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## WEAVING THE RUG STORY

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# Rosana Escobar

Working between Colombia and Germany, Rosana Escobar seeks to develop an all-inclusive vision of sustainability and circular manufacture, linking farming, science and design

**R**osana Escobar sees herself as a bridge between disciplines, a biologist and textile designer who thinks about materials as living ecosystems. Born in Colombia, she visits the territories from which materials originate, to explore the interwoven relations between materials, people and ecosystems. She gives materials a second chance, finding beauty in the raw while telling local narratives in new ways.

Colombia, the location of her atelier, is one of the most biodiverse ecosystems in the world. Meanwhile, Secondary RAW, a studio founded in collaboration with Zoa Lu Rosenkranz in Berlin with the support of Design Farm, combines fieldwork with a hands-on method to focus on the research and development of circular and traceable materials, harvested from secondary sources. 'We spread our love for fibres and materials through touch-based aesthetic experience and thoughtful collaborations,' says Escobar.

She regards sustainability as involving the communities that we are part of, the food we eat, the clothes we wear. With

the fast, mass-production pace of today, people are part of an untraceable, disconnected, driven economy that values productivity over resources. To create regenerative and sustainable economies there is a need for collaboration, an urgency to restore our relationship to local ecosystems, to dissolve the boundaries between disciplines.

Escobar believes that collaboration is essential to creating something meaningful and powerful. 'Sharing skills and cultural knowledge makes us more aware and inclusive. It is one of the ways we can benefit from the globalised and the interconnected world that we live in. I also think that we need to expand our vision of collaboration

towards other species. And research how we can build relationships where have a positive impact not only to our own advantage but to the benefit of other species.

'With the technology that we have developed,' she says, 'we can grow and collaborate with, for example, bacteria that develop membranes and natural colours, the mycelium that works as a natural glue to bind materials together.'

Designers need to become researchers, able to test and experiment, thus losing the boundaries between science and design. Collaborative practices must be developed to create new materials. There is already much innovation of materials, but a link is missing regarding

how they can be integrated in the system. Design needs to create collaborations between sectors that seem unrelated but that could benefit from each other to create circular economies.

Escobar is sure that her efforts have positive implications for coffee growers and the farmers that grow the fique plants. 'I think in a way my work can bring visibility to and share the stories of the farmers. The value of the material can only change when we begin to see its beauty. And sometimes an external view can bring to the local realities a fresh perspective on what they already know but take for granted—when the value is not in relation to the market but connected to their traditions.' *Marcella Echavarría*  
**@escobaryrosas**

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01 Poncho en cobre y fique, Rosana Escobar

02 Librería de brochas, Rosana Escobar