



MEETING THE ARTISAN

Gertha'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 Gertha Verdier. To further explore a communication with this artisan, please visit: www.setfreeinternational.com.

My name is Gertha.

I am a youth who is learning to sew applique.

I know that appliqué is something that can help me more in life. I began learning to sew appliqué a few years ago. For me, it wasn't too difficult to learn because it is something that I really loved doing - so I learned it quickly.

My sisters have asked me to teach them appliqué now too. They really appreciate my work.



I love this sewing to admire
because this is a great
in Louisa, artists that we
leave in the sewing wayserl
really love sewing at all.

These are my two teachers.
They taught me how to do
appliqué.



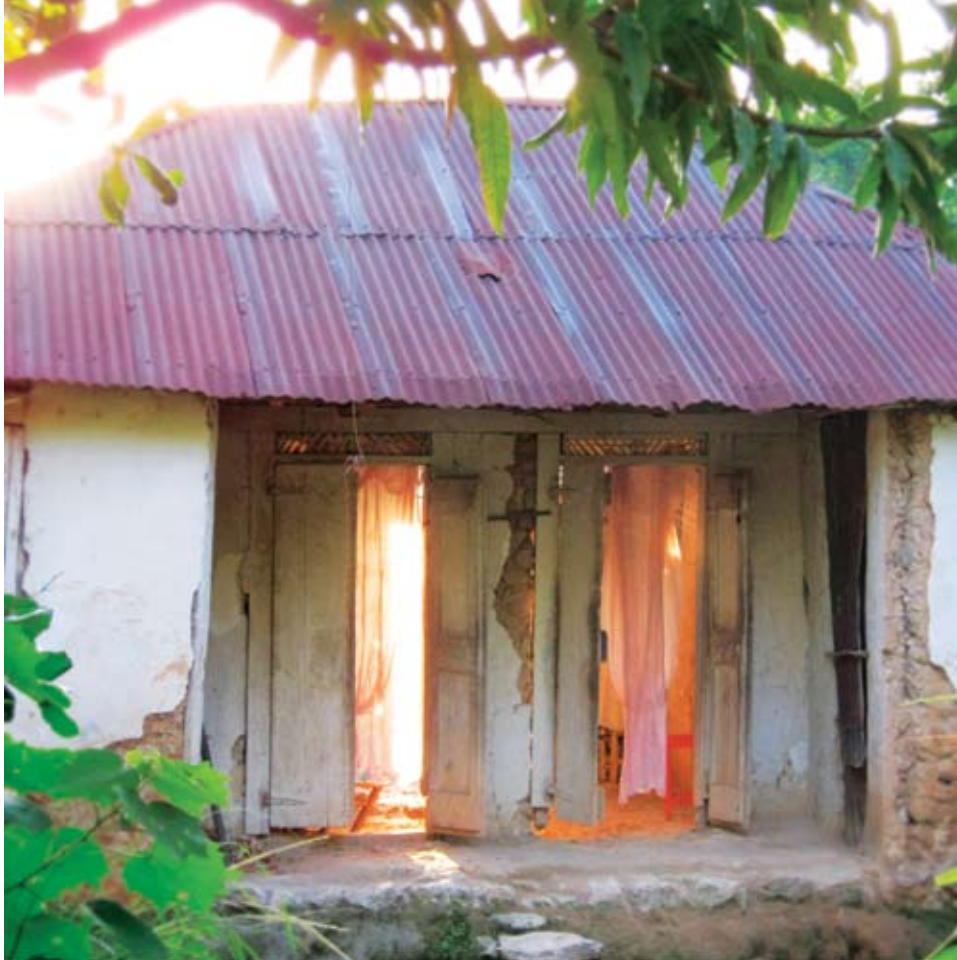
Learning how to sew has made me so proud.

I used to see beautiful dresses on other women and I would always wonder - how did they make that?? But now, I am going to school to learn how to sew and I am really advancing. I even made a dress for myself. I am very proud of that.

Most of my siblings have moved away to Port au Prince.

I have two brothers and two sisters who live in Port au Prince now, but I live here in Lougou with one of my brothers and my mother. We live with my aunt and uncle's family too.

I love my mother so much because she is the only person I have. I don't have a father now. He died in 2005.



This is my house.
When the earthquake struck it broke many parts of our house and made it like this. There are seven of us who live here.

This is my mother making coffee for us to drink. She does this for us every morning because she knows how much I love coffee.



When I am paid for my work, it helps our whole family.

Whenever I am sewing all day, my mother always helps to find me food to eat so I can continue my work. She knows I won't have the time to cook for myself - so she helps me out. She is really supportive of me because she knows that my appliqué can help support us all.

I think a strong woman is one who is able to stand.

When things are not going well at home - there might be sick people, or people needing help - a strong woman is able to stand. She doesn't fall apart. She finds medicines or does what is needed.

With death it's the same. A strong woman is able to stand on her feet and make things happen - even in the midst of chaos.



My cousin and my aunt were on their way to a community meeting near the water basin. I really love them - and they really love their community.

These children were hanging out near my house talking about school. When I saw them there, I thought they were really beautiful together, so I took their photo.



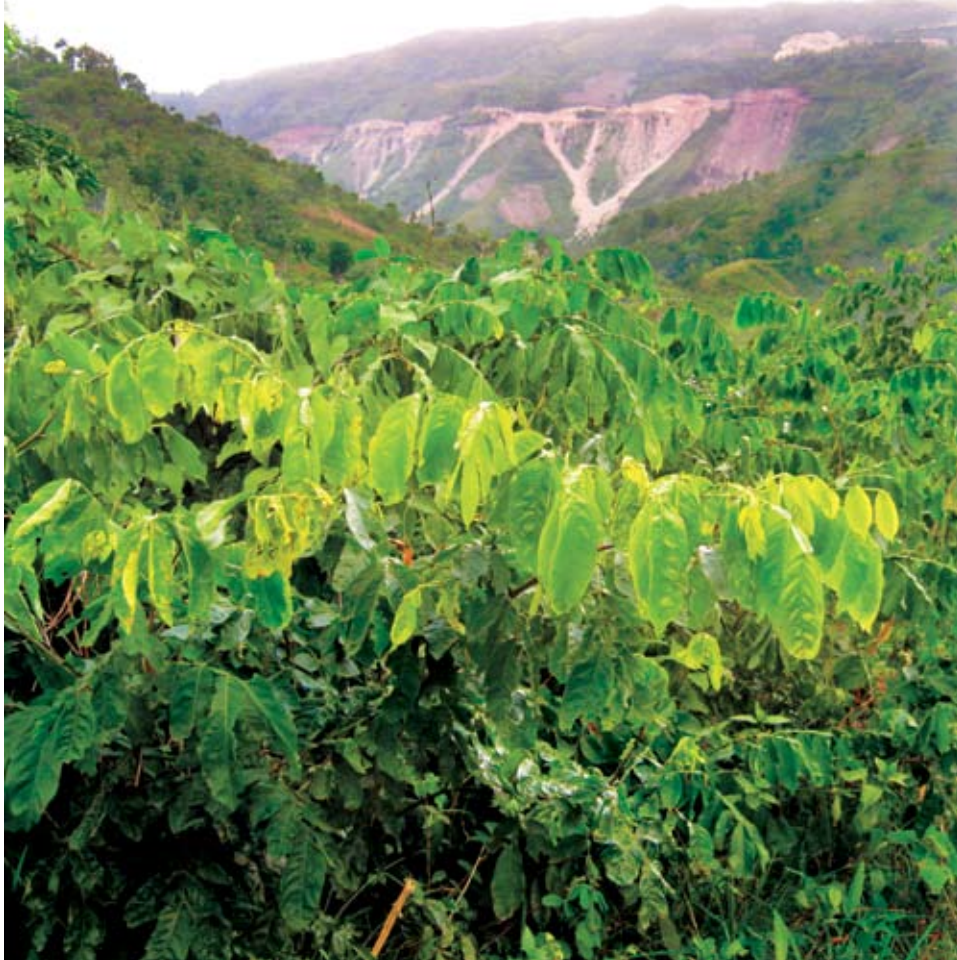
I believe my role is to be involved in my community.

I want to participate in every activity the community is doing. I would love for our community to be clean, beautiful, and advanced in every possible way.

A great day for me is to be able to praise God . . .

In a great day I would get up and go to church - to sing and pray - and praise God.
It makes me feel so happy and at ease.

I would also love to see another country one day - or another place full of beauty.
I would love to travel and feel at peace.



This is a photo that I took near my house. When I'm not doing anything, I come here to look out at the nature all around us.

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