

logo not found or type unknown

DPNR Says Anyone Using Official V.I. Madras for Commercial Purposes Without License Will Be Issued Cease and Desist Order

Government / **Published On March 08, 2022 06:46 PM /**

Staff Consortium **March 08, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



The V.I. Dept. of Planning and Natural Resources said Tuesday that anyone who uses the official V.I. Madras commercially without a license from the V.I. Council of the Arts, will be issued a cease and desist order.

D.P.N.R. Commissioner Jean-Pierre Oriol said that the official Virgin Islands Madras fabric, as per Act No. 8424, is the official property of the government of the Virgin Islands. "As such, the VI Madras fabric's identity has been copyrighted and is protected. The Virgin Islands Council on the Arts (VICA), a division of DPNR, is the custodian of this material. Therefore, all persons must obtain a license from VICA to utilize the VI madras material commercially," Mr. Oriol said.

D.P.N.R. added, "Any persons or organizations utilizing the official madras commercially without a license from VICA will receive a cease-and-desist order."

The official V.I. Madras was commissioned to be made by locally raised textile designer Debbie Sun through a 2016 grant awarded by the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts. The official Madras fabric was established by Act No. 8424 (Bill No. 33-0226). This Act amended the Virgin Islands Code Title 1, Chapter 7 to establish the official Madras of the Virgin Islands of the United States. V.I.C.A. unveiled the fabric on Saturday, June 5 2021 at the Frederick Dorsch Cultural Center in Frederiksted.

The colors chosen for the V.I. Madras pattern represent the following:



Additionally, there are four stripes on the pattern that represent each of the major U.S. Virgin Islands and the fourth line symbolizes their unity. In answer to a non-Virgin Islander's query of what it means to be a Virgin Islander, "We wanted the Madras to be that symbol to represent who we are as a people through the fabric," Debbie Sun said last year [during an interview](#) with the Consortium.

"We look forward to seeing how designers, seamstresses, and artists will use the fabric creatively. We are grateful to cultural bearers like Mr. Bradley Christian who had the foresight to bring together so many talented individuals that were able to create another piece of V.I. history," said V.I.C.A. Executive Director Tasida Kelch in a written statement last year.

Various fashion designers, seamstresses, and artists on St. Croix have already begun using the fabric. Outside of fashion, Designs by Regal and Creative Crucian launched a '[My Madras Competition](#)' for residents of the territory who are 16 and under to create their own madras pattern. The winner will receive custom wrapping sheets of their design.

According to [Modern Madras](#)' website, Madras has been authenticated differently in most Caribbean cultures and throughout West Africa. In West Africa, it is sometimes called Injiri and George. In Jamaica, Madras is referred to as Bandana or Madras Bandana. Caribbean islands like Antigua, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Kitts/ Nevis and Guadeloupe have their own national Madras fabric. Ms. Sun shared that their patterns often correlate to the colors in their flags. It is unknown as to whether any of those islands created their own fabric as the U.S.V.I. did. Nevertheless, Ms. Sun, president of the St. Croix Heritage Dancers, Bradley Christian and president of the Christiansted Community Alliance, Mary Dema chose to design an original fabric symbolic of the people, history, and environment of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Debbie Sun engaged in discussions over what Madras is, its history in the U.S.V.I. and its history in the Caribbean with fellow project partners. Mr. Christian shared in an interview with VIC that the wearing of Madras as traditional attire dates back to the 1700s. To this day, quadrille dancers still adorn themselves in various patterns of madras while dancing to the calls of the territory's native music, Quelbe.

As Madras is made through weaving, Ms. Sun even went as far as visiting a weaving factory in England for research purposes to understand the mechanics of how Madras is made. Madras originates in Chennai, India also known as Madras city. The official V.I. Madras, however, was manufactured in Trinidad, according to Kendell Henry, the special projects coordinator for V.I.C.A. on St. Croix.