Inspired by our Somali heritage and adapted to modern trends, NYOTA FARSAMO makes high quality handmade home décor items and accessories.
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ABOUT US

Founded in 2018, NYOTA FARSAMO is a Somali-Kenyan artisan collective from Dadaab, a town in north-east Kenya turned refugee camp in 1991. Made up of 48 women and two men, we work together to make beautifully handmade home décor products inspired by our common Somali heritage. Our product collection includes coiled baskets, plaited floor mats and baskets, striking tie dye textiles, intricately carved wooden spoons and more!

NYOTA means “star” in Swahili and FARSAMO means “artisan” in Somali – this combination of Swahili and Somali represents the mixed cultures of the collective. With our handwork, we hope to share the beauty and story of our culture and improve our challenging situation in Dadaab by reaching out to markets in Kenya and internationally.
OUR SOMALI HERITAGE

With our handmade products, NYOTA FARSAMO hopes to share the artisanal heritage, history and culture of Somalia. Unfortunately, times of conflict usually are moments when countries lose a large part of their cultural property and heritage. NYOTA FARSOMA hopes to contribute to its survival.

Some of the skillsets featured in NYOTA FARSAMO’s handmade objects are inherent to Somali culture. These include: tie dye, plaited basketry, coiled basketry and woodwork designs. The NYOTA FARSAMO collective seeks to integrate its Somali heritage with contemporary design aesthetics to create coveted artisanal products that are both traditional and cool.
OUR SKILLS & PRODUCTS

Inspired by our Somali heritage and adapted to modern trends, NYOTA FARSAMO makes a variety of high quality contemporary handmade home décor items and accessories.

Using skillsets which have been passed down by our mothers, relatives or neighbours, we have developed four main product categories.

COILING

PRODUCTS: baskets, placemats and decorative mats.

Coiling is a traditional basketry technique which in Somali culture is used to make containers to contain camel milk and food. Coiling consists in building a basket beginning at the centre by wrapping fibres round in a circle.

At NYOTA FARSAMO, we make coiled baskets of various sizes, placemats and decorative circle wall hangings.
TIE & DYE

PRODUCTS: scarves, pillows, tote bags, fabric by the meter.

Somali’s love tie dye! We use this technique to make colourful scarves and dresses for ourselves. At NYOTA FARSAMO, we use tie dye to make scarves, pillows, tote bags and fabric by the meter.
HAND-PLAITING

PRODUCTS: floor mats, floor pillows and baskets.

Plaiting consists in carefully braiding together different strands of fibre to make a strip. We then braid the strips together to make rectangular floor mats or coil the strips to make round or oval floor mats. We can also make plaited baskets.

Traditionally, the plaiting skill is used to make floor mats which are used as prayer mats.
WOOD WORK

PRODUCTS: ornate wooden utensils.

Making objects out of wood has always been part of the Somali heritage.

The men of the NYOTA FARSAMO group use wood collected in Dadaab. Inspired by traditional Somali designs, they make wooden spoons with intricately handcarved details.
LIVING & WORKING IN DADAAB

Dadaab is one of the world’s largest refugee camps located in north-east Kenya – with a population of nearly 200,000 people in 2018. The camp was established following the 1991 civil war in Somalia. The camp is now nearly 30 years old, and hosts first, second and third generation Somali refugees across four different camps and is also home to local Kenyans living in Dadaab town. The land is desertic, but some areas are filled with shrubs and one can spot roaming wild camels and giraffes.

Being in Dadaab can make accessing raw materials a challenge. However we do our best to work with locally available material. We use the bus connection between Dadaab and Nairobi to ship our goods to clients.

The development of the NYOTA FARSAMO Dadaab collective was supported by the International Trade Centre, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Dutch Government.
OUR PARTNERS

Throughout our journey, the five groups which make up NYOTA FARSAMO have received mentorship and support from different organisations, experts and brands. We thank them fully for their guidance.

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