



Taste the BVI

Where Cultural Flavour Meets Creative Vision

By Jerelyn Callwood

Tucked along Historic Main Street, Taste the BVI is not just a restaurant—it's a gateway to a unique cultural experience. Founded by the visionary Riah Durante in November 2023, the business started in a humble three-foot yellow dome at the Cyril B. Romney Tortola Pier Park. It swiftly expanded to a 10x10 boardwalk space before finding its permanent home on Main Street. Here, Durante continues to redefine the essence of the Virgin Islands, offering a taste, a feeling, and a celebration of its rich heritage.

From Heritage to Hospitality

An eighth-generation descendant of Salt Island, Durante draws inspiration for Taste the BVI from deep roots. Before launching the restaurant, she operated a concierge and

destination management service focused on authentic experiences. "There were lots of restaurants," she recalled, "but very few that celebrated the Virgin Islands through food."

The name speaks for itself—Taste the BVI invites diners to experience the islands through every bite. Durante isn't a chef by title, but she's a creator who took culinary management courses to master her craft. Her mission: to highlight Virgin Islands traditions and ingredients while elevating them with creativity and care.

Standing Out by Staying True

In an industry often swayed by trends, Durante stands firm

on the grounds of authenticity. “People often ask why we don’t serve burgers or wings,” she expressed. “But our aim is to be known for serving the best local food in the BVI.” The menu is a reflection of the comfort of home—Johnny Cakes, fish, and hearty island stews—dishes that not only fill the stomach but also connect people to their roots and memories.

While Taste the BVI once thrived on cruise ship traffic, its heart has always belonged to the locals. “Most of our clientele are local,” she proudly stated, “which is a testament to the quality of our food and our strong bond with the community.”

More Than a Restaurant

Durante’s space doubles as a creative hub, hosting cultural discussions and collaborations with local organisations such as the H. Laverty Stoutt Community College and the BVI Literary Arts Festival. Now serving as Event Manager at H.L. Stoutt Community College, she uses her platform to connect culture, education, and community.

One standout event, Maritime Melodies: Storytelling through Song and Taste, honoured the BVI’s seafaring history. Featuring cultural icon Elmore Stoutt, it explored the evolution of the Virgin Islands’ maritime history, paired with a traditional menu that reimaged home-style meals in elegant ways. Guests sipped cocoa tea brewed with real cocoa, nutmeg, and lemongrass, served in enamel mugs—a

nostalgic nod to the past.

Collaborating with Sean Palmar of Aromas, Durante also curated island-inspired beverages to elevate the evening. “It wasn’t just about storytelling,” she said. “It was about connection.”

Looking Ahead

Following the success of Maritime Melodies, Durante is planning her next event—the Virgin Islands Christmas Guava Berry Festival, promising a family-friendly celebration of culture, flavour, and holiday cheer.

But her vision stretches further. In summer 2026, Taste the BVI will launch a Culinary Apprenticeship Program for youth interested in hospitality, offering hands-on training in traditional cooking and cultural preservation.

A Taste That Lasts

For Durante, food is the language of heritage. “Whether you’re two or ninety-nine, there’s always something creative to look forward to at Taste the BVI,” she said with a smile. Taste the BVI isn’t just serving meals—it’s serving history, creativity, and a taste of the Virgin Islands’ soul.

Visit Taste the BVI

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Sounds of the Islands

The Evolution of Fungi Music in the BVI

By a Proud Virgin Islander

If you've ever sat under a tamarind tree in the evening, breeze blowing off the sea and the scent of salt in the air, you might've heard it — that sweet, scratchy sound that makes your foot start tapping without you even realising. That's fungi music. The heartbeat of the Virgin Islands. The kind of sound that feels like home.

When I was a child, I remember hearing the elders laugh and sing while the band played. The washboard would rattle in time with the banjo, the bass would hum deep and steady, and someone always had a triangle or a pair of bottles to add a little sparkle. Fungi music never needed fancy instruments or a stage — just people, stories, and joy.

They say the name fungi comes from our favourite dish — the one made with cornmeal and okra, stirred until it's just right. It's a mix of everything, simple but full of flavour. That's how our music is too: a blend of African rhythms, European melodies, and Caribbean soul, all mixed together by generations of Virgin Islanders who turned struggle into celebration.

Long before the bright lights of festival village, our ancestors played these tunes in the yard after a long day's work. The songs carried their laughter and their

pain, their gossip and their pride. They sang about love, politics, and the little things that make island life what it is — from donkeys on the road to the latest scandal in town.

Fungi music wasn't just sound; it was storytelling. It was survival wrapped in rhythm.

By the time I was old enough to dance, fungi had already become the soundtrack of our celebrations. Bands like The Lashing Dogs and Eustace "Boss" Freeman and the Sparkplugs were the stars of the scene. Their music could make the shyest person get up and move. You'd hear the banjo strum, the conch blow, and before you knew it, a full circle of dancers would spin under the moonlight.

There was something magical about those nights — no big stage, no microphones, just pure energy. The kind that comes from people playing for the love of it. The music pulled us together, no matter what part of the islands we came from.

As the years rolled on, so did the music. The younger generation started mixing fungi with reggae, calypso, and a little soca spice. Some people worried it might lose its roots, but I think it just grew — the same way our

people did. Bands like The Razor Blades from Elmore Stoutt High School carried the torch forward, showing that fungi still has a place in modern life.

Today, you'll still hear it at Emancipation Festival, or when schoolchildren celebrate Culture Week. And every time that washboard scratches or that bass starts to thump, the same spirit comes alive. It's the spirit of our ancestors — proud, strong, and unbreakable.

Fungi tells the story of who we are as Virgin Islanders. It's the laughter, the wit, the rhythm of our speech. It's how we hold on to our traditions even as the world around us changes.

When I hear that music now, I think of my grandparents — of barefoot dances in the yard, of jokes told between verses, of community. The kind that doesn't need to be

announced or rehearsed. It just happens, naturally.

These days, we talk a lot about preserving culture. But fungi music doesn't need to be preserved like something fragile — it needs to be played, danced to, and lived. When the young ones pick up the banjo or start scratching the washboard, that's how we keep it alive.

Because fungi music isn't just about the past, it's about who we are, right now — a people proud of our history and full of life.

So the next time you hear that familiar rhythm floating across the breeze, take a moment. Tap your foot. Maybe even dance a little. That's the sound of the Virgin Islands calling — the sound of fungi, still alive and beating strong in the heart of our home.



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The BVI's Next Big Export Isn't Rum or Tourism—It's Creativity

A generation of island creatives is flipping the script, using art, music, and digital culture to build something real—something theirs.

Forget the glossy postcards. The British Virgin Islands aren't just about turquoise water, catamarans, and sunburnt tourists clutching rum punches. There's something real bubbling up beneath the perfect surface—a creative wave that's reshaping what these islands sound like, look like, and stand for.

Across the BVI, a new generation of makers and dreamers is on the rise. Musicians, painters, designers, filmmakers, and poets are rewriting the narrative—one beat, brushstroke, and Instagram post at a time. They're calling themselves The Creatives, and their energy is electric. It's less about chasing fame and more about claiming identity, celebrating heritage, and building something that actually feels like home.

The music scene tells the story best. Traditional island rhythms are still the backbone, but they're being remixed, reimagined, and turned up loud. Think roots and fungi colliding with reggae, soca, and Afrobeats, layered with a bit of digital grit. It's a unique blend of heritage and hustle—a sound that's both nostalgic and completely now.

Art, too, is shifting gears. The canvas isn't just paradise anymore—it's protest, pride, and perspective. Walls are becoming murals. Beaches are turning into galleries. The work feels raw and rooted, balancing beauty with boldness.

Meanwhile, the fashion, photography, and content scenes are quietly blowing up. Local designers are redefining Caribbean

style with a global lens. Photographers are telling stories that look nothing like the travel brochures. And social media is their stage, where they showcase their work, connect across islands, and turn small-town ideas into worldwide moments. Creatives are using these platforms to bridge geographical gaps and share their unique perspectives with the world.

The best part? It's all happening organically. No big grants. No institutional hand-holding. Just people figuring it out—collaborating, creating, and finding ways to make art in a place better known for sailing than storytelling.

And yet, this creative wave isn't just about expression—it's economic power. The global creative economy is booming, and the BVI is finally stepping into the conversation. Festivals, pop-ups, open mics, and street art projects aren't just community events anymore; they're catalysts for something bigger. Art is becoming infrastructure. Creativity is becoming currency.

Of course, it's not all smooth sailing. Resources are scarce, formal training is limited, and most creatives still juggle side hustles to make it work. But even with the odds stacked, the movement is growing stronger because it's built on passion, persistence, and a deep sense of place.

The British Virgin Islands are in the middle of a cultural awakening. The world still sees paradise. But the creatives? They're busy building something deeper—a creative identity that's loud, proud, and impossible to ignore. This isn't the BVI you see on a postcard. This is the BVI that's rewriting its own story, in colour, in rhythm, in motion. And the world's finally starting to listen.

Creative Waves Brings Art to Life in the BVI

When VI Family Link caught up with Sophie Stanton of Creative Waves BVI during the gallery's Digital Arts Showcase, the room was alive with colour, light, and conversation. Ten glowing screens displayed the work of fifteen digital artists—proof that creativity in the Virgin Islands is thriving in new and unexpected ways.

Sophie founded Creative Waves in early 2024 with a simple idea: to give local artists a space to be seen. After living in the BVI for over six years and working with creative communities around the world, she noticed how many people here were quietly making art without a platform to share it.

"I kept meeting these incredible, almost 'secret' artists," she recalled. "They all had full-time jobs in other sectors but would go home and paint or create in their spare time. I just thought—why not give them a moment?"

That spark led to a major exhibition at H. Lavity Stoutt Community College in February 2024. Sophie expected only a few submissions but was amazed when seventy-one artists came forward. The turnout made one thing clear: the BVI's creative spirit had been waiting for an opportunity to shine.

As Sophie dug deeper, she discovered that art hadn't been part of the school curriculum for more than a decade. "It's not just here; it's something I've seen in other countries, too," she explained. "But it's an easy problem to fix. You need space, energy, and opportunity."

Now, Creative Waves has exactly that. The organisation's new home in Road Reef Plaza, Tortola, is a bright, welcoming gallery that hosts monthly exhibitions. Recent shows have featured photographers, painters, and now digital creators. "There's no art supply shop here, no national gallery," Sophie noted. "So people have turned to digital tools instead. It's

incredible to see what they're producing on their iPads."

Creative Waves also brings art beyond the gallery with public mural projects. The first two, created in partnership with the BVI Ports Authority, were completed at the Road Town Jetty by artist Tia Modest and on Jost Van Dyke by Vea Donovan Hodge. Others followed along Ridge Road and most recently at the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport, where artist Simond Llewellyn's 120-foot mural welcomes travellers to the territory.

The community's enthusiasm has been overwhelming. Visitors often wander into the gallery out of curiosity and leave inspired to join a class. Creative Waves runs workshops in painting, digital art, and even basket weaving. As a nonprofit, the funds from these classes help support community programs—from art sessions with seniors to rehabilitation projects at the prison.

"Everything connects," Sophie says. "The artists earn from their work, and we reinvest what we can into more community initiatives. It's about showing people that creativity can be part of daily life—and even a career if they want it to be."

Looking ahead, Sophie is preparing for a new exhibition by celebrated local artist Joseph Hodge, which will transform the space into a vibrant cultural festival. "There'll be crafts, music, Guava Berry wine—it's going to feel like a true celebration of BVI creativity," she says.

Sophie reflects on the journey so far. "We're just scratching the surface. There's so much talent here. All we're doing is giving it the space to shine."

To all creatives - KEEP SHINING!





Bold Strokes



Art is evolving, and today's creators are painting the canvas and beyond. VI FamilyLink celebrates some of the artists, illustrators, and digital visionaries redefining what creativity means in a connected world. From traditional brushwork to digital renderings and immersive 3D design, these innovators blend technology with imagination to craft new forms of expression. Their work challenges boundaries, transforms perspectives, and reminds us that true artistry has no medium — only vision.

VI FamilyLink shines the spotlight on four creatives of the BVI whose Bold Strokes are leaving a mark.

J'LIYA NIBBS

At just 18, J'Liya Nibbs is making her mark on the Virgin Islands' creative scene. A Graphic Design student at H.L. Stoult Community College, she's been surrounded by art since childhood, inspired by her mother's old pastels, brushes, and paints.

Her passion for design began in high school, where joining the media team sparked an interest that soon became a calling. For J'Liya, design is storytelling—an art of communicating emotion and culture visually.

Before design came drawing. Known as “the art kid” in primary school, J'Liya loved charcoal sketching and teaching classmates to draw. Her style now blends semi-realism with animation influences, merging observation and imagination.

Her breakthrough came with a high school project reimagining Road Town's Roundabout. The futuristic design earned her a spot in the Creative Waves Exhibition





for Women, where she was showcased alongside other women artists.

J’Liya hopes to inspire others to create fearlessly. “You don’t have to be perfect when you start,” she advised. “Creativity grows with courage.” With plans to graduate in 2026, she continues to refine her craft—reflecting the vibrant, evolving spirit of Virgin Islands art.

CHENICA SOMMERSEL

At just 23, Chenica Sommersel has already carved out her own vibrant corner in the world of art. Known online as Kheni Cloud, Chenica brings a whimsical, semi-realistic touch to her designs — from dreamy illustrations to custom bags, stickers, and commissions.



Chenica’s art — often colourful, bright, and full of life — mirrors her outlook. “People always tell me, my head is in the clouds,” she laughed. “So, I thought, why not make that part of my brand?”

“I’ve loved art since I was a kid,” she said. “I always knew I wanted to do something creative, something that made people feel.” That spark of imagination eventually grew into her creative brand, Kheni Cloud, and later into a project close to her heart — Toka Tola.



Toka Tola follows five teenagers in the BVI as they search for identity and purpose. “It’s something for young people who feel stuck between growing up and still being a kid,” she explained. “When I was in high school, I didn’t really have an outlet like that, so I wanted to create one.” With its Caribbean backdrop and anime-inspired storytelling, Toka Tola aims to give local teens characters they can truly relate to.

Commissions are open for anyone in need of an original piece of artwork. Whether it’s a portrait, a character concept, or a custom design, Chenica brings her unique touch to every piece.

Bright, bold, and beautifully imaginative — that’s Chenica Sommersel and her brand, Kheni Cloud.

SILKÉ TITTLE

At Elmore Stouff High School, Silké Tittle teaches almost the entire student body, grades eight through twelve, but her classroom is far from ordinary. With six years of experience and a passion for creativity, she blends art and education to inspire her students to see the world differently.



Silké learned art from her mom. "A lot of who I am as an artist comes from her." Her own work explores contrast — soft and edgy, bright and dark — a reflection, she says, of her mental state and hopes for the future.

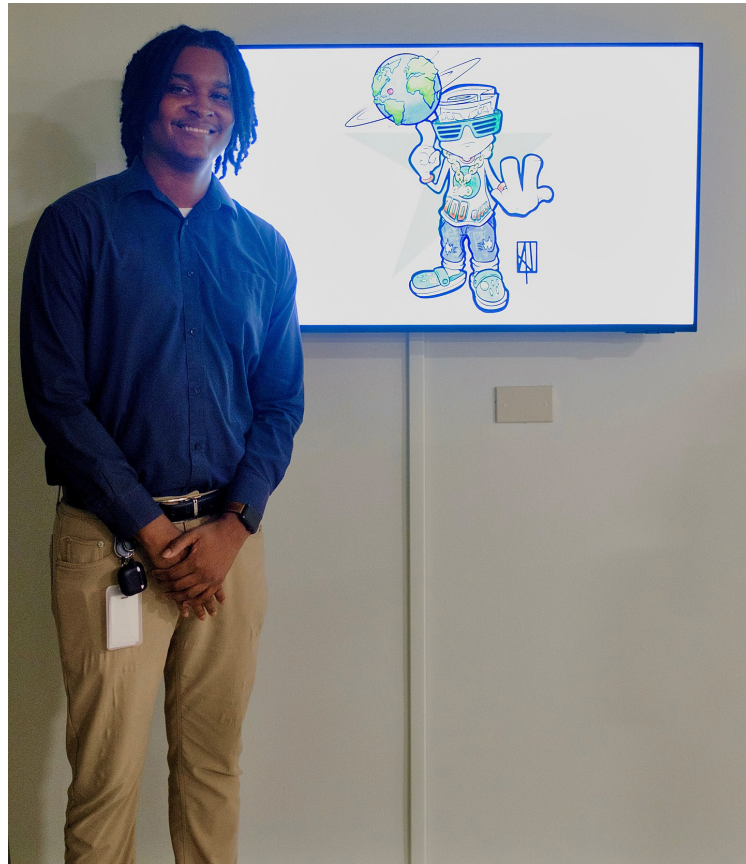
For her, art is more than a subject — it's culture. "Art is all around us," she said. "Life would be dull without it. For too long, we've had incredible local artists working quietly in the background. It's time we celebrate that creativity as part of who we are."

According to her, digital art has become a big part of the creative shift. "From the designs on your clothes to the logos on your favourite brands, that's all digital art," she explained.

Whether in the classroom or her studio, Silké continues to encourage self-expression through art. "Use whatever you have," she advised. "A notepad, your phone, your imagination — just create. That's where it all begins."

ANTHONY JUNIOR GLASGOW

Meet Anthony Jr Glasgow, a young artist whose work dances between nostalgia and imagination. Anthony's been drawing since he was just eight years old — back when pencils, paper, and pure curiosity were all he needed. It's now 2025, and he has leapt into digital art, blending his traditional roots with modern tools.



Anthony's style leans into cartoons and animation, and for him, it's all about connecting with that universal spark, the inner child we all carry. "Cartoons appeal to everyone," he shared. "They make people stop and go, 'Oh wow, this is cool!' That reaction — that moment of connection — that's what keeps me going."

His creative process is as spontaneous as it is passionate. "Sometimes I'll be at work," he laughed, "and I'll just doodle something on the side — maybe a stick figure or a small animal. Then I'll take a picture, scan it to my iPad, and build from there. That's how my characters come to life."

Anthony's enthusiasm for Creative Waves — a platform that uplifts artists — is just as vibrant as his art. "I'm so inspired and ecstatic about it," he emphasised. "Artists need spaces like this, especially from small islands. It's not just about showcasing art — it's about connection, networking, and being seen."

In every sketch, stroke, and digital brush, Anthony brings out the joy of storytelling and self-expression. His mission is simple yet powerful: to make people smile, pause, and remember the magic of imagination.

For the Love of Bush Tea



A Caribbean Tradition Steeped in Healing, Heritage, and Heart

On any given morning in the Virgin Islands, long before the sun climbs above the sea, the aroma of something ancient and comforting drifts through open windows — a pot simmering gently on the stove, filled with wild herbs, leaves, bark, and roots. It is more than a drink. It is bush tea, the Caribbean's original elixir — a potion of healing, memory, and love.

Bush tea is not just tea. It is culture. It is a story. It is survival.

A Tradition Rooted in the Land

In the BVI and across the Caribbean, bush tea traditions date back generations, shaped by African, Indigenous, and European influences. When enslaved Africans arrived in the region, they brought with them a deep knowledge of herbal medicine, wisdom passed from healer to healer, mother to daughter.

Over time, this knowledge merged with the plants of the islands: lemongrass waving in the wind, the sturdy leaf of soursop, the humble jackass bitters, the earthy root of ginger. Out of hardship came ingenuity, and out of that, a ritual that still binds communities today.

Each island has its favourites. In Tortola, many swear by soursop leaf tea to calm the nerves. In Dominica, fever grass (lemongrass) is the cure-all for colds and stress. In Jamaica, cerasee is both loved and feared for its bitter bite and powerful cleanse. In Saint Lucia and Antigua, bush blends are an everyday ritual, crafted not just for healing, but for comfort.

The Bush Behind the Brew

Ask any Caribbean grandmother, and she'll tell you: "Not all bush is for tea!" Each leaf has its purpose, its potency, its spirit. Some of the most beloved include:

- Fever grass (Lemongrass) – for headaches, fever, and anxiety relief.
- Soursop leaf – known for calming properties and immune support.
- Jackass bitters – a strong detoxifier used sparingly.
- Ginger root – for digestion, nausea, and warmth.
- Cerasee – for cleansing the blood and easing skin issues.
- Basil or "sweet bush" – for colds, flu, and spiritual cleansing.

In the old days, elders didn't consult Google; they walked the hills. They knew which plant to pick after rain, which root to dig under the full moon, which leaf worked best for "cooling down the system."

A Ritual of Connection

To make bush tea is to slow down. You don't rush it. You wash the bush, "bruise" the leaves, and let the scent rise as the water boils. You pour, you sip, and you remember.

In the BVI, many still recall sitting on the porch at sunrise, listening to roosters crow while sipping tea from enamel mugs. It was a quiet ritual that signalled love and care — a way of saying, "You're looked after."

In every Caribbean home, a pot of bush tea is often the first line of defence and the last comfort before bed. It is brewed when someone is sick, stressed, or simply in need of grounding. It's

a healing gesture, often accompanied by advice, storytelling, and laughter.

From Bush to Boutique

In recent years, bush tea has made its way from the kitchen stove to café menus, wellness retreats, and export shelves. Local entrepreneurs in the BVI and beyond are packaging traditional herbs with modern flair — blending wellness with culture. Artisanal bush teas, organic blends, and eco-friendly branding are helping to preserve the tradition while sharing it with the world.

But even with its new popularity, most islanders agree: nothing beats the real thing. The magic lies in walking into your backyard, picking your own bush, and knowing exactly what you're brewing.

A Cup of Heritage

Bush tea is more than a drink — it's a metaphor for Caribbean resilience.

It carries the wisdom of ancestors, the beauty of nature, and the comfort of home.

To love bush tea is to love what it represents - the healing power of the earth, the strength of women who kept families well with what they had, and the stories that continue to steep in every island kitchen.

So next time you sip a steaming cup of lemongrass or soursop, pause — breathe in the aroma — and remember that you're part of a lineage that has always known how to find wellness in the wild.



Nurturing the Artists, Dreamers, and Inventors of Tomorrow

Creativity isn't an exceptional talent given to a lucky few; it's something every child is born with. From the moment they can grab a crayon or build a tower of blocks, children are natural creators. They see possibilities where adults see limits, and they turn everyday moments into adventures.

But as kids grow, that bright spark of imagination can fade under the weight of schedules, schoolwork, and the pressure to "do things right." The real challenge for parents isn't to teach creativity; it's to protect and nurture it.

Here are simple, joyful ways to keep that creative spark glowing bright.

1. Let Curiosity Lead the Way

When your child asks "why?" for what feels like the hundredth

time, take a breath — and smile. Each question is an open door to learning. Instead of giving quick answers, turn the question around: "What do you think?" or "Let's find out together."

Curiosity fuels creativity. Every question helps your child learn how to explore, wonder, and think for themselves — the first steps to lifelong creativity.

2. Celebrate Mistakes as Part of the Process

Kids quickly pick up the idea that being "right" matters more than being original. But real creativity happens when it's okay to mess up. If the paint spills off the page or the story takes a silly turn, that's not failure — that's freedom.

Applaud the effort, not just the end result. Remind your child that even the best inventors and artists made lots of "mistakes"

before they found their magic.

3. Make Space for Imagination

A creative space doesn't need to be fancy; it just needs to invite exploration. Set up a cosy corner with crayons and paper, a box of old clothes for dress-up, or a kitchen counter where kids can mix and experiment.

Keep materials handy — blocks, storybooks, musical instruments, or even recycled boxes — and give your child the freedom to make, unmake, and remake their creations.

4. Limit Screens, Expand Real Play

Technology can inspire, but too much screen time can shrink imagination. Encourage your child to explore the real world instead — to climb trees, build forts, make mud pies, or daydream.

Unstructured play is where problem-solving, storytelling, and creative thinking naturally bloom.

5. Fill Their World with Inspiration

Take your child to a local art show, a children's theatre performance, or a live concert. Read poetry aloud. Listen to music from around the world. These experiences stretch their imagination and introduce them to new ideas and cultures.

But remember, creativity isn't just in the arts. It's also in science experiments, building LEGO structures, or inventing a new game. Every subject can spark creativity.

6. Be Their Creative Role Model

Kids learn most from what they see. When parents draw, write, cook, garden, or dream out loud, children understand that creativity isn't just for kids; it's a lifelong joy.

Share your own creative moments: write a family poem, make up a silly song, or cook dinner without a recipe. When you show creativity, your child feels free to explore theirs.

7. Trust Their Journey

Every child's creative path looks different. Some fill sketchbooks, others build gadgets or tell endless stories. What matters most isn't perfection — it's joy.

Trust the process. Give them time, space, and encouragement, and their imagination will grow in ways you could never predict.

Final Thoughts

Nurturing creativity isn't just about raising future artists. It's about raising confident thinkers, problem-solvers, and dreamers. In a world that often rewards fitting in, creativity is how kids learn to stand out, speak up, and see endless possibilities.

When we protect that spark in our children, we're not just helping them express themselves; we're helping them imagine a brighter, more creative future for everyone.



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Walls That Speak through the BVI's Street Art Story

In the Virgin Islands, our culture doesn't live only in books or museums—it lives on our walls. Across Tortola and the sister islands, vibrant murals tell the story of who we are as a people. They remind us of where we came from, what we've overcome, and all that we continue to celebrate. Every brushstroke carries memory and meaning, turning concrete into a canvas of identity.

The Ridge Road in Fahie Hill displays twenty-three inked panels forming an open-air museum of the island's past. Local artist Reuben Vanterpool, known for his scenes of traditional life, led the project and was supported by fellow artists Dean "Ghost" Smith, Cedric Turnbull, Quito Rhymer, Pearl Friday, Thor Downing, and Garth Hewlette, who joined him. Together, they captured the everyday beauty of a simpler time—donkeys on trails, bread baking in coal pots, and villagers working under the sun.

Farther west, on the north shore of Tortola, stands a massive mural by Franklin Hodge at Zion Hill. Towering nearly twenty feet high, it celebrates the rhythms of daily island life—boat building, women balancing bread baskets, men weaving fish pots. Standing before it feels like stepping into a cherished memory, painted with pride and love.

At the eastern end of Tortola, two murals depict the churches, early schools, animals, and tools that sustained generations back to the 1800s—a moving reminder of resilience, freedom, and faith.

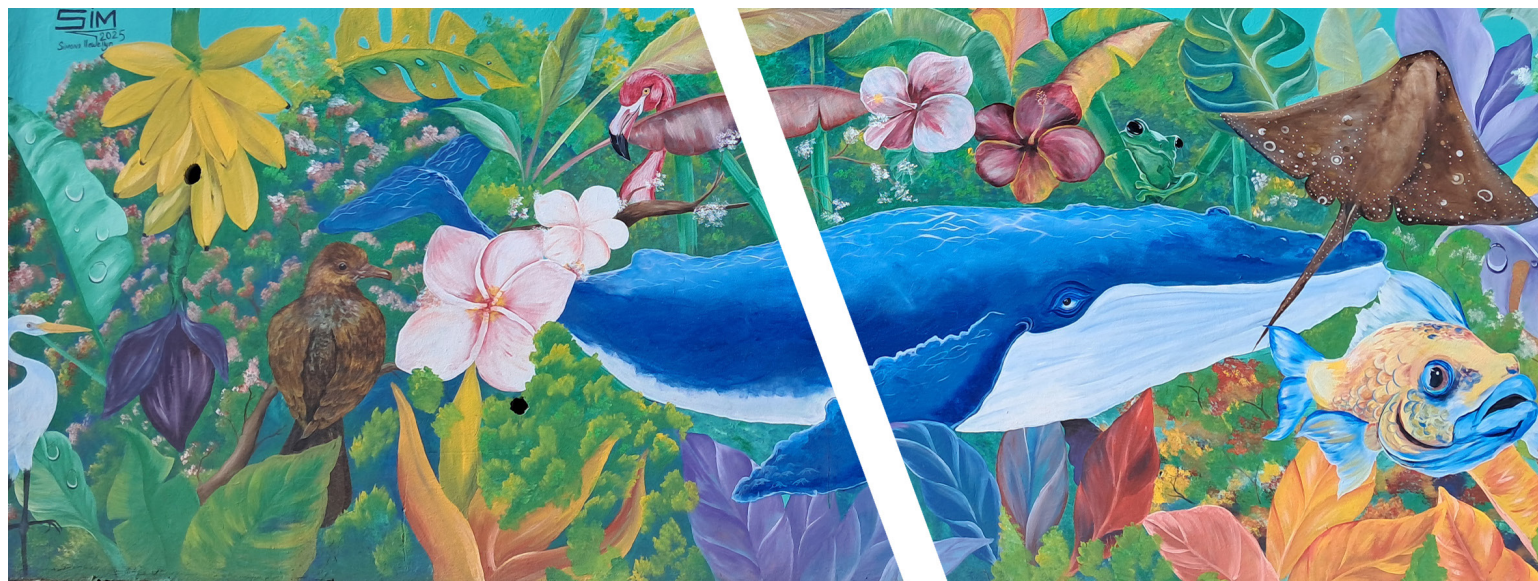
In Carrot Bay, artist Kezzia Jones has left her own bright mark outside D'Coal Pot Restaurant. Her mural radiates the colours of the sea and mountains, celebrating the heart of her community. Locals call it a love letter to home—a reminder that art belongs to everyone.

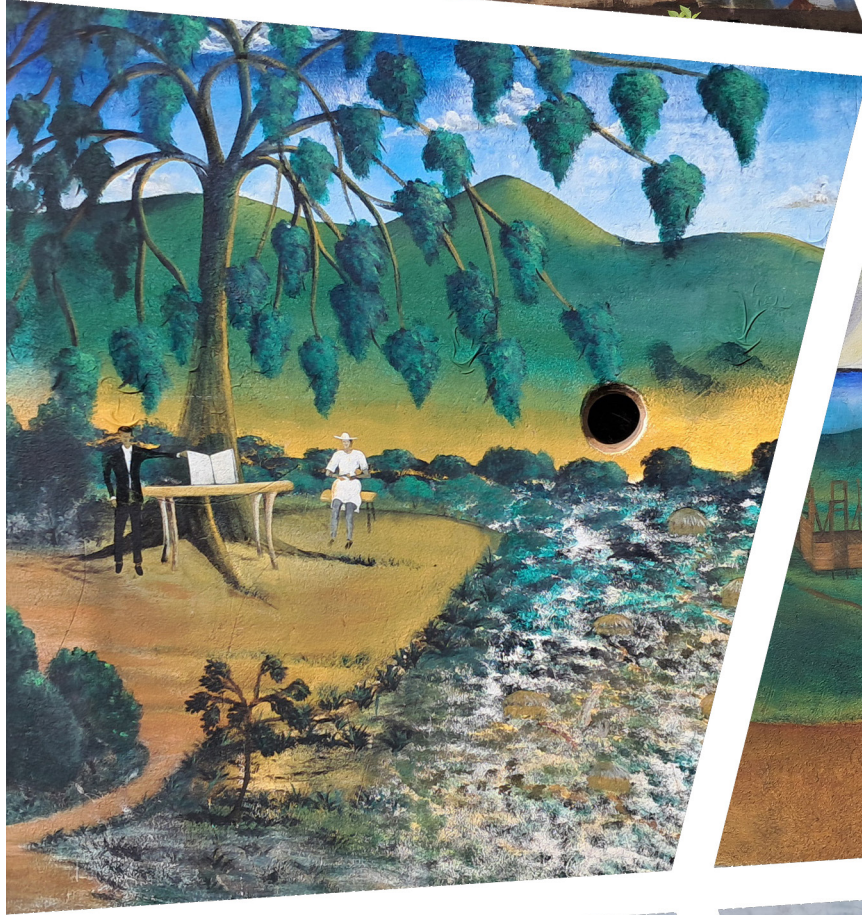
The spirit of creativity continues through initiatives like Creative Waves, which has brought new life to public spaces with murals at the BVI Ports, the Wheatley Wall, and the Road Town Jetty. Artists like Tia Modeste, Via Donovan, and Simond Llewellyn, and other emerging talents are carrying the torch, showing that the BVI's artistic pulse is as strong as ever.

Across the waters on Virgin Gorda, community murals at the Recreation Grounds bring together students and local artists to paint scenes of island pride—from The Baths to portraits of leaders who shaped our story. It's a space where colour, culture, and connection come alive.

Every mural across the Virgin Islands is a chapter in one long, beautiful story. You might pass one every day without realizing the history and heart behind it. So slow down, look closely, and let the walls speak. They remember our laughter, our struggles, our ancestors, and our dreams for tomorrow.

In the BVI, art is not confined to galleries—it lives among us. Our walls tell our stories, and through them, we remember who we are.











Joseph Hodge: The Art of the Virgin Islands Spirit

When you stand before a painting by Joseph Hodge, you are not just looking at colour and form — you are witnessing the Virgin Islands themselves come alive. From the rhythm of the sea to the warmth of a village gathering, his canvases breathe with the stories, emotions, and spirit of the islands he calls home.

For decades, Hodge has been one of the most influential figures in the British Virgin Islands' art scene, known both for his mastery of visual storytelling and for his role as a cultural torchbearer. His paintings are rich with atmosphere and humanity, shaped by an intimate understanding of island life — the laughter, the labour, the faith, and the fierce pride that define his people.

Beyond his own artistic journey, Joseph Hodge has become a cornerstone of creative mentorship in the Virgin Islands. Generations of young artists have benefited from his guidance, encouragement, and generosity. He has long believed that nurturing local talent is essential to the cultural growth of the territory — a belief that has helped cultivate a vibrant and confident art community.

On November 4, 2025, the walls of Creative Waves Art Hub came alive with colour during Hodge's debut exhibition, an event that brought together art lovers, supporters, and members of the community to honour his life's work. The exhibition features a stunning array of works created throughout 2025. This display showcased Hodge's continued vitality and passion for artistic expression.

As part of the Virgin Islands' Culture Month celebrations, Creative Waves has committed to featuring Joseph Hodge's artwork throughout November — a fitting tribute to an artist whose vision has helped define the Virgin Islands' creative identity.

Through decades of creativity and service, Joseph Hodge has become more than an artist — he is a storyteller, a cultural guardian, and a bridge between generations. His art reminds us that the Virgin Islands' identity is not only to be preserved but also celebrated, painted in colour, and passed on with pride.



The Music Behind Words

Poetry is one of humanity's oldest and most luminous arts — a flame passed down through centuries, flickering in countless tongues. From the ritual chants of our ancestors to the whispers of modern verse, it has carried the pulse of human feeling, the ache of memory, the shimmer of dream. Poetry does not merely speak; it sings. It crosses the boundaries of language and time, letting one soul touch another through the delicate alchemy of words.

At its core, poetry is the art of compression — a universe folded into a handful of syllables. It distills emotion until it becomes essence, until rhythm, sound, and silence blend into something more than meaning. Where prose explains, poetry awakens. It does not tell us what to see; it opens our eyes. A sonnet's steady heartbeat, a haiku's quiet breath — each form teaches us how beauty can live in restraint, how truth can bloom in brevity.

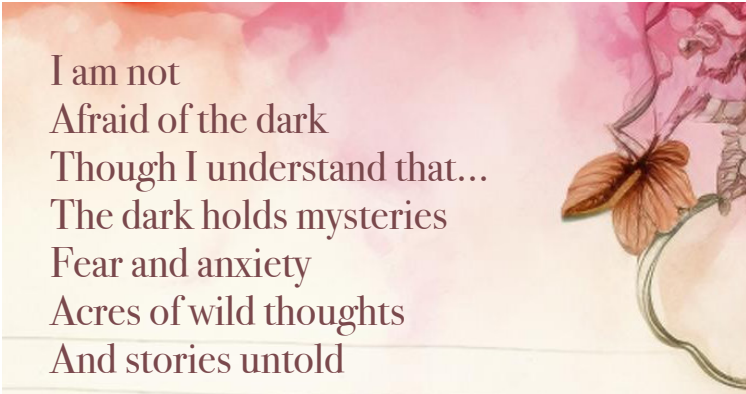
The poet works with language the way a sculptor works with stone, chipping away until only the necessary remains. Every word is chosen, every pause deliberate. In poetry, the unsaid is as powerful as the spoken. Through image and metaphor, poets uncover what ordinary speech conceals. Emily Dickinson turned dashes into breaths between thought and silence; Langston Hughes gave rhythm to struggle and hope, his lines echoing like jazz through the soul. Each poet, in their own way, transforms language into a mirror where the human spirit sees itself.

Poetry is born of feeling — of love and loss, wonder and despair, longing and grace. Yet it is not merely emotion poured onto the page; it is emotion shaped, refined by imagination and craft. A poem gathers the chaos of the heart and turns it toward form. Through its music, we are reminded that what is fleeting can still be eternal, that even pain can be made beautiful when held in language.

And still, poetry changes. In our digital age, verses live not only on the printed page but on glowing screens and open stages. Spoken word poets fill rooms with fire; a few lines on social media can move millions. The form shifts, but the spirit endures — the same impulse to connect, to name what cannot be named, to speak into the vastness and be heard.

Poetry asks us to slow down. It teaches us to listen — to the cadence of thought, the rustle of memory, the quiet between words. In a world that moves too fast, a poem is an act of resistance, a moment of stillness. It reminds us that attention is a form of love, and that meaning often hides in the smallest spaces — a turn of phrase, a pause, a single image that lingers like a breath.

This is the true art of poetry: to live in the tension between sound and silence, between heart and mind. It is a way of listening to the world and to ourselves, of shaping the invisible into song. To read or write a poem is to stand at the edge of the ordinary and look beyond — to glimpse, for a heartbeat, the infinite.




I am not
Afraid of the dark
Though I understand that...
The dark holds mysteries
Fear and anxiety
Acres of wild thoughts
And stories untold

I am not
Afraid of the dark
Please understand that....
The dark nighttime sky is adorned with
Sparkly diamonds that twinkle
Like dancing fairies on ice
A nightly show of nature

I am not
Afraid of the dark
Please understand that
My palate enjoys the warm taste
Of layers of dark moist chocolate cake
That creates orgasmic delight
Satisfying my culinary desires

I am not
Afraid of the dark
Please understand that.....
The touch of his dark skin
Ignites passion so pure and real
The waltz of his whispers
Reminds me that I am love and light
So fears and anxieties
And a tsunami of wild frightful thoughts
Does not consume me

Because
I am not afraid of the dark



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