

## ART FEATURE | *WORTHWHILE* MAGAZINE

“Date Night” by Will Armstrong

When a friend of Will Armstrong’s returned to Richmond, VA to open a restaurant, the artist decided to create a special piece of art for her as a welcome-home gift. As it turned out, that piece propelled Armstrong into an entirely new form of expression, defining his work and illustrating his travels for years to come.

Armstrong earned a BFA in Communication Arts and Design from Virginia Commonwealth University. He spent time as a bartender, art director and picture framer on his journey to becoming a nationally recognized craft artist. Since then, his work has been featured in shows and exhibits across the country for over a decade.

Focusing on environments based in music and travel, Armstrong prepares his canvases with simple collages comprising sheet music, old show posters and maps. Once he lays the collage work down, he whitewashes it and then draws the scene with a watercolor pencil. From there, his process includes different inks, acrylics, a dry graphite rub, adding color when necessary, sealing and varnish.

One night after a show, Armstrong joined some artist friends for cocktails in Coconut Grove. Like the abstract expressionists bantering in the Manhattan bars of old, they discussed what to create next. “You have to go see the Tampa Theatre,” one of them said to Will. And so he did, which led to “Date Night.”

For this piece, Armstrong set out to produce the feeling of being out on a date. So much so, one of his goals was to convey romance even through the portraiture of the building itself. He also wanted extra attention on the woman, hence the use of red ink for her dress.

Regardless of subject matter, Armstrong aims to tell evocative stories on several levels, bringing spaces, architecture and people to life. “There’s often a narrative thread running through my work. You might see the same character in different places on a canvas, or appearing in the next piece of a series,” he says.

Many consider Armstrong’s work to be the soundtrack of a timeless road trip. Considering the more than half a million miles along which he’s found inspiration, he smiles in agreement.

To learn more about the artist and view additional work, visit [willarmstrongart.com](http://willarmstrongart.com).

## LIVING WELL FEATURE | *WORTHWHILE* MAGAZINE

Reset and reconnect

As challenging as these times have been, perhaps they've also generated some needed space for reflection and mindfulness, as well as inspired different methods for connecting with ourselves and others. From soothing the mind, body and soul, to coping with stress, to simply brightening someone else's day, a few simple actions can help you stay centered.

### Clever touches

When distance has us apart, creativity can keep us together. For example, how beautiful was it to see citywide clapping for essential workers and healthcare professionals? For someone you know and love, especially if they are down, you can make the same loving impact. Handwritten note? Video applause? Artwork or music? Think outside the box and they'll remember it forever.

### Breathe better

Stress and shallow breathing are two sides of the same coin. If your breaths seem to be coming from your throat, you're likely stressed. Take a moment to push all the air out, breathe in as deeply and slowly as you can, then repeat. Drawing breath below the belly is the magic spot for producing calm.

### Keep brains active

If you're used to being on the go, staying put can be a drag. But that doesn't mean you can't stay busy above the shoulders. Has there ever been a better time to dive into a great novel? How about a personal project that's been on the back burner? Or recipe you haven't tried yet? And don't forget about movies, crossword puzzles or anything else you might enjoy during such a pause.

### Embrace the present

Nothing fuels anxiety quite like mulling over the past or future. Silence the noise by focusing on your immediate surroundings and what you're doing. Then, finish the thought, "At this very moment..." over and over for as long as you can. With practice, you'll learn to stay in the moment.

### Core values

Tried, true and beneficial, self-care is always worthy of attention. From eating a balanced diet, to sleeping well (and enough), to drinking plenty of water, tending to your body's basic needs will improve your overall health and well-being. And when things settle, who says you can't treat yourself? Personal training session or visit to the day spa, anyone?

### Out of mind, onto paper

If you're human, you might have a few lingering fears or regrets. Perhaps an apology or two to make. Try journaling to help process complicated feelings, then talk about them with someone you trust. If an apology is owed and appropriate, make it. While not easy, this endeavor will bear lasting fruits.