

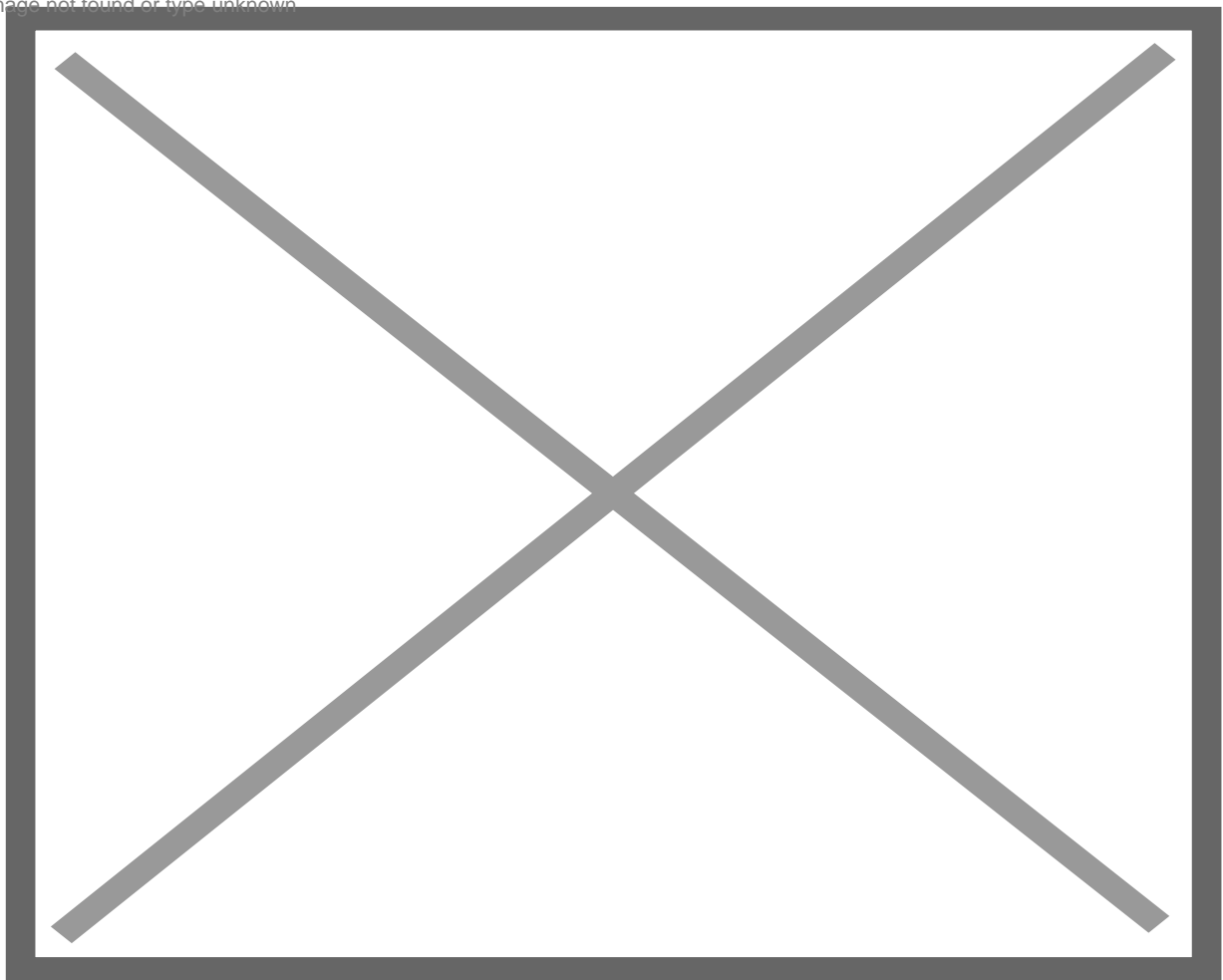
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VI Curator and Arts Advocate Launches 'USVICOID19Arts', an Online Portal Archiving Territory's Visual and Literary Artistic Responses to Covid-19

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Covid street art by Clay Jones By. PRISCILLA HINTZ RIVERA KNIGHT

Virgin Islands curator and arts advocate Priscilla Knight has launched the USVICOID19ARTS online archive portal. The online archive seeks to support artists in archiving, preserving, and making accessible — virtually, to the public — U.S. Virgin Islands visual and literary artistic responses to the Covid-19 global pandemic. This ongoing project will be continuously updated and the call for artists submissions is ongoing, according to a release issued this week. See website [here](#).

“As we approach the one-year anniversary of the first quarantine shut down in the U.S. Virgin Islands, I want to ensure that we capture and properly archive the artistic achievements produced by Virgin Islands artists during this historic moment. Throughout the world artists have been inspiring us, entertaining us, provoking us, challenging us, and sustaining us during these most challenging times,” said Ms. Knight.

About the Archive

Pandemics have occurred at various points in history - most recently the 19th-century outbreak of Cholera; the 1918 Spanish Flu whose death toll stood at more than 50 million people worldwide; the smallpox pandemic, eradicated in 1980; and the HIV/AIDS crisis, classified as a pandemic in 1983. Throughout the centuries, artists have created their works for the purposes of healing, unleashing art as a tool for education, compassion, hope and solidarity during crises, explained the release.

A virtual archive of pandemic-related images and stories by artists, curators, and arts organizations throughout the Virgin Islands will highlight a defining moment in U.S. Virgin Islands and global history, argued the release. "Documentation of our arts is essential so that future generations can learn from and experience current events through our community's artistic accounts of an unprecedented and historic time," says the release which also spoke of racial justice and the role art plays, as well as environmental advocacy.

"This archive will consist of Covid-19 arts related news accounts related to the arts community in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It will also document visual works, poetry and spoken word by students and professional artists and writers working throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands and Virgin Islanders living in the diaspora. In addition, it will document special projects or exhibitions by U.S. Virgin Islands arts organizations, stated the release.

The release says the website will be continuously updated during the ongoing pandemic and will seek work that artists have created independently or through an arts organization with an emphasis on self-expression with candor and a willingness to be a social commentator.

Work that will be accepted for the archives are works that are Covid-19 specific or inspired. In addition, work will be considered that is relevant to the inequities that make this pandemic even more significant — in particular, work that addresses racial inequality and what the release terms "environmental justice" in the time of Covid-19.

A deadline has not been established due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic. Submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the Covid-19 virus is no longer prevalent throughout the world.

Ms. Knight is encouraging artists to go to the newly created website to see current submissions and for submission information, application requirements and guidelines.

The project is funded in part by the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. It is being created in collaboration with the Gri Gri Project and Ms. Knight is serving as the archive curator.

The Gri Gri Project's mission is the creation of interpretive exhibitions, critical writing, events and archives related to the cultural patrimony of the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Caribbean region, according to the release. The Gri Gri Project has been involved in arts-related projects and exhibitions in the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, the United States, Aruba, Denmark and Cuba.

Priscilla holds a MA degree in arts administration from Goucher College and a BA in social sciences with a concentration in Caribbean studies from the University of the Virgin Islands. She was the editor and co-founder of Art Fusion Magazine and has worked for and collaborated with such organizations as the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C., the Turabo University Art Museum and Center for Humanistic Studies in Puerto Rico, The St. Thomas Historical Trust, El Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, and Casa de las Américas, in Cuba. She is currently the owner of Bajo El Sol Gallery on St. John.

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