

# Aid to Artisans

Fall 2017 Newsletter



# Table of Contents

## **Page 3 - Djibouti**

*Artisanal Design Flourishes in Djibouti*

## **Page 7 - Tunisia**

*Tunisian Artisans Prepare for Global Markets*

## **Page 10 - Las Vegas**

*ATA Prepares for TEAM @ Las Vegas Market*

## **Page 12 - Washington, DC**

*Holiday Craft Sale Brings Global Crafts and Good Cheer*



# Artisanal Design Flourishes in Djibouti

ATA has expanded its reach in East Africa by modernizing the craft industry of Djibouti, a small country neighboring Somalia and Ethiopia. Traditional Djibouti handcrafts consist of basketry and mat weaving that embodies stories of its people and culture through patterns, shapes and colors. A poor country with limited resources, Djibouti's handcrafts industry and artisans have been neglected. Most artisans live in the countryside and produce tribal traditional items for their own use. Meeting Djiboutian artisans who are proud of their heritage and culture, Aid to Artisans sensed a "hunger for design" in the artisans' eagerness and openness to new designs.

Aid to Artisans launched our "Artisan Women Initiative in Djibouti" as part of the "Projet de Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes et de l'Artisanat (PROPEJA)", Job Promotion for Youth in Crafts project. Funded by the World Bank and the Japanese Government, through the Agence Djiboutienne de Développement Social, PROPEJA will provide practical skills training and access to finance for over 3000 youth and women living in poor communities in Djibouti-ville, Arta, Tadjourah, and Ali Sabieh.





Previously ATA developed new products for sale to the French military, US Marines, expatriates and tourists. ATA engaged international Designer, Sophie Sauzeat and Binky Newman, owner of Design Afrika to travel to Djibouti and implement ten-day beading and basketry product development workshops with over 70 women. The workshops developed new products for fashion accessories and home décor.

Sophie trained 35 Djiboutian women in beading creative new products. This led to new jewelry and fashion accessories reflecting local nine themes, including coral sea-inspired jewelry and geometric patterns. “In this training, I delivered more than one design file per artisan. The participants showed enthusiasm, requesting more and more designs while enjoying creating jewelry sets. We did a collection of 100 models that needed minor improvement but overall it shows great progress if we consider from where we started,” says Sophie. Her training proved successful as artisans continued to develop their designs after the designers had completed the training and left the country.





The main exhibition hall featured four booths filled with products from six regions. Three large podiums displayed “prestige products” at the entrance of the conference hall. The event attracted government officials and dignitaries, Chamber of Commerce functionaries, expatriates from the U.S. and Japan, and US military and embassy staff who appreciated the innovative designs. The sales were \$5000 USD over five days, boosting artisans’ confidence and commitment to the work.

The next steps of this project will include more product development workshops and marketing events to reach more artisan women and target local markets.



Binky trained 35 women, developing 122 new basketry products including decorative baskets, bags, hats, and large functional baskets in a variety of colors. Keeping the Djiboutian cultural elements, the artisans expanded their creativity through new designs, ideas and unique creations. The design workshops caught the attention of Djibouti’s President and the First Lady who promoted and supported it by increasing participation of additional women artisans.

The workshops culminated in a five-day marketing event in December led by ATA Marketing Specialist and Designer Frederic Alcantara. Frederic organized a large exhibition of the new handmade products that centered on three themes: Heritage; showcasing a selection of some of the most beautiful achievements of traditional Djiboutian craftsmanship, Utility; reinvented tradition crafts to be used in daily life, and Design; capturing techniques and styles that reinvent crafts itself by blending materials, techniques, and motifs.

# Tunisian Artisans Prepare for Global Markets

Funded by the US Department of State, Aid to Artisans and its local partner, the International Institute of Human Development (IDH), is implementing the two-year project “Building Export Capacity in Tunisia” (CAP-X). CAP-X will create employment opportunities by increasing Tunisian handcraft exports. The project provides technical expertise to Tunisian artisans, fine-tuning their products to respond to international tastes. Aid to Artisans is working closely with the Tunisian government (Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Commerce, and the National Office of Handcraft) to facilitate the participation of artisans in international markets and to increase product exports.



Our partner, IDH, focuses on advancing Freedom, Peace, Equality and Dignity. With a mission to promote and monitor respect for human rights and the rights for women and youth, Emna Jebblaoui, Director of IDH, is excited to collaborate with ATA. “We are eager to begin training 50 craft entrepreneurs for international markets, who will further train 250 marginalized rural artisans,” says Jebblaoui.

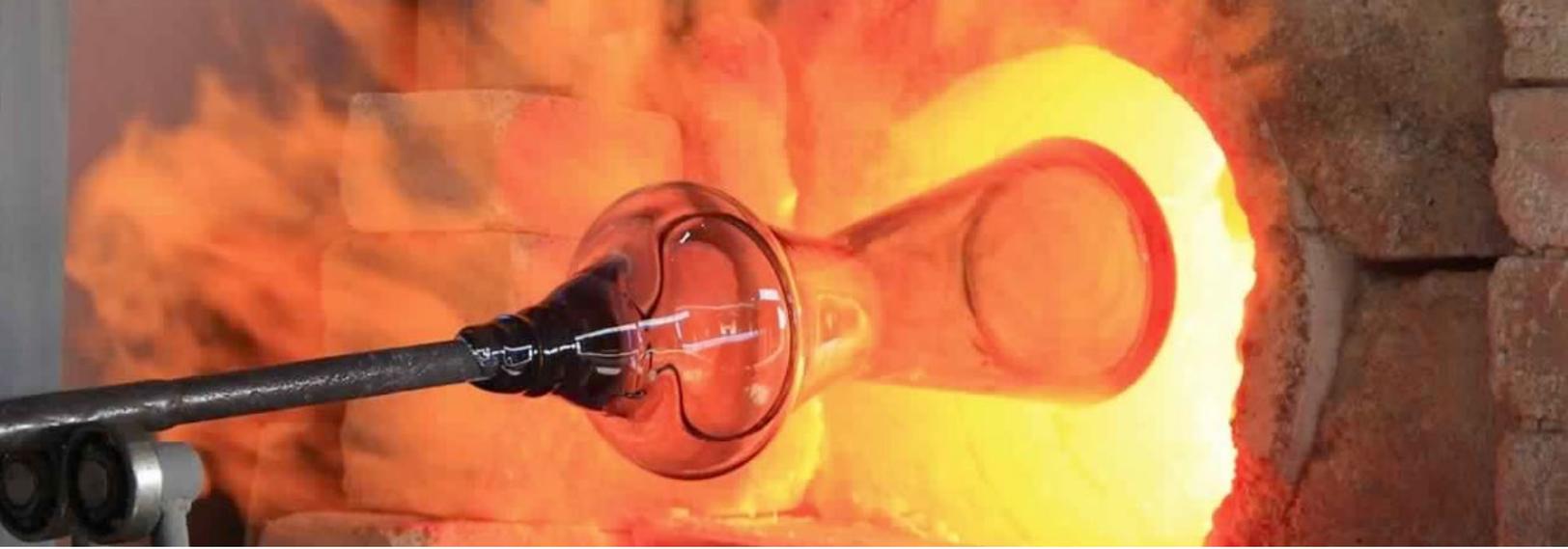
“Our vision is to build the capacity of artisans, entrepreneurs and young designers to reach global markets. This collaborative project will help our beneficiaries with new design expertise and products that correspond to the demand of US wholesale buyers. Tunisia needs a national craft strategy that promotes export. Through this project, we believe that Tunisian craft will become a success at international trade shows” says Nour Bdioui, Project Manager at IDH. Having worked with communities in the poorest parts of the country, IDH fully understands the needs of artisans, particularly women and youth.



“With Monika Steinberger, (Director of Program Management and Development ATA) we met many artisan groups and developed a deep appreciation of their work. With the help of ATA designer Alex Bates, we identified craft media and design concepts with most potential for further development,” says Bdioui.

Inspired by Berber heritage, the pottery of Sejnene is on UNESCO’s list of world patrimony. Sejnene pottery will be use traditional motifs in modern ways to open new market possibilities. Basketry will be developed for lighting pendants, floor coverings and home décor. Hand-blown glass designs will be adjusted for utility and taste of the International market. Olive-wood will be used to produce occasional tables, painted mirrors, boxes and trays, and the beautiful hand-woven “hayek” and “fouta” will delight US buyers as embroidered scarves or as decorative textiles for the home.





During its two-year duration CAP-X will offer Tunisian artisans a Market Readiness Program, several product development workshops and a series of buyer visits. Entrepreneurs will have an opportunity to participate in US trade fairs, such as NYNOW and the Las Vegas Market. “This project will create employment opportunities for artisan producers who have the skills but not the knowledge of the US market. It will enable them to sell in the US and increase their revenues. It will bring together government officials, women, youth, entrepreneurs and designers to strengthen the artisan sector of Tunisia and take it from a local level to a regional and international one” states Bdioui.



# ATA Prepares for TEAM @ Las Vegas Market

ATA is busy preparing for its first “Training for Entrepreneurs in Artisan Markets” (TEAM) initiative taking place from January 28-31, 2018 at the Las Vegas Market. TEAM is an on-site coaching and mentoring program for emerging international artisan businesses so they can successfully participate and trade shows. Our holistic training and trade show preparation process will help artisan entrepreneurs grow their businesses, expand into new markets, and achieve sustainable growth by exhibiting and selling at the Las Vegas Market.



“Aid to Artisans is excited to have the opportunity to partner with Las Vegas Market,” said Bill Kruvant, president of Creative Learning, Aid to Artisans’ parent organization. “As Las Vegas Market is rapidly expanding, becoming a beacon for under-served West Coast buyers, we believe the partnership is a perfect match and anticipate a long and productive partnership with Las Vegas Market” Bill added. “Las Vegas Market is taking on a vital and important role in the growth and development of artisan-crafted merchandise through this exciting new partnership with Aid to Artisans,” says Dorothy Belshaw, president of Gift Leasing and Chief Marketing Officer, International Market Centers. “This is a brand-new industry offering that is unique to Las Vegas Market, and one that represents the next step in the evolution of our presentation of handcrafted and maker-produced goods,” adds Belshaw.

Aid to Artisans' TEAM showcase will be in Pavilion 1 of the Market and will feature first-time exhibitors offering handmade gifts, home décor and accessories from South and Central America, Asia, as well as the Caribbean, Middle East, and Africa. Buyers will see exquisite hand-woven textiles, batik, natural fiber baskets, handmade jewelry and much more.



**Reve**<sup>™</sup>  
jewellery  
*Handmade in Jamaica*

TEAM exhibitors include [ArkofCrafts](#), a socially responsible Turkish supplier committed to bridging rich Turkish artisanal traditions and ethical, time-honored processes to a selection of artisan-crafted, home décor gifts and accessories and hand-loomed textiles. [HoonArts Fair Trade LLC](#), one of only three Fair Trade Federation members working with artisans in Central Asia will provide suzani hand-embroidered home decor items, hand-woven silk ikat scarves, hand-felted wool on silk wraps, and hand-carved wooden combs, barrettes, toys and Christmas ornaments. [Indus Heritage Trust](#) that preserves and revives Pakistani indigenous crafts by working with 2,600 grassroots-level embroidery workers to create a unique collection of home décor and accessories. [YUMAJAI](#), a Colombia based ethical fashion brand offering colorful handmade earrings, necklaces, rings, bags and unique accessories. [Reve Jewellery](#), an international award-winning high quality handmade Jamaican jewelry and accessories brand will offer products made of precious and semi-precious stones, metals and natural materials sourced from Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.



**YUMAJAI**

We wish all our exhibitors good luck as they prepare to branch out to the west coast with an aim to further expand their reach into international markets.

# Holiday Craft Sale Brings Global Crafts and Good Cheer

ATA's fifth annual Holiday craft sale was in full swing and the vibrant display of colorful crafts added to the holiday spirit, bringing in passersby to admire handcrafted pieces from different corners of the world. Egypt's [Dokkan](#) displayed striped silk stoles, brightly-colored geometric Kilim rugs, and cushion covers with motifs that tell stories of its culture and folklore. Soma Crafts Turkey featured different sizes of hand pounded metal and leather and cloth purses. Syrian refugees now based in Turkey have been innovative in creating crochet embroidered necklaces and bright handbags with crochet flowers and hand puppets for children. Nepalese artisans' display had detailed artwork in pen and ink and cotton puppets. Tibetan artisans showcased traditional yak wool products like hats, handbags and scarves. Basketry and stoneware from Puebla, Mexico, was seen in the form of candleholders, tablemats and delicately woven baskets in subtle colors. Bahari Deco Crafts showed a variety of traditional batik and tie art, ranging from yoga mats to tote bags made by women artisans in Tanzania. Traditional beaded jewelry and handbags from Kenya were popular amongst patrons from DC, Maryland and Virginia. With over 10 countries displaying their culture and heritage in form of handicrafts, the ATA craft sale was a great cause to support. As always, all profits from the sales went directly to help artisans.





# Happy Holidays!

We at ATA have lots to be grateful for in 2017. We are thankful for embarking on new initiatives in uncharted territories, new partnerships and linkages with global artisans. Most of all, we thank you for all your continued support. ATA wishes you happy holidays and a brilliant 2018!

**Artisans around the world need your support! Please make a donation by clicking [here](#).**



## Aid to Artisans

