentation to provide an intimate look at how Post’s patronage of Cartier was emblematic of her lifelong passion for collecting objects of the finest craftsmanship, historical significance, and true splendor. “Along with other pieces from the most notable jewelers of the 20th century, Post’s Cartier jewels, frames, and objets d’art compose a collection that today is a very important aspect of Hillwood’s holdings,” explained Hillwood’s director of collections and exhibition curator, Liana Paredes. “Post’s interest in Cartier coincided with the very apex of its rise toward becoming one of the 20th century’s most distinguished jewelers,” Paredes continued. “This exhibition of Post’s most important Cartier acquisitions offers a snapshot of the very time at which Cartier in the 1920s boldly embraced the modern sensibilities of the Art Deco period and attracted the interest of the world’s most visible and fashionable clientele.”

Founded in Paris in 1847, Cartier’s iconic status was solidified at the turn of the century after Louis Cartier, grandson of the firm’s founder, and his two brothers, Pierre and Jacques, opened their prominent rue de la Paix store in 1899 and, in response to the changing world, ushered in a new modernity at Cartier. Around the time that Cartier opened its New York store in 1909, Post was developing her taste for collecting as she furnished her elegant new interiors with the arts of late

[18th-century France](#), in particular the neoclassical style of Louis XVI—a style that was in vogue among New York’s fashionable society. This newfound passion, combined with her partiality for the modern, was timed just right to this turning point at Cartier, when a simplified approach to its classic Louis XVI style set it apart from the other jewelry houses. Post became known as Cartier’s best New York client and a lifelong customer. Her purchases ranged from the stylized jewels of the Art Deco period, to the finely-crafted frames, to the colorful creations of the 1950s.

Exhibition Highlights

The exhibition opens with two Cartier frames, the earliest pieces in the show, which illustrate the Louis XVI-style influence while also predicting, with their Fabergé-influenced enameling, the powerful attraction that [Russian art](#) will have for Post in the coming decades.

A selection of stunning emerald pieces represents both the jeweler’s and client’s interest in historic gems. A magnificent 21 carat Colombian emerald that once had been set in a ring worn by the ill-fated emperor of Mexico, Maximilian was remounted by Cartier for Post in a trendy setting of baguette diamonds whose geometric cut established the ring firmly in the Art Deco style. Post wore it for her presentation to the court of St. James’s in 1929 and donated it to the Smithsonian in 1964. The well-known emerald brooch displayed alongside the necklace on loan from the National Museum of Natural History together will illustrate the enchantment of the Indian style that Cartier produced from the late 1910s to the 1930s, when Post acquired them. The brooch boasts remarkable old cut emeralds, including seven 17th-century carved Mogul emeralds weighing a total of 250 carats. The necklace features 24 baroque-cut emerald drops, each topped with a smaller emerald bead. It was originally a *sautoir*—a longer necklace that could be worn with the brooch as a pendant—that she had shortened to adapt to new fashion dictates in 1941.



A diamond and sapphire necklace is an impressive example of the transformations that Cartier jewels often underwent over time in response to evolving tastes or owners. For this piece, Post instructed Cartier to combine two existing diamond and sapphire bracelets to form one necklace. The centerpiece, a large cushion-shaped sapphire surrounded by cascading diamonds, could be detached and worn separately as a brooch. Among the other important jewelry pieces on display are an arrow-shaped brooch with dangling tassels of diamonds that Post used as a clasp for her magnificent strands of pearls and a necklace and earrings made of amethysts, turquoises, diamonds, and platinum that show the adherence of Post and Cartier to the latest fashions

In addition to the selection of frames, made of agate, enamel, or onyx and adorned with semiprecious stones that Post commissioned in the 1920s and 1930s, other luxury items on view reflect the fashionable trend among Cartier’s clients to appoint their environments with elegant and precious objects. Among those on view are a tobacco jar made of jade, gold, enamel, and sapphires; vanity cases of gold, enamel, lapis lazuli, diamonds, and sapphires; and a silver and enamel dressing table set consisting of a jewelry box, glass bottles, brushes, hand mirror, shoe horn, lace hook, and a nail file, all monogrammed with MC for Marjorie Close—her name during her first marriage—reflecting the trend among Cartier’s most fashionable clients to appoint their environments with elegant and precious objects.

Programs and Events

An array of programs and events, including a lectures series in fall 2014, will explore the many design and social aspects that underpinned the relationship between Cartier and Marjorie Post. Several audio tour stops will explore the story of the exhibition’s most revealing pieces.

An opening night celebration will be held on June 3. Inspired by Post’s grand affairs at Hillwood, ***Be Dazzled*** will include an evening of cocktails on the Motor Court and dinner on the Lunar Lawn. Visit www.HillwoodMuseum.org or call (202) 243-3974.

Sponsors

The exhibition is supported by the Marjorie Merriweather Post Foundation, Ellen MacNeille Charles, Doyle New York, Auctioneers & Appraisers, Dina Merrill Hartley, Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency, Inc., Donald G. Preston, Jr. and Frank C. Torres III, Susan and David Thoms, and Diane B. Wilsey. All exhibitions and programs are funded in part by the U.S. Commission on the Fine Arts through the National Capital Arts and Cultural Affairs program.

Hillwood Background

When art collector, businesswoman, social figure, and philanthropist Marjorie Merriweather Post left to the public her northwest Washington, D.C. estate, she endowed the country with the most comprehensive collection of Russian Imperial art outside of Russia, an exquisite 18th-century French decorative art collection, and 25 acres of serene landscaped *gardens* and natural woodlands. Opened as a public institution in 1977, today Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens offers a gracious and immersive experience unlike any other. Highlights of the collection include Fabergé eggs, Russian porcelain, Russian orthodox icons, Beauvais tapestries, and Sèvres porcelain, and Post’s personal collection of apparel, accessories, and jewelry. Thirteen acres of enchanting formal gardens include the Japanese-style Garden, Rose Garden, French Parterre, and a greenhouse full of orchids.

General Information

What: *Cartier: Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Dazzling Gems*

When: June 7-December 31, 2014

Where: 4155 Linnean Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20007

Information: www.HillwoodMuseum.org or call (202) 686-5807

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Hours: Tuesday through Saturday, from 10 am to 5 pm
Open on select Sundays from 1 to 5 pm
Closed Mondays, most national holidays, and for two weeks in January

Café: The **Café** serves lunch Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm. Afternoon Tea is served on Sundays only from 1 to 3:30 pm. Express Dining, featuring a quick selection of sandwiches, salads, snacks, and beverages is available Tuesday through Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday from 1 to 4 pm. Call (202) 686-5807 for café reservations

Suggested Donation: \$15; \$12 for seniors (65 and older); \$10 for college students; \$5 for visitors age 6 to 18. Donation waived for visitors under age 6.

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