

Fiona Druckenmiller's boutique, FD Gallery, is an artistic Upper East Side setting for the wonderful jewelry and objets d'art that she curates to form an impressive collection.



FIONA'S TREASURE TROVE

BY LILY HOAGLAND

IT SPEAKS VOLUMES to Fiona Druckenmiller's own personality that she stocks her boutique, FD Gallery, with one-of-a-kind pieces. In an intimate setting at the corner of 65th and Madison, the rare and the hard-to-find are carefully curated from around the world. Fiona's background is as unique as the collection: In the late '80s, she was a portfolio manager for the Dreyfus Corporation, responsible for combined assets worth \$400 million; she is mother to three girls and serves on multiple charity boards; she is also an ordained interfaith reverend. Certainly, someone that multi-faceted is the right person to spot extraordinary gemstones.


The vintage jewelry and watches, from Cartier Panthère rings to rare Patek Phillippes, can also have wonderful provenance: an amethyst necklace in one of the cases belonged to the second



Duchess of Marlborough. FD Gallery is also the exclusive home of contemporary designers like Hemmerle and Viren Bhagat, outside their own shops. We sit down with Fiona to learn more about how she sets up her collection.

LILY HOAGLAND: What propelled you to transition from being a private collector into becoming a curator?

FIONA DRUCKENMILLER: Well, I still collect; I sort of do them in a parallel manner. I had always worked my whole life, but when my third child was a toddler, I left Wall Street. What really propelled me to start when I did was when my youngest daughter was going to college. So with three girls out of the house I had a lot more time, and I wanted to do something fun that was related to beauty and design. So it was a natural fit.



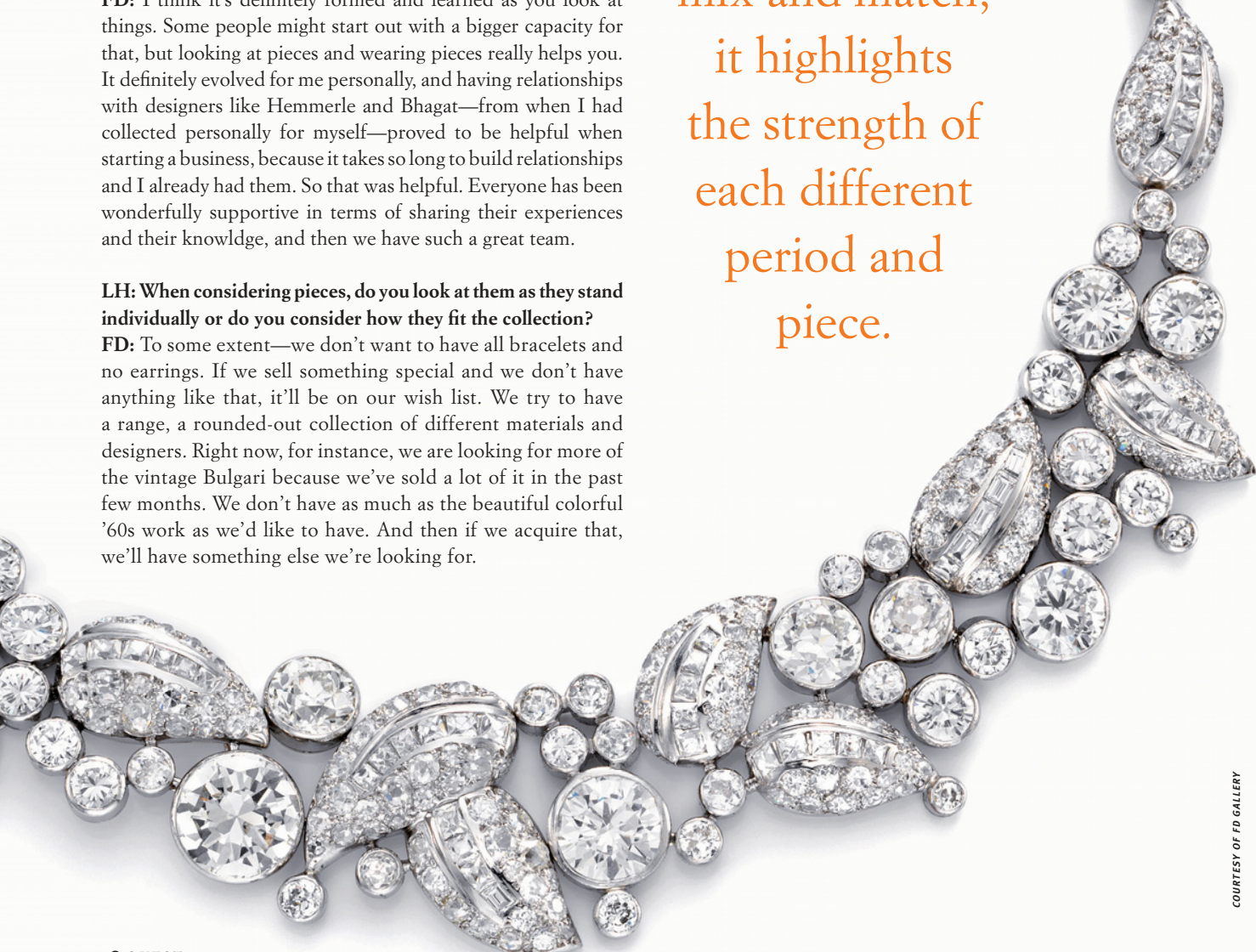
LH: Do you believe that your eye for what goes well together is a natural-born talent or is it something that needed to be developed and honed?

FD: I think it's definitely formed and learned as you look at things. Some people might start out with a bigger capacity for that, but looking at pieces and wearing pieces really helps you. It definitely evolved for me personally, and having relationships with designers like Hemmerle and Bhagat—from when I had collected personally for myself—proved to be helpful when starting a business, because it takes so long to build relationships and I already had them. So that was helpful. Everyone has been wonderfully supportive in terms of sharing their experiences and their knowledge, and then we have such a great team.

LH: When considering pieces, do you look at them as they stand individually or do you consider how they fit the collection?

FD: To some extent—we don't want to have all bracelets and no earrings. If we sell something special and we don't have anything like that, it'll be on our wish list. We try to have a range, a rounded-out collection of different materials and designers. Right now, for instance, we are looking for more of the vintage Bulgari because we've sold a lot of it in the past few months. We don't have as much as the beautiful colorful '60s work as we'd like to have. And then if we acquire that, we'll have something else we're looking for.

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This page, clockwise from above: The intimate offices in the gallery create a comfortable atmosphere; Fiona Druckenmiller, owner of FD; the dramatic cases display the rare and unique jewelry in the gallery. Opposite page: A pair of pink and purple spinel ear clips, mounted in white gold and copper, by Hemmerle; a diamond and platinum 'Foliate' necklace, by Suzanne Belperron, circa 1970.



More than jewelry cases, the store also has exotic collections of interesting pieces, like the tabletop of treasures (below), or the emerald, ruby, opal, and diamond 'Mouse' brooch, by Verdura (right).





LH: Is there any particular style or time period that you can never pass up when you have the opportunity to buy it?

FD: Yes, beautiful Deco pieces. We always like to have them. The best mines were really emptied first—in India the Golkonda diamond mines, and in Columbia the Muzo emerald mines—and so a lot of the old jewelry has the best stones in it. So we are constantly searching for older pieces, but I think we look for whimsical pieces; we like to have things that make people smile. Wearability is really big, of course. Still, as much as we all love animals, we can only have so many animal brooches. There are only so many clients looking for brooches. So it's always a dance between a variety of different factors.

LH: Are there any style rules, like “always remove one accessory before going out” or “never mix silver and gold,” that you think are antiquated or that you object to?

FD: I don't like any of the rules. I believe you can mix whatever you like. Quite frankly, I think the matchy-matchy look—where a woman has a complete set of matching earrings, necklace, ring, and bracelets, *et cetera*, that all are from a suite—I personally don't find that appealing. It's more interesting if you break the rules. That's kind of my personal philosophy. With art, too—whether it's sculpture with other forms, Asian with European, or whatever—anything really. I like to mix and match; it highlights the strengths of each different period and piece.

LH: Where do you find your sources of inspiration, and what do you look to for ideas for how to set up the collection?

FD: Nothing in particular. We curate according to the periods, the designers, and the materials. For example, we'll always be looking for natural pearls for one case up front. I can't think that there's anything particular we'd change, but in terms of the objects and the books and the table-top silver, it's really about design and what delights. I mean, we don't want any depressing pieces. We wouldn't buy anything depressing for the store.

LH: Have you ever had clients going after the same piece?

FD: We have. It's a good position to be in. It's funny—sometimes if somebody tries a piece on, another client, who has already been in the store for forty-five minutes and hasn't paid any attention to it, will all of a sudden be very interested in it. It happened to us a week or two ago.

LH: How do you take clients' personalities into account when suggesting specific pieces for them?

FD: People ask us. So we'll have people say, "I'm trying to decide between two pairs of earrings, what do you think?" We'll definitely weigh in. And if a husband is buying a piece for his wife, he may like two or three different suggestions that we've made, and he'll ask which one we think she'll like more. We'll say, "Well, the last three gifts you gave her were earrings so maybe you should get her a ring this time."

LH: What type of person is your client?

FD: I would say that our client is somebody who's a strong individualist, more than a conformist. I think that once people are looking for one-of-a-kind pieces, they do not want to have the same thing every other woman has. We definitely have a different kind of a customer here. ♦



This page: FD has a vast array of one-of-a-kind items to catch anyone's fancy, whether handbags, books, or timepieces. Opposite page: Natural pearl and diamond ear clips by Viren Bhagat; gold, emerald, ruby, turquoise, and ivory 'Elephant' bangle, by Van Cleef & Arpels, circa 1973.

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