

logo not found or type unknown

Art Event in Christiansted Sees Big Turnout, Could Represent Turning Point as Young Artists Take Initiative

Art / **Published On December 13, 2021 09:06 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **December 13, 2021**

Image not found or type unknown



Portraits on display at Eliana Schuster-Brown's "Prolific Fine Art Exhibit", described as "a creative collaboration expressing self-love and the importance of body positivity."

By. ERNICE GILBERT/ V.I. CONSORTIUM

[Levels VI](#), a new bar and entertainment spot in the town of Christiansted hosting a variety of activities, was part of something special Saturday night. Descending on the storied and historic space was a mixed group of individuals in their 20s, 30, 40s and older representing Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X, respectively. They were in attendance for Eliana Schuster-Brown's "Prolific Fine Art Exhibit", described as "a creative collaboration expressing self-love and the importance of body positivity."

In simple terms, photographers sought to inspire individuals to better appreciate their complete self and body by displaying pictures that depicted one's sexuality and the uniqueness and appeal thereof. The intimate portraits achieved the intended goal, as edgy images of local models decorated with art — all painted by Ms. Schuster-Brown — captivated the mixed audience and won collective praise.

Photographers exhibiting included Irene Ali, Markida Scotland, Chalana Brown, George Armstrong, Sai and Sincere. The nascent, well-attended event was deemed a success by the sheer amount of praise it received. Attendees had to pay \$10 to attend, and the art on display were on sale as well.

"Prolific is inspired and fueled by so many things," stated Ms. Schuster-Brown. "It started with my story behind overcoming abuse and learning to love myself again. Breaking those low self-esteem barriers, if you will."

She added, "I want to be the type of artist that is constantly thinking outside the box. Being able to inspire, invoke feeling, spark up conversations with my art alone is what drives me to continue. The one thing that drives me the most however, is the ability to spread my message about the importance of self love! My story is one I will share with anyone who asks, but my art say a lot about it already! Pay attention!"

Photographers who participated were grateful to be included. "For me, since the theme was self-love, I decided to take a different approach with it in terms of the things people consider vanity and narcissism and why we look at certain aspects of that as a bad thing," said Ms. Scotland. She said she believes people revere themselves in the process of self-love, which prompted the creative to use the theme of a statue, "because statues are what you build when you really love somebody." Her portrait saw a model looking up at a statue of herself.

Ms. Ali, whose involvement in putting the exhibit together in support of Ms. Schuster-Brown was deemed an indelible contribution, said the event was important because "we believe the message [of self-love] needs to be spread on St. Croix." She added, "We are blessed to be here to spread the message of self-love and body confidence. For anyone who has ever felt ashamed about that, we are here to encourage you as we believe it's something that you should be proud of. At the end of the day your body is yours and you should love every bit of it."

Aside from the captivating work, the event also represented what Ms. Schuster-Brown hopes will be a turning point for art that she says not only represents the budding creatives' body of work, but better capture the island of St. Croix as a people and more broadly the territory.

"Planning this event opened my eyes to the lack of creative spaces for up-and-coming creatives in the territory," she said. "I really want to change the art culture here and make a way for new creatives to flourish."

Some people gathered at Levels VI's bar located immediately upon entering the facility, where Frank Robinson, the beloved mixologist served up a variety of beverages. Others gathered on the second and third floors located in a separate area away from the bar, and even more were situated on the first floor where the creatives' work were on display. Popular St. Croix DJ Supa Trakz International kept the crowd engaged with music suited for the graceful and stylish affair; media personality Ki-Ana Tonge painted the body of a model on the main stage; Ms. Ali soothed the night with an emotional rendition of Andra Day's "Rise Up".

As she sang, Ms. Schuster-Brown, who was painting a portrait of a woman whose life had the embodiment of grace, strength and love birthed through painful experiences, gained inspiration. In

her element, Ms. Schuster-Brown's entire person was swaying along with every word Ms. Ali uttered with projecting, passion-filled vocals. In the moment, the painting progressed and came to life through the words of a song. "Can you see it?" Ms. Schuster-Brown asked this reporter when the painting was completed. The answer was absolutely.

© Viconsortium 2024