

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Dr. Michael S. Krzemnicki FGA

gemlab@ssef.ch



Lot 264 from Christie's Magnificent Jewels Sale in Geneva on May 7, 2019: The Ana Maria Pearl set as watch-brooch (estimate: CHF/\$800,000-1,200,000). In the centre is a *portrait of Ana Maria de Sevilla*, wearing the pearl, painted by Jean Baptiste Eugene Reverdy in 1861. Copyright: Fundacion Casa Ducal de Medinaceli.

SSEF Performs First-Ever Radiocarbon Age-Dating Procedure on Historic 'Ana Maria Pearl,' to be sold as Lot 264 at Christie's Magnificent Jewels Sale in Geneva in May

BASEL, SWITZERLAND: MAY 7, 2019 - The Swiss Gemmological Institute SSEF has successfully age-dated the historic 'Ana Maria Pearl' using carbon-14 (^{14}C). This is the first time such a procedure has been conducted on a historic natural pearl, to provide valuable and new information on the age of a gem.

The Ana Maria pearl is due to be offered at Christie's Geneva as lot 264 in the upcoming Magnificent Jewels auction on May 15, and will be on public display as of May 10 at the Four Seasons Hotel des Bergues.

The data from this first-ever radiocarbon analysis revealed that the historic formation age for this natural pearl was between the 16th and mid-17th century AD. This fits perfectly with the documented historic provenance of the 'Ana Maria Pearl', once owned by Ana María de Sevilla

y Villanueva, XIV Marquise of Camarasa (1828-1861), which is presumed to have been discovered during the Spanish conquest of the Americas in the 16th century.

The pearl is a slightly baroque drop shaped natural saltwater pearl of 30.24 carats, set as a detachable drop of a beautiful brooch, which contains an invisible watch by Audemars Piguet, a design from the 1960s (estimate: CHF800,000-1,200,000).

Dr. Michael S. Krzemnicki, director of SSEF, said: "We are honoured to be able to provide additional scientific evidence to the historic provenance of this important natural pearl. We are in the process of further developing radiocarbon analysis and other scientific techniques to verify the historic provenance of antique jewellery and iconic natural pearls".

"This is a first for a historic natural pearl offered at auction", added Jean-Marc Lunel, senior jewellery expert at Christie's Geneva. "The scientific innovation provided through radiocarbon age-dating is a critical addition to the extensive work we do on documenting the provenance of exceptional items such as the Ana Maria Pearl".

The ¹⁴C research and services offered by SSEF are done in partnership with the Ion Beam Physics Laboratory at ETH Zurich, one of the world's leading universities.

Notes to editors:

About the SSEF

The **Swiss Gemmological Institute SSEF**, which is part of the Swiss Foundation for the Research of Gemstones (SEEF: Schweizerische Stiftung für Edelstein-Forschung), was founded by trade organisations in 1974 and works independently on a scientific basis. It is structured as a foundation under the aegis of Switzerland's Federal Department of Home Affairs. The function of its laboratory is to analyse precious stones and issue test reports for diamonds, coloured stones and pearls. Members of SSEF Laboratory are also engaged in research and education, in connection with leading universities or with other gemmological laboratories.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in 2018 that totalled £5.3 billion / \$7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and international expertise. 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.

Alongside regular sales online, Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.

**Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.*

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and are reported net of applicable fees.*

Contacts:

For additional information on the radiocarbon age-dating procedure:

Please contact Dr. Michael S. Krzemnicki FGA gemlab@ssef.ch

For additional information on the Christie's Auction:

Please contact: Alexandra Kindermann at akindermann@christies.com