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CHARLIE PALMER  
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KATIE SCOTT  
JESSIE SINGH  
& MORE



# CAPTURE

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**C:** What inspired the display system for the client's jewelry collection?

**JA:** Our clients were highly aware that our firm is made up of architects that design buildings to the level of furniture. With that in mind they had a vision that their jewelry collection would be displayed in vitrines that would be deployed out of walls of the architecture. It was an incredible design problem to solve. The resultant design created an outer veil of doors that retract to reveal a remarkably bespoke collection of sculptural jewelry that reside in portable vitrines, each containing a series of removable display trays for individual viewing. This presentation of art transcends a purely visual experience and has evolved into an episodic ritual for both our clients and their guests.

**C:** When you first met with the architect did you have in mind to display your art collection in your home?

**SUSAN CUMMINS:** Absolutely. We don't consider ourselves collectors of art although we have some great pieces, but we knew we wanted good-sized walls in the house to hang large paintings. We also have an art jewelry collection. Having owned an art gallery in the past that included not only paintings and other objects but also art jewelry, I knew I wanted to make a place in the house to display it. Jewelry needs a dedicated space and I had some ideas based on my past experience in showing it. The display needed to be in a prominent place in the house to signify its importance to us. Also the collection required a lot of drawers to store the pieces that were not on view and at the same time need to be flexible so more or less could be seen at any given time. I also knew groups of collectors from museums or collecting groups would want to come and see this jewelry, so needed to be able to take the jewelry out of the drawers to show it all at once. There were many considerations, and we worked with Aidlin Darling Design to address them all. We are super happy with the results!

**C:** How did you get interested in starting an art jewelry collection?

**SC:** As mentioned I had a gallery and besides showing paintings I wanted to show something unique. Although very interested in craft of all kinds, I decided to concentrate on art jewelry. As I got to know the jewelers I represented, I discovered an amazingly intelligent group of artists whose work was both beautifully made and cleverly conceived. So impressed, I started to collect it. I also started an organization called the Art Jewelry Forum. Through that group I organized trips for collectors to places around the United States and Europe to meet artists, see museum exhibitions and collections of contemporary jewelry, and to attend schools and universities where these artists studied. We all learned a lot over the years. AJF is just celebrating its 20th Anniversary.

**C:** Tell us your process in choosing an artist to collect.

**SC:** At this time, we are collecting very intensely in the art jewelry field. We are particularly interested in about 6 different artists. We are buying current work and also looking for old pieces. These artists are all older and very well established so it is sometimes difficult to find their earlier work. Each is very different from the other but what they all have in common is a rare ability to infuse their jewelry with a real power. They are masters of their craft and they are smart about what they are making. Besides these artists we occasionally add other artists to the collection who seem original and strong as well. We don't buy a lot of pieces each year.

**C:** Do you have an emotional relationship with the jewelry and art that surrounds you?

**SC:** Yes, we love the art we have. I have an attachment to certain materials like lead and other metals for instance so we tend to find artwork that contains these materials. It all has a wonderful textural

*Susan Cummins is a well-known collector of art jewelry and an active board member in AJF, an art & jewelry forum. She developed her own gallery into a nationally recognized venue for regional art and contemporary art jewelry, and now works with a private family foundation called Rotasa and serves on the board of California College of the Arts.*

