



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

-----0-----

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

4611 Tutu Park Mall  
Suite 300, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
St. Thomas, VI 00802  
(340) 774-3320

45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted  
St. Croix, VI 00840  
(340) 773-1082  
dpnr.vi.gov



Office of the Commissioner

Contact: Jamal Nielsen, Media Relations Coordinator  
[jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov](mailto:jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov)

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

## OPEN CALL FOR ARTISTS

### ***TIDES OF FREEDOM: LEGACIES OF RESISTANCE FROM THE USVI TO THE USA***

---

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning & Natural Resources is pleased to announce that the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums (DLAM) invites USVI artists, creatives, and storytellers to submit works that explore the journey of Virgin Islanders self-identity from emancipation to the current drafting of a people-centric constitution.

“Tides of Freedom” is a multi-disciplinary visual art exhibition that explores the trans-Atlantic and inter-generational struggle for Black liberation through the lens of two pivotal emancipation events: the July 3rd, 1848, Emancipation Uprising in St. Croix, Danish West Indies (now U.S. Virgin Islands), and Juneteenth (June 19, 1865) in Texas, United States.

This exhibition seeks to bridge geographical and historical divides, highlighting how freedom movements and African people and their descendants are deeply interconnected, rooted in liberatory practice, cultural memory, and resilience. The exhibition asks artists to examine how Virgin Islanders have envisioned self-determination and self-governance in the past. Additionally, artists should examine how this has been expressed through our songs, art, poetry, and dance. The exhibition offers an opportunity for contemporary artists and cultural producers to reflect on those legacies and reimagine them for our present moment and future.

#### **Possible themes to explore:**

##### RESISTANCE AS LEGACY

- Liberation leaders and grassroots defiance then and now (General Buddhoe, Denmark Vesey, etc.)
- Who are some Virgin Islanders who have played monumental roles in improving civil rights not only at home in the Virgin Islands (former Danish West Indies) but who also inspired Trans-Atlantic Black Liberation worldwide?
- How have Virgin Islands cultural legacies served as a source of knowledge in guiding us on the path towards self-determination?

##### AFRICAN-DIASPORA AND CONNECTION

- Movement of ideas, people, culture, and struggle across the Atlantic
- What are some of the shared African-diasporic rituals, symbols, and languages of liberation?

### UNFINISHED FREEDOM

- The ongoing pursuit of justice and economic equity
- Reflections on systemic racism, legacies of slavery and colonialism
- Addressing other themes specific to the 6th Constitutional Convention such as establishing rights to education, healthcare, environmental protection and voting rights
- What would self-determination and liberation look like had Virgin Islanders been granted independence upon emancipation? What would identity and nationhood look like if we were not colonized?

### **We seek submissions that:**

- Honor the 1848 uprising and Virgin Islands ancestors
- Celebrate cultural legacies of resistance
- Reflect on unfinished freedom and systemic challenges
- Address the 6th Constitutional Convention as a blueprint for our future
- Articulate what self-determination and governance in the US Virgin Islands mean to you.
- Unpack multi-layered issues of cultural identity in the US Virgin Islands. Are Virgin Islanders African American, Afro-Caribbean, or something else?

### IMPORTANT DATES:

- Artist Call Opens: May 14, 2025
- Proposal Submittal Deadline: June 16, 2025
- Artwork Drop-off: June 20, 2025
- Exhibition Opening Night: June 27, 2025, at Fort Frederik Museum
- Activities on St. Thomas and St. John: TBA
- Submission Requirements due June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025:
  - Short artist bio (250 words max)
  - Project statement describing how the work responds to the themes (500 words max)
  - Images of recent work to show (photos, titles, media/dimensional details)

Submit to: Monica Marin, Territorial Curator at [monica.marin@dpnr.vi.gov](mailto:monica.marin@dpnr.vi.gov) or call Fort Frederik Museum at 340.772.2021