

Diamonds Are Forever **Opens at the Museum of Ventura County on May 2**

*George Stuart Historical Figures tell the stories of the world's most fabulous gems
and their past possessors*

(Ventura, CA) – ***Diamonds Are Forever***, a new exhibition at the **Museum of Ventura County** will tell the fascinating stories of history's most famous diamonds and their equally famous owners, opening in May. The exhibit will feature the well-known **diamond replicas** of **Scott Sucher** and the stunning **Historical Figures** of artist-historian **George Stuart**. The exhibit runs **May 2nd** through **August 24th**, **2014**.

Over the centuries many of the world's largest diamonds have taken fascinating journeys from the mines of India, Africa and South America to the coffers of the rich and powerful. For 400 years, these very special gems have been part of the royal treasuries of Europe. Many priceless diamonds, including the Cullinan, Koh-i-Noor, Orlov, and Beau Sancy, have been permanently mounted in the crown jewels of France, England and Russia. Many other exquisite diamonds have been snapped up by aristocrats, merchants and industrialists of Europe and America.

For the first time anywhere, the unique exhibit will illustrate the amazing stories of many precious gems and their famous owners. The Hope Diamond, perhaps the most famous, will be traced from the mines of India to Paris, London, New York, and finally to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. Along the way, the exotic blue diamond is cut, re-cut, stolen, lost, rediscovered, and resold many times. Legend says it is cursed.

See the Historical Diamonds and Their Famous Owners this Summer 2014

The Museum of Ventura County in Ventura, California will host a fabulous exhibition that will firmly link many famous diamonds to their equally famous and often notorious owners. Scott Sucher's superb replica diamonds will be exhibited side-by-side with George Stuart's remarkable Historical Figures of the famous people who owned them. The exhibit is scheduled to run from May 2 to August 24, 2014.

This debut will combine the artists' renowned works - illustrating history and telling the intriguing stories behind these special gems. Scale replica diamonds by Scott Sucher and Historical Figures by George Stuart will include:

- Tavernier, French Blue, Golden Fleece Badge, Hope exhibited with Louis XIV and Louis XV
- Regent with Marie Antoinette
- Beau Sancy with Marie De Medici
- Mirror of Portugal with Queen Elizabeth I
- Orlov with Catherine the Great
- Koh-i-Noor with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

Special activities are being planned during the four-month long exhibition. Artist George Stuart will introduce a new Historical Figure® specifically for the exhibition. The identity of the famous diamond owner will be unveiled at the opening reception on May 2.

Stuart will tell the stories of these famous gems and their owners. On May 3, Scott Sucher will present his experiences working with Smithsonian and French art experts to scientifically prove the origin of the famous Hope diamond. For more information, and exact dates, visit the Museum of Ventura website at www.venturamuseum.org, or the Gallery of Historical Figures at www.galleryhistoricalfigures.com.

Background Information

Early Encounters

India was producing vast quantities of high quality diamonds long before South America and Africa yielded their first gems to Europeans. Early European explorers and traders knew about the gems, but often had difficulty in procuring the best diamonds, which were controlled by heads of state. When French merchant traveler Jean-Baptiste Tavernier first visited the mines of India in 1638, the region had already been producing huge quantities of high quality gems. Indeed, many diamonds would become known with names like the Florentine, Sancy, Hope, Orlov, Regent, and Koh-i-Noor.

Suggested Themes

Each of these diamonds has its own story to tell. The staff of the Historical Figures Foundation suggests these editorial themes, and can provide story outlines, reference materials or even complete articles. High resolution images are available of the famous diamond replicas and associated Historical Figures.

Tavernier, French Blue, Hope worn by Louis XIV and Louis XV. Fascinating 300-year odyssey from India, through Bourbon France, the biggest heist ever, to recovery in England, and finally to America as the fabulous Hope diamond.



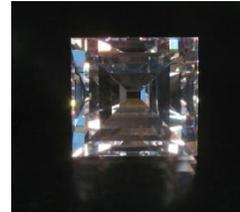
Regent worn by Marie Antoinette. Beginning with theft and murder in India, to a French royal crown, to Napoleon's sword, to Austria, and back to the French Crown jewels.



Beau Sancy worn Marie De Medici, oldest diamond ever sold at auction in May, 2013 for \$9.4million. An astonishing story from the assassination of her husband Henry IV, pawned in the Netherlands, to England's royals William & Mary, to the House of Prussia.



Mirror of Portugal worn by Queen Elizabeth. Famous owners have "ranged from the tenacious to the hapless, the romantic to the cunning," including Phillip II, Elizabeth I, James I, Charles I.



Orlov in the imperial scepter of Catherine the Great. Some say it was plucked from the "eye" of an Indian deity statue in ancient India. Bought by spurned lover Count Orlov and given to the Russian Empress, who had it mounted in the imperial scepter.



Koh-i-Noor worn by Queen Victoria. The oldest of ancient stones, it was owned by many Indian dynasties, and was appropriated as reparations by a British diplomat, who presented the Koh-i-Noor to Queen Victoria, and remains in the British crown.



Great Table Diamond. George Stuart is creating a new Historical Figure of a person important to the story of the Table Diamond. Taken as plunder by an Iranian Mogul, the diamond disappeared, although there is some evidence pieces exist.

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Short Bios of the Artists

About the Diamond Replicator

Scott Sucher, www.museumdiamonds.com

Over the last twenty years, Scott Sucher has become known as the world's foremost expert on the technology of documenting and replicating famous historical diamonds. His superb private collection of diamond replicas have been displayed worldwide and are described in detail on his website. He has also appeared on the Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channel, and collaborated with museums worldwide on various projects. On Sucher's



bucket list is the opportunity to document and reproduce the Shah and Orlov diamonds in the Russian Diamond Fund.

About the Artist and Historian

George Stuart, www.galleryhistoricalfigures.com

For more than fifty years George S. Stuart has been capturing the essence of history's most famous and infamous personalities in sculptures he calls Historical Figures. Rarely have art and history been melded so exactly in works of such breathtaking realism. The Figures have been exhibited in many museums, the Clinton Presidential Library and the Smithsonian Institution.

He has created more than four hundred Historical Figures spanning world history from 1500 to 1900. Many subjects of his Figures have owned or even worn famous historical diamonds. Currently Mr. Stuart is the Curator Emeritus of the Museum of Ventura County, where the Fred. B. Smith Gallery is dedicated to exhibition of his work.



About the Museum of Ventura County www.venturamuseum.org

The Museum is located at 100 E. Main Street in downtown Ventura, near the Mission San Buenaventura. Free public parking is available in the lot adjacent to the Museum. For event information and ticket sales call (805) 653-0323 ext. 7.

For more information about the exhibit or collaborators, email info@galleryhistoricalfigures.com.

