



GEMSTONE CARVINGS: THE MASTERWORKS OF HAROLD VAN PELT

Opening April 22, 2017

Bowers Museum Presents *Gemstone Carvings: The Masterworks of Harold Van Pelt*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Master gemstone artist's brilliant carvings promise to capture light and imaginations at esteemed Orange County museum of cultural art

SANTA ANA, CA (April 2017)—The Bowers Museum in Santa Ana is pleased to announce the return of the beloved exhibition, *Gemstone Carvings: The Masterworks of Harold Van Pelt*. For the past 50 years Harold Van Pelt has worked tirelessly at honing his skill carving crystals to become a self-trained master of one of the most difficult crafts practiced today. Not the least of the many characteristics required to cut gemstones, Van Pelt's rock-hard resolve is a necessity when carvings often take hundreds of hours and even the smallest error in drilling can shatter a surface as narrow as 3 millimeters. For his determination, Van Pelt's works have been recognized as marvels by the secretive industry masters of the gemstone carving capitol, Idar-Oberstein in Germany; a distinction only shared by one other man. Open to the public Saturday April 22, 2017, *Gemstone Carvings: The Masterworks of Harold Van Pelt* presents this wonderful life's work.



*Rutile Hand; 8 in.
A life-size copy of the hand of
Erica Van Pelt, wife of the artist,
on a base of rutilated quartz.
© 2010 Harold and Erica Van Pelt*

2002 NORTH MAIN STREET, SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA 92706
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Faceted Quartz Egg; 8 ½ in.
This hollowed-out egg contains 416 triangular facets and rests on a 363-carat aquamarine pedestal.
© 2010 Harold and Erica Van Pelt

Despite the remarkable quality of Van Pelt’s carvings, few know of the artist’s passion for creation. Famed throughout the world as one of the foremost professional gem and mineral photographers—which Si and Ann Frazier, experts on gem carvings, credit for his “artist’s eye”—it is only recently with exhibitions the Bowers Museum and the Houston Museum of Natural Science that Van Pelt has come to fame as an artist. But Van Pelt has been quietly pursuing his dream since the late ‘60s, when he first started by buying agate nodules and quartz crystals at gem shows and tediously shaped them into intricate designs with homemade tools.

The art of gemstone carving itself has a rich and multicultural history dating back thousands of years. Five millennia ago the Chinese began carving jade to create containers and mythical animals; the beginning of the common era saw Greeks, Romans, and other cultures in Europe engraving seals and cameos; and in more recent times Carl Fabergé’s exquisite eggs, animals, and containers achieved enduring fame. The tradition is still carried on in China, where jade and other materials are carved in distinctly Asian styles. Today almost all Western-style gemstone carving is done at Idar-Oberstein, making Van Pelt’s sculptures a rare exception to the rule and meaning that his works are entirely unique.

Van Pelt’s work is done in quartz, rock crystal, or agate—the same materials used by gem carvers since ancient times due to their beauty, durability, and availability. Countless hours go into every carving: working the stone down to paper-thin walls, bringing out the gorgeous natural quality and colors of agate, refining opaque rock crystal to the transparency of glass. Repositories and refractories of light, Van Pelt’s works promise to amaze visitors with their beauty and intricacy.

BOWERS MUSEUM

The **Bowers Museum** has earned an international reputation through its world-class exhibitions, including *A Quest for Beauty: Van Cleef & Arpels; Warriors, Tombs and Temples: China’s Enduring Legacy; Terra Cotta Warriors: Guardians of China’s First Emperor; Secrets of the Silk Road;* and *Mummies—Death and the Afterlife: Treasures from the British Museum*, as well as its own extensive art collections from throughout the Americas and the South Pacific. Additionally, the **Bowers’ Kidseum**, located one block south of the main museum, offers a high-tech and interactive focus on its new mission of “Igniting Imagination through Exploration” spotlighting the excitement of art and archaeology.

BOWERS MUSEUM

Enjoy a leisurely luncheon at our award-winning restaurant, **Tangata**. Outdoor seating is also available, overlooking the Bowers' historic mission-style courtyard from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Browse the rare and exotic at the **Bowers Museum Gallery Store**. It's more than just a shopping trip—it's a cultural experience.

LOCATION, HOURS AND ADMISSION

The Bowers Museum is in Santa Ana, is centrally located in the heart of Southern California at 2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706.

Tickets and Information	714.567.3600	www.bowers.org
Group Tours	714.567.3680	grouptours@bowers.org
Membership	714.567.3639	membership@bowers.org

Bowers Museum and **Kidseum** are closed on Mondays, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Regular operating hours: Tuesday through Sunday, 10 AM to 4 PM.

FRIDA ADMISSION TICKETS

(includes general admission)

	Weekdays	Weekends
Adults	\$23	\$25
Seniors (62 & up) & Students	\$20	\$22
Children (under 12)	Free*	

*Must be accompanied by a paying adult

GENERAL ADMISSION TICKETS

(permanent exhibitions only)

	Weekdays	Weekends
Adults	\$13	\$15
Seniors (62 & up) & Students	\$10	\$12
Children (under 12)	Free*	

*Must be accompanied by a paying adult

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FREEDAY

The Bowers Museum offers free admission to Santa Ana residents, with proof of residency, each Sunday through a generous donation in memory of Dorothy Goerl and courtesy of the Lockhart Family.

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