



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DPNR UNVEILS “STILL WE RISE: ART BEHIND THE WALLS” AT FORT FREDERIK MUSEUM

Commissioner Jean-Pierre L. Oriol of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) announces the opening of *Still We Rise: Art Behind the Walls*, a powerful new exhibition presented by the Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums at Fort Frederik Museum.

The exhibition features original artwork created by incarcerated individuals at the John A. Bell Correctional Facility who participated in a volunteer led art and literacy program. Led by two committed volunteer instructors, the program has evolved into a meaningful rehabilitative initiative that encourages creative expression, skill development, and personal reflection.

A unique highlight of the exhibition is the use of locally sourced calabash gourds as an artistic medium. Traditionally simple natural vessels, the gourds have been transformed into compelling works of art that reflect the cultural heritage of St. Croix while giving voice to each artist’s individual story.

“What began as a modest classroom project has grown into something deeply transformative,” said Mary Mingus, one of the program’s instructors and organizers. “Beyond artistic expression, the program offers participants a renewed sense of purpose, dignity, and hope.” *Still We Rise: Art Behind the Walls* invites the community to engage with the creativity and humanity of individuals who are often unseen, while highlighting the important role the arts play in rehabilitation, healing, and restorative justice.

Exhibition Details

Location: Fort Frederik Museum, Frederiksted, St. Croix

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 23, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Exhibition Hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Admission: \$10 for adults; free for students under 18.

For more information, please contact monica.marin@dpmr.vi.gov.