

# Buying fine, online

A DALLAS SISTER AND BROTHER ARE  
UPENDING THE WAY WOMEN BUY  
THE GOOD STUFF

When Tisha Vaidya began pursuing her MBA at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania after a career in finance and real estate, she already knew that she wanted to join the family jewelry business. So it was only a matter of time before Vaidya, a Dallas native and the fourth generation of her family to work in gems (her great-grandfather was an emerald miner), moved back home to Dallas from New York to start **PRATIKSHA JEWELRY**, an online shop that Vaidya says is aimed at revolutionizing the way women buy fine jewelry for themselves. Her brother, Parag Vaidya, who also attended Wharton and pursued his own career in finance and real estate in New York and Mumbai before returning to Dallas to help lead their parents' 35-year-old loose gemstone and jewelry business, AGI, acts as an advisor. "We felt there was a hole in the market for jewelry that had elements of costume and fashion jewelry, but was still made with real materials," Tisha says, "so that [the pieces] last a long time."

The duo launched Pratiksha in July 2015 using the popular direct-to-consumer method, though Parag says that this model has been slower to catch on for fine jewelry. Pratiksha's pieces in its top-end Luxe Collection, for example, are priced from \$4,500 for a diamond tennis bracelet to \$82,000 for an emerald-and-diamond ring. To combat hesitancy, the website provides multiple photographs of each piece at different angles, as well as a video and a detailed description, right down to the precise carat weight of the genuine jewels. Gems are inspected where they are sourced in Thailand, Sri Lanka and India. The company holds trunk shows so that potential customers can see, feel and try pieces, but there is no brick-and-mortar store. Another difference, Parag says, is that Pratiksha is not a marketplace selling pieces at a high markup. Tisha designs, and in-house jewelers craft. The fact that the company has direct access to factories abroad, thanks to family connections, and that it owns all of its inventory allows Pratiksha to keep overhead low and prices competitive, Tisha says.

But why leave Wall Street for jewelry design? Tisha says she noticed that as women advance in their careers, they upgrade their shoes, their handbags and their cars, but that fine jewelry remained an heirloom, something passed down instead of picked out. "Jewelry is kind of the last frontier," she says. 800-641-1277; [pratikshajewelry.com](http://pratikshajewelry.com)

—Liz Johnstone

Madison Bellini cocktail ring  
with diamonds, \$3,000



## LOVE IN THE AIR

**D**ancer and choreographer Jamal Story learned the art of aerial dance on a Cher tour in 2002 and now regularly serves as dance captain for the singer's private performances. The experience, along with watching aerial acrobatics in other shows, got him thinking. "I wanted to investigate a way to introduce a human component and not just make it arbitrary and beautiful," he says, "[but] to present something in the air in the context of a story." So, Story — yes, that's his given name — created an aerial pas de deux inspired by the tale of Echo and Narcissus. **DALLAS BLACK DANCE THEATRE** founder Ann Williams saw it and wanted more. Story had performed with her company while earning a degree in dance and communications at Southern Methodist University. Telling him she wanted "to take dance to a new level," Williams, with some financial muscle from TACA, commissioned a bigger piece.

Debuting February 19 to 21 at the Dee and Charles Wylie Theatre, the new work enacts three more myths of rocky love — Zeus and Hera, Orpheus and Eurydice, Hades and Persephone — in addition to Echo and Narcissus. As yet unnamed, the performance will incorporate three types of apparatuses: a hammock, two aerial silks and a trapeze. "The biggest challenge is staying with my initial vision," Story says, "which is to showcase the aerial work in a context. As choreographers and dancers, we get so married to our sense of nuance and arcane aspects of what we're doing ... but audience members want to be moved and see a story. They want to come away having an opinion." [dbdt.com](http://dbdt.com)

—Holly Haber

Dancers  
Claude  
Alexander  
III, top, and  
Alyssa  
Harrington