

Ferney Mejía Dura | Asociación
Gloria de Dios | Colombia | Basketry

Canaan baskets range in size from monumental to modest



The artisans of Colombia's Asociación Gloria de Dios, founded in 2009, make strikingly intricate, hand-woven baskets using indigenous materials: the hardy fibers of indigenous tetera and chocolatillo plants. Both species flourish along the Pacific Coast of Colombia, but the region's proximity to the sea doesn't make it a tourist center. Their town of Guapi, one of the poorest in Colombia, is a place that has been harmed by isolation and lack of communication and vital infrastructure. Members of the Canaan indigenous community founded Asociación Gloria de Dios in 2009, a year after the group's leader, Ferney Mejía, and his family arrived in Guapi from their reservation, Guangüi. The difficulties of settling in a new landscape drove Ferney to examine the best possibilities for the Canaan, which eventually led him to the creation of this artisanal group.

and weave. The processing of natural dyes is very complex and reserved only for the best artisans, those who usually have been involved in this knowledge for a long time. Plants, mythology, and animals like spiders, shrimps, frogs, crabs, butterflies, monkeys, scorpions, and others, are represented in traditional weaving. The basketry is nothing short of fine art, with meticulous arrangements of geometric patterning and colors forged into hypnotic designs.

Traditionally only women participated in basketry process, but now Asociación Gloria de Dios promotes the participation of men and women, big and little baskets, purses, petacas (basket with lids), terlenças (baskets without lid), and many other objects made with fiber.

Basketry is long-standing tradition within the Canaan community. By making their basketry, artisans communicate, teach each other, learn,

PHOTOS: ARTESANÍAS DE COLOMBIA