

# CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | GENEVA | 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## THE OPPENHEIMER BLUE

THE LARGEST FANCY VIVID BLUE DIAMOND  
OFFERED AT AUCTION



[GENEVA - MAGNIFICENT JEWELS - 18 MAY 2016](#)

**Geneva** – Christie's is proud to present the **Oppenheimer Blue**, the largest and finest Fancy Vivid Blue diamond ever offered at auction. Weighing 14.62 carats, this exceptional stone will lead Christie's auction of *Magnificent Jewels*, held at the Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues. This exceptional blue diamond, named in honor of its previous owner Sir Philip Oppenheimer, is estimated at US\$38-45 million.

‘On May 18<sup>th</sup>, Christie’s will present the largest and finest Fancy Vivid Blue diamond ever seen. This stunning Fancy Vivid Blue rectangular-cut gem promises to create a media sensation as it travels around the world, fascinating both collectors and gem enthusiasts alike, before it makes its way to the auction block in Geneva.’

Rahul Kadakia, International Head of Jewellery



This incredible Fancy Vivid Blue diamond was previously owned by **Sir Philip Oppenheimer**, who controlled the Diamond Syndicate in London. Sir Philip began working in the family business at De Beers London in 1934, whilst sitting at a bench sorting and valuing diamonds. As head of the London-based Central Selling Organisation for 45 years and serving as Chairman for the Diamond Trading Company branch, Sir Philip oversaw a diamond sales cartel set up by De Beers to keep strict control over the diamond supply worldwide. Today he is remembered as a master negotiator and the foremost architect of stability in the international diamond industry – and, of course, for his incomparable gem collection, including the magnificent **Oppenheimer Blue**.

## BLUE DIAMOND IN NUMBERS

The color of the **Oppenheimer Blue** is so remarkable that it was graded Fancy Vivid. In blue diamonds, Fancy Vivid specifically describes those that are medium to dark in tone and strong to very strong in saturation. In a past GIA study of 462 blue diamonds, only 1% were Fancy Vivid. Although blue diamonds only account for 0.1 percent of those originating from the Premier mine, a seemingly negligible figure, a rough estimate of global blue diamond production would be less than 0.0001 percent and by some rough diamonds calculations, only one stone in 200,000 rough diamonds mined.

*It is well known that extraordinary skill is required to extract the ‘best’ color from fancy colored diamonds. Achieving the strongest colors in traditional shapes such as the 15 carat Oppenheimer Vivid Blue can only be achieved with a highly saturated intrinsic color of the rough diamond. This blue diamond’s color and clarity combined with its traditional cutting style and provenance is truly exceptional.*

Tom Moses, Executive Vice President GIA



One of the earliest historic blue diamonds to have appeared for sale at Christie’s was the Idol’s Eye on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1865, in the saleroom of Christie’s London, where the catalogue described a ‘splendid large diamond known as the Idol’s Eye set round with 18 smaller brilliant and framework of small brilliants’. It sold for a momentous £740 equivalent to US\$86,000 today.

In more recent times, very few blue diamonds have been offered for sale. In 2008, Christie’s London presented the *Wittelsbach*, a cushion-shaped Fancy Deep Greyish-Blue diamond which sold for a then record price of US\$24.3 million. In 2014, the 13.22 carat *Winston Blue* diamond realized US\$23.7 million at Christie’s Geneva. Given the extreme scarcity of strongly colored blue diamonds of importance sizes, records continue to be broken year after year. In November 2015, a 12 carat Fancy Vivid Blue diamond achieved a staggering US\$48.5 million at US\$4m per carat, exemplifying the ever growing demand for the very best.

**Sale: 18<sup>th</sup> May at 7pm**

Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues, Geneva

Exhibition: From 13<sup>th</sup> May to 18<sup>th</sup> May from 10 am to 6 pm.

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**About Christie's**

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2015 that totalled £4.8 billion / \$7.4 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. 2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 350 auctions 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 also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth 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. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.

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*Images available on request*

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