

THE “WORLD OF STONE”: EDUCATING THROUGH ENTERTAINMENT

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1. Poster of First Show on April 4–5, 1992.

2. Organizing Committee of “Jewellery Olympus”, competition of the stone cutting and jewellery: (left to right) Alexander A. Yakovlev, Nina G. Orlova, Irina K. Rakhmanova, Victor V. Demskii, Natalia N. Biezin’sh, 1996.



This year, the “World of Stone” company (St.-Petersburg, Russia) who organize Jewellery and Mineralogical Shows, celebrates its 20th anniversary. In June 2012, the *Manezh* Central Exhibition Hall hosted an exhibition dedicated to this outstanding event.

In the very beginning of existence, it was not clear how to adequately translate “*Mir kamnya*”, the Russian name of the Show, into English – *World of Gems* or “*World of Stone*”. In the first instance, it means only gemstones, and, in the second case, it is any stone, including a pebble under feet. The second translation has won. For 20 years, the “*World of Stone*” discloses to the visitors the stone treasures of the Earth irrespective of their position in the hierarchy. I think that this is a secret of success of the exhibition, which became one of the symbols of the town on Neva River.

According to the very modest calculations, “*World of Stone*” conducted during last 20 years about 250 events only in St.-Petersburg. It was attended by some 2,500,000 visitors. Not many people could expect such a success in the very beginning. In the



3. Hall of Stiglitz State Art-Industrial Academy during the Show.

4. G.A. Lazarev, collector, participant of “*World of Stone*” Shows from the beginning in April, 1992.



5. Collectors near the table with minerals.



6. Glass-painting learning.
7–9. “GEO-Show” – popular-science and education program:

7. M.N. Afanasov, educator of “GEO-Show”.

8. N.S. Solov'ev, educator of “GEO-Show”.

9. Most popular part of “GEO-Show” – demonstration of crystal growth.

10. Organizing Committee and VIP-guests of the jubilee Show in June, 2012.



early 1990s, the geological industry of the former Soviet Union was in trouble, and the geologists were losing jobs. The employees of the Chernyshov Central Research and Exploration Museum decided to organize a fair, which they called “*World of Stone*”. It was opened on the 4th of April 1992 in the Leningrad House of Nature and hosted only 26 participants. The poster of the Show invited visitors to attend the exhibition to replenish their collections. Its success exceeded the expectations, and the exhibition started to evolve. The House of Nature, the Culture House of Communications, Mikhailovskiy Manezh, Bosse House, Mukhina's School, Manezh Central Exhibition Hall are the venues through which the “*World of Stone*” was wandering in the city, collecting more and more participants. In 1996, the “*St.-Petersburg Jeweller*” Show made its first steps, which united the artists, and, on its basis, the first Russian competition of the stone cutting and jewellery art called “*Jewellery Olympus*” was founded. Although it is a separate story from the “*World of Stone*”, it undoubtedly raised the status of the exhibition and attracted many amateurs of minerals.

On all accounts, the “*World of Stone*” became a club, which united the people of any age who love the stone. Here, one can meet a company of old ladies, discussing the acquisition of the agate brooch with unusual pattern, and children, who passionately wash gold or observe the growth of crystals as part of the popular-science and education “*GEO-Show*” program. There may be first year students of the famous Mukhina School (now St.-Petersburg Stiglitz State Art-Industrial Academy), who show their first works at the large exhibition. Of course, there are famous Russian stone cutters, who are known for many years in Russia and the West. Obviously, nobody remains neutral to the beautiful thematic expositions of the minerals. All these years, the “*World of Stone*” follows the same principle: educating through entertainment. It invites leading Russian geological museums to its territory. Jasper and opal, agate and volcanic rocks and minerals, which give colour to paints, pictures in stone, and landscape stones of America are the main topics of the exhibitions with participation of the Chernyshov Museum, Mining Institute Museum, St.-Petersburg University Museum, and private collectors.

The jubilee Show was not an exception. The visitors saw a whole bunch of interesting specimens. The core of the exhibition was the *Stone in Jewellery Art* collection from the funds of the “*World of Stone*”, which were gathered over the years. The items with agates and jaspers, fluorite and amber, chrysoprase and quartz, tinguaita, tektite, and other natural aggregates received warm words in the book of visitor impressions.

No doubt that the “*World of Stone*” will bring new surprises to its visitors.