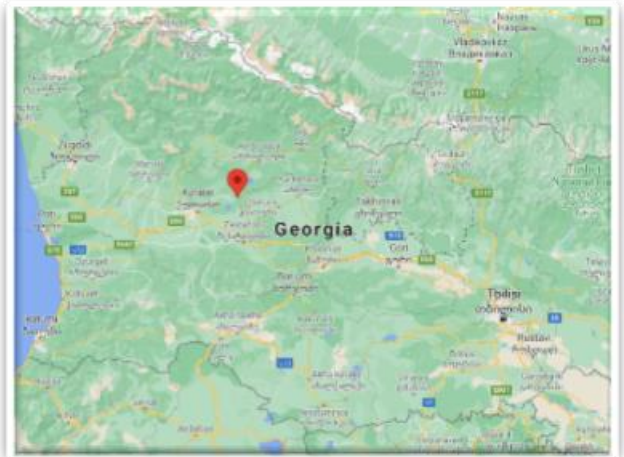


THE GEORGIAN GAGATE



Location:
Georgia/Imereti/ Tkibuli

Key words: Craft, master classes



Levan Tskipurishvili established a small workshop together with his friend 25 years ago. The two young men from Tkibuli started processing gagate by a new method. Later, two companions joined them. The friends acted based on the knowledge verbally received from elder residents of Tkibuli and also learnt by observing others. As they mention, they were looking for something innovative and different. Levan and his friends dedicated many years to obtain this knowledge and now they are teaching this technology to seven young persons from Tkibuli.

"The Black Treasure" is produced in Dzirovani, one of Tkibuli villages. This type of fossil coal has a very high quality, but it is less valued in Georgia. More and more foreign tourist visit the gagate workshop in village Dabadzveli during the touristic season. A special webpage is created for sale of the products. Decorations made of the Georgian gagate are very attractive for tourists. Due to this fact, Levan Tskipurishvili decided to rehabilitate the workshop and turn it into a touristic attraction. Today, tourists watch the decoration production process with great interest, view the products and leave the place in an inspired mood.

Marketing approach

A special webpage was created for sale of the products. Financial success was predetermined by different products which are distinguished for high quality and authenticity of the raw material. The produces are also sold by private orders, at exhibitions and fairs, via social networks.

Success factors and challenges

One of the main factors for making visitors interested is the so-called "story-telling" - Tkibuli residents have a

legend about "The Black Treasure": one forester was digging "black" soil, found an unprocessed piece of gagate and used it as a talisman. The stone brought luck to the forester and his poor family. Other peasants also heard this story and called gagate "a noble stone". Women used to attach it to cradles to ward off the evil eye, men made talismans and amulets for luck. Later, gagate necklace was presented to the fiancée on the day of engagement. It was necessary to include an item made of this stone in the dowry.

Plans for the future development

Levan plans to turn the semi-precious Georgian stone into a brand in the future. Considering the growing demand, the friends decided to offer additional services to tourists. Arrangement of the area behind the workshop where a dining room and an open space with a fireplace are located is already finished. As Zedubani village and the neighbour villages are known for tea culture, Levan plans to add tea tasting and serving treats to the

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workshop offer so that the tourists can stay there longer

and feel comfortable. The workshop members also plan

to landscape the yard and make an exhibition corner.

GALLERY:



Sources of the images: Google

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