

THE NATURE OF

DIAMONDS





The Nature of Diamonds glitters from beginning to end.



Historical galleries include artifacts and paintings as well as dazzling jewelry.

OVERVIEW

Glamorous. Dazzling. Ancient. Born from billions of years of crushing geological force, diamond is a truly extraordinary material. The American Museum of Natural History is proud to revive its award-winning exhibition, *The Nature of Diamonds*, a comprehensive exhibition which explores the human fascination with diamond, delving into its **geologic origins**, how it is mined, its cultural significance in **art, literature, and adornment**, and its numerous uses in modern science and technology. Against a backdrop of **stupendous gemstones**, *The Nature of Diamonds* tells its story through absorbing computer animations, compelling multi-media, evocative exhibitry, and approximately **500 dazzling objects**.

HIGHLIGHTS

- A **corsage ornament belonging to a niece of Napoleon**, comprised of 2,600 diamonds
- A walk-through re-creation of a **diamond tunnel mine**
- A **hands-on model** of a diamond's crystal structure
- **Historical jewelry** from the 15th through 19th centuries
- A **Frank Gehry neck ornament** created for Tiffany & Co
- **Breathtaking gems and jewels** on loan from public and private collections all over the world





"Hand of God" brooch, designed in 1940 by Paul Flato out of diamonds, gold, and platinum for actress Joan Bennet.



A diorama illustrates methods of diamond mining.



19th century portrait of Queen Victoria, wearing some of her royal jewels.



PRESS QUOTES

"A dazzling feast for the eye"

—*The New York Times*

"So much gleam...you'll need shades"

—*Where Toronto*

"The Nature of Diamonds...is a perfect distraction from the everyday blahs and will probably teach you a thing or two that you didn't know about the gems"

—*Torontoist*

"A sparkling combination of science and art"

—*Los Angeles Times*

"More than 500 drool-worthy pieces"

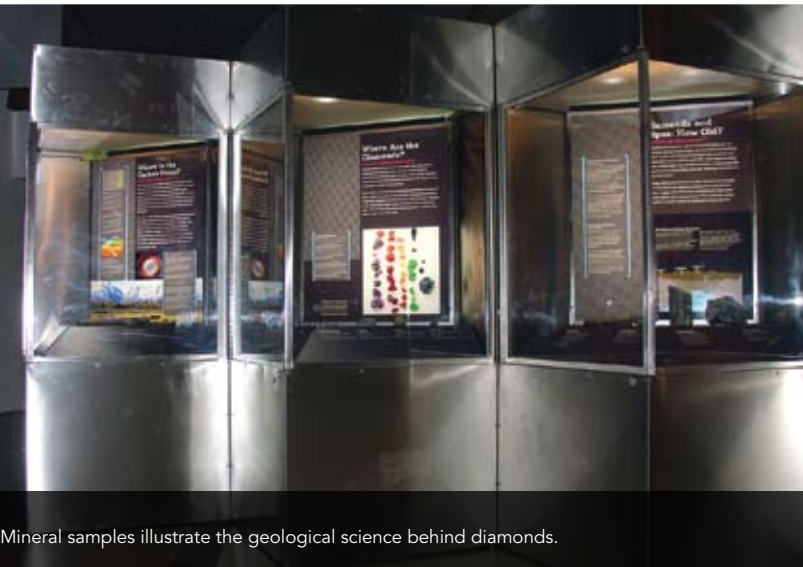
—*Town Crier Online*

"Grab[s] the attention of children and their parents alike"

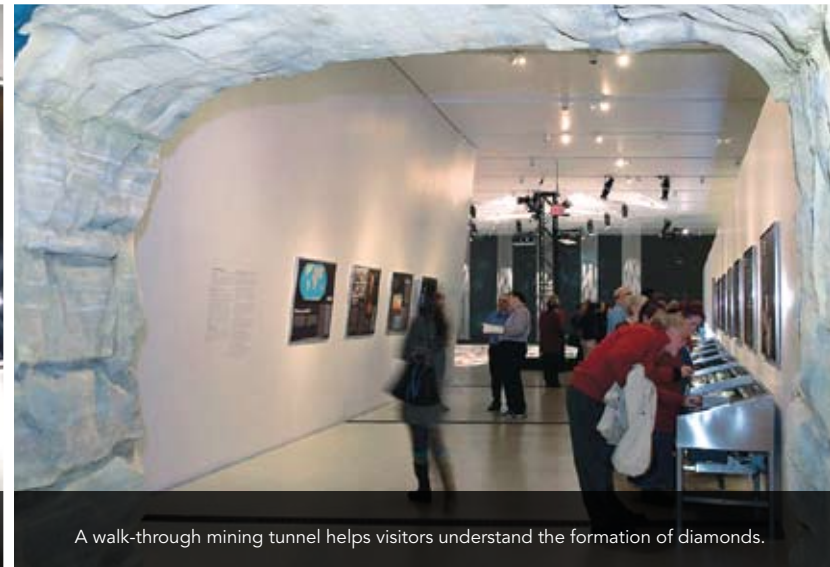
—*Torontoist*

"Guaranteed to put a twinkle in any jewel addict's eye"

—*Where Toronto*



Mineral samples illustrate the geological science behind diamonds.



A walk-through mining tunnel helps visitors understand the formation of diamonds.

1. WHAT IS DIAMOND?

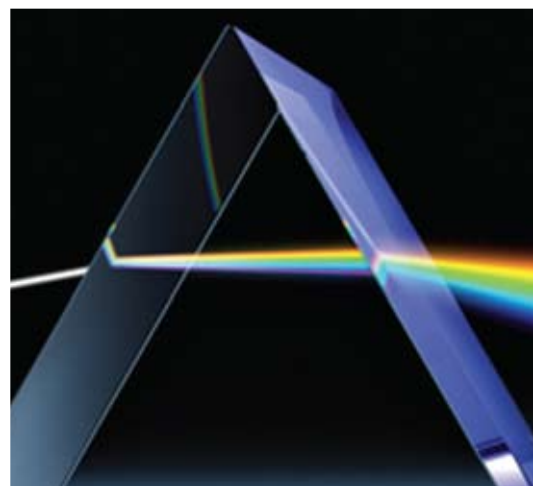
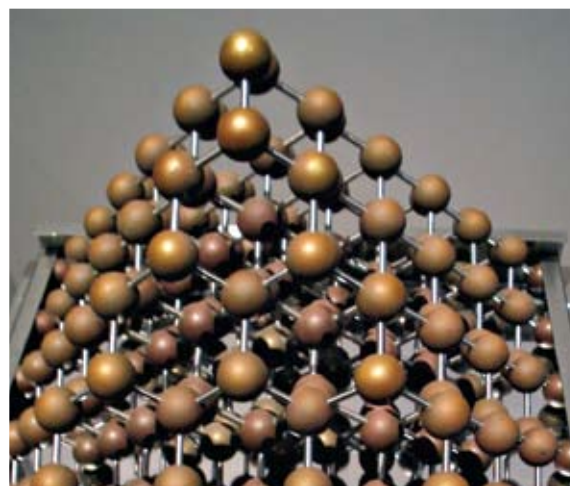
The introduction examines diamond as a natural substance—its structure and composition; its shape, color, fluorescence, and phosphorescence; its superb heat conduction; its unparalleled hardness; and other unique properties. These are demonstrated through mineral samples and models, including a **hands-on model of diamond's crystal** and an **interactive exhibit** that demonstrates diamond's ability to conduct heat. **Fine samples of diamond crystals** show the mineral's diversity in nature.

2. THE SOURCES OF DIAMONDS ON EARTH

This section explores where diamond comes from, what it tells us about Earth, and the way in which diamond is moved to Earth's surface. Embedded in a walk-through re-created diamond pipe are samples of **rare diamond specimens, including the 25-carat Engelhard diamond**. From the mine tunnel, visitors can watch a **large-screen computer animation** that illustrates how these pipes are formed, bringing diamonds from the Earth's depths.

3. THE HISTORICAL GALLERIES

The third section provides a fascinating historical panorama of diamond legend and lore. **Ancient and medieval manuscripts, jewelry, and artifacts** illuminate the intriguing cultural and historical significance of this mineral. Included here is a superb selection of **diamond jewelry from the 15th century to the present**, including rare Spanish jewels from the 1600s and 1700s, fanciful diamond flowers from the 1800s, a collection of **25 diamond betrothal rings spanning five centuries**, and jewelry worn by modern celebrities including Elton John and Salma Hayek.





The Aurora Butterfly of Peace contains 240 diamonds, representing every variety of fancy colored diamonds and a range of cut styles.

4. MINING HISTORY

The story of historical and contemporary diamond exploration is told through a look at different types of mining, diamond's progression from mine to dealer, and an account of the "marketing miracle" of diamond. Visitors examine **models that describe the three types of mining:** kimberlite pipe, or underground mining; alluvial, or gravel mining; and marine, or beach and undersea mining.

5. THE GEM VAULT

The exhibition's walk-in diamond vault houses some of the most dazzling objects on display, beginning with the stunning **Aurora Butterfly of Peace**, created from 240 diamonds of every color. The treasures continue inside the vault: the **diamond-studded corsage ornament** owned by the niece of Napoleon Bonaparte; a **Cartier diamond flapper headband** from the 1920s; the **1890 "Question Mark necklace** created by the famous French jewelry firm, House of Boucheron; and a diamond and onyx Art Deco belt buckle owned by the Maharajah of Indore.

6. THE FOUR C'S

7. DIAMONDS IN INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

The final sections discuss the gem industry and industrial uses of diamonds. Described here are the criteria used to judge a gem—cut, carat, color, and clarity—and the cutting process. The amazing properties of diamond—its hardness, its hydrophobic surface, its ability to conduct heat—makes the gem ideal for a wide variety of uses, from cutting tools to electronics to surgery.



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AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Size: 7,000 square feet

The Nature of Diamonds is organized by the American Museum of Natural History, New York (www.amnh.org), in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Texas; and The Field Museum, Chicago.

Photo credits:

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