



Marie Alexandrine
Rasoanantenaina | Madagascar |
Apparel, Basketry, Rugs,
Textiles for Home

Weaving together fragrant vetiver and recycled denim



For 35 years, artisans at the Madagascar cooperative textile organization Tahiana Creation have been producing a range of natural-fiber products. Tahiana's founder, Marie Alexandrine Rasoanantenaina, started out by selling hand-made clothing door-to-door in the 1980s; Within a few years, she was able to hire additional women to help with sewing and embroidery. As Rasoanantenaina's business grew, she began to experiment with alternative dyes and materials, tapping into Madagascar's abundant natural resources. The island of Madagascar is beloved, of course, for exports like pepper and vanilla, but the island is also home to hundreds of unique forms of plant life, which lend themselves beautifully to sources for a variety of creative uses. By 1992, Tahiana Creation was tapping into these resources—creating natural hues from materials like bark and fruit pits, all indigenous to Madagascar.

and elegant, whose earthy hues like warm beige or soft chocolate brown imbue them with an almost ethereal quality. Tablecloths and placemats are crafted in dramatic, modern black, but also offered in simple, pleasing pale green or peach tones. Elsewhere, natural-fiber baskets resemble bird nests, with twig-like appendages jauntily surrounding a finely woven vessel.

Rasoanantenaina supports other seamstresses not only by providing platforms by which they can sell their work, but also by providing learning opportunities in the form of training and workshops meant to foster marketing and business skills.

Some items created by Tahiana Creation, such as richly textured wall hangings, for example, are understated

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ARTIST