
Gubelin Newsletter #31, Friday, June 18, 2010

Headlines:

- *** Kashmir sapphire bracelet achieves record price at auction
- *** Gubelin Gem Lab issues notes in respect of Mogok rubies
- *** Differentiating between natural and cultured pearls
- *** Digital pearl radiography

*** Kashmir sapphire bracelet achieves record price at auction:

Auctioneer Christie's June sales in Hong Kong have set a new record price for a bracelet. The platinum Cartier bracelet featuring nine sapphires weighing a total of 49.61 ct fetched US\$ 7 million. It was the Gubelin Gem Lab that confirmed the unheated state of the nine sapphires as well as their Kashmiri origin.

*** Gubelin Gem Lab issues notes in respect of Mogok rubies:

Burma (now Myanmar) has long been recognised as the source of the world's most desirable rubies. Its most famed region is the Mogok Valley, or Mogok Stone Tract, north-east of Mandalay. Although it is uncertain when mining first began, accounts indicate that rubies have been sourced in the Mogok area for well over one thousand years. Burmese rubies, especially those from Mogok, have since maintained their renown. The Gubelin Gem Lab has decided to accompany each report on classic Mogok rubies – unheated or traditionally heated – with a separate note page, free of charge.

*** Differentiating between natural and cultured pearls:

A number of gemmological labs have recently issued alerts on the issue of distinguishing natural pearls from cultured pearls. The Gubelin Gem Lab has been harbouring suspicions about certain non-beaded cultured pearls for many years. Back in 2008, for instance, Gubelin identified some very prominent pearls – submitted by a leading auction house – as cultured, in direct contrast to reports issued by other recognised gem labs. To address this issue, two years ago we took on Dr. Stefanos Karampelas – the only lab gemmologist in the world to possess a PhD on pearls – as research scientist. We are delighted that other labs are now contributing to the effort. The Laboratory Manual Harmonisation Committee, of which Gubelin is a member, has established a technical pearl commission which met recently in Bahrain to create awareness of the issue among peers.

*** Digital pearl radiography:

Technology continues to advance at a steady pace. The Gubelin Gem Lab has recently purchased a digital sensor to take the radiographs on pearls in real time. The system is equipped with a sophisticated high-definition monochrome diagnostic display and comes with customised visualisation software. It is capable of taking high-quality pictures from

several directions in a fraction of the time it used to take. This will further increase the lab's capabilities when it comes to analysing the internal structure of pearls.

The Gubelin Newsletter is issued periodically by the Gubelin Gem Lab and provides concise and up-to-date information on current topics in the jewellery and gemstone industry, as well as news from the Gubelin Gem Lab itself. Your e-mail address is on the distribution list of the Gubelin Gem Lab. To unsubscribe from the mailing list, reply to info@gubelingemlab.ch and type 'unsubscribe' in the subject line. All previous Gubelin Newsletters can be viewed in the archive section of the Gubelin website (www.gubelingemlab.ch).

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