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ABC Carpet Launches Eco Line

By Sophia Chabbott

ABC Carpet & Home's latest initiative is clean jewelry.

Last week, the firm launched the Grounded Jewel Collection, a new section in its Manhattan flagship dedicated to fine jewelry made from sustainable materials such as recycled gold and diamonds from mining firms that assist the people of mining countries.

Sustainable goods aren't new for Paulette Cole, chief executive officer and creative director of ABC Home. Twenty-five percent of the firm's products, including furniture and housewares, are now sustainable.

Being green has become a hot-button issue, and jewelry — particularly, how it is obtained — is also touching a nerve. The release of the film "Blood Diamond" starring Leonardo DiCaprio, coupled with recent initiatives to aid citizens of diamond-mining countries by well-known figures such as Russell Simmons, has raised public awareness about how gold and diamonds are mined.

Even though the Kimberley Process — a certification plan intended to ensure that diamonds aren't mined and traded to finance illegal activities and violent conflicts — is intact, some jewelry retailers have said that consumers were inquiring about the provenance of gemstones and gold.

"Customers are much more curious about the origin of a product and how it is made," said Cole. "They want to own things that support a community and support sustainability of our planet. There is awareness around recycled materials and knowing that diamonds come from a responsible source that supports a better than fair income and the community.

"Jewelry is such a personal, close and intimate purchase," Cole added. "Having your values reflected in what you wear really resonates throughout the day. Looking at something beautiful and knowing it has been made beautifully, from the diamond mining to the gold, makes for a deeper experience of beauty."

Sarah Perlis, the 28-year-old owner of an eponymous New York jewelry firm, is the first to offer her wares at the Grounded Jewel Collection at ABC. The store, at 888 Broadway, has sold Perlis' collection for the last three years and **she worked closely with Cole on sourcing recycled gold and Sierra Leone-mined diamonds from mining company Pride Diamonds, which focuses on improving mining communities by paying higher daily wages to miners and various methods of community outreach.**

Perlis, who plans for all of her jewelry to be completely green by this fall, is offering her nature-inspired 20-karat gold bangles, necklaces and earrings for \$100 to \$1,800.

"Paulette gets really involved in things," said Perlis, who added that because of high gold prices, using recycled gold was a cost saver, as well. "[ABC] is so proactive with this. They're a pretty impressive little company."

ABC plans to grow the in-store department to include young, local design-forward artisan jewelers.