

ARTISTIC PROCESS

PICKING OUT THE ROUGH- The entire artistic process begins with the difficult task of being able to see the potential inside a rough un-finished stone. One would be quite amazed at the incredible difference between a completely rough specimen and the finished product (see photos below). Secondly, a trained lapidary artist must be familiar with the physical attributes of each stone he works with. This includes know how hard each mineral is, what their fracture points are, how they polish up, and most importantly which tools needed to work said minerals. The last part of picking out the rough is knowing where to find the most unique and rare specimens which in most cases requires building relationships with the miners of the different countries in which the materials are found.



SHAPING THE STONE- Most work on shaping a fossil or mineral is done outside, full protected, with a right angle grinder and a diamond cup-wheel or blade. Though on some occasions we'll use a wet slab-saw to cut pieces that need a flat surface. However, all contoured surfaces must be done by hand with a right angle grinder or air powered die grinder. This is typically the most labor intensive part in creating a sculpture.



POLISHING THE STONE- After we are satisfied with the shape of the sculpture it's time to bring it into the wet room. In the wet room we use a similar variable speed right angle grinder with the added feature of an attached water-feed. The water is for two main reasons, to keep the dust down, and to prolong the life of the very expensive diamond pads. The typical process of polishing a stone will be to start with a 30 grit diamond pad followed consecutively by 50 grit, 100 grit, 200 grit, 400 grit, 800 grit, 1500 grit, 3000 grit, 5000 grit, 10000 grit, and finally a softer polishing pad. This step of the process usually takes 10-15 hours in the wet-room.



BALANCING AND DRILLING- Once the we've finished the shaping and polishing of both parts of the sculpture we must now figure out how the two pieces will combine together. Anyone who has seen our sculptures before knows that our hallmark trait is to make each piece balance perfectly so it spins freely. Because this feature is often copied in the sculpture world I won't go into too much detail as to how we find the

exact center of balance. Measurements and adjustments at this point in the process must be precise. Once the center of gravity is found the piece must be jugged up, flipped 180 degrees, and drilled (wet) precisely in the same orientation. This portion of the creation process can be one of the most stress-inducing for the simple reason that an error at this point can ruin the entire piece (and has before).



FINISHING TOUCHES- Once all the above has been achieved the final touches include cutting pins and sleeves to fit the two pieces together perfectly and cleaning each piece so it's ready to be shown to the public.

