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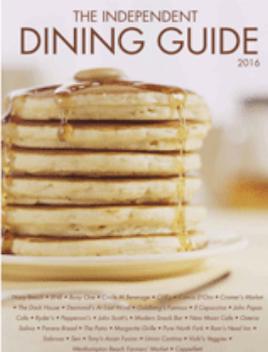
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September 21, 2016

## Will Ryan: An Artistic Awakening

By Nicole Teitler

The East End is a breeding ground for creative minds, but much more it breeds compassion. Artist Will Ryan is the result of these two concepts.

Living in Amagansett, near Lazy Point, Ryan walks to the beach or bay side with his flute to regenerate his soul, enjoying the heartwarming marine blues that surround him.



Artwork by Will Ryan and Richmond Burton (click for larger version)

However, not everything in Ryan's life has been a symphony of tranquility and beauty. In 2015, he was diagnosed with Amyloidosis, a form of cancer that creates malformed protein cells in the bone marrow, which can shut down any organ in the body. Upon receiving this news, Ryan searched the Internet for any information he could. Time and time again the word 'fatal' popped onto the screen, prompting him to see a doctor at NYU Hospital. Though the chemotherapy made him sick, in his efforts to remain positive Ryan booked a trip to Europe. When he came home fatigue and heart failure took over and he soon found himself at The Amyloidosis Center at Boston University School of Medicine, a center dedicated to Amyloidosis research and treatment.

Doctors recommended Ryan undergo a stem cell transplant at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York to prevent further spreading of the disease. His doctor, Dr. Heather Landeau, performed the operation and even did a heart biopsy.

"If the doctor was in I was in. We did it and I just tried to stay positive. I didn't want any kind of depression overcome me, it wouldn't do any good."

Ryan claims Buddhist training helped his attitude during the whole process. That, along with the help of supportive family and friends who kept informed.

"I knew I was going in for basically the battle of my life, the main event," Ryan's optimism overcame the fear.

With ten million stem cells being transplanted from his bone marrow into his blood stream in February 2015, Ryan endured five to six weeks of hospital visits undergoing tremendous amounts of chemo aimed to kill his immune system in order to regenerate his body.

"I really had a great life. I could let go, but the choice [to live] was mine." One night during Ryan's sleep, a week or so after the transplant started, he had a vivid hallucination of a young, fourteen year old self visiting him.

"Fourteen year old Will said, 'We're not done yet,' and I was like, 'We're not?' He said, 'No, we have a lot of work to do.'" And with a sigh of relief adult Will Ryan was ready to take on whatever was ahead.

Over a year later, slowly gaining the weight back from his arduous journey, Ryan focuses every day on gratitude and compassion. "Every moment is precious, may I be awake in this

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moment and realize that."

Through all the pain has come an artistic awakening. Introducing East End Duets, an art show that will run Thursday through October 9 in which Will Ryan collaborates with over 30 artists. "I learned a lot in collaborating with people. When to yield and when to hold your ground. Respect the other person."

As the summer has come to an official close, Ryan looks back at everything with a big smile on his face.

"It's one of the best summers in my life, and I've had some good summers," he laughs. "Playing with my friends and being healthy. Having the results be the exhibition, nobody got hurt in the process." Duets is comprised of collaborations of pieces in varied media - sculpture, paintings, and collage among them.

When asked how he envisions himself as a painting on someone's wall, "I would really like to be painted with a smile on my face, and my family and my friends with their arms around me. That would be the nicest painting done."

The opening reception will be this Saturday from 5 PM to 7 PM at The White Room Gallery at 241 Main Street in Bridgehampton.

Donations and some proceeds from each sale will go to the adult bone marrow transplant program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

Artists include Paton Miller, Dan Welden, John Messinger, Dennis Leri, David Geiser, Scott Bluedorn, Mark Seidenfeld, PipiDeer, Darlene Charneco, Jeff Muhs, Martin Magna, Perry Burns, Athos Zacharias, Eric Ernst, Bob Golden, Sally Breen, Janet Jennings, Andrea McCafferty, Daphne Stern, Barbara Dilorenzo, Gabriel Raacke, Charles Waller, Abby Abrams, Steve Joester, Mark Wilson, Randy Willier, Dennis Short, Josie Fields, Chris West, Jack Who, Mark Zimmerman, Anna Dillingham, Michele Dragonetti, Clare Schoenheimer, Daniel Schoenheimer, Laura Benjamin, Robert Perez, Lauren Loscialo, and William Quigley.

For more information visit [www.thewhiteroom.gallery](http://www.thewhiteroom.gallery).

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