

## Artisans and Designers from Putumayo and Middle Magdalena Valley Participate in Vancouver Fashion Week 2023

- Colombian designer Juan Pablo Socarrás, and his brand SOCARRÁS, in partnership with Indigenous designers from Gran Tierra Energy's *Hilos de la Tierra* project presented the "Cecilia collection" on October 17 at **Vancouver Fashion Week** in Vancouver, Canada. The show is the third largest fashion show in North America.
- Gran Tierra Energy sponsored three artisans from participating communities of the *Hilos de la Tierra* project to travel to Vancouver to participate and see their work walk the runway at Vancouver Fashion Week.
- *Hilos de la Tierra* is an ongoing project developed by Gran Tierra Energy and is implemented in partnership with the World Women's Corporation of Colombia (CMMC). The project brought together this creative collaboration with SOCARRÁS and is centered around local artisans from the Putumayo and the Middle Magdalena regions. Through this project, communities have been able to acquire new knowledge, improve their skills, increase their economic incomes, and recognize their work as a valuable contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of their communities.

**Bogotá, Tuesday October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023.** Three local artisans and designers from the Putumayo and Middle Magdalena Valley traveled to Vancouver, Canada last week to present with Colombian designer Juan Pablo Socarrás the "Cecilia collection" at Vancouver Fashion Week. This creative collaboration centered around local artisans from the *Hilos de la Tierra* project and focused on the preservation of Colombian culture, tradition, and ancestral knowledge.

*Hilos de la Tierra* is an ongoing project developed by Gran Tierra Energy (GTE) and is implemented in partnership with the World Women's Corporation of Colombia. In the Putumayo, the program works with artisans and Indigenous women's and men's groups to make handcrafted designs using natural fibers, dyes, seeds and recycled goods to help facilitate the recovery of ancestral practices. In the Middle Magdalena Valley, the program works with vulnerable women dedicated to fashion. SOCARRÁS and the "Cecilia collection" is proud to feature the intricate work of traditional artisans as they seek to preserve their cultures and share stories about their lived experiences as a way to inform and educate new generations.

Through the project, communities have been able to acquire new knowledge, improve their skills, increase their economic incomes, and recognize their work as a valuable contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of their communities. Karmina Medina from

San Martin, Middle Magdalena Valley participated in the event and said, “This was a very enriching life experience from a personal and professional point of view. Being able to be part of the Cecilia collection in Vancouver was simply wonderful. During the event I was able to learn about the logistics and all of the backstage work required for an international runway. It was also incredible to see how, in one of the most important markets in Vancouver, there are clothing stores with dresses very similar to the ones I produce. That allowed me to be inspired and dream of trying to grow my business even more and one day be able to sell my clothes in other countries, to have a higher income and generate more local employment in my own town.”

Diego Perez-Claramunt, Vice President, HSE & Corporate Social Responsibility of Gran Tierra Energy stated, “At Gran Tierra we are beyond proud to see the exceptional work of our neighbours shine on the international fashion runway. This project is a great example of how partnerships between GTE and local communities can result in concrete actions that change the lives of hundreds of people. Gran Tierra will continue supporting local entrepreneurs through strategic and sustainable social investment programs, always with the objective of maximizing the economic development benefits as a result of our presence.”

The “Cecilia collection” combines exceptional artisan skills including crochet, embroidery, bead weaving, natural dyes and trends such as fringes and mesh. They have all been contributed through the active collaboration of 7 Indigenous communities of Putumayo: Kiwe Nxusxa, Huasipungo, Saladilloiaco, San Miguel de la Castellana, Kiparado, Awá, Caña Bravita and Bourdines and 65 women, mothers, heads of families and victims of conflict in the Middle Magdalena Valley. The collection is built into 4 moments that weave the textural and chromatic transition: fire, earth, air and water. These elements grant their ancestral and natural power to the woman who travels through her territory dressing her origins. “Cecilia” pays tribute to the traveling woman, caretaker of the world, loyal and hardworking, who accumulates stories and has a deep love for culture, traditions and their preservation.

This collaboration is a milestone in promoting cultural diversity, sustainability and fashion with a purpose. It is just one example of Gran Tierra’s “Beyond Compliance” philosophy, in which the company focuses on investments and operating practices that are responsible, meaningful and sustainable. Gran Tierra voluntarily goes beyond what is legally required in their social investments in order to provide significant opportunities and benefits to communities, because it is the right thing to do. Gran Tierra Energy, the CMMC, designer Juan Pablo Socarrás and the *Hilos de la Tierra* project are excited to share this unique partnership with the world and will continue promoting the value of fashion design and the preservation of the cultural roots of Colombia's communities.

### **About Juan Pablo Socarrás**

Designer and entrepreneur with more than 17 years of experience leading transformation and social impact projects through the design and creation of collections that connect with artisanal, Indigenous, Afro-descendant, and traditional communities in Latin America.



**SOCARRÁS**

As an expert consultant, he has supported international organizations such as the International Development Bank, USAID, Women Together, the World Corporation for Women Colombia, among others, in the design, construction and implementation of projects on topics such as economic and productive empowerment that promote sustainable development of communities, gender equality and poverty reduction.