

ALROSA

IN-HOUSE PUBLICATION OF THE LARGEST DIAMOND MINING COMPANY

WINTER 2020

Dmitry Amelkin,
director of the ALROSA Strategic
Projects and Analytics Center:

**“THEY HAVE
MADE A CULT
OF FORECASTING,
AND I DON’T THINK
THAT’S RIGHT”**

FINDS OF THE YEAR

**“CHINESE LANTERN”
AND “SNOWFLAKE”:
TWO UNIQUE ROUGH
DIAMONDS UNEARTHED
IN RUSSIA**



Elena Esaulova,
jeweller and founder
of E2J brand:

**“I DECLARED WAR
ON JEWELRY
FAST FOOD”**

MOVEABLE FEAST

PHOTO PROJECT WITH DIAMONDS OF ALROSA

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EDITORIAL NOTE

During a magical winter season, ALROSA Magazine has gathered characters, stories, and jewelry collections which perfectly support and prolong this feeling of miracle. You will learn where ALROSA's unique 'Firebird' diamond has flown. We will show you two ingenious art pieces of nature which were found at Russian diamond deposits last year. You will enter the imaginarium of Russian jeweller Yelena Yesaulova, whose gems have their own stories. Also, the reader will find here a Christmas tale about losing and finding an important diamond ring. Believe it or not, but this time it didn't go without a marvel too.



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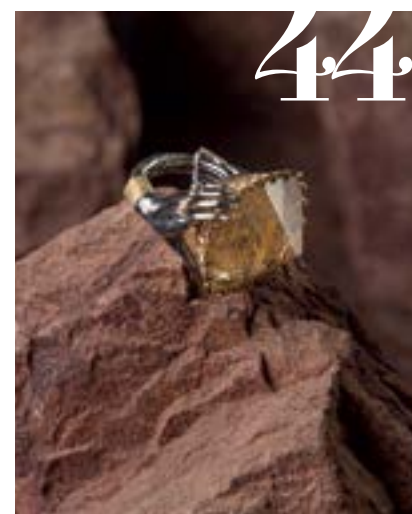
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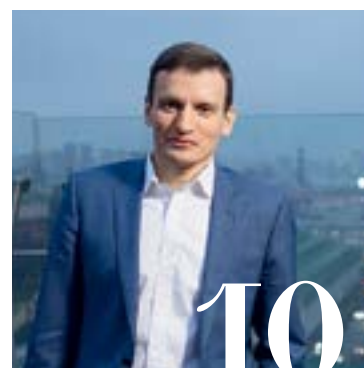
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ALROSA in-house publication



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FIREBIRD FLIES to Graff

For over half a century Graff has represented the rarest gemstones. Generations of the Graff family have employed their expertise and experience, personally selecting every stone and – uniquely among diamond houses – presiding over every step of its journey. The house founder Laurence Graff was the one who brought yellow diamonds into vogue. As Financial Times' How to Spend It magazine noted some time ago, "he has an extraordinary affinity with diamonds, a sort of sixth sense that enables him to understand their individual characters, to see the subtlest nuances of light, fire and color. And to perceive, often in an instant, a diamond's full potential to be the best, the most brilliant, the most beautiful, the most valuable it can be."

Graff Diamonds, the world-renowned hi-end jewelry brand, has acquired the Firebird 20.7 ct diamond from ALROSA. The parties do not disclose the transaction details, but note that it achieved one of the highest prices per carat for such stones in recent years

Yellow Asscher-cut 20.69 ct diamond was graded by GIA as Fancy Vivid Yellow – VS1 – Excellent polish and symmetry. Created by nature and brought to perfection by ALROSA cutting and polishing masters, the diamond resembles a simultaneous ensemble of flame, reflections of sunlight on crystal water and a trail of sparkles coming from the tail of a Firebird.

"This Fancy Vivid Yellow with high clarity and very special step-cut is truly unique. And one can only imagine the wealth of rough colors that comes from that fire that sparks the diamond's lightness. It is extremely rare and very special in the world of diamonds to see unique yellow diamond like this," said John King, GIA Chief Quality Officer.

The diamond is a part of "The Spectacle" unique diamonds collection, dedicated to the Russian ballet. There are two more diamonds in the collection, one of them is "Spirit of the Rose" 14.8 ct Fancy Vivid Purple-Pink stone. Another diamond will be announced later when cutting and polishing is finished.

"Firebird", the legendary ballet show, premiered in 1910 at Grand Opera in Paris. The ballet was the first of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes productions to have an all-original score composed. It had the idea of creating a "national ballet" driven by the popularity of Russian folk songs and dances among the French public. The plot is based on the Russian fairytale of the Firebird and the blessing and curse it possesses for its owner. Stravinsky composed the music; Michel Fokine choreographed the dance, while Alexander Golovin and Leon Bakst created the decorations and costumes.

Outstanding Firebird diamond was created from "Stravinsky", a 34.17 ct rough diamond, bearing both rare honey-yellow overtones and incredible clarity. Discovered at the Ebelyakh mine in Yakutia in 2017, it is one of the largest rough diamonds of such color and quality ever extracted in Russia. It was defined by its naturally-occurring shape, smooth structure and, most certainly, by its incredible intensity and homogeneity of color.

SERGEY IVANOV,

ALROSA CEO, said:

– We are delighted to see that such a beautiful exceptional diamond has found an equally exceptional owner. Without a doubt, it could be a heart for a magnificent exclusive jewelry piece. It is more than just a regular deal for ALROSA. This is the first direct purchase of Graff made without intermediaries, and we hope that it will be the beginning of a new phase of our work. We are pleased to see the trust of major industry players, which, among other things, was made possible thanks to our efforts in the field of business transparency, diamond provenance guarantees and our high contribution to society.

MATRYOSHKA DIAMOND

PUZZLES SCIENTISTS

An unusual diamond with another diamond moving freely inside was mined in Yakutia by ALROSA in Fall, 2019. Due to its peculiarity, the stone resembles a traditional Russian Matryoshka doll. According to the experts who have studied the find, this is the first such diamond in the history of global diamond mining.

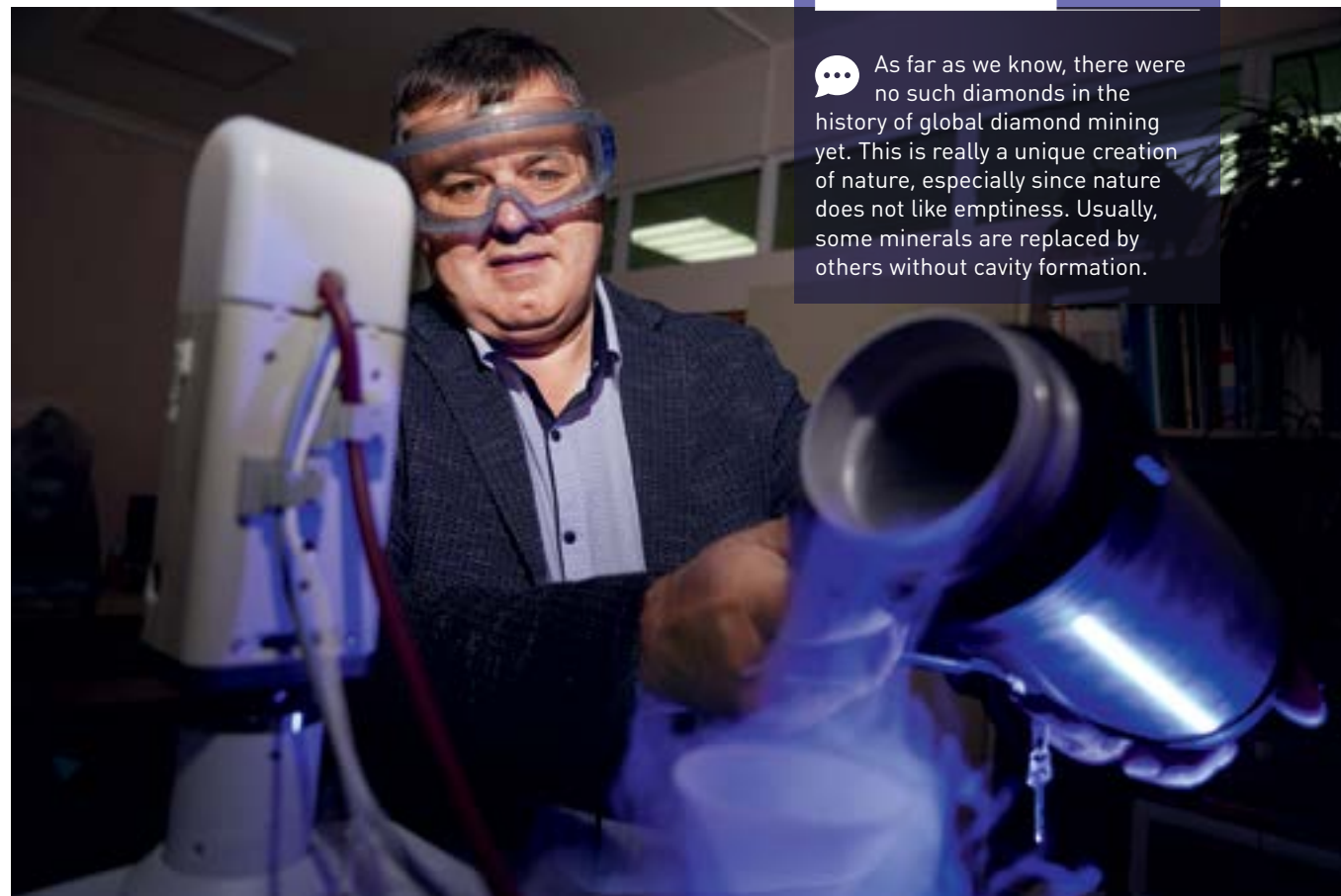
Despite its complex structure, it weighs only 0.62 carats (0.124 grams) and has maximum dimensions of 4.8 x 4.9 x 2.8 mm.

Specialists of the Yakutsk Diamond Trade Enterprise discovered this unusual diamond during a sorting process. They handed it over to the Research and Development Geological Enterprise of ALROSA. There it was studied using several methods, including Raman and infrared spectroscopies, as well as X-ray microtomography. Based on the results of the study, the scientists made a hypothesis about how the crystal was formed.

Initially the scientists inclined that there was an internal diamond at first, and the external one was formed during the subsequent stages of growth. "The most interesting thing for us was to find out how

OLEG KOVALCHUK:

As far as we know, there were no such diamonds in the history of global diamond mining yet. This is really a unique creation of nature, especially since nature does not like emptiness. Usually, some minerals are replaced by others without cavity formation.



GIA: Over time – millions or billions of years – about 0.11 carats of diamond material dissolved away through two small etched channels that extended from the surface of the diamond to the internal cavity. The diamond material that remained formed into a small diamond crystal of 0.03 carats that is entirely detached from the host crystal.



the air space between the inner and outer diamonds was formed. We have two main hypotheses. According to the first version, a mantle mineral captured a diamond during its growth, and later it was dissolved in the Earth's surface. According to the second version, a layer of porous polycrystalline diamond substance was formed inside the diamond because of ultra-fast growth, and more aggressive mantle processes subsequently dissolved it. Due to the presence of the dissolved zone, one diamond began to move freely inside another on the principle of matryoshka nesting doll," said Oleg Kovalchuk, Deputy Director for innovations at ALROSA's Research and Development Geological Enterprise.

Both these versions meant that the inner diamond was older than the external one. But now, the leading hypothesis of ALROSA's scientists is that both diamonds formed at the same time.

World reaction to find

World media showed a lot of interest in the unique find of the Russian diamond mining company. There were hundreds of publications about Matryoshka diamond after ALROSA revealed the find. Several experts shared their own theories with journalists. Michael Förster, a postdoctoral researcher in experimental petrology at Australia's Macquarie University told National Geographic: "Perhaps the double diamond could have once housed a drop of the salty fluid in which the mineral took shape. Such a fluid could have readily leaked out through a hole or crack in the

THOMAS STACHEL,
University of Alberta
minerologist, to National
Geographic:

"I THOUGHT, HOLY COW, I NEVER SAW ANYTHING LIKE THAT. WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR DIAMONDS NOW FOR A LONG TIME, AND THAT IS A FIRST"

GEORGE HARLOW,
a curator in the Department of
Earth and Planetary Sciences at
the American Museum of Natural
History in New York City, to Live
Science:

"I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANYTHING LIKE THIS IN THE NATURAL MINERAL WORLD"

larger diamond casing. Other experts suggested that the space was once filled with minerals from the mantle, such as brown-green olivine or dark red garnet." Experts suppose that the spacer between the inner and outer diamond could have disappeared en route to the surface after contact with searing fluid or molten rock, or at the surface when water weakened the filling or during human processing with strong acids.

Matryoshka in GIA

In December, ALROSA sent Matryoshka diamond to the Gemological Institute of America, GIA. The GIA research team – Dr. Wuyi Wang, GIA vice president of research and development; Staff Gemologist Emiko Yazawa; Senior Analytics Technicians Stephanie Persaud and Elina Myagkaya; Senior Research Scientist Dr. Ulrika D'Haenens-Johansson; and GIA executive vice president and chief laboratory and research officer Tom Moses – examined the rough crystal using advanced instrumentation.

Based on their observations and expertise in diamond formation, they determined that over time – millions or billions of years – about 0.11 carats of diamond material dissolved away through two small etched channels that extended from the surface of the diamond to the internal cavity. The diamond material that remained formed into a small diamond crystal of 0.03 carats that is entirely detached from the host crystal.

Detailed analysis confirmed that the small internal diamond has nearly the identical trace element chemistry as its host and that when the host formed in the earth's mantle, it was a solid diamond without the cavity.

As GIA noted, the team was also intrigued by the natural clear green body color of the internal crystal and the Christmas tree-like etchings that decorated its surface. They determined that these were small, dark green radiation stains that were present in shallow fractures along its edges, which revealed that this diamond was naturally irradiated. Fluid with radioactive elements is responsible for the green body color and formation of radiation stains, and would have been the last step in decorating this crystal, GIA wrote.

Art OF NATURAL FACETING

Here are two ALROSA's finds which amazed us with their natural facets. The diamond mining company decided not to cut and polish these rough diamonds but to leave them in its Moscow collection of unusual roughs. This collection is kept by ALROSA's United Selling Organization (USO). USO experts noticed that one of the finds looks like a Chinese lantern, and the other one resembles a snowflake. Each of them is a cyclic twin.



“CHINESE LANTERN”

DEPOSIT: Lomonosov diamond deposit, Arkhangelskaya region (developed by ALROSA's subsidiary Severalmaz)
WEIGHT: 1.95 carats
FLUORESCENCE: yellow-green



“SNOWFLAKE”

DEPOSIT: Nakyn kimberlite field, Yakutia (developed by Nyurba mining and processing division)
WEIGHT: 3 carats
FLUORESCENCE: white

Director of the ALROSA
Strategic Projects and
Analytics Center

DMITRY AMELKIN

talks about common misconceptions about how and who develops a company's strategy, criticizes himself for not praising employees enough, and explains why he is not on social networks.

**“THEY HAVE
MADE A CULT OF
FORECASTING,
AND I DON'T THINK
THAT'S RIGHT.”**

**ABOUT ALROSA'S
STRATEGY...**

The ALROSA Strategy is M&M, which is mining and marketing. We focus on diamonds: we look for deposits, and we mine and sell rough diamonds. Less commonly, we cut them and sell them ourselves. Marketing, primarily generic marketing, is the need of the hour. It does not matter how much we mine if there is no one to sell to. That's it. Nothing more.

A strategy is a fixed agreement, so as not to return to the same issues every day. Because, in any company, and also in ours, new and not-so-new opportunities arise every day. For example, they say to us: "Let's manufacture lab-grown diamonds" or "Let's mine something else besides diamonds to spread the risks." Most of these issues are addressed when a strategy is under development, and it provides answers to them. Therefore, you can avoid wasting time continuously discussing them.

There is a reciprocal problem: that of slavish obedience to a strategy. CA strategy is adopted under conditions that management is aware of or predicts at a certain moment. But new matters may always arise, for example, new calculations or new technologies. And if something like this emerges, there are no restrictions that prevent us from reviewing our strategy. But, unfortunately, many people stop at the first part: a strategy is approved, and everything that lies beyond is removed from discussion.

Why does ALROSA not manufacture man-made diamonds? Many people ask about this. The answer is very simple, and like many premises of strategy, it centers on economics. Man-made diamonds are many times cheaper than natural stones, and if we switch to manufacturing them, there will be no big profit, and hence, no taxes or dividends. That is not an increase in efficiency, it is just a transition to a less profitable product with a negative result. We are responsible to our shareholders, we are responsible to Yakutia. Along with that, we are closely following the market for man-made diamonds and developing measures to differentiate those products from natural diamonds.

...AND HOW TO WORK ON IT...

There are no special departments which develop strategy single-handedly. Many people from various departments of the company work on it. Every top manager should be a strategist, should have visionary thinking in his or her area and share it with subordinates. Our task is to arrange and moderate the strategy development process. Therefore, I always feel a little uncomfortable when they say to me: "You are developing the strategy." Nice to hear that, but it's not true.

The main difficulty in the company's strategy development is that there are a lot of stakeholders. And, naturally, everyone has their own vision. And since a strategy is often concerned with some distant prospects, there are no metrics that confirm that one solution is right and that another is not. And it is necessary to come to some common solution, to include all suggestions in one document, one system, based on some general logic and common values. Sometimes the role of an integrator is psychologically challenging, because, when people interact with each other, they behave more personally than professionally.

I don't think it is right for a company to make a cult of strategy. As a rule, 80% of such a document is repetition of obvious things and compliance with standards. To say that we should work better, faster and try to achieve something, to be innovative: a lot of high-sounding words that mean nothing. I have studied the experiences of other companies a lot. I should say that if 20% of the content in such a document is devoted to resolving important issues, then it is a very good document. And in many strategies, there is zero useful information.

Forecasting is a tool, not a goal in itself. Of course, we must have a plan for what the company will do under the most probable circumstances. But it is often useless to spend time discussing things that are interesting but do not affect decision making. You can develop 5 or 10 scenarios, but the most probable

one should be taken as the base. Generally, it doesn't matter whether the market grows by 2% or 5% per year. In either case, management should perform approximately the same actions to increase efficiency, because it is necessary to improve efficiency, regardless of any current crisis.

ABOUT THE PROJECT APPROACH

The strategy itself does not lead the company anywhere. Just as a map in your hands does not help you reach your goal if you are standing still. Further specific actions are required. For this, the company launches investment, organizational, and innovative projects. And we should map out these activities

You need to be able to mitigate or avoid conflicts. You should be able to understand the "pains" of the main participants in the project, **WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM, WHAT THEY CANNOT LOSE. COMMUNICATION IS CREATIVE WORK,** and "mathematicians" sometimes have trouble with it

in detail. That is, make a schedule, take risks into account, assign roles, monitor fulfillment, and adjust our approach if necessary.

A good team is the key to a successful project. And the main part of this team is people from the unit to undergo transition. Nobody knows the specific features of their work better than they do. Our department is a business partner in fulfilling this task. We help determine the requirements, calculate, elaborate options, and evaluate resources.

We have built up production at the Nyurba Mining and Processing Division by over 15 %.

Or by \$200 million a year. First of all, we worked with the processing plant, and in the second half of the year, we managed to significantly improve the performance of our open-pits. But the main contribution to the results of this project was made by the employees of the Nyurba Mining and Processing Division and the company's management in Mirny. They were just able to look at their processes from a different angle.





DMITRY AMELKIN
He was born in Moscow on February 4, 1983.

In 2004, he graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University) of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a degree in Banking and Finance. After graduation, he worked at PriceWaterhouseCoopers. Then he headed the Strategic Development Department at the Ingosstrakh insurance company, and later at SOGAZ. Prior to joining ALROSA in 2017, he was responsible for project management in agencies of Sberbank.

People, when facing a new approach, go through all 5 stages of grief, as in psychology: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Trust me, we go through these stages just like any other department. In any situation, the main thing is to set the right priorities. There was a case recently, when,

Probably every company has had negative experience with consulting. But in most situations, success depends on whether or not you understand what you want. The Nyurba project was such an example for us. Before launching the project, we knew exactly where there was potential for growth and invited consultants with relevant experience. Many people were skeptical at first, but now they see the results and are looking forward to similar projects at other plants. *Another successful project is our cutting.* Two years ago, the company adopted a new strategy which introduced changes to the range of products and new approaches to cutting. This year, DIAMONDS ALROSA made money for the first time. *Now we are working extensively on the merger with Kristall.* The plant has great history and traditions, but poor economics, and today it is unprofitable. Our mission is to restructure the operations of all three of our enterprises and redistribute rough diamonds in such a way that they all operate effectively.

in discussing the development of a new device, one of the managers expressly told me: "I am against it because this device will replace the functions of my employees." One can understand him as a person, as it is not easy psychologically. But one cannot understand him as a manager, as he should take a broader view: if you do nothing, then in a negative scenario, you will need to fire many more people.

...AND ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO WORK ON IT

Being a strategist does not mean being good and being a tactician does not mean being bad. And by no means are they always different people. Strategy and tactics are just options, and each is important in its own time.

In a practical sense, tactics offer more benefits. In 95% of cases, a tactical decision is required, and only in 5% should one forget about everything and look at the situation from the outside. A person who deals with daily challenges and knows how to hammer nails is more useful in the here and now than someone who argues that, in 2028, machines will be hammering the nails instead of you.

I don't really care about the education of the people who work with me. Most of all, I look at their mathematical and logical skills. From the point of view of structuring and project management, working with people who have a physical-mathematical or IT background is the best. They structure well and understand cause-and-effect relationships. But every person has his or her own strengths that can be used. I have two children, one plays chess very well and can solve tricky problems, while the other is an excellent communicator. Which of these is more important is an open question.

The ability to communicate is a very important skill. After all, a big part of our work is in communicating with people, with departments, and they do not always have a positive attitude towards the things that are happening to them. You need to be able to mitigate or avoid conflicts. You should be able to understand the "pains" of the main participants in the project, what is important to them, what they cannot lose. Communication is creative work, and "mathematicians" sometimes have trouble with it. It is often difficult for them to step outside their algorithms.

ON MOTIVATION

Sometimes I am criticized for my approach to motivation. It's common to tell employees things like "This is a great project, it will soar, and it

will carry you with it!" I can't say things like that if I understand it's not all as easy as it sounds. I honestly tell the person about the risks, that there is an 80% chance that those risks will become a reality, but there is still a 20% chance of success. True, hearing that, no one floats out of my office, inspired. But they do not give up when faced with difficulties, because they are ready for them. And if you fill an employee with high expectations, then eventually he or she will realize that they don't match reality, and then it will be impossible to motivate him or her with anything.

I try to "scare" future employees when hiring them. I tell them about all the horrors, list all the difficulties, from the complex projects, to the excessive working hours, to the cold of Yakutia. I even exaggerate sometimes. I honestly say: "We will try to improve working conditions, but I can't promise it." I honestly say this job can provide the opportunity for career growth over 2-3 years, but it is unlikely to bring a million dollars. And I give the person a chance to decide. Those who stay are really interested in being here. This approach is designed for distance runners, sprinters cannot contribute a lot to our work.

I am critical of employees, and that is a problem for many managers. I frequently tell people what they have done wrong, but rarely do I tell them what was done right. I understand that, and am trying to work on myself. But judging by the feedback from my colleagues, I still have room for improvement in this regard. Recognition is maybe even more motivating than money. All in all, we all spend a lot of time at work, and if we only ever hear about our mistakes, then it is difficult to see why we should stay in such a climate.

ON PERSONAL SPACE

An informal setting helps us overcome difficulties in team relationships. In any team, there are some people who dislike each other, clash with each other secretly, or cannot work together normally. And then they meet outside of work, talk to each other, and it turns out that both are normal people, even having common interests. On the other hand, obsessive team building can have the opposite effect. There are people who are introverts, and they hate intrusive corporate attitudes. *I am not on social networks, and I do not want to be there.* I just don't understand the purpose. After all, on social networks, people often try to appear to be someone else. There is too much pretense and falseness. It is a lot nicer to communicate with a someone face to face.

Thanks to Ritz Carlton for providing a place for the photo shoot

WECHAT MINI PROGRAM FOR BLOCKCHAIN-ENABLED DIAMONDS



ALROSA, Tencent and Everledger have launched a WeChat Mini Program e-commerce solution to Chinese retailers, demonstrating the power of blockchain technology to seamlessly enable the purchase of diamonds with full transparency of their origin, characteristics and ownership history.

Created by the world's largest diamond producer ALROSA and independent technology company Everledger, this new Mini Program pilot will put transparent and secure diamond information at the fingertips of potentially a billion active WeChat users. It is also the first product to capitalise on the synergy between Everledger and their new investor Tencent, creator of WeChat – one of the world's largest social media and e-commerce platforms.

The WeChat Mini Program pilot will showcase diamonds from ALROSA, enabling full traceability from mine to consumer. It will be offered as a white label API for jewelry manufacturers and retailers in China who wish to offer consumers more innovative and insightful stories about their products and their brand, and so expand their e-commerce proposition. This enables a better informed and more secure

purchase for consumers as well as a more seamless online-to-offline user experience. By enabling new touch points between consumers, jewelry manufacturers and retailers, the Mini Program will encourage brand differentiation in the highly competitive Chinese luxury market.

Consumers will be offered unprecedented levels of transparency and trust around the origin, characteristics and authenticity of the jewelry they purchase. Using the WeChat Mini Program on their smartphone, consumers can check an individual diamond's full provenance and certificate information, purchase the diamond in the Mini Program using WeChat Pay, and also attest its ownership through the Everledger blockchain platform.

ALROSA will provide information on their diamonds extracted in Russia, thus enabling consumers to know the exact origin of each stone and have certainty around its sustainable and ethical footprint.

As Pavel Vinikhin, Head of Diamonds of ALROSA (the company's polishing branch) noted, "we believe that this collaboration with the most popular social media platform in China will help us to further strengthen our sales there."



Photo: Carlos Folgoso

TEST DRILLING AT MIR KIMBERLITE PIPE STARTED



ALROSA has started drilling for the further investigation of the Mir kimberlite pipe as part of its strategic investment plan to study a feasibility for the production at its unique diamond deposit.

Experts from ALROSA's Vilyui Exploration Expedition will start studies at the depth of 1,200–1,600 meters below the surface. This will help to define more precisely the pipe's dimensions, its position, diamond quality and grades, as well as geological conditions and hydrogeology of the deposit. Total exploration costs are estimated at RUB 2 billion.

The company expects to carry exploration over 2020–2021. The reserve estimate report to be prepared in 2022.

ALROSA ALLIANCE ADDS NEW MEMBERS



ALROSA in January held a trading session for its client companies basing on the updated list of the members of ALROSA Alliance.

When a client becomes a part of ALROSA Alliance, it means that the client belongs to loyal buyers of rough diamonds. Meeting the requirements of ALROSA Alliance is an essential condition for companies wishing to become ALROSA's long-term clients.

ALROSA Alliance members have a right to use a relevant logo that confirms the client's reputation as a reliable and trusted participant of the global rough diamond market.

ALROSA decided to integrate the industrial diamonds consumers into the

community. In January 2020, ALROSA Alliance welcomed 15 new members and increased their total number to 76. New ALROSA Alliance members include 4 jewelry companies and 11 clients specializing in industrial rough diamonds.

Adding buyers of industrial rough diamonds to the narrow group of ALROSA Alliance members serves to help responsible participants of the industrial rough diamond market, whose products meet Russian quality standards, to distinguish their products from lab-grown diamonds.

"Adhering to inviolability of ALROSA Alliance guidelines, we decided to

expand these criteria to buyers of our industrial rough diamonds. We ran a check-up to include in the alliance 10 long-term clients and one spot buyer who purchase industrial rough diamonds from us and meet key requirements of ALROSA Alliance," commented Evgeny Agureev, Deputy CEO of ALROSA. "We also completed another analysis of activity level and requirements of our long-term clients after the second year of the current contract period. Besides, we updated the list of ALROSA ALLIANCE members nominated for signing long-term agreements in the future. The list comprises four spot buyers of gem-

quality rough diamonds and one buyer of industrial rough diamonds."

ALROSA's long-term contracts guarantee volumes of monthly supplies, product mix and a possibility to purchase additional batches of rough diamonds. This form of cooperation ensures the stability of rough diamonds sales for the diamond miner and its clients as well as the protection against the volatility in diamond prices in the global market. Long-term contracts form the basis of ALROSA's sales policy, accounting for up to 70% of all sales. All ALROSA's long-term clients are ALROSA Alliance members. Current three-year contracts with ALROSA last from 2018 to 2020.



ALROSA Deputy CEO
EVGENY AGUREEV:

– In December, we observed signs of stabilising diamond demand that had emerged earlier in the second half of the year amid the gradual restoration of market balance. This was largely supported by a flexible sales strategy of mining companies. Cutters and retailers entered 2019 with large stocks of goods, but their expectations of strong demand did not match the reality. Along with a number of other factors, this triggered a massive destocking while also hitting the demand for rough diamonds. As a result, 2019 saw sales by diamond producers drop by almost a third from the previous year. At the same time, there is robust demand for jewelry from end consumers. The preliminary data on Christmas sales shows its year-on-year growth in some regions. This proves that diamond jewelry remains a key way of expressing one’s special feelings.



ALROSA GROUP INCREASED DECEMBER SALES BY

11%

In December 2019, ALROSA Group sold \$363.8 million worth of rough and polished diamonds, 11% higher than in December 2018. Rough diamond sales by value amounted to \$352.1 million, polished diamond sales totaled \$11.6 million.

ALROSA’s total rough and polished diamond sales in January–December 2019 amounted to \$3.338 billion (–26% year-on-year). During the twelve months of 2019, rough diamonds were sold for \$3.273 billion, and polished diamonds for another \$64.7 million.



RUSSIAN BANKS GRANT LOANS TO ALROSA’S FOREIGN CLIENTS FOR THE PURCHASE OF ROUGH DIAMONDS



International diamond manufacturer Dali Diamond, one of ALROSA’s long-term clients, signed a loan agreement with Eximbank Of Russia (part of the Russian Export Center Group) for the financing of rough diamond purchases from ALROSA. Dali Diamond successfully started to use the loan funds during the January trading session of ALROSA.

The loan agreement between Eximbank Of Russia and Dali Diamond provides for a 24-month revolving credit line in euros. The terms of financing are among the best in the industry today – both with regard to rates and deferred payments to the bank. EXIAR (Russian Agency for export credits and investments insurance) is in charge of risk insurance under the agreement.

“It’s another milestone for Dali Diamond to receive a seal of confidence of the Eximbank Of Russia in choosing Dali as their first client in diamonds”, noted Isidore Morsel, President of Dali Diamond Co.

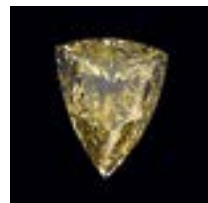
“This transaction marked the beginning of cooperation between Eximbank Of Russia and EXIAR with

the diamond industry and one of ALROSA’s long-term clients, the Belgian company Dali Diamonds. Undoubtedly, this transaction is a good foundation for further enhancing cooperation on projects related to export of diamond products to ALROSA, the undisputed international leader in the diamond industry,” said Nikita Gusakov, Senior Vice President of the REC Group.

“We are happy that our long-term client Dali Diamonds had successful negotiations with the EXIMBANK OF RUSSIA and for the first time ever could finance the purchase of ALROSA’s goods within a revolving credit line. It is a new source of funds in our industry, and we hope that such form of cooperation will work out,” says ALROSA Deputy CEO Evgeny Agureev. “Now, when we often hear that sources of financing in the industry are cut down and key players have decided to withdraw from the sector or are considering such an option, the actual financing that took place is encouraging and is a milestone for the whole diamond market.”

SOMETIMES I FEEL REGRET WHILE SENDING PECULIARLY SHAPED DIAMONDS TO FACETING

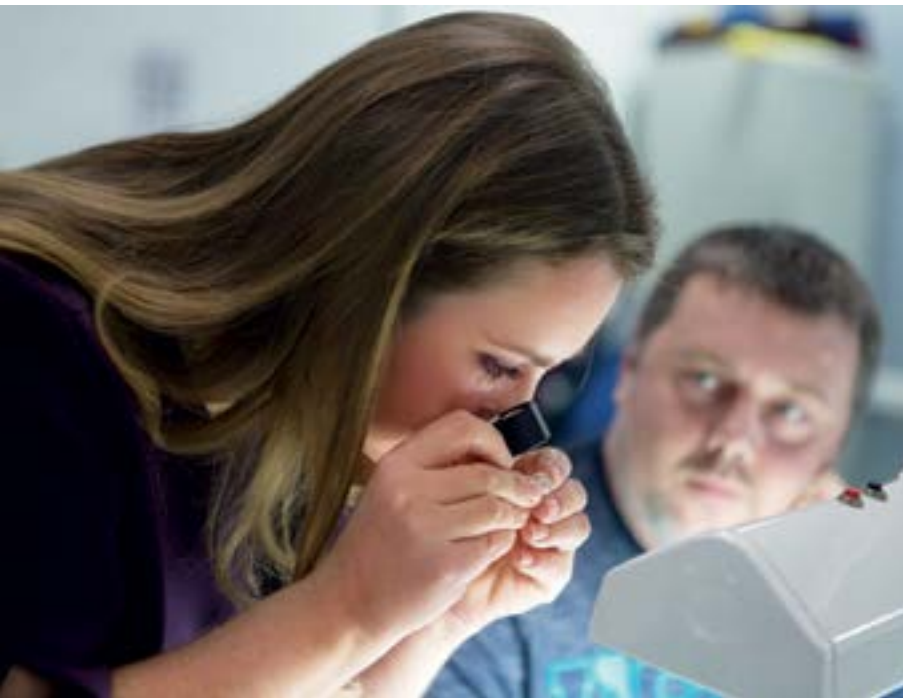
DINA SHVETSOVA, THE DEPUTY HEAD OF PLANNING DEPARTMENT AT DIAMONDS OF ALROSA, PLANS AND MAPS HUNDREDS OF CARATS OF UNCUT DIAMONDS DAY BY DAY. She examines every diamond larger than 10.8 carats as well as each unique item. While working in the industry, Ms. Shvetsova has seen its dramatic changes, with high tech playing a crucial role in recent years. We talked about how she paved her way towards diamonds, what ties she has to the Far North and which diamonds she would like to leave rough.



Dina Shvetsova: As I saw this diamond, I said right away "Let's make a pendant!" Its shapes were drawn by nature. As you can see, we kept its original extended triangle form. Eventually, we got a unique and unmatched diamond with the maximum possible weight. There were many bids at the Hong Kong auction as customers were interested in buying it.



WHAT WAS THE MOST FASCINATING DIAMOND I'VE EVER WORKED ON? DIAMONDS ARE SO INTERESTING AND DIVERSE. EVEN AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS IN THIS FIELD, I STILL COME ACROSS EXCLUSIVE ITEMS AND CAN'T HELP ADMIRING THEIR BEAUTY. IT TURNS OUT THAT EVERY SINGLE DAY I WORK AND LEARN SIMULTANEOUSLY



Diamond Polishing In Theory

– Planning and mapping of rough diamonds is quite a narrow field of expertise. Where have you learned it?

– I was among the first to study basics of this profession at the Moscow State Mining University.

I joined the very first class of the newly founded department, and chose rough diamonds processing as my specialization. I got my diploma in production engineering and in 2003 joined Diamonds of ALROSA in Moscow. I started as a rough planner apprentice, then I worked as a planner and finally as a technologist. I was promoted to the deputy head of planning department in 2018.

– **And when did you first take a real diamond in your hands?**

– As you know, diamonds are extremely expensive. During my five years of education, I had not a single chance to touch them. In fact, we learned processing theory from the books and could only look at real rough or polished diamonds at museum exhibitions or jewelry shops. I took a real diamond in my hand for the first time only after joining Diamonds of ALROSA, based at Smolnaya Street in Moscow.

Job peculiarities

– **What are key responsibilities of a technologist?**

– A technologist works in the cutting section. He or she takes control over each step that a stone goes through – from mapping to the last facet and final polishing. Cutters are technologist's hands.

– **How long does it take to get promoted to this position?**

– You need to work for at least five years as a planner or, say, a cutter. A technologist must know the entire production chain.

– **Now you are in charge of planning and mapping...**

– I'm responsible for evaluating rough diamonds larger than 10.8 carats. I make projections for types of the resulting diamonds, their shape, weight, color and quality characteristics and cost.

– **What is the total rough volume for which you've made projections for the entire career?**

– I'd say I have already passed the 200.000 carats mark for 16 years of work.

– **What are the most difficult rough diamonds to deal with?**

– The more inclusions a diamond has, the more complex our work becomes. The so-called hardly predictable gems are also the hardest to deal with. For example, diamonds with high internal strain can just "burst" while being cleaved or cut.

Even after gems reach the cutting section, we still keep an eye on our little wards. We trace cutter's deliverables and, if necessary, can reconsider our original map.

– **Do you often make any changes at the cutting stage?**

– Faceting can spring a surprise; some new defects can pop up when the diamond is already in the cutting machine. But any changes in shape or features of a polished diamond in the process are anyway exceptions.

– **What are your favorite diamonds?**

– Freshly cut are the most favorite ones. You can admire and celebrate the outcome of the joint efforts of a large team.

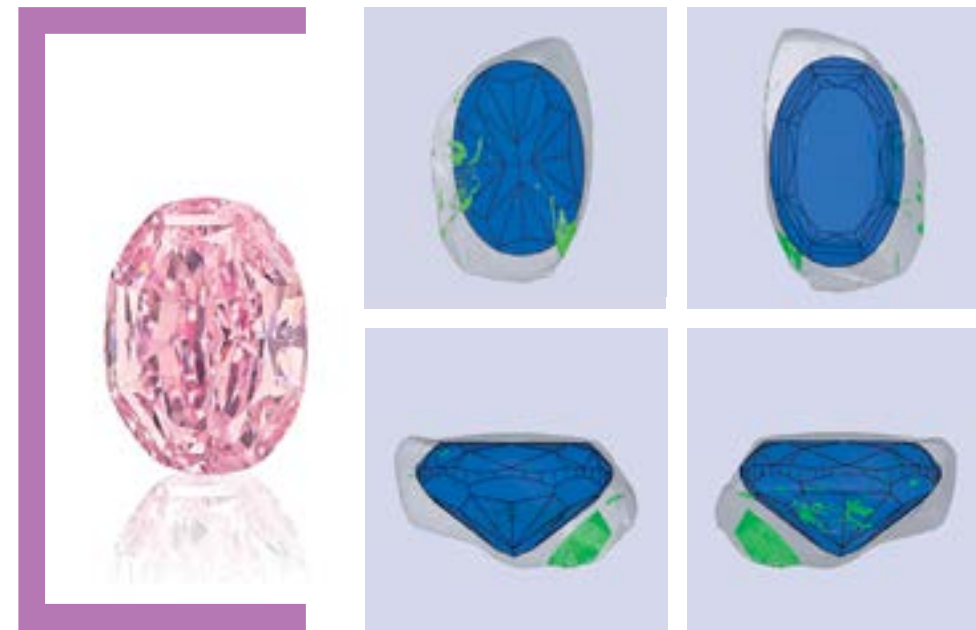
Transforming Craftsmanship: From Quill and Ink to Laser

– **When you come to the cutting section and see cutters leaning over their cutting disks, you start thinking this craft hasn't changed much for recent decades...**

– And when you come to the mapping section, you'll see everyone in front of their computer screens. Now we create 3D-models of diamonds using complex software which allows to factor in every

Dina Shvetsova plans every unique diamond. Among them was a 27.85 carats chunk of rough diamond called Nijinsky. It became The Spirit of the Rose diamond weighing 14.84 carats. You can find some information about it in the autumn-2019 issue of ALROSA magazine.

The picture shows the mapping of this unparalleled pink diamond.



PLANNING INCLUDES 3D-MODELLING, CALCULATION OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS, SELECTION OF THE MOST PROFITABLE SOLUTION AND LASER MARKING. EVERYTHING STARTS FROM EVALUATION OF ROUGH ITSELF AND GEMS-TO-BE

IN THE NORTH

Dina Shvetsova was born in the Ukraine. When she was a schoolgirl, her parents moved to the diamond mining settlement of Aykhal in the Sakha Republic to earn money. Her mother worked at ALROSA diamond processing plant #14. The young 15-year-old girl moved to the Far North to her parents and lived nearly 2 years close to the Arctic Circle. Her parents stayed there for 20 years and raised her younger brother in Aykhal. However, Dina knew she'd be back "on the mainland" soon to get a degree in the Ukraine. "I was going back to my homeland. I was good at drawing and that's why I was going to apply the institute of architecture my mom graduated from." "No, it wasn't my mom who encouraged me to choose a diamonds-related profession. That was my school principal; he suggested that I should go to Moscow. Representatives from the Moscow Mining University came to Aykhal. School graduates could pass exams right there and move to Moscow if succeeded. That's exactly how it happened to me." Having moved to Moscow, Dina split up with the North forever. "It was in April 2019 when I came back to Sakha for the first time in 22 years, and then only thanks to the company – I took part in the corporate forum where I was awarded for contribution in development of ALROSA."

inclusion and fracture. However, as early as in the 90s, lines on diamonds used to be drawn with quill and ink. When I just joined Diamonds of ALROSA as a planner, I drew lines with a special pen. And today we use lasers. High-tech solutions invade the industry. Mechanic cleaving is replaced by a laser technology, which allows us to cut diamonds with minimum losses and in any direction. Some processes might be fully automated.

– Does it mean that computers are about to compete with humans?

– In the mapping it's still the other way round. In the Soviet times, there was a single planner against couple dozen cutters. Since the advent of some new equipment, the mapping has become more accurate and difficult, while planning teams have expanded. Today there are 15 planners per 69 cutters.

What's the point of the mapping technology development? Is it a greater share of useful rough and an efficiency improvement. The emerged 3D-technologies that allowed mapping inclusions were revolutionary for planning of highly defective rough, which has lots of inclusions and fractures.

Every year new and advanced technologies come to the market. They mitigate global diamond mines depletion and serve as a good aid amid reduction of the world diamond reserves.

Diamond Worthy Of Its Collet

– Which diamond you'd rather leave uncut?

– To be honest, sometimes I feel regret while sending peculiarly shaped diamonds to faceting. I remember a large batch of such species from the Arkhangelsk Region. They were of various colors – yellow, orange, green and brown. Their shapes were like adorable exotic flowers. Their scientific names were not so romantic – spinel twins of isometric cubic crystals interpenetration and juxtaposed spinel twins. These stones were worth setting them into collets without faceting. Of course, we had to process them. They became wonderful colorful diamonds and were successfully sold. Although I should admit that in rough these diamonds were as beautiful as in polished.



**EVERY SINGLE MOMENT
HUNDREDS OF CARATS OF ROUGH
DIAMONDS CROSS THE MAPPING
SECTION OF DIAMONDS OF
ALROSA.
OVERALL, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF
CARATS IN THE PLANT**

EXPRESS INTERVIEW

Core skills for this job:

Aptitude for learning, constant improvement and eye for details. Look before you leap – that's all about us.

Diamond of your dream:

It hasn't been found yet. But I hope it soon will be discovered and mined. What will it be like? We'll see.

If not diamonds, then...

Architecture.

The most pleasant and the hardest part of your job:

To see a successful result of your work is the most pleasant. To wait for the results is the hardest.

Your perfect New Year:

With my parents, brother and friends. Anywhere in the world. It's not always possible, although we are doing our best.

DIGITAL TWINS

ALROSA creates digital twins of diamonds for remote display in diamond parcels

The diamond mining company held first digital tenders where boxes with diamonds were displayed, each of which contained a 3D model scan. This allowed customers to download detailed scan of each diamond in the box and draft cutting plans for each stone before making any purchasing decisions.

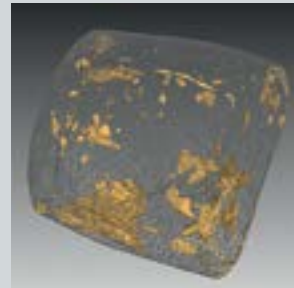
ALROSA is implementing digital tenders in partnership with the Israeli company Sarine, which manufactures the scanning equipment. Alexey Tikhonov, Head of Projects, ALROSA Strategy & Analytics, says:

“For each digital tender, we select about 15 boxes of 2–10-carat rough diamonds and transfer them to Sarine facility for scanning. The data we get displays all of the information our customers require to make their purchasing decisions. First of all, this is a detailed 3D model of the outer shape of each stone with its unique features. It is also a complete 3D map of inclusions and flaws inside the stone, as well as information about color and level of fluorescence, if any. All the data is presented in the Sarine Advisor format, which is conventional and familiar for cutting and polishing companies. The customer can access this data via the ALROSA online trading platform. Thus, customers have detailed information about each stone before they even see it. This allows them to significantly reduce the risks involved in the procurement of roughs and focus their attention only

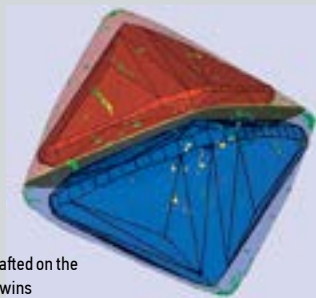
on the products they are interested in. Customers are effectively completely informed when they come to us to see a stone: they know for sure what they will see, and all they need to do is validate the digital twins they have already explored in great details.”

Alexey Tikhonov notes that diamond scanning technology is not new in the market. However, the business model where digital twins are provided by the mining company has broken the conventional policies of the industry. “We are transferring the existing scanning processes (and the associated costs) from the cutters to the mining company for the benefit of both,” a representative of ALROSA points out.

The overarching goal of the project is to create conditions in which customers will be able to purchase diamonds



The program constructs a three-dimensional model of the diamond with all inclusions



Cut plans are drafted on the basis of digital twins



Alexey Tikhonov, Head of Projects, ALROSA Strategy & Analytics

remotely, without the need to travel and inspect them personally. Thus, they will save not only on scanning but also on the costs associated with personal inspections of rough diamonds (airline tickets, hotels, travel time for the expert). Customers also gain side-line economic benefits by shortening their production cycle. While they used to have to wait for purchase contract, payment and delivery of stones to the factory to start planning of the cut, with this new approach, they now can draw up cutting plans even before making the actual purchases.

ALROSA has also started a similar experiment with special-sized diamonds. Diamonds from ALROSA mines weighing 10.8 carats and above are sold at auctions. Mining companies hold about a hundred diamond auctions around the world annually. Of course, traders and cutters cannot attend every auction. They have to make choices, and thus potentially miss out on interesting options. With the availability of digital twins, customers will be prepared and will be able to make more informed decisions about visiting particular auctions.

“Of course, the market today is not ready to remove completely the element of physical inspection of rough diamonds before purchasing. But our project creates opportunities for customers to make that choice. Thus, the crucial purpose of digital tenders is to provide the most objective and unbiased data on the

characteristics of the stones sold,” Alexey Tikhonov adds.

The opportunity to show diamonds to the maximum number of potential customers is an obvious advantage for a diamond miner. As a matter of fact, the current sales system is limited by the physical ability to show products to customers. Digital tenders will remove this restriction, as digital twins of diamonds can be downloaded an unlimited number of times by an unlimited number of customers.

Alexey Tikhonov adds: “Digital tenders represent only one step in building up an ecosystem where one of the leading roles is played by the data about each and every particular stone. The data about a diamond collected during scanning is valuable not only to our customers, but also to all participants in the diamond market. In fact, such data confirms a stone’s uniqueness, its natural origin and provenance. It makes sense to collect such data at the beginning of the production cycle and arrange for its transfer down the chain, all the way down to a retail store, where consumers will be able to purchase diamond jewelry with confidence in its origins.”



DAVID BLOCK

Sarine CEO:

“We are glad to provide this service to ALROSA and strongly believe it will provide significant value to ALROSA and their clients who are, for the most part, Sarine customers as well. The diamond industry is evolving, and rough diamond buyers are seeking ever more information in order to ensure decisions that are the most effective. Market conditions and margins are such that few can afford to err in the purchase of rough diamonds for their respective businesses. Sarine already has in place the industry’s most advanced technological infrastructure to enhance rough diamond buying efficiency and is continuously investing to broaden its offerings in this segment.”

84 million diamonds, weighing 10 million carats (2 tons), have been processed at the Smolensk plant over 56 years

In 2003, Smolensk Diamonds made a ring with a one-carat diamond of fancy champagne color based on a personal sketch by Sir Elton John. The ring was inspired by the song "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road." The ring was handed over to the singer during his visit to Moscow. Today, Smolensk Diamonds continues to make rings based on sketches by Elton John. A similar product with a colored diamond can be purchased in the company's showroom

438 cut shapes have been developed by Kristall specialists. New cut shapes are created for promotion in tight markets. For example, the Dubai cut, with 99 facets representing the 99 names of Allah, was invented for the UAE. Kristall produces decagon amaranth-cut diamonds especially for Japan. The "phoenix" cut shape has been promoted in the UK market

95% of Kristall round diamonds being sent to the American GIA laboratory for certification get a Triple Excellent rating. This signifies perfect quality of cutting, symmetry, and polishing (the term applies only to round diamonds)

About **90%** of Kristall diamonds are round cut

Kristall Production Association Joint Stock Company is a leading Russian exporter of diamonds. The factory in Smolensk is world famous for its cut quality. In 2019, Kristall joined the ALROSA Group

58 000 square meters production facility in Smolensk

1800 employees

TIMELINE

ON MARCH 1, A DIAMOND POLISHING FACTORY WAS ESTABLISHED IN SMOLENSK on the site of the Moscow Mint manufactory for the production of diamonds

1963

1965

1967

1970

The Smolensk plant became the lead plant of the Kristall production association, which included six other diamond cutting enterprises: in Kyiv and Vinnytsia (Ukraine), Yerevan (Armenia), Gomel (Belarus), Barnaul, and Moscow (after the collapse of the USSR, the factories in Smolensk, Moscow, Barnaul, and Gomel were preserved. All of the Russian plants are part of the ALROSA Group)

1974

1975

1980

1985

1990

The plant signed its first long-term contract with ALROSA for the supply of diamonds. Branches were established in New York and Dubai. The subsidiary jewelry production company "Smolensk Diamonds" was founded

2000

2005

1992

1995



Yuri Gagarin, the first person in space, visited the Smolensk enterprise



The fancy "happy" cut is an in-house design from Kristall specialists. The original shape combines 81 facets and a special calculation which ensures low losses of crystal mass in processing

KRISTALL OPENED ITS FIRST FOREIGN COMMERCIAL AGENCIES IN ANTWERP AND HONG KONG

2002



The largest diamond ever in the Kristall plant, a black "pear" weighing 107.7 carats, was cut. The diamond acquired the name "Czarevitch" and was sold abroad

In honor of the 45th anniversary, a diamond weighing 45.45 carats was cut at the plant and was the most expensive diamond ever for Kristall



2008

2015

2012

2010

In the year of the 250th anniversary of the Imperial Crown of Russia, Kristall presented a replica of a historical piece of jewelry, created by professionals from Smolensk Diamonds. The replica of the crown is made of white gold, has over 11 thousand diamonds, 74 sea pearls and natural rubellite weighing 385 carats. It was displayed at leading museums in Russia and abroad, where over 600 thousand visitors could see it. It is owned by Kristall



ALROSA ACQUIRED 100% OF THE SHARES OF KRISTALL

2019



SERGEY RAUSOV,

SMOLENSK DIAMONDS:

**“OUR MAIN TASK
IS TO SHOW THE BEAUTY
OF THE DIAMOND”**

The designers of the Smolensk Diamonds jewelry group invent style and create jewelry collections side by side with the cut production of the Kristall plant. They visit the cutters, and the interesting stones that catch their eyes often inspire them to create new pieces of jewelry. Sergey Rausov, Art Director of Smolensk Diamonds, tells the story of how the diamond cutting company decided to start jewelry production and how it has changed together with its customers.





Chief Technologist Yuriy Kovalev (left) and caster Vladimir Malynsky

THE IDEA OF MANUFACTURING JEWELRY WAS CLEAR. THERE WERE NO COMPANIES LIKE THAT ON THE MARKET

There were only a few domestic jewelry companies working with diamonds at the turn of the new millennium. To say nothing of design. We decided to master jewelry production first. At the Kristall plant, with almost 40 years of experience, everyone knew about cutting rough diamonds but knew almost nothing about jewelry. There were very few jewelry schools in the country. And only craftsmen, not artists, were trained there. I believe a jeweler should have a creative background.

I started working at Smolensk Diamonds as a sales manager, then I worked as Sales Director for many years, and now I am the Art Director. At the beginning of the company's activity, all members of our small team had to delve into different issues: legal, accounting, trading and artistic. It was interesting, we spent days and nights discussing where to go.

The first step was to train mounters. We bought gold pieces, set our beautiful diamonds in them, and

the jewelry was ready: the job was done! We sold these products on the emerging Russian market.

Despite plain design, our displays were prominent at Russian jewelry exhibitions, because, thanks to our Kristall plant, we were setting amazing, big diamonds. Our goal was to show off the beauty of the stone, and to do that, it was enough to set it in a classic setting.



Leading pattern designer Tatyana Glushkova

unsuccessful attempts to start jewelry production, some grumbled: "Too much equipment purchased, too many loans taken out!" Others said: "Don't bother with that nonsense. Why do you need all that? We've been through all this before." But the jewelry line seemed very logical, taking into account the empty market, the unique base of Kristall stones, and the great skill of the cutters.

WHATEVER WE COULD NOT GET IN RUSSIA, WE FOUND IN THE HOMETLAND OF FASHION, IN ITALY

Meeting the artist Stefano Ricci in 2004 was the landmark event for the Smolensk Diamonds (actually, at that time we were called the Kristall Jewelry Center). The top managers of Kristall met him at a foreign exhibition and this laid the foundations of a longstanding partnership. We flew to Rome to build contacts. Stefano had been collaborating with several jewelry companies as an independent artist, and before that he had worked for BVLGARI for many years.

He taught me quick sketching, the technique of creating sketches in the presence of the customer. In the time of our collaboration, Stefano held two workshops for us, one in St. Petersburg at the Europe Hotel, where our customers were invited. Stefano immediately understood the psychological profile of the customer. He managed to understand the desires of a woman and immediately turn it into a drawing.

Together with Stefano, we created the first collection we had clear ideas about. In the design criteria, among the key issues, I stipulated the need to reflect a Russian style in the products, and to display the beauty of the diamond. The Italian offered us four topics: visualization of the capital "K" of our name as a sort of refrain for our jewelry, Easter eggs, Russian domes, and the two-headed eagle. Ideas and connections with Russian history and culture could be clearly seen in the jewelry.

Together with Stefano Ricci we created several collections. The last collaborative collection was called Freedom. Lively, mobile, flexible products, flawless reverses which are just as beautiful as the front of jewelry, and rubber, a new, inexpensive material. We added color to the collection using saturated red and blue sapphires.

In general, we introduced large colorful inserts – emeralds, sapphires, and rubies – over ten years ago. We noted the lack of jewelry offerings with these stones from domestic manufacturers, so we designed them and brought them to market.

CONTEMPORARY CUSTOMERS ARE NOT INTERESTED IN PARTIES, BUT IN EDUCATION

How did I move to St. Petersburg? I fell in love. Generally speaking, it seemed very natural to develop

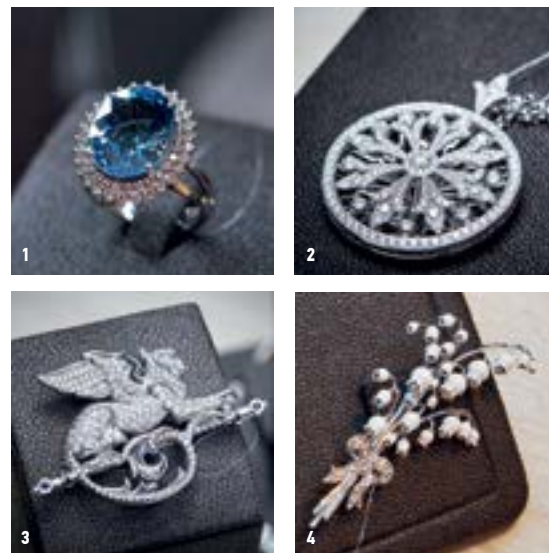
All pieces of jewelry in domestic showcases at that time could be described in two words: which setting, which cut, and there were very few varieties. But the stones drew the spotlight. One of the rings that attracted much attention at that time had a black diamond. When it was cut at Kristall, we used an obscene number of discs, the processing was so difficult.

In 2002, we bought full-cycle equipment: a Japanese injection molding machine, one of the best in the world, a firing kiln, and a wax injector. And we wanted more: to have our own original design.

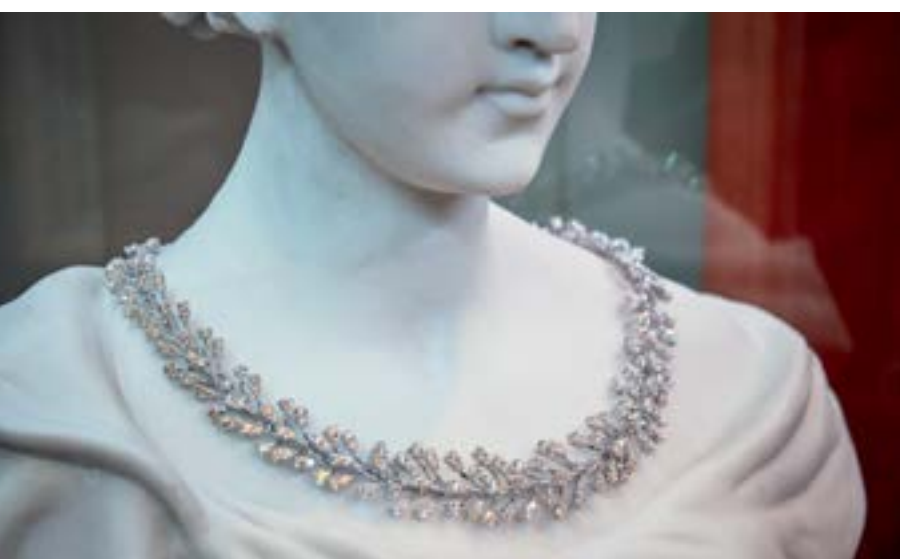
At that time, there was only a single example of great design in the domestic market, which was the Jewelry Theater of Maksim Voznesensky and Irina Dorofeeva, who proved that a Russian jewelry company can reach the highest international level. We in Smolensk, where, in contrast to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kostroma, there was absolutely no foundation, bought jewelry models from talented small firms, recruited our first designers from among recent graduates, and invited specialists to arrange training. As a result, Smolensk Diamonds became a base for many designers, some of whom decided to start their own jewelry businesses.

There were many doubters around us when we were developing our jewelry business. After previous

1. Sapphire ring, Ballet collection
2. Pendant, Faberge Sketches collection
3. Brooch "Griffin", Imperium collection
4. Brooch "Lilies of the Valley", Faberge Sketches collection



work in the Northern capital. 30 % of Smolensk Diamonds sales are in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Petersburg is important not only from the point of view of commerce. It is also an inspirational city. Our new collection is called Imperium, and it is dedicated to St. Petersburg. Thanks to our long-term friendship with the Hermitage, we even have access to those masterpieces that are hidden from the eyes of museum visitors. For example, we have created a jewelry collection based on authentic sketches from



the Faberge company, provided to us by the Hermitage. Recently we had a meeting with our customers at the Hermitage. Customers want to be amazed. But they don't need parties, they want cultural impressions. Today, the way to their hearts is not through food and dinner, but through unique cultural entertainment invented for them: the symphony, museums, the theater. There is plenty of spiritual repast in St. Petersburg, so we often bring customers from other cities here. Of course, we often visit the cities where our salons are. Everything is serious and businesslike, we make presentations about the market situation, about trends in fashion and jewelry, and learn about customers' preferences.

PREVIOUSLY, CLIENTS BOUGHT FOR STATUS, BUT NOW THEY BUY FOR THE LOOK

When we opened our first showroom in city center of Moscow, a man in tracksuit trousers came in and

bought a pure, three-carat, emerald-cut diamond of the first or second color. He spent a fortune, and he bought it for himself! And the interior of our salon was just like this cafe (we are meeting in Sever, a cafe opposite Gostiny Dvor on Nevsky Prospect in Saint Petersburg – Ed.), like Versailles. That was the need of the hour. Customers were interested in ponderous stones, easily noticeable from a great distance, a reason to respect the owner. Our customers have outgrown that complex. Now, people want original designs, history, jewelry with soul. They come to us with their own ideas and we make custom jewelry. I see our ability to quickly turn our clients' desires into reality as one of our advantages. We also act as "gem hunters", lurking in the hedges, looking for stones for the client if they cannot be found at that moment.

Still, we mostly sell jewelry of classic design, which was relevant 20 years ago and is relevant today. After all, Western brands also mostly sell classic jewelry, and not the experimental collections shouted about in the fashion media. In the end, there is no better setting for a solitaire (large diamond) than the classic. It is universal and always irrefragable. A customer who buys it today agrees with that, and, without a doubt, so will her great-granddaughter who will wear it many years from now.

At the core, we showcase the beauty of the stone, just as we did in 2004. This has remained our key concern, and traditional design does a great job of it. Often, the idea of jewelry is housed in the stone itself. I visit Smolensk every month and look at the goods in production, looking for any "stars" that might inspire us to create exclusive jewelry.

Back on the topic of the customer's needs: there are people who look narrowly only at the reverse of the product, and if the name of an international brand is not printed there, they will not be interested in it, even if the design is perfect. We are headed the other way.



In the St. Petersburg Salon of Smolensk Diamonds on Nevsky Prospect. A sales manager showing a diamond and sapphire bracelet from the Freedom collection

AUCTION DIAMOND SALES IN 2019*

Christie's, Sotheby's, Bonhams

* Preliminary data. Overall sales of loose diamonds and diamond jewelry

** Sold in carats:

\$ - total price

\$ - average price for carat



Yellow
1032.8
 carats
 \$34 million
 ~\$30 thousand per carat



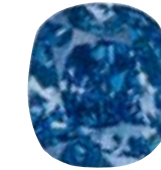
Colorless
 WEIGHING
 OVER 10 CARATS
1341.5
 carats**
 ~\$78 million
 ~\$55 thousand per carat



Pink
165.4
 carats
 \$46 million
 ~\$270 thousand per carat



Brown
64.1
 carats
 \$1.2 million
 ~\$18 thousand per carat



Blue
50.8
 carats
 \$37 million
 ~\$720 thousand per carat



Grey
13
 carats
 ~\$290 thousand
 ~\$20 thousand per carat



Orange
7.3
 carats
 ~\$150 thousand
 ~\$20 thousand per carat



Green
4.6
 carats
 ~\$840 thousand
 ~\$180 thousand per carat



Red
0.59
 carats
 ~\$710 thousand
 ~\$1 million per carat

I adore simple pleasures. They are the last refuge of the complex

Oscar Wilde "The Picture of Dorian Gray"

COLOR: Intense Yellow
CUT: radiant
WEIGHT: 7.15 carats



Masquerade ball

Scene from "Interlude in Prague", 2017



stalking.com

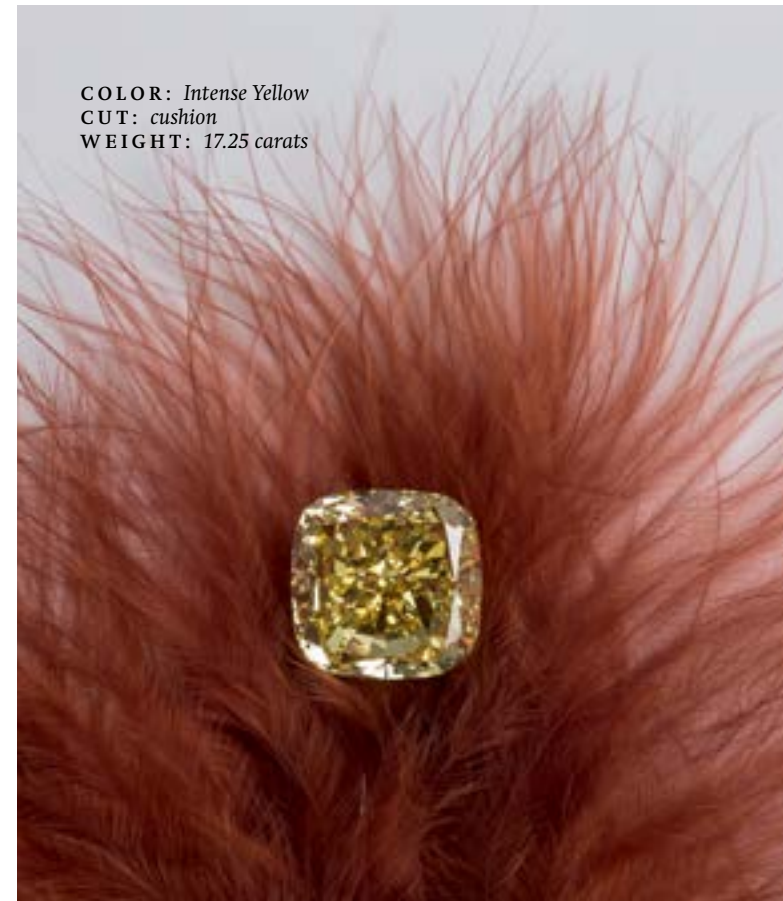
Brilliance of diamonds, soft texture of feathers, aura of mystery and festivity. Here is our "Masquerade ball" photo project



COLOR: Intense Yellow
CUT: oval
WEIGHT: 7.90 carats

*The pleasure has an advantage:
Unlike happiness,
it has the merit to exist*

Frédéric Beigbeder



COLOR: Intense Yellow
CUT: cushion
WEIGHT: 17.25 carats



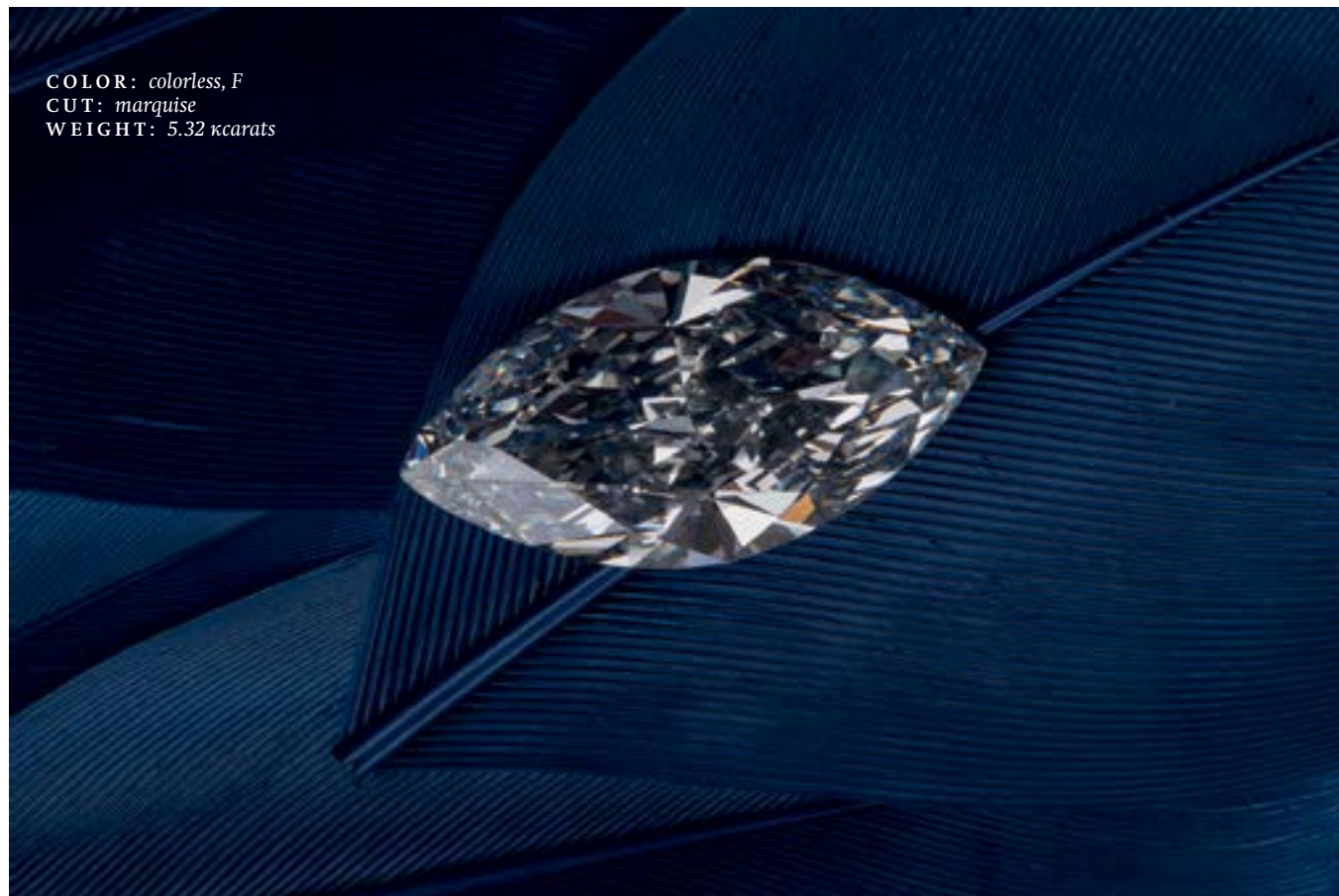
sonypictures.com

Scene from "Marie Antoinette",
2005



COLOR: Vivid Yellow
CUT: emerald
WEIGHT: 1.54 carats

COLOR: Intense Yellow
CUT: radiant
WEIGHT: 2.27 carats



COLOR: colorless, F
CUT: marquise
WEIGHT: 5.32 carats



Scene from "The Great Gatsby",
2013



COLOR: colorless, G
CUT: round
WEIGHT: 22.28 carats



COLOR: colorless, G
CUT: asscher
WEIGHT: 14.13 carats



text:
KARINA MELKUMYAN
photo:
VLAD VOLKOV

JEWELLER
AND COLLECTOR

*Elena
Esaulova*

LIKES JEWELRY WITH
A STORY TO TELL. SHE IS
HAPPY TO RESTORE "ITEMS
WITH A STORY TO TELL," AND
WHERE THERE IS NEITHER
A STORY NOR ANY PIECE
OF JEWELRY YET TO SEE –
ONLY GEMS AND IDEAS – SHE
CREATES THEM HERSELF
COMPLETE WITH STORIES IN
HER VICTORIAN COLLECTIONS
UNDER HER E2J BRAND.

IN BETWEEN THE FUTURE AND THE PAST

E2J necklace. Glass, silver, ruthenium, gold plating, demantoids, rubies and diamonds



Elena, how did you become a jeweller? Did you actually start out by collecting vintage costume jewelry?

Before concerning myself with costume jewelry, and later with jewelry pieces, I designed images for advertisements and movies. I have an artistic background. I also taught at the Moscow Cinema School. And at some point I understood that I had come to the end of the road: I was bored with advertising, found most films in production unappealing and felt that teaching was more of a side job than a calling for me. I asked myself: what do I want to do full-time? I looked around and realised: costume jewelry. At that time I had a decent collection of vintage jewelry, and I found the subject fascinating.

But how did you move from trinkets to jewelry?

The more I learned about vintage designer fashion jewelry – at one time or another I held truly rare pieces from America, France, the UK – the more obvious it became to me that all that was just the tip of the iceberg. And underneath were enormous layers, various historical styles, unique pieces of jewelry that were complex, intriguing and, last but not least, little known in this country. I started meeting with collectors and reading extensively, and the world of jewelry gradually became less closed and inaccessible to me. I realised that anything was possible.

In other words, costume jewelry became a kind of springboard for you?

Yes, almost literally. Overnight I found an interesting customer who wished to buy my entire collection of costume jewelry – all 230 pieces of it. I took a leap of faith and used the money I earned to buy my first three antique pieces of jewelry. Then they



E2J hand-shaped pomander. Porcelain, silver, gold plating, pyrope, emerald and ruby



Lenaginarium puzzle ring. Gold and ruthenium

grew in number, and gradually I switched over. Incidentally, costume jewelry has a serious shortcoming: if a piece breaks, it's very difficult to repair. I got my hands on quite a few exquisite pieces of costume jewelry dating back to the 1930–40s, most of which were irreparable. Restoration would have either left obvious signs or been cost-prohibitive. It's a different story when you invest in refashioning or restoring a vintage piece of jewelry with precious stones: diamonds will always be diamonds.

How did you come up with your first jewelry in the shape of female hands?

Jewelry in the shape of hands was popular in the Victorian era. Back then they often used all manner of lockets, with a trick to unlocking them. For example, my collection has an antique locket in the shape of a hand holding a fan. You press the flower and the mechanism opens the fan. When you lay your hands on such items, it's always an opportunity to start your own "archaeological dig" and discover something interesting. After all, the field has a lot that has been forgotten, undescribed and lost. And this is what happened to me. I dipped my toe in the Victorian era and literally "fell for" those hands.



Lenaginarium necklace. Japanese pearls, diamonds, ruby and emerald. The lock used to be an antique art deco ring

What did Victorian jewellers want to say through their hands?

Generally speaking, the tradition to make jewelry in the shape of female hands is quite tongue-in-cheek, as is the case with other items from the Victorian era, which is why I love it. Back then all items were classified into mournful – these were made of dark materials – or conversely into ones associated with hope, expectations, love. Those were light-coloured and made, for example, of bone. In other words, there was a clear-cut duality. And the image of a female hand became a device for depicting a mood. It could be holding a dead bird or,



E2J hand-shaped pendant. Silver, ruthenium and gold plating. Emerald, rubies, rhodolites, sapphires, spinel, demantoids and diamonds

MINIMALISM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH RUSSIA: THIS NATION HAS ALWAYS LIKED BEAUTY AND COLOURFUL CONSPICUOUS SHAPES

E2J gimmel ring. Silver, ruthenium, gold plating, quartz with gold rutile, tanzanites, sapphires, ruby and diamonds



Lenaginarium ring. Restoration of gold ring box for perfumes. It was necessary to keep the original design of the early 20th century and the genuine central diamond

say, a flower, and those were two totally different premises. I became so engrossed in that story that I developed an *idée fixe*: make locking hands that will be doing what they are meant to do – “holding” the adornment while serving as a decorative element.

To make such miniature hands is probably not the easiest thing to do. Not easy at all – and I was warned about it. It took us nearly a year to make our first hands, and they were a sorry sight. But eventually we captured the lightness of the shape: when it seems that the locking hand holding a string of beads or a gemstone is on the verge of letting it go, dropping it, but in fact the whole design is very precise and secure. Starting with locks, I went on to develop the theme using female hands and gestures. And

LENAGINARIUM IS MY DIARY, A DIRECT LINE TO ITS READERS, AND MY ANTIQUE JEWELRY FINDS. IN OTHER WORDS, MY SMALL UNIVERSE

I later discovered rings that were popular in Ireland in the shape of two spreading hands cupping an item such as a heart, an anchor... I thought that the idea could be developed into a great “lego” for adults: jewelry with a centrepiece of your own choosing, from a precious stone to a shell picked up on the beach by your child.

Hands are now the theme of your E2J collections. Apart from that, you have two more jewelry projects, Lenaginarium and Hleb. Why are there three?

I didn't want to lump together totally different stories. E2J is all about hands. Lenaginarium is a diary where I share my discoveries, and at the same time it is about my antique jewelry: those I found in flea markets, those brought in by customers, restored and given a new lease on life.

Hleb is a studio where I mostly do mainstream work. I normally work there with customers' stones that were gifted or inherited. Not infrequently do I see old jewelry brought in to be given a modern look. For example, someone inherits a ring from their grandma. Its shape is unappealing, but the stone is good. One day a girl brought in her great-

grandmother's ring with a stunning ruby. But the jewellers – apparently, the great-grandmother's contemporaries – virtually drowned it in gold so that you could hardly see it. We exposed the stone, having removed the surplus metal and giving it an elegant shape. The customer was happy: “This is now a ring for me.”

How did you come up with the name Lenaginarium?

It's all because of my love of fairy tales and stories about how you build your world around you, your own small Universe. And naturally enough, the name harks back to The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus. Lenaginarium is first of all a direct line to my readers, my antique jewelry finds. In other words, my small Universe.

How do you choose precious stones for your collections?

I had a very amusing experience after which I sought out a professional gemhunter, a gemmologist, who started hunting stones for me. When I made my first hand-shaped jewelry, I used synthetic gems in an effort to save money. “So what?” I reasoned. “This is beautiful! After all, what the buyer is after is design first and foremost.” So here I am, showing my jewelry to a prominent jewelry critic. She narrows her eyes and says something that has shaped my attitude to synthetic gems once and for all: “You're clever enough to make such items, but not clever enough to make money to buy decent stones!” I left with a red face. And after that I found my own gemhunter, who I trust completely. She has been in business a long time, she has her own network, and she's also a forensic expert on jewelry. In other words, she's a true professional. And it's thanks to her that great finds come my way.

Do you have favourite historical periods apart from the Victorian era?

I like virtually anything and everything made before 1930. In my opinion, the most beautiful, interesting and innovative things were done then. Thereafter design started slipping towards the avant-garde. The world was experiencing a technological revolution and was being streamlined, and that affected jewelry as well. In my mind, it was then that beauty and innovations lost ground. They were

sacrificed on the altar of “new forms”. And much simplified forms too, such as a circle or square. This was embraced even by brands such as Cartier, which also made Bauhaus jewelry: plain squares and circles without diamonds. So, all modern minimalism was devised long ago. It wasn't invented by you or me.

And what do you like or dislike in the world of modern jewelry?

The trend that scares me most is endless minimalism, the dominance of these plain rudimentary rings devoid of any meaning. For me, this is sort of bland uniform. When you don't know what to put on, how to match it, so you choose something “safe” and therefore secure. Instead of agonising over your choice, you opt for a bunch of multi-coloured thin rings or small chains with miniature symbols, like they do in Scandinavia. Minimalism has its place, but it's not my style. If history is anything to go by, it has nothing to do with Russia. This nation has always liked beauty and colourful conspicuous shapes. Even during the times of Soviet shortages. You couldn't afford diamonds and rubies, so you used man-made gems, the larger and shinier the better. There is also another thing I don't like: the modern habit of instant gratification, like fast food, which has impacted the jewelry scene as well.

Where do you see it?

In the desire to grab an item and put it on almost without pausing. This trend is also followed by the manufacturer, which leads to simpler products. This is naturally totally at odds with my philosophy, with the idea of lock hands, where every detail is worked out; up to and including the fact that we design locks separately for the left-handed and right-handed. But at some point I realised that the shopper doesn't want to linger over such fine points. They do everything on autopilot, without thinking. Long story short, all that sent me through the roof and I declared war on “fast food”.

How did you go about it?

I started putting jewelry in small boxes that needed some physical engagement. It requires effort to open it, and you have to put your phone aside at the very least. Not much of a trick, but it works. People do indeed slow down, albeit reluctantly,



ONE DAY I REALISED THAT PEOPLE ARE TOO MUCH IN A HURRY TO GIVE EVEN THEIR JEWELRY ANY THOUGHT. I BLEW MY TOP AND DECLARED WAR ON FAST FOOD IN JEWELRY.

MY HAND-FEATURING ITEMS ARE HAPPY BECAUSE THEY AND THEIR DIAMONDS ARE NOW BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

and become absorbed in the process. And I think of it as a small victory. Because collecting jewelry is not about speed, it's not about quickness. It's about contemplation and admiration though. And I go about putting together my private collection of antiques in the same manner – very slowly and deliberately.

How often do you have customers who collect jewelry?

Often enough. Many people, having bought a piece or two of jewelry, say, “You know, I have a jewelry box at home that's now

full. How about we meet and see whether there's anything of interest there and fill a new one?” And this raises the question: why does anybody need a jewelry box? To wear jewelry? To collect it? To invest in it? For many people, it's the last option they're interested in, but note here that in order for an item to be considered an investment, it must meet certain criteria. These can include a unique provenance or a stone of some size.

Do you often come across unique provenances?

Often enough. And if somebody brings an item I fall in love with and tells me how they got it and from whom, I often say, “Can I buy it complete with your story?” I inherited nothing other than a funny small ring made of plain gold. My grandparents were blue-collar workers and peasants. That's why I'm always interested in the stories behind the family jewelry that people bring me for refashioning or sale. Some of those stories I try on for size: I imagine my grandmother being given this piece, think of where she might have worn

it, stored it and carried it through the years. Such items are certainly something more than a particular combination of gold and precious stones.

If not in inherited jewelry boxes, then where do people usually find collectable jewelry?

Most often in some flea markets, antique shops and auctions. For example, you buy an item, find a hallmark on it, start walking it back and discover that what you have is a unique item. Such miracles don't happen often, but they do happen. Here's a first-hand experience. One day in Cyprus I dropped in at an antique furniture shop and found a Russian silver box in the shape of an egg. It didn't cost much. The box contained a brooch and an art deco ring with original stones and minimal damage. What's more, all the items were [hall] marked. And so, when I came back to Russia and started researching various sources, I discovered that the work of the jeweller who had made the items was featured at the Russian Museum. In other words, what I found was more or less a treasure trove.

Having found a treasure trove, what do you normally do with the jewelry after restoration?

Normally, I get several offers right away, for example, at triple the price. And so I must decide what to do next: either sell on the spot while the offers stand or put the jewelry on ice: it won't go away, and chances are it will only increase in value. Such items are disappearing. Many are melted down to make new pieces. Yet they are increasingly sought after by collectors.

Can a brand be a commercial success if it continues doing what it does disregarding the dominant trends?

All projects that I do start out as non-commercial. I believe that the label “commercial” is a game-changer, and not for the best. You start costing the item, looking to cut costs, and what you lose right away is beauty. Many people are afraid to make what they like precisely because they fear that it will be difficult to sell. I think this is

a vote of no confidence in the shopper. And I design all jewelry as if for myself, even thinking while I'm making them about what I would wear them with. But at the end of the day, there's always a customer who would notice “my” item and exclaim, “This is so me! I must have it.” And she buys it.

Do you think jewelry and specifically “items with a story” can appeal to the younger generation?

When somebody tells me that they do not like jewelry, I answer that I didn't used to like it either until, that is, I realised that their design doesn't boil down to floral patterns and twirls. The world of jewelry is incredibly rich and varied.

As for “items with a story” they hold little if any interest to most young people – only to those who collect them. These account for no more than 10% of the people I know. Those who are in the game, on the other hand, are usually great at bridging the past and the present. One of my best friends has genuine Etruscan earrings, and she wears them naturally and gracefully with jeans, trainers and T-shirts. When seen as a whole, her outfits look stunning, and the word “old-fashioned” hardly applies to them. What matters here is how good you feel wearing it and how willing you are to flout conventional wisdom.

What is the role of diamonds in your jewelry?

They are featured in nearly every one of my items, except for a few. And this is because people still love it when the certificate for their item has the magic word “diamond”. Even if it's minute. I use large diamonds mostly in my Lenaginarian and Hleb lines, and in E2J items they can be quite small, such as tiny rings on decorative female hands. But even these work magic. Because the stereotype that diamonds are a girl's best friends still holds true. And this is particularly true of my hand-featuring items because they and their diamonds are now best friends forever.

We thank 72 concept store for their assistance in making filming possible



**WE REVIEW
DIAMONDS
AND EXCITING
POINTS OF
A CAREER WITH
THE OLYMPIC
CHAMPION
NIKITA NESTEROV**

text:
MIKHAIL POLIEV
photo:
EUGENE LIHATSKY

B R I L L I A N T

MOMENTS

The player of the Russian national hockey team, the Olympic champion of 2018, the holder of the Gagarin Cup-2019 as the member of the Moscow CSKA Club Nikita Nesterov admits: "I love stones. And who doesn't love them?" He recalls how he presented his wife Catherine a diamond ring for the birth of their second son. The hockey player carved out two hours before training for viewing ALROSA's special colored diamonds and a tour of Moscow-based cutting and polishing plant. We told Nikita about the intricacies of diamond cutting and a variety of natural colors, and asked him about sports and family.



Head of Auction Sales Department, Natalya Kruglova, tells Nikita Nesterov about rare natural shades of diamonds

ABOUT THE OLYMPICS AND EMOTIONS

– Nikita, let's start with the most pleasant part: the Olympics 2018. Final with the Germans. 60 seconds before the end of the third period, the team "burns" 2: 3 and, moreover, plays shorthanded. Did you believe that you'll finally win?

– No (smiles). I really don't remember what I believed then, what I was thinking. Perhaps there were no thoughts at all, just a desolation. But when we evened the score, a belief appeared: that's ok, now we definitely will not miss the "gold".

– Have you been angry at yourself? The opponent is not the strongest one, but the match is going so unluckily?

– Why get angry? In fact, the Germans presented a great team, they were in top form. In fact, it was a very spectacular match Olympics. The audience liked the game for sure.

– Have you ever had the same emotional moments in your career?

Can't remember. But ... In 2013, when I played for Tractor, in the final of the conference we had a game with Ak Bars. The seventh match was held in Kazan. Regular time ended with a score of 1:1, and in overtime we delivered the winning puck and reached the final of the Gagarin Cup. But the Olympic final stands distinctive of course.

ABOUT THE NHL

– You had a chance to play as an NHL member for Tampa Bay. Do you follow the performances of the former team?

– I basically follow the entire league, not just Tampa.

– Do you communicate with someone?

– Not very. Still, it's difficult to communicate when you have such a time difference. But sometimes we manage to correspond with Radulov (Alexander, striker of Dallas – Ed.), with Kuzya (Evgeny Kuznetsov, striker of Washington – Ed.), and with Kucher (Nikita Kucherov, striker of Tampa Bay – Ed.).

– Is there a player you look up to? Who is your shining beacon?

– Well, I did not look up to anyone, I just took the best from the ones I liked. For example, from our hockey stars: Sergey Gonchar, Vyacheslav Fetisov, Sergey Zubov.

– In previous interviews, you cited Drew Doughty from Los Angeles as an example. What did you take from him?

– From him – nothing (laughs), because when he played, I had already grown a little, so I did not follow him. Rather, I meant that now he is one of the best defenders.

ABOUT THE HOCKEY

CENTER FOR CHILDREN

– Last year your school opened in Chelyabinsk ...

– This is not a school, but a hockey center for education and training of young guys who do not spend much time on coaching staffs and do not join the squad. It is necessary to play, train, grow somewhere. I have long wanted to create something like this, I was offered one project, and finally agreed.

– So it was not your idea?

– The idea is mine, but the project of its implementation was proposed by my childhood friends, who continue to work on it. They designed everything, showed me, and together we delivered the project.

– As far as I'm concerned, graduates of the Tractor school and your father-in-law Oleg Sirotnin helped you in creating the center?

That's right. Oleg – he is actually one of the founders – and the guys from the Tractor school: Artem Ilyin and Gleb Bovin – they all helped. They



I HAVE NEVER BEEN AGGRESSIVE EXCEPT ON THE ICE. I ALWAYS TREAT MY SONS GENTLY, ESPECIALLY SINCE SOMETIMES WE DO NOT SEE EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME

- So, the coach's trust is one of the factors of the emergence of future stars?
- Exactly. Because if the coach trusts you, you play calmly. And even if you make a mistake, he still says: "It's okay," and you go on. We must give a chance to juniors.

- But the result is required from the coach, and young people can not always give it right away.

– A funny story. The result is required from the coach, and the team must include high-level defencemen. And where we can get them? Results will be demanded anytime, after all, this is coaching work, but we can turn a blind eye to some points – especially when it concerns youth education.

ABOUT CHILDREN

AND FAMILY

- You grew up surrounded by factories. Why did you choose hockey and not become, for example, an engineer?

– You can't start engineer's career at five – I came to hockey at five – my father brought me to Tractor School. At this age, you go where they send you (laughs). Whatsoever, everything could have turned out differently. It was a moment when I wanted to break ties with hockey.

- Sounds unexpected.

– In childhood, legs hurt from skates, so I started to think about quitting. But that's all right, I has endured. Actually, my father helped to endure (laughs). He just forced me to go, so I got adjusted and managed it after a while.

- It is not easy to be a sportsman's wife: you are always on the road,

flying, playing. How does your spouse cope with this?

– You need to ask herself (laughs). But in general, she has enough things to do: she is taking care of herself, raising children.

- How do you usually choose gifts for her?

– Usually she chooses by herself. She just says what she likes, and I buy it.

- Could you tell us please about your last gift to your wife?

used to play with me before, they don't play hockey anymore.

- What difficulties you got into while implementing the project?

– I didn't (smiles), because the guys managed everything. But generally there were many nuances, and in fact, everything turned to be not as easy as on paper. The way we initially planned completely changed finally. Tritely: one of the most difficult problems was to find a facility. But, thank God, everything finished well and the center opened – even though a month later than it was planned.

- Who works as trainers in the new center?

– Local hockey players. I would say that they didn't manage everything in their playing careers for various reasons, so they learned a trade of coach and will now work with young guys.

ABOUT YOUNG PLAYERS

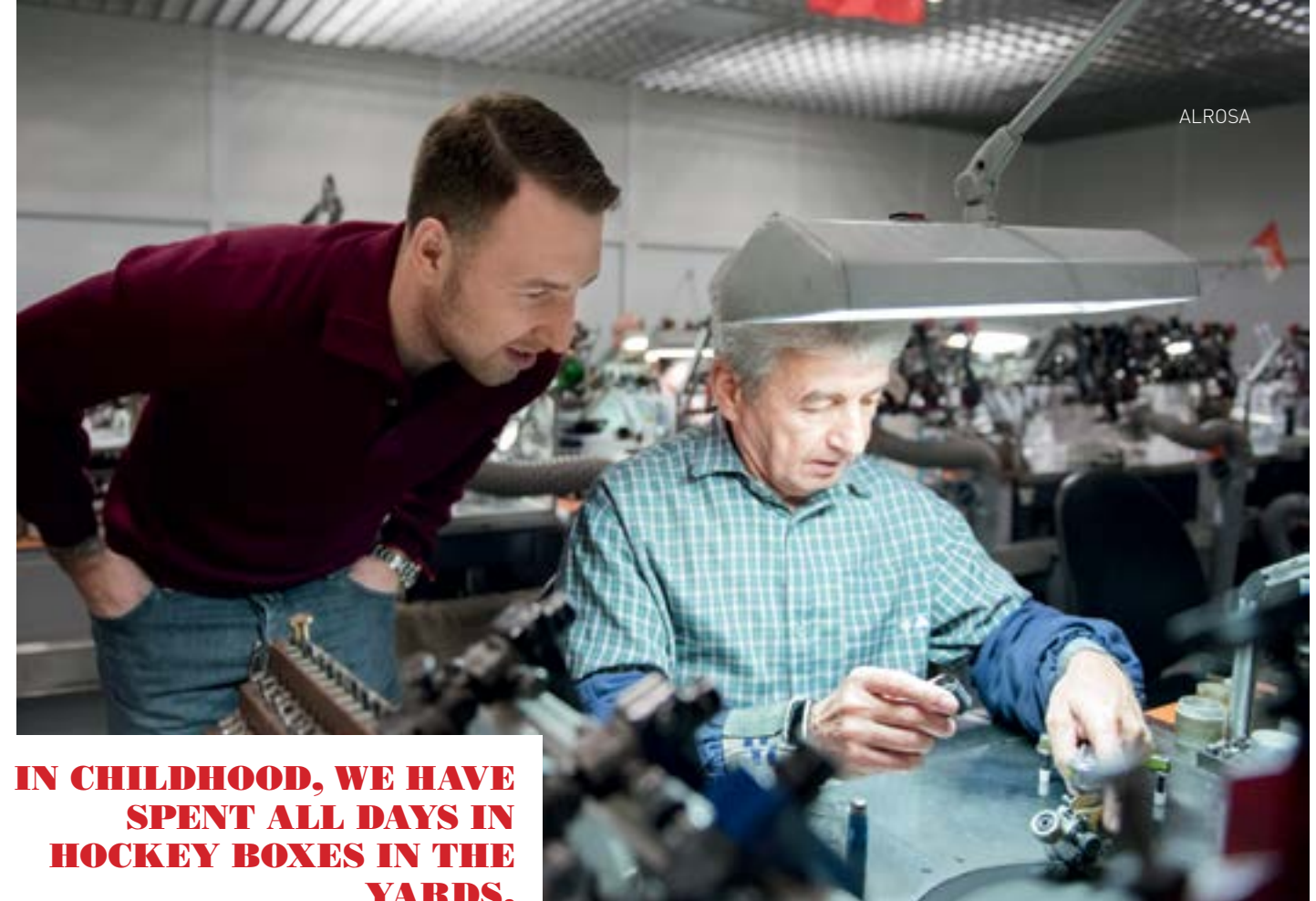
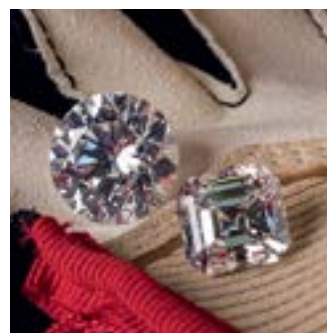
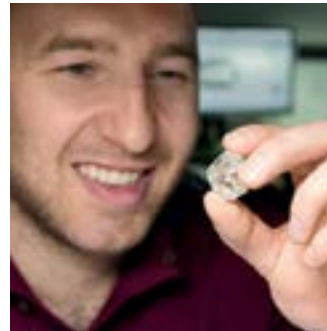
- What is the difference between your generation of hockey players and new one going to replace you?

– Now everything is absolutely different. How it was before: go out to the yard – hockey boxes are everywhere, we were hanging out there all winter. Well, except for a short time, for home lunch. So what's nowadays? A lot of guys spending days playing computer games. Therefore, they grow differently, think differently, and play hockey differently.

- Worse or better?
- Only time will show.

- It is believed that the Russian team today lacks a high-level defenceman. Should we expect the arrival of new stars like Darius Kasparaytis or for example Zubov?

– I think, they will appear anyway, because we have talented youth. But a lot depends on how they treat their success and development. Well, we have Alexander Romanov in CSKA. A young, promising guy, and I think he'll be fine, but there are a lot of talented guys besides him? They just need support.



IN CHILDHOOD, WE HAVE SPENT ALL DAYS IN HOCKEY BOXES IN THE YARDS.

TODAY, A LOT OF CHILDREN SITTING AT THE COMPUTER FROM MORNING TO EVENING. THEREFORE, THEY DEVELOP, THINK AND PLAY HOCKEY IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT WAY

- Would you like your sons to follow in your footsteps in future?

– It's too early to talk about this. But probably not. The hockey player's life is quite short, and you spend all the time in the stadium. And also it is cold there (laughs). Better they play tennis.

- So, the sport is objective, no matter which kind?

– Definitely. But if they'll want to play hockey – for God's sake, I will not mind.

FAMILY TIME

- What do you usually do when you have time with your family?

– Usually just walking with the children.

- Do you have favorite places for walking?

– We don't have any in Moscow, but in Chelyabinsk we like to spend time in the country.

- How did you celebrate New Year 2020?

– We have two small children – how can you celebrate with them (laughs)? We stayed at home, set the table, had a glass of champagne and went to bed. Lately, all the holidays look the same.

- But what about grandparents?

– They were not there. We are not given much time off. I had only a couple of days off: December 31 and January 1. And on January 2, I already had to be on the ice.

The most valuable diamonds of Russia are cut on this site

Masha and **GREAT BEAR**

text: SERGEY YURIYEV

illustrations: VICTORIA MEZENOVA
Digital drawing. Stylus, tablet
Instagram @vicamor_art

Anton is a master of surprise. He recently claimed that in summer you should holiday in the south, and in winter in the north.

You should ring in the New Year at home, and celebrate Christmas at a new place. And that is why they are here, in the middle of Pomor taiga, in a log cabin on the shore of an iced-over forest lake.

Masha went out on the porch and took in the smooth surface of the lake glistening in the sunshine. Anton was already there. He was standing on the frozen-in wooden jetty, watching the sunrise.

On hearing Masha's footsteps, he turned around, gave her a smile and, after a short pause, took a small red box out of his pocket: "This is for you."

Excited and full of suspense, Masha lifted the small lid. To be sure, underneath was what she expected to see. But she had not expected to see it today of all days and here of all places. Sitting in a satin padding was an elegant thin ring of warm metal with a round diamond, each of its facets reflecting the morning rays of the northern sun.

– "Like it?" Anton asked in a low voice.



– “Let’s go for a walk,” suggested Masha without answering his question, finding it difficult to hide the tremor in her voice and slipping the small box with the ring into her jacket pocket. – “Let’s just walk around the lake, and I’ll give you my answer on the way back, OK?”

They set out along the path skirting the lake, listening to the crunching of snow under their feet. At some point the path started to turn away from the lake and towards the woods.

– “You know what? Let’s take a shortcut,” suggested Masha; she had decided that the footpath would take them back to the lake after a small detour.

– “Are you sure?” asked Anton. – “I heard from the locals that there is a stone around here they call the Witch’s Chair. In bygone days it was used by witches for their sorceries. If you happen upon it, you’ll have a hard time getting back... If you do get back.”

– “And do you believe this?!”

– “You bet!” – Anton answered, smiling. – “Local websites are full of “[love] magic” classifieds: ‘bring your lover back’, ‘remove celibacy wreath’, ‘cast a love spell’... To all appearances, this land is still chock-full of witches ...”

– “Got your compass on you?”

– “You bet!” Anton nodded, patting his blue backpack, his nearly constant companion – “I’m always prepared!”

– “Let’s go then!” – Masha felt like an adventure.

They walked on for another half a mile or so, but the path went on without turning back, taking them ever deeper into the woods. Suddenly the trees parted, and they found themselves in a large snow-covered clearing. Its sparkling whiteness was interrupted in the middle by an upright piece of black granite: it was nearly as tall as a man and couldn’t be embraced by two people.

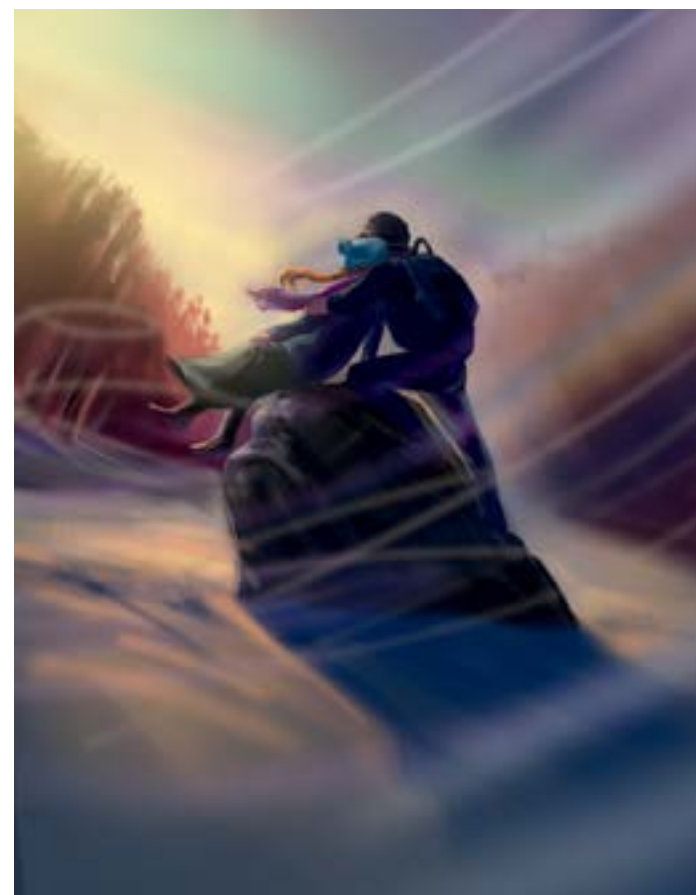
Having looked at the stone, Masha recalled the story of the Witch’s Chair, felt like laughing and decided to get on top of it whatever it took. She

dashed forward and, grasping at the handholds, quickly climbed up and sat down on the flat top. A strong gust of wind struck her nearly at the same moment. It would have knocked Masha down to the ground, but for Anton, who ran up a moment before and caught her by the shoulders. The wind would not subside. Another few seconds and it turned into a roaring tornado, which caught, enveloped and nailed Masha and Anton to the spot. In sync with it, and equally swiftly, sinking into the ground like a drill, the stone started spinning. It grew dark and quiet around them...

Looking around, they saw that they were in a huge cave, dimly lit up by the stalactites hanging from the ceiling. The Witch’s Chair was also there; it was now under a heavy stone dome. Suddenly Anton spotted a reflection of a distant bonfire on a wall.

– “Let’s go there...” he whispered, pulling Masha in that direction.

She kept berating herself the whole time for climbing the stone and dragging them into this sinister underworld. But what they saw next all but petrified them. Dancing around the flames were witches. As large as life. True, not all of them were terrifying and ugly. Not all of them were old... But they were definitely witches – each and every one of them! Their glances alone were enough... They looked



daggers. Masha and Anton were frozen to the spot. All of a sudden, the dance stopped abruptly, the witches halted in their tracks and, as one, glared at the party crashers.

– “What is thisss? You after our treasuresss?!” lisped one of them, who seemed the oldest.

– “No. It’s an accident...” was the only thing that Masha managed to say.

– “What does it matter now, by accident or on purpose?!” a witch, who looked slightly younger cut in. – “There is still no way back from here for humans...”

– “Say, would you like to be a witch like us?” another one asked all of a sudden. – “Then you can leave...”

– “No,” whispered Masha in a small voice, and pressed herself harder against Anton.

– “Here you are,” a witch offered her something shiny. Masha made no response, and the witch pored a handful of diamonds into a pocket of her jacket: “The offer stands.”

Nobody deigned Anton with a glance. A moment later, however, Masha forgotten too, the witches resumed their dance.

Anton gently took her by the elbow and led her back to the stone that sank through the ground.

– “Where are we going?” asked Masha, hoping that he had thought of something.

– “Where there is an entrance, there can also be an exit,” he answered without stopping.

The Witch's Chair was still in its spot, and the dome over it seemed as impenetrable as before, not a single crack in sight. Anton approached the granite boulder, took a torch out of his backpack and, having switched it on, started clearing patches of moss from the stone.

– “Take a look,” He stabbed his finger at the craggy stone.

Masha could barely read the carved inscription: “This is a lodestar, linked to Ursa Major...”

– “How do people orient themselves without maps or landmarks?” Anton started reasoning aloud.

– “By stars,” Masha responded right away. – “But how do you find stars underground?”

– “Why don't you look in your pocket!”

– “You think stones can turn into stars?” Masha said sceptically, though willing to clutch at any straw. – “It only happens in fairy tales...”

– “And where do you think we are?” Anton asked. – “Where do you find witches, and in droves too!”

– “And to think that I wanted to get rid of them,” said Masha, taking a handful of precious stones from her pocket.

– “What is important is that you possess diamonds and not the other way,” said Anton, sticking out his palm. When it was filled with diamonds, he started sifting through them slowly, muttering strange words: – “Mizar... Dubhe... Alkaid...”

– “What are you on about?” Masha asked, sitting down next to him.

– “These are the names of stars, and I'm trying to pick out stones that are close to them in spectrum and brightness...”

– “Why, aren't all the stars the same colour?”

– “No, sweetie... In the Great Bear constellation, most are white, but Dubhe is a triple-star system, and it is yellowish, and Alkaid bluish...”

– “How do you know all of this?”

– “I've enjoyed looking at the stars since childhood. And I was a member of an astronomy club at school...”

Finally, the stones were sorted into groups of the right size and colour. Some of them were even emitting some light of their own. Anton climbed on top of the Witch's Chair in order to reach the cave ceiling and started pressing the diamonds into the moist clayey dome. It took him quite a while to shape them into something like Great Bear.

– “We must also have the North Star,” suggested Masha. – “Otherwise how will we find the north?”

– “Let me think.” Anton thought for a moment. –

“We take the distance from Merak, Beta Ursae Majoris, to Dubhe, its alpha, and apply it five times



up... Only we don't have a suitable gem – we need a distinctive one, with a light-yellow tint...”

– “Will this one do?” – Masha reached into her pocket and opened the small box with the sparkling diamond ring that was given to her that morning.

– “Yes, the colour is very delicate, light-yellow, it took me a long time to find. Are you sure?”

– “I wouldn't have given it up for anything... But we're out of options.”

The constellation was in place, the North Star moved into its spot, but nothing happened. They started to lose hope.

– At least we tried, Anton said bitterly.

Masha thought for a moment.

– “Wait! Maybe, we should light them up with something? Only where do we get sunshine here...”

– “Sunshine? That we can do...” Anton reached for his backpack and, after digging about in it, pulled out a signal flare. – “I always carry it with me when I'm out on an outing...”

A moment later, a torch flared up in his hand, lighting up the cave. When it went out, the precious

stones in the dome did start sparkling, as brightly as the stars on a clear winter night. Another moment; and the dome vanished into thin air, and a huge starry sky opened above them.

– “Look, it's now mine!” exclaimed Masha, pointing at the North Star. “It was you who gave it to me! Right?!”

– “Yes, sweetie, it's yours! Like it?” Anton asked again his question from that morning.

– “A lot! If I could only have back the North Star that was left in the cave ceiling...” Feeling sad, Masha pulled the small red box out of her pocket, slowly opened it – and got the umpteenth surprise of the day: it displayed the sparkling ring with the round diamond that was given to her this morning.”

This time around, she did not hesitate and put it on her ring finger:

– “But how can it be? And what was it that happened to us?”

– “A miracle. Simply a miracle. After all, it is Christmas...”

Ballet

OF JEWELS

text:
ELLA ZAKHAROVA



Peacock brooch,
Van Cleef & Arpels

To find and cut a unique diamond is as difficult as to become a ballet star: unearthly beauty is in both cases achieved through a combination of natural talent, perseverance, aptitude, and luck. Could it be the reason why the art of ballet has inspired more than one generation of jewellers?



Russian ballet had been inextricably linked to the imperial court and its favourites from the very beginning.

In 1738, Empress Anna Ioannovna founded a dance school, for which 12 of the best-looking girls and boys were selected from the palace servants. In 1756, Elizaveta Petrovna, who succeeded her on the throne, signed a decree to found theatre in the capital, which is what established the system of imperial theatres, financed from the treasury and managed by the Ministry of the Imperial Court.

Although not of national importance, ballet was very much of interest to the upper crust, and court dancers were always in favour. Members of the imperial family attended their examinations, called on them after shows, gave them expensive gifts on benefit nights – and it was all totally above board.

Imperial treasure

Enthusiasm for the art of dance more often than not extended to the female dancers themselves, and the most attractive priestesses of Terpsichore boasted quite a few admirers who were grand princes. It was almost a point of honour for nobles to have a “ballet” mistress in the 19th century.

Standing head and shoulders in this respect above the rest of the ballet world was Mathilda Kschessinskaya, who at one time or another was intimate with three members of the House of Romanov: Nikolai (future emperor Nicholas II), Grand Duke Sergei Mikhailovich, second cousin of Nikolai, and Grand Duke Andrei Vladimirovich.

The patrons presented their *Malechka*, as Kschessinskaya was known to her friends, with exquisite jewelry, which she later described in detail in her memoirs.

E.g., among her *pièces de résistance* was a gold bracelet with a large sapphire and two large diamonds: the first gift from Nikolai, then only an heir apparent. Mathilda had it engraved with two dates: 1890, the year when she saw the czarevitch for the first time at the graduation examination of the Imperial Theatre School, and 1892, the year their affair started.

Kschessinskaya describe the gifts from the czarevitch as “good but not large”. The offerings from Grand Duke Vladimir Aleksandrovich (the father of her lover and later her lawful wedded husband Prince Andrey), on the other hand, she called “lovely”. Those included, for example, a jewelled Fabergé egg and a bracelet with a sapphire pendant. Not far behind his dad was Prince Andrey: one day he presented the ballerina with diamond-studded shoe buckles.

Apart from that, Andrey Vladimirovich took part in creating Mathilda’s personas for the stage. This is what she writes about that: “For the second act of the *Talisman* ballet, Prince Shervashidze (Stage designer at the Mariinsky and Aleksandrinsky Theatres in 1907–1918 – Author) drew me a very beautiful



Many portraits of Mathilda Kschessinskaya show in minute detail a designer choker of diamond circles or a necklace with jewelled ribbons – her favourite pieces of jewelry. Sometimes the ballerina would put on both pieces together – much as we do nowadays

Not only did the Axenoff Jewelry brand make exclusively for the film *Mathilda* by Alexey Uchitel original items such as tiaras, brooches, earrings and necklaces, but it also reproduced Kschessinskaya’s actual jewelry. Specifically, her famous diamond choker

Swan Lake brooch, Van Cleef & Arpels



headband of artificial stones, which prompted Andrey to commission Fabergé to make me a jewelled diadem with diamonds and sapphires as shown in the drawing.”

Kschessinskaya often appeared on stage wearing her own jewelry, which, naturally enough, enhanced her persona, especially if it was a princess or other royal. However, even in the role of the gypsy woman in *Paquita* she could help adorning herself with diamonds worth a hundred thousand roubles!

The ballerina also liked to pose for photographs dressed to the nines – wearing either her stage outfits or evening gowns – always exquisite and made by the best couturiers of the era. Many portraits show in minute detail a designer choker of diamond circles or a necklace with jewelled ribbons, the ballerina’s favourite pieces of jewelry. Sometimes Kschessinskaya would put on both adornments together; at other times, she would adorn her hair with a necklace with ribbons – much as we do nowadays.

Over the period when she was a favourite – on stage and with nobles alike – Mathilda Kschessinskaya put together a huge collection of jewelry. It was so big that when the October Revolution broke out in Russia in 1917, it took 11 boxes to carry the ballerina’s treasures. Nobody knows, however, where they ended up and where they are today: whether they were deposited with a bank for safekeeping, hidden away in the safes of the Fabergé firm, or buried outside Kschessinskaya’s dachas in Strelna... Nor did Kschessinskaya’s jewelry pop up at global auctions; it would hardly have gone unnoticed and unrecognized. All we know is that when leaving the country, the ballerina only managed to take out a fraction of her collection: she went abroad carrying nothing but a small valise with her favourite items.

Naturally enough, the jewelry could have been discovered and seized and then broken down into individual stones and sold by the Bolsheviks. But the hope that Mathilda’s treasures escaped that fate and will surface one day is still entertained by lovers of jewelry and memorabilia.

Brilliant pas de deux

Jewellers followed the ballet scene with no less interest than did grand dukes. This enthusiasm is best illustrated by the history of Maison Van Cleef & Arpels: the famous jewelry house started making jewelled figurines of dancers as early as the forties of the 20th century. The first was



ALROSA

Jewelry from the Firebird collection, Laliq

The French house of Laliq made its ballet-themed collections with support from the Paris Opera (Opéra National De Paris): they were inspired by the ballet and opera productions that had a direct connection with the famous Paris theatre. E.g., *L’Oiseau de Feu* (Firebird), which incorporated yellow gold, fire opals, sapphires, diamonds and nephrite, harks back to the costumes of Leon Bakst, designed by him for the first production of Igor Stravinsky’s ballet: it took place in 1910.



The first act of the Jewels ballet, Emeralds, George Balanchine dedicated to France with its blooming gardens and green fields

THE FRENCH JEWELRY HOUSE OF VAN CLEEF & ARPELS WAS AMONG THE FIRST TO MAKE BALLET-THEMED JEWELRY COLLECTIONS – IN THE 1940S OF THE LAST CENTURY

The ballet was later staged – in its entirety or fragments – by many renowned theatres around the world, and its triumphs were shared by our old friend, the jewelry house of Van Cleef & Arpels. The premier at the Covent Garden, which took place 40 years after its first production, in 2007, Van Cleef & Arpels unveiled its Ballet Précieux (Ballet of Jewels) collection. And in 2012, when Jewels was staged at the Bolshoi Theatre, the costume and stage designers looked for inspiration to the memorabilia stored by the famous jewelry house.

Dance of gems
Van Cleef & Arpels, however, is not the only brand to have been inspired by the art of classical dance.



Two brooches, a necklace and earrings with rubies and diamonds, all by Van Cleef & Arpels



Vesna necklace, Ballerina Clara bracelet and brooch, Van Cleef & Arpels

a Spanish Dancer of platinum, diamonds, emeralds and rubies. It was followed on jewelry scene by La Camargo – the brooch reproduced the silhouette of Marie Anne de Cupis de Camargo, the legendary dancer of the 18th century, as painted by Nicolas Lancret.

The idea was such a success that it became a trend overnight and gave rise to a multitude of copycats – e.g., Marcel Boucher (the creator of the Boucher costume jewelry brand) made the Ballet of Jewels series, which was enthusiastically welcomed by ladies who could not afford Van Cleef & Arpels Jewelry.

It is noteworthy that Van Cleef & Arpels' "affair" with ballet took an unexpected turn and spun off another story. It dates to the day when the jewels were noticed in the window of the brand's New York boutique

by a famous choreographer. He was George Balanchine or, as he was originally known, Georgy Melitonovich Balanchivadze. Born in St Petersburg, he began his career at the Mariinsky Theatre; in 1924 he emigrated to Europe, worked for the Ballets Russes of Sergei Diaghilev, and then moved to the USA, where he became a founding father of American ballet. The fluttering figurines of Van Cleef & Arpels inspired Balanchine to create his Jewels ballet, which premiered in New York 13 April 1967. The ballet had three acts: Emeralds, with music by Fauré, Rubies, with music by Stravinsky, and Diamonds based on Tchaikovsky's music. What is more, every act of Jewels, which became the first ever ballet "about nothing", symbolized one of the three "main countries" in Balanchine's life: France, the US and Russia.



The second act of Jewels, Rubies, with music by Igor Stravinsky, includes a lot of comic relief: the dancers alternate between imitating horse riding and flirting with each other – in a word, they communicate the pulsing vibes of a fire-red ruby

STORY



Goldfish necklace, ring and brooch, Van Cleef & Arpels

The Ballet collection of the Utopia jewelry brand is a fusion of gold, diamonds and South Sea pearls. The art of classical dance has been portrayed by the jewellers through sophisticated and elegant shapes and chiaroscuro effects.

E.g., in 2015 Boodles, a British jewelry brand, unveiled its Pas de Deux collection. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Covent Garden ballet company co-authored it. Rebecca Hawkins, head of design at Boodles, spent a lot of time not only studying the theatre's archives but also in its rehearsal rooms in order to get an insider's feeling for the ballet world and then embody what she saw in platinum and kite-cut diamonds of rare fantasy shape.

Cooperation between the Lalique French jewelry house and the Paris Opera (Opéra National De Paris) resulted in a number of collections inspired by opera and ballet productions staged by the renowned theatre in different periods.

The L'Oiseau de Feu (Firebird) collection includes yellow gold, fire opals, sapphires, diamonds and nephrite. The black-orange-white pattern is reminiscent of costumes designed by Léon Bakst for the first production of Igor Stravinsky's ballet.

It took place on the stage of the Palais Garnier in 1910. The building is now owned by Opéra National De Paris, and Firebird survives in one of the five sectors (red) of the theatre's famous light globe painted by Mark Shagal.

The miniature wings of white gold, diamonds and mother-of-pearl lovingly hold a pomegranate, the symbol of eternal love. This is a collection called Cygnes (Latin for "swan"), inspired, naturally enough, by Swan Lake of Pyotr Tchaikovsky. The image



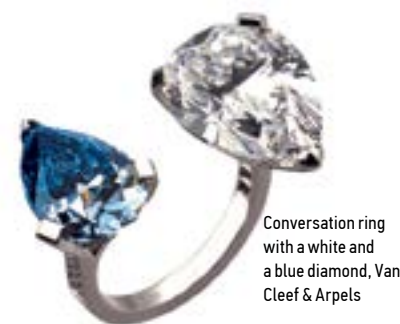
**THE JEWELS
BALLET BY GEORGE
BALANCHINE
PREMIERED
IN NEW YORK
15 APRIL 1967**

The third act of the Jewels show, called Diamonds, is based on Tchaikovsky's music

of a snow-white bird is often present in the work of René Lalique, too.

And another twist, which harks back once again to Mathilda Kschessinskaya. A film by Alexey Uchitel, which is eponymously titled "Mathilda", hit the screen in 2017 and made a lot of waves even before its première. It provoked a lot of controversy and raised a number of questions, which were hotly debated in the press and even in the State Duma: whether it was appropriate to touch on

such a sensitive subject, whether the actors looked anything like the people they portrayed, etc. You should watch Mathilda, however, just to see the jewelry collection by Pyotr Aksyonov (Axenoff Jewelry). Not only did he make exclusively for the film original items such as tiaras, brooches, earrings and necklaces, but he also reproduced Mathilda's actual jewelry. Specifically, two of her most favourite necklaces: a diamond choker and the famous piece with jewelled ribbons.



Conversation ring with a white and a blue diamond, Van Cleef & Arpels

ITAR-TASS / Mitya Aleshkovsky



Photo: Chaumet

"The Winter Egg"
by Alma Pihl



The first famous winter jewelry collection was created in the early 1910s by Alma Pihl, a Finnish-born female jeweler who worked for Carl Fabergé. One of Fabergé's regular customers, oil baron Emanuel Nobel, the nephew of Alfred Nobel who founded the famous Nobel Prize, commissioned dozens of brooches with an original design.

Workmaster Alma Pihl was entrusted with the task of creating them. It remains unknown whether Pihl's winter line was inspired by the frosty patterns on the windowpanes of a house in the old Shuvalovo neighborhood where she was living at the time, or whether she was inspired by the snowy St. Petersburg landscape, but once she had the idea of creating this icy, yet floral jewelry made from silver and platinum with tiny diamonds, the work kept her busy for several months. Nobel was pleased with her work: the theme of ice and snow had never been used in jewelry before, and Alma Pihl continued to draw inspiration from this theme even after she had completed the order. Her icy, jewel-encrusted pieces with snowflakes of sparkling diamonds that never melted, like in the fairy tale of the Snow Queen, became Fabergé classics.

In 1913, Pihl created her most famous icy adornment – the Winter Egg – an Easter egg ordered as a gift for Tsarina Maria Feodorovna by her son Tsar Nicholas II. The egg, made of quartz, platinum, diamonds, and moonstone, was placed on a crystal base of the same material, and resembles a melting glacier with streams of diamonds and platinum. Both halves of the egg were also decorated with the finest ice-crystal engravings. The Russian Imperial Romanov family paid 24,600 rubles for the Winter Egg, which was a record-breaking sum of money at the time. Soon afterward Pihl received a new order from the Romanovs to create a gift for the wife of Nicholas II, Alexandra Feodorovna.

Other jewelers began exploring the extensive creative possibilities of the snow theme. It grew to embrace a variety of narratives: the Russian winter with its snowy forests, the animals we associate with winter, polar bears and wolves with icy sapphire eyes, the fairies and fairy-tale characters from Hans Christian Andersen's stories, and, of course, winter's flower, the snowflake, which offers endless creative possibilities.

While the humble snowflake looks as if it were created especially for jewelry, with its frosty filigree patterns and its clear tracery sparkling like a diamond, it took a long time before its obvious potential was discovered. That was until Finnish designer Alma Pihl became enchanted by the frosty picture outside her window while working in wintry St. Petersburg.

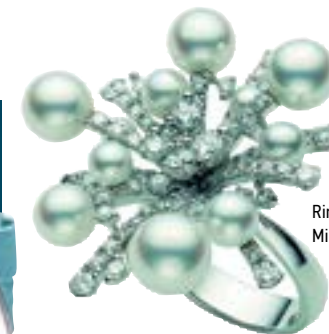
text:
KARINA MELKUMYAN
photo courtesy of
press offices

Eternal AURORA

From the snow blanketing the taiga and the polar night to strolls through the northern cities and the filigree trim of icicles that decorate Russian log cabins: each jewelry brand has its own unique conceptual interpretation of winter. This brochure has everything you need to know about the most dazzling recently released winter jewelry collections.



Watch,
Chopard



Ring,
Mikimoto



Brooch,
Pasquale Bruni



Piaget

The pieces in the 2019 Sunlight Escape collection by Swiss watchmaker and jeweler Piaget illustrate exquisite fantasies inspired by the vast landscapes of the North Pole, with exceptionally radiant and flamboyant visual effects. Piaget unveiled its collection in Paris during the Haute Couture Fashion Week as a polar story comprised of three complementary lines.



The “Exalting Sights” line is perhaps Piaget’s most traditional expression of the winter theme, combining snowflake patterns reminiscent of frosty Arctic ice floes and the cold sparkle of white gold and clear diamonds, while flawless white opals dance around a Madagascar sapphire. However, even these more predictable motifs for winter collections are distinct from the classic conventional designs thanks to the use of impressive statement shapes and unconventional embellishments, such as engraving white gold by hand using the Palace Décor technique.

The main symbol of the “Warming Lights” line is the winter sun, and how it transforms the Arctic landscape. Its dazzling radiance, like a stream of sunlight, a ray bursting across the sky, is rendered using clear diamonds. One of the most stunning pieces of jewelry in this line is the White Sun watch, with beams of light made of diamonds and white gold framing a snow-white mother-of-pearl dial.

In contrast, the “Dancing Nights” line inspired by the aurora borealis exhibits a combination of deep and contrasting tones: sparkling Colombian emeralds, blue tourmalines, pink sapphires, and spessartite garnets.

Photo: Piaget



Van Cleef & Arpels

The Contes d’Hiver collections (“Winter Tale” in English) continue the famous tradition at Van Cleef & Arpels of creating snow-white jewelry. Jewelers at Van Cleef & Arpels have been using the crystal-clear combination of colorless diamonds with white gold and platinum since the beginning of the 20th century. The first winter pieces were manufactured by Van Cleef & Arpels in the 1940s. Their modern winter collections combine two of the brand’s favorite themes at the same time: nature and haute couture.

Contes d’Hiver 2016 is a classic winter theme, expressed through delicate and intricate craftsmanship. The collection includes brooches shaped to resemble the fluttering feminine silhouette of snow fairies, necklaces and bracelets with falling snowflakes, as well as bows and flowers made mainly of white gold and diamonds. A select few of the pieces of jewelry in the Contes d’Hiver collection are a pristine snowy monochrome color, diluted with the cold sheen of sapphires or illuminated by emeralds.

Van Cleef & Arpels jewelers have used unique techniques from their traditional

jeweler’s arsenal to create a sense of movement, and to give their jewelry a truly wintry radiance. One of these techniques is the combination in a single piece of jewelry of diamonds cut with different facets: rose, baguette, marquise, and pear cuts. This combination of “clashing” shapes set in clearly outlined forms creates a lively and spontaneous pattern, like a drawing traced on a frosty windowpane.

The same natural effect is enhanced by another proprietary technique unique to Van Cleef & Arpels: the jewelers use different methods to set stones in the same piece of jewelry.

It is also worth adding that all of the collection’s central stones boast the highest color grade (D) and one of the two best clarity grades (“Flawless” or “Internally Flawless”).



Photo: Van Cleef & Arpels



Boucheron

A magnificent winter collection inspired by the Russian winter, Hiver Impérial ("Imperial Winter" in English), was unveiled by Boucheron in 2017. It is worth noting that 110 years earlier, in 1897, Boucheron became the first French jeweler to open a boutique in Moscow. That is why the theme of tsarist Russia is not just based on abstract ideas in the imaginations of the collection's designers, but it is part of the jeweler's history, part of its heritage, and where Boucheron's founder, Frédéric Boucheron, made lasting memories.

The Creative Director of Boucheron, Claire Choisne, has divided the "Russian Collection" into three themes: nature, couture, and architecture.

The architectural line is called L'Anneau d'Or ("The Golden Ring" in English) and is inspired by the golden onion domes of Russia's churches, which Choisne would have seen on her Golden Ring tour of Russia.

La Lumière de Nuit ("The Night Light" in English) captures the essence of the beautiful nature in the Arctic North. And, of course, Boucheron could not resist using this inspiring theme to supplement their famous animal pieces by introducing new characters: snowy owls, Arctic foxes, polar bears, and huskies.

Finally, the women who inspired the "Femmes Boréales" collection (literally "Northern Women" in English) were the



Russian empresses, tsarist consorts, and imperial heiresses who adorned themselves with precious gems.

The collection has blended imperial luxury with the theatrical, using a diverse range of materials: Claire Choisne has incorporated mother of pearl, chalcedony, quartz, and even aspen wood that has been given a wintry silver patina. These were combined with diamonds to create the earrings in the jeweler's "Rostov" set. The range of cold tones in the stones used – aquamarines, moonstone, tanzanites, chalcedony, sapphires and, of course, transparent diamonds – create a wintry mood. One of the brightest pieces in the collection is the pearl collar necklace named after Lake Baikal: many have noted its similarity to the luxurious jewelry once worn by the Romanovs at courtly costume balls that is preserved in historical postcard paintings and photographs.



Photo: Boucheron





The “Promenades Impériales” line (“Imperial strolls” in English), inspired by paintings of the snowy Siberian forests, was unveiled by the Parisian House of Chaumet in early 2018, at their historic workshop on Place Vendôme. Thus, Maison Chaumet launched its Les Mondes du Chaumet collection (“Worlds of Chaumet” in English) that year, dedicated to the countries and continents that have shaped the brand’s 238-year history. Chaumet’s Russian chapter began in 1914, when Joseph Chaumet, known as the jewelry virtuoso of the Belle Époque, traveled there for the first time. He made the trip to attend the wedding of Felix Yusupov with Irina Romanova, the niece of Nicholas II. The highlight of the wedding was the presentation of a royal gift brought over from Paris: a tiara with the unique Polar Star diamond.

Round and marquise diamond cuts set in lacy patterns complement blue Ceylon sapphires and pink Padparadscha sapphires, reminiscent of the cool shade that descends around early winter sunsets. A set of transformable necklaces, rings, earrings, brooches, and bracelets create the appearance of kaleidoscope paintings replacing one another: the snow-covered steppe glistening in the sunlight, wooden log cabins in villages with carved trims like lacework, frosty patterns on windowpanes, the image of Lara from Doctor Zhivago, one of the most widely read Russian novels in the West.



Chaumet



Messika

The Snow Queen collection, as its name suggests, narrates the fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen, using jewels instead of words. The pieces in the Haute Joaillerie collection are dedicated to various fairy tales, an idea sparked by its creator and Messika's artistic director, Valérie Messika. In 2018, sets inspired by the heroines and princesses of "The Little Mermaid", "One Thousand and One Nights", and even "Fenist the Bright Falcon" joined the brand's catalog of jewelry.

But the Snow Queen is the perfect starting point to build on Messika's favorite techniques: these include a lack of color accents and playing with geometric shapes.

The jewelry looks as if it has been pieced together from dozens of tiny, shattered shards into whole clear pieces, like the pattern made from splinters of ice, but they are not necessarily symmetrical.

However, one of the collection's central pieces is completely symmetrical – the Shards of Mirror Necklace – just like the outline of the Snow Queen's castle, elegant and cold as winter, where Kai spelled the word "eternity" with the ice splinters that fell in his frozen tears. The piece includes 341 pear-shaped diamonds, fixed as if they are floating in the air. The largest diamond is set in the center of the Shards of Mirror Necklace and weighs 3.42 carats. It is worth mentioning that it took the Messikas jewelers 950 hours of work to create a diamond necklace with the perfect shape.



EASY DETECTION FOR DIAMONDS AND DIAMOND JEWELERY

The first Russian portable device for diamond identification ALROSA Diamond Inspector showed high results in ASSURE project testing, held in an independent laboratory UL Verification Services, Inc. in Boston (USA). Due to three optical methods of analysis, ease of use, and low cost in comparison with analogs, Russian device suits retail shops, pawnshops, distributors, gemological laboratories, jewelry manufacturers.



ALROSA DIAMOND INSPECTOR IDENTIFIES:

- / polished lab-grown diamonds grown using HPHT or CVD methods (other methods)
- / polished diamonds
- / enhanced or treated polished diamonds
- / non-diamond imitations or simulants (moissanite, cubic zirconia, etc.)



