

Shining Bright? Gallery Hopping through the Ambivalent Radiance of the
Gem Trade

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Abstract

While “gems” have identical underlying physical properties to rocks, gems have commodity status as art objects. This essay synthesizes experiences investigating these “geological freaks” and their culture(s) at the point of sale. “Gallery hopping” through a large show in Arizona, I visually explored the labor(s) involved in this ambivalent field, which permitted theoretical contemplation on the importance of what I discuss as the *ecstatic dimensions of capitalist aesthetic experience*. Thus, the essay provides greater purchase on the social meaning of gems and the cultural import of the multiple facets of the industry’s intersections with the economy, art markets, the built environment, and everyday life.

Keywords

Gem and Mineral Industry; Atmospheres and Ecstasy; Production of Space; Visual Ethnography; Arizona, USA; Emotions and Space

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"Conceived as ecstasies...Aesthetic work in all its dimensions come into view...one can see that precisely speaking an artist is not concerned with giving a thing - whether a block of marble or a canvas-certain qualities, formed or coloured in such and such a fashion, but in allowing it to go forth from itself in a certain fashion and thereby make the presence of something perceptible."

Gernot Böhme (1993: 122)

"Oh my god! One is thirsty in the desert, and what to drink, but Coke. The perfect commodity. Why?... A commodity is an object that is full of theological, even metaphysical niceties. Its presence always reflects an invisible transcendence. And the classical publicity for Coke refers to this absent, invisible quality. Coke is the real thing. Or, Coke that's it. What is that *it* - *the real thing*? It's not just another positive property of Coke - something that can be described, pinpointed through chemical analysis. It is *that mysterious something more*. The indescribable excess that is the cause of my desire."

Slavoj Žižek (2012)

"Geological Freaks" and their Ecstasies

How does one study gems ethnographically? To put it more precisely, what is culturally interesting about rocks? Estimated at more than \$30 billion, the global gemstone market is robust, with a long, if problematic, history. Yet, while gems may have identical underlying physical properties to rocks and minerals, gems have a commodity status approximating that of art objects, thus further differentiating them from stock resources that are widely mined around the world, like copper or gold.

Many factors influence gem value. There is no single dimension that determines price. For example, an important variable is the processing of the specimens. High profile, professional gem dealers will have special machines or even specific people they engage on a regular basis to provide the finishing touches, like polishing, so as to present the gems in the best possible light - to transform and therefore to distinguish gems from rocks, making them into, as my interlocutors often mentioned: *objets d'art*.

As part of a larger project into notions of beauty and their connection to mining and the gem industry, I became attentive - through my interlocutors at the 2025 Tucson Gem and Mineral Showcase - to the fact that it is in the rather metaphysical dimensions that one creates the gem as a commodity. The culture surrounding gems therefore revolves around what, aesthetically and therefore socially, designates its "value" beyond the labor of the miners, of the maritime labor involved in global shipping, and that of the prospector, the cutter, and the lapidarist. Indeed, the distinction about gems, rocks, and minerals is made clear in innumerable beginner level prospecting books:

- "Minerals are homogenous inorganic solids composed of either a single element or chemical compound. Most important, minerals have a definite crystalline structure resulting from an orderly spatial arrangement of atoms."
- "Rocks are aggregations of minerals similar to concrete, a man-made rock, composed of a variety of minerals cemented together."

- "'Gem' is a term of art, not science. Both rocks and minerals can qualify as gems. Gems are the best examples of species judged according to their beauty, durability, and rarity. As such they are geological freaks because their size, color, hardness, or other attributes are so unusually rare as to make them rocks to kill for" (Bearce 1999: 7).

Thus, the gem trade presents itself, on an ethnographic level, as a point of interest due to the (potentially violent) distinctions between art and commodities, and the types of variable labor involved in what can be seen and unseen in these processes. These first indications also show how intimately visual gems are. They are thoroughly connected to sight. Such issues can be a useful point of departure for a social and cultural analysis of *the becoming of gems*, that is, about how a "rock" undergoes its transformation into a "gem," which marks its designation as, no longer just another piece of "rough," but as a piece of "art," something beautiful to behold. In this way, I have utilized visual ethnography as a means to begin an inquiry into the aesthetics of a particular field of material culture.

To study gems, I have found the growing field of research and philosophy concerning atmospheres as essential to my analysis. In my view, atmospheres are always tied to aesthetic concerns and therefore much work remains to be done at the intersections of the literatures on the sociology of art and broader concerns in philosophy, anthropology, and cultural geography. Some of this work has already begun as scholars have investigated the social meaning of light. For instance, *prizing* the possibilities for a cultural anthropology of light, Mikkel Bille and Tim Flohr Sørensen discuss how visible wavelengths and their interaction with "things," i.e., the inanimate world, afford opportunities for multiple social practices and for understanding the interconnectedness of a multiplicity of actions (Bille and Sørensen 2007). They argue these may include intimacy, inclusivity, exclusion, hospitality, and other means of orchestrating movement in a variety of settings from the banal to the grand. "Lightscapes," as they call them, are thus shaped by social priorities and contingencies across a variety of spatio-temporal realms and objects. Within Bille and Sørensen's program for developing ethnographic perspectives on light, they point to a key underlying principle: *ecstasy*. Light has certain *ecstatic qualities*, a notion they explore that emerges from German philosopher Gernot Böhme's work. In other words, what is distinctive about light is its quasi-absence. In fact, this points to shadow. The so called 'play of light' is always about a relationship, or a dialectic, of 'light' and 'dark,' of seen and unseen. Such an interpretation of light and its impact on the non-kin sociality afforded by architectures and objects thus builds on Böhme's theory of atmospheres (Böhme and Thibaud 2016). For Böhme, and those scholars working at the intersections of emotion and society, light is a productive, if always in-between force, such that light's interactions with spaces and things has a *spilling-over-effect* that generates sensuous experiences. As the opening quotation to this essay indicated, Böhme argues that even in the realm of fine art itself, the author of the work of art is never so much concerned with the art object in and of itself as they are with what he calls the going forth of the art, thus its spilling out into the world as a kind of force predictive of something beyond the thing itself, that is, an atmosphere. The atmospheres

of places can then inform how people react to those spaces as ‘cosy’, as ‘cold,’ ‘uninviting,’ etc. Put differently, Böhme and others implore us to consider how a thing’s presence is always imposing itself, through a form of articulation with the social, on other nearby, or even seemingly distant, places, or geographies. This “tincturing” of social life (Bille, Bjerregaard, and Sørensen 2015: 60) is, I argue, a productive starting point for thinking through the cultures and labors surrounding gems. Take, for example, some illustrative encounters from the 2025 Tucson Gem and Mineral Showcase.

Gallery Hopping through Mineral City

It’s February and I am in the middle of what is called ‘Mineral City’ on the edges of downtown Tucson, Arizona. This location was founded in 2020 to provide a permanent storage and business solution for gem and mineral dealers. Here, while not specifying its discourse around gems as ‘art,’ per se, there is still an emphasis on minerals as art objects and a certain degree of presentation. A main difference I observe, compared to many other locations across the showcase, is in how people engage with the space – it is intended largely to be either a kind of museum for the public, emphasizing a pedagogical dimension (one stated mission for the Tucson Gem and Mineral Society), or for serious mineral and gem collectors who are looking for very specific ‘pieces.’ As one commentor on a Tucson Gem and Mineral Showcase Reddit (a free to access, online discussion board) thread proclaims: “Mineral City is like the *Louvre* at this point, you need more than a day to see it all!” (emphasis added).¹

This kind of elite notion, demarcating Tucson as the Paris of the American West, when it comes to gems anyway, is interesting to note. I was told by several dealers that it was their desire to eventually have a location in Mineral City. It is considered one of the best locations to do business, hosting 150 dealers and 13 warehouses located just outside of the central downtown district: “People do business out of these warehouses year-round. There’s truly nothing like it in the world” (Hicks 2025: 18).

Furthermore, Tucson is considered a unique destination for its other atmospheric qualities in terms of weather and the time of year when the event is held: “another part of it is just everybody wants to come to Tucson. It’s a great time of year weather-wise. Another factor is that many buyers need to see and feel rocks that they want to purchase” (Hicks 2025: 21). Thus, the sensory experience at the level of the buyers is vitally important. This issue is something that the proprietors of Mineral City have spoken about in their interview with the trade publication Tucson EZ Guide:

“what are we, as basically older brick-and-mortar guys, doing to facilitate these guys in their business? We are trying to do just that at Mineral City. We’re providing a room here that we allow people to use at any time. We’re having concerts and outdoor stuff to draw people in after dark. And my feedback from that idea was

¹ The thread of this post can be found online here:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Minerals/comments/1i52gth/any_firsttimers_headed_to_the_tucson_gem_mineral/?rdt=52010

that wow, you know, there weren't that many people in the parking lot, but when you walk through the halls, everybody's rooms had people in them. They came to listen to music and to eat some barbecue, but they came to do business" (Hicks 2025: 19-20).

And so, having just made the rounds at a number of the brick-and-mortar warehouse structures as I move through Mineral City, I notice a space that is very 'in-between.' It is neither brick, nor mortar, nor a location that was the ubiquitous white tent, modular environment also taking up huge swaths of the city to protect tourists and gem dealers from the sun and elements. The outward appearance of this location I happened-upon actually approximated the white tent locations but was made of foldable metal panels. I decide to head into it.

Inside, it is a small bazaar like scenario. There is a hodge-podge of minerals from the U.S., Japan, Eastern Europe and more. Here I meet a miner who is new to the game, having sold another business a few years before to finally follow his dream of prospecting. As I talked to him, he told me that his motivation was as follows: "I wanted to invest in something that had a history to it." As he quickly discovered though, it was not all about being in the field digging, but to a great degree about *performance*, about going to events, and keeping spreadsheets to track and project earnings and losses. Having just been to the Phoenix, Arizona area shows in the central part of the state, he made his way with his haul to Tucson. He brought with him a "new find," specimens from a fluorite mine discovered near Tombstone, Arizona.

Talking with him and his business partner, I discussed some of the dynamics and hierarchies of the showcase, and we discussed distinctions between "gem people" and exhibits from "the mineral side."

Fluorite Miner 1: "Yeah, the mineral side is (pauses) more earthy. Real people. You know? The other seems to be (pauses)."

Author: "Business people?"

Fluorite Miner 1: "Yeah, high end or think more highly of themselves than they should, ya know?"

As I keep talking, I also notice that these miners have copious imagery, using visuals throughout their exhibit. Although, it is unlike the more formal gallery spaces present elsewhere, these almost all look to be wide-angle, low-resolution images of the actual mining process. I ask them why I do not see more images like this rather than the carefully crafted art prints in the gem galleries:

Fluorite Miner 2: "Yeah, people like to keep that really close to the vest."

Author: "Is that for ethical reasons or because they are afraid somebody is going to exploit it and find out about it?"

Fluorite Miner 2: "I think it's more the latter. People are afraid it's going to get exploited. I don't really care, you know what I mean. I don't want people to exploit it obviously, but I like being able to share stories and information about what's goin' on. Because it was only a year and half ago that I got into mining. And before that, I would

have given anything to just sit here and talk to somebody that is actually doing it. So, it's nice to be able to share that...This [event] is helping us fund our next trip...If I can get it [this show] to pay for itself and maybe make my initial investment back then, you know, I'd be happy."

In the course of the conversation, and as a result of making the digital images and being able to quickly review them, I observed how the light from the surrounding area was spilling into this location, further underlining questions at the intersections of ambiance and distinction. Indeed, the images from this locale all had a noticeable pink hue. Why? Looking into the finer details of the images, I finally saw the reason - the adjacent building. This structure is called The Arkenstone, and it is painted in bright pink. As the sunlight reflected off the building's surface, the light diffused, quite literally spilling into the adjoining building where I was talking with the miners. I asked the fluorite miners about how they felt about their place within the show and the market compared to the garish pink building, which specializes in selling very highly regarded gems.

Fluorite Miner 2: "Oh yeah, It's totally different [there] Yeah. They are big money. I mean, maybe that's the difference between a company like that that can have ten plus employees or whatever."



Figure 1 February 5, 2025 - Fluorite Miner with his quarries. Notice the reflection in the glass and the white surfaces of the structure that take on the pink hue of the adjacent building - a "gem gallery," that spills into the surroundings of this structure and its environment. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.

But, as I would learn, the proprietor of the ecstatic pink building and his success in no way can be boiled down to a technical interpretation - the early adoption of the internet to sell gems. Instead, this was a project of decades of inspired work.

Named after a mythical gem from J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, The Arkenstone is one of the largest free standing gem gallery spaces that is privately owned and operated year-round that is connected to the gem show, although the main base of operations for The Arkenstone company is in Dallas, Texas. While the building itself is a former restaurant, it has now been entirely painted in pink, with graffiti art by New York City based artist Tim Goodman.² Throughout the past three decades of activity, it, and its founder, a former biochemistry scholar, have been active at the Tucson Showcase. And the online dimension of his work has long been under the name "irocks.com." The promotional material from when the pink mural was made described it as follows:

"The new mural on the side of The Arkenstone's location incorporates the culture of the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, featuring mining imagery, species names, and some Tucson flare with cacti and nods to the mountains and desert... and even Gollum, as an acknowledgement of the origin of The Arkenstone's name."³



Figure 2 February 5, 2025 - The exterior of The Arkenstone in Tucson. A postmodern wonder and palimpsest in Mineral City. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.

² <https://www.tgoodman.com>

³ https://www.irocks.com/artist-creates-a-mural-for-the-arkenstone?srsId=AfmBOorDMDq56Pga6uc9HsZuafdWEpuN-agZilQSsFuqc_nk-eq5OM97

Indeed, the reference to Tolkien, persistently mentioned in the promotional material for the site, is surprisingly relevant in the context of thinking about “gems” as opposed to minerals. A large part of the context for the *Lord of the Rings* in fact deals in resource struggles, specifically around the desire of elves and men to extract and exploit the resources of dwarves, who mine from their mountain dwellings. It is thus both an apt, yet paradoxical name for a business predicated on the mining and curation of specific products of earthly and human labor, as contemporary readings of Tolkien take his themes to be a critical social and even geopolitical commentary (Santra 2021). Indeed, even Goodman’s choice to include the Gollum figure is a strange celebration of a character whose existence was ruined by allowing life to be ruled and overcome by a lustful allure of mineral derived objects and their power. As opposed to *silma*, the main mineral resource in question as part of the underlying backstory to the famous *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, as it produces the famous “rings” around which much of the story revolves, The Arkenstone is rather distinguished by Tolkien as a thing that *radiates* certain qualities linked to specifically atmospheric notions. In other words, it is a gem:

“...But fairest of all was the great white gem, which the dwarves had found beneath the roots of the Mountain, the Heart of the Mountain, the Arkenstone of Thrain... ‘The Arkenstone! The Arkenstone!’ murmured Thorin in the dark, half dreaming with his chin upon his knees. ‘It was like a globe with a thousand facets; it shone like silver in the firelight, like water in the sun, like snow under the stars, like rain upon the Moon!’ (Tolkien 2012: 212 and 243).

The Tolkienian inspiration here is further interesting because of the deployment of light in creating *silmarils*, which are three jewels created by Fëanor the elf, which were especially significant because they contained the light of the elf gods (the Valar), from two trees of Valinor (elf heaven), the original source of middle-earth’s light, according to the story. And so, like the Arkenstone of Tolkien’s tales, the structure at the Tucson Showcase radiated and tintured the experience of the event along multiple dimensions, a product of elite craftsmanship.



Figure 3 February 2, 2025 - Inside the China Collection at The Arkenstone. Polished malachite in the foreground. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.

And so, in this photo-essay, utilizing my method of layering images and text together into a larger sequence to expand interpretive possibilities (O'Neill 2025), I explore some of these underlying conceptual and material concerns, such as tincturing, and the issues about what goes seen and unseen in the context of the gem trade.

The showcase takes place from the end of January and runs through the second week of February on an annual basis. 2025 was the 70th anniversary. The event is widely regarded as the single most important such event, not only in the U.S., but in the world, particularly from a professional perspective in terms of access to materials, networking, and business to business gem and mineral practices (Rambo 2020). As one flier I collected during the event stated in bold letters, it is: "THE LARGEST, OLDEST and MOST PRESTIGIOUS GEM AND MINERAL SHOW IN THE WORLD." As a large and prestigious event, there has been consistent news media attention, often repeatedly fascinated by the spectacle of the showcase and its size given the fact that it is not in a location that is geographically nor culturally central within the American economy or art worlds. For example, *The New York Times* has called the show, an

"emporium for almost every variety of gem in the world, from \$10 slabs of rough amazonite to \$100,000 specimens of faceted zircon...world class jewelers from houses such as Boucheron and Tiffany and Company and newcomers just getting started on Etsy cruise the aisles looking for one-of-a-kind stones" (Gomelsky and Noble 2023).

Here the notion of an emporium obviously recalls the bazaar notion of many tourist places and spaces, places brimming with atmosphere – the recreation of a bazaar being an ideal, although always in a sanitized, watered-down manner (Edensor 2007). Concerning the Tucson Showcase, the city, and the tourism companies connected to it, report that the event is “Tucson’s most valuable event” with a 2019 assessment estimating attendance at 65,000 visitors with 4,882 exhibitors from 44 countries and 44 states. The economic impact has been estimated at \$131 million in direct spending and \$13 million in tax revenue garnered by the city (Gomelsky and Noble 2023).

But, what does this event reveal, as well as hide? What labors does it involve, and what stories does it tell us about the work involved in making value from rocks? Here, I offer that a visual ethnographic essay is a uniquely suited starting point for the task of unpacking these questions.



Figure 4 February 8, 2025 - A display in the HABITS exhibit at the Tucson Fine Mineral Gallery complete with specific light to reflect through the gems and props that are to invoke the natural elemental nature of the gems. Notice too, the white display case and the specific acrylic base mounting the pyrite on Quartz from Peru in the top-center of the image. Almost all the other cases seen in the showcase were black, but here the white further allows for the articulation of color and use of spotlights. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O’Neill, 2025.



Figure 5 February 1, 2025 – A large geode (often conspicuous and given pride of place in open air shows like this one situated on a parking lot along the highway) is split in half and displayed, being sold by a company from Uruguay. In the shade, taking some time off from carting around stock, a worker has a cigarette and sits on some packing boxes. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 6 February 1, 2025, inside a hotel situated along a nearby highway. The seller is new to the job, but it is a family business. From Amsterdam, the family mines this specimen of dark blue beryl from Afghanistan: "Look, you don't come across it normally. It has color shift...it is published in some magazines and my uncle discovered it actually...*They* were mining, and they just found a pocket of this dark blue beryl...But it is the color shift(ing) that makes them really *one of a kind*." Throughout the presentation, he shines the light through it for to see the color shift and its qualities better. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 7 February 2, 2025. Another show - one that was reportedly “hidden” and “unofficial” taking place in a hotel along the highway outside of downtown. Theft is a major issue, but experienced buyers know to handle wrapping and shipping their purchases and product on their own and using intermediaries they trust. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O’Neill, 2025.



Figure 8 February 2, 2025, inside one of the showcases in the Mineral City complex, where the seller specializes in African specimens. A collector from Taiwan makes a purchase and has the material sent home - a fluorite piece. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O’Neill, 2025.



Figure 9 February 2, 2025, inside another stall at the Mineral City Complex. Iconography, like this miner hewn from minerals itself, is ever-present, further emphasizing the habit-forming quality of mineral and gem collecting and the passion for the materials that many collectors hold. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 10 February 4, 2025, on the outskirts of Tucson and on the outer edges of the Kino Show, a place labelled by journalists as the “scruffiest” of the shows at the whole event. Here, the proprietor, who drives in his RV across the country from the Midwest was thrilled to show off his collection of copper and other specimens, all self-collected, and displayed using materials at hand. During the night, he was hired by a larger seller to be the security guard for several stalls in the area. Coming to the show for decades, he reports his love of the materials, but also pedagogy: It’s all passion. I love it. It’s not work. I love to do it, you know? I love to see the people – their reactions to stuff because they’ve never seen it. And I love to explain it to ‘em and then they say, ‘wow I didn’t know that!’” Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 11 February 4, 2025 - Serious and Casual collectors alike wander the Kino Show on peripheries of the city of Tucson amidst open air containers and tent structures, all laid out on an enormous tarmac parking lot. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 12 February 4, 2025 - On the edges of the Kino Show, a huge number of medium sized geodes stand for sale and workers clean up in the hot sun. The seller intends to offload these geodes, not as single items, but in bulk amounts, hoping to make sales to, for example, the many gem and mineral dealers all around the American Southwest who own rock and spiritualist shops. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 13 February 5, 2025 - a military veteran who has found work manning one of the “showcase” rooms along the highway surveys a room full of Turkish purple (lavender) jade - *Ketaya* (from the Bursa region, as it was reported to me). “My boss owns the only mine of purple jade. If you see anybody else with purple jade, it’s because they bought it from him. Sometimes they will buy it rough and create their own, or sometimes they’ll buy here and then resell.” New to the business, he finds the gems beautiful “I’ve been learning as I go, but if I keep in this business, I’m sure I’ll end up getting some.” Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O’Neill, 2025.



Figure 14 February 7, 2025 - On the peripheries of the city, a large indoor complex houses the JOGS Show. JOGS is a company that runs these types of events all over the country throughout the year. Unlike the highly curated gallery spaces near the center of the city, much is makeshift here, and there is no attempt made to balance warm and cool light temperatures for displays and workers are attempting to sell by

marketing their materials at apparently steep discounts. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 15 February 7, 2025 - Inside the large JOGS Show complex. A French prospector has taken his family through the entirety of the Americas on a three-year roadtrip. Collecting as they go, he found the JOGS show online and attempts to sell a variety of items, from mineral specimens to gems and even artifacts that he has come across along the way. However, he hopes to get into one of the shows that is more central to downtown to be able to sell more material as he has been a bit disappointed by the clientele here. Additionally, and partly because the U.S. leg of the trip has been so expensive, he is considering returning to South America, where a mining company has made him a standing offer to help them mine as a kind of consultant. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 16 February 16, 2025 - Inside the 22nd street show complex. Promoted as “the oldest show” amidst the event, it draws large crowds and diverse buyers and sellers. One can get anything from rugs and baskets

to Jade from China. The interest in gems stemming from Tolkein's stories can start at a young age - the boy in this image sports a Lord of the Rings t-shirt with a map of Middle -earth on the front. Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 17 February 16, 2025, at the Miner's Coop show. Particularly in love with Smoky Quartz and Zambian Emeralds, this miner from Colorado has been coming to this show for years. He prefers the Miner's coop, because nobody wears suits there. He has tried to make prospecting his sole source of income, but that has proven difficult over the years, but he still loves it: "We do a lotta digging up in Colorado and I have a few claims up there to dig, and I spent quite a few years doin' it full time. But as my son got older, it's like, okay, I need to do something else. I always have been a home builder. Did it for a while and got burned out. Played for a while and then I watched my savings account just go like (points down) that and so I said, 'it's time to get back to work.'...but I have hit some pretty significant pockets. But they're far and few between. If that happened regularly, I would make more than building." Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.



Figure 18 March 21, 2025, inside the The Alfie Norville Gem and Mineral Museum in downtown Tucson, Arizona. Amidst a variety of gem and mineral specimens, this wall features the Phelps Dodge company's commissioned (in 1923) paintings and organized around the theme of illustrating mining life in Bisbee Arizona. William D. White is the artist, who was commissioned by general Manager of the company Percy Gordon Beckett. Reportedly, "White toured the Copper Queen mine and the Sacramento Pit mine in Bisbee, a bustling town of 20,000 inhabitants. He then traveled to the Pilares de Nacozari mine in northern Mexico. White returned home and created 20 paintings from 1923-1924. Beckett selected 17 paintings for his office and home, and in 1958 donated the collection to the University of Arizona in Tucson."⁴ Tucson, Arizona, USA. Photo by Brian F. O'Neill, 2025.

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