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“The Imperial Cushions”
Spectacular Golconda diamonds to lead
Christie’s *Hong Kong Magnificent Jewels* Spring Sale in May



Hong Kong – A pair of spectacular ear-pendants featuring the world’s rarest diamonds from the legendary Golconda mines will be offered at *Christie’s Hong Kong Magnificent Jewels Sale*, which will be held on Tuesday, 31 May, 2011 at the Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. *The Imperial Cushions*, a pair of 23.49 carats and 23.11 carats D Potentially Flawless Golconda Type IIa diamonds ear-pendants, is estimated at HK\$55 million to 75 million / US\$7 million to 9 million. The occurrence of such a pair of Golconda gemstones, with a limpidity that is particular to the world’s finest Type IIa diamonds, is a natural marvel. At 23.49 and 23.11 carats each, this pair of cushion-cuts is of exceptional calibre – matching in size, cut and shape, and represents a true jewel of majestic proportions. With Type IIa diamonds being less than 2% of the world’s production, this superbly matched pair of *The Imperial Cushions* is a unique example of magnificence and rarity. While the present diamonds do not actually come with an imperial provenance, the quality, workmanship, size, and rarity are certainly of a caliber worthy of a royal collection.

The Imperial Cushions

Since their discovery more than 3,000 years ago, diamonds have retained an unrivaled position in the mineral kingdom. For centuries the extraordinary properties and characteristics of these beautiful gemstones have mesmerized explorers, financiers and aristocrats all over the world. Golconda diamonds in particular, have a degree of transparency rarely seen in stones from other localities, such as Africa, Brazil, Russia or Australia. The characteristic that sets them apart from all other diamonds is the subtle, luminous, Type IIa quality. Type IIa diamonds are the most chemically pure form of diamond lacking in nitrogen which therefore yield exceptional optical transparency. From ancient Indian to modern times, *The*

Imperial Cushions are a glittering survival of the past and remains one the most outstanding jewels to ever appear on the market today.

Besides the exceptional size and quality of the gemstones, the ear-pendants are fashioned in the cushion shaped cutting style as a perfectly matched pair. The cushion form is seen in many historic gems including *The Koh i Noor*, *The Agra* and *The Regent*. The pair of stones illustrated here are as rare as you can possibly find and would be at home in royal collections anywhere in the world.

Golcondas in the Salesroom

The Imperial Cushions, a magnificent pair of cushion-cut diamonds, imperial in quality and size, recalls some of the most important Golconda stones ever auctioned at Christie's. Of significance is the *Archduke Joseph* diamond, a D SI1 cushion-cut Golconda diamond of 78.54 carats that sold at Christie's Geneva in 1993 for US\$6,487,945. *The Imperial Cushions* bear a striking resemblance to the shape of the *Archduke Joseph* diamond with its rectangular cushion cut and horizontally divided pavilion main facets – perhaps a style of cutting that is not entirely unfitting with its Indian lineage. Other notable Golconda diamonds offered previously at auction include the *Ahmadabad*, a historical pear-shaped diamond of 78.86 carats that fetched US\$4,324,554 at Christie's Geneva in 1995; *The Polar Star*, a 42.28-carat cushion diamond with an eight-pointed star cut on its pavilion which sold for US\$5,086,705 at Christie's Geneva in 1980; and the *Indore* diamonds, an exquisite pair of pear-shaped diamonds weighing 46.39 and 44.14 carats - neither of these stones were D colour or Internally Flawless, but nevertheless they achieved the sum of US\$2,686,600 – a tremendous amount in 1987.

More recently, Christie's Hong Kong sold a 16.72-carat marquise-shaped Golconda diamond for HK\$24,180,000/US\$3,114,384 in November 2010.

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IMAGES of *The Imperial Cushions* can be downloaded here:

<http://cshk.myftp.org/Spring%202011%20Christie's%20Hong%20Kong%20Auctions/Jewels/Imperial%20Cushions/>

In advance of the 31 May sale in Hong Kong, *The Imperial Cushions* will be on view in the following cities around the world by appointment:

Date	Location	Venue
9-11 April	New York	Christie's New York – Rockefeller Center
23-24 April	Shanghai	The Waldorf Astoria
26-27 April	Beijing	St. Regis Hotel
5-6 May	Singapore	Christie's Singapore
10-11 May	Bangkok	Christie's Bangkok
14-17 May	Geneva	Four Seasons Hotel de Bergues
21-22 May	Taipei	Fubon Life Assurance Building
26-31 May	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2010 that totaled £3.3 billion/US\$5.0 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 US\$200 to over US\$100 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. *Estimates do not include buyer's premium