

Prea Bhandari: Life in Colour

24-year-old USVI artist Prea Bhandari is making her mark in the St. Thomas art community through paintings that embody the colours and atmosphere of the Caribbean lifestyle. She was recognised for her exceptional talent at an early age, enabling her to take part in community projects such as illustrating the governor's children's book, *See the Virgin Islands March* and participating in art exhibitions at Yacht Haven Grande, St. Thomas.

Throughout high school, she honed her skills by painting commissioned portraits for local clientele and attending summer art programmes in San Francisco. After high school, she went on to pursue a fashion education in Paris, Milan, and London, graduating top of her class in 2020 from Istituto Marangoni, London, with a degree in fashion design and marketing. Her graduate collection featured sustainable avant-garde fashion inspired by the draping's of upcycled, broken umbrellas, with an emphasis on circularity, organic textiles, and zero waste practises.

Returning to her home in the USVI in a pandemic, quarantine setting allowed the young artist to reconnect with her fine art roots, leading her to set sights on new creative horizons and experiment with unfamiliar painting mediums and styles.

Her art can be described as fluid works of colour with deep feeling. Some of her pieces represent a practise of giving up control and letting the medium take over. Others are descriptive works mirroring the female form. Then there are those which depict women swimming in seas of colours, like rich blues and reds. The art is nothing if not sensual. Prea has her first debut solo exhibition in the fall at 81C Gallery in St. Thomas. If you will be in the country at that time, it's worth it to experience her art in-person and let it wash over and consume the senses.

If you're interested in contacting Prea, you can e-mail her at preastoric.art@hotmail.com. Her Facebook is Preastoric Art, and on Instagram you can find her at [instagram.com/preastoric.art](https://www.instagram.com/preastoric.art). For a full scope of the work produced, check out any of her social media sources. You can purchase art on her web shop at <https://preastoricart.etsy.com>.

