



Global Perspective

Artistic expressions from around the world in Temps

As the world embraced the 21st century, many of its finest traditional arts and historical crafts were in danger of fading into oblivion. But since 2000, many global wholesalers and retailers dedicated to the business practices of Fair Trade have filled a niche and brought attention and economic success to the artisans of these exquisitely handcrafted products from around the world. Exhibitors in AmericasMart's Global Designs category, debuted in January 2011, offer a wide variety of traditional, hand-crafted products including jewelry, fine glass, leather goods, textiles, clothing and accessories unavailable before except in the countries of origin.



GIFT

Handmade Expressions of Austin, Texas, and Sevyra Handmade in Charleston, S.C. focus on the traditional arts of India including weaving, block printing and hand embroidered products. Indian artisans were discouraging younger generations from embracing their artistic heritage because they saw no future for them until they began working with Fair Trade wholesalers and retailers. Working with more than 20 collectives — approximately 7,000 persons throughout India — Handmade Expressions and Sevyra Handmade brought the intricately handmade, beautifully colored textiles and other products to Western attention while building a sustainable art and livelihood for the Indian producers.

Cynthia Glensgard of Global Handmade Hope in Park Ridge, Ill., speaks to large and small groups and at community wide events about the company's commitment and unique products. Beautiful, hand-loomed products from Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and now, Columbia, South America, include items from African-themed photo frames to delicate jewelry and pottery. Global Handmade Hope offers both wholesale and retail services as part of its commitment to be an active force within its own community.

Selecting Fair Traders

Wholesalers encourage retailers to educate themselves about Fair Trade practices and legitimate claims of sustainability. They also recommend working with a wholesaler certified by the Fair Trade Federation who can answer questions, assist with development of customized products or suggest effective sales and marketing strategies. But, they also stress that as important as the mission behind these products is, retailers should first become reacquainted with the beauty and high quality nature of these artistic, creative and unique works and communicate that to their customers. ■

Pablo Merlo Flores, principal of Pampeana Glass Art can be reached at 503-490-3537 or www.pampeana.net; Manish Gupta, principal of Handmade Expressions can be reached at 512-535-5228 or www.handmadeexpressions.net; Joan Rasch, principal of Sevyra Handmade can be reached at 843-763-3156 or www.sevyra.com; and Cynthia Glensgard, principal of Global Handmade Hope can be reached at 847-720-4084 or www.globalhandmade.com.

Images courtesy of Global Handmade Hope, Pampeana Art Glass, Sevyra and Handmade Expressions

Visit Global
Designs Temps
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