



MEETING THE ARTISAN

Marie-Claude'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.

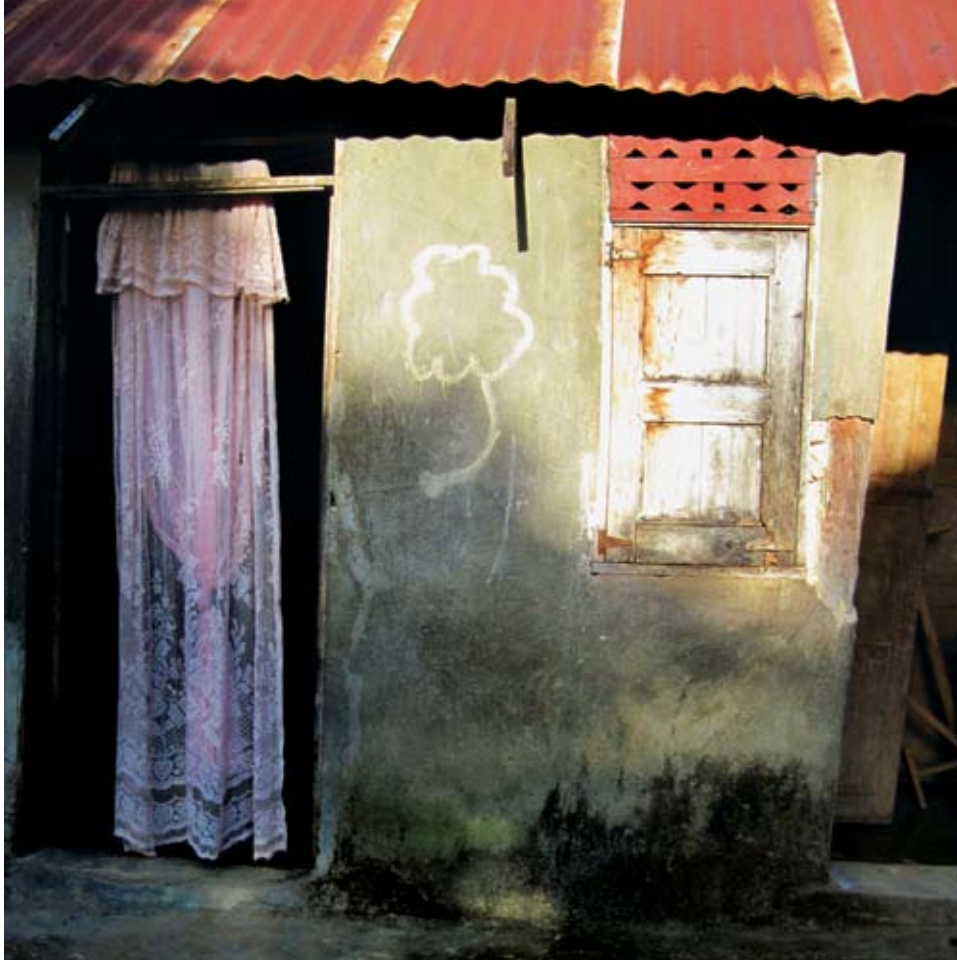
It is our greatest joy at Set Free International to bring the beautiful art of these women to you - and through your purchase, to return to each artisan a payment that goes well beyond a living wage in order to gain a sustainable and hope-filled future for these women and their families.

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 Marie-Claude Albéréna. To further explore a communication with this artisan, please visit: www.setfreeinternational.com.

My family is proud of the work I do.

I live here in Lougou with my father, one of my brothers, and one of my sisters. My brother and sister both are appreciative of my work, but my dad is especially appreciative. He wants me to do a good job with the skirts that I sew with Set Free International.

My mother does not live with us though. 10 years ago, she was in Port au Prince. We were called and told that she had lost her mind and was wandering the streets. She never got better. Now she is back in Lougou, but we can't stay with her. Her head is not well. So now, we live with my aunt and her family.



This is my family's home.
And this is the house
where my aunt lives too.
We live here because my
mother's head is not well.
We can't stay with her,
so now we live here.

These are the kids in the children's club that I work with. I love them so much, and they love me too. I hope that in the future, they won't ever give up - but will always be involved and hold on to the club.



A strong woman always strives to do her best.

A strong woman is one who studies and learns things to be first in everything she does in her environment. A woman who is strong is also a woman who tries to do her best in every activity she is involved with.

I am proud that I can continue in my school.

My parents were not able to help me, but with the help that I got from the education program here in Lougou I can continue in my studies.

I love going to school because it makes me feel proud to know that I have the opportunity to learn - that I have a chance. Down the road, when I try to find work, if someone asks me - do you know how to read - I can say, "Yes, I do!"



This is a photograph of me, Marie-Claude. I am a leader in the scouts which stands for society, ability, opinion, union, and work. I especially love this movement and I will never leave it.

This is me, Marie Claude,
with my cousin Clotilde
putting together one of
the appliquéd skirts. I love
her so much. I am always
praying for God to help her
in everything she does.



I want to be a teacher for others in my community.

I see myself as a professor or a teacher in my community. I want to help others with appliqué... teaching other women how to do appliqué well, because it is something that I like to do really well.

It was my cousin Clotide who first taught me how to do appliqué. She gave me a piece of fabric to work on, and that's when I realized it was something I could do. That piece of fabric is what brought me to finally working on the skirts.

I believe appliqué can help me reach my goals.

I learned appliqué because I hope that it will help me to economically achieve my goals. Tomorrow, if God helps me, I would like to become a nurse. I hope that appliqué will help me in the future to secure funding to learn this.



These are my cousins checking each others health at our house. I love them so much. My cousin, Melesil, is studying to be a doctor so that she can give care to our community.

These are two of my dear cousins and one of my good friends. My friend is also my classmate in school. I ask God to always protect our lives and that we would be able to finish our schooling together.



When I imagine a great day, I imagine all of the youth coming together . . .

I would love to have a meeting with all of the youth in my community to discuss what is happening in our lives and where we want to go further.

We could dream together.

We could dream about our future . . .

In dreaming of our future - we imagine what could be better for us. We could find out how to go to school in the future. It would make my heart happy to know that we could come up with the future together.



This is my dear friend Adele. She is my classmate in school and in quilting.

We have grown up together. I love her so much. She is one of my best friends.

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