

Jean Rene Leseau | Haiti Projects |
Haiti | Apparel/Home

Old World needlework plus Haitian creativity equals exquisite textiles



Non-profit organization Haiti Projects is steadfastly focused on financially empowering the women of this impoverished country, while simultaneously encouraging their creativity and health, and their children's well-being. Nestled in the town of Fond des Blancs, Haiti Projects is currently the second largest employer in a region where over 60,000 people live with no electricity or public services. From elegantly patterned pillows with delicate versions of vodou motifs to equally eye-catching tablecloths with restrained palettes, to lavishly soft hand towels, Haiti Projects offers a uniquely gentle artistic touch, and it's no wonder: the organization uses only the finest materials, including linen, canvas, crochet thread, and yarn all made from 100% cotton. Their lightweight cotton voile nightgowns are especially remarkable.

onto cotton or linen with washable ink. Once a design is transferred onto the fabric, it's distributed to embroiders to take home. After embroidery is complete, the piece is washed and ironed and handed over to a seamstress for hem-stitching or other finishing touches.

In Fond des Blancs, women were historically taught embroidery skills by French nuns, who came to the region to do charity work. While nuns have long since left the region, the tradition of embroidery continues. Haiti Projects, for the last 20 years, has further developed and enhanced the embroidery techniques that were part of the culture, and enriched traditional styles with symbols of Haitian folk traditions, calling upon various spirits traditionally associated with protection, assistance, and healing.

All products are hand embroidered, knitted, crocheted or hemstitched. Some are pieced together using sewing machines. The production process starts with hand-drawing or stamping designs

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST