

Pievy Polyte: From Haiti to Vermont

January 6—March 13, 2024

Burlington, Vermont-based artist Pierrevy “Pievy” Polyte was born in the south of Haiti and grew up supporting his father’s coffee farm. He used the money he made from farming coffee to fund his education and help his friends out with expenses, like buying school uniforms. Inspired by his brother and uncle, who were artists, Polyte eventually enrolled in the Ecole Nationale des Arts (ENARTS) in Port-au-Prince. His paintings are inspired by Haiti’s people, landscapes, shipyards, spiritual traditions, and music.

Polyte describes himself as a man who wears many hats—artist, yes, but he is also an agronomist, chef, and teacher, and he is the founder of a coffee cooperative, Peak Macaya, and school in Haiti. In 2016, Hurricane Matthew destroyed Polyte’s farms and schools. His sources of livelihood destroyed, he moved to Burlington for opportunities to make money that he could send back home. In Vermont, Polyte started working as a landscaper with Gardener’s Supply, sending money back to Haiti to help rebuild. Eventually, he left landscaping to focus full time on his art and nonprofit work.

As a cooperative, the majority of Peak Macaya’s profits go to its farmers, but a portion helps to fund the schools Polyte founded in Haiti: the Public School of Park Macaya and Public School of Lacadonie. These schools incorporate environmental education into their curricula, involving students in activities such as planting trees that support the farming cooperative.

Proceeds from Polyte’s art sales go to Peak Macaya Cooperative, which grows coffee, cocoa, fruit, and vegetables while aiming to promote the biodiversity of Haiti’s second tallest mountain.

A closing reception is being planned with a date to be announced.

More information and a price list can be found in the binder at the desk adjacent to the library.