

Jean Marie Charles LaValle Jacmel, Haiti



Jean Marie is an artist who lives and works in the region called LaValle Jacmel. It lies on the outskirts of the southern coastal city of Jacmel, long recognized as an artistic hub in Haiti. His work has been featured in exhibitions in Port Au Prince and Jacmel. His paintings can be seen hanging in middle-of-nowhere hotels and houses in the hills surrounding Jacmel. A respected member of his community, Jean Marie has devoted his life to teaching the youth in LaValle. Having lost his humble studio in the recent earthquake, Gemey continues to teach children to make 'artizana' from the Haitian peet plant, which when dried closely resembles hemp. He creates unique accessories and figurines in a style that is all his own, and he is committed to sharing his talents with the youth of his community. His dream is that the young people in LaValle learn to support themselves

His painting style is largely intuitive expressing an indicative Haitian style in its brightness and color, but lacking the naiveté that is often associated with Haitian art. Following in the footsteps of renowned Haitian artist Tiga Garoute, Jean Marie (A.K.A. Gemey) obscures traditional Haitian imagery and frees them from their typical meanings. While sharing an aesthetic with so-called folk-art from the region, Gemey is not presenting a vision of Haitian culture, but a view from the inside looking out at the world, artistic or otherwise.



Some of Jean Marie's Students



A view of Jean Marie Charles' studio in LaValle