



MEETING THE ARTISAN

Clotide's Story

As shared through her own
photographs & words



Set Free
INTERNATIONAL

where women artisans meet global markets



MISSION STATEMENT

To respond to the cry of women worldwide who live in restrictive or oppressive environments due to poverty or sociopolitical factors.

By marketing their native skills in authentic and innovative product formats, Set Free International will connect these women to a world of customers formerly closed to them.

Our products will be priced to reflect the value provided and the freedom derived.

High in the southern mountains of Haiti . . .

there is a group of women with extraordinary beauty, strength, and skill. Though the terrain of their community is difficult and isolated, their homes often decrepit or in need of repair, and their formal educations generally lacking - these women have grown and excelled, through dignity and determination in their skills of artistry and appliqué. Today, their works stand amongst the best in the world.

It is our greatest joy at Set Free International to bring the beautiful art of these women to you - and through your purchase, to return to each artisan a payment that goes well beyond a living wage in order to gain a sustainable and hope-filled future for these women and their families.

It is also our joy to introduce these women to you on an individual level. Through her own personal photographs and statements that follow, you will meet the artisan, Clotide Albéréna. To further explore a communication with this artisan, visit: www.setfreeinternational.com.

A beautiful day for me would be a gathering.

Just like when we gather here together - as a group of women - I dream we could sit together in another country, meeting other women from other places; we could talk about our countries, and we could share our lives and our dreams.

I would want to share with everyone what God has done for me.



This is the river in our community. This is where we wash and where we go to find water. And this is where we cross to join with our community members on the other side.

This is our family's horse. I use her to go to the market. She helps me carry my loads so that I can do business in town.



A while ago I had become very sick.

I was put on a motorcycle to go to the hospital - but I was nearly dead. It wasn't until I was in the hospital with an IV in my arm that I woke up and discovered where I was.

Because of diseases that struck my family, we were forced to sell the goats that we had planned on selling for my children's education.

Every time I have tried to do better in my life – a disease or a new problem will come for me and my children.

Our money just evaporates. My child had also become very ill. One day he couldn't breathe and we had to rush to the hospital. He stayed there for three days and I was forced to take out a loan to pay for his recovery. The loan held me down; I was indebted to the loan and was paying \$45 every month to try to pay it off.

But now - through Set Free International - I am receiving money for the work I have done on the skirts. After that money, I was finally able to pay off the loans that I took.

Now I feel free! I feel so good to be free!



These are my two sons,
Evans and Reginal. They
are putting together a fire
to make food for us to eat.
I love them so much.

I love the coconut tree
because it gives us fruit.
I can make food with it, or I
can sell it. I love it so much.



Now, my life and my work make me so proud.

Before I used to work what we call “avanjou” or weeding other people’s lands. I worked very hard, in the sun, in the earth. I used to be drowned in the sun - it would dry me out in avanjou.

But now, I can sit in the shade where the sun cannot eat me. I can bathe before I go to work, and then sit in a beautiful place to do my appliqué. I can sit, work, and watch the children play in the neighborhood.

This makes me so proud.

A strong woman manages to do things on her own.

A strong woman is one who, when her husband is not around, she doesn't wait for him to do certain things. She does them on her own. If her family is hungry, she can go out and dig deep down in the rock hardened dirt to find yams and food. She can manage to do it on her own - to put food on the table and feed her family.



These are two of my friends who are making food for the school in our community. We, the people of Lougou, built the school ourselves. One day my youngest child will attend here too.

This is me Clotide, and my friend Mariette. We are putting together the skirts we have sewn. I am arranging this skirt for our future.



I first started doing applique just because I liked it.
I didn't think I'd make any money from it.

But then I realized - my gosh - this is a beautiful thing and it can help me a lot: with my family, my kids, my husband. It could help me pay for my children's school.

It's helping me a lot because there used to be things I couldn't resolve. But now, with what I am doing - I can find those solutions.

My family loves what I do a lot.

My mother in law used to complain about when I would go to do appliqué. She would say, "What takes you so long - you are gone all day!" But now, she is happy to see me sew.

My husband used to be the same. He used to say when I went to appliqué, that I wasn't doing anything. Now, even if I tell him that I have to spend three days away in appliqué, he would be very happy.

Now that I know appliqué too - I can teach other people to learn as well. I can help my whole community this way.



These are my two daughters, Yvelin and Sami, holding one of my nephews. They are all friends. I love them all so so much and I would love for them to continue to advance.

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