

## “WEALTH OF THE EARTH IN THE ART OF STONE CARVERS”

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The exhibition “*Wealth of the Earth in the Art of Stone Carvers*” devoted to 250 years of the establishment of the St. Petersburg Mining University was opened at the Mining Museum (Fig. 1). This project was executed in partnership with the Shmot'evs Foundation for the Promotion of Culture and Arts (Ekaterinburg).

During the working time of the exhibition (October 4, 2023–March 17, 2024), students, personnel, and guests of the Mining University and visitors to the Mining Museum got acquainted with this exhibition. When it was prepared, the decision was made to use the unique potentialities of this museum with the help of its research staff. The cooperation of the museum and Foundation resulted in an exhibition project that organically combined its three parts.

A section of the exhibition delves into the historical background essential for understanding the origins of stone carving art in the Urals. The texts prepared by the Foundation complement the Museum's exhibits (Fig. 2), providing visitors with insights into masterpieces of the 20<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> centuries.



1. Halls of the “*Wealth of the Earth in the Art of Stone Carvers*” exhibition in the St. Petersburg Mining Museum. Photo: author.



2. Diagram of the materials used in the creation of the work, and below samples of these minerals from the collection of the St. Petersburg Mining Museum. Photo: author.

3. *Danila-Master* sculpture group. Svyatogor stone carver Studio, 2020–2021. Shmot'evs Foundation. Photo: A. Pavlov.



The visitor had a chance to gain an insight into some aspects of the “kitchen” of the stone carvers in the showcases and explanations that explained the mineralogical composition of the sculptures. Detailed sketches were correlated with stone specimens in the showcases that showed the stones in their diverse forms: unprocessed stones, polished mineralogical specimens, and fragments of the works of art. The most inquisitive visitors were able to have a look of extended explanations devoted to the mineralogical specimens that were made available through QR codes placed on the showcases.

The core of the project was eleven pieces made by artisans in Ekaterinburg in 2011–2023. Ten of them were manufactured at the Svyatogor stone carver studio, and one at Aleksey Antonov's stone carver House. All the works of art are done in the technique of 3D mosaics and made up of carefully fitted fragments of various rocks. This technique reached the peak of its evolution in Florence in the 17th century and was brought to Russia with masterpieces of the House of Carl Fabergé. Widening the assortment of the stone carver production, this brilliant businessman addressed various aspects of the European heritage. Following the House of Carl Fabergé, this technique was employed by the House of Alexey K. Denisov-Uralsky. The technique of making