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RENOWNED WITTELSBACH-GRAFF DIAMOND UNVEILED AT AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

FAMOUS FOR ROYAL HISTORY, FLAWLESS CLARITY, AND DEEP BLUE COLOR

The **extraordinary 31.06-carat natural fancy deep blue Wittelsbach-Graff Diamond** goes on display Thursday, October 28 in the Museum's Harry Frank Guggenheim Hall of Minerals. This amazing diamond will be on display at the Museum through January 2, 2011.

Originally found in India, this stunning gem has had a long history of royal owners. After being brought to Europe by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier in the 17th century, it was given by Philip IV, King of Spain, as part of the dowry to his daughter Infanta Margarita T eresa—the young princess famously depicted in Diego Vel quez's masterpiece *Las Meninas*. The blue diamond then passed through subsequent marriages to Bavaria's ruling House of Wittelsbach in the 18th century. After World War I, the blue diamond was confiscated, vanished, and then put up for auction in 2008, where it was purchased by Laurence Graff.

For decades, experts have wondered if this diamond was cut from the same stone as the celebrated 45.52-carat Hope Diamond—another famous blue diamond from India. But a recent comparison showed that is not the case. Based on its distinctive composition—specifically the absence of nitrogen and the presence of boron, which gives the gem its distinctive color—it is classified as a Type IIb diamond. Such stones as the Wittelsbach-Graff Diamond and the Hope Diamond are believed to make up less than one in ten thousand of all diamonds found in nature. Type IIb diamonds also share another unusual characteristic: they are semiconductors. Another famous example of this unique group of gems is the 70.21-carat Idol's Eye, believed to be in private hands.

The curator for the Wittelsbach-Graff Diamond exhibit is George Harlow, curator, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences.

This exhibition is made possible by Graff Diamonds and Laurence Graff.

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AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY (AMNH.ORG)

The American Museum of Natural History is one of the world's preeminent scientific, educational, and cultural institutions. Since its founding in 1869, the Museum has advanced its global mission to explore and interpret human cultures and the natural world through a wide-reaching program of scientific research, education, and exhibitions. The Museum accomplishes this ambitious goal through its wide-ranging facilities and resources. The institution houses 45 permanent exhibition halls, state-of-the-art research laboratories, one of the largest natural history libraries in the Western Hemisphere, and a permanent collection of more than 32 million specimens and cultural artifacts. The spectacular **Frederick Phineas and Sandra Priest Rose Center for Earth and Space**, which opened in February 2000, features the rebuilt Hayden Planetarium and striking exhibits about the universe and our planet. With a scientific staff of more than 200, the Museum supports research divisions in anthropology, paleontology, invertebrate and vertebrate zoology, and the physical sciences. With the launch of the **Richard Gilder Graduate School** in 2006, the American Museum of Natural History became the first American museum with the authority to grant the Ph.D. degree. The Museum welcomed 5 million visitors from around the world this year and has produced exhibitions and Space Shows that can currently be seen in venues on five continents, reaching an audience of millions more. In addition, the Museum's website, amnh.org, extends its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs to millions more beyond the Museum's walls.

At the American Museum of Natural History

The Museum offers a broad array of programs for adults, children, families, students, educators, and scientists. These range from special exhibitions to symposia, lecture series, workshops, and film festivals. Highlights include *The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter* (October 16, 2010–May 30, 2011), an annual favorite at the Museum featuring 500 live, free-flying tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America; Africa; and Asia; the Hayden Planetarium Space Show, *Journey to the Stars*, narrated by Whoopi Goldberg; *Race to the End of the Earth* (May 29, 2010–January 2, 2011), which recounts one of the most stirring tales of Antarctic exploration: the contest to be the first to reach the South Pole in 1911-1912; *Highway of An Empire: The Great Inca Road* (October 17, 2009–September 2011), an exhibition of more than 35 striking photographs featuring roads and trails built by the Inca six centuries ago; *On Feathered Wings* (June 21, 2008–May 1, 2011), an exhibition of more than 30 striking photographs featuring dramatic images of birds in flight; *Vital Variety: A Visual Celebration of Invertebrate Biodiversity* (ongoing), an exhibition of 23 large-format color photographs highlighting the immense diversity of invertebrates; **Space Show Double Feature**

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(Friday and Saturday evenings), shown in the Hayden Planetarium, back-to-back screenings of the Museum's first two Space Shows, *Passport to the Universe* (narrated by Tom Hanks), which launches visitors on a thrilling trip through space and time, and *The Search for Life: Are We Alone?* (narrated by Harrison Ford), which explores a question that has always captivated the imagination: does life exist beyond Earth?; and **One Step Beyond**, the popular monthly party series where guests can dance in the Museum's Cullman Hall of the Universe to sets by the biggest names in techno, electronica, hip-hop, and indie rock.

Hours

The Museum is open daily, 10 am–5:45 pm
The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Space Show Hours

Journey to the Stars is shown every half hour Sunday–Thursday and Saturday, 10:30 am–4:30 pm, and Friday, 10:30 am–7 pm.

Admission

Suggested general admission, which supports the Museum's scientific and educational endeavors and includes 45 Museum halls and the Rose Center for Earth and Space, is \$16 (adults) suggested, \$12 (students/seniors) suggested, \$9 (children) suggested. All prices are subject to change.

The Museum offers discounted combination ticket prices that include suggested general admission plus special exhibitions, IMAX films, and Space Shows.

- Museum plus special exhibition, IMAX film, or Space Show: \$24 (adults), \$18 (students/seniors), \$14 (children)
- Museum Supersaver (includes all special exhibitions, IMAX film, and Space Show): \$32 (adults), \$24.50 (students/seniors), \$20 (children)

Visitors who wish to pay less than the suggested Museum admission and also want to attend a special exhibition, IMAX film, or Space Show may do so only on-site at the Museum. To the amount they wish to pay for general admission, they should add \$20 (adults), \$16.50 (students/seniors), or \$11 (children) for a Space Show, special exhibition, or IMAX film.

Public Information

For additional information, the public may call 212-769-5100 or visit the Museum's website at amnh.org.

Now you can prepare for your Museum visit by downloading the new **American Museum of Natural History Explorer App**, a groundbreaking enhanced navigation tool available for free from the App Store on iPhone and iPod touch or at www.itunes.com/appstore/. The Explorer pinpoints your location within the Museum and offers turn-by-turn directions through the 45 permanent exhibition halls, and features customized tours, a fossil treasure hunt, and social media links for posting to Facebook and Twitter.

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