

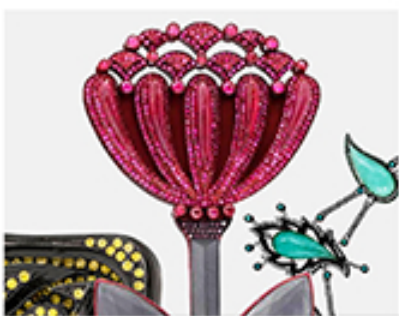


DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

The Multifaceted Life and Career of William Ehrlich

The architect, real-estate developer and avid collector (of ceramics, art and more) has now turned to designing dramatic laser-cut jewelry, which he likens to wearable sculpture.

by Julie L. Belcove | February 15, 2016



William Ehrlich's jewels are not for shy, retiring types. They are big, bold statement pieces, no two exactly alike: a look-at-me nose pin with pink sapphires and gray diamonds for petals and oval hunks of chalcedony for leaves; a wide crocodile-skin cuff decorated with mother-of-pearl, diamond and sapphire pomegranates; a ring dominated by a cabochon ruby the size of a ripe strawberry.

Ehrlich, an architect by training, a real-estate

"I had heard about this collector from New York who was buying Clément Massier," Jacques recalls. "I had no idea who he was, but one morning I saw a man looking at a Massier vase with his wife in a little shop." After hearing him speak English, Jacques approached and asked if he'd be interested in another piece by the artist. "He said, 'You have one?' I took my backpack and pulled out a Clément Massier pot."

That customer, of course, was Ehrlich, and the pot was their first transaction. After that, Jacques would scour the flea market for Massiers on Friday mornings, when desirable new works arrived. If he found one he thought Ehrlich would like, he'd ask the seller to hold it until after lunch. At noon, he'd telephone Ehrlich, who was six hours behind in New York, inevitably waking him to describe the piece. This was, after all, the 1990s, before iPads and smartphones had become common, and Ehrlich recalls Jacques detailing size, form, color and decoration. "He has the gift of verbalization, so he could be very specific," says Ehrlich, who would



Ehrlich and Jacques walk along East 75th Street, near Jacques's gallery. The two men met more than 20 years ago, when Jacques pulled a Clément Massier pot from his backpack and sold it to Ehrlich.



Ehrlich owns approximately 100 Massier pieces, most of which can be found in his living room. At left, a small Elizabeth Peyton painting from 2000 hangs behind the shelves.