

When I say Cric, you say Crac; my WMG Stories

Babette Wainwright



“I was born and raised in Haiti where the majority of the population was illiterate. Knowledge was passed through story telling. I understand the magic of stories. Cric- Crac is our magical word that opens the tale.

So, when I say Cric, you say Crac.

I grew up under the dictatorship of Papa Doc Duvalier where self-expression was often a death sentence. The oppressive regime taught us to subvert our emotions, speak in parables and read between the lines.

My art became my private diary, a place to soothe my soul, to heal. Consequently, as a refugee in the US, I never expected to be understood. I did not have a community, and I felt alone. My Jensen art history book taught me only about the work of European men; no mention of artists like me. Ironically, it compelled me to do art my way, to tell my stories in my own style, in order not to forget, and to celebrate the beautiful aspects of my Haitian culture, no matter the consequences.

Of all the galleries I've encountered, Jura Silverman's was most welcoming. She understood the spirituality within my work. But it was not until Helen Klebesadel - Associate Professor at Lawrence University in Appleton - introduced me to Woman Made Gallery that I finally felt at home as a woman artist of color, and a lesbian.

Suddenly, I was no longer alone. WMG gave me a community. I no longer needed to explain my work or compare myself to the Jensens. Woman Made Gallery helps artists like me feel respected, encouraged, and empowered. They dare us to create from our guts and take ownership –financial and otherwise - of a female space which nurtures and honors its artists.”

-Babette Wainwright