

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Names Julio Encarnacion As Chief Conservator. He Will Lead Assessment And Preservation Of Territory's Public Artwork And Antiques.

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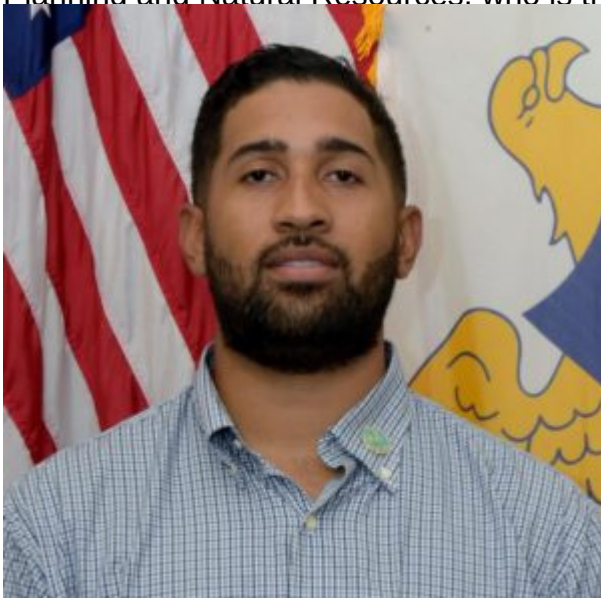


The Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands has hired St. Croix cultural preservationist Julio Encarnacion III to catalog and manage the territory's collection of antique artifacts and paintings, Government House announced Thursday.

Governor Kenneth Mapp announced the appointment of the chief conservator on Tuesday in a letter to Senate President Myron Jackson, and Mr. Encarnacion officially assumed his duties on April 16, Government House said. Earlier this week, Mr. Mapp [vetoed](#) a bill calling for the creation of a curator position, explaining that steps had

already been taken to fulfill the tasks that the proposed legislation suggested.

“The newly hired chief conservator will work with the commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, who is the statutory historic preservation officer of the our territory’s cultural resources, arts and ion,” Mr. Mapp said.



Julio Encarnacion

Hurricanes Irma and Maria made it necessary to have additional assistance in this area as many valuable items were relocated due to storm damage at Government House on St. Thomas and other facilities, Government House said.

Mr. Encarnacion, known to many in the Virgin Islands as “The Native Son”, said he started collecting local artifacts as a child. “I have independently curated and conserved my own private collection and a great amount has been on display over the past year,” he said.

A professional member of the American Alliance of Museums, Mr. Encarnacion returned to St. Croix last year from studies in Boca Raton to exhibit his collection at Government House during the Virgin Islands Centennial Transfer events. His Centennial commemoration efforts included a presentation at the John H. Woodson Jr. High School, where he became inspired by the students’ enthusiasm, Government House said.

His personal collection consists of more than 700 pieces dating back to the pre-Columbian era. It includes Danish Colonial coins dating back to 1748, photographs and books from the 19th century, furnishings passed down over three generations, rum receipts from brigs that landed in the Territory in the early 1800s and paintings from many local artists.

“My goal has always been to inform the community about the importance of preserving and promoting our culture and history through historical artifacts,” Mr. Encarnacion said. “I have visited schools to teach students about preservation and have participated in many exhibitions.” He feels he will help young people better understand their history by being a full-time ambassador for cultural preservation.”

Mr. Encarnacion said he enrolled in art history courses while a graduate student at Lynn University to better understand preservation techniques. "I also created a website (www.thenativesonusvi.com) and a social media platform to support my mission to preserve and promote our history," Encarnacion added.

The new conservator will initially focus on cataloging the antiques and artwork and determining the best means of long-term storage during the renovation process, according to Government House.

"Documentation of this caliber takes time and we can't afford to miss anything," he explained. "In order for everything to be formally and accurately cataloged we are implementing new QR Codes for each piece. Once I have completed the official assessment report, the inventory will then be made public. We look forward to being able to display all of these antiques and artwork once again, and at this point I am confident that all antiquities are safe and secured."

Mr. Encarnacion explained the QR Codes are similar to barcodes and that when scanned provide detailed information about each piece to which they are attached.

*Feature Image: Mr. Encarnacion greets Governor Kenneth Mapp during an event.
(Credit: The Native Son USVI)*