

For Immediate Release  
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CHRISTIE'S

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FABULOUS GEMS - IMPERIAL PROVENANCES - TOP JEWELLERS

# MAGNIFICENT JEWELS

SFR.9M HEART-SHAPED DIAMOND LEADS THE SHOW  
AT CHRISTIE'S GENEVA ON MAY 18



Wednesday 18 May 2011 - 2 pm & 6.30 pm  
Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

**Geneva** - Christie's is pleased to announce its Spring Geneva auctions, the most important jewellery event in Europe with top-quality jewels. A rich catalogue of more than 320 lots brings to the international arena the best in every category of gem stones, extraordinary period pieces and signed jewels, with an expected total pre-sale estimate in the region of US\$ 55 million.

**Jean-Marc Lunel, Head of the Jewellery Department, comments:** "The Geneva spring sale at Christie's is one of the most appealing selections of jewels and gem stones seen in recent years. Confidence in this market

*category is high, following a magical year for jewellery sales in 2010, and the May 18 auction promises strong results for a wide array of important gem stones and magnificent jewels—including a sensational 56.15 carat heart-shaped diamond that is the ultimate acquisition for a true connoisseur."*

The top lot of the May 18 sale (*illustrated above left*) is a perfectly symmetrical 56.15 carat, heart-shaped D colour, Internally Flawless diamond estimated at US\$ 9-12 million. Polished diamonds in excess of 50 carats are extremely rare, and fewer than a handful of perfect hearts have appeared at auction in the past 20 years, making the sale of this gem virtually a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

Among the many other highlights of Christie's Geneva sale is an impressive ring set with a rectangular-cut Fancy Intense Blue, Internally Flawless diamond, weighing 6.60 carats (estimate: SFr.4,000,000-6,000,000; *illustrated right, un-mounted*). Coloured diamonds are today extremely sought-after stones, and Christie's currently holds the world record price per carat for a blue diamond with The BVLGARI Blue, a triangular-cut Fancy Vivid Blue diamond of 10.95 carats set in a ring by Bulgari which sold in New York for US\$ 15,762,500 (\$1.4 million per ct for the Fancy Vivid Blue diamond).



## MONSIEUR ET MADAME FRANÇOIS AN EXCEPTIONAL PRIVATE COLLECTION

For more than 50 years, Harry Winston, known as ‘The King of Diamonds’, was the purveyor of some of the most wonderful gems and jewellery ever created. Synonymous with the finest stones and sublime craftsmanship, Winston jewels always excite fierce competition amongst collectors whenever they surface at auction. This is especially true when the treasures come from the François Collection.

Jean-Pierre François led a fascinating life as an international banker, eventually advising French President François Mitterrand. His life as a collector began in 1952 when he married Pari Riahi, a young Iranian student at the Beaux Arts, with whom he shared a common passion for art and for jewels. In their homes in Paris, Geneva and Monaco, their jewellery collection was perfectly combined with Old Master, Impressionist and Modern paintings in settings of 18th-century French furniture, silver and porcelain, Art Nouveau and Art Deco.

Three exceptional pieces of jewellery by Harry Winston from the François collection will be offered on May 18. The highlight is a superb pair of diamond ear pendants, the tops designed as clusters of pear and marquise-shaped diamonds and the detachable pendants set with two pear-shaped diamonds weighing 14.85 and 14.59 carats, mounted in platinum (estimate: SFr.2,800,000-3,200,000; *illustrated right*). Also on offer will be an important rectangular-cut diamond ring weighing 21.09 carats and an iconic diamond necklace (combined pre-sale estimate: US\$ 5,200,000).

The entirety of the François Collection of art, objects and furniture, assembled over a lifetime, will be auctioned at Christie’s London saleroom in June 2011 under the title ‘Monsieur et Madame François : A Lifetime of Collecting’.



## THE EMERALDS OF THE EMPRESS



One of the most beautiful women of her time, Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba, was born in Spain in 1826 and educated in Paris, where her elegance and charisma seduced Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who ascended the throne as Emperor Napoleon III in 1852.

Made an Empress by her marriage the following year, Eugénie greatly influenced French fashion. She famously loved jewellery and, green being her favourite colour, adored emeralds. Among her preferred jewels was a personal tiara with nine emeralds. Upon her death in 1920, she bequeathed nine emeralds, most probably un-mounted from that tiara to her goddaughter, the future Queen Victoria Eugenie of Spain, who wore them many times, mounted in a necklace, then re-mounted as a parure.

As the Queen of Spain herself had to leave in exile, she sold the jewels at auction in Bern in 1961. Subsequently the brooch and the ring were acquired by the mother of the current owner who had the stones remounted by Swiss jeweller Meister as a pendant and a ring.

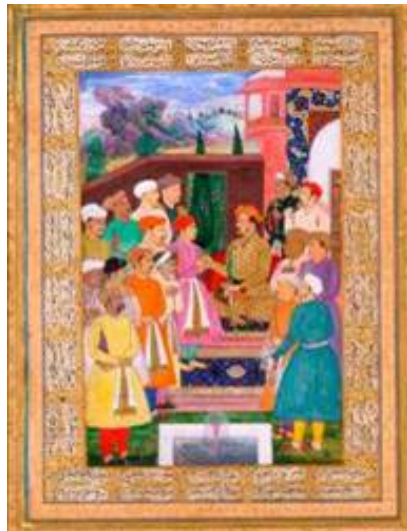
The two rectangular-cut emeralds weighing 17.97 and 15.99 carats, with diamond set ring and pendant fitting by Meister, are now offered for sale with an estimate of SFr.200,000-300,000; *illustrated above left*). The sale of these gems is a unique opportunity to acquire historic stones.



L'impératrice Eugénie, by Franz Xaver Winterhalter  
© RMN (Château de Fontainebleau) / Gérard Blot

## MUGHAL SLENDOR

After the great success achieved by an Imperial Mughal spinel necklace sold in 1997 at Christie's London, it has become increasingly difficult to find old Mughal jewels with inscribed beads. Both private collectors and public institutions now recognise the great historical significance of these rare gems and are more willing than ever to compete for them in the saleroom. The Mughal rulers of India had a great affection for spinel beads and prized them just as they did Golconda diamonds and carved emeralds. Spinel was treasured as protective talismans, and it is said the



Emperors wore three of them during battles to protect themselves from injuries and death.

Christie's is honoured to have been selected once again to present for sale one of the finest examples of Indian jewellery to come on the market: a rare imperial Mughal necklace with eleven polished spinels for a total weight of 1,136.63 carats (SFr.1,500,000-2,500,000 / US\$1,500,000-2,500,000; *illustrated above*). Three beads on this necklace bear the name of Jahangir (*illustrated left*; ©V&A Images, Victoria and Albert Museum), who reigned from 1605-1627 and was the father of Shah Jahan, best known for constructing the Taj Mahal. The numbers that follow Shah Jahangir's name in the inscription signify specific years of his reign according to the Islamic or Hijri calendar. 1015 A.H. for example equates to the year 1606 A.D. One of the spinels also bears the name of his grandson, Emperor Alamgir (1618-1707), also known as Aurangzeb, and of Shah Jahan.

This exceptional necklace is a true Museum quality piece.

## AN EXTRAORDINARY SELECTION OF MAGNIFICENT STONES

Highlights of the selection of gem stones on offer include the 'Classic Cushion', a fabulous un-mounted cushion-cut diamond weighing 66.37 carats, estimated at SFr.2,200,000-2,700,000 (*illustrated right*), and a ring set with a rectangular-cut fancy vivid yellow diamond, weighing 8.47 carats, to the pavé-set diamond shoulders, estimated at SFr.760,000-950,000 (*illustrated left, un-mounted*).



Also exceptional in quality is the 8.53 carat cushion-cut ruby ring mounted by Van Cleef & Arpels in 1960s: a powerful example of the famed 'Pigeon's blood' colour (estimate: SFr.1,700,000-2,000,000; *illustrated on the following page, top left*). This gem comes from the Mogok mine in Burma, renowned for having given the world some of its most beautiful coloured stones. The pure red hue of great intensity that distinguishes Burmese rubies is known as 'Pigeon's blood'. Though fabled for centuries, the crimson colour continues to astound.





Burma is also a great source of sapphires, whose intense blue has been venerated, coveted and sought after from time immemorial. Burmese sapphires have a characteristically vivid, electric, slightly violetish blue, not to be compared with the hues of Kashmiri or Ceylonese stones. This colour is referred to as 'Royal Blue' as it has been cherished by royal families for its extreme elegance. The 130.50 carat Burmese sapphire brooch set in an old-cut diamond frame and mounted in gold to be auctioned in the Geneva sale exhibits the 'Royal Blue' colour with an exceptional clarity, extremely rare in sapphires of this weight. Estimated at SFr.800,000-1,200,000, it will attract true connoisseurs (*illustrated right*).

The Christie's Geneva catalogue also includes an exceedingly rare pair of Art Deco natural pearl and diamond ear pendants (estimate: SFr.600,000-800,000; *illustrated below left*). It is extremely rare to find outstanding specimens of this large size (approximately 100 grains and 96 grains) with such beautiful shape and orient. Further enhancing the desirability of these pearls is the delicate mounting, which dates to the Art Deco period (circa 1925). The elongated, classic design, very much in fashion during the period, remains extremely wearable today.



## GENEVA MAGNIFICENT JEWELS

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues

### AUCTION

Wednesday 18 May 2pm & 6.30pm

### VIEWINGS

Saturday	14 May	10am-6pm
Sunday	15 May	10am-6pm
Monday	16 May	10am-6pm
Tuesday	17 May	10am-6pm
Wednesday	18 May	10am-1pm

### INTERNATIONAL PREVIEWS & EXHIBITIONS

**New York**, Rockefeller Center

Saturday	9 April	10am-6pm
Sunday	10 April	10am-6pm
Monday	11 April	10am-5pm

**Hong Kong**, Alexandra House

18 Chater Road, Central

Tuesday	19 April	10.30am-6pm
Wednesday	20 April	10.30am-6pm
Thursday	21 April	10.30am-6pm

**Shanghai**, Shanghai Club Ballroom, 2/F Waldorf Astoria

Bund No. 88 Sichuan Zhong Road, Huang Pu District

Saturday	23 April	10am-6pm
Sunday	24 April	10am-6pm

**Beijing**, Great Hall, 2/F St. Regis Hotel

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Tuesday	26 April	10am-6pm
Wednesday	27 April	10am-6pm



### **About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business had global auction and private sales in 2010 that totaled £3.3 billion/\$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 \$200 to over \$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. *\*All auction sales figures include premium.*

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