



# LIZZADRO MUSEUM OF LAPIDARY ART

## NEWSLETTER & CALENDAR OF EVENTS SUMMER 2017



*"Majestic Northern Lights"  
necklace, opal from Idaho.*

### Museum Hours

Tuesday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Closed Mondays & Major Holidays.  
Closed July 4th.

### Admission

\$5.00 Adults, \$4.00 Senior Citizens  
\$3.00 Students & Teenagers  
\$2.00 Children 7 to 12 yrs.  
Free for children under 7 yrs.  
Friday is a Free day.

Members of the Lizzadro Museum and active members of the Armed Forces are admitted free of charge on any day the Museum is open to the public.

### Group Tours

Tours can be arranged for groups with special interests or needs. Reservations are necessary for guided tours.



The Museum has facilities to provide access for physically disabled visitors.

Visit us and Shop online at:  
[lizzadromuseum.org](http://lizzadromuseum.org)



Volunteer forms are available.



Smithsonian Institution  
Affiliations Program



[ExploreElmhurst.com](http://ExploreElmhurst.com)



# "Smithsonian Gems" American Designers & Phenomenal

By Dorothy Asher

Photos and jewelry information courtesy the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History

The Special Exhibit "Smithsonian Gems" will open on July 5 and run through March of 2018. The exhibit was put together with the help of the Smithsonian's gemologist curator Russell Feather. This exhibit brings together twelve pieces from the National Museum of Natural History's gem vault that highlight American jewelry designers and American gems along with a variety of phenomenal gems. Many of the pieces represent recent additions to the Smithsonian's gem collection.

## American Designers on Display

The exhibit includes some famous designers such as Harry Winston, Tiffany & Company and Baily & Company, among jeweler to the stars Kazanjian Jewelers from Beverly Hills, Brenda Smith from Atlanta, Georgia and Susan Helmich from Colorado Springs, Colorado and others. "Smithsonian Gems" blends unique gems with original designers, jewelry that will rarely be seen outside the walls of the Smithsonian. Look for special programs relating to this exhibit this Fall. Phenomenal gems in the exhibit will be featured in the Fall newsletter. Here is a preview of select pieces in the exhibit.

**Midnight Dreamscape** is a brooch designed and fabricated by jewelry designer Susan Helmich featuring a gem intarsia created by Nicolai Medvedev. The 18k yellow gold brooch is accented with diamonds (0.17ct total) and a 10mm South Sea pearl. The intarsia includes azurite malachite from Bisbee, AZ in the center, framed by Australian white opal, and then bordered by malachite from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Intarsia is the term applied to both the art of stone and wood inlay, where pieces of the same thickness are precisely shaped to fit closely together without gaps or grout. The brooch was a gift of Mr. Edward R. Patton in 2015.



"Midnight Dreamscape" brooch by Susan Helmich, intarsia by Nicolai Medvedev.

Susan Helmich takes her inspiration from natural elements, string instruments, historical pieces, and wants to connect to elements and the past through her pieces. She has won multiple awards in the US and Abroad including the MJSA "American Designer of the Year" 1991; Women's Jewelry Association "Design Excellence Award" 1996. Japan International Pearl Association design competition awards 1990, 1991, 1992; Invitation to Exhibit: Munsteiner Atelier, Germany, 2002.

Nicolai Medvedev is a master of intarsia and world renowned for his intarsia boxes, objects of art, and jewelry. Several of his boxes are in the Lizzadro Collection and two are on permanent display at the Museum.

**Majestic Northern Lights** is a custom designed gold necklace set with an opal triplet measuring approximately 51.5 x 22.0 x 7.9mm. The opal from Spencer, Idaho represents one of the finest stones from this locality showing vivid flashes of red, yellow, green and blue play-of-color. Bob & Susan Thompson, owners of Opal Mountain Mines, Inc. in Spencer, Idaho donated the necklace to the Smithsonian in 2005.



"Majestic Northern Lights" necklace, opal from Idaho.

The opal deposits in Spencer, Idaho, about 70 miles west of Yellowstone National Park, formed in a rhyolite-obsidian rock filled with gas pockets or cavities. The opal, a form of silica, was hydrothermally deposited when geyser activity brought silica rich water to the earth's surface over 4 million years ago. As this water seeped inside the hollow cavities, the opal formed in successive layers. The thin layers of opal that formed are extremely high quality with great transparency and a vivid play-of-color. Approximately 10% of the material is thick enough for cutting a solid opal cabochon; however, most of the material is too thin and therefore is fashioned into opal doublets and triplets. Opal doublets are thin slices of precious opal glued with epoxy onto a matrix material, usually black basalt. Opal doublets are often-times covered with a thin rock crystal quartz cap to make them more resistant to scratches and breakage. This is known as an opal triplet.

**Southern Charm** pearl earrings were designed and donated by jewelry designer Brenda Smith in 2016. The earrings were inspired by the wrought iron gates in Charleston, South Carolina and utilize natural freshwater pearls from the Tennessee River. The earrings are hand fabricated in blackened sterling silver with 18k yellow gold hand-forged leaves plated in 22k yellow gold for contrast. The earrings feature 26.49 carat weight pearls obtained from the Latendress Family Collection, acquired between 1949-1980.



"Southern Charm" Tennessee river pearl earrings by Brenda Smith.

# Gemstones



Smithsonian Institution  
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Brenda Smith likes to work with organic forms and specializes in custom pieces, working with gold, platinum, silver and all natural gemstones. She teaches jewelry design at the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts in Young Harris, Georgia and silversmithing in the Atlanta area. Her designs have been worn at the Academy Awards and chosen by celebrity stylist, Michael O'Connor. She was commissioned to design pearl jewelry for the documentary film, "Circling the Pacific" by the Cultured Pearl Association of America. Her awards include the International Pearl Design Competition by the Cultured Pearl Association of America.

**Sapphire Cobblestone-style bracelet** is made of blackened 18k gold and set with 288 cabochon cut blue sapphires totaling 209.3 carats. The cabochons are well-matched in color and are a mix of round, oval, and heart shapes. There are also 45 round brilliant cut diamonds set in white gold with a total weight of 0.76 ct. Each gem is set with four prongs in an open framed cell that is wire-wrap connected for flexibility. The bracelet was a gift to the Smithsonian from Laurence Blickman in 2016.



*Sapphire cobblestone style bracelet.*

Historically the finest sapphire gems came from Burma, Sri Lanka, and the Kashmir region of India. Although sapphires occur in a wide variety of colors, traditionally blue has been the most popular and valuable. Sapphire is the gem variety of the mineral corundum. Pure corundum is colorless, but small amounts of impurity atoms can impart a range of colors. In this case, iron and titanium are responsible for the beautiful blue color of the sapphire.

*This exhibit was made possible through the City of Elmhurst's Explore Elmhurst Community Grant Program. Explore Elmhurst is a marketing campaign developed to further promote community events and activities in Elmhurst to the public.*

*Dorothy Asher, Director of the Museum and gemologist co-curated this exhibit with Smithsonian gem curator Russell Feather. The Lizzadro Museum of Lapidary Art is a Smithsonian Affiliate.*

## New Acquisition

A superb celadon-white nephrite jade vase and cover from the late Qing Dynasty, early Republican Period (circa late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century) was added to the Lizzadro Collection in early 2017. The baluster form vase is impressive for its large size and quality of stone. The unadorned vase portion is lustrously polished with some opaque inclusions and veins. A pair of mythical beast-head handles each suspends a loose ring. The cover finial is carved in an intricate openwork coiled dragon providing a pleasing aesthetic contrast with the plain surface. The vase sits on a wood stand and measures 14 1/8 inches in height.



The vase is a unique addition to the jade collection on permanent display. It was purchased by the Lizzadro Family Foundation at Sotheby's in Hong Kong and was previously the property of a distinguished Asian family collection.

Large high quality jade boulders began to be sent as tribute gifts to the Qing Court during the reign of the Qianlong Emperor, after the Qing army's conquest of the Northwest Territories in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. These boulders, which came from the jade-rich territories of Khotan and Yarkand, were then selected to be carved by artisans working in the Palace Workshop, in the jade workshops of Suzhou or in those belonging to the Huai and Changlu administrations. The finished product was later presented to the court for approval before being displayed in the Palace.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century China's political, economic, and social conditions sank into devastation. As demand for jade remained high, the unemployed palace artisans set up workshops in Beijing. Some cities became centers of economic prosperity, such as Shanghai. As a port city under foreign control, Shanghai was exempt from Chinese law. The wealthy and nouveau riche continued to collect both traditional forms of jade and new styles. Many serious Chinese collectors who came to Shanghai focused more on ancient Chinese art and contemporary works that reflected antiquarian interests. A whole new group of archaic style objects were created for these collectors in China's various treaty ports.

### References

Sotheby's Hong Kong.

*Later Chinese Jades Ming Dynasty to Early Twentieth Century, Michael Knight et.al., 2007.*

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS JULY THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2017

JULY 22

## “Start Your Rockin’ Collection!”

Create your very own, personalized rock collection! Cartons and materials for decoration are provided. Each child can choose several rocks to start or fill in their collection carton. Rocks from home can also be brought in for identification.

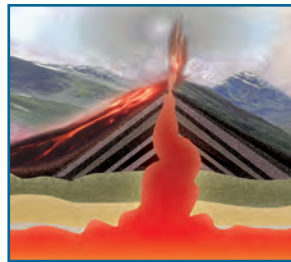
*Workshop - 2:00 p.m. - 60 minutes*

*Ages 5 to 10 yrs.*

*Fee: \$5.00 per person,*

*Museum Members Free*

*Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616*



## AUGUST 19 “Volcanoes”

Geologist Sara Kurth presents an interactive lecture on volcanoes. Discuss how volcanoes work, and compare different eruption styles. Focus on recent eruptions and explore how volcanoes can effect local and global communities. Hands-on specimens.

*Lecture - 2:00 p.m. - 60 minutes*

*Youth to Adult*

*Regular Museum Admission*

*Museum Members Free*

*Reservations Recommended*



AUGUST 26

## “Soapstone Carving”

Lapidary Lorel Abrell teaches soapstone carving using simple tools and techniques. Learn the basics from design to final polish. Take home a carving of your own creation. All materials are provided.

*Activity - ages 9 yrs to Adult*

*10 a.m. to 12 p.m.*

*Fee: \$15.00 per person,*

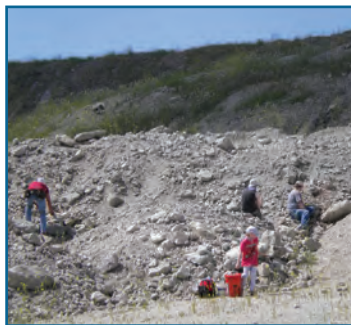
*Museum Members \$10.00*

*Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616*

## SPECIAL EXHIBIT “SMITHSONIAN GEMS” OPENS JULY 5, 2017



American jewelry designers and phenomenal gemstones are featured in this exclusive exhibit from the gem vaults of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. Regular Museum hours & admission.



JULY 14

## “Fossil Collecting Field Trip”

Travel by motor coach to Vulcan Quarry in Sycamore, Illinois. Collect Silurian and Ordovician Period marine fossils in shale and limestone. Collectable fossils include: brachiopods, cephalopods, corals, crinoids, gastropods, and more.

*Field Trip - Ages 8 yrs. to Adult*

*Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

*Fee: \$45.00 per person,*

*Museum Members \$40.00*

*Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616*

SEPTEMBER 16

## “Marvels In Marble”

Discover *Parchin Kari* the art of colored stone inlay in marble. The Taj Mahal is India's most exquisite example of stone intarsia. Sakina Bharani, gemologist and Museum docent, presents the history and modern techniques of this fascinating form of lapidary art. See beautiful specimens on display at the program.

*Lecture - Youth to Adult - 2 p.m.*

*60 minutes*

*Regular Museum Admission*

*Museum Members Free*

*Reservations Recommended*

SEPTEMBER 23

## “Rock & Mineral Identification”

Geologist Sara Kurth presents an introduction to rocks and minerals. Learn to identify minerals through basic hands-on identification including observation skills and hardness tests, great for rockhounds, Boy & Girl Scout merit badges and Professional Development credit.

*75 minutes - Ages 8 yrs. to Adult*

*10:30 a.m.*

*Fee: \$5.00 per person,*

*Museum Members \$3.00*

*Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616*

SEPTEMBER 23

## “Rockin’ Jewelry for Kids”

This beginner's class allows children to make their own gemstone jewelry to keep. Choose two different types of jewelry to make and learn how to work with jeweler's tools. Parties of 10 or more are encouraged to schedule a private class. Email: [educator@lizzadromuseum.org](mailto:educator@lizzadromuseum.org).

*1:30 p.m. - 75 minutes - Ages 8-16 years*

*Fee: \$10.00 per person*

*Reservations Required: (630) 833-1616*



## LIZZADRO MUSEUM OF LAPIDARY ART

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We would like to hear from you.

Please direct questions or comments

to: [info@lizzadromuseum.org](mailto:info@lizzadromuseum.org)