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JEWELS FROM A FAIRYTALE ROMANCE - Formerly the Property of Anita Delgado (1890-1962), Fifth Wife of Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala at Christie's in December

**Magnificent Jewellery
Wednesday, 12 December 2007**



London - Elegant beauty and fairytale romance unite at Christie's London **Magnificent Jewellery** sale on Wednesday 12 December 2007, when sale highlights will include eight pieces of jewellery *Formerly the Property of Anita Delgado (1890-1962), fifth wife of Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala*. With estimates ranging from £5,000 to £100,000 these marvelous jewels are expected to realise a total in excess of £200,000.

The tale of Anita Delgado (1890-1962) the fifth wife of Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala could have been written by the best of storytellers; however it is fact, not fiction. Born in Malaga, 1890, to a respectable yet modest family of restaurateurs, the young Anita could never have dreamt of the princess' life that lay ahead.

"The collection typifies the Art Deco style at its most dramatic, with strong, angular designs on a large scale," David Warren, Christie's Director of Jewellery, London. *"These jewels are a symbol of cross-cultural love and taste, bringing together Indian princely patronage with the finest European craftsmanship and design,"* Dr. Amin Jaffer, Christie's International Director of Asian Art.

The turn of the 20th century brought tumultuous change to the Delgado family's finances and they moved to Madrid to seek new opportunities. Out of financial necessity, the young Anita and her sister Victoria embarked upon the unexpected career of dancers, at Café Central-Kursaal; having been spotted as a pair whose beauty and rudimentary dancing talent held great entertainment potential.

Far greater change lay ahead for 16 year old Anita. In 1906, dignitaries and noblemen from around the world travelled to Madrid for the marriage of King Alfonso XIII of

Spain and Princess Victoria Eugenia of Battenberg. The Delgados were amongst the crowds who gathered to watch the wedding march and, as a silver covered carriage carrying the extravagant Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala passed by, it was the beauty of young Anita which caught the Maharaja's eye and captivated his heart. Having attended Anita's performances and requested the company of her and her family innumerable times the Delgados finally conceded to meet the Maharaja. Over a year later, in 1907, after learning the cultural and social nuances expected of royalty, Anita Delgado married the Maharaja and became the fairytale Maharani of Kapurthala (1907-1925).

Anita Delgado's jewels, which will be offered at Christie's Magnificent Jewellery sale in December, consist predominantly of Art Deco pieces. All of these jewels were designed and mounted in Europe, with diamonds and emeralds from the Maharaja's collection. This is not surprising as the Maharaja, who was known for his exceptionally extravagant taste, was particularly fond of all things European, even commissioning a palace inspired by Versailles and the Louvre. The star lot is a stunning Art Deco emerald, diamond and rock crystal necklace (estimate: £70,000-100,000) *illustrated on page 1*.

The jewel which tells the most personal story is a remarkable Belle Époque emerald and diamond brooch, *circa* 1910 (estimate: £20,000-30,000). Comprising an extraordinary crescent-shaped emerald, which was originally the decoration of the Maharaja's most prized elephant, this is a stone which the young Maharani fell in love with immediately. Anita earned this jewel upon mastering Hindustani on her 19th birthday. It was later set as a delightful brooch. Other brooches include a pair of geometric, sapphire and diamond clips, *circa* 1930 (estimate: £10,000-15,000) and a chic ruby and diamond clip brooch *circa* 1925 (estimate: £5,000-8,000).

A charming early 20th century diamond and ruby pendent necklace (estimate: £40,000-50,000) combines the graceful Belle Époque era, the pendent is designed as a stylized basket of flowers, with a later Art Deco diamond-link neck-chain with ruby spacers, epitomizing the dynamic line synonymous with this popular period. Further treasures include two beautiful pairs of diamond ear pendants as well as a striking Art Deco diamond and emerald bracelet band, with fan and scroll motif to the emerald detail, *circa* 1925 (estimate: £20,000-30,000).

Anita Delgado was known to be a strong, philanthropic character, who helped the Red Cross and the French cause during the First and Second World War. Her marriage to Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala ended, after 18 years, in 1925. These jewels were all her private property and thus part of the agreed divorce at the time. The Maharaja only had one son with his fifth wife, Ajit Singh (1908–1982). Upon his mother's death, Major Ajit Singh sold these eight pieces of jewellery to the present vendor's family.

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A selection of images is available on request

Notes to Editors:

Auction: Magnificent Jewellery, Christie's King Street on Wednesday 12 December 2007

Public Viewing: Christie's London, 8 King Street, St James's SW1Y 6QT

CHRISTIE'S – JEWELLERY MARKET LEADERS SINCE 1994

Christie's has been the world market leader in jewellery for over 13 years, with sales totalling a record \$355 million in 2006, a 27% increase from 2005 and the highest sales total ever realised. Christie's jewellery auctions take place in Amsterdam, Geneva, Hong Kong, London, Milan, New York, Paris and St Moritz, and cater to a vast audience of international collectors looking to buy a range of magnificent jewellery, from a single pair of ruby-inlaid cufflinks to a 100 carat diamond. Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging markets, including the inaugural jewellery sale in the Middle East in January 2007 in Dubai.