

Below: Louis XV hardstone, gold and gemset cane handle, **€105,000 (£91,000)** at Adam's.

Among the highlights of the Fine Jewellery sale at Adam's in Dublin on May 12 was this remarkable Louis XV hardstone, gold and gemset cane handle.

As one of the lots that came for sale by descent from the Gilded Age industrialist Philip Danforth, it was hammered down to a continental European buyer at €105,000 (£91,000) – some 10 times the mid estimate. A 25% buyer's premium was charged.

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Hammer price flies off the handle in Ireland

News

Buyer gets a grip on collection from the Gilded Age

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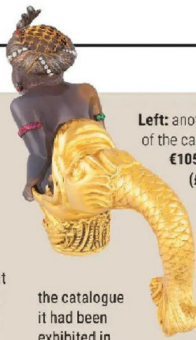
Made in Paris c.1750, the high carat gold handle is fashioned as a stylised dolphin, from whose wide-open jaws emerges a carved agate blackamoor wearing a gem-set gold turban, ruby earrings and emerald and ruby arm bracelets.

An almost identical cane handle, previously in the imperial collection at the Winter Palace, was exhibited at the Moscow Kremlin Museum in 2021, as part of the exhibition *France & Russia: Ten Centuries Together*. According to

the catalogue it had been exhibited in 1904 at Baron Stieglitz's museum in St Petersburg where it was perhaps fancifully described as depicting Zamor, the favourite servant of Louis XV's last mistress Countess de Dubarry.

Philip Danforth Armour (1832-1901) was the founder of the Chicago firm, Armour & Co, once the world's largest

Left: another view of the cane handle, **€105,000 (£91,000)** at Adam's.



Left: pair of early 20th century natural saltwater grey pearl and diamond earrings, **€340,000 (£294,500)** at Adam's.

food processing and chemical manufacturing company.

Leading the Dublin sale at €340,000 (£294,500), again close to 10 times the pre-sale guide of €25,000-35,000, was a pair of early 20th century natural saltwater grey pearl and diamond earrings. They were among five lots from 'the private

collection of a continental lady'.

A well-matched pair of natural pearls of this size and shape are an impossibly rare marvel of nature. They were probably fished in the Persian Gulf, the principal source of pearls from antiquity until the 1920s.

An accompanying report from the Laboratoire Français de Gemmologie in Paris stated that these gems weighed 6.69g and 7.01g. Adam's jewellery specialist Claire-Laurence Mestrallet said they were bought by a European private collector.

"What a night," she enthused. "We had strong competition from around the globe between Irish private bidders, international collectors and trade. The evening proved again that top quality pieces continue to fly high."

Roland Arkell