



O B S I D I A N

Second draft
March 2006

Pronounced ob - sid - e - un

Origin Natural glass formed from rapidly cooling lava from a volcano. The speed of cooling was so fast that crystals did not have time to form. Obsidian can be fractured to produce sharp edges and has been used since pre-historic times for cutting tools, arrowheads, ornaments and jewellery. It was even polished to make a primitive mirror! The quote 'Through a glass darkly' (Shakespeare) refers to obsidian.

Composition Mainly silicon dioxide SiO_2

Inclusions These can produce a metallic sheen (e.g. rainbow obsidian or goldsheen/silversheen obsidian). It can include internal gas bubbles or crystals to produce a snowflake effect (snowflake obsidian).

Source Crystals obsidian is from Mexico

Crystals

Story Much of our carved obsidian is carved by a single family who we meet once a year. The father's hands are well scarred from this very sharp material. Their challenge is to artistically highlight the sheens and patterns in individual pieces. Highly skilled Chinese carvers produce our top end pieces such as the largest AA Grade hearts. For the last two years we have selected rough obsidian and arranged shipment to our Chinese carvers from whence it returns via Hong Kong! This can take up to a year but we believe the obsidian we sell is amongst the finest, if not THE finest, in Europe.

Crystals' commitment to obsidian is an example of our developing and encouraging appreciation of a ludicrously neglected stone. How often we heard ignorant people suggesting it was not worthy of gold settings or use in large bangles! THEY WERE WRONG.

Ros Mason March 2006

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