

Gemstone Forecaster

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Prices Strong at Tucson Gem Shows

by Robert Genis



Lots of people were happy that the Tucson Gem Shows returned this year, even in the face of the omicron variant. Unlike the no shows of 2021, this year counted 40 shows and events. Pre-covid, these gem shows could bring in as much as \$131million dollars and 65,000 visitors. Many feared the numbers would be dramatically lower this year due to the pandemic. Although no official statistics have been reported, attendance seemed crazy the first day of the show and leveled out.

International Show?

Tucson was always considered one of the top three gem shows in the world, the others being Basel

and Hong Kong. With the political situation in Hong Kong, that show may never come back. This leaves Tucson and Basel now as the two premier international gem shows. Dealers from many source countries again found their way to Tucson this year. We saw vendors from Asia, South America, Africa and Europe. What we didn't see were large buyers from these areas. Covid probably was the reason for the lack of international buyers for the show, as flying remains difficult. The Tucson shows were primarily local on the buying side, with the main component being retail jewelers from the United States.

Hot Stones

Due to the lack of mining because of the pandemic, there were no new hot stones. Some dealers mentioned Burma sapphire teal colors as in-demand. Others said any unusual color of sapphire was kind of hot. Some dealers are promoting grey spinel as a sleeper gem compared to red, blue, pink, and orange spinels. These stones are really not new but may have been overlooked. Might be a while before we have a new hot stone enter the marketplace. Hopefully, mining will begin again as the pandemic morphs into an endemic.

Action on the floor

Almost counterintuitively, the pandemic was good for the jewelry industry. Business increased in 2021 over 30% from 2020. Since people weren't spending money on travel, they bought gems and jewelry instead. This put retail jewelers in the precarious position of not having enough colored gems to show their clients. They decided they needed to buy strong. And they did.

The first day of the show was crazy. It was almost as if retail buyers could only spare one day away from their offices, but they brought lists of what they wanted and they bought it quickly. The lines at the booths were three and four deep. There was almost no point in negotiating and they paid the high prices and didn't seem to care.

After the first day, the shows cooled down. Attendance dropped dramatically and the price conscious buyers remained. They would make offers on stones they were interested in but mostly were turned down. This was an unusual turn for the show compared to years past. In the past, dealers would not want to return home with their stones, so they would sell at discounted prices just to move their inventory. Now facts on the ground have changed. No one knows when they are going to get any new goods. They fear not being able to restock themselves. Since this is true, why give away your goods like years past? Many people searched for old goods, believing the stones would be better priced than any new material. Although generally true, many dealers are simply increasing prices on old material to reflect the reality of new, higher prices. The present gem market is definitely a sellers market, not a buyer's market.

Few Gem Impressions

Here are a few stones to indicate price levels at the show.

I love the neon Vietnamese cobalt blue spinels. One that really struck me was a .85 blue gem for \$10,000 per carat. These stones are trying to be the new Paraiba.

One dealer had a stunning day glow red Burma spinel. It was two carats. A killer stone but \$8500 per carat? Seems high.

Also, I saw a two carat Mong Hsu ruby. Although unheated, these stones should sell for a discount to the Mogok material. The stone was \$40,000 per carat. It had an AGL stating Mong Hsu and a GRS stating "pigeon blood" Burma. That's why you need an AGL with Burma rubies

One particular good deal was a 1.14 blue Paraiba Brazilian gem for \$25,000 per carat. Seemed like a good deal because other similar gems (the few available) were \$40,000 plus.



Why prices are strong

As if supply chain issues and travel bans weren't enough reason for high prices, worldwide inflation caused by years of Central Bank easy money accommodation, and now high energy prices, have done the trick. Inflation is painfully obvious whenever you fill up your car with gas or go to the grocery store. Any demand coupled with a very limited supply, is bound to cause prices to rise in the high end gem market. Truly fine goods have always been scarce, but now many of these top quality gems are essentially impossible to find. Collectors and investors are seeing their money evaporate in the stock markets and are looking for true wealth preservation. Gems and colored diamonds have always been seen as a hedge against bad economic times and today sure seems like a good time to diversify your portfolio.

Gem News

The Saudi-Thai relations are strained.. What is the story of the “blue diamond” and the unknown killings?

by iic_wpadmin

January 26, 2022

How often do colored diamonds get involved in international incidents? Rarely. Here is the latest update on this fascinating story. ED

Saudi Arabia and Thailand announced the return of diplomatic relations, after more than three decades of tension due to the crisis of the theft of jewelry from a Saudi palace in a case known as the “blue diamond case”.

In a joint statement, the two countries announced the complete restoration of diplomatic relations, “during the visit of Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha to Riyadh, in the first visit of an official from Thailand to the Kingdom.

What is the story of the blue diamond?

The crisis began in 1989, when a gardener from Thailand called Kryangkrai Techamong worked in the palace of Prince Faisal bin Fahd, whose father, King Fahd, was taking the throne of the kingdom at the time. The year began to win the trust of palace workers.

A Thai worker plans to steal jewelry from the palace, believing that the amount of jewelry there will not make the prince notice that some of them are missing. Indeed, he began to implement his plan and began stealing it in batches while the Saudi prince was spending a vacation outside Riyadh.

The Thai worker stole as much as 90 kilograms of necklaces, gold, jewelry and watches studded with diamonds and sapphires, including a rare blue diamond worth more than \$20 million, and began sending the stolen items back to his country in batches, before taking the last batch with him and fleeing with it from Saudi Arabia.

After the prince returned from his vacation, he discovered the matter, and learned that the Thai worker was the thief. The prince contacted the Thai authorities, who promised at that time to solve the case as quickly as possible and return the jewelry to him. Soon after, the worker was arrested and imprisoned for 5 years.

Thailand tried to maintain its relationship with Saudi Arabia, and returned the stolen jewelry to the prince, who discovered that only 20% of it was real, while the rest of the stolen items returned to him were fake and did not include the most expensive piece, the “blue diamond” weighing 50 carats. At the time, Saudi Arabia accused the Thai police of neglecting the investigation into the theft of precious stones, stressing that senior officers had embezzled a quantity of the stolen goods.

Series of killings

During the investigations led by Thailand and a period in which Saudi Arabia also investigated, a series of killings took place as if the Bermuda Triangle was swallowing everyone who approached the case, as two bodies were found that turned out to be the wife and daughter of a jeweler who bought the stolen goods some time after their kidnapping.

In 1990, Saudi Arabia sent a team to investigate the case, including a businessman. Upon their arrival, the businessman disappeared in mysterious circumstances and was found murdered along with 4 Saudi diplomats, which raised suspicions that senior officials in Thailand were behind these crimes, all of which were recorded against an unknown person. Saudi Arabia has not sent an ambassador to Thailand in decades and imposed travel restrictions between the two countries.

Five men, including a high-ranking Thai policeman, were accused of being involved in the murder of the Saudi businessman, and in 2014 the prosecutions against them were dropped due to a lack of evidence.

Unresolved issue

While investigations continued, the wives of senior Thai officials appeared on official occasions wearing some new jewelry that looked a lot like stolen jewelry. Among them is the wife of the Thai police chief, Saung Tiraswat, whom the Kingdom considered among the accused to change the course of the investigations and obstruct them.

In a cable sent by the United States in 2010, it indicated that the Lebanese Hezbollah was behind the crime, but did not provide evidence for the matter.

The case caused Thailand to lose nearly \$10 billion annually due to Saudi Arabia's ban on Thai workers and the decline in Saudi tourism in Thailand. The fate of the blue diamond remained unknown.

The Thai jewelry thief, who sold a large part of it before his arrest, spent 3 years in prison instead of the 5 he was sentenced to because of his good behavior, and in 2016 he became a monk and got a new name in Thai that means "the owner of the diamond flag".

The World's Most Unique and Valuable Precious Stones
Flux magazine
2022
by Al Woods

Pretty sure Moldavite should be in the same category as the Big Four, and the author is not well versed in mining sources, still a good beginners article about gems. Edited for space.
 ED

The word "precious" is used to describe something that has a high value – and precious stones are no exception to this rule. These gems have been prized for centuries, and they continue to gain in popularity every year as more and more people learn to appreciate them. In this article, we'll be discussing some of the most precious stones on Earth.

Moldavite

Moldavite is a very rare and unusual stone, and it's linked to the Elbe River Valley near the town of Moldova, Czechoslovakia. Moldavite has formed about 15 million years ago when a large meteor hit the Earth at that site. This meteoric rock melted into many fragments which landed all over Europe, including areas where Moldavites are still mined today. This green-colored gem has been highly prized since ancient times for both its unique beauty and intense metaphysical properties.

Diamonds

Diamonds can be found everywhere around the globe and were discovered on a large scale in places like South Africa and Russia. Other significant diamonds deposits have been found in Brazil, Canada, India, China, and Australia. Their sparkling beauty makes them perfect for

adorning women's fingers (e.g. diamond engagement rings) or as a part of a necklace.

'Fancy' diamonds can be pink, blue, yellow, green, etc. depending on their color tone and hues. Blue diamonds are the rarest type with only about 150 known specimens existing worldwide. Diamonds are also used as drill bits as they can withstand heat and pressure better than any other material. They are also used extensively in various cutting and polishing tools owing to their unmatched hardness.

Emeralds

Emeralds are prized for their rich green color and are found in a variety of shades depending on their geographic location. The highest quality emeralds come from Colombia, where the mines are some of the oldest and most famous in the world. Other countries that produce high-quality emeralds include Zambia, Zimbabwe, Brazil, and Afghanistan.

These precious stones have been prized by humans for thousands of years and were used as currency in some cultures. They are thought to bring good luck and prosperity to their owners and are often given as gifts or worn as jewelry. Emeralds can be damaged very easily, so they must be handled with care; they are quite soft and can be scratched by most other stones.

Rubies

They are known for their beautiful deep red color and are highly sought after by jewelry collectors. Rubies are also thought to be very lucky and are often given as gifts to celebrate important occasions. Rubies were once believed to make their wearers invincible, especially if they had been created in a volcano-like Mount Vesuvius. Ancient soldiers believed that rubies could add protection from injury as well as act as an amulet against all types of danger.

In ancient India, it was said that rubbing one's skin with ground-up rubies would help cure leprosy. Throughout history, many royals have worn them during coronations or for special occasions because they symbolized royalty and power. Rubies are mined in places like Madagascar, Thailand, and Afghanistan. In recent years rubies have become more expensive than diamonds because there is a high demand for them and not enough to go around.

Sapphires

Sapphires are one of the oldest gemstones known to man and they have been used in many different cultures throughout history as a symbol of status (or as currency). The word "sapphire" is derived from the Latin word "sapphirus" which means blue, although they also come in such colors as yellow, pink, orange, and black. The sapphire has been used for many different purposes over the years such as in jewelry, watches, weapons, and even medical equipment.

Sapphires have been found in locations all around the world but some of the most notable sapphire deposits have been found in Burma, Sri Lanka, Australia, and North America. The value of sapphire can vary depending on its color, clarity, and size and they are typically worth more than diamonds of similar size and quality.

Summary

If you're interested in precious stones, you may also wish to study pearls, opals, amethyst, and turquoise. Whether you read about them or own them, precious stones continue to be a delight and fascination to multitudes. While some fashions come and go, they are certain to remain a valuable commodity all across the planet.

Six most sensational jewelry robberies of modern times

From London to Venice, these jewelry heists are noted as some of the most famous in recent times.

By Bazaar Intern

Not sure why we find these robberies so entertaining but here are some of the best. ED

SINCE GREAT CLASSICS such as Asphalt Jungle and To Catch a Thief, the events surrounding jewelry robberies have inspired the Hollywood imagination on many occasions, so much so that we often forget this kind of robbery happens in real life.

These are some of the most famous real-life jewelry thefts of modern times.

The Antwerp diamond heist

In 2003, the day after Valentine's Day, diamonds worth USD \$100 million were stolen from the

Antwerp Diamond Centre in Belgium. The thieves reportedly managed to steal the treasure by overcoming highly advanced security measures, including hi-tech combination locks, motion and heat sensors, and eighteen-inch steel doors.

The mastermind of the coup was an Italian, Leonardo Notarbartolo, who had studied the robbery for the previous four years, managing to find a way around the complex security system. Unfortunately for him, however, he was betrayed by an unfinished and forgotten ham sandwich on the floor, which police used to track the coup back to him via a DNA test.

ABN Amro Bank heist in Antwerp

In 2006, an old gentleman — after posing as a wealthy diamond dealer for months — befriended the bank staff by gifting them delicious chocolates. Through this he managed to gain access to the bank vault. At that point (having gained the level of trust he did), the only thing he had to do was fill his bag with USD \$28 million worth of diamonds and take the main exit.

Theft at the Graff in London

In 2006, two men in suits broke into the Graff jewelry shop on New Bond Street in London in broad daylight and stole an estimated £40 million worth of jewelry, rings and necklaces. The men threatened the jewelry store employees with firearms, then fled in a blue BMW. They were chased and later charged.

Brussels airport robbery

One of the most blatant robberies ever, In 2013, eight armed men, masked and disguised as police officers, opened an airport fence and reached an airplane that was about to be loaded with USD \$50 million worth of precious stones bound for Zurich.

Intimidating the workers with guns, within three minutes, the thieves seized the diamonds stored in the plane. The authorities later declared themselves very surprised, admitting the genius behind the organization of the theft.

Stolen jewels at the Carlton Hotel in Cannes

In 2013, a chain series of jewelry heists involved the French Riviera. Among these, the extraordinary theft of a collection of jewelry, the value of which has been estimated at around €102 million. In the midst of an exhibition, an individual wearing a hat and bandana entered the hotel's exhibition hall on the ground floor and

brandishing a gun, took possession of a suitcase containing diamonds that belonged to Israeli billionaire Lev Leviev.

Theft at the Doge's Palace in Venice

In 2018 Palazzo Ducale, a popular tourist destination in Venice, exhibited jewelry from the royal collection of Qatar. The pieces — owned by the former Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Abdullah Al Thani — were stolen in broad daylight on the last day of the exhibition. It seems that the thieves managed to delay the triggering of the alarm by 1 minute, the time necessary to flee without attracting attention.

Billion-year-old black diamond sells for \$4.3m

The New Telegraph
February 10, 2022

Not as expensive as most colored diamonds, \$7,740 per carat seems a fair price. What is the value of any gem or diamond? What a knowledgeable buyer and seller agree is the price. Another crypto buy. ED

A billion-year-old black diamond, believed to be the world's largest cut diamond, has sold for £3.16m (\$4.3m).

Named The Enigma, the 555.55 carat gem, which weighs about the same as a banana, had been expected to fetch more than £4.4m in the online action, reports the BBC.

Auctioneer Sotheby's said "the buyer has opted to use cryptocurrency for the purchase."

There are competing theories about the origins of the stone, including that it was carried to Earth by an asteroid.

Sotheby's did not identify the purchaser but after the auction cryptocurrency entrepreneur Richard Heart took to social media to claim that he was the buyer of The Enigma.

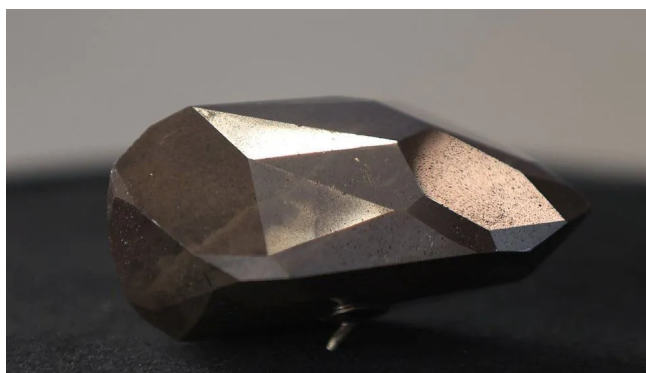
He told his more than 180,000 Twitter followers that "as soon as the payment's gone through and possession's been taken" the gem would be renamed the "HEX.com diamond", in reference to the blockchain platform he founded.

The gem is a carbonado, which is one of the toughest forms of natural diamond.

Carbonados are extremely rare and have only ever been discovered in Brazil and the Central African Republic. Because they contain

osbornite, a mineral found only in meteors, they are believed to originate from space. Sotheby's described The Enigma as "one of the rarest, billion-year-old cosmic wonders known to humankind."

Although the precise origin of black diamonds is shrouded in mystery. Black diamonds are usually around 2.6 to 3.2 billion years old — a time before dinosaurs existed. The Earth itself is around 4.65 billion years old, so not much older than black diamonds



Gemstone Forecaster Prices (1975-2021)

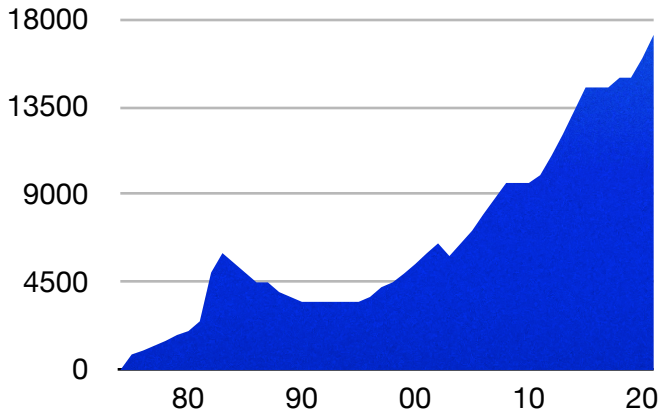
The one word that describes the price action last year was UP. For the first time in a long while, every gemstone and diamond we follow increased in price. Even pink colored diamonds rose 3% and white diamonds 10%-20%. Diamond prices got hammered when Covid started but have rallied back as precious metals and inflation returned. Burma goods continued their ascent as no new goods have been mined in Burma in the last two years. With US sanctions, don't expect this to change any time soon anyway. No treatment top Colombian emeralds have found a niche market with collectors internationally. Brazilian Pariaba remains the "chosen one" of the colored gemstone world because of relentless demand and no supply for years. Same for Kashmir sapphire.

One reason gems keep rising is many investor/collectors would rather have money in hard assets than money in the volatile international stock markets. As inflation becomes painfully obvious, this bodes well for hard asset inflation hedges such as precious colored gems and white and colored diamonds.

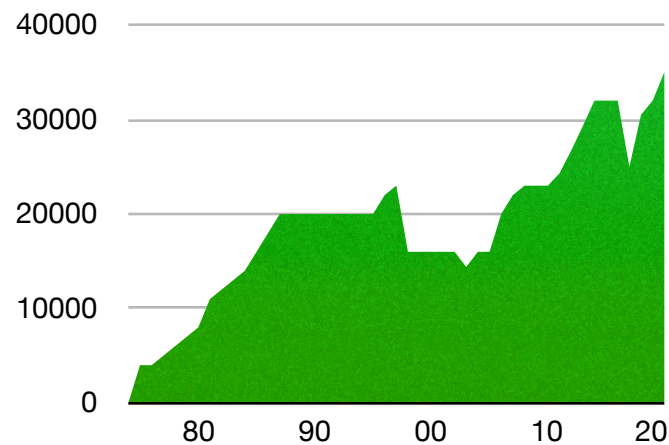
Retail Gemstone Prices (1975-2021)

These charts are prices per carat for GIA graded diamonds and AGL colored gems only. Prices represent retail prices encountered in the US markets. Wholesale prices are approximately a 50% discount to these colored gemstone prices. Diamond prices are approximately wholesale and any discounts are small. The only true price is what a knowledgeable buyer and seller agree to as a transaction price. No guarantees are made and no liabilities are assumed as to the accuracy or validity of these prices. Copyright 2022 by NGC. Reproduction is strictly forbidden.

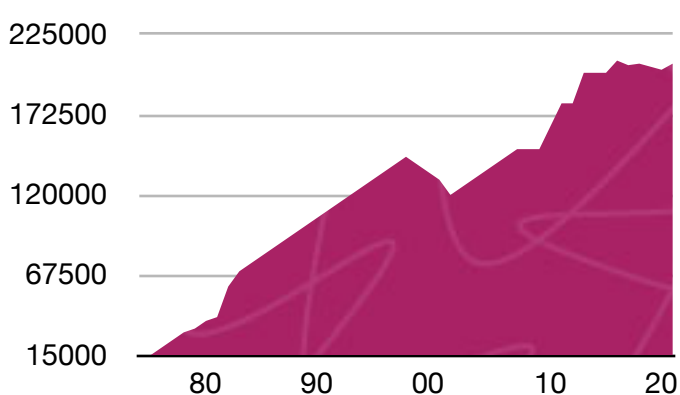
Burma Blue Sapp, 1ct, 2.5/75, LI, no heat



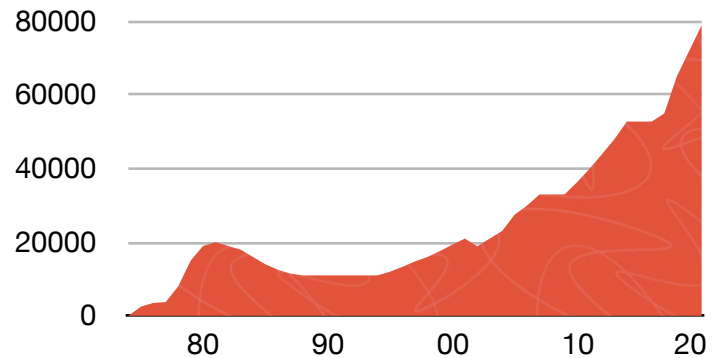
Colombian Emerald, 1ct, 2.5/75, LI, no treatment



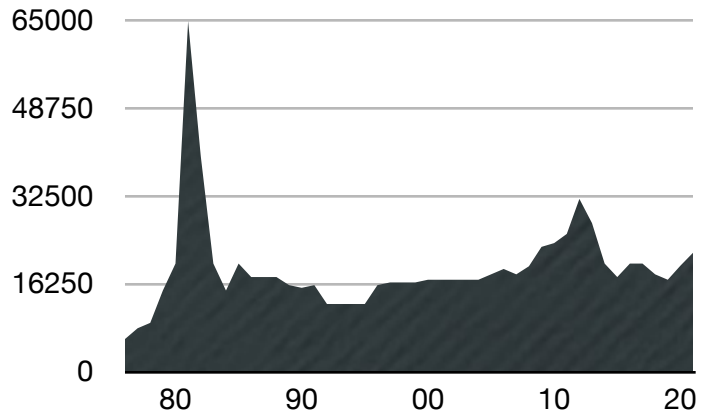
Fancy Intense Pink. 1ct., VS, Round



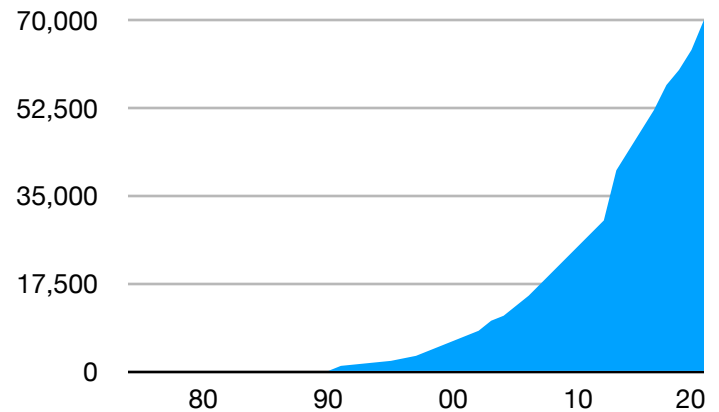
Mogok Burma Ruby, 1ct., 2.5/75, LI, No Heat



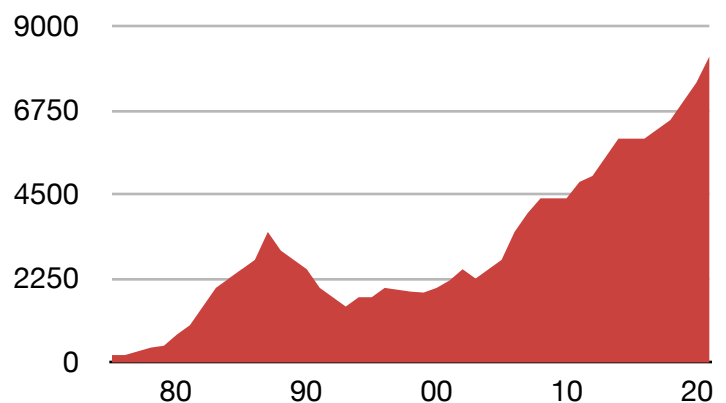
Diamond, 1ct., D-FL, Round



Brazil Paraiba, 1ct., Blue, LI, Low Heat



Burma Spinel, 1ct., Red 2.5/75, LI



Artist Damien Hirst Reveals What Happened to \$100 Million Diamond Skull

Saxon

January 26, 2022

We wrote originally about the skull when it was created and sold in 2007. Check out the article here:

Check out Gemstone Forecaster, Volume 25, #3 Fall 2007 ED.

A platinum skull encrusted with diamonds has become the most expensive piece of art in the world

Damien Hirst created the skull in platinum with diamonds in 2007. He called the work of art For the Love of God, it was estimated at 100 million dollars. And the skull was called the most expensive work of modern art ever created. But for a long time the diamond skull had not been exhibited anywhere, and fans of Hirst's work were interested in where he had gone. The intrigue was revealed by the artist himself, writes the Daily Mail.

The platinum skull was a copy of a 35-year-old European who lived between 1720 and 1810. and it was adorned, in addition to small ones, by a huge pink diamond. Hirst bought the original skull from a taxidermy shop in London and inserted real teeth into it.

A few months after the presentation of the skull at London's White Cube Gallery, it was purchased by a group of investors for £38 million. Among these investors, by the way, was the Ukrainian philanthropist Viktor Pinchuk.

And now the skull has not been exhibited anywhere for a long time. It is stored in a warehouse in the London jewelry district of Hatton Garden.

The richest artist in the world has repeatedly spoken out about the fact that sometimes his works do not find their buyers. And he condemned those potential buyers who, in his words, "shied away from his work," but threw millions of dollars on "paint-smearred canvases."



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