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NEWS, TRENDS AND ANALYSIS FOR AMERICAN JEWELRY PROFESSIONALS



IF YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW

Entrepreneur Camille Zarsky understands the importance of experiential retail in a changing economic landscape

COLOR PALETTE

Colored gems are taking center-stage in daily wearables, statement pieces, and classics — as well as in the bridal category. Designers are injecting a dose of color with precious and semi-precious gems, exploring interesting cuts and textures to woo jewelry wearers. Smitha Sadanandan investigates...



Vlad Yavorsky, founder and designer of Ivy New York, has a deep passion for vibrant colored gemstones. He recalls a dramatic trek up the Tian Shan Mountain range in Central Asia over 35 years ago and being pulled along by an old pack horse to access a cave full of “the reddest of rubies.”

Color is at the heart of his recent collaboration with Gemfields. He has embraced the elegance and versatility of several classic cuts, including oval, pear, cushion, and emerald cuts. “Each of these cuts offers its own distinct charm and brilliance, inspiring us to create timeless Ivy jewelry pieces that showcase the natural beauty of Gemfields’ responsibly mined rubies and emeralds, bestowing blessings since the day they were unearthed,” Yavorsky says.

The collection features earrings, rings, bracelets, and necklaces crafted from 18k gold with Mozambican rubies and Zambian emeralds, set alongside rose-cut diamonds. The pieces include bold emerald statement rings and ruby and diamond chandelier earrings (both pictured right).

As a leader in the colored gemstone industry, Gemfields, the primary owner and operator of both the Montepuez ruby mine in Mozambique and the Kagem emerald mine in Zambia, regularly collaborates with designers and brands around the globe. Rubies symbolize desire, strength, and vitality, while emeralds evoke images of nature’s beauty and serene tranquility, Yavorsky explains. “What I love

about both stones is how they effortlessly convey the essence of these qualities, making them not just gemstones but reflections of the human experience itself, promising one will helplessly fall in love again and again with their sensuality.”

Designer Andy Lif loves color in a myriad of forms. Often incorporating *plique-à-jour* into his color intensive pieces, he combines this technique with diamonds or colored stones. Of Lif’s collaboration on the Octa Infinity emerald ring with David Nassi — leading gemstone specialist and president of 100% Natural Ltd — he notes that the “spectacular antique no-oil emerald” cut by Nassi is a bespoke piece.

Housed within a gold octagonal frame, green *plique-à-jour* enamel is rendered across a series of delicate gold cells to evoke a stained-glass effect. “It is the most impactful green enamel and gem piece in

Above: Sorellina Jewelry
Below left: Ivy New York x Gemfields Emerald and Diamond Peas in a Pod Ring
Below right: Ivy New York x Gemfields Ruby, Diamond and Moonstone Earrings





the collection,” Lif says of the ring, which debuted at Salon Art + Design in New York last November.

As Lif regularly combs trade shows for vibrant gems, he has seen an increase in sales and interest for emeralds and tourmalines this year, specifically on the higher value gems of each variety. “I’d give a lot of credit to retailers and private clients gaining more knowledge as to what makes a specific gem sought after. The access and availability of gemology education programs is really moving the industry forward,” explains Lif. How end-consumers look at color, cut, and treatment of colored gemstones helps to inform their purchase. It also helps that esteemed laboratory certification and appraisals offer peace of mind for those making substantial investments in a noteworthy gemstone. “Above all else, vibrant and saturated shades of tourmaline and emerald are flat out fun. In this era of anything goes, people realize they can choose a colored gem that speaks specifically to their nuanced and refined taste,” adds Lif. Pink gems were also in demand at the Tucson show this year: “Both demand and price seemed to be up for spinel and pink sapphire.”

Over the past few years, the fine jewelry palette has become more colorful, reports Darlyn-Feythe Valentine publicist of L Woods PR. “Gone are the days of just diamonds, it’s all about wearing your birthstone as an everyday piece or picking a colored gemstone for your engagement ring. Emeralds, rubies, and pink stones have really seen an increase over the years. If you look at California-based brands like La Kaiser Jewelry or Scout Fine Jewelry, they create everyday pieces that are fun and colorful (La Kaiser), and use alternative stones such as turquoise and pink sapphires for engagement rings (Scout Fine).” Valentine believes that, over time, people have come to want variety in jewelry. “This is due partly to cost, coupled with wanting to stand out. The diamond is definitely not going anywhere, but it will cease in being a priority standalone stone, and will become a ‘diamonds and’ conversation,” adds the founder of the boutique PR company.

Peggy Grosz, senior vice president and creative director at Assael, has brought out a series of vibrant designs that capture the bright summery holiday mood. At the Couture show, the brand showcased



new pieces with Conch pearls, coral of different shades, jaspers, and more. The color palette ranged from pinks and peach, to oranges and reds. “Our NatureScapes collection also includes colorways of both soft neutrals, and strong, fiery colors. Again, coral will play a big part in the summer palette. Soft Angel Skin with striped chalcedony and an oval brooch depicting a Mediterranean Sea floor are new and a personal favorite, a pair of earrings with huge Aquamarines and a trim of beautiful pink conch pearls and diamonds,” says Grosz.

Now that the gloom of the pandemic has passed, there is demand from the end consumer for playfulness, notes brand strategist Darren Hildrow. His online B2B jewelry marketplace, NouvelleBox, has gained momentum in recent years and features a cohort of established and up-and-coming designers on its roster. At the NouvelleBox Paris show in Spring, there was an array of beautiful gemstones on display. “Nada Ghazal’s Doors of Opportunity collection not only had the splashes of vibrant colors running through the jewelry but each gemstone had meaning behind it. The golden color symbolizes courage, the blue prosperity, the green manifests luck, the white is for power, orange symbolizes happiness while the pink is for self-love,” points out Hildrow. “Eden Presley is another designer with such a passion for colored stones that her cabinets at the show look like Vincent van Gogh’s paint palette after a long night at the canvas. The timeless yet whimsical collection Mantra is a rainbow of colored sapphires and tourmalines. Gwen, the designer, does not chase color as a trend – it’s in her DNA.” People are also traveling more; with beaches and warm weather necessitating color, observes Hildrow.

Nomis, a Ukrainian brand based in Switzerland – founded by Alyona Kiperman to pursue her passion for experimentation and innovation – offers versatile and unisex pieces. At the start of its launch Kiperman used lab-grown emeralds and sapphires in bright hues in her jewelry. The designer, who showcased her new works at the NouvelleBox trunk show, has begun to offer her designs set with natural gems. The decision seems to have been sparked by client demand for natural stones. “It was interesting to see Nomis adding natural stones to the collection. Previously having launched with lab-grown stones, the brand has felt a growing demand for traceable mined stones. Their multifunctional cuffs are a favorite, and one of Nomis’s bestsellers. They can be worn as earrings, pendants, and as a ring – but the real draw is the bold use of colored gems where the stones outweigh the gold,” remarks Hildrow.

Above left: Andy Lif and David Nassi Octa Infinity 5ct No Oil Emerald Ring
Above right: Assael Tahitian Pearl, Sardinian Coral and Tiger Iron Earrings

TRENDS

Jewelry publicist Jennifer Levitt sees “a definite trend towards luminescent, nearly neon gemstones like Paraiba, rhodochrosite, and sphene that display brilliant fire and flash.” Fully-formed, translucent, gem-quality specimens of these varieties are rare and resonate with collectors and jewelry enthusiasts alike, Levitt notes. “Clients of mine, such as Sorellina, sought out these stones in Tucson for their vibrancy, uniqueness, and striking color.”

Clients of Kim and Nicole Carosella, siblings and founders of Sorellina, have been increasingly requesting pieces with unique, vivid gemstones. “We sourced some really vibrant Paraiba and rhodochrosite at the Tucson Gem Show earlier this year and are using them in a few upcoming one-of-a-kind and custom designs. Exploring and working with gemstones we haven’t used in previous collections is always an exciting and welcome challenge for us,” adds designer Nicole Carosella.

Francesca Villa envisions repurposing *objet trouvé*, or found objects, into beautiful pieces of jewelry. The designers gives vintage and antique treasures a new life with enamel and ethically-sourced diamonds and gems. She regularly uses colored gems to embellish her design.

Lauren Gaiot, of jewelry sales consultancy RAP Group, is seeing several colored gems piquing buyer interest. “These include citrine, malachite, turquoise, and lapis lazuli gems that remind us of sandy beaches and Caribbean waters.” Additionally, many buyers, she notes, are looking for fun everyday jewelry. “Adding a piece with a beautiful gemstone is a great way to layer and pop their existing jewelry collection. Yellow gold continues to be popular in the States, as well as the layering of necklaces and bracelets. Pops of color can be seen in earrings and rings especially. Faceted gems are still most common but designers are using cabochons and baroque pearls for a more organic look,” adds Gaiot.

The new Butterfly Effect collection from Mason and Books incorporates the signature colors and whimsical imaginings of designer and founder Jamie Books. “I utilize my favorite tonal gemstone color combinations and mixed media designs in pendant necklaces, earrings, and rings.” Books mixes faceted stones with smooth ones and adds in dots of diamonds to create a playful butterfly motif to join her Mason and Books menagerie. Hearts and geometric shapes with

specialty-cut gems complete the line. “We feature Persian turquoise, Ethiopian opal and Brazilian lime opal, emeralds, pink sapphire, fire opal, pink opal, peridot, blue lace agate, tanzanite, white topaz, black onyx, prasiolite, and pink topaz,” adds the designer. Her collection serves as an instant mood lifter, conveying positive energy and endless possibilities.

For Future Reference (FFR), founded by Randi Molofsky, is a New York and Los Angeles-based brand development agency with a focus on independent fine jewelers. FFR is known for color, and Molofsky has seen both stores and end customers looking for larger, more dramatic colored gemstone jewelry. “Some favorites have been monochromatic looks like riviere necklaces from Mateo in citrine, aquamarine, or rose quartz; large single-stone cocktail rings from Harwell Godfrey in tanzanite, peridot, or amethyst; and cabochon-studded rings, bracelets, and earrings from Jade Ruzzo in tourmalines and moonstones. Bold silhouettes and repetitive stones are all the rage,” she adds.

Danish-born jewelry designer Fie Isolde founded her eponymous brand in 2019. The raw finish that resembles waves is central to her work and is created by hand sculpting in hot wax before each design gets cast. Most of the pieces, made in 14k or 18k gold, are accented with natural diamonds or precious stones.

“We are seeing an increase in demand from our younger clientele wanting to introduce colored stones into their jewelry collection but in a subtle way. A good example of this is our best-selling ring, the Alfa Rainbow, where we set stones of different shades in the same color in one band. This gives a pop of color but in a timeless and elevated way,” adds Isolde.

Another member of the FFR tribe, Kirsty Stone of Retrouvaï has always loved a mix of semi-precious with precious-colored stones. “Earlier this year, I procured some lavender tanzanite and have been loving incorporating these in to our one-of-a-kind pieces,” says the designer. But, as always, emeralds remain her go-to colored gem to infuse vibrancy in her creations.

Aurelia Demark started her namesake brand in 2017 with a collection of whimsical designs and dainty pieces inspired by toys and luxurious objects. Hand-finished in New York, she selected tiny blue sapphires, emeralds, or diamonds to accent the



Above top: Mason and Books Butterfly Effect Statement Earrings

Above bottom: Retrouvaï Heirloom Bezel Treasure Chest Necklace

18k gold pendants and charms, and engraved the back of the pieces to make them more personal and meaningful. She has since added new collections to include bolder signet rings, cuffs, pendants, and bangles. The newer creations feature gems ranging from minty green tsavorite garnet and London blue topaz, to chrysoprase and coral, to mint prasiolite and orange sapphire. What first draws Demark to a gem is always its brilliance and color saturation – and how the light interacts with the stone. “Its cut is just as important as this allows for the gemstone’s high-quality properties to shine. For emeralds in particular, it’s the richness and saturation of the green color and the clarity of the stone. Emeralds are more visibly included than not, so it’s very much up to our clients’ preferences and which ‘jardin’ they are drawn to,” she explains. Inspired by the large leaves of Sea Grape trees, Demark’s new Bloom ring design is set with natural gems such as emeralds in a Toi et Moi setting. Palm Beach-based Demark sources caches of gemstones from her suppliers in New York City and from suppliers she has met at the Tucson Gem Show and Miami Antique Show. “I recently received a beautiful parcel of sapphires – the colors include different hues of bluish greens and teals. We’re using them to design a capsule collection of rings,” she says.

Meanwhile, Boochier bounces through summer with more color in the new iterations of drop earrings and rings. Designer Melinda Zeman has relied on blue zircon, fanta garnet, spinel, emerald, and rubellite to play with the springy, coiled forms of her popular Slinkee collection.

Colored gems feature prominently in the pieces by Gyan Jaipur. The Indian jewelry brand also leans on Paraiba tourmaline, pink tourmaline, tanzanite, and rubies – and if recent trunk shows in the US were any indication, the brand has many takers for its colored stone collections. Some of its daily wearables in the form of linear earrings and ear



climbers are available in an attainable price range and feature cabochon and faceted sapphires that lend contrast to the design.

The allure of vibrant blue-green Paraiba gems has other adopters – including Le Vian. The family-owned New York-headquartered jewelry company showcased its newest pieces at Haute Jewels Geneva this April featuring high-quality neon blue Paraiba tourmalines combined with the brand’s signature vanilla diamonds.

Lebanese designer Clara Chehab – who retails her collections at Gin and The Banker, and The Twist – has recently unveiled her second line, Sienna. Made in 18k gold, the collection draws on her love for colored stones, in particular tumbles and roughs. “I find the roughness of the stones so empowering,” says Chehab of the texture that inspired her to feature them alongside faceted gems and diamonds. The emerging designer uses rough forms of amethyst, rhodolite, morganite, aquamarine, peridot, and smoky quartz to reference the earthy tones.

New Yorker Perle Adler shares how she has always transformed pieces she owned or those that were passed down to her to make them more practical or give them a new life. The Parisian designer started her fine jewelry brand Macadam in 2022 to share her appreciation for adornment. Her latest line, Horizon, is available in 18k yellow gold, rose gold, white gold palladium, and platinum. Emerald-cut rubies, diamonds, and sapphires in various colors are lined up to highlight the symmetry in each piece. “Only about 70% of the stones we inspect make it into a Horizon piece because all the facets need to match.” The rings and bracelets, inspired by Art Deco, are a nod to the infinite lines of the city. “The pieces can be worn alone or stacked with your existing collection, and they are meant to be worn every day,” she adds.

With consumers who once focused on diamonds now migrating to colored gems, designers have taken note of the reinforced love of brighter palettes and dramatic hues. It has enthused them to look at a broad palette of stones to punctuate their creations. Offering minimalist, maximalist, as well as flirty options – all fabulously embellished in a spectrum of colors – designers have sparked a trend for jewels with a sumptuous and colorful effect that is likely to grow stronger as the year progresses.

Above left: Clara Chehab Sienna Half Moon Ring Purple
Above right: Aurelia Demark Ring
Below: Van Stack Rings

