



Atelier St Thomas Arts Foundation aka 81C Arts
Mailing address: 8124 Subbase STE 102 / #70 STT USVI 00802 (340)203-4030 81CVI.ORG 81CVI.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 11.11.25

81C Marks Five Year anniversary with Territory-Wide Expansion as The Farmhouse Gallery Opens in Frederiksted, St. Croix

As 81C celebrates its fifth anniversary, the Charlotte Amalie–based art space announces a major expansion to St. Croix with the opening of The Farmhouse Gallery at Prosperity Farm Distillery in Frederiksted—further strengthening the Virgin Islands’ cultural infrastructure and creative economy. The inaugural exhibition, featuring Virgin Islands artist Siyandi Matthias, will open to the public Friday, December 19, with a special event from 5 PM to 10 PM, marking a significant milestone in advancing 81C’s mission to grow community arts engagement, youth enrichment, and historic revitalization across the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Bringing my current body of work to St. Croix feels like a continuation of the conversations that began in St. Thomas—about creativity, technology, and the ways art connects our communities across the VI. This exhibition isn’t just about the work itself, but about the shared curiosity and collaboration it inspires. I’m grateful to 81C for championing that spirit of connection through their programs and for creating spaces where art can bridge islands, generations, and ideas.” — Siyandi Matthias, Artist

“I think our expansion to St. Croix is a natural continuation of what we’ve been building over the past five years—a community-driven arts model rooted in collaboration, education, and shared purpose. 81C Arts has always been about creating spaces where artists and audiences can meet, learn, and grow together. Extending our programs to Frederiksted allows us to strengthen those connections across islands and celebrate the creativity that defines the Virgin Islands as a whole, while working to elevate young, emerging community artists onto the global stage.”
— Zack Zook, Founder & Executive Director, 81C Arts

Five Years of Growth and Territory-Wide Impact

The expansion to Frederiksted represents a natural evolution for 81C Arts, 81C's non-profit foundation, which has become a cornerstone of the Virgin Islands cultural landscape since opening its flagship location on Strand Gade near Market Square in 2020.

Over the past five years, 81C Arts has curated and produced more than thirty main gallery exhibitions and over one hundred pop-up and emerging artist showcases, while welcoming more than 19,000 visitors annually to its St. Thomas venue in historic downtown Charlotte Amalie. Through its Artist Dialogues Series, the organization hosts upwards of 1,000 students annually for field-trip visits to its curated art exhibition spaces, connecting young audiences directly with working artists for conversation on creative technique, art and economics, abstract interpretation, and cultural significance.

In 2023, the organization expanded further by opening a dedicated education center in the Camille Pissarro Building on Main Street, where it now operates a regular digital arts and animation afterschool program and summer art camps for students on St. Thomas.

“We’re thrilled to see 81C Arts expanding its youth arts programs to St. Croix. Initiatives like these give young people the chance to discover their creativity, build confidence, and express their voices through the arts. This growth reflects our shared commitment to nurturing the next generation of Virgin Islands artists and cultural innovators.”

— Vernon Araujo, Executive Director, King of the Wing Foundation

The Farmhouse Gallery: An Emerging Creative Destination in Frederiksted

Situated atop an 18th-century estate on 180 acres, The Farmhouse Gallery will offer Frederiksted a distinctive third floor contemporary art space where curated art, cultural history, and creative dialogue converge. The partnership between 81C Arts and Prosperity Farm Distillery will offer a multidisciplinary hub for art exhibitions, youth enrichment, and community programming, overseen by the 81C Arts team.

Through this collaboration, visitors will experience professional art exhibitions in a setting that balances historic architecture with contemporary creativity, further positioning the Virgin Islands as a growing destination for art and culture tourism.

“Prosperity Farm Distillery is proud to partner with 81C's non-profit arm 81C Arts, an organization that has done an extraordinary job bringing contemporary art to St.

Thomas and supporting established, emerging, and local artists. The arts unite communities, transcend cultural boundaries, challenge the status quo, and open new ways of seeing what's possible in the world - and 81C Arts' education programs do just that, especially for community youth. This partnership will help extend that vision to St. Croix, and we look forward to seeing our community come together for the inaugural exhibition by St. Thomas artist Siyandi Matthias." — Mark Gelband, Prosperity Farm Distillery

Expanding Signature Programs Across Islands

The St. Croix expansion will extend 81C Arts' three signature art and education programs—the Art Exhibition Program, the Pop-Up Program, and the Artist Dialogues Series—to a new audience. Each initiative will be adapted to The Farmhouse Gallery setting, offering both indoor and outdoor activations.

Art Exhibition Program

In Charlotte Amalie, this program has an anchored mission with professional, curator-driven exhibitions featuring Virgin Islands, Caribbean, and international artists, often integrating global perspectives. At St. Croix, the program will mirror this curatorial rigor with the objective of enhancing the third-floor gallery space for immersive visual storytelling.

Pop-Up Program

The Pop-Up Program will continue its St Thomas reputation as a flexible, artist and emerging entrepreneur driven format for rapid exhibition and community engagement. In Frederiksted, these activities will expand into Prosperity Farm Distillery's outdoor event space, combining art exhibits with local creative brand makers and artisans, arts education events, and creative and cultural performance events.

Artist Dialogues Series

The Artist Dialogues Series continues its mission of connecting artists directly with the public through meaningful conversation and exchange. Each session pairs exhibiting artists with students, educators, and community members to discuss creative process, inspiration, technique, and the realities of working in the arts. Through public artist talks and panel discussions, audiences gain a deeper understanding of how art reflects life in the Virgin Islands and beyond. The series encourages dialogue across generations, supports arts education, and strengthens the relationship between local artists and their community. These gatherings—often part of exhibition programming or school field trips—serve as an accessible bridge between creative practice and public engagement, inspiring future artists while cultivating cultural and creative pride and awareness. To

date, more than 40 artists have participated in the series, which continues to grow as a cornerstone of 81C Arts' educational mission.

"Youth is the greatest resource of any community, and investing in them ensures a stronger future. 81C Arts' youth enrichment programs create opportunities for self-awareness and transformation—empowering young people to think critically, create boldly, and shape their own paths. That's why I proudly support this mission to inspire change from within." — Keturah Nelson, 81C Arts Art & Education Advisory Council

Education, Mentorship, and the Emerging Caribbean Arts Market

In tandem with this expansion, 81C Arts is preparing to launch The Portfolio Project VI, a professional arts-education initiative designed to provide mentorship, career guidance, and scholarship opportunities for young Virgin Islands artists. The program—currently building a waitlist for student enrollment—aims to establish a direct pathway for emerging creatives to develop professional portfolios and access higher education or arts-related careers. Recent philanthropic supporters of the initiative include Merchants Commercial Bank and Christie's International Real Estate USVI, underscoring growing confidence in the organization's educational mission.

"Merchants Commercial Bank remains committed to supporting the arts and education of the youth of the Virgin Islands, and is pleased to support 81C Arts with The Portfolio Project VI." - Ro Khiani, Merchants Commercial Bank, Vice-President and Chief Credit Officer

Operating from 81C's Education Center in the historic Camille Pissarro Building on Main Street, the organization's educational outreach also includes DigiLocal, a full-time digital arts and animation program providing hands-on training in design, illustration, and creative technology. Thanks to the philanthropic support of Orange Tree Staffing, four full-time afterschool scholarships are now available to Virgin Islands students, ensuring that access to this emerging field remains equitable and inclusive.

By linking youth education, artistic excellence, and economic opportunity, 81C Arts is shaping a model for how small island communities can cultivate sustainable creative economies through meaningful partnerships with businesses and community stakeholders. As 81C Arts enters its sixth year, these partnerships illustrate the organization's long-term strategy: building bridges between art, education, and enterprise to sustain creative growth across the Virgin Islands. The organization's efforts reflect 81C Arts' belief in the growing potential of the Caribbean arts sector—where creative visibility, collaboration, and investment are poised to shape new possibilities for

artists and communities alike. What was once an under-recognized movement is now steadily emerging, and 81C Arts sees in this moment the realization of a vision long at the heart of its mission: that the Virgin Islands can stand as a leader in Caribbean cultural innovation, where art, education, and opportunity move forward together.

“I’m thrilled to team up with Prosperity Farm Distillery as we open a new 81C location in St. Croix. As an advisory council and board member for 81C Arts, I’ve seen firsthand how impactful our programs have been in St. Thomas, and I’m excited to see how much more we can grow in St. Croix—with its rich history and vibrant arts scene. This collaboration has the potential to empower creative youth and strengthen the broader community, and I can’t wait to see where this next chapter leads.”

— Dyonna Potter, 81C Arts, Board of Directors / Arts & Education Advisory Council

“We wholeheartedly support 81C Arts’ mission to expand equitable access to advanced art education across the Virgin Islands. The Portfolio Project VI’s vision—to empower young artists through professional training, mentorship, and creative community—is vital to cultivating the next generation of cultural leaders and strengthening our region’s creative future. As artists and educators, we’re proud to support 81C Arts’ expansion to St. Croix, helping to build a cross-island community that fuels a vibrant fine art circuit and creates lasting opportunities for young artists to thrive.”

— Jenna Rees & Emily Braswell, Artists / Instructors / The Portfolio Project VI

About 81C

Founded in 2017 and officially opened to the public in 2020, 81C and its nonprofit foundation, Atelier St. Thomas Arts Foundation (81C Arts), are dedicated to enriching the cultural life of the U.S. Virgin Islands through professional art exhibitions, creative education, and community engagement. A federally recognized 501(c)(3) organization, 81C Arts operates from its multiple locations in historic downtown Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, providing platforms for artists, students, and the public to connect through the transformative power of creativity. Its mission centers on cultivating artistic excellence, expanding educational access, and strengthening community through the arts across the Virgin Islands and beyond. 81C Arts is headquartered at the Camille Pissarro Building on Main Street - the location of their education center, while their flagship art gallery is located on Strand Gade near waterfront. The 81C brand also offers boutique luxury accommodations and concierge services at the 81C Grand Residence above its art gallery, wine bar, and event venue on St Thomas. Visit 81CVI.COM

About Prosperity Farm Distillery

Newly opened in June of 2025, Prosperity Farm Distillery is the only farm-to-bottle distiller in the USVI. Their 180 acre St. Croix farm celebrates the island's rich heritage by crafting premium, small-batch spirits, rooted in tradition and authenticity. Using locally sourced ingredients and time-honored distilling techniques, the distillery creates distinctive flavors that capture the spirit of the Virgin Islands. More than just a place to produce distinctive spirits, Prosperity Farm Distillery is committed to sharing the culture and craftsmanship of St. Croix in every bottle. Visitors can enjoy a taste of the island's history while supporting a locally owned business dedicated to quality, sustainability, and community pride. Visit PROSPERITYFARMDISTILLERY.COM

Media Contacts

81C

Zack Zook 917 327 1561 zacharyzook@gmail.com

81CVI.COM

81CVI.ORG

IG and FB: [@81CVI](#)

Prosperity Farm Distillery

Mark Gelband 303 522 1192 mgelband@prosperityfarmdistillery.com

PROSPERITYFARMDISTILLERY.COM

Ig: [@prosperity_farm_distillery](#)