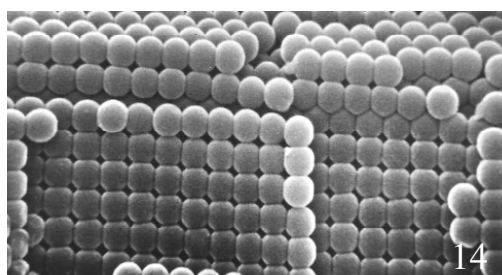


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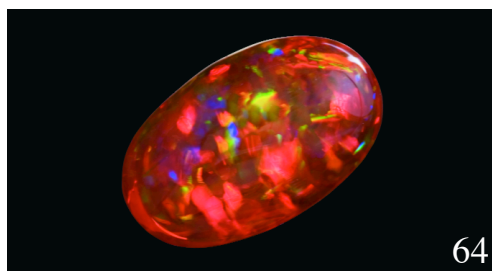


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*Facing Page:*  
*Robert A. Smith of Lightning Ridge in New South Wales takes stunning macro photo - graphs vibrant with opal pattern and color. In this extreme close-up of a Lightning Ridge black opal, the field of view is approximately 3 mm wide. Opal courtesy Jenni Brammall*