



Aid to Artisans

Winter 2017

A New Year Brings in New Collections

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A New Year Brings in New Collections

This February at NY NOW, ATA's orange walled booth was more spacious and brighter than ever. It exuded creativity and innovation with a blend of subtle earthy hues and vivid colors that created a harmonious background for culture and heritage from different corners of the world. Its fresh new look attracted attention to new collections from Pakistan, Mexico, Egypt and Turkey.



This show was a first for Pakistan's [Indus Heritage Trust's](#) (IHT) new product lines "Shadow work, Shashiko, Dreamy collection and Grommet collection" produced by IHT artisans under the guidance of ATA's designers. It was great to see traditional motifs embroidered on pastel scarves and crisp white tone on tone embroidered pillow covers, table runners, cushions and clutch bags in ways that appeal to contemporary taste. The indigo pillows with traditional kantha work made up the "Shashiko" line and was the best seller of the Pakistani



New York based, [Veero's](#) independent initiative with ATA's guidance to work on a joint project with IHT artisans was a huge success. Its collection had striking pillows that incorporates a traditional stitching technique that filled the entire surface with remarkable detailed embroidery. These innovative pillows with large eye motifs embroidered were Veero's best sellers and definitely "eye" catching to many visitors.



ATA's exhibition of [Chiapas](#) craft was a mix of gorgeous throws with traditional motifs and hand-loomed pillowcases with a modern touch. The products were a fascinating blend of traditional motifs and modern design--black and white embroidered pillows and pillows with elegant blues and prominent tassels added. ATA's Chiapas project also exhibited its organic hand-woven striped tablemats for the first time and these were very well received. The brightly colored and versatile pom-poms were a showstopper that brought big smiles from almost everyone who touched them.



Egypt's [Dokkan Crafts](#) Craft introduced its new collection of patchwork pillows made in traditional appliqué style using linen and cotton. The colors are inspired by Egypt's climate reflecting shades of earth tones and glowing sun. Handwoven kilims made of sheep's wool and cotton stood out in vibrant colors and geometric patterns. Hand-loomed scarves made of 100% Egyptian cotton—with a history going back to Pharaonic times proved to be Dokkan's best seller at the booth.



This year [SOMA](#) Artisans from Turkey introduced gorgeous lace work-embroidered scarves and newly designed clutch bags. The biggest sellers were the stuffed toy Rooster (a big hit since it's the year of the Rooster) and embroidered purses made with children's drawings that gave these beautiful creations more meaning and a cultural context. Through the sales of these delicately embroidered bags, SOMA Artisans are raising money for families of miners who lost loved ones in a mining disaster. The SOMA craft provide sustainable income to these struggling families.

An Inside Story with Artemateria; Blossoming into its own space at NY NOW



Maribel and Dalia, founders of [Artemateria](#) and 2013 MRP graduates met while living in Chicago. They became friends through a common passion for Mexican artisanal heritage and design. Artemateria's mission is to support Mexican artisans by sharing their artisanal heritage and culture. Artemateria exhibited at ATA's booth for several years, and we helped them to become a separate exhibitor this February. Artemateria showcased their latest products at a stand-alone booth in the Accent on Design section of NY NOW. Here is Artemateria's story in Maribel and Dalia's own words.

ATA: Tell us about how Artemateria came into being?

Artemateria: We are both Mexicans living in the US. We always carry with us the sentiment of our home, the warmth of its people and the vastness of its culture. That is why Mexican artisanship and its beauty spoke to us in a way we hoped to share and exalt. We wanted to integrate our heritage and giving back to Mexico with our love for design; that is how Artemateria was born.



ATA: What was your vision and inspiration when you started your company?

Artemateria: Our childhood, culture, color, travel and contact with the arts and artisans of Mexico were our inspiration. Our vision was to translate that beauty of nature, of people, their stories and their craft into designed products that could be showcased and stand out in stores and interior spaces not only in Mexico but also abroad.

ATA: How did you get started selling your handmade items and where did you derive ideas/inspiration?

Artemateria: We participated in ATA's 2013 Market Readiness Program as a stepping-stone to our endeavor. In 2014 we showed at the ATA booth in NYNOW and started building relationships with store buyers, interior designers, museum shops etc. We both love to constantly design and create new products. We get inspired by a synergy of the beauty of the artisan heritage and its surroundings and the current trends and techniques of high-end design and architecture.



ATA: Displaying at your own booth for the first time, how was the response at the NY show? What product drew most attention and interest?

Artemateria: We got a great response from new and repeat buyers, interior designers and the press; it was a very positive experience and the consummation of a lot of work!

We like to design our different collections in a manner that integrates them with our color schemes and design aesthetics. Everything in our line is easy to coordinate. Having said that our functional pieces i.e. baskets and bags are always our most popular items.

ATA: What's been the biggest impact on artisans lives back in Mexico?

Artemateria: As we have grown we have seen the artisans develop entrepreneurship skills; improving their administrative operations and handling digital technology.

It is great to see how they get empowered and better organize and distribute the work within their communities. Being able to market their skills helps them improve their living conditions and support the education of their children. It enhances their heritage and their dignity.



ATA: What advice would you give other artisans who want sell handmade goods and expand to U.S. markets?

Artemateria: Look for outlets to learn about global design and current trends but have your product reflect your tradition and beauty of handmade. A great positive shift is that thanks to institutions like ATA the story value and mission of a product in the design market now matters and has meaning to an increasing number of buyers. Nevertheless, the product has to stand on its own –Quality and design are key while it's also important to remain unique to your voice and aesthetic.

ATA: What's your future vision for Artemateria and how do you plan to implement it?

Artemateria: Explore participation in more trade shows and increase our client base beyond the US. Increase turnover and competence in production and sales. Keep learning, expanding our artisan and designer base and training. Develop the necessary channels and workshops to develop new products -coming up with innovative techniques and materials such as our new hybrid textile collection which merges unexpected materials such as cotton or wool with metal thread and palm leaf- pictures to come. We also need to work on positioning our brand and making a deeper impact on the livelihoods of artisan communities in Mexico.



ATA wishes Artemateria the very best in sharing their cultural designs and using their passion in taking their creativity for handmade goods to a whole new level. Artemateria will always be part of the ATA family

ATA Expands its Reach in Mexico



Aid to Artisans' latest project is a collaboration with the government of the state of Tlaxcala and artisans from this small state that is famous for its embroidery. Forty artisans hailing from several municipalities such as Contla, Chiautempan, Ixtenco, San Pablo del Monte, Calpulalpan and Panotla with a background of textile crafts will be part of four workshops being conducted by ATA.

ATA designers Mimi Robinson and Paola Martínez Pascual are busy working with embroiders, weavers and costume makers in Tlaxcala, adding special touches to their traditional techniques to develop craft pieces for the US market. The artisans and designers are drawing inspiration from the traditional sarape, treadle loom and traditional motifs to create handcrafted textiles that are being modified for overseas markets. Besides blending the new and old in creating an innovative style, this project will highlight color innovation, using natural colors derived from roots, plants and seeds.





Our designers plan to experiment with metallic thread in a mix of organic cotton thread and sequins with embroidery to give products a new look. Tlaxcala artisans' new collection will make its debut in NY NOW this summer at the ATA booth and their products of the treadle loom, embroidery, knit and crochet techniques will be reflected in the form of pillows, floor cushions, rugs and handbags. .

Register for the 2017 Market Readiness Program



[Click here to see the video](#)

Join us this August for the 2017 MRP. This program is a unique hands-on training experience for all those associated with the artisan sector. The program provides intensive preparation for entry into the US market and vital information for building successful export businesses.

[Apply here](#)



Thank you

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