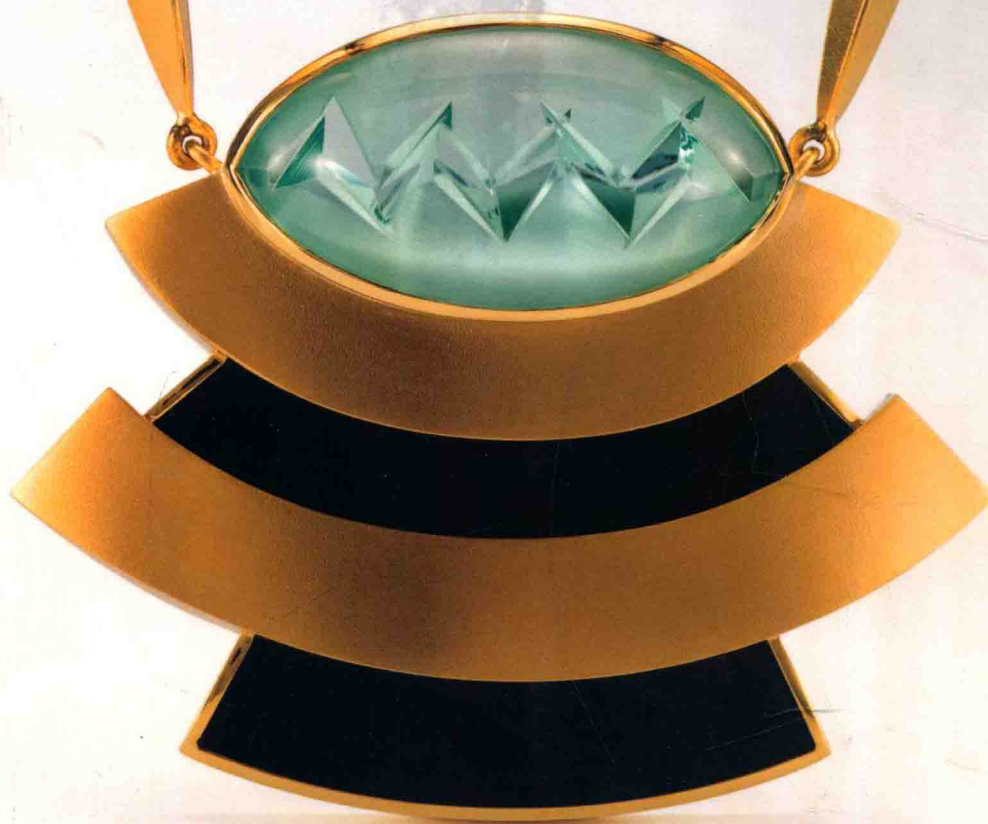


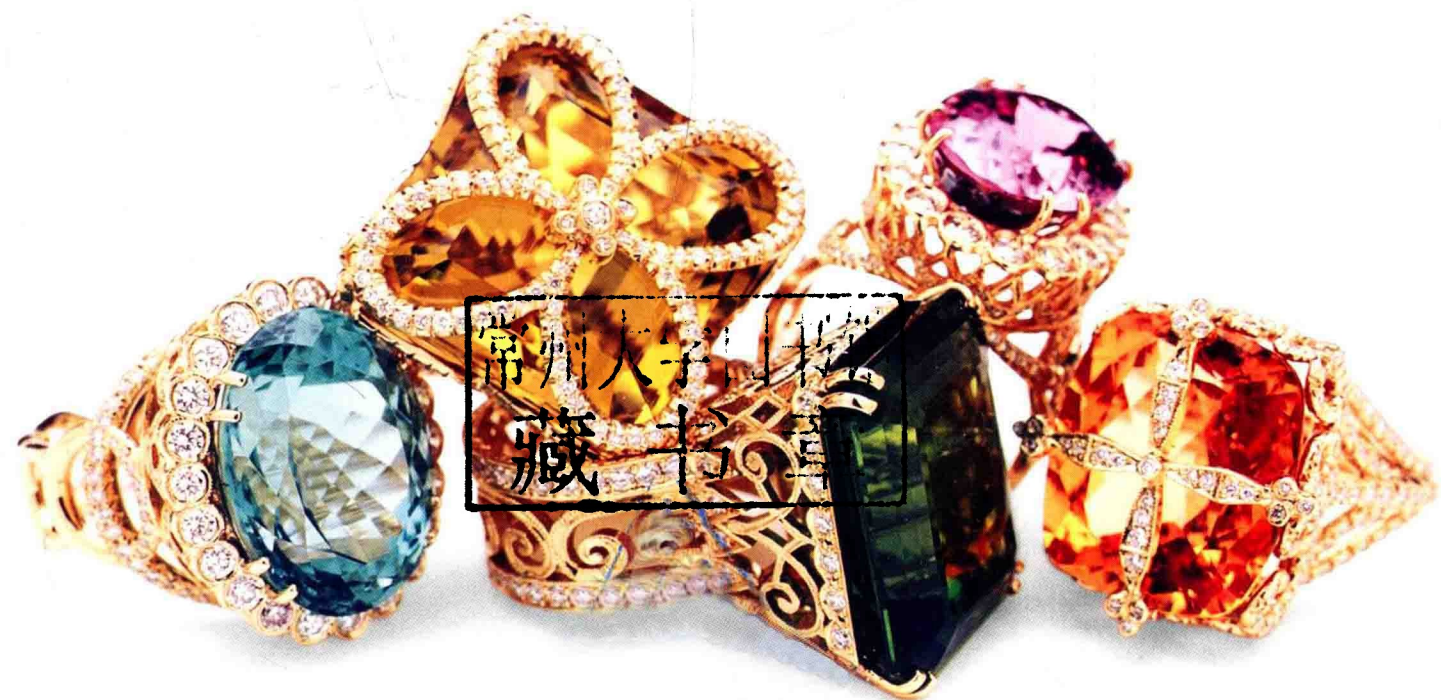
500 GEMSTONE JEWELS



A Sparkling Collection of Dazzling Designs

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A SPARKLING COLLECTION OF DAZZLING DESIGNS



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Flower with Aqua Leaf, 2008

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Birth, 2008

Petra Class

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SPINE

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Untitled, 2007

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Lilly Fitzgerald

Multi-Colored Sapphire Necklace, 2008

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Directions Brooch/Pendant, 2008

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18K Gold and Diamond Goddess Rings, 2005

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Die Tränen von Pandora, 2004

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Introduction

When I was asked to jury this book, I thought that the task would be simple—even fun. Gems inspire such deep attachment in the people whose lives they touch that I knew I'd be overseeing a collection of innovative and inspired designs. Over time, though, my buoyant attitude gave way to a tumble of questions, and I began to find the selection process daunting. When considering gemstones, there are so many factors to bear in mind besides beauty. Science, cost, rarity, and mechanics also come into play. Plus, new gems are being discovered all the time. Today there are more than ever before.

So I did some research, hoping to establish a few guidelines before jurying. Most of the definitions I came across for the word gem contained the phrase “beautiful mineral”—a clear reference to stones like the diamond, a gorgeous turn on carbon, and the ruby, the lushest iteration of corundum. But for each definition I encountered, I could think of stones that didn't fit in. What about gems that were simply rocks, like lapis lazuli? Or those “gems” that were just organic-based matter, such as amber or jet? And how about popular materials like coral or pearl, which weren't even land-based? Should they be considered gems?

To make matters more complicated, I noted that some gems were classed as precious, while others were considered semiprecious—a term I particularly dislike. After all, wasn't the rarest, most perfect alexandrite much more valuable than an emerald that was cloudy and dingy? Surely such an emerald wasn't “worth” much. And considering how common amethyst was—it's mined all over the world—could it be considered precious at all? What about a two-dollar-a-carat quartz? Wasn't it too cheap to be called a gem? Also confounding were elements like river rock and concrete. These common and (pardon me!) dull materials are often given royal treatment by designers and used in their pieces. I wondered if the jewelry that resulted could be considered precious.

Just when does a mineral grow up to be a gem? And who has the right to say so?

Sure, there's a lot of science involved, including the color grade as indicated on a gemologist's chart, and the definitions established by the American Gem Trade Association. But don't the whims of fashion also influence a stone's status? Just a few years ago the idea of setting a raw, industrial-grade diamond cube in silver or gold and calling it diamond jewelry was thought of as too avant-garde for the fine jewelry industry. (Thank you, Todd Reed, for expanding our horizons!) And even more recently, heavily veined or plain flat diamond slices that are now quite fashionable and viewed as precious were tossed away during the traditional diamond-cutting process.



Thomas Herman

Turquoise Oak Brooch | 2008

These and other issues swirled around in my mind as the curating date approached. I knew that I'd be choosing from a huge variety of materials, not all of them clearly gemlike. Would it hamper my critical faculties? Would I get stymied?

I suppose I needn't have worried.

What struck me the most as I reviewed the vast range of designs submitted for consideration was that I loved all of the pieces, because they represented the incredible variety of materials on offer by Mother Nature. As I evaluated the wide panorama of gemstones—from diamonds cut to the most scientific and exacting standards to beryls left in their raw crystal states—I felt a sense of wonder. How did tourmalines and sapphires get their scope of colors? How did a stone-cutter decide whether to carve a piece, facet it, or just leave it alone? How did jewelers arrive at settings that enhance stones so well?

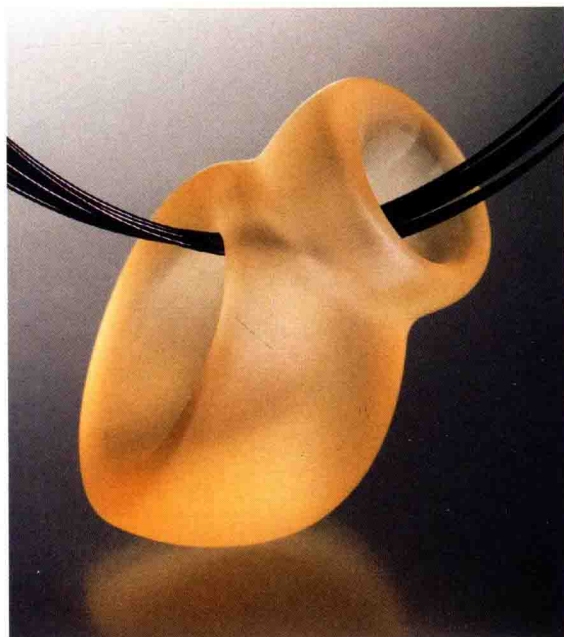
Fortunately, my curiosity didn't get in the way of jurying—it just enhanced the sense of awe that I was feeling. The lure of gems, I realized, is a strong one. They're the rarest material a jeweler can work with, but—more than anything else—they're beautiful, and this fact proved to be the key for me. It provided me with the clarity I needed to curate responsibly and give every item its due.

This doesn't mean that I came to the task without some pre-existing standards. I admit to being biased toward jewelry that's wearable and creations that seem effortless. For these reasons, I focused first and foremost on design. I eliminated submissions with complicated settings that seemed off-balance, as well as pieces with a disharmonious choice of stones. I also passed on affected treatments that showed off technique rather than good composition.

Harmony, simplicity, and ease of design—these are the qualities that appeal to me, as you'll find when you flip through this volume. On these pages, you'll discover jewelry that will make you go “hm?” and jewelry that will make you go “ah.” You'll also find that there seems to be no limit to the ideas that can be expressed through gemstones. Sometimes a gem is used to finish a design, and sometimes it is the design—as when a picture agate completes a scene, a drusy becomes a landscape, or an opal mimics the ocean.

A rainbow of stones is collected here, set in just about any kind of material—precious and non-precious—that you can think of, including gold, glass, platinum, palladium, iron, resin, and silver. This book is your opportunity to view the bounty of Mother Nature as it's been reshaped and transformed by some of the finest artists in the world, all of whom bring different perspectives and sensibilities to bear on the creative process. Without a doubt, jewelry can be stimulating as well as beautiful, and this volume is filled with pieces that are bound to raise aesthetic questions. But take my advice: forget about the artistic issues, and allow yourself to be swept away, as I was, by the beauty of gemstones.

Cindy Edelstein



Dieter Lorenz

Carved Citrine Pendant | 2007



Sydney Lynch

Blue Bracelet | 2007

17.4 CM LONG

18-karat gold, 22-karat gold, sterling silver,
Paraiba quartz, aquamarine, peridot, keshi pearl,
blue tourmaline, rainbow moonstone, prehnite,
boulder opal, aquamarine surface; fabricated

PHOTO BY ALAN JACKSON

Ross Coppelman

Untitled | 2000

EACH, 4.1 X 1.6 CM

Boulder opal, Mississippi River
pearls, diamonds, crystal opals,
18-karat gold, 22-karat gold

PHOTO BY ARTIST





Suzy Landa

Petit Four Confection Bracelet | 2007

0.6 X 17.8 X 2.4 CM

18-karat gold, rubelite, pink tourmalines, diamonds

PHOTO BY BRENT KRAUSE



Julia Behrends

Overlap Rings | 2004

LEFT (PERIDOT RING), 3.3 X 2.4 X 1.5 CM; RIGHT (RHODOLITE RING), 3 X 2.2 X 1.3 CM

Peridot, rhodolite, diamonds, pink sapphires,
18-karat yellow gold; hand fabricated, laser welded

PHOTO ROBERT DIAMANTE



Suzy Landa

Stack of 25 Colored Gemstone Rings | 2008

LARGEST, 0.8 CM

18-karat gold, aquamarine, fancy sapphire, spinel,
tourmaline, diamond accents

PHOTO BY TARA DIGIOVANNI



Laura Gibson

Rainbow Quail | 2004

43 CM LONG

22-karat gold, chalcedony, amethyst,
tourmaline, tanzanite, citrine, fire opal,
rhodolite, yellow beryl, chrysoberyl,
cat's eye, hessonite, mandarin garnet

PHOTO BY ARTIST