

SABRA SILK PRODUCED WITH AGAVE FIBERS IN MOROCCO

Fibres of the Agave, an aloe cactus grown in Mexico and today also harvested in many African and Asian countries, are well known and sought for the production of very resistant textiles, as the sisal, which is used in crafts and industry.

In Morocco, however, peasants and artisans were able to make an extraordinary invention consisting in harvesting the agave cacti fibres found in the Sahara Desert, to make silk.

Also known as Cactus Silk or Sabra Silk, it is a natural fibre very similar to the traditional silk for its soft, brilliant, and very resistant texture. Sabra silk today is used to produce blankets, cushions, bedspreads, carpets and decorative items like silk buttons of different shapes and colours.

Besides being beautiful, the silk is sought for its quality, strength and beauty since millennia. It is a completely functional textile, resistant, flexible and with a high elasticity, which also has a high moisture absorption that makes it virtually having no wrinkles. It has a high mechanical strength, thus it is used for making textiles and decorative elements requiring high durability. The silk can be washed at 30 degrees or dry-cleaned, and it is safe to iron on a low steam.

The fabric is a 100 percent vegetable silk made of agave fibres. The fabric is completely sustainable biodegradable and does not generate any allergy. The agave can be grown in very arid soils with organic, environmental friendly methods, returning it into a profitable production. The production of Cactus silk is part of the zero waste approach, as the ready-made garment can serve as organic fertilizer after use.

The production process of Sabra silk from agave fibres is hand-loomed in Morocco since centuries: the long spiky agave leaves are crushed and the fibres washed from the green parts and hammered, then the leaves are soaked in water to separate the white fibres and filaments to be crafted. In villages across the country making the fabric is a craftsmanship made in workshops equipped with small looms.

The production of vegetable dyes of different colours complements the silk product with an aesthetic and ecological added value.

This vegetable silk is attracting great interest in the world of high quality fashion for being a more attentive alternative to the environment. The manufacture of Sabra silk is an example of a



traditional know-how, still used by small producers and artisans, which succeeded in drawing the attention of the most demanding consumers and advanced trends for a sustainable world.

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