

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK PRESENTS TWO HISTORIC JEWELS

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN DIAMOND

THE CATHERINE THE GREAT EMERALD AND DIAMOND BROOCH



The Emperor Maximilian Diamond
39.55 carats
Estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000



*The Catherine the Great
Emerald and Diamond Brooch*
Estimate: \$1,000,000-1,500,000

Jewels: The New York Sale
April 22, 2009

New York - This spring, Christie's New York will present two exceptional jewels with fascinating histories – the **Emperor Maximilian Diamond** and the **Catherine the Great Emerald and Diamond Brooch**. Both jewels will highlight Christie's first major jewelry sale of the year on April 22, 2010 and set the tone for what promises to be another exceptionally strong year for rare jewels in the global auction market.

Rahul Kadakia, Head of Jewelry at Christie's New York, commented: *"Since the record-breaking sale of the Wittelsbach-Graff diamond in December 2008, Christie's has been the world's leading source of historically important jewels. This April we are honored to present two legendary gems not seen in public for decades - the Emperor Maximilian Diamond of 39.55 carats and the Catherine the Great Emerald and Diamond Brooch, set*

with a Colombian emerald of over 60 carats. Aside from their exceptional rarity, these large stones bear a fascinating history and provenance that renders them truly priceless in the world of fine jewels. We look forward to unveiling them both in New York for our auction on April 22."

THE EMPEROR MAXIMILIAN DIAMOND

The **Emperor Maximilian Diamond** of 39.55 carats (estimate: \$1-1.5 million) is one of two large diamonds the Archduke Maximilian (*pictured at right*) acquired in Brazil in 1860, in the years just before he was named Emperor of Mexico at the urging of Napoleon III. In 1866, under pressure from the United States, Napoleon III backed away from financial and military support for Maximilian, effectively abandoning him. Soon thereafter, republican forces captured and court-martialed the young emperor and sent him before the firing squad. Legend holds that Maximilian was wearing the Emperor Maximilian Diamond in a small satchel tied around his neck when he was executed. The diamond was returned to his wife, Princess Charlotte of Belgium, who later sold the jewel. Its whereabouts remained unknown until 1919 when it was purchased by a Chicago gem dealer who kept the diamond until 1946.



The cushion-shaped diamond appeared at auction at Christie's in July 1982, where it was purchased by London jeweller Laurence Graff after an intense round of bidding. The winning bid was \$726,000 - more than twice the estimated price of \$330,000. The following year, Mr. Graff sold the Emperor Maximilian Diamond together with two other important diamonds, to Madame Imelda Marcos, wife of the President of the Philippines. Subsequent private transactions followed, until it was acquired by the present owner. The upcoming auction marks the first public viewing of this historically significant diamond since 1982.

THE CATHERINE THE GREAT BROOCH

Also highlighting the April 22 sale is the stunning **Catherine the Great Emerald and Diamond Brooch** (estimate: \$1-1.5 million), long considered one of the outstanding jewels of the world. The brooch centers on a hexagonal-cut Colombian emerald of exceptional quality weighing between 60 and 70 carats. Uniquely precious and suited for imperial elegance, the emerald is set within rows of rose and old mine-cut diamonds and mounted in silver-topped gold. This Imperial gem originally belonged to Catherine II of Russia (*pictured at right*), who ascended to the Russian throne in 1762. She was known as one of the greatest jewelry collectors of



all time, and took great pleasure in her most treasured gems, including the emerald and diamond brooch, which is renowned not only for its quality, but also for its sheer size.

In 1776, Catherine gave the brooch to Sophie Dorothea, princess of Württemberg, as a wedding gift on the occasion of her marriage to Catherine's son and successor Tsar Paul I. It was subsequently handed down to the princess's descendants, and remained the property of the noble house of Hohenzollern for the next three generations. In 1972, the brooch was sold to a private American buyer whose estate now offers the historic jewel for the first time in nearly 40 years.

GLOBAL JEWELRY MARKET UPDATE

Despite the downturn in the US economy during late 2008 and 2009, auction prices for fine jewelry and diamonds have remained surprisingly resilient, led by strong demand among investors for top-quality diamonds and signed jewels by the top houses. In 2009, Christie's global sales in this category totaled over \$270 million. Multiple new auction records were achieved for exceptional jewels, including The Vivid Pink, which set a new per-carat record price for any gemstone at \$2.1 million per carat or US\$10.8 million, and The Annenberg Diamond, a 32-carat D Flawless diamond, which set a new per-carat record price for a colorless diamond at \$240,000 per carat or US\$7.7 million. The 2010 outlook for top-quality jewels at auction remains buoyant and Christie's anticipates continued demand for high-quality historic jewels with exceptional provenance, as well as increased buying activity from clients in emerging and newer markets.

Auction: Thursday, April 22 at 10:30am & 2:30pm
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Center Galleries April 17-21, 2010

Prior to the New York auction on April 22, these important jewels will be on view at Christie's locations in select cities around the world on the following dates:

March 29 & 30 – Christie's London

April 5 & 6 – Christie's Geneva

April 8 & 9 – Christie's Hong Kong

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2009 that totaled £2.1 billion/\$3.3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United

Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai. *All auction sales figures include premium.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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Note to editors:

- Christie's 2009 global sales for jewelry totaled over US \$270 million; the combined 2009 global sales total for Jewelry, Watches and Jadeite was US\$338.5 million
- Christie's has been the world market leader in jewellery for the past 16 years in a row, with 62% market share compared to its principle competitor.
- Over the years, Christie's has sold some of the world's most extraordinary jewels, including those of Mouna Ayoub, Joan Crawford, Doris Duke, Florence Gould, Salimah Aga Khan, Marjorie Merriweather Post, Merle Oberon, Mary Pickford, Nelson Rockefeller, and the Estate of Mrs. James de Rothschild, HRH The Princess Margaret, and Hollywood actress Ellen Barkin, among otherse.

Images available on request

Complete catalogue available will be available online at www.christies.com or via the Christie's iPhone app

