

# Annual Report 2021

## Virgin Islands Council on the Arts



|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR.....  | 2  |
| THE YEAR IN REVIEW .....        | 3  |
| Grants.....                     | 4  |
| Initiatives.....                | 5  |
| FINANCIAL SUMMARY FY 2021 ..... | 14 |
| VICA BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....    | 15 |



Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to share with you VI Council on the Art's (VICA) annual report for fiscal year 2021. This year has been both demanding and rewarding to operate throughout the changing landscape presented by COVID19. But despite it all VICA remains committed to strengthening the creative and cultural capacity of our community by providing all Virgin Islanders with diverse opportunities for arts and cultural participation.

The team at VICA met the challenge head on and continued to provide resources, financial assistance, entertainment and enrichment for our community as they continuously battle the pandemic. We believe arts, culture and creativity are vital to quality of life for all residents and hold economic vitality for our community. We take pride in our role to sustain and enhance a dynamic art and culture ecosystem that extends throughout the community, while delivering meaningful opportunities for cultural and artistic participation and expression.

I am in awe but not surprised by the resiliency of our community to always maintain the ability to adapt and adjust. We are truly VI Strong. The programs and projects that we have funded, partnered with or coordinated have had a tremendous impact on all Virgin Islanders near and far. We are truly pleased to share our year in review with you.

In these trying times I encourage you to support the arts! The arts are a fundamental component of healthy communities, strengthening them socially, educationally, and economically.

Sincerely,

Tasida H Kelch

Executive Director

# The Year in Review

## Fiscal Year 2021

In fiscal year (FY) 2021, VICA unveiled the territory's official madras fabric. The fabric was established by Act No. 8424, which was passed by the V.I. Legislature in late 2020 and signed by Gov. Albert Bryan Jr. in early 2021. The madras fabric has become intertwined in our history and culture and it has become, organically, a proud representation of the Virgin Islands. The official design is a woven plaid including seven colors. Madras fabric has a long history, starting in Madras, India, as a plain undyed cotton muslin. It was exported to Africa and the Middle East to use as headwraps by the 1500s. Over time, the handwoven fabric became more elaborate, using dyes. The bright and bold colors were thought to be reflective of the hot climate and the foliage of the place where the fabric was made. The madras fabric has become intertwined in our history and culture and it has become, organically, a proud representation of the Virgin Islands.

As part of the agency's commitment to access, the Council continued its outreach to address ageism towards our senior citizen population. VICA teamed up with First Lady Yolanda Bryan, AARP of the Virgin Islands, the V.I. Department of Tourism and Stanley and the Ten Sleepless Knights to celebrate older American's month with an "ole' time serenade" at the various senior living communities in St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.

The agency also added new language to its FY 2022 funding guidelines specifically its grant amounts:

- General Operating Support has increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000.
- Project Support has increased from \$5,000 to \$7,000.
- Arts in Education Support and Arts in Underserved Communities Support have increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000.
- Mini grants have increased from \$1,000 to \$2,500
- Technical Assistance grants have increased from \$1,000 to \$2,500.



VICA's staff at the official madras unveiling ceremony



# GRANTS

Although FY 2021 was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts was able to advance its mission "to enrich the cultural life of citizens of the Virgin Islands through leadership that preserves, supports, strengthens, and make accessible, excellence in the arts to all Virgin Islanders.



French Ballet Theatre Inc, a VI Council on the Arts grantee in FY 2021.

The agency budget in FY 2021 was \$301,135 which was matched with \$77,000 local appropriation. The Council submitted its FY 2022 grant application to the National Endowment for the Arts where we were awarded \$313,135; an increase of more than \$10,000 from the previous fiscal year. The Board of Directors, Executive Director and staff reviewed eighty-three grants with requests for funding totaling \$594,309. \$241,800 was awarded to fifty-five grantees territory-wide to include General Operating Support, Project Support, Arts in Education, and Arts in Underserved Communities.



"Claiming Spaces: The African Narrative Story of the Sugar Mill" an exhibit by Stephanie Brown a VI Council on the Arts grantee in FY 2021.

# Initiatives

The VI Council on the Arts facilitates the territory-wide contests for the Poetry Out Loud (POL) competition, presented in partnership with the Poetry Foundation. POL encourages the nation's youth to learn about great poetry—both classic and contemporary—through memorization and recitation. The Poetry Foundation provides and administers all aspects of the monetary prizes

awarded for Poetry Out Loud. The Poetry Out Loud national finals are administered by Mid Atlantic Arts. In March 2021, Kaden Hughes; a high school student at Antilles School was named the Virgin Islands Territorial champion where he then advanced to the (virtual) National Finals Competition. Rahele Megosha, a senior at Washington High School in South Dakota, was announced as the 2021 Poetry Out Loud National Champion.



VICA staff at the 2021 (virtual)  
USVI POL territorial competition

The Community Challenge initiative began in 2020 in partnership with AARP; the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. The grant program is part of the nationwide AARP Livable Communities initiative that helps communities become great places to live for residents of all ages. The initiative was created to support creative aging methods for our local senior citizen population who typically would not have access to these creative aging outlets. Five local senior citizens were given the opportunity to create public murals throughout St. Thomas; Caryl Johnson, Sharie Smyth, Kathy Butler, Mary Davis and Susan Edwards. The five artists worked together to create beautiful murals that depicted aspects of island life and culture.

"When they said they wanted me to do it, I was sitting at home not seeing anybody because of COVID," said Davis. "We're far apart and outdoors and wearing masks. We can do happy things. It's pleasant and it's joyful."



Susan Edwards working on her mural



Each spring, the Congressional Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation and in each congressional district. Students submit entries to their representative's office, and panels of district artists select the winning entries. Winners are recognized both in their district and at an annual awards ceremony in Washington, DC. The winning works are displayed for one year at the U.S. Capitol.

The winner of this year's competition was Deonna Gumbs; a student of the St. Croix Central High School. Second place was captured Deja Simon from the VI Montessori School & Peter Gruber Academy in St. Thomas, and third place, Carlan Joseph from the St. Croix Educational Complex



Deonnas winning artwork

Each Year, VICA hosts a Valentine's Day visual art exhibit; 2021 marked the fourth annual exhibit. The Council was delighted to welcome twelve local artists in our gallery space to display their artwork. This year's exhibit entitled "Stupid Cupid" challenged artists to create anti-love pieces.



Artist Chunikwa George poses with her live art pieces

In FY 21 the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts continued its partnership with the V.I. Economic Development Authority's Enterprise Zone Commission to extend the Made in the USVI Pop-Up shop on all three islands. Stocked with 100% locally made products from the U.S. Virgin Islands, the pop-up shop coordinated a special opportunity for locals and tourists to select locally made home decor items, clothing, soaps, body lotions, spices, seasonings, jewelry, accessories, books and tasty treats. The array of items represents approximately 30 homegrown artisans and small manufacturers operating on St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix.



Shoppers inside the Made in the USVI Pop-Up shop on St. Thomas



October is National Arts & Humanities Month (NAHM) —a coast-to-coast collective recognition of the importance of culture in America. NAHM was launched by Americans for the Arts more than 30 years ago as National Arts Week in honor of the twentieth anniversary of the National Endowment for the Arts. The arts are fundamental to our humanity. They ennoble and inspire us—fostering creativity, goodness, and beauty. The arts bring us joy, help us express our values, and build bridges between cultures. The arts are also a fundamental component of a healthy community—strengthening them socially, educationally, and economically—benefits that persist even in difficult social and economic times. In celebration of (NAHM) VICA hosted a month-long schedule of activities to include a back-to-school supply giveaway, social media campaigns and a temporary tattoo initiative.



Local soca artist Adam O gives his rendition of how #ArtCreatesHope for him



VICA staff wear their temporary #SupportTheArts tattoos



Sip and Paint classes combines the fun and relaxation of a party with the challenge of a class guided a professional artist. On December 12, 2020 VICA held its first Christmas Sip and Paint event hosted by Eliana Brown. This event had the seasonal theme of the holidays and brought community members together for an evening of relaxation, conversation, and fun.



Attendees of VICA's Christmas Sip and Paint at the Dorsch Center

Couples Painting Class for Valentine's Day-VICA's second Sip and Paint was held on February 13, 2021.



Attendees of VICA's Valentine's Day Sip and Paint at the Dorsch Center

Delta Dorsch (March 26, 1915 - January 28, 2011) was an educator, storyteller, and preserver of the cultural history of the U. S. Virgin Islands. Teaching for 38 years, working with the Department of Education and the Commission on the Preservation of Virgin Islands Culture, Dorsch was a tireless advocate for conserving traditions of the Virgin Islands and teaching as a means of giving them life. She contributed two books on the history and traditions of the country and received many awards and honors in recognition of her work. On March 27, 2021 VICA held a virtual story-telling Festival in honor of Mrs. Delta Dorsch.



A photograph of Mrs. Delta Jackson Dorsch



Guest speaker Temisha Libert at VICA's "A Night of Storytelling" in honor of Delta Jackson Dorsch



Guest speaker Sayeeda Carter at VICA's "A Night of Storytelling" in honor of Delta Jackson Dorsch



In FY 21 VICA's Dorsch After Dark Series was created. The goal of the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts is to highlight an artists' talents and provide the opportunity for exposure of their art to the community and physical space at the Dorsch Center to network, with other artists and the community. VICA's objective is to promote each artist's talent. Thus, VICA strives to interview each artist beforehand, and create a profile on them. Their profiles are then shared across our various social media platforms, with the artist's permission, to give broader exposure to showcase their talent. The artist has the choice of also displaying their art for sale, through the one-night-only pop-up shop, held at the Dorsch Center.



Attendees at VICA's Dorsch After Dark event



Musician Gyasi Clarke, performing at VICA's Dorsch after Dark event

VICA in partnership with AARP of the Virgin Islands hosted the Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Day concert featuring Romanza Band, and Eddie Russel Jazz Ensemble. The event was held virtually at the Dorsch Center, with over 20,00 views via social media. The master of ceremonies was radio personality Papi Love. The collaboration with AARP is always a fruitful relationship that continues to grow stronger.



Eddie Russel Jazz Ensemble performing at VICA's V.I. - Puerto Rico Friendship Day concert



Romanza Band performing at VICA's V.I. - Puerto Rico Friendship Day concert



MC Papi Love



On July 10, 2021 Kevin McEwen, founder/artistic director of the Kofago Dance Ensemble hosted a West African Dance Workshop. This workshop provided attendees a presentation of dance and song workshops in traditional West African dance techniques. Approximately forty-five (45) people attended the workshop.



Kevin McEwen / direct dancers



Kevin McEwen / direct drummers

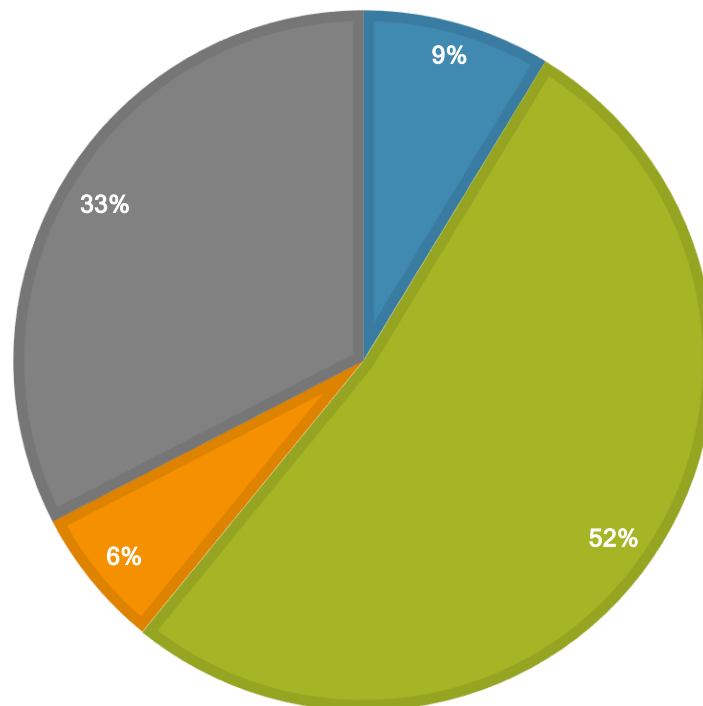
# Financial Summary

## SUMMARY OF FUNDS AVAILABLE FY 20/21

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| APPROPRIATED PROGRAM FUNDS    | \$301,135.00 |
| NONFEDERAL FUNDS              | \$95,000.00  |
| TOTAL AMOUNT GRANTED          | \$241,800.00 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM FUNDS AVAILABLE | \$396,135.00 |

## FUNDING CATEGORIES GRANTED

■ Arts In Education ■ Project Support ■ Arts In Underserved Communities ■ General Operating Support





# Virgin Islands Council on the Arts Board of Directors

(As of August 2021)

**Jose Raul Carrillo**

Chairman  
St. Thomas, VI



**Vernon Araujo**

St. Thomas, VI



**Claire Roker**

Vice Chairwoman  
St. Croix, VI



**Vernon Finch**

St. Thomas, VI

**Karen Thurland - Treasurer**

St. Croix, VI



**Glenn "Kwabena" Davis**

St. Thomas, VI

