



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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World Record for Largest Cut Tanzanite Set at Rice Museum

HILLSBORO, OREGON – On Saturday, March 9, 2024 a Guinness World Records™ was set at the Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals by L'Heure Bleu, a 703.4-carat tanzanite gem hand-carved by Naomi Sarna. L'Heure Bleu was verified as the world's largest cut tanzanite by two independent witnesses and a Guinness adjudicator.

The expert witnesses, Jessie English of J.S. English Appraisals and Madeline Sanders of Oregon Estate Jewelry, weighed L'Heure Bleu on two scales. They then examined the tanzanite and performed tests to make sure it was not another material, such as glass. After these tasks were complete, the Guinness adjudicator verified and announced the results to the crowd that was present for the event.

Several years ago, Sarna was invited to the Tanzanite mines in Tanzania to select a piece of rough to carve for an international competition. At the time the Tanzanian government did not allow tanzanite larger than one gram to be exported. In fact, to get a large enough piece of rough Tanzanite, Sarna had to start carving at the mine, working with a flashlight, in a rubble strewn room, finishing it when she returned to her studio. The result was the L'Heure Bleu sculpture, which won a First-Place Spectrum Award for carving from the American Gem Trade Association.

The Tanzanite mines, located in the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro, are on the ancestral land of the Maasai people and it is the only place in the world where this blue-violet gemstone is found. Touched by the community and the poverty she witnessed while teaching the Maasai women how to make jewelry from tanzanite, Sarna announced that profits from the sale of the L'Heure Bleu carving would go to the Maasai to provide eye care for the community through the world recognized Casey Eye Institute of Portland, Oregon.

About the Rice Museum

Housing a world-class collection of rocks and minerals, the Rice Museum is recognized as the finest in the Pacific Northwest and one of the best in the nation. Its educational programs include organized school field trips and ongoing educational outreach throughout the community at large. The Museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its unique architectural style, use of natural stone, and extraordinary native Oregon woodwork.

The Rice Museum is a Smithsonian Affiliate, one of only three in Oregon. The Affiliation serves as an endorsement of the quality of a museum's facilities, the training and professionalism of its staff, and its mission to educate the public. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and Affiliate activity is available at www.affiliations.si.edu.

About Naomi Sarna

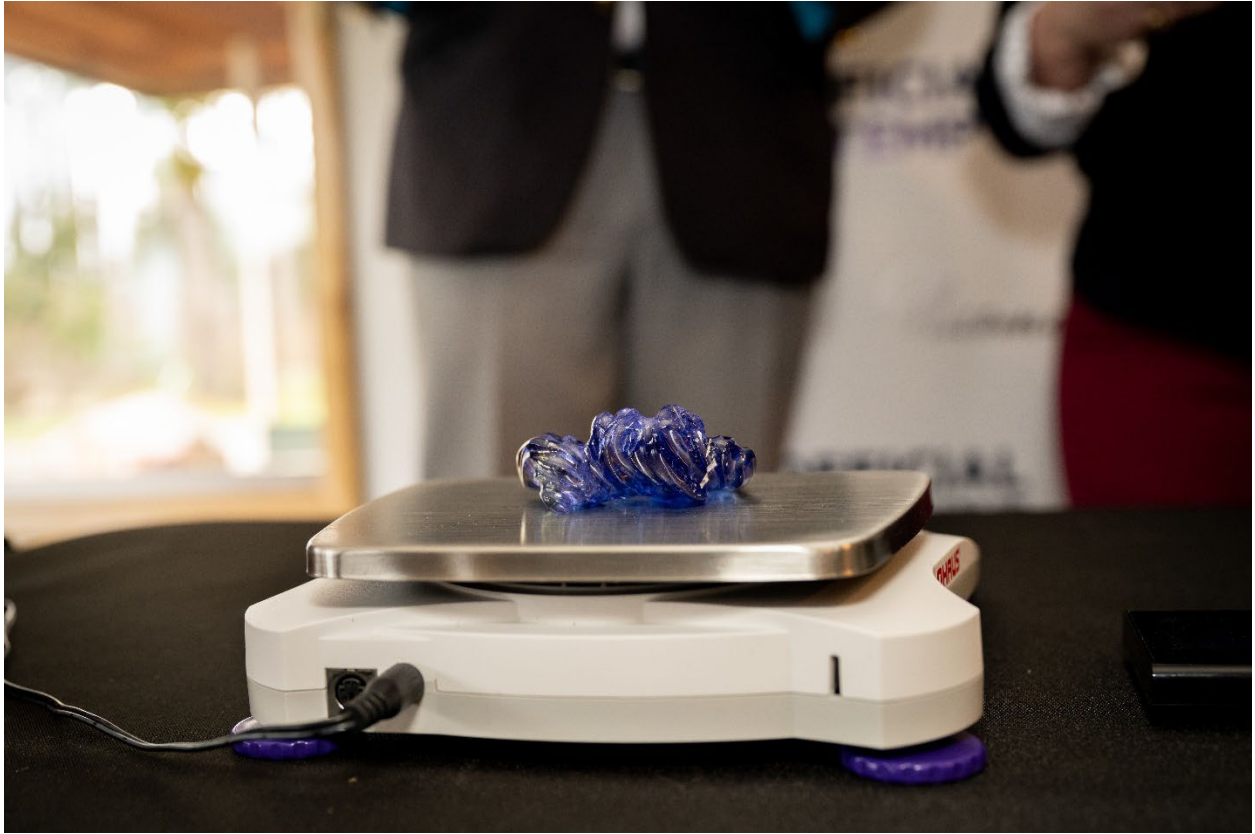
Born within walking distance of some of the world's greatest mineral mines in Butte, Montana, minerals, gems and fossils were a part of everyday life for international award-winning jewelry artist and gemstone carver Naomi Sarna.

Central to Sarna's work is the play of light and shadow, movement, texture and the use of bold color combinations. According to Sarna, carving is a relatively simple process using a stationary arbor. What she says is more complex is creating the art that become the carvings seen in her jewelry and precious objects. Sarna's work is inspired by the sensuous curves and flowing curls of the Pre-Raphaelite and Art Nouveau periods.

Sarna, is the recipient of 23 Spectrum Awards in both gem carving and jewelry design. She was recently awarded a Silver Medal for her white jadeite carving, "Winter Bird, Spring Greens" at the 2019 Zi Gang Bei Jade Exhibition in Suzhou, China. Sarna received a Bronze Medal for her unique nephrite jade carving, "Mossy River" at the same competition in 2017. She has created pieces that are represented in the Smithsonian's Permanent Collection of American Gems as well as many private collections. Sarna had her first solo show "Stone in Motion" at the Wilensky Mineral Gallery in New York City and she was part of a group show "Gemstone Masterpieces" at the same gallery. In addition, Sarna was selected to create a piece of jewelry for the Maine Museum of Gems & Minerals using Maine tourmaline in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the "Big Find". She is also the Jewelry Arts Journalist for *Unique*, the Private Jet Magazine.



L'Heure Bleu, 703.4 carat tanzanite hand carved by Naomi Sarna. Photo by Shawn Linehan.



L'Heure Bleu, world's largest cut tanzanite, being weighed. Photo by Shawn Linehan.



L'Heure Bleu, world's largest cut tanzanite, being inspected by expert witness Jessie English. Photo by Shawn Linehan.



Naomi Sarna with Guinness adjudicator. Photo by Shawn Linehan.