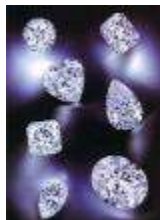


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Honour your ancestors by turning their ashes into diamonds!



London, Nov 26: Mexico, a country with a deeply rooted Catholicism, well known for its ancestral traditions involving the cult of their dead, is now embracing new ways of honouring them.

For those Mexicans who want to keep more than memories, or an urn of ashes- there is now an alternative, having their loved one's ashes turned into a diamond.

The Swiss company Algordanza, founded in 2004 with a presence in 14 countries, have started operations in Mexico to offer its customers the possibility of turning ashes of their deceased relatives into small diamonds ranging from 0.3 to 1 carats.

"Actually, what we do is nothing else than making synthetic diamonds with the difference that the carbon we use comes out from the cremation ashes of humans" said Rinaldo Willy, executive director of Algordanza in Switzerland and one of the creators of the concept.

Mexico is the first country in the American Continent where the company has established operations and will be a trial location to evaluate the market for possible expansion in other countries of Latin America.

Rafael Lopez, director of Algordanza in Mexico said the reason why they chose to establish their first operation in Mexico was because they recognised that Mexico held strong and important family ties that bonded them forever to our loved ones.

However the reactions of the public were different.

When she heard about the product, a Mexican Catholic, Maria de la Luz Hernandez said: "It is not true that those are real diamonds, modernisation is taking away from us, the Mexican people what we are, our roots, a land with Mexican traditions of respect. "

Mexico is home to one of the largest Catholic communities in the world and has deeply embedded ancestral traditions.

The Catholic church seems to be more open minded to the issues contrary to its followers, some see the product as an acceptable way to solve one of Mexico's untaged problems: saturation in the cemeteries.

The diamonds are obtained from the carbon extracted from ashes.

The process begins once the customer expresses its desire to obtain a diamond, the ashes of its relative are transported to a laboratory in Neuchatel, Switzerland where the ashes are tested to determine the quantity of carbon of its components.

Once this is done the ashes are submitted to a process of transformation that includes exposure to high temperature and pressure.

Once the rough diamond is obtained, it is polished and cut according to the specifications of the client.

The whole process takes some 12 weeks from the reception of the ashes to the delivery of the diamond to the client.

The cost varies accordingly to the karats requested and ranges from 4,900 dollars (US) to 11,000 dollars what makes this a product aimed to a wealthy segment of the population.

The company did not release any estimates on the number of diamonds it has made so far. But to illustrate the impact it has, a spokesman for the company said in Japan alone the monthly demand is around 100 diamonds.

Algordanza operates in Switzerland, Germany, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Eslovaquia, Spain, France, Holland, Japan, Luxemburg, Portugal, Check Republic, Thailand and now Mexico.

Some 70 percent of Algordanza's clients are widows who want diamonds out of their husband's ashes.

Perhaps their husbands didn't give them enough rocks of their own.

Bureau Report