

Mineral Shows 2018:  
Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines (France), June

SAINTE-MARIE 2018:  
NOTES ON “PRESTIGE” EXHIBITION



1. Poster of the Mineral & Gem Show, Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France.

Photo: Bryan Swoboda

2. View of the Theater, where top dealers are exhibited. Photo: Natalia V. Borovkova, 2018.

3. Street of the city, turned into a fairground. Photo: Natalia V. Borovkova, 2018.



This year the Sainte-Marie Show presented by three our correspondents well-known in mineralogical community: Dona Leicht (*Kristalle*, USA), Natalia V. Borovkova (St.-Petersburg Mining Museum) and Mark Mauthner, mineralogist and photographer from Austria

... the Show with the most Fun!

This little village in the Alsace region becomes the center of all things natural history every year in June. What started as a very small show to honor the mining history of the region (known as ‘the Silver Valley’) has become a ‘must do’ event.

In 1962 a “Bourse aux Mineraux de Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines” was begun by Francois Lehmann with only local character and participants. Originally only professionals were attracted to the area but over time, and various leaderships, the St.Marie show now attracts nearly 1,000 exhibitors and as many as 30,000 visitors!

Under the current management of the ever personable and highly capable mayor of the town, Claude Abel and his team, this show has taken on an entirely different attitude. I describe it as the show with the most varied selection of merchandise and the most fun!! The social aspect is absent from many shows around the world, but not in St. Marie... the entire town comes together to make certain everything goes smoothly, including a party for all participants, town folks, special guests held on the football field — complete with full band, food and adult beverages. This party goes on until well after midnight.

The show has various sections: the mineral zone, the gem zone, the ‘well being’ zone and now the fossil zone. The mineral zone is the area where a “Prestige Exhibition” takes place. There are also lectures, a gem fashion show, workshops and a great deal of area and effort for children.

The 2018 exhibition was entitled: *Fantasmineral: collectors’ dreams*. Previous years exhibits were filled with wonderful specimens but the area lacked some ‘style’ — this, too, has been refined and it now a well put together exhibit with proper display cases and lighting.



4. **Topaz.** 18 x 15 cm.  
Virgem de Lapa, Minas Gerais, Brazil.  
NHM-Paris, # MNHN\_MIN\_187.61.



5. **Tourmaline** (var. rubellite).  
13 x 6 cm. Pala, California, USA.  
NHM-Paris, #MNHN\_MIN\_106.873.

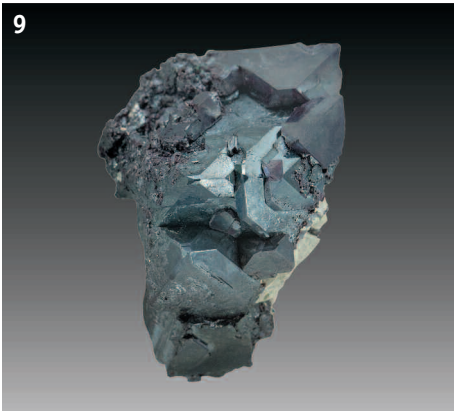


6. **Smithsonite.** Lavrion, Greece.  
Museum of Confluences, Lyon, #3703.

7. **Calcite.**  
Fontainebleau, France.  
MM-ParisTech, #12.626.

8. **Cuprite** crystals.  
Chessy, Rhone, France.  
MM-ParisTech.

9. **Cuprite** crystal. 10 x 8 cm.  
Mashamba West, Katanga, DR Congo.  
NHM-Luxembourg, #VP105.



Exhibitors included The National Museum of Natural History in Paris, the Museum of Mineralogy MINES Paris, the Natur-Museum of Luxembourg, the Museum Confluences in Lyon, the British Museum of Natural History and private collections of Gilles Emringer, Frederic Khun, Alain Martaud and one ‘titillating’ exhibit entitled ‘Naughty Nature’.

**The National Museum of Natural History – Paris** (NHM-Paris). The Museum put together five display cases that included worldwide minerals and many of the museum specimens from France of course. I took note of a tourmaline from San Diego County, California, probably mined 100 years ago from the Pierre-Pont Morgan collection; a huge blue topaz from Brazil (I am guessing from the days of Alan Caplan); two large, beautiful fluorites from France (one yellow, one blue). The museum also displayed one of the largest and most impressive danburite specimen from Mexico.

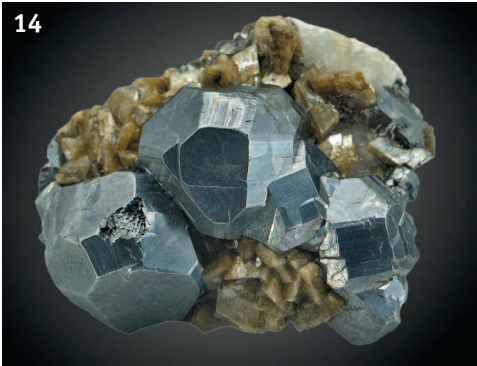
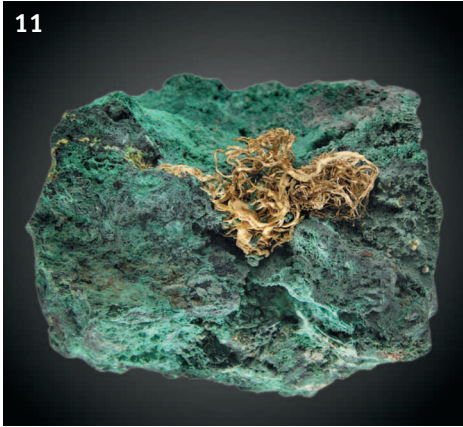
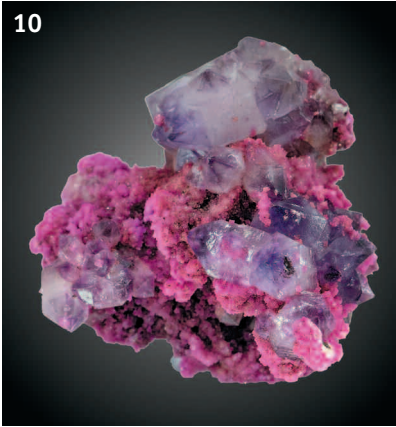
**Museum of Mineralogy MINES ParisTech** (MM-ParisTech). Eloise Gaillou, curator, brought some very historical pieces and certainly the cumengeite from the Cumenge collection, circa 1896, got much attention. A small collection of calcites from Foret de Fontainebleau was unusual and different from anything normally seen from the locality. The Chessy pieces were of special interest.

**Museum of Confluences – Lyon.** Three cases: one of minerals from Sainte-Marie-aux Mines, another of fluorites from around the world, and one showcasing the Alexis Chermette (1902–1996) collection given to the museum. This very striking architectural museum, opened in 2014 along the river, is well worth a visit if only to see their collection of French minerals.

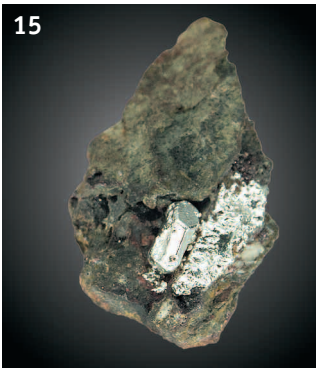
**Natur-Museum – Luxembourg** (NHM-Luxembourg). Simon Phillipo put together an extraordinary case devoted to minerals of the Congo. I was attracted to a specimen of wire gold on



10. **Quartz** (var. amethyst) with Co-rich **calcite**. 6 x 6 cm. Kambove underground, Katanga, DR Congo. NHM-Luxembourg, #VP108, Jean-Marie Pendeville collection.
11. **Gold** wires on **digenite**. 7 x 5 cm. Musonoi extension, Katanga, DR Congo. NHM-Luxembourg, #VP001, Jean-Marie Pendeville collection. Photo: Michael Leybov.
12. **Siderite** 'box'. Buckland Monachorum, Devon, England. NHM-London.
13. **Prehnite**. Mont de Lens, France. NHM-London.
14. **Galena**. Neudorf in Harzgerode, Harz, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany. MMU-Strasbourg, Paul Groth acquisition, 1872.



15. **Moschellandsbergite**. Moschellandsberg, Oberrmoschel, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany. MMU-Strasbourg, Paul Groth acquisition, 1872.
16. **Apatite, topaz, albite, orthoclase**. Epprechtstein, Fichtelgebirge, Bayern, Germany. MMU-Strasbourg, Victor Dürrfeld acquisition, 1909.
17. **Baryte** crystal on matrix. Egremont, Cumbria, England, UK. NHM-London.
18. **Silver**. Kongsberg, Norway. MM-ParisTech.
19. **Hauyne**. Niedermendig, Eifel, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany. MMU-Strasbourg.



20. **Gold**. Colorado Quartz mine, California, USA. Gilles Emringer collection.
21. **Gold**. Round Mountain, Nevada, USA. Gilles Emringer collection.
22. **Gold** crystals group (6.1 cm high). Fire Creek mine, Lander, Nevada, USA. Specimen: *Miner's Lunchbox*. Photo: Jeff Scovil.

malachite (Wayne Leicht said it was the best he had ever seen from the locality) and a super fine cuprite. The letters and historical items added to the appeal.

**National Museum of Natural History** (NHM-London). Four cases of amazing specimens organized by Mike Rumsey and Robin Rennie-Hansen included the very famous specimen of the Siderite 'box'. In the French case the rare prehnites from Mont de Lens, France were outstanding. My eye went to an amazing mint green fluorite from the St. Peter's mine in the English fluorite case.

**Strasbourg Mineralogical Museum (MMU-Strasbourg)** This is a museum that not many of us have ever visited, but judging from their display it should warrant a visit from any collector who comes to the Strasbourg area. The moschellandsbergite caught my attention — something we rarely see in any display. The museum had two cases, one of 31 German specimens and another of worldwide specimens with historical old labels which I really loved. The blue apatite from Epprechtstein was amazing and the galena from Neudorf was excellent.

**Gilles Emringer** displayed his personal gold collection for the first time and there were certainly some beautiful specimens, especially two Nevada golds. There was also a mix of worldwide specimens.

**Alain Martaud's** case was a truly extraordinary visual pleasure. It was hard to choose a favorite within this beautiful mix. His rhodochrosite from South Africa, a most unusual gold from Nevada, the calcite from Fontainebleau and the cumengite and boleite from the Cumenge collection — everything in his case was exceptional.

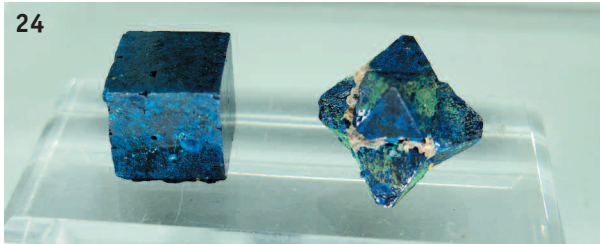
**Frederic Khun** These four cases were among my favorite — the combination of the historical mining lamps, swords, French minerals (a huge Chessy azurite!) and another case featuring some western USA lamps and specimens. Frederic put together one of the most interesting, historical cases that appealed to even those visitors who were not mineral collectors.

Well done to all participants and organizers!  
Visit: [www.sainte-marie-mineral.com](http://www.sainte-marie-mineral.com) (French, English, German)

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## Highly Educational Exhibition

I have long wanted to visit Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines in early summer for the annual mineral show "Gems and Minerals". At this time of a year the peaceful town located in the narrow valley between the Vosges Mountain slopes of French Alsace gets invaded by thousands of mineral collectors and amateurs. This year I got



23. **Beryl**. Sherlova Gora, Adun-Cholon Range, Zabaykalsky Krai, Russia. MM-ParisTech.
24. **Boleite** and **Cumengeite**. About 1.5 cm on edge. Boleo, Baja California Sur, Mexico. MM-ParisTech.



there too. 2018 was the anniversary year for the show that took place in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines at the 55<sup>th</sup> time. I am limited to the cursory description of my impressions, as it is impossible to tell within the short notes genre about all the museums and mineral collectors that took part in this show. Traditionally, the special guests of the show – the natural science museums – display at the special exhibition “Prestige”. Every year they choose the theme each participating museum follows to and demonstrates its exhibition. The theme of this year was “Fantasmineral: collectors’ dreams”. The special guests were the major European natural science museums from Paris, London, Luxembourg, the mineral museums of Ecole des Mines (Paris) and Strasbourg and also the Museum of Confluence (Lyons). Collectors Frederic Kuhn and Gian-Carlo Parodi were the special guests together with the museums. The display of the London Natural History museum, one of the largest in the world, impressed me with the wonderful multi-colored baryte crystals from Egremont deposit in Cumbria (UK). The Mineral museum of Ecole des Mines demonstrated minerals from all over the world which were donated to the museum by the private collectors from year to year, for instance, the spectacular rhodochrosite druse from Namibia, wulfenite crystal from the USA, goethite specimen from Mexico, the druse of azurite crystals from Italy and azurite with cuprite from the famous French deposit Chessy-les-Mines. The exhibition displayed mineral specimens donated to the museum both in late 19<sup>th</sup> and in 20<sup>th</sup> century: the silver nugget from Kongsberg was acquired in 1881; the aquamarine crystal from Adun-Cholon (Transbaikal, Russia) was displayed along with its original old label.



25ab. "Cristallisations sucrées". Created by Louis Agnellet. Photo: Mark Mauthner.

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26–27. "Rave Party" displays featuring mining lamps and paraphernalia... and historic specimens. Frederic Khun collection. Photo: Mark Mauthner.

28. **Moschellandsbergite**. About 7 cm across. Moschellandsberg, Obermoschel, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany. MMU-Strasbourg. Photo: Mark Mauthner.

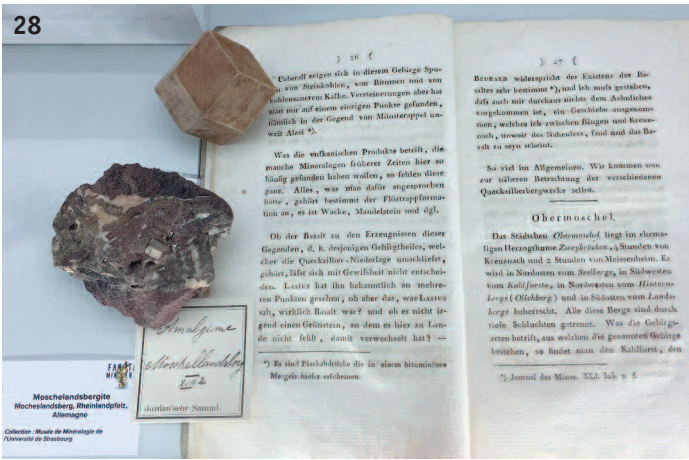
29. "From the Dreams of the Experts". Various private and public collections. Photo: Mark Mauthner.

The German mineral specimens were displayed at the show by the Mineral museum of Strasbourg University. The exhibition included extraordinary fancy shapes of silver, calcite and tetrahedrite clusters, galena crystals, large crystals of hayuine *in-situ*. The Museum owns historical mineral collections. One of them is the little-known collection, collected before 1784 by natural history professor Jean Hermann. It consisted of more than 350 mineral specimens accepted from his foreign colleagues and followers. During the French Revolution, in late 18 century, it was recognized to be one of the largest mineral collections of the French north-east. At present, the second hall of the museum is devoted to the regional mineral collection of the Vosges Mountains. Apart from the museum side of the show my attention was drawn by the display of the *Wendel Minerals* company. In the “museum-style” displays there were many mineral specimens of museum quality, including those from Russia, for example, fluorite and pyrrhotite from Dalnegorsk, emerald from the Ural Emerald Mines (Central Urals).

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## ... a thoroughly enjoyable Exhibit!

I have to say, the name “Fantas Mineral” gave me no clear picture as to what could be expected in the special exhibit at the 2018 Sainte-Marie-aux Mines show. As I entered the gallery, the first object that drew my attention to my left was a glittering tower called “*Cristallisations sucrées*” (Sweet Crystallization). The clearly mineral-inspired candy creation was produced by star French pastry chef, Louis Agnellet and definitely fit the category of “fan-



tasy”. Except the radial aggregate of tetragonal needles very reminiscent of an Indian mesolite ball... so, “*fantasy minerals?*?” What next caught my eye was a visually stunning display featuring a plethora of mining lamps, paraphernalia, graphics and specimens was called “Rave Party”. I was quite puzzled what an all-night narcotic dance party had to do with mining equipment but a label along the way indicated that the word stems from a style of lamp (la rave) and I was left to assume that etymology in turns found its roots in the lamp’s form: rounded and shaped like a beet. I began to understand that the displays were less about the minerals themselves, and more about how certain people relate the objects they accumulate. The stories attached to the various display spoke to the history behind the collections: of the passionate people behind some of the world’s most significant institutional collections to the specific interests that made private collectors assemble pieces sharing some characteristic. Fluorite, a fairly common collecting theme, was featured heavily, and is/was the focus of a couple of the collections presented: Jacques Dayssiols with a selection of miniature-site, strictly English specimens, more English examples from the Natural History Museum – London, and the

Musée des Confluences, Lyon brought pieces representative of the passion for fluorite of a significant donor to the museum’s collection, geologist Alexis Chermette. Exhibit organiser, Alain Martaud, also shared his mineralogical dream ... including a photo of himself in dream state. Collecting has been called a “gentle madness”, and it became clear that the theme pointed to what in English might be described “*the dreams and passions of collectors*”. It also paid homage to the different directions that collectors take in fulfilling their desires. For someone whose own tastes include historical specimens, it was a treat to see historic specimens that many might dream to own, such as the several shown that were once in the hands of Count De Bournon (Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris) and a boléite paired with a cumengite from the species’ namesake himself (Musée de Minéralogie MINES ParisTech). Despite the initially confusing title, a thoroughly enjoyable exhibit!

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