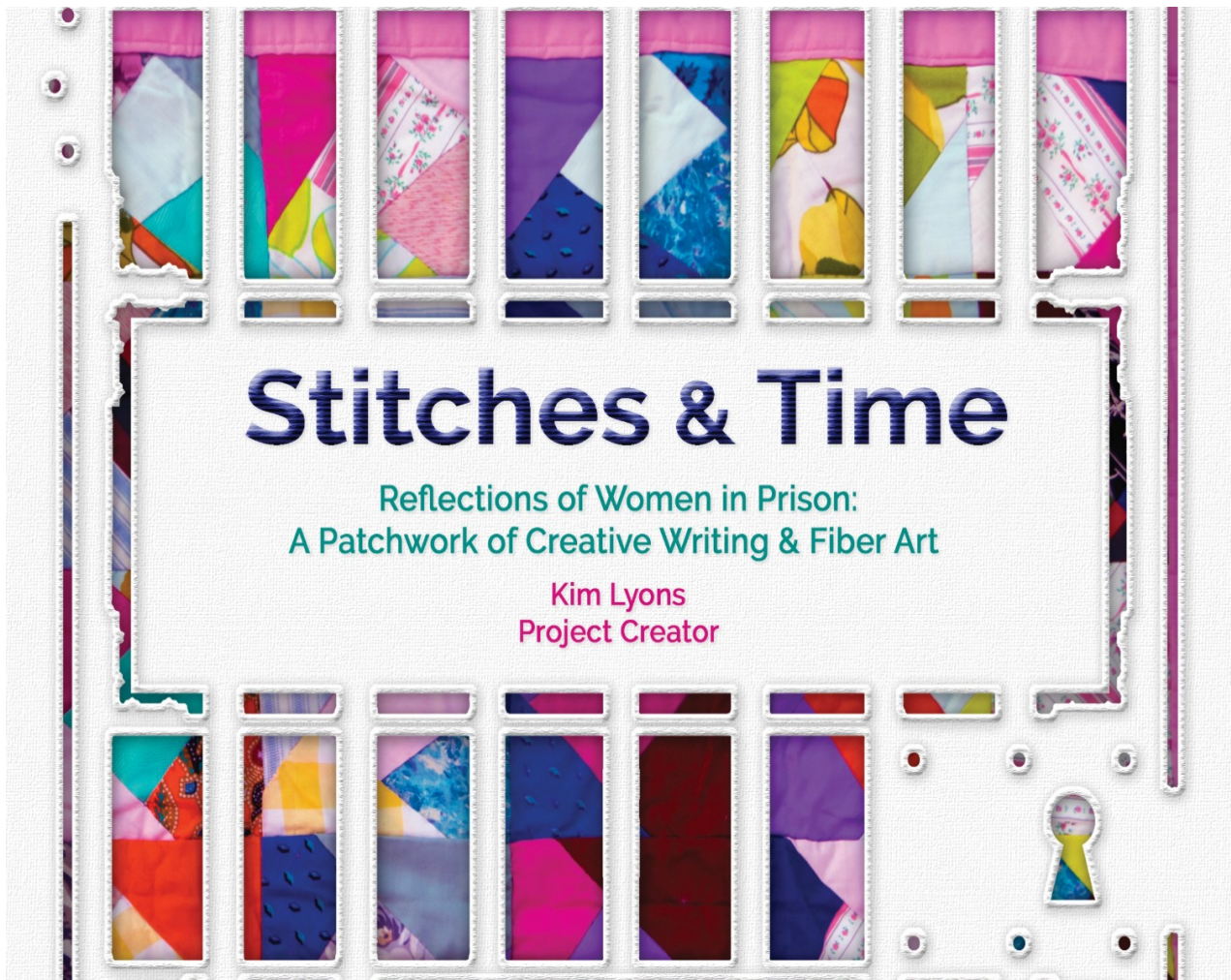


The Virgin Islands Consortium

Writings Of VI Prisoner Compiled In New Book

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Experts say creative expression is a powerful tool for healing and rehabilitation and a new book highlights the writings of women incarcerated on St. Croix, according to a recently issued release.

Stitches & Time: Reflections of Women in Prison: A Patchwork of Creative Writing and Fiber Art is a compilation of short essays written by a small group of Golden Grove Correctional Facility prisoners who participated in a four-month sewing and writing workshop put together by St. John artist and former Bureau of Corrections employee, Kim Lyons.

A 76-page hardcover book and a colorful hand stitched quilt are the fruits of that effort and the public will have the opportunity to view both at upcoming events on St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. "Seeing this book in print is very gratifying," Lyons said. "These women bravely shared of themselves by offering their personal writings while soldiering through creating a quilt together - under circumstances that weren't always pleasant or easy. I thought I had come to Golden Grove to teach a class, but I ended up learning a great deal from them as well."

The program was designed to incorporate textile arts and creative writing. The quilting provided a group activity that they could accomplish together, and the short writings afforded individual expression, Lyons said.

The public can see the book and quilt and learn more about the writing project at several upcoming events:

- April 12 – VI Literary Festival Book Bacchanal – Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts, Frederiksted, VI
- April 13 – Bajo El Sol Gallery, Mongoose Junction, St. John, VI
- April 15 – Papaya Café, Marketplace, St. John, VI
- April 29 – Virgin Islands Council of the Arts (VICA), Charlotte Amalie, VI
- May 1 – Virgin Islands Carnival Cultural Fair

Lyons said copies of the book will be on sale for a \$40 donation with proceeds going to develop further programs for Virgin Islands' prisoners.

A St. Johnian, who spent several years living and working on St. Croix, Lyons' art encompasses several mediums, but she has most recently focused on textiles. She formerly owned and operated K. Lyons Studio, a gallery and artist workspace, in historic Frederiksted.

Stitches & Time was funded, in part, by a grant from the St. Croix Foundation, but it was largely a volunteer effort that included generous input from other individuals cited in the book's acknowledgments. Additionally, the project had the full support of the Virgin Islands Bureau of Corrections.

Last week, Lyons had an opportunity to discuss the Stitches & Time workshop as part of the Story Corps Project in concert with the St. Croix Community Foundation. Story Corps promotes podcasts on National Public Radio and is an independent nonprofit whose mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world

"It is my hope to generate enough support to continue these kinds of workshops," she said. "I know the women found value in telling their stories, but the telling benefits society at large by broadening our understanding of the human experience."

To learn more or to purchase a copy of the book you can visit her website, www.klyonsstudio.com or contact Lyons at 340.227.9412.