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USVI Premier of Award-Winning Fireburn Documentary Commences on Dec. 17 on St. Croix; Showings Planned Dec. 18 and 19 in STT-STJ District

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The Fireburn Foundation has announced the upcoming Virgin Islands premiere of the award-winning “Fireburn the Documentary,” which will be shown on St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas, followed by a panel discussion with some participants of the film.

The Friday, Dec. 17 screening event to be held on St. Croix at the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts in Frederiksted is sold out, however, the Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts will be hosting an additional screening in the very near future, according to the release. There will be two showings at Bajo El Sol in Mongoose Junction on St. John on Saturday, Dec. 18, at 4 to 6 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. On St. Thomas, the event will be held on Sunday, Dec. 19 from 6 to 8 p.m. at Antilles School’s Prior Jollek Hall.

To attend the free event, an RSVP is required due to COVID-19 restrictions. Email fireburnfoundation@gmail.com to reserve a seat. All government mandated Covid-19 protocols will be followed, according to the release.

The nonprofit Fireburn Foundation said it seeks to help transform lives through partnerships and collaborations with other nonprofits and like-minded individuals, to create products that render quality education, as well as projects that result in financial donations and necessities for those in need, particularly those in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Fireburn the Documentary” was inspired by the Amazon #1 best-selling book “Fireburn The Screenplay,” a historical fiction set in post-emancipation Danish West Indies written by the Fireburn foundation’s founder, Angela Golden Bryan, released in 2018. The book weaves a tale of passion, purpose and revenge, giving a glimpse into the unfair and oppressive working conditions that prompted four women to rally other laborers to protest in the 1878 Fireburn Revolt on St. Croix.

Bryan’s interest in the Fireburn is deep seated in family history. She grew up hearing tales about the Fireburn and as an adult, learned of her great-great grandmother Moriah’s participation in the revolt.

“Two of my aunts shared the story of how our ancestors were involved in the Fireburn and it made the story so personal to me,” she said. “Not everyone may have ancestors involved in the Fireburn, but it’s a story that helps define all of us, our resiliency, our culture, and our heritage, and it’s a story that should not be forgotten.”

“Fireburn the Documentary” was produced by Fireburn Foundation and created by Bryan as executive producer and producer, along with producers Steven James Tingus, and Marjorie Tingle, and director Joel Fendelman. This short film explores the inhumane conditions that existed prior to the labor revolt and looks at the women who were called “Queens” due to their leadership in the Fireburn. The documentary features historians, cultural ambassadors, and educators, and looks at the folklore, art, music, and history surrounding the Fireburn. “Fireburn the Documentary” was filmed entirely on St. Croix in February 2020 and includes interviews and insights by Dr. Patricia James, Frandelle Gerard, La Vaughn Belle, Senator Myron Jackson, Eugenie Golden Kelley, Eugene “Doc” Petersen, Julio Encarnacion III, Dr. Chenzira Davis Kahina, Yulette George, Davis Christian and Campbell “Ras Soup” Carter.

The response to “Fireburn The Documentary” has been overwhelming. It was selected as the 2021 Best Documentary at the Chicago Indie Film Awards, as well as at the Djarfofo International Film Festival (West Africa); it received the 2021 Best Producer award by Luminous Frames Film Festival (Denmark); and the 2021 Audience Choice award at the International Black & Diversity Film Festival (Canada). It was nominated as a semi-finalist at the Flicker’s Rhode Island International Film Festival and nominated for either Best Director, Best Doc Short or Best Experimental Short in 12 different film festivals for 2021. The documentary is scheduled to air on PBS in 2022.

The screenings were jointly funded by a \$20,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, along with a \$7,000 project support grant from the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC, a federal agency." Local collaborating partners and sponsors include WTJX, Caribbean Museum Center for the Arts, Virgin Islands Museum Civic Cultural Center, Reichhold Center for the Arts, and Bajo Del Sol Art Gallery.

