

ART FOR A NEW AGE

MUSEUM-QUALITY CRYSTALS ARE THE LATEST ART CRAZE TO HIT HOME.

BY ALYSON PITARRE

Amethyst as art? It may sound like New Age babble, but growing numbers of interior designers and affluent homeowners are sourcing museum-quality geodes and crystals to display as works of art.

Jeffrey Segal, owner and founder of Venice, California-based Mystic Journey Crystals gallery and Mystic Journey Bookstore, has carved out a unique niche in the luxury home sector. Segal is one of only a handful of purveyors in the United States, who specializes in museum-quality crystals. While Segal sells crystals in all sizes, from \$2.95 small tumbled stones to \$100,000 geodes, he has found a following among celebrities, interior designers and affluent homeowners who want to bring the energy and natural beauty of these one-of-a-kind pieces into their homes. Indeed, the person who can afford to purchase a \$44,000 six-foot-tall amethyst geode is also more likely to have the square footage for displaying such large specimens.

"People are becoming more open to the healing power of crystals, particularly in Los Angeles, New York and other large cities," Segal tells me one afternoon as he gives me a tour of his gallery. "People are also looking at them as natural pieces of art."

Must-Have Material

Crystals' ubiquitous presence in the public domain can be traced back to celebrities like Gwyneth Paltrow, Victoria Beckham, Katy Perry, Khloé

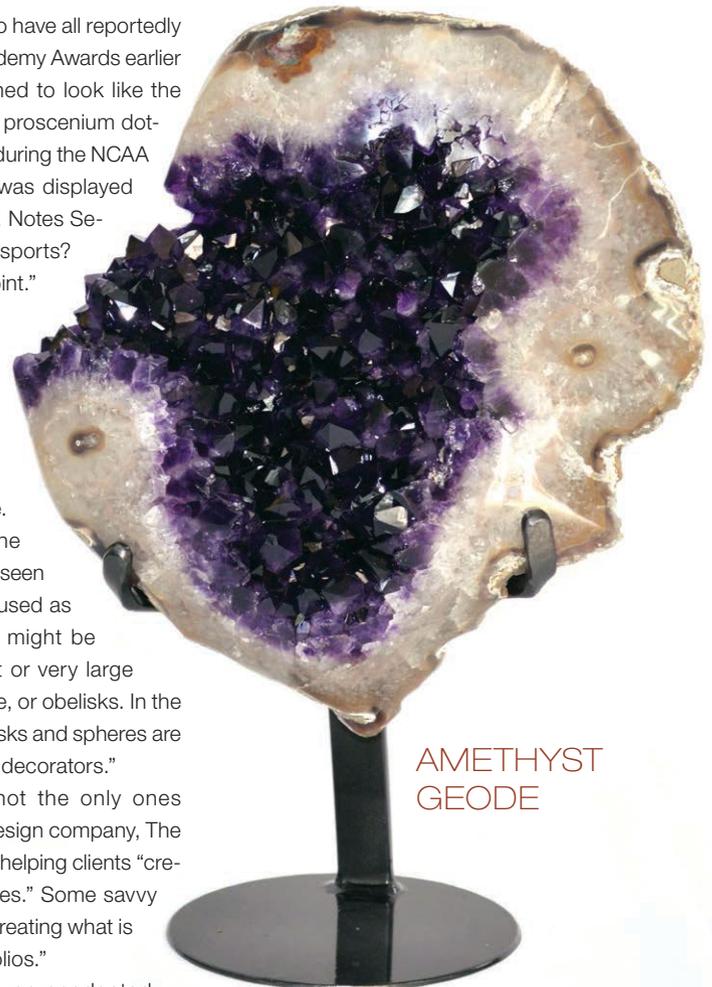
Kardashian and Bella Hadid, who have all reportedly praised crystals. At the 90th Academy Awards earlier this year, the stage was designed to look like the inside of a geode, with a 10-ton proscenium dotted with 45 million crystals. And during the NCAA championship, the ESPN logo was displayed with crystals on the bottom of it. Notes Segal: "If you're putting crystals in sports? It's sort of everywhere at this point."

Christophe Choo, a sales associate for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Beverly Hills, who has been collecting crystals for over 30 years, is not surprised to see their entree into the luxury home decor space.

"I've been in some of the finest homes in Los Angeles and seen large pieces of stone or crystal used as decorative items," he says. "It might be a four- or five-foot crystal point or very large crystal spheres placed on a table, or obelisks. In the world of decorating, crystal obelisks and spheres are very sought after by top interior decorators."

Interior designers are not the only ones sourcing crystals. One interior design company, The Crystalline, actually specializes in helping clients "create energetically balanced spaces." Some savvy investors have also taken note, creating what is called "crystal investment portfolios."

All of this has created unprecedented



AMETHYST
GEODE

COURTESY MYSTIC JOURNEY



Jeffrey Segal

PHOTO BY VINCENT VALLEJO / ©/PICTOGRAPHY 2014

demand for high-quality crystals. Says Choo: “Prices have gone up dramatically in the last 10 years.” Daniel Trinchillo, a mineral expert known as the “Indiana Jones of Crystals,” can attest to that fact. He regularly sells rare pieces for \$1 million to \$10 million. Segal is on his way — he recently sold a \$65,000 white quartz cluster that was delivered to an estate in the San Francisco Bay area.

“The thing about these crystals is that each one is completely unique,” says Segal. “You cannot replicate them. That’s why people see them as rare and priceless as a piece of art.”

Art Meets Wellness

Crystals offer an interesting intersection between art and wellness in the home. While scientific evidence is still lacking, crystals have long been prized for their metaphysical powers.

“Crystals, it seems, appeal to those who seek calm in a chaotic world: a counterbalance to the anxiety induced by nonstop news and feelings of Instagram FOMO [fear of missing out],” declared New York Times writer Caroline Tell last summer.

Ruby Warrington, author of “Material Girl, Mystical World,” adds that people are seeking ways to feel more connected to nature and the natural world to counterbalance “the ever-encroaching presence of technology in our lives.”

“Not only are crystals incredibly beautiful, but thanks to a surging interest in all things New Age (or what I call ‘now age’), people are also becoming more familiar with their healing properties,” says

Warrington. “If you’re spending that much on a piece of art for your home, why not invest in something that can also bring healing and good vibes to your space?”

Finding the One

Choosing a gallery-quality crystal is not simply a matter of a person’s aesthetic. Some people say that when you touch or hold a crystal in your hand, you will feel a connection of frequency. Amethyst is said to provide a powerful and protective energy, for example; smoky quartz offers a grounding force and reportedly helps turn dreams into reality; while citrine brings abundance, manifestation, imagination and personal will.

“People will come into the gallery and say, ‘I need to be grounded’ or ‘My mind needs to be settled,’” says Segal. “Or, people are looking for love.”

After a crystal sculpture is purchased, where is it typically placed in the home? Segal says one of three places: an outdoor space, a bedroom or the space where they entertain — like a living room, a dining room, “or man or woman cave, because they want to show off the crystals.” The stones are showing up in other areas of the home, too — in floorboards, chandeliers and furniture.

Whether you ascribe power (or even value) to crystals or not, experts say it is not a trend, but a movement. “Crystals were here before us, and crystals will be here after us” is a common refrain. The only difference now is that the word is out, and those with time, money and passion for creating wellness in their lives have gotten the message. Crystal clear.

WHITE QUARTZ CLUSTER



Citrine Geode on display

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