

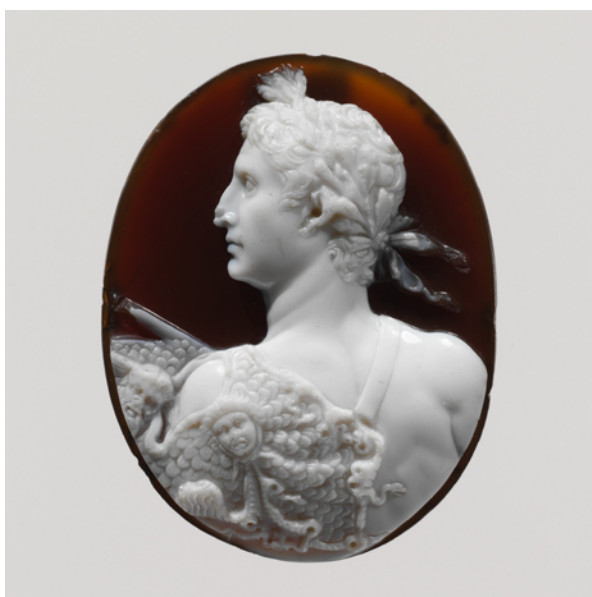
**What lies in gems is a wonderfully innate power.
Great power is given to herbs, the greatest is given to gems.**
(From the "Lapidaries" of Marbod of Rennes, XI century)

Glyptics is one of the most ancient and rare types of art, which has no equal in world culture. It is able to turn any material – whether as precious as emerald or as humble as hematite – into a dazzling adornment. Aristocratic splendor, impeccable style, high quality and fine workmanship make the engraved gems a true value that unite the powerful allure of precious stones with the power of image, becoming status symbols in their own right. Glyptics is an art used to create family crests, genre scenes or official portraits, and a timeless craft that is continued to this day.

The first carved gemstones (gemmas) saw the light in the East and on the islands of the Aegean Sea back in the IV – III millennium BC. The gemmas of ancient Greece were distinguished by grace, beauty and special refinement of execution. It was namely there the expressive artistic language of glyptics was born. It manifested itself in miniature works, which skillfully combined the beauty of stone and masterful carving. The images of the glyptics could be either accurate and graphic, or soft and tremulous. No wonder Goethe called the ancient engraved gems "the purest source of aesthetic pleasure."



"Flying Heron", V century B.C.
Sapphirin intaglio by Dexamenos of Chios
The State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg)



Portrait of the Emperor Augustus, ca. 41-54 A.D.
Sardonyx cameo by unknown author
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)

The early type of carved stones was called **intaglio** meaning in-depth image. First of all, they had a practical function serving their owners as personal seals, as well as amulets. Then they became objects of fashion, and were worn to signify the interests, allegiances, beliefs and persuasions of the owner. Later, carvers began to create larger polychrome gems with convex images – **cameos**. Usually performed on multi-layered coloured stones, they were luxury items that adorned secular and cult objects, as well as clothes of nobles and priests.



"The Last Kiss of Romeo and Juliet", 1824
Rock crystal intaglio by Giovanni Beltrami
The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)

The high heyday of the art of glyptics in the Renaissance, as well as later, in the second half of the XVIII - early XIX century, came at a time of increasing interest in antiquity. Carved stones, antique and new work, have always been the subject of passionate collecting. During the Enlightenment, the fascination with gemmas reached such a scale that it was compared to an epidemic. The most famous collectors of the engraved gems are considered to be King of Prussia Frederick II, George III, Maria Theresa, Lorenzo de' Medici, as well as Empress Catherine II, who collected more than 10,000 cameos and intaglios.

Today glyptics is going through a rebirth. Present-day craftsmen paying tribute to the great past of stone-carving seek their own course in this form of artistic creativity. This art form in the XX and XXI centuries is presented to the viewers through the prism of works by the carver Vladimir Popovich, whom TENZO Jewellery House fruitfully cooperates with for more than 20 years. The master describes his creative method as "the path from the meaningless to the divine joy of being." The whole world, the whole macrocosm, is enclosed in the stone. Therefore, it is necessary to reveal the essence of the stone and to transmit it as far as possible. This is an attempt to link our being with eternity. In his delicate workmanship with such hard natural materials as topaz, beryl, sapphire, diamond etc., Vladimir achieves an almost inexplicably fine precision. His paintings in stone are made on perfectly clear gemstones; their sheen and clear hues add to the beauty of the final image. In the small space limited by the size and, most importantly, the depth of the stone, Vladimir creates multidimensional compositions full of fascinating plots. According to Alexander Tenzo, the founder and creator of TENZO, "intaglios are a whole world of images, spiritualized characters, felt experiences, extraordinary stories. Immersion in this world promises familiarization with the mystery of creativity."



"Heracles and Iola", 2001-2002
Topaz intaglio by Vladimir Popovich
TENZO Jewellery House



"Madonna of the Yarnwinder", 2005
Topaz intaglio by Vladimir Popovich
TENZO Jewellery House



"Bamboo under the Snow", 2020
Beryl intaglio by Vladimir Popovich
TENZO Jewellery House

Glyptics has a thousand-year history and truly is considered an eternal art. The majority of ancient works of painting, sculpture and architecture did not reach to the present day, and just small intaglios and cameos, carved on solid gemstones, often serve as an evidence of entire eras. Engraved gems offer an intimate insight into the history of human culture, both ancient and modern, unveiling aspects such as adornment, beliefs, social and political status, artistic style, fashion and craftsmanship. Moreover, created according to long-standing traditions, gemmas unfailingly remain elitist and are designed for sophisticated connoisseurs of beauty.



"Annunciation", 2018
Amethyst intaglio by Vladimir Popovich
TENZO Jewellery House