

Maintaining Purpose: Looking to IAC's 2023 Gold + Diamond Conference

Each summer, Initiatives of Art and Culture's Gold + Diamond Conference dedicates several days to responsible action within the gem and jewellery industry. Lisa Koenigsberg, IAC's president, explains how 2023's Conference will — among other topics — consider how individual goals can be met while working for an acceptable global value system.



A rubellite extracted from the Cruzeiro mine. Photo by Leo Drummond/Nitro, courtesy of Cruzeiro mine.

Those of us in the gem and jewellery industry are driven by a compelling need to preserve the magic, romance and emotional power of gems and jewellery. At the same time, the industry is confronting external forces that are influencing how business should — indeed, must — be conducted across the value chain if the industry is to flourish in a responsible way. These external imperatives include the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are seventeen interconnected objectives centred on sustainability that are intended to further global peace and prosperity, and the Glasgow Climate Pact, the outcome of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) in late 2021. During

COP26, representatives from almost 200 countries hammered out an agreement advancing the fight against climate change in general and implementation of the 2015 Paris Accord (COP21) in particular.

The tension between these internal and external factors was the focus of Initiatives in Art and Culture's (IAC's) 2022 Gold + Diamond Conference. Participants explored the value of a 'declaration of principles' regarding responsible conduct and recognised the clear difference between such a declaration and a blueprint for implementation. They also sought to remain mindful that detailing ways to 'operationalise' the goals of any such declaration can present obstacles to its adoption.

During the 2022 Conference, IAC presented Mark Hanna, chief marketing officer of Richline, with the fifth Responsible Practice in Jewelry Leadership Award. The award was presented to Hanna in recognition of his bold thinking and his commitment to purpose, transparency and 'trustability'. Rob Bates received IAC's second Award for Extraordinary Contributions to the Diamond and Jewelry Industry in recognition of his twenty years of reporting at *JCK Magazine*.

Hanna and Bates, however, would likely be among the last to argue that the work required to build a more sustainable industry is done. IAC's 2023 Gold + Diamond Conference, "Maintaining Purpose"— to be held 17 - 19 July in New York City — will thus focus in a more granular way on how statements of principle can become blueprints to achieving fundamental transformation in the precious metal, diamond, coloured stone and jewellery sectors.



Miners affiliated with Moyo Gems. Photo courtesy of Pact.

The Conference will, in part, seek to understand how to operationalise the gold industry's 2022 Declaration of Responsibility and Sustainability Principles, keeping in mind that often-vast differences in social, economic and geographic context can preclude the possibility of a single solution to any given problem. Blueprints or roadmaps with clear, quantifiable milestones are essential to this process, as is, in the words of the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Conference attendees will consider the meaning of 'sustainability' before entertaining the following questions:

- How are the goals of any declaration of principles met, and outcomes measured, at each step along the value chain?
- Will individual actors or sectors within the industry need to modify their practices and regulations to comply with what is laid out in documents such as the Declaration of Responsibility and Sustainability Principles, which were proposed at a London Bullion Market Association (LBMA) meeting sponsored by the World Gold Council (WGC) in October 2022?
- How can varied goals and principles of different declarations be harmonised so all can work together toward a generally accepted global value system?

Every link in the jewellery supply chain, from mine to market, has its own potentially adverse impact on climate. IAC's Conference will explore how these individual impacts can best



Merian Goldmine of Surgold, Newmont Suriname. Photo courtesy of ATV-Networks.

be measured and then mitigated, balancing the need to transition to low- or zero-carbon methods without subjecting at-risk communities to new socioeconomic injustices.

For example, conference participant Newmont Corporation, the world's largest gold-mining company, has defined clear pathways to achieving a targeted 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. To quantify its progress in meeting these targets – the criticality of such measurement being a major focus of the Conference – Newmont relies on science-based criteria that align with standards set by Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi). As of 2021, Newmont was one of only two gold mining companies globally and one of only twelve companies in the Standard & Poor 500 to have climate targets approved by SBTi. For countries to meet their commitments under the Glasgow Climate Pact to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to combat climate change in accordance

with the UN SDGs, industry as a whole must join them.

Another conference participant, the Centro de Innovación Científica Amazónica (CIN CIA) of Wake Forest University is also applying a data-driven approach to achieving UN SDGs, quantifying mercury pollution in Madre de Dios, a region in southeastern Peru's Amazon Basin. Mercury, a potent neurotoxin, has been used for thousands of years to separate gold from ore. Artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM), which has expanded rapidly in Madre de Dios since 2000, is responsible for nearly 40% of global mercury pollution. To better understand the flow of mercury in the Madre de Dios ecosystem, CIN CIA has established a local analytic laboratory that quantifies mercury and its dispersion in the environment.

Quantifying a pollutant is an essential precursor to mitigation. Mercury Free Mining, a participant in both the 2022 and 2023 Conferences, focuses on both discovery and deployment of mercury-free processes in ASGM. One such technology is Goldrop, which uses elutriation to separate gold from sediment without the use of mercury (for more information, see pp. 26-29). Goldrop's inventor, John Richmond, will describe the technology for attendees.

It is widely argued that over-rigorous sourcing standards have marginalised artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) by negatively impacting the miners' local economies. The Conference will explore approaches the global community can take to mitigate negative impacts of ASGM through 'formalisation' by integrating

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it into the formal economy, society and regulatory system. A panel including a representative from the WGC will review proposals by the LBMA designed to encourage inclusion of gold produced by ASGM in mainstream supply lines to, in the words of the LBMA, “advance... governance... [and] open direct market access for those who depend either wholly or in part on artisanally-produced gold for their livelihood...”

Coloured stones, as previously noted, are predominantly sourced through ASM, and the Conference attendees will hear about how Pact, a nongovernmental organisation operating in Africa, Asia and South America, works in partnership with governments, industry and miners to formalise ASM, creating a safer and more productive and equitable enterprise. In collaboration with Anza Gems, Nineteen48 and the Tanzania Women Miners Association (TAWOMA), and building on an education program developed for miners with the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), Pact devised the pilot of what has

Consulting to bring Moyo miners into compliance with CRAFT.

The family-owned Cruzeiro mine in Minas Gerais, Brazil, aims to create a new mine-to-market model in which goods incorporating its tourmaline and rubellite are finished in-country. This challenges the traditional model of shipping locally extracted resources elsewhere for processing and transformation into greater valued-added product, thus providing greater local economic benefit. In 2022, Cruzeiro and brand-development agency Julis invited a select group of designers from or based in Brazil to create an exclusive collection using the mine’s gemstones for the Couture show in Las Vegas. Cruzeiro and Julis will be on-hand to recount this journey.

Brilliant Earth, another conference participant, is pursuing its own path to sustainability. Certified Carbonfree by Carbonfund.org, this American jewellery brand uses conflict-free diamonds, gemstones and precious metals from ethically and environmentally responsible sources, reuses diamonds

example, under the auspices of the MJSA Education Foundation, the MJSA Mentor & Apprenticeship Program provides tools that businesses need to bring on and train apprentices. In an endeavour pioneered by the Urban Institute and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, jeweller and educator Nanz Aalund leads development of the first Competency-Based Occupational Framework (CBOF) for apprentice bench jewellers in the United States. We Wield the Hammer (WWTH), founded and led by self-taught metal artist and arts educator Karen Smith, identifies, trains, tracks and supports young women of African descent who might not otherwise choose a career as a metalsmith. Currently operating in Oakland, California, and Durham, North Carolina – and with plans to extend the program to Senegal – WWTH’s training program provides the fundamentals of metalsmithing in an eight-week session in which students learn the art and practice using copper, brass and sterling silver.

Next, we will look at how pioneering makers marry sustainability and responsibility with artistry. British-West African jewellery designer Satta Matturi, a board member of the Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), launched her first collection in 2015. Matturi will explore in her presentation the ways in which she marries her heritage and awareness of a new, emerging Africa with an understanding of British craft and global design to create high-end jewellery such as her Calabash and Kwe earrings. She sources materials from Africa and is keenly aware of the resulting positive economic impact on the local economies. Matturi’s work is receiving increasing attention: Oscar winner Viola Davis wore her Kwe earrings on the red carpet at the premiere of Showtime’s anthology series *The First Lady*.

The Conference will offer attendees an opportunity to visit RIVA Precision Manufacturing, a company committed to sustainability, responsibility and artistry, in equal measure. CEO Ted Doudak founded RIVA thirty years ago, working alone at night in his basement. The company has since become an integrated manufacturer, occupying 37,500 sq. ft. with over 140 employees, offering a full range of services, from design to production.

The Conference has fully committed to exploring a range of options for



Activists from the Extinction Rebellion group demonstrating during protests outside the Bank of England in London. Photo by Luke MacGregor/Bloomberg.

become Moyo Gemstones, a program helping female miners in Tanzania and Kenya move gemstones from mine to market through vetted local brokers and traders. Pact is also working with the Alliance for Responsible Mining (ARM) to adapt the Code of Risk-Mitigation for ASM Engaging in Formal Trade (CRAFT) – a code intended to increase responsible sourcing of gold from artisanal miners – to coloured gemstones, and with MTL

and chooses recycled precious metals to reduce its carbon footprint. It sources precious metals from refiners that adhere to standards set by organisations such as the Responsible Minerals Initiative and LBMA.

Turning to training, we will explore initiatives designed to advance careers in the jewellery and mining sectors and ways in which responsible practice can be integrated into curricula. For

responsible sourcing. We will consider ASGM-sourced gold and recycled gold (including its definition and use). We will also discuss single-mine origin (SMO) gold such as that produced by Hummingbird Resources, a gold production, development and exploration company and member of the WGC. At the same time, the Conference will explore the implications for the jewellery sector of a circular economy in which no waste is generated, and everything is shared, repaired, reused or recycled.

As in past years, The Conference will conclude with the awards for Leadership in Responsible Practice in Jewelry and for Outstanding Contributions to the Diamond and Jewelry Industries. The sixth Responsible Practice in Jewelry Leadership Award will recognise a trade member, or a jewellery-focused organisation, that has made a transformational and worldwide contribution to ethical sourcing and responsible practices. The third award,



Viola Davis at the premiere for *The First Lady* wearing Satta Matturi's Kwe earrings, made with ethically sourced diamonds from Botswana provided by De Beers Group. Photo courtesy of De Beers Group.

for Outstanding Contributions to the Diamond and Jewelry Industries, reflects IAC's belief in collaboration, community and commitment, and is

intended to recognise and honour extraordinary ongoing engagement and dedication to the realisation of positive change in these fields. ■

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Melissa Lee-Patrick FGA DGA

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