

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

powerHouse Books is pleased to announce the January 2004 release of

**In Her Hands  
Craftswomen Changing the  
World**

**By Paola Gianturco and Toby Tuttle**

**Forward by Alice Walker**



All over the world, from Latin America and Africa to Eastern Europe and Asia, women in developing economies endeavor to improve the lives of their families by creating and selling exquisite indigenous crafts. The weavers of Guatemala, the Ndebele beaders of South Africa, the flower painters of Poland, the batik artists of Indonesia, the dollmakers of Turkey, the mirror embroiderers of India- all these women artisans draw from past traditions as well as make eloquent contributions to the future of their children and their cultures. ***In Her Hands: Craftswomen Changing the World*** is a beautifully photographed documentary of ninety women living in twelve countries on four continents, revealing their diverse lives and surprisingly universal aspirations.

Often driven by the harsh realities of poverty, little education, and lack of even basic health care, these female artisans are motivated by the desire to provide for their children: to dress them properly, to feed them well, and most of all, to educate them. The need for social contact and a sense of community brings craftswomen together into groups, which in turn gives rise to microenterprises in developing countries. Numerous political and social organizations, including the United Nations, provide guidance and economic support, often in the form of small, short-term loans; thus cooperatives are created that strengthen and enrich cultural heritage as well as individual lives and fortunes.

Authors **Paola Gianturco** and **Toby Tuttle** spent five years photographing, interviewing, and writing about craftswomen for this volume. Within the book, the artisans' individual voices are heard describing their hopes, families, and daily lives; amusing, affecting

journal entries relate the authors' experiences and reflections. ***In Her Hands*** celebrates a different kind of women's movement—a movement in which mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and friends join together to create beautiful crafts that contribute to a better life for themselves and for future generations.

**PAOLA GIANTURCO** is the founder of The Gianturco Company, a marketing and communications firm in Mill Valley, California. She has co-taught courses about women and leadership at Mills College and the Stanford University Institute for Research on Women and Gender. Gianturco is also a director of International Nature & Culture Adventures. She is past chair and a current member of the board of the Crafts Center, a nonprofit organization that serves artisan members in seventy-nine countries.

**TOBY TUTTLE** is secretary-treasurer of the Lone Pine Group, an independent investment banking company in Evergreen, Colorado. Tuttle has held account management and media positions with advertising agencies in Seattle, Los Angeles, and Denver. In addition, she worked with Gianturco at the first women-owned advertising agency in the United States.

**ALICE WALKER** won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple* (Harcourt, 1982). Her other books are *The Temple of My Familiar* (Harcourt, 1989), *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (Harcourt, 1992), *By the Light of My Father's Smile* (Random House, 1998), and *The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart* (Random House, 2000). Her latest published work is a collection of poems called *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth: New Poems* (Random House, 2003).

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY/WOMEN'S STUDIES/ARTS & CRAFTS**

Paperback, 8.5 x 11.25 inches, 240 pages

224 four-color photographs

ISBN: 1-57687-184-3 \$35.00

**High-res scans to your specification are available upon request; scanning from the book or lifting images from the PDF file are strictly prohibited.**

**Mandatory credit line: from IN HER HANDS: CRAFTSWOMEN CHANGING THE WORLD, by Paola Gianturco and Toby Tuttle, published by powerHouse Books.**

**For more information**, please contact Sara Rosen, Publicity Director  
powerHouse Books, 68 Charlton Street, New York, NY 1014  
Tel: 212-604-9074, Fax: 212-366-5247, email: [sara@powerHouseBooks.com](mailto:sara@powerHouseBooks.com)

## HIGHLIGHTS

of craftswomen on four continents-  
from Latin America and Africa to Eastern Europe and Asia

---

In Her Hands engages the reader in the stories of such extraordinary women as:

- The weavers of Chimaltenango, Guatemala, who are victims of the 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. Hundreds of widows, as the sole support of their families, weave traditional local patterns into tablecloths, place mats, -and napkins using yarns that appeal to sophisticated contemporary consumers.
- The members of the "Mother's Clubs" are refugees who live in the shantytowns that surround Lima. Many of them, survivors of the terrorism of The Shining Path guerrillas, make *arpilleras*, which are three-dimensional fabric collages depicting life in the Peruvian countryside and the villages they left behind.
- The painters of Vnorovy, Czech Republic have a unique distinction: for the past 100 years, at least one woman in every household has created *Kraslice*, hand painted Easter Eggs. No two of their signature designs- white, yellow, red and black geometric and floral patterns -are alike.
- The Ndebele Bead Women of the village Waterval in South Africa create beautiful beaded dolls, jewelry, body and head ornaments, now central to their personal, cultural, religious and political identity, as well as being a source of income for the group. This intricate beadwork dates back to the sixteenth century when the Portuguese brought glass beads to southern Africa to trade for slaves and ivory.
- The doll-makers of Soganli, Turkey are the only wage earners in the village. Men work in the fields and gather firewood for their families, but there are no cash crops or " men's jobs" in manufacturing or construction to provide income. Fifty women (the town has only 50 families) create dolls dressed in bright silky costumes accented with sequins -much like the clothes they wear themselves.
- The 400 members, in nineteen Turkish villages, who belong to the DOBAG Rug Weaving Cooperative, use 3,000-year-old techniques that guarantee the rugs to last 200 years. One requirement for membership in the cooperative: the weaver's children must attend school and not be used as child laborers.
- The Hindu floral offering makers of Bali, Indonesia. Women on the island formerly spent up to a half of each day creating the intricate daily ritual offerings called for by their religion. Today, every morning, priest caste women sell these offerings (made from bamboo, flowers, leaves, fruit and grains) in the market.

- The Zulu basket weavers of Durban, South Africa use 45 different reeds, rushes, palms and grasses to weave geometrically patterned baskets and mats that are collected by galleries and museums around the world.
- The Hill Tribe needleworkers of Northern Thailand who live in villages founded by the country's royal family. Women's sewing and men's silversmithing have replaced the traditional opium growing as the area's " cash crop." In another part of Thailand, craftswomen who participate in the "Women Against AIDS" program create gift items covered with batik-painted Sa (mulberry) paper, earning enough money to prevent numerous families from selling their daughters into prostitution.
- In Gujarat, India, members of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an unusual trade union that works with tribes in the desert Kachchh district near the Pakistan border. SEW A helps these women, many of whom, until recently, lived behind the veil in Purdah, to market the glittery mirrored embroidered fashion and home accessories that they create.

Other craftswomen chronicled by the authors include: the Quechua knitters of southern Bolivia who make brightly colored doll shaped purses for sale to tourists and the Kuna Indians of the San Blas Archipelago off the coast of Panama who create intricate molas, layered and appliqued fabric pictures traditionally incorporated into blouses. The authors also visited the Cuyuscate weavers of Guatemala, the Shipibo potters of the Amazon Basin in Peru, the floral painters of Poland, the Shona artists of Zimbabwe, and the batikers of Java.