

Rebrand to Restart 再品牌化 重新啟動

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Recently I was approached by Gem-A's former Ethics and Sustainability Manager, Vivien Johnston to assist with a project that her new employer TDI (The Dragonfly Initiative) was working on. By their standards it was a relatively small project in Pakistan, but from the point of view of a gemmologist, it was a fascinating one. The clients' brief was simple. They wanted to create jewellery with emeralds from a region where they had a personal, historic connection and they wanted to do so in a way that would positively influence and improve the lives of women. They were women themselves who had 'made it' in business in Britain, achieving success through years of hard work and determination. It was important to them that whatever they did would be an exemplary illustration of what could be done when a business could hold up its procurement chain as a reason why a luxury, and thus discretionary, purchase could be so much more.

It is that thought that captivated me and it is more relevant now in these times of economic uncertainty than it was then. After all, how will our industry restart the wheels of commerce when we know that there are many cogs in the global jewellery production machine that are stuck or seized-up? Our big problem is that our end products are not vital to life. They do not feed and nourish the person who buys them, but they do nourish the person who produced the raw materials or who put together that end-product. Hong Kong may not have much to do with the production of raw materials, but it is certainly heavily invested in the manufacture and retail of these luxury items. Consumption of them is necessary for the nourishment and well-being of many.

So perhaps now is the time for the industry to highlight the efforts of the people behind the scenes who would not normally feature in the advertising of the brand. A careful image may have been crafted over decades convincing the consumer that their product's affiliation with a great sportsman, or the sport itself is a reason to buy it, or that the endorsement of a film-star allows the consumer to achieve some sort of proximity to the fame, money and adulation. But consumers are not stupid. They go along with this because it flatters them. That is the classic marketing for the previous generation; the traditional feel-good factor.

These are changed times.

Younger consumers already demand more social responsibility. Now is the time to remind consumers of who their purchase supports and why they should not feel guilty about purchasing jewellery at a time when people are struggling even if they themselves are not. Let us celebrate the artisanal and small miners who produce the majority of coloured gemstones, let us show respect and support for those cutters, polishers, enamellers, carvers, goldsmiths and setters who are the workers behind the brands and who need to be working again.

My trip to Pakistan resulted in a dream supply chain. The miners, safe and certified, sold to the cutter who ran a modern 'mother-friendly' facility with the highest of standards and who, in turn sold top-grade emeralds to TDI's client for their stunning start-up collection crafted in British workshops. Anyone making a purchase, could not only enjoy the pride and joy of owning a gorgeous new piece, they could also feel the glow of knowing they were the most important part of the emerald's journey from deep in the Swat mountains.



Fig. 1 (L) Fiza Ghat to Swat River, (M) Clipping rough Shadra, (R) Washing concentrate
(左) 巴基斯坦費薩加特到斯瓦特河，(中) 收集得的Shadra祖母綠原石，
(右) 洗滌原石

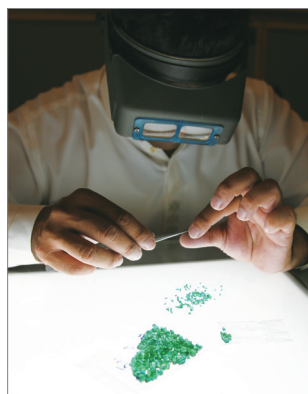


Fig. 2 (L) Sorting clipping, (M) Fine cut, workshop ladies, (R) Workshop emerald sorting
rough for faceting
(左) 分選原石，(中) 全女班精細切割工作坊，(右) 分選祖母綠毛胚，用於切磨



Fig. 3 (L) Shadra rough, (M&R) Fine cut, workshop lady
(左) Shadra祖母綠石胚，(中、右) 女工們在車間進行精細切磨

Let us be honest, they pulled the product. Along the way it was cleaned, cut and polished by a carefully selected chain of professionals all working to a credo of transparency, honesty and fairness.

I know I would feel better looking at a fine piece of jewellery and knowing my intimate connection to all the others who were a part of the finished jewel. It would make me feel more pride and pleasure than I would if the brand used a film-star to sell it to me. By showing consumers the faces behind a discretionary purchase, we can let them see why they are important to so many more than just the retail staff in front of them.

To this end it is time for us to re-evaluate our branding tactics by understanding what we should be endorsing. Our clients already know.

TDI (<https://tdi-sustainability.com/>) will be publishing a number of papers that everyone in our industry should read. They have been exhaustively researched and are the products of extensive consultation at every point in the supply chain. Read more here: <https://gemstones-and-jewellery.com/research/> Take a look at the work of Myne London here: <https://www.mynelondon.co.uk>