



MEETING THE ARTISAN

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

My family comes from poverty.

I have three sisters and four brothers, but none of us ever had a chance to learn something (skilled). I hope that my children will be able to learn and have a trade of their own; I wish this for all of my daughters and sons. I have four daughters and three sons. The oldest is 24 years old, and my youngest is only five months.



This is my daughter.
She is going to school.

My son and daughter wanted their photo taken together. He is 20 and she is 17. They are both going to school. My daughter is going to one of the best schools in Haiti, Maznod.



I have hope for my family.

I would like them to learn some thing and make something of themselves - especially my daughters - for them to respect themselves and to focus on their studies so they can become something tomorrow. So that one day when we adults are no longer here, our kids will be able to take care of themselves.

If I was easily discouraged I wouldn't be here now.

I was almost at my due date with Danli while finishing this skirt. Still, I would brave myself and walk to our teacher's house where the materials were to sew more each day until I finished. I learned to sew because I always wanted to sew for my children and others. My goal is to one day have a sewing machine and to sew my children's clothes. But that requires patience.

Now I know that I am good at sewing and I like to do it. But when I first started, the teacher always used to tell me I couldn't sew. She'd say to me, "You're back. I told you, you can't do it. Why do you keep coming?" But I kept trying. Others quit from disbelief and disappointment, but I kept trying. When all the others were done with the teacher, I was the only one to keep coming around.



This is my child. He was crying for milk and so I am feeding him. I have fed him for over six months now. His name is Danli.

This is my home.
There are 11 people living
in it. I constructed it myself
with my husband.



I imagine that one day ...

we could have a house that is bigger and more beautiful, so that we could live more at ease as a family. I imagine having all the means to raise my children and to provide for their needs.

But for now when I imagine a great day, it is a Sunday. I would get up, get all dressed, and go to church. I would pray to God and give him thanks. I would tell him about my worries and after that I would go home.

My husband is very supportive of my work.

Before, I used to go out a lot in the rara parties. Whenever I came home we would always have arguments. But now he knows that I am occupied with appliqué and so there aren't any arguments anymore. He knows that it is good for me, for him, and for our family—and that it is good financially. So there is no resentment at all now.



This is my husband.
He is holding our child.

This is a photo of my friend. She is cooking beside my son, Danli.



A strong woman works hard.

My average day is busy with many good things. I wake up and begin my work around the house (cleaning, making food, etc.) I work the land and take the animals to pasture until noon. I sit with friends and tell jokes. I sew and I cook dinner.

A strong woman works hard and is involved in many activities. She is not afraid to work hard.

We have a lot to be proud of.

I am so proud of the community breakfast program. Before, I used to wake up and scratch together whatever I could find to feed five kids. Now they receive breakfast with the community every morning and I only need to worry about feeding them at night. This gives my heart pride.

I look forward to seeing the community becoming more beautiful each day. I would like to see a hospital here so the sick wouldn't have to travel so far. I would like to see the 6th graders from our schools pass their exams and continue to learn and become good citizens. Once you can get an opportunity to learn, you should always take it because it might not come again.



This is my pig who is giving
milk to her babies.

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