

# LOOKS FOR THE LOBES

Vintage statement earrings can offer the perfect punch for completing an outfit, says Boston dealer Tiina Smith.

BY PHYLLIS SCHILLER

**What are the reasons jewelry lovers like big and dramatic vintage earrings?**

Jewelry lovers and collectors appreciate the quality and craftsmanship that go into vintage pieces. Our clients are always looking for great earrings to wear for special occasions as well as every day, but they want something that stands out, something that no one else will have.

**Was this trend apparent before Covid-19, or have face masks and Zoom events added more focus to this type of jewelry?**

We've always had steady interest in unique earrings. They complete a look and become a style signature. Whether it's a pop of color or a dash of gold for daytime, or the full-on glamour of cascading diamonds or rubies for evening, earrings are an easy and obvious upgrade to any look.

**Has selling earrings online, especially during the pandemic, proved a challenge, since clients can't try them on?**

Earrings have always been a strong selling category for us, and we actually saw increased interest during the pandemic. Our clients wanted to invest in pieces that would be seen and appreciated, either via Zoom or while masked. Scale and comfort are critical factors when choosing earrings. Any piece that comes into our collection has to pass the wearability test. We try on every earring, and if it pinches or is too heavy, we won't accept it. We understand that scale can be hard to judge online. We want our clients to be completely satisfied with their purchases, so we offer a reasonable return



David Webb octagonal Angel Skin coral drop ear clips.



## WHO IS TIINA SMITH?

Tiina Smith, owner and founder of Tiina Smith Vintage and Exceptional Jewelry in Boston, Massachusetts, combines a connoisseur's expertise with a collector's enthusiasm. With a background in finance and strategic consulting, she has merged her passion for exquisite jewelry with her business acumen to assemble a collection for discreet and discerning buyers. The gallery offers an assortment of 20th- and 21st-century jewelry from the most important makers, selected for relevance, artistry and intrinsic value. [tiinasmithjewelry.com](http://tiinasmithjewelry.com)

policy that allows them to try pieces on at home with confidence.

**What are the most popular eras and styles, and which makers of these pieces are most in demand?**

There is a lot of interest in earrings from the 1960s and 1970s, including great examples from [Jean] Schlumberger and David Webb, and rare pieces from Bulgari and Marina B. There is something about the offhand glamour and easy sophistication of jewelry created in that era that is very appealing to today's collectors.

**Are collectors attracted to these types of earrings? Do they buy them to wear or repurpose?**

Certainly, our clients buy earrings from us to add to their collections, but their primary motivation is wearing and enjoying them. The only "repurposing" we ever hear of is when a client's daughter borrows them for herself.

**What do you look for in stocking statement earrings? How easy is it to source them?**

We focus on pieces created by the great jewelry houses of the 20th and 21st centuries. We are particularly drawn to earrings that are colorful, bold and comfortable to wear. As with anything that is rare, it becomes harder to track down these pieces over time, but we are incredibly fortunate to have valued sources and contacts around the world to satisfy our clients' requests. ■