

# The Virgin Islands Consortium

## St. Croix Native Johanna Bermudez-Ruiz To Show Trailer Of Her New Film At NPS's Thursday Lecture Series

Art / **Published On October 12, 2016 11:24 PM /**

Staff **October 12, 2016**



ST. CROIX -- On Thursday at 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Johanna Bermudez-Ruiz, above, an award-winning writer, producer, and director of internationally acclaimed documentaries and films, will show her trailer for "Sugar Pathways" and discuss the historical significance of the 50-minute film, the National Park Service (N.P.S.) announced Monday.

According to N.P.S., "Sugar Pathways" is a powerful and vibrant film that recounts the story of the unwilling migration by Puerto Rican families from the small Caribbean island

of Vieques to the U.S. Virgin Islands. The severe economic conditions fueled by the "Great Depression" compelled hundreds to migrate. Twenty years later, a second migration of women, men, and children occurred. This was due to the U.S. Navy's brutal expropriation, damage and destruction they inflicted on civilian lands, homes, and properties.

The film tells the story of Puerto Rican families' survival of their journeys, their integration, and their contributions to the culture, economy, and politics of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The film is narrated by actress Lauren Vélez of the Emmy Award-winning Showtime series "Dexter."

Ms. Bermúdez-Ruiz, a native of St. Croix, has a bachelor of arts degree in interdisciplinary studies with a focus in filmmaking from Antioch College, Ohio. Her award-winning documentaries include "Vieques: An Island Forging Futures," "Sugar Pathways," "Spirit of Expression," "Better To Be Human," and "Forgotten in Paradise."

Some of her recognition include a nomination for best female film director of color at the African Diaspora Film Festival, best short documentary ("the Pitirre Award") at the San Juan Cinema Festival, best short documentary at the Maffa Film Festival, and special jury mention award at the Imagination Film Festival.

Early on, Ms. Bermúdez-Ruiz gained first-hand experience in film writing, production, and editing in New York, working closely with renowned acting coach, producer, and writer Susan Batson and her son Carl Ford of Susan Batson Studio, LLC. Ms. Batson and her son have worked with diverse talent such as Nicole Kidman, Oprah Winfrey, Tyler Perry, Kerry Washington, and Rihanna. Ms. Bermúdez-Ruiz has since worked directly with Lauren Velez ("I Like That"), David Mayas ("Dexter"), and Guillermo Diaz ("Scandal").

Residing on St. Croix, where her film company, Cane Bay Films, LLC is based, Ms. Bermúdez-Ruiz is one of the founding members of the New York City Chapter of the National Association of Latino Independent Producers, and a member of the International Documentary Association.

The lecture will be held in the Danish West India & Guinea Company Warehouse on Company Street in Christiansted. The Fort parking lot will be open until 7:00 p.m.

As is custom, a meeting of the Friends of the St. Croix USVI National Parks will meet at 5:00 p.m. just before the lecture in the same location.

*Correction: Oct. 12, 2016*

*The National Park Service, in an email correspondence this evening, told The Consortium that it erred in spelling Ms. Bermudez-Ruiz's name. It's Bermudez, not Burmudez. The story has been updated to reflect the correct information.*

[Watch the original video](#)