

Aid to Artisans

Summer 2018 Newsletter



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ATA @ NY NOW

NY NOW August 2018 marked the debut for Tunisian artisans. Their lovingly crafted collection stood out against the orange glow of the ATA booth. Having been mentored by the ATA CAP-X team, Tunisian artisans were proud to share their culture captured in the hand made products. Stools and pillows in natural colors were best sellers.

We showcased contemporary handcrafted products and new designs inspired by the rich Berber traditions, and curated by Alex Bates, Founder of Flint & Kent. Ceramics shown were made by the women of Sejnane, a small pottery community, where traditions have been passed down from mother to daughter for centuries. Their simple shapes are created from natural materials and colors are derived from botanical

sources or inherent in the clay. New designs of hand woven halfa grass made by women in the remote southwest region of Tunisia, cotton rugs in geometric patterns with a classic contrasting black and white, creamy lamb's wool throws with pom-poms, intricately embroidered pillows with traditional motifs, and lamp shades made of straw had a modern look that made them show-stoppers.

The Tunisian artisans represented in the booth are part of our CAP-X program, which is funded by the US State Department. Our local partner, International Organization for Human Development (IDH), collaborated with the National Office of Handicraft (ONAT) to get the Tunisian products to NY NOW.





“I felt it was a big responsibility, representing these artisans, knowing that they have placed big hopes on us. I was really proud to introduce the beautiful work they’ve done and to be an ambassador for the Tunisian handicraft sector,” said Mohamed Basti, Project Manager, [International Institute for Human Development](#) (our local partner), in La Marsa, Tunisia.

Zayneb Farhat, representing a group of 65 women potters from Sejnane, was particularly encouraged by buyer response. “This experience was unique and very rewarding. Buyers greatly appreciated the work of women potters who give more value to this ancestral art and heritage that must be preserved,” said Farhat. “It is encouraging for us that the team of Tunisian

and American experts followed up with us and helped us” added Zayneb.

Tibet’s [Dancing Yak Handicrafts](#), returned to showcase new product lines complementing the bestselling items from winter NYNOW. New color was used for objects rooted in traditional Tibetan design. A shopping tote bag was the bestseller in both solid and tri-colors. Buyers appreciated the improved design in fresh orange with contrasting color pom-poms. Other top sellers included a natural wool hand-woven purse, pencil holder sets in traditional Pulu designs, key chains and Tibetan brocade bags in turquoise and gold. The new collection was a huge success with fifty percent greater sales than last year.



MRP Class of 2018 Brings Diversity and Strong Ties



Sarah Daniela Quinones Espinosa of Armadillo Stores in Ecuador discusses her products with designer Mimi Robinson.



This August marked ATA's 18th annual Market Readiness Program, bringing together 17 entrepreneurs and artisans from 9 countries. Facilitated by ATA's new Training Manager Lauren Barkume, in partnership with MRP Manager and long-term consultant Carol McNulty, the 2018 MRP brought exciting new developments. "I was so happy to be back at the MRP after assisting my first MRP with ATA in 2006. The MRP has grown enormously in that time. I am thrilled with the depth of knowledge we can offer participants." said Barkume.

This year's MRP introduced the Business Roundtable, an interactive session that dove into a SWOT analysis of each participant's business, guided by seasoned ATA mentors. This session was developed in response to requests for hands-on sessions for participants to work on their business challenges with ATA experts. By the end of the workshop, each participant had an action plan that addressed their greatest challenges. "The training was beneficial to give me an overview of the global artisan market and the challenges faced by many of the other(s). It provided me with the tools to apply to our artisans in the Pacific" said Virginia Bruce, CEO [Real Impact Investments](#).

"The idea behind the Business Roundtable was helping participants develop concrete actions to put into practice when they get back home" added Lauren. The four-day intensive program provided a solid foundation for entering the US Market. It covered topics such as 2019 color and trends, buyer relationships, marketing and social media, product development, export 101,



and costing and pricing.

Our annual reception pulled in many veterans of the crafts industry along with buyers, alumni and patrons of the global handmade sector. Displays of the MRP participants' crafts lined the room. They included woolen knits from India, straw bags and accessories from the Asian Pacific Islands, baskets, tote and clutch bags from Ecuador, tote bags and cotton spreads from Mexico, ceramic accessories from Tunisia, metallic and semi-precious Jewelry from Ecuador, basketry and hand-knitted mohair accessories from Lesotho.

President Bill Kruvant formally passed on the baton to Carola Mandelbaum, the newly appointed CEO of Creative Learning and ATA. In addition, Charito Kruvant (Founder of Creative Associates International) made a heartfelt speech highlighting the value each artisan brings. "The richness and diversity in artisans' talents and background significantly contributes a strong and supportive ATA network to the extended artisan family", said Charito.



The MRP class of 2018 included: Madison Pease, Maria Zambrano, Maria Isabel Lopez Vera, Caroline Hanson, Nthabiseng Sennane, Mantai Mpesi, Mohapi Lephallo, Angelita Narciza Vinansaca Alvarado, Jose Antonio Garcia Treviño, Sara Daniela Quinones Espinosa, Vasanthi Veluri, Virginia Bruce, Assalaha Toure, Rosamelia Travi, Mohamed Basti, Lorgia Elizabeth Cuenca Correa, and Vivian Lopez.



Here are their stories



Mohamed Basti, Project Manager, International Institute for Human Development (IDH), La Marsa, Tunisia

Working with 50 artisans under the umbrella of IDH, Mohamed's goal was to learn about how to enter the U.S. market. "I felt there was a lot of give and take at the MRP; taking a lot of information for giving back to help the artisan community back home. I want to use the knowledge I got thanks to the MRP training and to my experience at the NY Now Fair to make Cap-X a better and more effective program."

Afrisoko is an online African shop selling art and craft to the world. Mohapi hoped to learn how to become a catalyst to change and advance the artisan market in Lesotho. He was quick to notice the challenges, opportunities and competition that artisans face. "The possibilities are endless and require a lot of effort, I learnt that telling a good story is important. Livelihoods and economies can be changed by hand-made. There is a huge market in the U.S. for us to tap and I have to figure out where we can



Mohapi Lephallo, National Manager Lesotho, Afrisoko, Maseru, Lesotho

go".

AMA is an association of 32 Ecuadorian women that makes and sells banana fiber craft in order to improve their income. "It has been a spectacular experience both for me and the organization I represent. I hope to take back everything that I learned, to share with my colleagues. I now have a better idea of pricing, and new ideas for designs and product lines after consultants' reviews. I have got the motivation needed to keep going until we have made a difference", said Lorgia.



Lorgia Elizabeth Cuenca Correa, Manager, Asociacion de Mujeres Agro-Artesanales AMA, El Oro, Ecuador



Virginia Bruce, CEO, REAL Impact Investments Pty Ltd, Sydney, Australia

REAL Impact is building a platform so that Pacific artisans can access markets. REAL hopes to connect Pacific artisan communities to the global creative economy and design marketplace and improve participation in local tourism. “The MRP has been helpful, specifically in validation of the sector and understanding of the U.S. market. It has been valuable and informative for our business strategy for market entry,” said Virginia.

Handmade in Lesotho sells carefully sourced, niche market, contemporary and traditional crafts made by Basotho artisans through their website and exhibitions. Mantai focused on understanding international markets, showcasing her products and getting feedback from buyers. “I would also like to learn more about how to succeed at targeting the U.S. market and prepare for successful export.”, stated Mantai. Mantai is being coached as part of ATA’s Lesotho project.



Mantai Mpesi, Managing Director, Handmade in Lesotho (PTY) Ltd, Maseru, Lesotho



Vasanthi Veluri, Designated Partner, Almora Craft Design Studio LLP, Uttarakhand, India

Vasanthi is one of two textile graduates from the National institute of Design who started Peoli, a design studio in Almora, India. They work with 60 women artisans on handmade woolen and cotton clothing. “The MRP was helpful, giving us one-on-one feedback and information regarding our product range, prices, design, quality and buyer needs. For us, based in India, the course has equipped us in various dimensions so that now when we step into the market located so far away from us, we will do so in a much informed



Jose Antonio Garcia Treviño, President, Promotora de Exportacion MXO SA de CV, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

Promotora de Exportacion MXO de CV is a trading company that works together with different artisans in Mexico exporting their products to retailers in the United States through their brands Mi Patria, Rustico and San Jose. Their three basic lines are Hispanic housewares, decorative products, and textiles. At the MRP, Jose Antonio's goal was to develop new products, learn more about potential new markets and market trends, and meet with designers that can work with them.

Isabel's firm was created by reinventing and rescuing Azuaya jewelry inspired by the lightness and delicacy of the work done in "filigree," creating a unique product. Her designs feature a mix on silver, gold and natural fibers to create friendly jewelry committed to the environment. At the MRP Maria hoped to improve her products and production chain as well as learn the tools to enter the U.S. market.



Maria Isabel Lopez Vera, Owner-designer, Jewelry Isabel Lopez, Azuay, Ecuador



Madison Pease, Event Coordinating Manager, Hip +Innovative Studio Boutique, Virginia, US

Hip Innovative Studio Boutique believes in celebrating and selecting thoughtfully handcrafted products from nationwide and global artists. Madison is passionate about working with artisans in developing countries in the fashion, creative and marketing fields. At the MRP Madison gained a better understanding of the artisan sector of retail as well as enjoyed learning from industry experts about product design and trend forecasting.



Caroline Hanson, Program Specialist, Creative Associates International, Maryland, USA

Creative is an international development organization dedicated to supporting people around the world to realize the positive change they seek. Caroline currently works on the SMD program, which provides support to Tibetan Artisans in China. At the MRP Caroline was able to learn more about the artisan sector, markets for export, and how she can promote the businesses of the people she works with.

As District Culture Officer: Nthabiseng is responsible for documenting, conserving, presenting, and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage as well as being responsible for the development and promotion of creative industries. Her focus at the MRP was to gain in depth knowledge and capacity on export requirements, buyer agent training, costing and pricing for the international market, international buyer expectations and quality control measures.



Nthabiseng Sennane, District Culture Officer, Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, Maseru, Lesotho



Vivian Lopez, Owner, Vivian L. Tettamanti Design, Guayas, Ecuador

Vivian works with two groups designing and planning the marketing of all their wide ranging artisanal products from laptop cases to earrings. One is a group of weavers in Chordeleg, the other is a group based in Cuenca that creates leather goods. After the MRP training, Vivian is planning to expand her business internationally, get potential clients in the US.



Assalaha Toure, Founder and Owner, Art Tuareg,
Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire

Assalaha has been making and selling Tuareg jewelry and finely crafted leather boxes since 1989. He is also the president of l'Association des artisans producteurs d'oeuvres Touaregs de Cote d'Ivoire. Through the MRP, he was interested in learning how to access international markets and clients.

Manabijou S.A. produces and sells creative products nationwide, from natural shells, crystal, and vegetable ivory, to coffee beans and stones. Maria promotes artistic self-sustainability, aiming to strengthen family units. She works with low income housewives who are her inspiration. Her MRP goal was to acquire knowledge about exporting and learning how to position her products in the U.S.



Maria Zambrano, Owner, Manabijou S.A.,
Manabi, Ecuador

TAGUA950 is an organization that works with local people in Montañita in Ecuador to make handmade artisan jewelry. Rosmelia joined the MRP to discover international clients, preferences, and also to learn the elements of e-commerce.



Rosmelia Travi, Administration, TAGUA950,
Sta. Elena, Ecuador



Sara Daniela Quinones Espinosa, CEO & Founder, ArmadilloStores, Pichincha, Ecuador

ArmadilloStores works with quechua communities from the Andes to design and produce ponchos, coats, throws, carpets and shigra bags. “I found the Product review with consultants and buyers really helpful in understanding the U.S. retail market in order for me expand my business to different cities in the U.S. It was good to understand the potential distributors in the market and e-commerce market for my products” added Sara.

The Cuenca Embroidery Center Cooperative, formed by 35 artisans from the rural area of the province of Azuay, makes handmade embroidery and woven items using natural fibers like cotton, alpaca, sheep wool and toquilla straw. Angelita hoped to learn more about the US market, and gain technical knowledge to increase sales of her cooperative while at the MRP.



Angelita Narciza Vinansaca Alvarado, Sales/Finances, Cooperativa de producción artesanal centro de bordados Cuenca, Azuay, Ecuador



THANK YOU!

To all of our amazing consultants, interns, staff and volunteers who made this possible

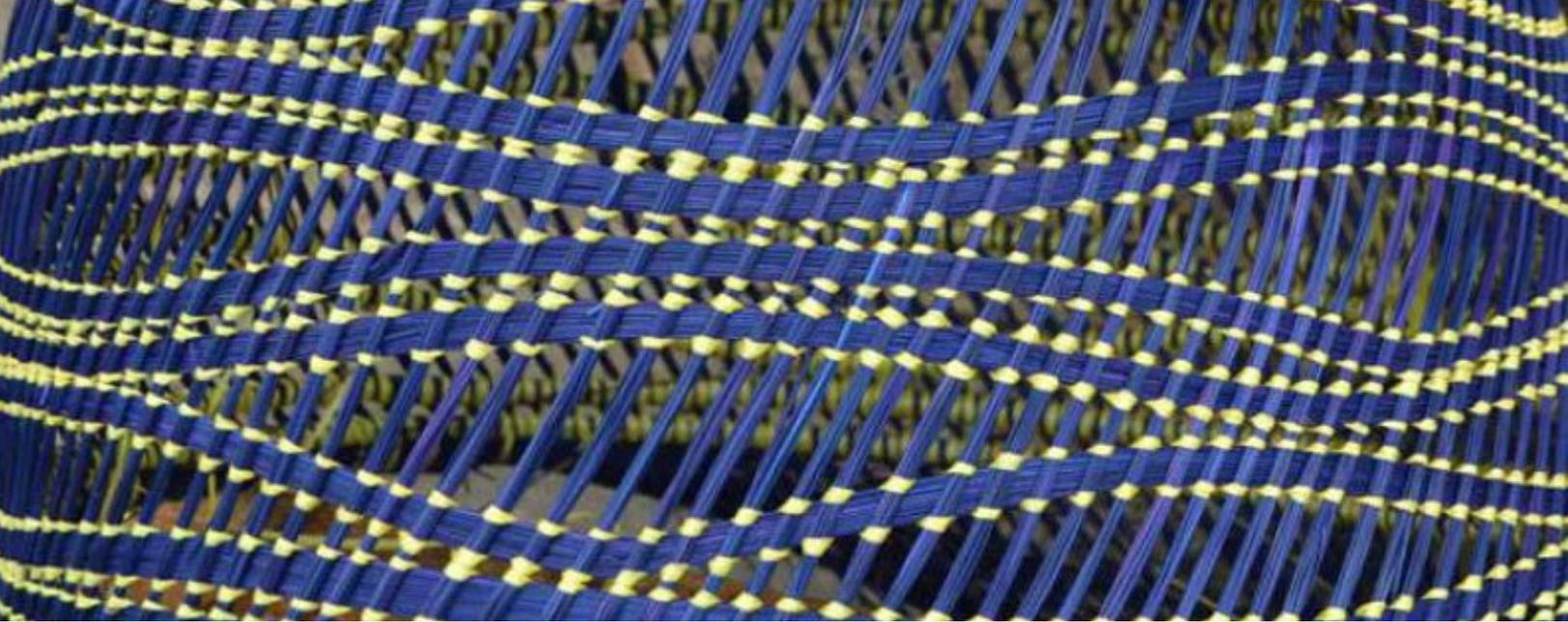


Lesotho: Connecting Artisans to the Global Market

and prepared manner,” said Vasanthi. Lesotho artisans, who are relatively unknown beyond the country’s borders, are about to enter the international arena. ATA’s Monika Steinberger and designers Frederic Alcantara and Jane Taylor travelled to Lesotho in June to gain first-hand knowledge of the local creative sector. “Lesotho crafts are not yet well known to international home decor and fashion accessories buyers. This, despite two great local craft media: basketry of local vegetable fibers and textile products made of Mohair, an indigenous raw material highly prized in international markets”, stated Monika Steinberger, Director of Program Management and Business Development. Basketry received rave reviews during the assessment team's trip to stores in neighboring South Africa. “Basketry and Mohair are in high demand. This means we can coordinate all training and product development with specific buyers and markets”, added Monika.

ATA will be devising and implementing a training, product development and market linkage strategy for Lesotho craft to South Africa and the US during the next 8 months. For basketry, ATA will create beautiful new designs and turn these designs into professional collections at export quality levels. “One of our top priorities will be basketry collections that turn great designs into coherent product offerings,” said Monika. ATA will also help create a costing and pricing structure, digital catalogues and other information needed





by international buyers. “The ATA assessment team has already mapped out a new product strategy: innovative collections at fair prices that move beyond current basketry and mohair products available in the international market” commented Monika.

To supply the international market, two exporters from Lesotho attended ATA's Market Readiness Program (MRP) this past August at NYNOW. They gained a thorough understanding of the U.S. market and met the buyers. Attendee Mantai Mpesi, export agent for

fashion accessories like jewelry, leather bags and Mohair shawls, was ready to take steps to upon her return home. “For ages, we have been making tapestries from mohair using traditional weaving techniques. Going forward, we will focus on to creating a whole new product line from floor looms. We will concentrate on engaging a whole new generation of artisans. The plan is to engage local design schools. We will partner with young, local designers in product development for the U.S. market. We will focus on achieving unique and high-quality products to compete globally”, said Mantai.





“ATA’s plans are focused on commercialization of products and engagement of the large Basotho workforce. When Lesotho goes to market, it will be fully export-ready” added Frederic Alcantara.

The project’s goal is job creation for the people of Lesotho. Their overall unemployment rate is 27%, with youth unemployment even higher at 38%. In fact, engaging young designers and entrepreneurs in the craft sector is one major strategy of the project. “We want to attract young, hip people to “hand-made” and amplify

their energy and ideas to empower the entire sector. We want to encourage them to see design and color differently, without relying on others to lead them. The goal is to ignite a new sense of creativity in design and inspire young people,” added Lauren Barkume, Training Manager at ATA.

With the Lesotho government’s approval, ATA’s design, training and marketing consultants plan to visit the country in October and November 2018. They plan to get young Lesotho artisans ready to respond to international buyers by



Introducing: ATA One-on-One; A Personal Mentoring Service

January 2019.

Responding to requests of global entrepreneurs and artisans who are unable to travel to New York to attend the MRP, ATA One-on-One is our way to provide personalized mentoring and business coaching across the globe. Launched in July 2018, ATA One-on-One is easily accessible, custom coaching available online. One-on-One will help address challenges and offer advice to artisan business owners, entrepreneurs, and associations. ATA One-on-One will cover topics ranging from costing and pricing, export and distribution channels to identifying market opportunities, improving buyer relationships, and promotion.

“ATA One-one-One is a unique opportunity for craft entrepreneurs to receive custom feedback on their business and how to enter the US market. I strongly recommend it for anyone who is seeking direct support from industry experts and seeking successful entry into the US market.” said Maud Obe director of Programs. With the launch of “One on One”, ATA hopes to help entrepreneurs and artisans around the world to improve their sales and grow their businesses.

To see if ATA One-on-One is right for your business, schedule a free consultation by



Maria Isabel Lopez Vera, Designer of Jewelry Isabel Lopez in Ecuador, gets one-on-one advice from ATA Consultant Annie Waterman

Aid to Artisans

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