

Aid to Artisans

Summer 2017

Total Eclipse of the Art at NY NOW

Meet the MRP Class of 2017

ATA Reaches out to Women Artisans in Djibouti

An Exciting Initiative: Announcing ATA's New Partnership

with the Las Vegas Market

Total Eclipse of the Art at NY NOW





This summer's NY NOW coincided with the solar eclipse and although the moon over shadowed the sun, our ATA booth glowed with bright orange walls and the beautiful handcrafts made by global artisans. This was the debut for ATA's projects in Tlaxcala Mexico, Tibet and Vietnam to exhibit their products while Pakistan and Chiapas returned to showcase their new product lines with even greater innovation and creativity to impress the U.S market.

During this show, our local partner [Indus Heritage Trust](#) introduced five new lines. With its intricate storylines of folk tales, the Pakistani Tribal Collection of embroideries from Sindh was the best seller. The colors of desert and sand favored by artisans from that area were used to depict some of the commonly used motifs and patterns. The Suzani collection reflecting joyful floral patterns derived from a mix of influences from Punjab made these embroideries the second best sellers. An array of delicately embroidered Paisley patterned scarves and shawls, using local embroidery techniques of shadow work done on wool and Tukri technique, commonly used on cotton, but modified to wool, generated good sales and made a perfect match for the fall season.



Inspired by the blend of Art Deco design as well as ethnic elements [Veero](#) debuted a collection of hand embroidered clutches and bags and bold pillow designs in simple geometric patterns of neutrals and metallic hues. In addition, there were new designs in different embroidery techniques that met with positive feedback for innovative design techniques and product line.



First-time exhibitor, Vietnam's [Wooven](#) showed off batik designs on simple yet stunning tote bags. Made with traditional tie dye technique in hand woven cotton, the addition of leather handles lent a contemporary touch to the elegant bags. The soothing Indigo dyed Ikat stoles were delicately designed to be worn in a multitude of ways.



Tibet's [Dancing Yak](#) also exhibited for the first time and attracted people to the red and black felt wool pillow cases with the endless knot design as well as the table runners. However, the Tibetan Brocade fabric in turquoise, gold, and brown and the Pencil cases in the traditional Pulu design fabric were the best sellers.



[Chiapas](#) featured cotton handwoven stoles with crochet borders and cushions in different textures in pastel hues and bold geometric patterns that had people thronging around it to have a feel. While there was a new range of throws with traditional motifs embroidered, the brightly colored pom-poms were the most popular.



Another first-time exhibitors were Tlaxcala, Mexico artisans representing the communities of Contla, Chiautempan, Ixtenco, San Pablo del Monte, Calpulalpan and Panotla to exhibit at this August NYNOW, and their artisanal products met with great enthusiasm.



Elly Montserrat Castillo Guerrero, leader of "Iniciativa Artesanos Textiles de Tlaxcala" and the driving force linking the artisans to the State Government of Tlaxcala, stated: "NY NOW is the first venture into the international marketplace for the artisans of Tlaxcala. The state government of Tlaxcala is committed to continue the effort into the global arena for the great producers of craft in their state".



Together with the project's group manager, Tania Espejel Macias, and two Tlaxcala artisans who personally talked to buyers about the products and production process at the ATA booth, it was a great feat for their artisans to showcase their handmade products at the hub of the international marketplace.





The vivid sequin clutch bags took center stage, featuring the historically significant rose motif used in the capes worn during Carnival. The tradition of "the rose" in the carnival of Tlaxcala dates to the beginning of the 20th century. This symbol was re-interpreted into embroidered and beaded high-fashion clutches as part of the new Tlaxcala product line developed by ATA designer Mimi Robinson. "It is important to preserve this part of our history, and we are excited to see a new interpretation of the design presented to an international audience at NYNOW" added Victor Morales, representative of the artisans benefitting from the initiative. The high fashion clutches displayed in the ATA booth will become part of new Tlaxcala collections going forward.



Big, billowy hand woven baskets with traditional white yarn were another big attraction from Tlaxcala artisans that drew buyers throughout the show.

Annual ATA Reception: Building the Artisanal Network



Meet the MRP Class of 2017



ATA conducted its annual Market Readiness Program bringing 20 entrepreneurs representing 13 countries, bringing together the best of East and West. With a team of seasoned ATA consultants and mentors, participants were introduced to key elements for entering the US market. This intensive program was a solid platform in providing training on production, quality control, sales, marketing, color and trend, social media marketing to buyers relationship, ready to take their enterprise to a new level of global business.



Anna Malone, Marketing and Outreach, Yorktown, Virginia: Anna represented Yabal Handcrafts, a social enterprise, focused on sustainable fashion that partners with indigenous women's weaving cooperatives in Guatemala, providing them with the opportunity to sell their hand-woven products through local and international markets. Having volunteered with Yabal in Guatemala, where her duties included market research and outreach, to try and expand sales. Anna is about to start a business creating an online platform to link designers and creatives, seeking custom made, Fair Trade textiles.

Alana Davicino, Program Specialist, Workforce Development and Youth, Creative Associates, Washington, DC: By attending the MRP, Alana wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the international artisan sector, and to ultimately use this knowledge to inform current and future artisan-related and export-related project activities at Creative Associates.



Catherine Rocheford, Catherine Rocheford Designs, St. Michaels, Barbados:

As a representative of the Network of Artisans in Tourism for the Greater Caribbean, Catherine has long been active in the artisan sector. She is the founder of the Barbados Artisan and Heritage festival, an event featuring the best of local artisans. This experience, inspired her to develop her own business. At the MRP she hoped to advance her knowledge of the requirements and expectation of the US retail market as well as have her products evaluated by industry specialists.





Dana Baugh, BAUGHaus Design Studio, Westmoreland, Jamaica: As a Parsons graduate, Dana has a special interest in blending modern aesthetics with the “roots & culture” of the Caribbean. In a true expression of Tropical Modern, her studio creates ceramics, lighting, furniture and soft goods for the home. At the MRP she sought to learn how to develop a more targeted approach to product development and to network for further growth in her business.



Elisha Chan, Founder, Elisha C, Los Angeles, CA: Elisha C is an ethical brand and a social enterprise with the vision of a poverty-free world. Currently working in Haiti with artisan groups producing a wide range of products ranging from food to home décor and fashion accessories, Elisha C offers educational scholarships, healthcare initiatives and entrepreneurial support to launch micro-enterprises. At the MRP she hoped to learn more about extending her market reach, aligning her products with her target market and to learn more through networking with others in the artisan sector.



Fabrice Boscart, Shanghai, China: Fabrice is in the process of developing a company specifically to import and distribute artisan made products. His passion for this project comes from his appreciation for the artisan work he has seen worldwide and which he views as under-represented in the retail market. He attended the MRP to learn how to work with artisan groups, to learn about market trends and to network with like-minded individuals in the industry.



Jane Taylor, Owner, [Collaborative Craft Projects](#) with the Safari Collection, Harare, Zimbabwe: This collective specializes in all forms of woven basketry for both function and fashion. Working with a variety of artisan groups, the collective also represents artisans who work in wood, cow horn and accessory furniture pieces. However, operating with limited resources and a small marketplace, Jane hoped to working with like-minded entrepreneurs attending the MRP as well as learning more about market trends and how to gain traction in the US retail market.

Kendal Troutman, Owner, The Purple Shoe Project, Los Angeles, CA:

Kendall is currently working with Artisans in Rwanda, Bali and Grenada. She buys Fair Trade and sells in the United States. Working almost exclusively in textiles handbags, travel bags, some home goods, she attended the MRP to better understand the best way to grow her business and move up to the next level.



Lalaina Raharindimby, Director of Women's' Programs, SEPALI Madagascar, Maroanetra, Madagascar: SEPALI is a non-profit business working with farmers to grow natural materials such as wild silk and raffia to be used in making finished products in fashion and home décor. Most particularly, Lalaina's goal was to learn how to make products as the artisans do so that she can better understand how to help the artisans manage their time around the family responsibilities and be more productive in their work.





Mamy Ratisimbaafy, Founder and Owner, SEPALI Madagascar, Maroansetra, Madagascar: As an entomologist, Mamy works to provide employment opportunities through environmentally grown natural materials, necessary for creating finished textile art and finished textile products. He wished to identify their target market for high quality goods as well as the fundamental logistics of exporting to US and European markets. His long term goal is to generate enough revenue to support the entire non-profit program through broader market access.

Paola Martinez, Design Consultant, Aid to Artisans, Chiapas, Mexico: Paola works directly in field with artisans on coaching and product development. Their home décor products have already had early success in the US with home décor items and offer fashion accessories as well. Paola's learning goal for the MRP was to improve the process of artisanal production and sustainable businesses by strengthening profitability and ethical practices.

Marabella Silvano Guzman, Local Coordinator, Aid to Artisans, Chiapas, Mexico: As field promoter for this ATA project in Chiapas, Marabella works directly with the artisans at workshops and training opportunities. The groups work in textiles for home décor, fashion and table top, providing economic opportunities for women. To be more effective in her work, Marabella wanted to learn more about the opportunities for handmade goods in the US retail market.



Rachel Clement, Artisan and Owner, Rare Unique Jewels, Bridgetown, Barbados: For the past 13 years, Rachael has been creating unique jewelry from sea glass and various metals, selling in the local tourist market, at hotels and occasionally online. She would like to expand her business and technical skills in order to expand into the US market. By attending the MRP, Rachel intended to learn improved pricing and marketing skills, learn the expectation of the retail market for quality and design and to network with and learn from other artisans.



Samina Mahmud, Head of Design, Indus Heritage Trust, Islamabad, Pakistan: Indus Heritage Trust is involved in training and marketing products produced by local artisans. IHT largely produces home décor products using local cotton materials. Having worked with artisans for 30 years, promoting regional embroideries of Pakistan, she currently works directly with artisans, and would like to explore innovative ways to promote the artisan sector. At the MRP she hoped to gain understanding in the dynamics of the international market for handmade goods.

Siddiqua Malik, Chairperson, Indus Heritage Trust, Islamabad, Pakistan: Indus Heritage Trust, an NGO, was started in 2004 by dedicated professionals committed to preserving and promoting the heritage of Pakistan by supporting artisans by helping them enhance their livelihoods. Siddiqua implements all the field activities, keeping in close contact with the artisan communities. Through their efforts IHT hopes to portray a softer image, the true image, of Pakistan to the international community. As an exhibitor in the ATA Global Handmade Booth as well as an MRP participant Siddiqua hoped to get enough interest in Pakistan's handmade embroidered products to attract orders.

Sheena Thorne, Business Development Officer, Barbados Investment & Development Corporation, Bridgetown, Barbados: In her role Sheena supports local artisans with strengthening or developing their business structure, product development, record keeping, costing, marketing and market entrance (local and export). Her relationship with artisans is very hands-on. By her participation in the MRP, Sheena's goal was to get exposure to international developments and trends in the craft sector, a heightened appreciation for international standards and practices to better advise her clients and gain knowledge in areas of business management as it relates to artisans.





Shanika Grimes, Artist and Designer, Artist Made, Bridgetown, Barbados: Artist Made is a young and progressive company which seeks to have maximum reach in marketing and producing high quality handmade products. Shanika is a young and talented designer who is dynamic and proficient in supplying customized handmade bags with handmade painted accents. At the MRP, her goal was to better understand how to improve the design of her products and strengthen her marketing efforts .

Sonya Shannon, Malaika, Program Development Manager, North Bethesda, Maryland: The mission of Malaika is to empower Congolese girls and their communities through education. The focus of Sonya's work has been to improve access to markets for artisan groups in Egypt and the Democratic Republic of Congo through capacity building interventions such market readiness workshops and product design and development training. Sonya attended the MRP to learn all that is needed to assist artisan groups to enter the US market such as current trends in handmade, product design and dev. principles, marketing, costing and pricing.



Ximena Gonzalez Fernandez, CEO, Nómades, Lima, Peru:

Ximena's social startup seeks to develop the handcraft market in Peru. Nomades was founded to highlight the commercial and as well as cultural value of Peruvian handicraft. With a focus on high quality fashion accessories and home décor, all products are designed recognizing the need to have positive impact on the environment while representing Peruvian identity. Seeking to innovate the current business model for handmade, Nomades is currently selling locally but their foremost goal is to enter the US retail market. During the MRP, Ximena was particularly interested in a greater understanding of the structure of the US market, distribution possibilities market preferences and networking with like-minded artisan leadership.

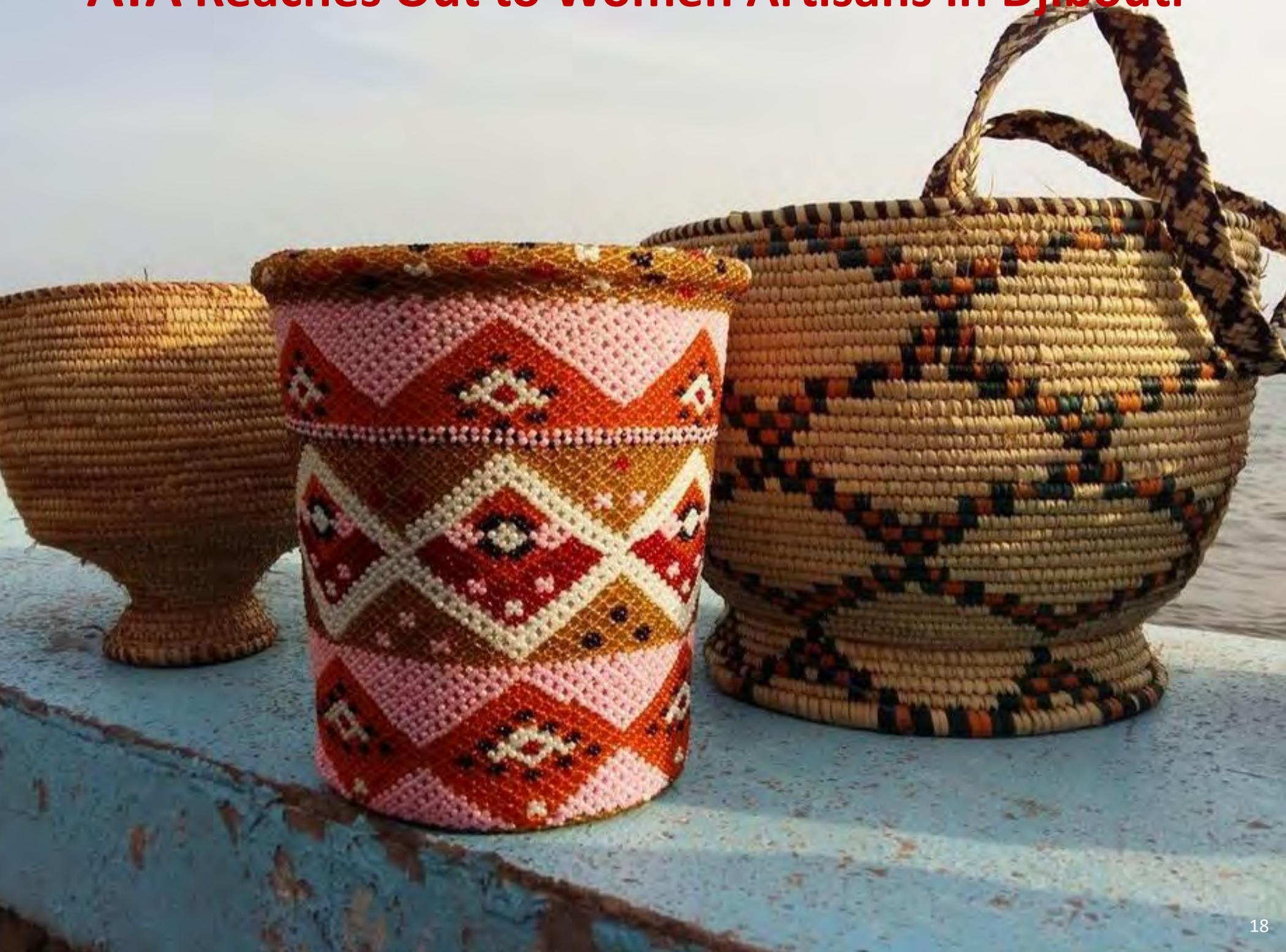




Glimpses of the MRP



ATA Reaches Out to Women Artisans in Djibouti





Last spring ATA implemented an assessment of the craft sector 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 Development Social, PROPEJA aims to provide access to practical skills, training and finance for over 3000 youth and women living in poor communities located in Djibouti-ville, Arta, Tadjourah, and Ali Sabieh.

ATA's objective is to provide income-generation opportunities. At least 1000 beneficiaries will be able to access funds to start micro-projects through a competitive process based on a business plan. Additionally 800 beneficiaries, mainly women, will receive direct or indirect training and financial assistance in the form of grants to improve their opportunities of income-generating activities for their crafts.

The nomadic population of Djibouti, a small country located south of the Red Sea has significant skills in basketry and beading, however, it's a desperately poor country where artisans have not yet received any development support to upgrade their skills. During the assessment, ATA designer Frederic Alcantara and Director of Program Management and Development Monika Steinberg traveled to remote communities of Balbala, Damerjog, Arta, Ali Sabieh, and Tadjourah. "Some of the locations are extremely remote over almost impassable roads but we were rewarded with great finds in terms of artisan skill and creativity. Some of the basketry is almost ready for the international market as it is, particularly in Tadjourah but other communities need to start from scratch and ATA will provide them with new design, and a solid costing and pricing strategy" says Monika Steinberger.



‘Despite these obstacles, we are confident that Djibouti artisans will become a significant factor in the market. In the upcoming implementation of the project, we will focus on creating local market opportunities, such as the thousands of military personnel stationed in country’ says Steinberger. The first steps toward exporting craft made in Djibouti will be to other African countries, before venturing to international markets such as New York. Aid to Artisans is ready to implement a capacity building and product development work plan that will help artisans develop targeted new product designs and product collection in the process of making Djiboutians proud of their culture, self-reliant, benefit from sales and lead better lives.

An Exciting Initiative: Announcing ATA's New Partnership with the Las Vegas Market





ATA is pleased to announce our new partnership with the Las Vegas Market (LVM). LVM is the nation's fastest growing gift and home décor market and the leading furniture marketplace in the western U.S., presenting 4,000+ gift, home décor and furniture resources in an unrivaled market destination. The LVM will take place from January 28th – February 1st, 2018.

We will inaugurate our new “Training for Entrepreneurs in Artisan Markets (TEAM)” at the Las Vegas Market this winter. TEAM is our advanced training initiative for emerging artisan-based enterprises seeking to enter the US retail market. TEAM has been developed for those who have completed our signature Market Readiness Program (MRP) in New York or believe they have enough experience to enter the US retail market.

“This is a unique opportunity for first time trade show participants to approach the market effectively and get the training they need to be successful within the US retail market. ATA’s partnership with LVM continues to bolster its mission to empower artisan enterprises around the world,” says Bill Kruvant, President of Creative Learning/Aid to Artisans.

Drawing on 25 years of experience participating in Global Handmade at NY NOW and implementing our signature Market Readiness Program™, we will use our holistic training and trade show preparation process to help artisan entrepreneurs worldwide grow their businesses, expand into new markets, and achieve sustainable growth while exhibiting at the Las Vegas Market. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to be part of TEAM at the Las Vegas Market this winter! To reserve your space and learn more about this initiative please visit [our website](#).



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Aid to Artisans

