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PLEASE YOUR SENSES...



Light - colours - materials - textures and weight - all affect and delight our senses. We are pleased to see the play of light in a layer of glass and pleased by a shape's supple curves, satisfying our sense of harmony. Yet we are also pleased to know that forty single Ghanaian women can now support themselves and pay for their children's schooling, thanks to a project partnership the women have entered into with Danida, Global Trade (a Bornholm fair-trade company) and Pernille Bülöw - who all saw the potential value of the fine craftsmanship of bead-making, developed over many generations.



THE AFRICAN VENTURE

As the Ghanaian women were poor, they were offered a loan to invest in their own tools and given training in making Pernille Bülöw's designs. The women are paid a fair price, i.e. four or five times that of normal daily wages. Pernille Bülöw estimates that the number of Ghanaian women involved in the project will soon have reached 200.

Ghanaian bead-making is a craft developed in the 16th century, after Portuguese fortune-hunters set foot on the coast of West Africa in pursuit of gold, bringing with them this colourful glass as a means of payment for native goods. Ghanaians adopted the new glass, particularly for making beads.

The raw material is quite simple and consists of old bottles and other waste glass crushed in a metal pail using a giant 'mortar' (an iron bar) to pulverise the glass. The powder is filtered and sprinkled into a clay mould perforated with tiny holes, and then a piece of straw is inserted in each hole. When the glass powder melts, the straw burns to ashes and leaves a hole.

This craft has been handed down over the generations and today it also serves as the basis for the production of beautiful new pieces of Pernille Bülöw jewellery by Rachel (right) and her colleagues.

