

Taracea making



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1. Geographic area

Today, taracea remains traditional in **Granada and Damascus** . And its beauty is appreciated in places all over the world. It is **endangered**, as it is a very laborious craftsmanship technique that is increasingly falling into disuse . In **Granada** there are still artisans who make authentic works of art with this technique.



2. Craft characteristics

- It is an ornamental technique consisting of inlaying small **pieces of wood**, mother-of-pearl, bone or other materials into **objects such as doors, walls and arches**.
- In the work, cut pieces of materials of different **colors** (wood, shell, mother of pearl, ivory or metals) are used, which fit into a **wooden support** until the decorative design is carried out.
- Between some pieces and others a **contrast effect is created** that depends on the color, brightness, texture, betas ... of the materials used.



3. The technique

The mosaics are formed with geometric strips of the woods and materials chosen. They are **glued from the inside to outside** and attach layers to the desired design . Later , **cut into plates** to combine several of them to decorate the piece.



The finishes chosen for the pieces after they are sanded and polished, are **the ancestral varnished to wrist** that achieves a **matt finish or the polyester** that offers a more durable finish with **shine**.



4. Used materials

For the realization of works of taracea, it is required the use of **fine wood veneers** of various species, such as **walnut, beech, ebony**, of those used in carpentry to veneer furniture.



You can also use other types of materials, such as **ivory or metal** (especially when it comes to true taracea, that is, incriminating the pieces in the base wood)



5. History

No less than 5000 years ago, works of taracea had already been made in the Sumerian period in **Mesopotamia**.

From Mesopotamia it spread throughout the Middle East, later the **Greeks** learned it and from these it passed to the **Romans**.

The Arabs learned it from the Romans and Byzantines and introduced it to **Spain**, which is why it derives from the Arabic word “Tar'sia”, which means inlay.

The taracea is the **Granada** handicraft that best represents us, as it reflects the influence of **ALHAMBRA**. The designs used are the same as those used in the decoration of the Alhambra, furniture and ceilings in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.



6. YouTube videos

This video is about an interview with **Miguel Laguna**, craftsman of the Tarcea, who tells us about his own carving located in Granada where he works for this important craft activity **does not disappear.**

We explain the **materials** we use (such as bones or metal), **how** is the **procedure**, **how long it takes to make** a piece and also shows us a reconstruction of the **furniture** that was in the **Alhambra during the Nasrid reign.**



7. Gallery

