

The Millennium Sapphire

The Millennium Sapphire

A Tribute to Humankind

Cameron Cooper

&

Pascal Butel

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“Better to write for yourself and have no public, than to write for the public and have no self.”

Cyril Connolly

Preface

In 1996, an exceptionally large natural sapphire crystal was discovered in northern Madagascar.
Eventually, it made its way into the hands of someone who chose posterity over profit.
This is the remarkable story of the Millennium Sapphire.



Special thanks to designer Alessio Boschi, whose vision, masterful design skills and meticulous oversight assured the Millennium Sapphire was released from the precious crystal in which it was enclosed. And to too many others to mention, without whose vision, imagination, encouragement, support and contribution, this project would not have been possible.

Prologue

"The art of sculpting is to capture the essence of one's concepts and emotions, then channel them through your body to the chosen media of expression. I would be challenged to find a finer example of this discipline than Alessio Boschi's *Millennium Sapphire*.

So much of "modern" art seems to lack the application of time honored traditional skills, tending rather to lean on being different, weird, bizarre or sensational in order to temporarily grab ones attention. Today's audience is ever growing in need of something new to briefly amuse themselves. The fast paced media of technology numbs the mind and spirit with an addictive flow of rapidly changing images making traditional artistic skills irrelevant.

I am humbled when I contemplate the *Millennium Sapphire*. It is ancient yet so urgently contemporary, timeless yet revolutionary in its extreme concept of artistic expression. This sculpture considerably raises the bar setting a new standard in the world of sculpture."

Richard K. Diran

Richard K. Diran, an accomplished sculptor and oil painter, was in the first graduating class of the *California Institute of Art*. He is the author and photographer of "*The Vanishing Tribes of Burma*" launched at the *United Nations*, and is a Graduate Gemologist of the Gemological Institute of America.

The Sapphire Sea

A novel inspired by the Millennium Sapphire

Lonny Cushman is a gemologist who finds the perfect sapphire. He is in the backwater island of Madagascar. Everybody wants to take the sapphire from him. He is a lonely and troubled guy. His wealthy father has abandoned him. He in turn has abandoned his wife and daughter. He is an interesting but flawed protagonist. Things heat up, as those who want the sapphire will kill him to get it. He has to get off the island to sell the sapphire and reunite with his child. After a harrowing escape and the sale of the sapphire for 100 million dollars, his wishes are fulfilled.

Wealthy Lonny Cushman has run far from home to get away from his father, his soon-to-be ex-wife, and his failure with his daughter. Living in the town of Diego-Suarez on Madagascar, Lonny spends his days glad-handing the locals and bribing officials while he not-quite-legally buys and sells sapphires. Things come to a head rather quickly when Lonny stumbles across a peasant with the sapphire of a lifetime and buys it for \$20,000. He barely has time to return to his home in Diego-Suarez before things start to happen. The American embassy wants him off Madagascar for political reasons, and when rumors of the amazing stone he purchased start to circulate, his life is in danger. With a murder pinned on him, Lonny goes on the run with a French expatriate through the bush, fraught with many dangers of its own. Suddenly, Lonny's whole life has come down to one thing: getting off Madagascar alive...with the sapphire.

John B. Robinson

John B. Robinson graduated from Harvard and headed straight to Madagascar paid for by the Institute of Current World Affairs. He is the author of *The Sapphire Sea*, an fictional novel inspired by the true story of the Millennium Sapphire.

Forward

(Being written)

Andrew Walsh

Andrew Walsh is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. His current research focuses on the parallel rise and divergent fates of northern Madagascar's sapphire and eco-tourist trades. More specifically, he has been studying how the lives of the Malagasy people involved in these trades are shaped not only by the particular sorts of work required of them, but by the peculiar demands of the foreign consumers served by their work.

Dedication

Genesis 1:27 - “So God created man in his own image”

By creating man in his own image, God created a creator.

The Millennium Sapphire is dedicated to the creative genius of Humankind

Contents

Introduction

1	Introduction
2	Sapphire Geology
3	Sapphire Gemology
5	Sapphire and Technology
6	Sapphire Folklore
7	Sapphire Mysticism
8	Sapphire and Religion
9	Significant Sapphire Sources
10	Origin of the Millennium Sapphire
11	The Footstool of God
12	Famous Cut Sapphires
13	Famous Carved Sapphires
14	About the Designer
15	Conceptualization
16	The Four Doors
17	Figures 1 thru 102
18	Prototype Development
19	Completion
20	Comprehension
21	Documentation
22	Authors
23	Conclusion
24	Recognition

Introduction

In 1995, the Millennium Sapphire was discovered in Madagascar, an island nation located off the southeastern coast of Africa. Designated a national treasure, the initial value reported in the local press was between US\$90 and US\$500 million. The sapphire was the subject of considerable controversy and caused political turmoil that eventually led to the impeachment of the President of Madagascar.

After leaving Madagascar, the sapphire was examined by the Asia Institute of Gemological Sciences (AIGS) in Bangkok, Thailand and was given its certificate of identification. The AIGS staff had some of the first glimpses of the enormous gemstone.



One staff member's reaction was a stunned look, a pointed finger at the large blue mass, followed by, "Is that sapphire?"

The Gemological Institute of America, as well as prominent international laboratories and gemologists, also certified the Millennium Sapphire as natural sapphire. In August 2001, Guinness World's Records issued a certificate designating the sapphire as the World's largest carved sapphire.

The Original Millennium Sapphire was owned by a consortium lead by Daniel McKinney. Rather than break the large stone into smaller pieces, McKinney initiated the Millennium Sapphire project, hiring world-renowned artist, Alessio Boschi to design the carving. Months of research and design were poured into the project to bring art, historical accuracy and technical excellence into the finished carving.

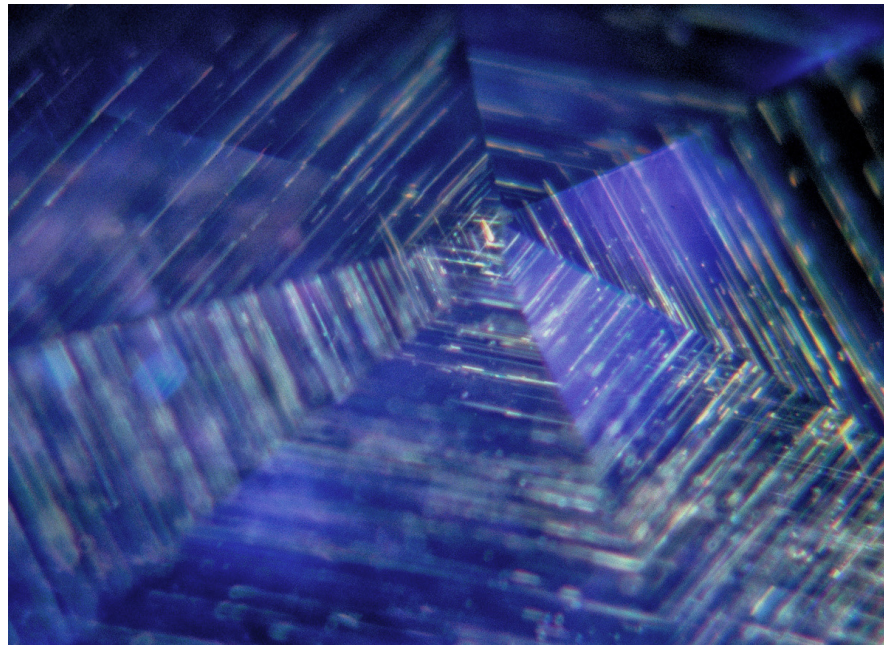
Sapphire Geology

Like most gemstones, sapphire is formed fairly deep in the earth. The reason that it's usually found in metamorphic rocks is because of the often intense pressure and heat that those rocks experience to change them. Like diamonds, sapphire requires only its base materials (aluminum and oxygen) to come into contact with heat and pressure in large enough amounts. When an igneous rock is made from cooling magma, crystals of sapphire may form inside it as the aluminum oxide cools and bonds together with other materials. Likewise, if aluminum oxide is present in a rock that changes and becomes a metamorphic rock, then that heat and pressure may cause the element to change and become crystals of sapphire.



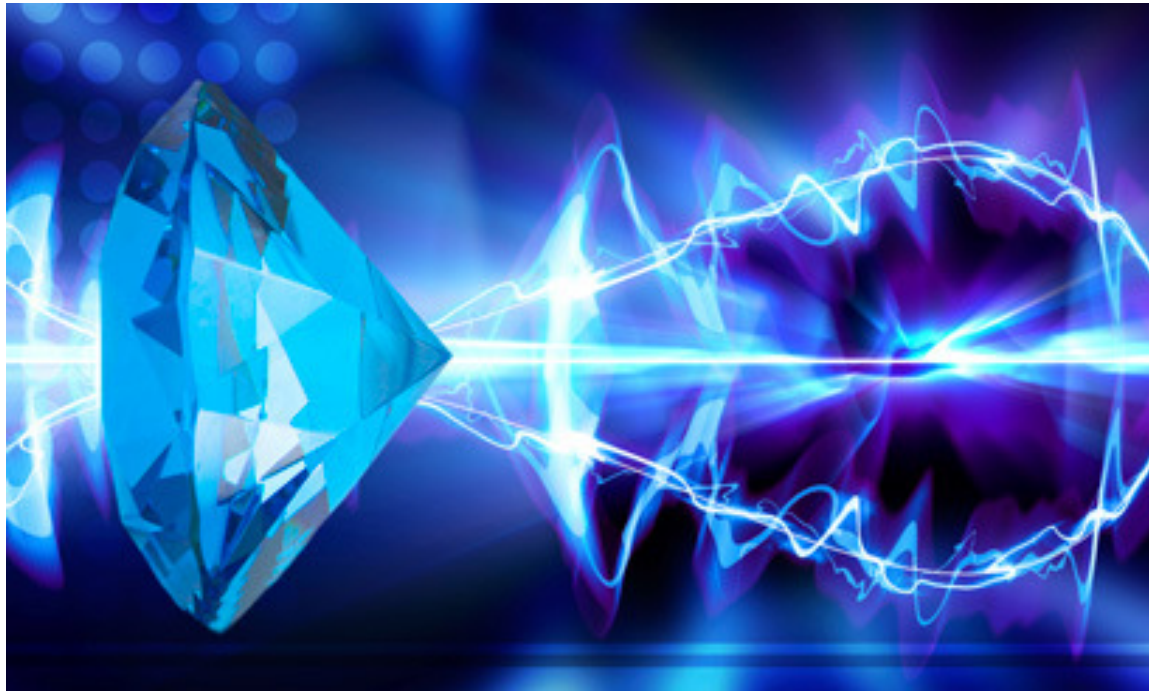
Sapphire Gemology

Sapphire (Greek: σάπφειρος; *sappheiros*, "blue stone"^[1]) is a gemstone variety of the mineral corundum, an aluminum oxide ($\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$), when it is a color other than red or dark pink; in which case the gem would instead be called a ruby, considered to be a different gemstone. Trace amounts of other elements such as iron, titanium, or chromium can give corundum, red, blue, yellow, pink, purple, orange, or greenish color. Pink-orange sapphires are also called Padparadscha. Pure chromium causes the red of rubies. However, a combination of e.g. chromium and titanium can give a sapphire its vivid blue colors.



Sapphire and Technology

Sapphires can be manufactured for industrial or decorative purposes in large crystal boules. Because of the remarkable hardness of sapphires (and of aluminum oxide in general), sapphires are used in some non-ornamental applications, including infrared optical components, such as in scientific instruments; high-durability windows (also used in scientific instruments); wristwatch crystals and movement bearings.



Sapphire is manufactured in very thin electronic wafers, which are used as the insulating substrates of very special-purpose solid-state electronics, most of which are integrated circuits.

Sapphire Folklore

Eastern cultures treasure the sapphire as a talisman for warding off evil; in India a sapphire necklace affords its wearer powerful protection. In the West, the unique star sapphire is known as the Stone of Destiny, with the three lines crossed lines that form the "star" representing Faith, Hope and Charity. Such is the power of the star sapphire it is believed the gemstone will continue to guide and protect its first wearer even after it has been passed to other people.



Greek mythology claims that when Prometheus stole fire from the gods to give to mortals he also stole a sapphire. The dreadful punishment exacted by the gods for this misdeed would indicate the sapphire failed to protect the unfortunate Prometheus. Ancient Persians believed the earth rested on a giant blue sapphire, and the gemstone's colour was reflected onto the sky.

In the Middle Ages blue gemstones were used to treat eye diseases and as an antidote to poison. Members of royalty wore sapphire around their necks to protect them from envy, poison and harm. Sapphires were considered to be an effective treatment for colic and rheumatism, as well as being used to ease certain mental illnesses.

The sapphire is considered an anti-depressant and has a positive effect upon different health issues, like hearing, burns and cancer. It also eases inflammation and lowers fevers. Sapphires are said to enable their wearers with insight, clairvoyance and telepathy. Natural healers use the sapphire to get rid of unwanted thoughts, and to bring joy, peace and wealth. It is also thought to help heal blood problems. The sapphire is used to treat the energy imbalances said to cause sore throats, headaches and nightmares.

Sapphire Mysticism

Belief in the mythological power of the sapphire was so strong it was said that a sapphire worn by a wicked, evil person would not shine. The sapphire was thought to have the power to influence spirits, and was popular with witches and necromancers who used it to communicate with the dead.



During the eighteenth century a gemstone known as the “Sapphire Merveilleux” became famous as a test of feminine virtue. This gemstone, like many sapphires, changed color according to the light source. In daylight it was a deep blue colour, changing to a deep violet under artificial light. To prove her faithfulness, or lack thereof, the subject had to wear the stone for three hours. The owner of this sapphire appears to have been aware of the light-changing feature - to establish the wearer’s innocence she would be given the stone to wear in daylight hours. When a subject’s guilt was sought the test would be scheduled to begin in daylight and end at night, when candles and lamps were the only source of light.

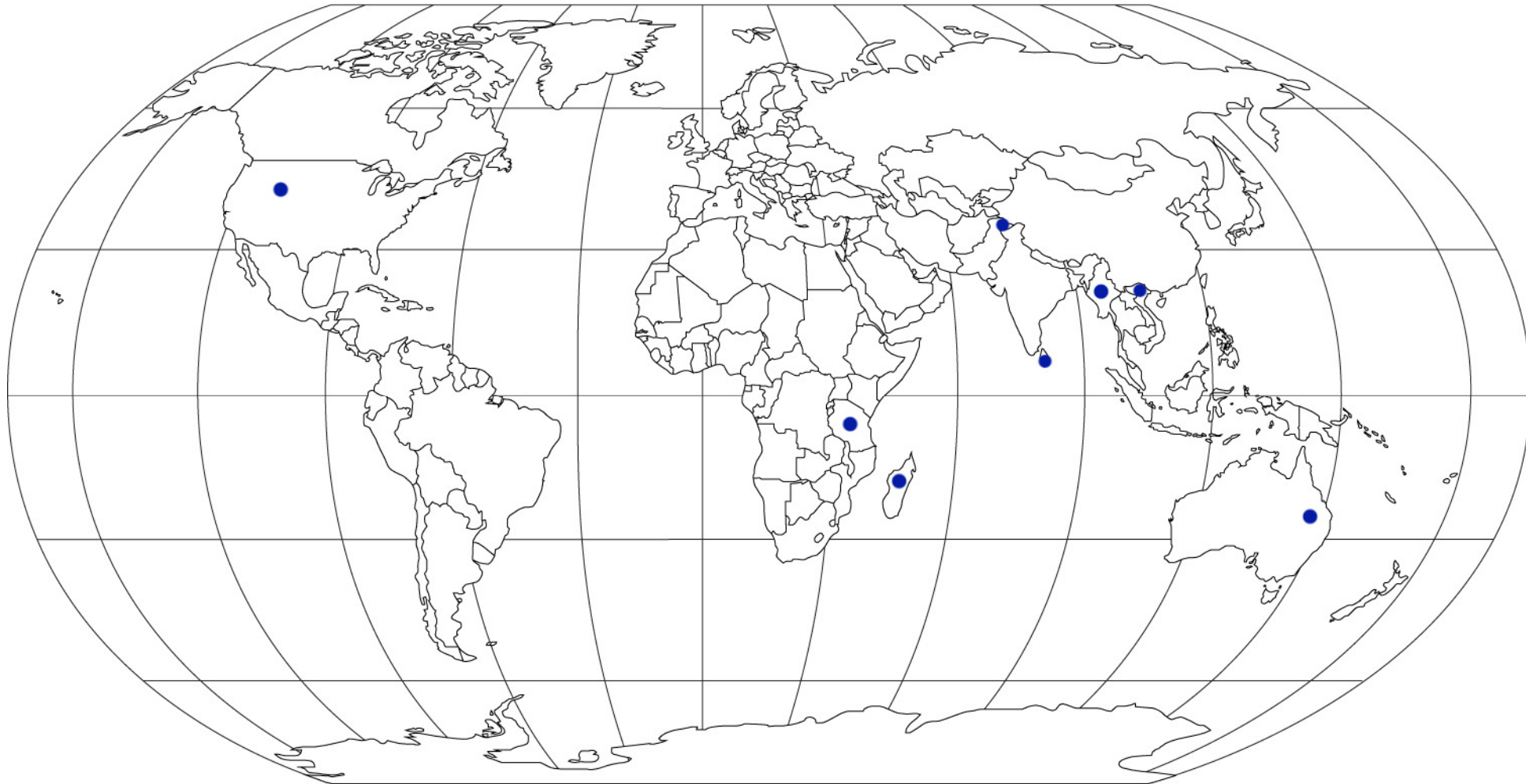
Sapphire and Religion

Ancient folklore claims the sapphire bestows spiritual enlightenment and inner peace upon its wearer, as well as providing protection from harm. Because sapphires were thought to hold the power of wisdom, those wearing these gemstones would be guided to make the correct decision when faced with obstacles and difficult situations. Sapphires have been credited with the ability to detect purity and faith, as well as possessing the power to foretell the future and attract divine favor. Because the sapphire represents purity of purpose and deed medieval-era church officials chose the gemstone to decorate their rings and scepters. Historically, Catholic Cardinal's rings were set with a sapphire.



The Ten Commandments handed to Moses by God in the Bible were said to have been carved on sapphire. Different English Bible translations believe the word “Sapir” in Exodus 28:18 is “sapphire”, referring to the stone on the garments of the priest of the Issacar tribe.

Significant Sapphire Sources

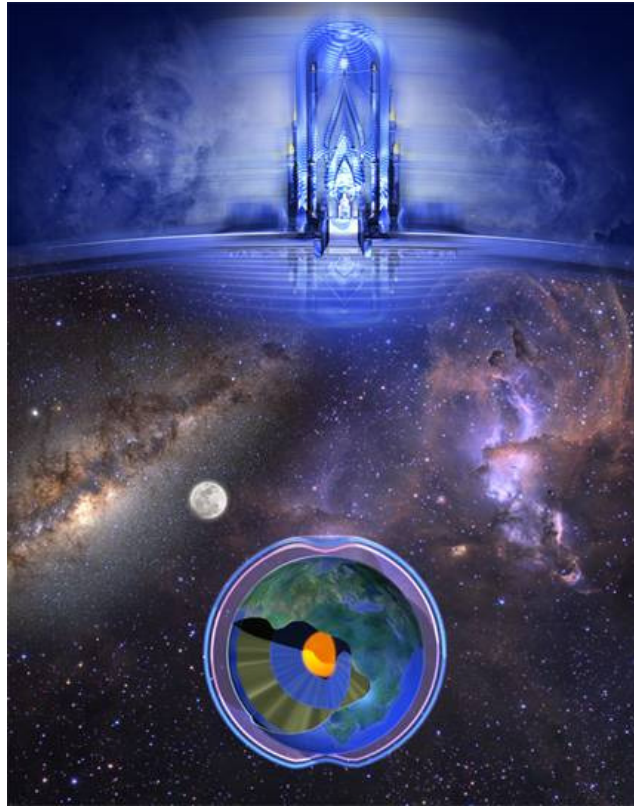


Significant sapphire sources include Kashmir, Burma, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Tanzania, Vietnam, USA and Australia

The Origin of the Millennium Sapphire



The Footstool of God



Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for me? And where is a place that I may rest? Isaiah 66:1

And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone. Exodus 24:10

The Millennium Sapphire presents the crowning achievements of God's greatest creation; Humankind. Therefore, we offer the Millennium Sapphire as the "Footstool of God"

Famous Cut Sapphires



422.99-carat *Logan Sapphire* from Sri Lanka
Smithsonian Institute



The Star of India is a 563.35 carat star sapphire, one of the largest such gems in the world.
The grayish blue gem was mined in Sri Lanka and is now kept in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City

Famous Carved Sapphires



Sapphire Buddha from Burma
British Museum of Natural History



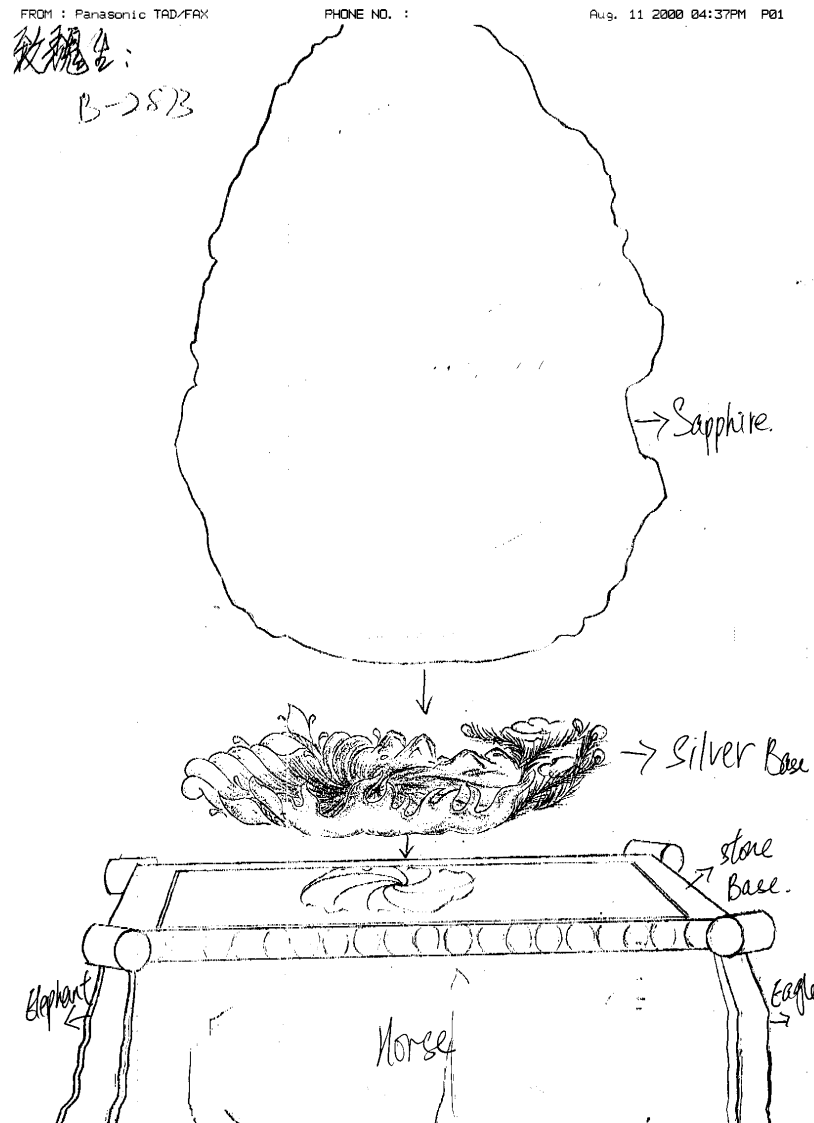
Carved from black star sapphire found in Central Queensland, Australia, these are busts of the American Presidents Lincoln (1318cts), Washington (1056cts), Eisenhower (1444cts) and Jefferson (1381cts). A fifth bust of Martin Luther King Junior has also been carved from an Australian sapphire that originally weighed 4180cts and the finished weight of the carving is 3284 carats. Commissioned by the Kazanjians.

About the Designer



Italian born Alessio Boschi has won many European, Asian and American awards for his designs. Selections of his works have been featured in prestigious venues around the world including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

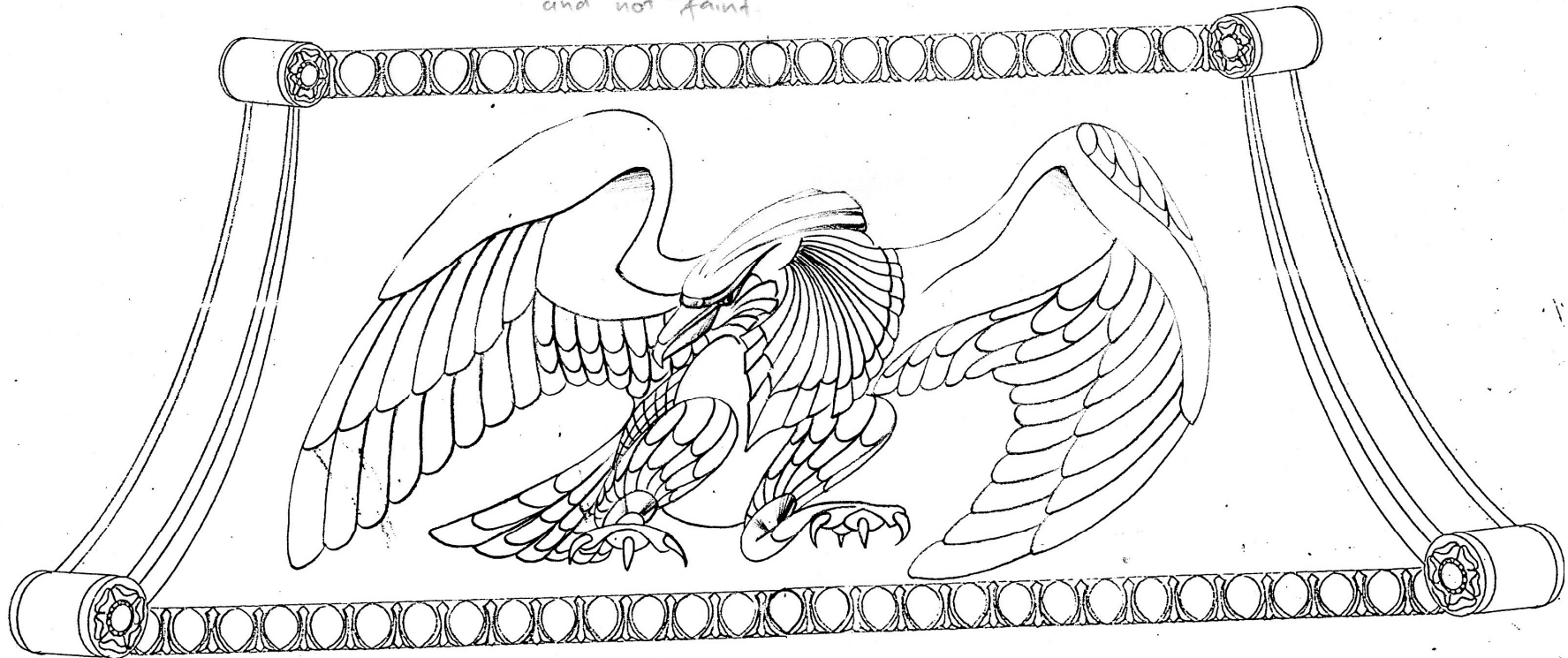
Conceptualization



The Four Doors: Air - Eagle

FOR THE DOOR OF THE AIR (EAGLE)

Isa 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew
their strength; They shall mount up with wings like
eagles, They shall run and not be weary, they walk
and not faint.



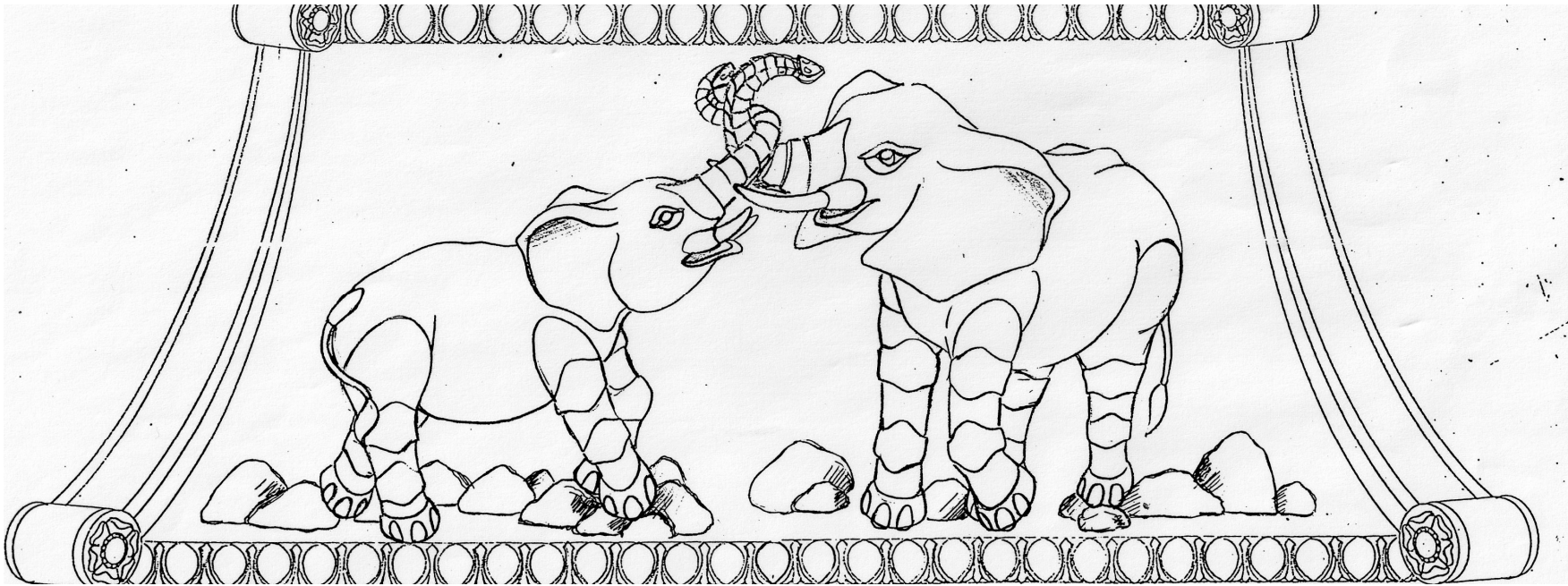
Water - Sea Horse

FOR THE DOOR OF THE WATER (SEA-HORSES)

Rev. 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.



Earth - Elephant

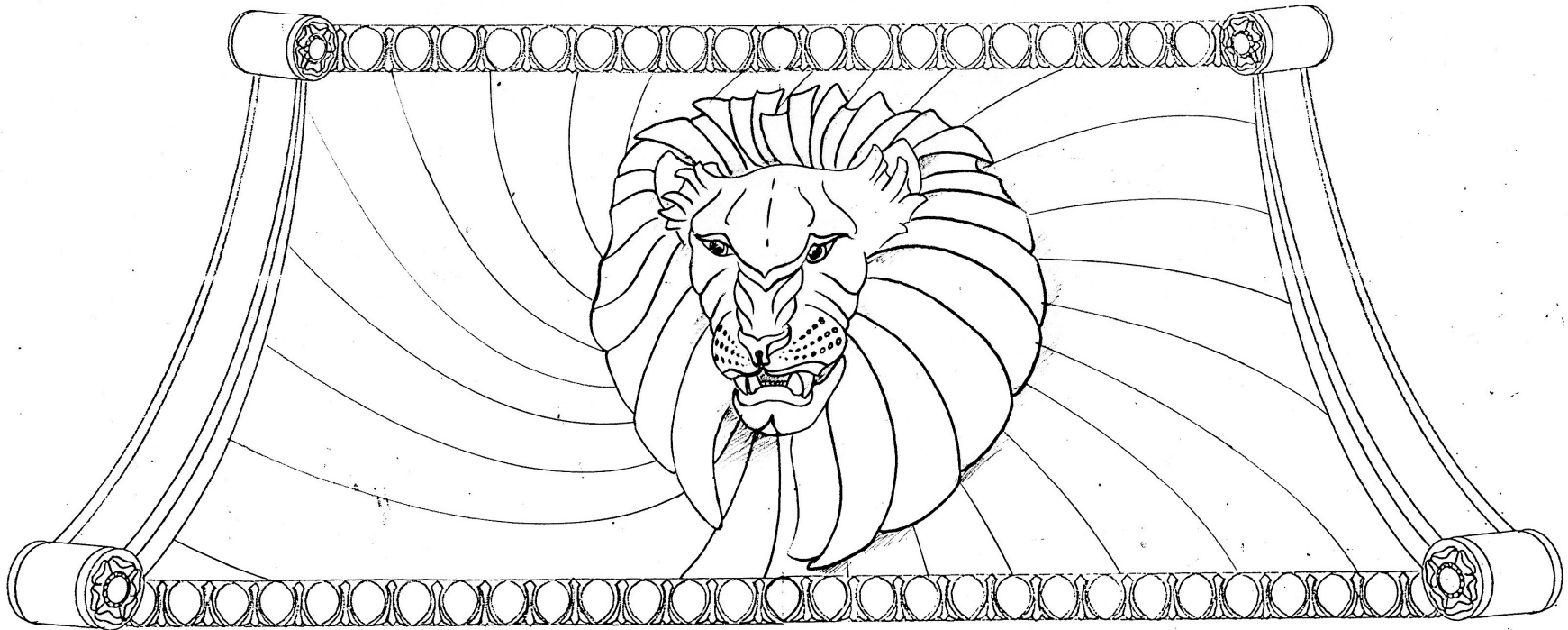


Fire - Lion

FOR THE DOOR OF THE FIRE (LION)

Num 23:24

Oh, what God has done! Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion.



Figures 1 thru 21

Partial list of figures

There are 134 figures in sequence spiraling up the carving supported by the figures in the four doors, air, water, earth and fire.

- Figure 1 -The Orion constellation
- Figure 2 - The three Pyramids of Giza.
- Figure 3 - Temple of Ur
- Figure 4 - The father of poetry, Humerus
- Figure 5 - Confucius
- Figure 6 - Discobolo (The discus thrower) of Mirone
- Figure 7 - Parthenon. Acropolis, Greece
- Figure 8, 9, 10 - Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- Figure 11 – Alexander the Great
- Figure 12 - Rafael painting inside the Room of the Signatory in the Vatican
- Figure 13 - Archimedes
- Figure 14 - Marble statue, l'Afrodite di Milo, Botticelli
- Figure 15 - Great Wall of China
- Figure 16 - Julius Caesar
- Figure 17 - Caesar Augustus
- Figure 18 - The Colosseum, Rome
- Figure 19 - Represents the Chinese, invention of paper by TS'AI LUN
- Figure 20 - Ptolemy
- Figure 21 - Mayan hieroglyphic writing, calendar. and the introduction in Mayan mathematical systems of " zero ".

Figures 22 thru 42

- Figure 22 - The Temple of Registrations, Mayan pyramid, Palenque, Mexico
- Figure 23 - Indian Numerology with the introduction of the zero.
- Figure 24 - Emperor Giustiniano I mosaic in the basilica of St. Vitale to Ravenna. He was the encoder of the Roman laws: Corpus Juris Civilis
- Figure 25 - Byzantine symbol of the eagle on a gold and enamel pin belonging to the empress Gisela
- Figure 26 - The exceptional mathematical and astronomic mastery of the Arabs appears evident in this plain Astrolabe.
- Figure 27 - Arabic numerical system that was adopted by Spaniards and eventually Italians
- Figure 28 - Samurai posted to watch an old building of the Shogun.
- Figure 29 - Castle of the Mountain, Bari, Italy.
- Figure 30 - Gold florin depicting the lily of Florence from which the name given to the coin was derived.
- Figure 31 - The dome of the Cathedral, Florence, Italy, built by Phillip Brunelleschi
- Figure 32 - "The Birth of Venus" painted by Sandro Botticelli, Florence, Italy
- Figure 33 - Donatell's "David" in bronze.
- Figure 34 - "David" performed by Andrew of the Verrocchio
- Figure 35 - Gutenberg's invention of the printing press
- Figure 36 - Leonardo da Vinci's "Proportions of the human body"
- Figure 37 - Leonardo da Vinci
- Figure 38 - Cristopher Colombus
- Figure 39 - Colombus' ship "Santa Maria"
- Figure 40 - Rafael's "Sanzio" self-portrait
- Figure 41 - Michelangelo's "David", Florence, Italy
- Figure 42 - Michelangelo bust by Volterra

Figures 43 thru 65

- Figure 43 - Nicolòs Copernicus' revolutionary theory that the Moon turns around the Earth and that the Earth and the other planets turn around the Sun.
- Figure 44 - Queen Elizabeth I of England
- Figure 45 - Portrait of, William Shakespeare
- Figure 46 - The telescope of Galileo built in 1609
- Figure 47 - Galileo Galilei
- Figure 48 - Bernini's "David, about to cast the stone"
- Figure 49 - Portrait of Gian Lorenzo Bernini
- Figure 50 - Borromini's tall lanternlike spiral tower on the Church of Sant'Ivo to the Wisdom, Rome, Italy
- Figure 51 - Isaac Newton
- Figure 52 - The reflecting telescope of Newton built in 1688.
- Figure 53 - Johan Sebastian Bach
- Figure 54 - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
- Figure 55 - Ludwig Van Beethoven
- Figure 56 - François Marie Arouet better known as Voltaire
- Figure 57 - Jean - Jacques Rousseau
- Figure 58 - Benjamin Franklin
- Figure 59 - James Watt
- Figure 60 - Johann Wolfgang Goethe
- Figure 61 - First flight in a hot-air balloon, the brothers Montgolfier.
- Figure 62 a and b - Two symbols of the French revolution. People in Paris rebel at the high taxes, the wealth and extravagance of King Louis XVI
- Figure 63 - The English physician Edward Jenner
- Figure 64 - Alexander Volta invents the first torchlight and in his honor the electric unit is called the " volt ".
- Figure 65 - Robert Fulton used the discoveries of Watt to invent the steamboat

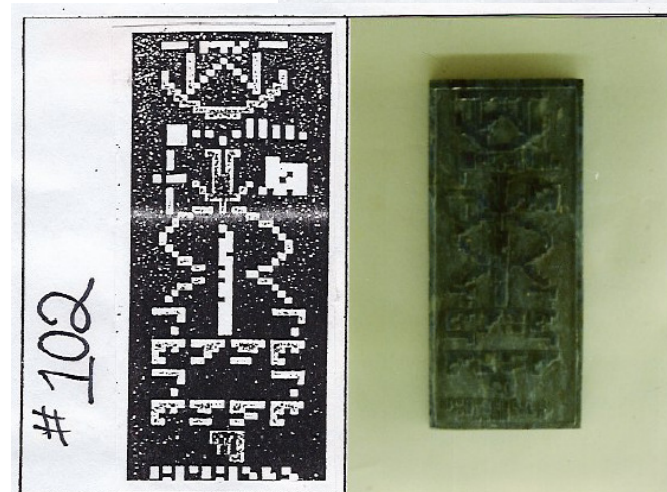
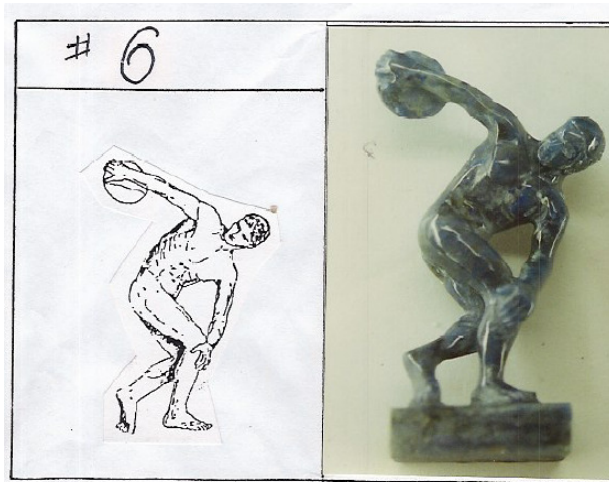
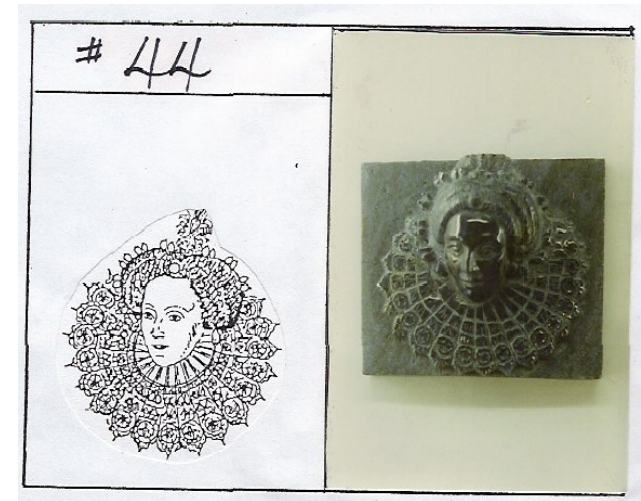
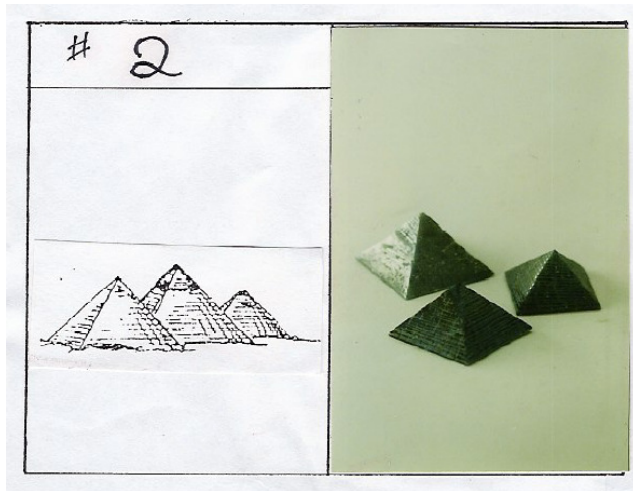
Figures 66 thru 88

- Figure 66 - George Stephenson introduces the first locomotive, the Bentcher
- Figure 67 - Louis Daguerre conceived the first photographic method: the daguerrotipo, patented and produced by his brother-in-law Alphonse Giroux.
- Figure 68 - 1851, London, the Great Exposition of Culture and Industry, architect by Joseph Paxton
- Figure 69 - Louis Pasteur
- Figure 70 - Monet's "Impression, soleil levant"
- Figure 71 - Thomas Alva Edison
- Figure 72 - Gottlieb Daimler put a motor on four wheels and created the original Gasoline Buggy
- Figure 73 - "Kiss" by August Rodin
- Figure 74 - Self-portrait of Vincent Van Gogh
- Figure 75 - August and Louis - Jan Lumière had invented the "cinematographe".
- Figure 76 - William Marconi (1874 - 1937) it was the inventor of the radio
- Figure 77 - The first flight of the Flyer I built by brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright
- Figure 78 - Chimney's on the roof of a house in Mil? Barcellona, Spain, by Antoni Gaud?
In the foreground the structure can be compared to the lantern tower of the Borromini of Sant'Ivo to the Wisdom (figure 50).
- Figure 79 - "Dance" by Henri Matisse and preserved in the museum of the ermitage of St.
- Figure 80 - Albert Einstein
- Figure 81 - Charlie Chaplin
- Figure 82 - Architect Gropius's masterpiece the "Bauhaus", Dresden, Germany
- Figure 83 - Charles A. Lindbergh and his "Spirit of St. Louis"
- Figure 84 - Walt Disney
- Figure 85 - "Woman in the fire of the Suburb of Rafael" Picasso
- Figure 86 - Italian physicist Henry Fermi discovers nuclear division
- Figure 88 - Louis Armstrong

Figures 89 thru 102

- Figure 89 - Mohandas Gandhi
- Figure 90 - Corbousier's "Unit?d'habitation" di Marsiglia
- Figure 91 - James Watson and Francis Crick discover the structure of DNA
- Figure 92 - Russian satellite Sputnik, first to orbit the earth
- Figure 93 - Elvis Presley
- Figure 94 - Martin Luther King
- Figure 95 - The Beatles
- Figure 96 - Singer Maria Callas
- Figure 97 - Alfred Hitchcock
- Figure 98 - Apollo 11, first astronaut to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong
- Figure 99 - The satellite "Mariner 10"
- Figure 100 - Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Nobel Peace prize winner
- Figure 101 - The Space Shuttle
- Figure 102 - Transmission into space by the radio antenna Arecibo, translated in electric impulses, according to the binary code, is the story of humans on planet earth

Prototype Development



Completion



Comprehension

Pascal Butel, Art expert, critic and collector



Translated from French:

(3 to 5 pages of text with photos)



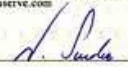
Documentation

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Date:

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 GUBELIN GEM LAB	
GEMMOLOGISCHER BERICHT · RAPPORT GEMMOLOGIQUE GEMMOLOGICAL REPORT	
No. Datum · Date	0009553 13 November 2000
Gegenstand Objet Item	One carved and polished gem material.
Gewicht Poids Weight	12.3 kg
Schliff Taille Cut	Not applicable
Abmessungen Dimensions Measurements	approximately 28 x 19 x 15 cm
Transparenz Transparence Transparency	opaque
Farbe Couleur Colour	mottled blue, grey and brownish
IDENTIFIKATION IDENTIFICATION IDENTIFICATION	NATURAL CORUNDUM
Bemerkungen Commentaires Comments	See Appendix.
 GEMMOLOGISCHES LABOR · LABORATOIRE GEMMOLOGIQUE · GEMMOLOGICAL LABORATORY Mailhofstrasse 102 · CH-8000 Lucerne 9 · Switzerland · Tel. (41) 41 - 429 17 17 · Fax (41) 41 - 429 17 34 www.gubelinlab.com · e-mail: gubelinlab@compuserve.com	
 Christopher P. Smith, G.G.	 Nicole Surdez, G.G.
Wichtige Anmerkungen und Einschränkungen auf der Rückseite · Remarques au verso · Important notes and limitations on the reverse. Copyright © 1999 Gubelin Gem Lab Ltd.	

Gubelin Appendix Letter text....



APPENDIX

to Gemmological Report No. 0009553

The 12.3 kg carved natural corundum described in the accompanying GGL Report has been named the Millennium Sapphire, to honour the beginning of the 21st century. This ornately carved gem material has a number of important personalities, places, inventions and works of art that were significant during the course of our history, covering its surface. From the bottom of the carving, the four essential elements of our planet; earth (soil), air, water and fire, form the foundation from which the rest of the individual carvings are built upon. From there, beginning with the Orion constellation, one hundred and two miniatures wind their way around and up this massive piece of corundum, where they culminate at the apex with a binary code of human development on the planet Earth.

This striking art object reportedly required 15 months to design and execute, whereas the original corundum crystal was reportedly mined in 1996.

Gubelin Gem Lab

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christopher P. Smith'.

Christopher P. Smith

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Surdez'.

Nicole Surdez

Lucerne, 13 November 2000

The United States of America



**CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION
PRINCIPAL REGISTER**

The Mark shown in this certificate has been registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office to the named registrant.

The records of the United States Patent and Trademark Office show that an application for registration of the Mark shown in this Certificate was filed in the Office; that the application was examined and determined to be in compliance with the requirements of the law and with the regulations prescribed by the Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office; and that the Applicant is entitled to registration of the Mark under the Trademark Act of 1946, as Amended.

A copy of the Mark and pertinent data from the application are part of this certificate.

This registration shall remain in force for TEN (10) years, unless terminated earlier as provided by law, and subject to compliance with the provisions of Section 8 of the Trademark Act of 1946, as Amended.



Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office

Authors



Cameron Cooper has worked in print media in Asia for over two decades, covering a wide range of subjects. He has been an editor and writer at GemKey Magazine, Yomiuri Shimbun and Dow Jones Newswires, as well as launching and publishing Bangkok-based Untamed Travel magazine. He has also contributed features and interviews to the National Geographic Traveller, Toronto Star, Melbourne Age, The Independent (UK), BBC radio and television, and taught media studies at Thailand's Thammasat University.



Pascal Butel is a fourth-generation private collector of exceptional ancient Asian art. After earning a Master's Degree in Thai Language and Civilizations from INALCO (Oriental Languages and Civilizations National Institute, Paris), Pascal began building upon his inherited family collection. Over 20 years of field experience and first-hand knowledge of Asian culture and antiques has honed his expertise and made him a leading authority in Buddha iconography. As a devoted collector, Pascal has acquired "one of Bangkok's most stunning private collections of antiques" (Time Magazine International Edition, April 2011). He has lectured before prestigious groups such as the WPO (World Presidents Organization).