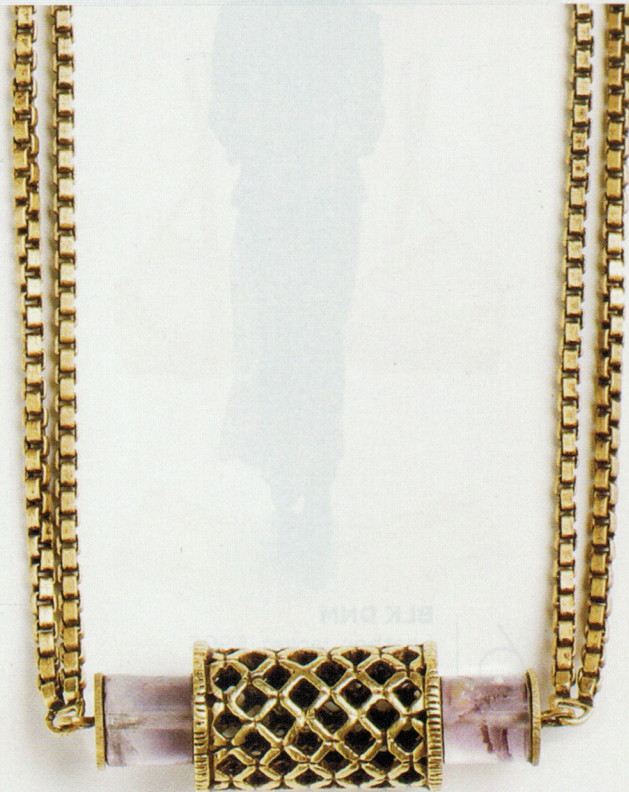
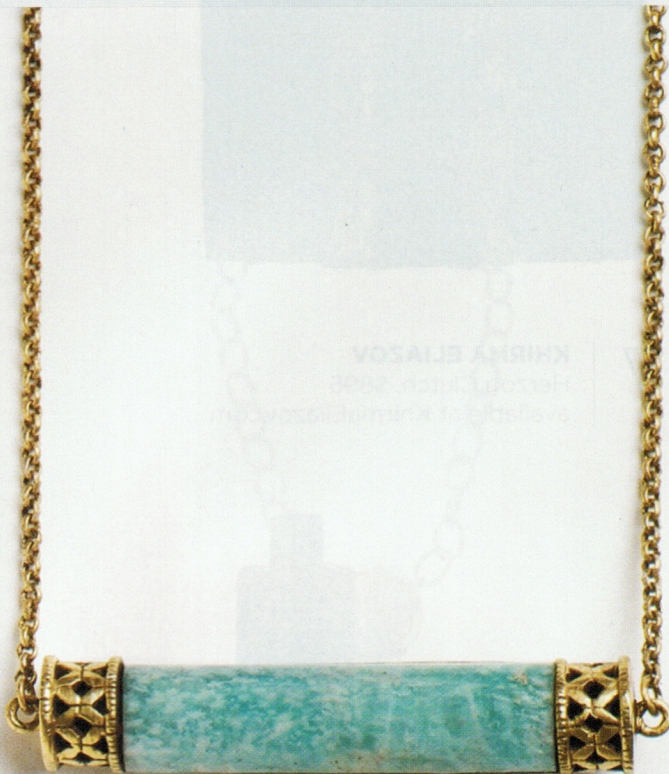


# SO FRESH & SO GREEN, GREEN

## SCARVES AND SOCIAL RIGHTS: A PEACE TREATY'S GLOBAL MOVEMENT



**A**fghanistan and Colorado aren't places you'd typically associate with luxury fashion. However, Creative Directors Dana Arbib and Farah Malik are changing our conception of luxury through their accessories label A Peace Treaty.

The company began in 2008 as a side project. Arbib and Malik met through a mutual friend in Rome, while Malik, an experienced NGO professional, was studying goldsmithing and Arbib, a Parsons-educated designer, was celebrating her brother's wedding. Once they were back in their current homes in NYC, the two met for coffee and talked about jewelry, scarves and their shared desire to work in fashion on their own terms.

What emerged is a luxury brand that creates sustainable business models by paying above fair trade wages to village artisans from all over the world to produce their products. Arbib explained that, "We knew that we wanted some type of humanitarian, social aspect to what we wanted to do. Then we decided that we wouldn't make anything in China, and we'd want everything to be handmade and supporting people who made it and their craft."

They also wanted to bring ancient hand-loomed and metalsmithing crafts to the forefront of fashion. "In Europe, the whole idea of being luxury is being handmade. We wanted to bring that European sense of handmade into our collection," says Arbib.

About two weeks later, A Peace Treaty began. Arbib, as the Creative Director, designed the templates,

and then Malik, in charge of the production side, went to Pakistan and brought the scarves back. "Our friends were the models, we photographed them against a white wall and I made a look book. We were working out of my apartment and hand delivering everything." Arbib recalled. "Daily Candy saw us and wrote about us. We sold out everything in one day."

Each of the four collections produced per year consist of 35 to 40 pieces of earthy, beautiful jewelry and 30 vividly colored, patterned scarves. The designers partake in collaborations, which keeps Arbib inspired and challenged, partners have included Ralph Lauren, Urban Outfitters, and up-and-coming jewelry designer Jonathan Simkhai - which keeps Arbib inspired and challenged.

To create each collection, Arbib first visualizes what technique she wants to utilize. Then, she looks into regions that have those skills. One season, Arbib selected embroidery as the focus. "We found someone in Afghanistan in a women's co-op who embroidered scarves," she explains.

Sometimes the inspiration for the collection has to do with the country they create the pieces in, like Peru, Nepal, and Bolivia. Other times, it can be "as specific as Japanese kimonos from the '30s or '20s."

After inspiration comes "a lot of different avenues of research," says Arbib. "I usually go through about thousands of images a collection of inspiration; sometimes I go to antique textile libraries. And then I just end up designing the pieces based on that."









The Spring 2013 collection, Villa Bambola, was inspired by Libya before Gaddafi, which, according to Arbib, "was this amazing country that had Italian and Arabic influence. There was beautiful architecture, art, clothing and I think it just kind of wittled away when Gaddafi was in power." To research the Villa Bambola collection, Arbib visited her father's friends and family and pored over clothing, jewelry, photos, and textiles. The collection features scarves in '60s sherbert tones reminiscent of Arabesque mosaic tiles and jewelry with semi-precious stones that call to mind Libyan glass tea sets.

It also marked the first time their product was produced in America. A Rocky Mountain artist in Colorado hand-painted the silk scarves, using old family techniques. The jewelry was produced in Jaipur, India, where artisans used wax carving techniques.

It's not just their merchandise and business model that's interesting though, they're repeatedly questioned about their name. "Certain countries have such a negative viewpoint in the media. Showing there are innocent people

everywhere that have amazing artisan skills and that beautiful things can come out of those countries" allows for people "to learn how to appreciate those countries from a different viewpoint. The name's more based on that then the simplified thing that I'm a Jew and Farah's a Muslim."

What's next for the globally-selling company? Arbib and Malik will continue to grow the brand by "moving across all facets of accessories." They plan to incorporate handbags and fine jewelry in the future.

We wouldn't be surprised if their innovative business model inspired followers; A Peace Treaty has the staying power to start a movement. The company doesn't just create luxury goods, "It shows [artisans] they have the skill to sell in a modern setting and bring their business into a different sort of market," Arbib explains.

You can find the luxe accessories at Bergdorf Goodman, Barneys, Saks Fifth Avenue, Harvey Nichols, American Rag and 150 other stores all over the globe. [APeaceTreaty.com](http://APeaceTreaty.com) **CASSIE TITLE**



GUEST EDITOR

