For Immediate Release

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Celebrate & Support Youth Art in Our Community

St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands, March 6, 2023 -- Youth Art Month (YAM) is celebrated across the United States of America in many different ways. In the USVI, YAM is mainly celebrated by putting student art on display for the community to enjoy. More than 400 students from over 19 schools and homeschool programs in St. Thomas and St. John submitted their artwork for the 2023 Youth Art Month exhibit. In St. Croix, 16 schools and programs participated with an estimated 400 works of art created by young artists. The Virgin Islands Children's Museum hosted the opening of their exhibit on Saturday, March 4th from 6-9PM during which 200+ parents, grandparents and art advocates came out to celebrate youth art. Crucians can look forward to this weekend as the Student Art Exhibit opens at CHANT (Crucian Heritage and Nature Tourism) in Frederiksted this Saturday, March 11th from 5-9PM.





Narius Walker and Maria Stiles, Co-Chairs of the USVI Regional YAM Committee

'The Arts are one of our core concepts at the VI Children's Museum and we are always pleased to provide a space to celebrate the artistic talents of our young people and to encourage more support of youth art in the territory. There are currently some schools without an art teacher or art program. In addition to that barrier, some parents are still unconvinced of the academic and developmental affects art can have on their children. Cultivating a child's passions and imagination aren't just key phrases, they are ways to help build your child's confidence and self-esteem. The VICM is happy to play our part in bringing these issues to light and galvanizing support for our children and their talents." -Chantel Hoheb, Executive Director of the VI Children's Museum. Attendees were welcomed in traditional VI fashion by the blowing of the conch shells. After which the Ulla F. Muller Bamboula Group performed a spiritual and energetic routine, led by their Director Ms. Mercer. Art lovers were also treated to three performances from the ladies at the MLB School of Dance, including a piece choreographed and performed by 12 year old Leah Williams specifically for Black History Month. Visit the YAMusvi Facebook page to watch this amazing performance or view more photos.

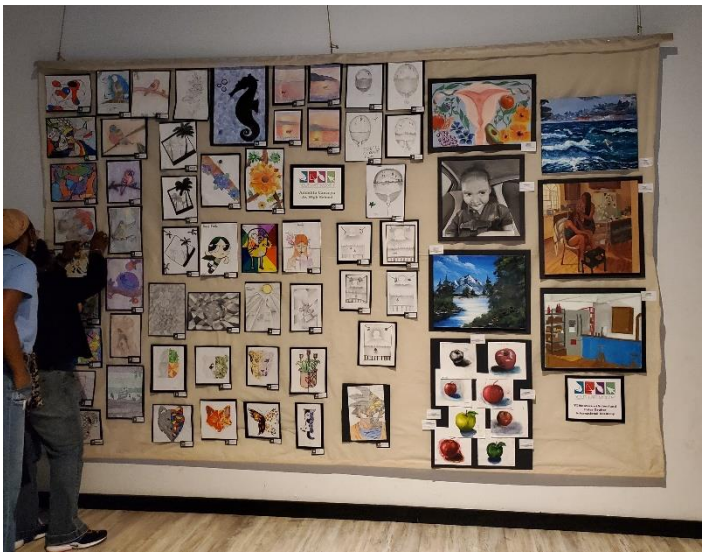


Artist Yashamay David showing off one of her pieces

Niarus Walker, a teacher, artist and art advocate, brought the celebration of Youth Art Month to the territory over 15 years ago. "Having spaces where the community can highlight and enjoy the creativity of our children will help to demonstrate the need for more resources to be assigned specifically to youth art and music programs in and out of schools in the USVI," stated Ms. Walker.

Youth Art Month is celebrated during the month of March and in addition to encouraging our young artists, it's a time to celebrate the amazing art teachers that continue to inspire future VI artists.

Co-chair of the Youth Art Month Regional Committee, Maria Stiles states "encouraging art helps build problem solving and communication skills while allowing for self-expression and creativity. Studies have shown that these qualities also improve the academic performance of students." The exhibition can be viewed in St. Thomas until March 24th and in St. Croix until March 31st. Regular admission rates for members, Veteran's, Senior citizens and our Museums for All visitors will apply. For more information please visit www.vichildrensmuseum.org or call 340-643-0366. Be sure to Like and follow the Youth Art Month USVI page on Facebook, www.facebook.com/YAMusvi for art highlights and updates.



Thank you to our volunteers, staff and sponsors who continue to support the Arts in education. Thank you to the VI Lottery Community Enrichment Initiative, the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands, Cape Air, Lindbergh Bay Hotel & Villas, My Car Rental VI, the Art Exchange, Ninja P, WSTX, and Conch Shell Media for sponsoring Youth Art Month USVI 2023.

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Press Contact:
Chantel Hoheb
Submitted Photos: 2023 Y.A.M. St. Thomas and St. Croix flyer, photos from the St. Thomas opening night