

CIEMNA STRONA DIAMENTÓW

W ostatnim stuleciu diamenty stały się czymś bardzo sentymentalnym dla naszego społeczeństwa. Te drogocenne kamienie są bardzo dobrymi prezentami na różne okazje od Świąt Bożego Narodzenia, przez Walentynki, po Dzień Matki. Już dawno nauczyliśmy się czterech zasad, do których trzeba się stosować przy zakupie diamentowej biżuterii. Ważne są kolor kamienia, jego szlif i przejrzystość oraz waga. Jednak istnieje ciemna strona tych kamieni, choć jest często pomijana.



Z tymi pięknymi kamieniami wiąże się wiele problemów. Pierwszy z nich to krwawe diamenty z Afryki oraz sporne afrykańskie diamenty. Występują również problemy natury ekologicznej. Żeby wydobyć jednokaratowy diament nieraz trzeba wydobyć ponad 1700 ton skał, piachu, czy błota. Jest do tego potrzebne niesamowicie dużo energii. Poza tym wydobywanie diamentów niszczy ekosystemy, może również prowadzić do zanieczyszczenia wody i powietrza, ponieważ tylko niewielki odsetek kompanii górniczych stosuje się do norm ekologicznych.

Co potencjalny nabywca diamentów powinien zrobić z tą wiedzą ??? Po pierwsze przy wybieraniu diamentów powinniśmy dowiedzieć się skąd one pochodzą, a przede wszystkim czy zostały wydobyte przez kompanię górniczą stosującą się do norm ekologicznych.

Są również dwie bardziej ekologiczne możliwości nabycia diamentów. Pierwszą jest kupienie używanej biżuterii na aukcji lub wymiana, odziedziczenie w rodzinie, a



jeśli nie, diament może zostać zrobiony z ciała i włosów zmarłej osoby lub zwierzęcia. Taki diament powstaje w kilka tygodni, a nie całymi wiekami. Ma też większe znaczenie sentymentalne.

Piotr Pluta

The Dark Side of Diamonds

Over the last century, diamonds have become a huge part of the sentimental side of society. These precious stones are now expected for many special life events explaining why numerous commercials flood the airwaves before Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Mother's Day. Men typically study the "four C's" —color, cut, clarity, and carat—before picking out a diamond ring for an engagement or other special occasion. There's no doubt about it, diamonds are beautiful gemstones. However, no matter how much light a diamond reflects, a dark side of diamonds exists that is rarely discussed or seen.

While watching those countless commercials or perhaps even buying one of these precious gems, do you ever wonder about the implications of blood diamonds or conflict free diamonds? Apart from the human rights aspect of diamond mining, there are also huge environmental concerns associated with extracting these gems from the ground. First, in order to find diamonds buried deep within the earth, tons of rock and soil must be removed. One estimate suggests that 1750 tons of earth must be moved for every 1.0 ct diamond. That is a lot of dirt! While some diamond mines are underground, many are open pit mines. Over time, these open pit mines grow to be enormous in diameter and depth. One Siberian mine is so deep (approximately 1700 feet), that helicopters are no longer allowed to fly over the pit due to the danger it imposes. The downward air draft created by the massive mine hole has sucked helicopters down causing them to crash. Second, moving tons of earth requires a lot of energy consumption from the amount of work it requires. Third, diamond mining in general can cause a lot of pollution because of the huge disturbance to the land, which can contaminate the soil. Air becomes polluted as carbon is released from the burning of fuel to produce the energy required to move the soil and extract the diamonds. Water can even become polluted when leftover waste in the rocks leak harsh chemicals, like acid. And last but not least, mining has the potential to wreck the surrounding ecosystem, which can cause harm to native plants and animals.

However, some mining companies do follow environmental standards and try to reduce the harm they cause. Positive practices include: pollution monitoring and energy efficiency programs, conserving the ecosystem by replacing the top soil, seeding the area once mining is complete, and recycling various materials used in the process.

With this knowledge, what is a potential diamond buyer supposed to do? When choosing to buy a new diamond, do your research! Find out where your local jewelry stores are purchasing they're diamonds and see whether or not they are coming from environmentally responsible mining companies. If choosing a less traditional route, there are definitely other options available such as:

Go Vintage: Recycling is not just for paper and plastics. A very meaningful way to reuse a diamond is to choose jewelry passed down within a family. If there are no family heirloom pieces, plenty of pawn shops, consignment stores, auction websites, and classified ads have lots of used rings, earrings, and other pieces of jewelry for sale and usually for a much cheaper price than if purchased brand new.

Synthetic Diamonds: A quick internet search for man-made diamonds pulls up multiple companies such as DNA2Diamonds and Heart In Diamond that use a process to create diamonds that replicates the natural process. Instead of taking millennia, diamonds are grown in a matter of weeks. Because the carbon source comes from the hair or ashes of a beloved family member or pet, the diamond will always hold special meaning to the owner.

