

# DOODADS

✿ A FAIR TRADE GALLERY

by: Anne Fullem

photography  
Amy Jones  
amyjphoto.com



Fair Trade Certified™ products come from village cooperatives and independent small farmers in over 70 developing countries across Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean. Nearly 12,000 products bearing the Fair Trade Certified label are sourced from these communities, and can be found in more than 100,000 retail locations across North America, but only one is in Harford County... **Doodads**.



*Owner, Rebecca Collins, outside her shop  
in Downtown Havre de Grace.*

Late in 2002, Becky Collins decided she wanted to be self-employed. She had a long running and successful career with Hess Hotels, but her heart was telling her it was time to move on. Becky fondly remembered working retail in her youth, and decided she wanted to open a store. Fair Trade was something she was familiar with, and felt it would be a good match for her. "I knew I liked it, it was kind of Bohemian, recycled, that old hippie look that appealed to me," said Becky.

She's learned a lot about Fair Trade since she opened Doodads doors in February 2003. "I knew it was from developing countries, but I have a much better sense of what a long term sustainable relationship this is. They don't exploit the artisans, a lot of which are women, no sweat shops, no child-labor, and they are paid a fair wage," explained Becky.

The World Fair Trade Federation monitors all the transactions to ensure that they maintain these standards. Instead of creating dependency on aid, they use a market-based approach that gives farmers fair prices, workers safe conditions, and entire communities resources for fair, healthy and sustainable lives. This leaves only one middle-man between Becky and the artists, of which she represents over 120 vendors.



If you've never been to Doodads... you're missing out. The cozy shop on St. John's Street in Havre de Grace is a feast for the senses. Bright colors, exotic smells and unfamiliar textures delight you in every nook and corner. Her fresh coffees from around the world, come in a variety of blends, even offering a decaf and half-calf options. Exotic teas, spices and over 20 varieties of chocolates, keep her regulars coming back week after week.

The store is ever changing, with a global variety of unique merchandise to browse. On my left as I enter the store are three wall hangings. The first is made of recycled saris from India, the second is oil drum art from Haiti, and the third is coiled wool from Peru. Hanging on the wall to my right is some really cool art from Zambia. From ceiling to floor... it's just one beautiful treasure after another.

Next to the counter is Becky's collection of global percussion and wind instruments, starting with a Didgeridoo and Java Drums from Indonesia. Gathered nearby are JuJu Bean Rattles from Cameroon, Shekere Shakers and Kente Talking Drums from Ghana and singing bowls from Nepal... just to name a few. These beautiful items are not only actual musical instruments, but make great home decor accents.

Speaking of home... Becky has everything from china and wood serving pieces, to tablecloths, aprons and pot holders. A tea set from Vietnam, or a carved stone chess set, would make a perfect conversation piece. Throws

and pillows made of exotic fabrics from around the world, artwork, sculptures and one of a kind finds will definitely make a statement in your home.

If recycling is important to you... than Doodads is your store. "Being green is very important to us," said Becky. "We carry so many recycled items, like feedbags made into pocket books, socks from recycled yarn, oil drum art from recycled oil drums, and goat toenail shakers from Bolivian goats." Looking around, I recognized some of the tongue-in-cheek recycled items, like the handbags made out of soda can tops, but the oil drum art is as classy as it gets.

When it comes to fashion and accessories, Doodads has it's own global style. The second floor of Becky's shop is dedicated to fashion, all made of beautiful exotic textiles. "We're carrying more one-size-fits-all, like ponchos made out of banana fiber and cotton," said Becky. Baja jackets, cute little wrap skirts, and tons of accessories, you won't find anywhere else, make Doodads a destination. "I've discovered that headbands are super popular this year, and we have a great variety" added Becky. Always popular at Doodads is their amazing selection of artisan jewelry. Big, bold pieces made of metals and precious stones, mixed in with softer pieces, like freshwater pearls strung on a suede cord. Some of her jewelry is made by local artists, but most comes from around the world, including rare gemstones you won't see in other stores.

If you feel like taking a trip around the world, but only have the afternoon... stop into Doodads, you'll be glad you did!

