



## Bruce Presents

# ***Crystals in Art: From Ancient Egypt to the Present***

*Mineral Expert James Zigras and Art Historian Joachim Pissarro Discuss  
the Scientific, Historical, and Aesthetic Aspects of Crystals in Art*

Tuesday, November 24, 2020, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, Webinar via Zoom



Quartz and Hematite. The Robert R. Wiener Collection  
of the Bruce Museum. Photo by Paul Mutino

**GREENWICH, CT, November 16, 2020** — Crystals have long had the power to captivate the human mind with their enigmatic beauty and mysterious properties.

Join us on Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 – 8:30 pm for ***Crystals in Art: From Ancient Egypt to the Present***. In this *Bruce Presents* virtual conversation via Zoom, **James Zigras**, a noted expert in the field of mineralogy, will address the scientific and historical aspects of crystal in art, and **Dr. Joachim Pissarro**, the Bershad Professor of Art History at Hunter College/CUNY and Director of the Hunter College Art Galleries, will provide an art historian's perspective on this enduringly fascinating subject.

Admission to the virtual Bruce Presents, *Crystals in Art: From Ancient Egypt to the Present*, is \$20 for non-members; Museum members receive a 20% discount. To make a reservation to participate in the webinar, visit [brucemuseum.org](http://brucemuseum.org) or call 203-869-0376.



BRUCE MUSEUM  
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## Press Release

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James Zigras is an American collector who has amassed several important collections of minerals and gems. His company, James Zigras LLC, offers appraisals and consulting on mineral specimens as well as gemstones. Zigras is President and owner of Avant Mining LLC, which is the world's largest crystal mining company with over 11,400 acres and 22 mines, primarily in Arkansas. Avant focuses on high-quality quartz crystals, as well as wavelite and Arkansas turquoise.

A native of New Jersey, Zigras became interested in minerals at age 12 after his mother took him to meetings of local gem and mineral clubs. He attended Montclair State University, receiving his Bachelor of History degree in 2004.



James Zigras at the Vortex Vein in the Zigras Mine. This is the most valuable vein of clear quartz crystals in the world.

Zigras is the only living person to be honored with a species of mineral (zigrasite), life (*Haidomyrmex zigras*), and genus (Zigrasimecia). The James Zigras Amber Collection is housed at the American Museum of Natural History on long-term, indefinite loan. Considered the most important private amber collection ever assembled, it contains nearly 8,000 specimens and has contributed to the identification of over 1,000 species found within amber pieces.

Zigras has completed appraisals of important gems and minerals for The American Museum of Natural History, The Smithsonian, Harvard University, Yale University, and the California Institute of Technology. In 2019, Zigras' Avant Mining was the lead supporter of the seminal show *Crystals in Art: Ancient to Today* at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Joachim Pissarro was educated at the Sorbonne in Paris and received an M. Phil. in History of Art from the Courtauld Institute, London, and a PhD in History of Art from the University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Pissarro was named the Bershad Professor of Art History and Director of the Hunter College Galleries, Hunter College, New York in 2007. Previously, Pissarro was Curator at MoMA's Department of Painting and Sculpture

where he organized several exhibitions: *Colors of the Night: Van Gogh's Nocturnal Paintings* (2009) and *Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro* (2005).

Pissarro's teaching and writing presently focus on the challenges facing art history due to the unprecedented proliferation of art works, images, and visual data. He co-authored a book on this topic with David Carrier, entitled *Wild Art*. He curated the show *Crystals in Art: Ancient to Today* at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the 2017 exhibition *Olga Picasso* at the Musée Picasso Paris, which subsequently traveled to the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, the Picasso Museum in Malaga, and the Caixa Forum in Madrid. Dr. Pissarro also serves on the Board of the Hermitage Museum Foundation in New York City.



Art historian Dr. Joachim Pissarro.

Renowned mineral collector and Honorary Trustee Robert R. Wiener will introduce the speakers at the November 24 webinar. In June 2020, the Bruce Museum announced a significant new gift of minerals from Mr. Wiener's private collection. The recent donation follows the gift of nearly 100 world-class minerals that Wiener pledged to the Museum in 2018, which also included a number of exceptional – and exceptionally large – museum-quality specimens. These magnificent minerals will be permanently highlighted along with selections from the Bruce Museum's existing collection of gems and minerals in the new Robert R. Wiener Mineral Gallery when the New Bruce opens in 2022.

Visit [brucemuseum.org](http://brucemuseum.org) to reserve your place in the *Bruce Presents* virtual program, ***Crystals in Art: From Ancient Egypt to the Present***, Tuesday, November 24, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. The speakers' presentation will be followed by a Q&A session, moderated by **Leonard Jacobs**, producer of the *Bruce Presents* series.

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#### **About the Bruce Museum**

The Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution highlighting art and science. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Bruce has been voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Bruce Museum is a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. The Bruce Museum is open in accordance with current state and local guidelines and with advance reservations for timed ticketed entry. To make a reservation or for additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit [brucemuseum.org](http://brucemuseum.org).

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