

The Thinking Watermill Society | May 2021

Interview With Ms Karina Díaz Vargas

(Chief Executive Officer at Costa Rica Fashion Week, Expert in Fashion, Jewellery Designer, Mentor and Coach)

Author: Maria Angela Maina

(Chief Research Coordinator- Africa at The Thinking Watermill Society)



**The Thinking
Watermill Society**

Introduction

It is truly a great honour to interact with a brilliant expert in fashion and high-end jewellery. In this interview, **The Thinking Watermill Society** has an opportunity to converse with **Ms Karina Díaz Vargas** on her expertise in the fashion and jewellery industry in light of her experience as the Chief Executive Officer at Costa Rica Fashion Week, a fashion designer and brand owner/designer at Jasmyn Jewelry.

The aim of this interview is to illustrate the importance of having ethical and sustainable standards to realize personal, national and global development goals. Furthermore, she gives us a deeper insight into the Costa Rican Fashion Industry. In this interview, Ms Karina Díaz Vargas aims to show the importance of pursuing your passion while making a difference to society.

1. You are a multi-faceted professional in the fashion and jewellery industry. How did your experiences lead you to focus on these areas?

Since I was a child, I've always loved fashion and design. Gabrielle Chanel's story has inspired me a lot and my first bag collection was inspired by her amazing designs. In Costa Rica, the fashion industry was not good when I finished fashion school, that's why I moved to another kind of business. Two years ago, I realized that I had to return to my real passion — fashion! I am happier than ever now that I am doing what I love!

2. Costa Rica Fashion Week (CRFW) is the fashion event with the longest history in Costa Rica and Central America. What is the importance of CRFW to the growth and development of the Central American fashion industry?

In Costa Rica, fashion design has evolved a lot, though we are still far away from being an international fashion capital. This industry opens a space for generating new

jobs and being an important part of the economy. The worldwide fashion industry moves billions of dollars, and Costa Rica doesn't want to be left behind. But, the necessity of education, better professionals and good exposition for national designers doesn't help. We as CRWF are engaged with every person in the fashion industry, we want to make Costa Rica a fashion reference.



3. You are now the Chief Executive Officer at the Costa Rica Fashion Week which also focuses on advising and assisting the development of new brands, designers and a Costa Rican textile industry. What principles and values do you apply to help CRFW achieve this in the long run?

We have three big principles: Quality, Creativity and Sustainability. With these, we create an environment for new talent. In that way we have a beautiful community that grows and becomes successful.



4. In 2017, Vogue Magazine stated that San José is where the future of sustainable fashion is. Currently, has there been a growth of Sustainable Fashion in Costa Rica as a whole?

Yes, definitely! The fashion designers are all looking for new alternatives hoping for a more sustainable country. We are all getting more aware of the necessity of change. It's clear how new sustainable fabric is getting more popular, and most importantly, preferred over other fabrics.



5. In your view, do the Costa Rican fashion consumers, both locally and internationally, value eco-conscious products? How can this change or improve?

I think that everyone knows the importance of eco-conscious products. What happens is that prices are always high. We can improve this by looking for other eco-conscious alternatives that are not that expensive.

6. I find it notable that you are also a high-end bracelet designer at your brand, Jasmyn Jewelry. This is a unique and powerful niche. Most of your designs use Swarovski crystals, cultured pearls, quartz and onyx stones. May you tell us your thoughts on the importance of ethical product sourcing in a jewellery business?

Ethical product sourcing is very important in the jewellery business because we have to think about everyone that's behind a pearl or a Swarovski.

I make sure that every little piece of jewellery that I use is paid in a fair way from an artisan to a company. Ethics is very important in every business and I make sure that my own brand follows every protocol and supports every provider.



Jasmyn



7. To follow up, what valuable lessons have you learnt from running your own jewellery brand?

I learned that sometimes we don't really value handmade work. The technique, the time; those are all things that we sometimes don't notice, and with my jewellery brand I lived all that.

8. I greatly admire that Jasmyn Jewelry is grounded on your passion for women empowerment. How does your brand work with local Costa Rican women to achieve this goal?

My work is made exclusively by jail women. This is a very under-valued sector. Many of these women need money to help their families. With my work, they generate money and invest their time in good activities.

9. What inspired your collaboration with the Costa Rica Ministry of Justice and Peace in working with prisoners to develop your jewellery pieces?

When I first visited the jail for women, I was shocked by how no one remembers this part of society and how sad they were. I knew there was a lot of talent. I made a proposal, they accepted me, and I really think that seeing them work makes me *very* happy.

Read More about Karina's Initiative [HERE](#).



Jasmyn

10. You are the owner of DK Promo company, which focuses on promotional and advertising articles based on the values of responsibility, trust and professionalism. What is your view on the importance of marketing to bridge the gap between brands and consumers by providing knowledge on the sustainability and ethical aspects of a product?

It's very important to know the ethical and sustainable aspects of a product or service before promoting it. It's wrong to promote something that goes against my values.



11. What do you look forward to the most in the Costa Rican fashion and jewellery industry today?

I look forward to new entrepreneurs and new women using their creativity. I look forward to more original and quality designs. These are all things that I know that can happen with all the women in my beautiful country.



Thank you for your cooperation, on behalf of The Thinking Watermill Society. All the best in your current and future endeavours, Ms Karina Díaz Vargas.



Learn More About Karina Díaz Vargas

[VISIT KARINA DÍAZ VARGAS](#)



About The Thinking Watermill Society

The Thinking Watermill Society is a non-profit organization. In particular, it promotes the debate and exchange of ideas among its members regarding the changes underway in the economic, cultural and social landscape, together with the analysis of the consequences that said changes entail, so as to identify the possible opportunities of economic, cultural and social growth related to said changes.

Our headquarters are in Rome, Italy.

Get Involved

Get yourself in gear!

Share your ideas and follow us on LinkedIn, YouTube and Spreaker.

If you wish to have more information on our activities or become a friend of our organization (a Watermill Thinker) or propose a project that you are willing to support.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

[CONTACT US](#)



"Ideas are what make us human. Ideas do not get handed to us by elites, the rich or the powerful. Ideas are not bounded by colour, race, gender or religion."