For Maria Teresa Aristeguieta , sustainability is the true luxury; It is a fundamental parameter of extraordinary socio-cultural value that has allowed us to “make with the hands” to combine technology with the high global standards of sustainable luxury.

**SOCIAL IMPACT**

Aristeguieta identity is intertwined with the authentic sustainability principles applied in many senses, as well as with the improvement of the life standards of all the stakeholders involved in the handbag production process. At our core, we strive to raise awareness for environmentally friendly practices, as fashion production must adapt to new consumption habits. We believe in sustainable luxury - in making you feel and look beautiful while making the world a better place.

Our sustainability strategies are based in our brand values adhered to three key concepts: environmental, social and the brand.

**1.        Environmental Sustainability:**

Attention to the environment and respect for our plant surroundings aiming at the search of what is natural have been strong reasons to opt for a raw material as special as wood. We take advantage of our relationship with local communities and use woods that come from preventive pruning activities and recollection of fallen trees performed by local Caracas authorities, which allows our materials to be considered as “legal wood”.

To produce our luxury handbags, these residues go through classification, cleaning and volume reduction processes that comply with our 3-R ideal: Reuse, Recycle and Recover.

Some of ourpieces have been considered in the edition of the “The Sustainable Design Book”, written by expert Rebecca Proctor, and granting us the recognitions of social enterprise, locally sourced and well-managed resources. Identified within UNESCO's Sustainable Development Objectives, we support with our work in responsible production and consumption with our best contribution being raising awareness and improving the planet.

**2.        Social Sustainability:**

In our design, manufacturing and production workshop is where the causes to get involved with the paradoxical reality of our surroundings are born. The main motivation for this project was based on preventing future generations to continue migrating -due to socio-economic conditions in the country- to seek better life conditions abroad, which is why we are committed to value and establish ways of conserving ancestral woodcarving practices in the region. One of our biggest accomplishments is the current development of our brand working with the second generation of a woodcarving family. Attending to the constant risk of losing this invaluable ancestral manufacturing tradition, we have also attended our surroundings, creating courses to qualify our human resource like artisans, artists and entrepreneur women in a private and exclusive manner at all production levels and stages aiming under the sustainable luxury philosophy, representing improvements in the social and family reality of workers by qualifying new artisans.

We generate work opportunities, elevate the woodcarving profession incorporating it to the luxury universe and offer empowerment to women in concrete design processes such as packaging development for our pieces involving local families in the process. Through this, we also support our own business by providing training to our talents, aiming to excellency in sustainable luxury.

**3.        Brand Sustainability:**

After Aristeguieta receiving the Independent Handbag Designer Awards price in New York City in 2013 for the best design and social responsibility, she managed to demonstrate from a geometric pattern, that through the exclusive use of noble wood, you can achieve unimaginable results by building a completely pure hand bag and without any hinges that are not carved with wood, maintaining the brand’s sustainable development principles. Committed with the socio-cultural landscape of Lara state in Venezuela, for MTA each wooden piece has its own distinct digital footprint. The many man hours from the artisans invested in each piece suppose a reassessment of the artistic manufacturing and each hand bag becomes an extraordinarily unique piece and/or a series in a collection.

We believe that sustainable luxury must focus on that consumer and/or client that values these ways of contributing both with environmental and social causes when obtaining a piece from our brand, that represent the ethnic and environmentally responsible values that satisfy equally in a win-win relationship. Which is why our true North aims to each day increase production in this client-tailored sector, one who is committed with sustainable luxury, an unattended sector currently in our region.

**Level of innovation**

·         The decision to incorporate a natural raw material as particular as wood for the universe of fashion and sustainable luxury.

·         The study of the wood’s properties has allowed us to know, deepen and innovate our processes to design minaudières adapting them to the material.

·         Translating fundamental concepts from immensely artistically rich centuries linked to the Renaissance generating a utilitarian sense to the fashion and luxury universe.

·         “Handmade” is an extraordinarily valuable socio-cultural strategy.

·         Integrating artistic disciplines into motivational work and that of mixing in other practices of particular beauty and importance, allow to highlight the beauty of carving in each of our pieces. Goldsmith in metals, such as silver, creating locks to each of the pieces, the visual arts that make each minaudière contemporary, all of that also designed with our own tools adapting them with the purpose of achieving integral results, positioning them equally to high standards within the sustainable luxury concepts and global recognition confirmed through national and international awards, such as the Independent Handbag Designer Awards (NYC, 2013), as well as showcasing pieces in the Art Basel 2017 framework, Washington, D.C. museums like the Smithsonian Museum and others. Also be featured in national and international publications like Vogue, In Style, Marie Claire, NY Times, WWD, and others. All of this as testament to the creation of luxurious and recognition-worthy pieces.

·         Showcasing and commercializing our pieces as objects and accessories created with an indestructible seal of sustainability at luxury boutiques that combine traditional artistry and connect with our planet’s sustainable practices..

·         It is a fundamental parameter of extraordinary socio-cultural value that has allowed us to “make with the hands” to combine technology with the high global standards of sustainable luxury.

·         The goodwill and support towards the environmental and socio-cultural causes tailoring design towards the universe of sustainable, luxurious fashion.