

NEWS SAN DIEGO

Fall 2013

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Happy Hours are typically held the last Thursday of each month. WJA - San Diego Chapter is planning some exciting events for the upcoming months. Please bear in mind that dates are subject to change - go to the San Diego Chapter section of www.womensjewelryassociation.com for event updates and registration.

Stay informed through privileged access to the resourceful local and national WJA websites and social networking groups.

Find out how to apply for grants and scholarships for continued professional education and training. For more information please contact: Lisa Slovis Mandel, lisa@lisaslovis.com.



Jewelry Night Out event. From left: Rebecca Buys, Joyce Boyajian, Barbara Wasserstrom and Lisa Slovis Mandel. Photo: Orasa Weldon

JEWELRY NIGHT OUT

September 12th, 2013

Bill Boyajian was our special moderator for Jewelry Night Out. The noted San Diego-based business consultant, speaker and author was extraordinarily engaging and fun. A master of persuasion, would-be members lined up to join the association following his presentation. WJA would like to thank him for this service.

The ladies who were part of the panel offered great advice for the attendees, particularly during these challenging economic times. All agreed that attention and detail regarding customer service was particularly important. And conversation following the event reflected a stimulating panel.

Greetings WJA San Diego

On behalf of the board and myself, I want to say hurray for WJA San Diego!



Kate Donovan

First, I also want to extend a special welcome to all our San Diego members who recently joined or extended membership at Jewelry Night Out. We look forward to seeing you at all our future events!

What an amazing group of ladies and gentlemen that we can proudly say are members of our chapter. This dynamic group continues to amaze me; many have contributed and accomplished so much in the gem and jewelry trade, while others are just starting their path to do so. The collective resource and wealth of talents our colleagues possess is a WJA member benefit that simply cannot be measured.

This was never more evident than at our Jewelry Night Out in September. Seeing the extraordinary panel that included **Katey Brunini**, **Barbara Wasserstrom**, **Jean Radakovich** and our special guest moderator **Bill Boyajian** – was a perfect perspective of the talent that make up our membership. Plus, watching the nearly 65 local industry attendees “in action” – networking and making business connections - was the success above all else.

As a member, we encourage you to be an active participant so you can gain the most and the chapter’s year is far from winding down. Stay tuned for our October “Last Thursday” happy hour, our November gathering and the holiday party in early December.

See you there!

Kate

Note of Appreciation

We want to give thanks to the many people who help us put together our newsletter. We thank **Robert Weldon** who is always there ready to assist whenever we need beautiful pictures and editorial ideas. We thank **Dr. Çiğdem Lüle** for her expertise and for sharing her wealth of knowledge with our members. We always get excited when Dr. Lüle says “yes” to our requests for an article. We thank **Cynthia Renée** for sharing her unique perspective in looking at our world, and for stimulating us to see things differently. And we send a big thank you to **Brooke Goedert** for her editing skills, and for making us shine! We are so lucky to have GIA near to us and the GIA Library always offering a helping hand.

From all of the members of the Women’s Jewelry Association, San Diego Chapter, we thank you.



Don't miss!
Our annual Holiday Party

Check your email

More information is coming soon.

- Our holiday party is where you meet others from our industry
- You make new contacts for your business
- Good food, good friends
- Help us welcome our new chapter president
- Enjoy our silent auction



Jeanne Larson

1. What do you know now that you wish you knew then?

Jeanne: I wish I knew that the phenomenal rise of women in the jewelry industry was about to take off within 10 years of my start in 1977! It was a very different world then, and far more challenging to establish your credibility with manufacturers, stone dealers, and the buying public! I have always had an all-female team of sales personnel, stone-cutters and goldsmiths. I believed in our abilities to provide quality, knowledgeable and excellent service to our customers. The rise of the women self-purchaser was a big boon to our business. Networking and sharing of business information that has been made possible through WJA has been a tremendous support in my career development and that of various staff members.

2. What do you see as a new trend in the jewelry industry?

Jeanne: What's trending now are unique looks with sleeker, crisper, more contemporary lines and a European flair using blackened gold, diamond beads, both diamonds and gems used in their rough forms, crafty, hand-worked treatment of metals, gem slices, turning inclusions into features; mixed precious and non-precious ma-

WITH JEANNE LARSON "To be successful, stay positive, work diligently, embrace your faith, and recognize that there are always ups and downs in life."

terials, necklaces worn wrapped as bracelets, and so forth. It's all about layering and combining different designs and textures to create your own everyday, individual look.

3. If you could offer one piece of advice to women jewelry professionals, what would it be?

Jeanne: To be successful, stay positive, work diligently, embrace your faith, and recognize that there are always ups and downs in life.

4. Who has most influenced you in the jewelry industry?

Jeanne: My husband, Bill, who is a walking encyclopedia on the history, mining, lore of the gemological and mineralogical world. He has been an inspiring teacher and mentor. In addition, I have had the good fortune to learn from many of our close friends and associates from Jose Hess to Henry Dunay to Giuseppe Pichiotti in manufacturing, to Jim Shigley and Vince Manson in research, to Gerhard Becker and the Kleins in gem carving.

5. What is your favorite gemstone or piece of jewelry?

Jeanne: That is a very difficult question to answer! Before I started my career in the industry, my favorite gemstone was Blue Sapphire. I love the color blue. However, I have now had the privilege to experience the best of the best of all gemstones and now answer my favorite gemstone, Tourmaline. The multitude of color hues is astounding. I still love blues so paraiba is my favorite! I designed a mag-

nificent ring featuring a 4ct ruby for a client. She loved the ring but needed to adjust one dimension which necessitated a new mounting. So I ended up with the previous one. It just so happened that my husband was involved with the Mozambique material, and I was able to cut a perfect stone for it! Voila, it became my 25th anniversary gift and my favorite piece of jewelry!

To find out more about Jeanne Larson, go to www.collectorfinejewelry.com

We Welcome | Irene Wetsman



Irene Wetsman

Where did you grow up and how long have you lived in San Diego?

Although not originally from San Diego, I grew up here and consider myself an “almost native”. I originated from Philadelphia and moved to San Diego as a child because of my father’s work. It was intended to be for only two years and here we are....still here!

What is your connection to the jewelry industry?

My connection to the jewelry industry is something that just evolved. I was an art major in college and always enjoyed drawing and creating along with an interest in art history. After college I worked in the antique industry, buying and selling, which is still a passion to this day. That expanded into dealing in antique and estate jewelry. Realizing I lacked some knowledge in identifying gem stones when purchasing antique jewelry, I signed up for classes and completed the gem identification course at the Gemological Society of San Diego. Perhaps I will make the leap and take some of the courses given by the Gemological Institute of America. I always admire those who are able to complete those courses.

How many years have you been in the industry?

I had been making jewelry as a hobby for many years, creating things for myself and giving away others for gifts. As my ‘designs’ grew in popularity, I started to become serious about it and selling approximately 6 years ago. After the gem identification class at the Gemological Society of San Diego, I started taking the silversmithing classes at San Diego Mineral & Gem Society. My present desire is to continue with my new found passion of repoussé.

Why did you join WJA?

I joined WJA, interestingly, because of my first repoussé class in San Diego in December 2012. A member of WJA who sponsored the workshop invited me to an event WJA was having that evening. And so I joined! I hope to have the opportunity to meet other members and learn about additional areas of the jewelry industry. I enjoy learning new things!



Cynthia Renée creates a collection inspired by nature

A Woman's Heart

"Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting --
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things."

- Mary Oliver



Reading these lines in the fall of 2011, I knew I had found a kindred spirit in the poet Mary Oliver, whose writings celebrate the world's beauty, while also acknowledging its sometimes sharp and unforgiving edges.

I am a trained geologist, colored gem hunter, and designer of custom jewels, and was living through one of the most painful experiences of my life—an unexpected divorce. Yet in the midst of it, I was also rediscovering the fierce allure of nature, which shocked my senses and set me on a new path of artistic discovery.

Beauty and nature have always pulled me back from the depths, and I found myself turning again and again to the metaphors the natural world provided. It can be a harsh and impersonal place, but it is also filled with majesty and redemption. In the past, almost all of my creations had been inspired by my clients, or were designed around a particular gemstone. I saw Paula Crevoshay at the 2012 Tucson Show and she urged me to pour my life situation into my designs. It was a new, and freeing, experience to use my own life's journey to create a collection.

The components I choose to mix as inspiration for these life statements were the poetry of Mary Oliver and the exquisitely illustrated fairy tale books of my own childhood, which I was then reading to my daughters. Those tales speak of trials and resurrections in enchanted kingdoms where animals wear jewels and play violins. I then set to work to create a series of three-dimensional jeweled creatures, each based on a different Mary Oliver poem, to express my awe and wonder at the nature I was experiencing. I felt they would also speak to the heart of many women as they travel life's trajectories. Many of the works of art are wearable as brooches, pendants, and earrings; some can double as small sculptures.

Since 1993, I have been collaborating with San Diego WJA Member Mirjam Butz Brown in the crafting of my pieces. I think these results are stunning, from a jeweled owl queen who perches on a green tourmaline crystal and sports mother-of-pearl claws and beak, to earrings depicting mice curled around moonstone cat's eyes with diamond accents. The described "Owl Queen" brooch took home "Best in Palladium and Color"

over six categories of palladium-made colored gem jewelry in the prestigious 2013 Spectrum Design Awards from the American Gem Trade Association. It was a big win and furthered my feelings of resurrection.

While the owl queens are wild and fierce, I also celebrate other flora and fauna that live in the woods where I hike near my North Carolina home, as well as more domesticated creatures, such as dogs. I like to combine these natural images with the fantastical features often found in children's books, where animals might wear jewels and crowns.

"The Owl Queen" brooch featuring barn owl hand-carved in petrified palm wood with a crown of 950 palladium accented by 0.15 carats diamonds and hand granulation. The Owl Queen surveys her world perched on a 42.57 carat natural, green Tourmaline crystal "fence post" complete with hand-made stainless steel "barb wire." Winner of 2013 AGTA Spectrum Award for "Best of Palladium and Color." Photo: Robert Weldon

"Faithful Companion" brooch/pendant featuring hand-carved hound head of petrified wood and carnelian accented by a 0.50 carat radiant-cut Bronze Zircon dog tag; set in 18 kt yellow gold. Photo: Robert Weldon

To find out more about Cynthia Renée, go to www.cynthiarenee.com

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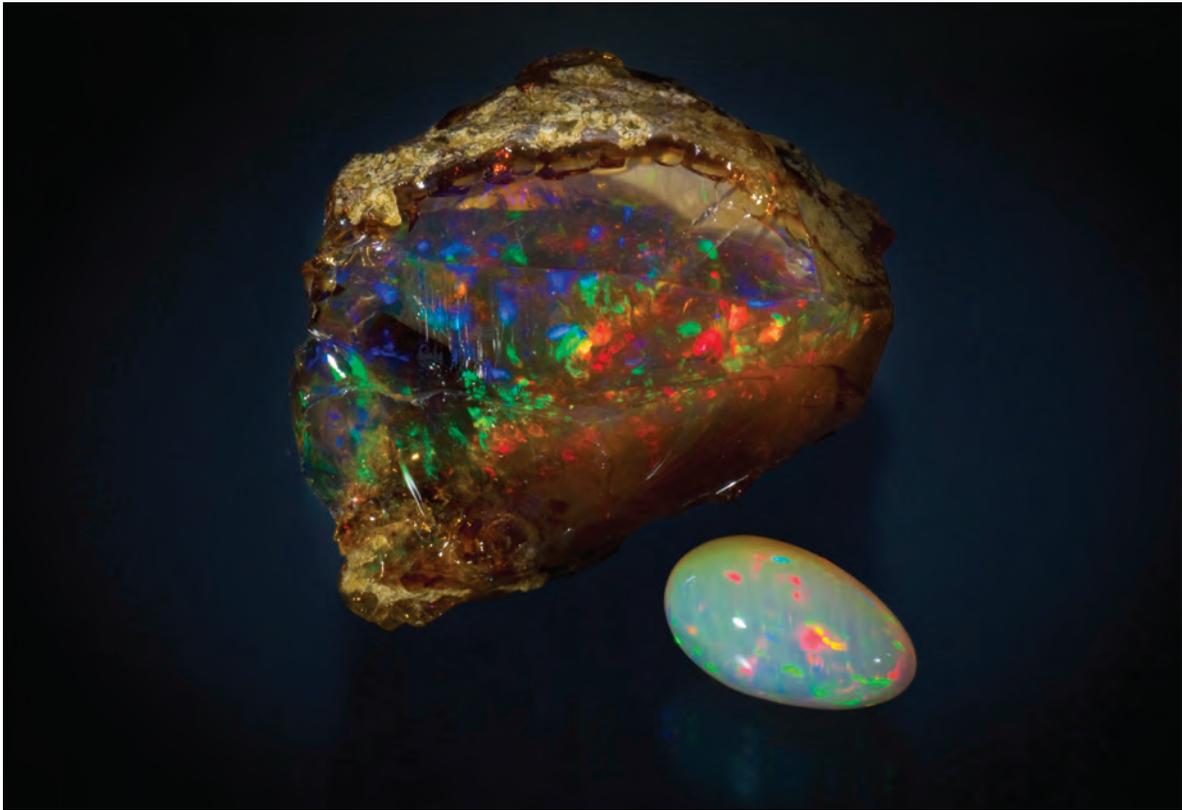
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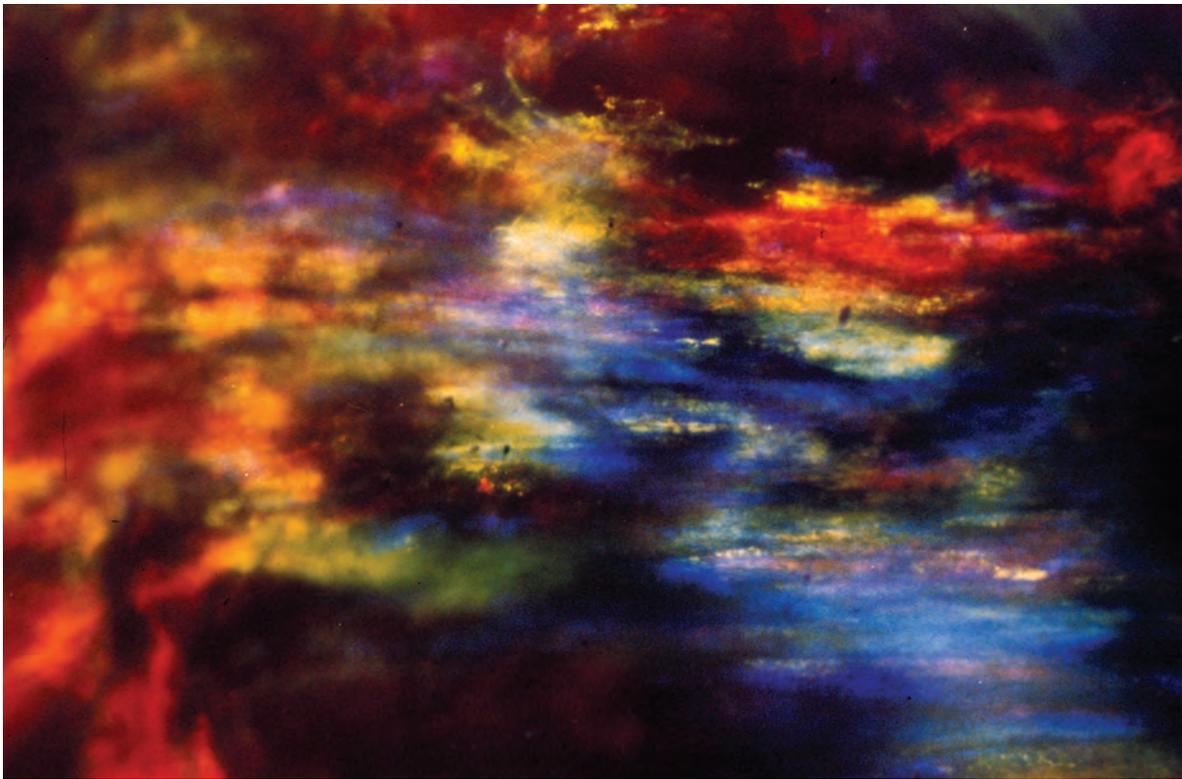
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5. Local Chair for Membership

Opal: Colors of Rainbow



Rough and cut opal from Ethiopia. Courtesy of Cenki Thomas. Photo: Robert Weldon/GIA.



The world of vibrant color seen when viewing an opal in reflected light, in a word, spectacular. Oblique illumination. 40x. Photo: John I. Koivula/GIA.

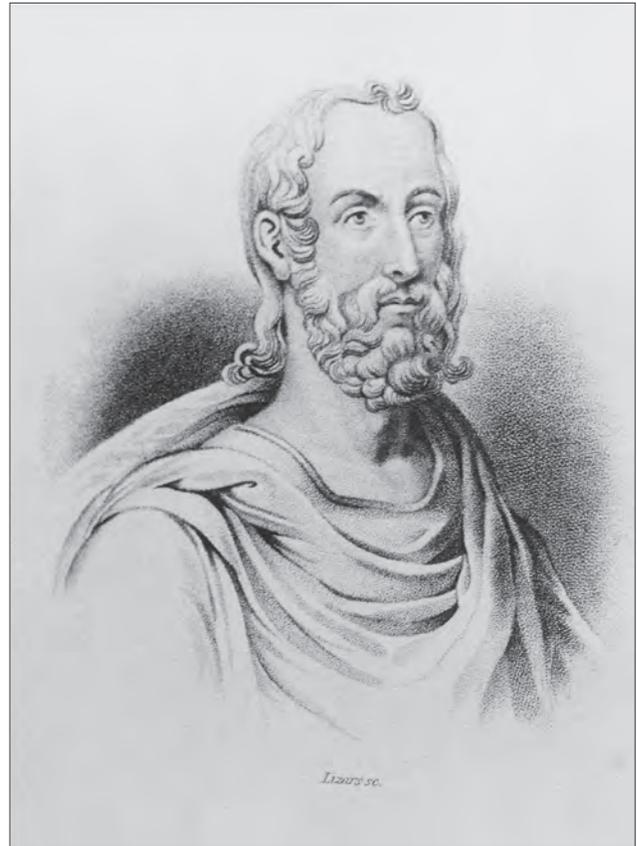
Colors of Rainbow

By Dr. Çiğdem Lüle, PhD, FGA, GG (GIA)

*H*ow much can one love opals? For the incurable opal lover fortunate enough to have an extraordinary stone in their collection there is no sacrifice too big to make. Roman Senator Nonius of 1st century AD possessed such a prized opal gem. In time Nonius would be demoted in rank and exiled for refusing to give up his beloved opal. It is written that fellow Roman Mark Antonius coveted opals and had made an offer to Nonius for his remarkable opal ring. Nonius refused it flatly, and then found himself banished from Rome forever on threat of death. The fate of the stone is unknown, as no further record of it is known.

It is clear that there is a little more than love of a stone in this story. It is mainly about power as Ancient Romans highly regarded opals as a symbol of power. Wealthy and noble citizens of Rome always possessed rare gems and glamorous jewelry as symbols of status. This practice was loathed by Pliny the Elder, although he had admiration for gems too. Pliny ranks opals next to emeralds. His infamous description of this gem is still used to reflect the beauty and unique phenomenon. In order to describe the play-of-color in opal, Pliny uses every coveted gem with their color as an analogy. According to him, opals glitter with fire of ruby, sea green of emerald and glorious purple of amethyst mixed together. Although his words reflect the beauty of opal, he wasn't correct about where it came from. He wrote that opals were coming from India, just like many other rare gems of his time. Romans had a vibrant gem trade and the gem merchants probably wanted to glamorize opal by associating it with an oriental source. However, the only source that opals could be found back then was in modern day Slovak Republic, for some reason, referred to as Hungarian mines in records. These mines produced opals for an astonishing 2000 years until the early 1920s.

Archaeological evidence indicates that opals were used as adornments by humans as early as 4,000 BC, based on a discovery in a cave in Kenya. Small local finds in the Middle East, Mexico, Peru and Honduras have been reported at various times in history, but none has amounted to big production or trading. However, it is known that the



Pliny, The Elder, 1496. Photo: Public domain.

Spanish did bring some opals from Peru to Europe during the 17th century. These were known as Aztec opal.

But historically, the major suppliers of opals to the important European gem trade were the Hungarian mines. This changed, however, with the discovery of rich opal deposits in Australia in the 19th century.

Throughout the Middle Ages in Europe, opal was attributed magical powers just like any other gem. It was believed that it could make the owner invisible should it be wrapped in bay leaf and kept in a pocket. It was also known as the stone of thieves, most probably, the thieves managed to be “invisible” most of the time. Later in the 18th century into the 19th, it was believed to be unlucky. Historians suggest that there are two major reasons for it. First one is a dramatic event that its cruelty can make look



Left: 13.60ct Australian opal from Lightning Ridge. Courtesy of Gerry Manning. Photo: Robert Weldon/GIA. Right: A 10.86 ct. Ethiopian opal enhancer set in 18k yellow and white gold, featuring diamonds and yellow sapphires. Leslie Weinberg Designs. Photo: Robert Weldon.

anything unlucky. As the story goes, one royal opal ended up getting broken in the hands of a goldsmith during setting. Louis XI had no mercy for such a mistake and ordered the goldsmith's hands cut off. One can only imagine what kind of horror the other goldsmiths had been through and never wanted to touch an opal following the event for a long time. The other reason that it had a bad reputation was an infamous novel written by Sir Walter Scott titled *Anne of Geierstein* in 1829. The heroine of the book dies when her opal loses its color. Readers of the book took it literally and believed that opal was unlucky. A careful reading of the book suggests the opposite. George F. Kunz wrote in his book, *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*, that Scott hadn't meant to represent opal as unlucky.

During the 19th century, the Hungarian mines were coming to an end and the opals coming to the market were easily crazed. Some researcher suggested that low grade opals contributed to its bad reputation.

The glamour of opal was restored gradually with the Australian material. The massive new mines produced big and dazzling opals that the Europeans had not seen in a long time. British gem dealers were skeptical at the beginning. They thought these opals were too good to be true and believed they were fake. Queen Victoria, however, loved

opals and she made sure her beloved Australia's new treasure was presented at every opportunity. As fashion caught up, opal was at the top of the popular gems list once again.

The first opal discovered in Australia came from the Southern part in mid 1800s. A dazzling opal with play-of-color was found in Victoria, followed by Queensland. The first commercial operation started in 1890 in White Cliffs, New South Wales. Early findings were white and lighter colored. The early 1900s witnessed the discovery of stunning black opals of Lightning Ridge. Today, Australian material is considered to be the most desirable opal.

More recently Ethiopia has been recognized as an opal producer. Ethiopian opal suggests a great potential for the future but the traditional opal market still considers the Australian material as incomparable.

Want to know more about Dr. Çiğdem Lülem? Email us at owdesign1@mac.com

A Few Words on Opal's Gemology

Opal is not a rare substance from a mineralogical point of view. It is simply a silica gel and its amorphous structure doesn't offer much excitement when there is no color or phenomenon displayed. Therefore, what really matters is the rare "precious" type in gemological terms. Play-of-color is a unique phenomenon to opal and the strength of it defines the value. Despite the common acceptance, there is gem quality opal without play-of-color. Bright orange and orangy red transparent Mexican opal doesn't always display phenomenon. In the last a few decades, there have been some discoveries of colored opals in the Andean Mountains. These delicate examples are known as Andean Opals and come in pastel pink, blue and green without play-of-color.



The rough opal in the background (59.00 g) shows ironstone matrix and Australian opal seams. The cabochons include a black Australian opal (left), as well as two white Australian opals. The opal with the orangy bodycolor, featuring play-of-color, is from Mexico. The opals range from 5.01ct to 10.25ct Photo by Robert Weldon/GIA.

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