



Media Announcement

Artist Duke Riley Honors Northport's Maritime and Farming History in New Commission for Long Island Rail Road



All That Was South Is East of Me Now (2024) © Duke Riley, LIRR Northport Station. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photo: Robert Bredvad.

(NEW YORK, NY — January 16, 2025) MTA Arts & Design announces a new metal and glass artwork at Long Island Rail Road Northport station by artist Duke Riley that playfully interrogates the town's nautical and farming histories in the artist's iconic style. Completed in conjunction with Northport's station enhancements, the artwork, titled *All That Was South Is East of Me Now*, is situated underneath the new platform canopy featuring a unified composition across seven metal and glass panels.

"History and site-specificity collide in Duke Riley's beautiful new artwork created for Long Island Rail Road riders at Northport," said **Juliette Michaelson, Interim Director, MTA Arts & Design**. "Showcasing a distinct visual style, the artist created this work as an homage to the past, present, and future of this special Long Island community."

"I wanted to capture both the nautical and dairy farming history of the area and their roles in the foundation of the town. The strong connection to the past is evident in downtown Northport's architecture, as well as the cemetery situated in the middle of a nearby parking lot," said **artist Duke Riley**. "While exploring the area, I spotted a weathervane in a shop window which sparked the idea to incorporate them as a reference to East Northport, reflecting the fun and confusion surrounding its name as East Northport, which isn't east of Northport but rather to the south."

Across the vast composition are two large, stylized weathervanes rendered in metal, which signal riders' arrival in the town that was once known as "Great Cow Harbor." On the east metal panel, a large cow sits above waves giving way to a barn and a mill, recalling the area's early history as lush farmland. Allusions to the village's agricultural origins continue with two tombstones situated under a willow tree—a reference to the small cemetery next to Northport's Home Depot where the 17th century Burr farming family lies in rest.



Detail: *All That Was South Is East of Me Now* (2024) © Duke Riley, LIRR Northport Station. Commissioned by MTA Arts & Design. Photo: Robert Bredvad.

As an avid sailor, Riley derives inspiration from urban waterways to recontextualize environmental histories. The silhouetted depiction that forms the basis of the metal and glass artwork resembles Riley's artistic practice using ink and found objects to make urban scrimshaw, the activity of engraving bone or ivory which was historically done by 19th century whalers while at sea. Discarded bottles, like the ones Riley repurposes, bob in the waves as shown in the glass panels, calling attention to the proliferation of plastic pollution found in bodies of water all over the world. A tugboat, 19th century clipper ship, schooner, and other ships connect to the nautical history of the area reminding viewers of the vessels that have traversed the Long Island Sound and passed Northport's harbor across time.



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Referencing the tightknit waterfront communities that call Northport home, the artist silhouettes historical houses rising out of water in clusters, each adorned with idiosyncratic weathervanes featuring animals and objects. Pigeons, another source of enduring interest for Riley, appear in-flight across the glass and metal artwork. In addition to several silhouetted birds in flight, realized in black steel, three additional pigeons are rendered in full color in glass component, a nod to Riley's friends in the local pigeon clubs. Heading east, the flock resembles Northport's Long Island Rail Road commuters heading home to roost in their beloved village. Totalling approximately 500 square feet, the artwork was fabricated in metal by KC Fabrications and in glass by Tom Patti Designs.

ABOUT DUKE RILEY

Duke Riley received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and his MFA from Pratt Institute. Riley is fascinated by maritime history and events around urban waterways. His signature style interweaves historical and contemporary events with elements of folklore and myth to create allegorical histories. His re-imagined narratives comment on a range of issues from the cultural impact of over development and environmental destruction of waterfront communities to contradictions within political ideologies and the role of the artist in society. Riley has previously been commissioned by MTA Arts & Design for permanent art at NYCT Beach 98 St Station and an art card in 2010.

ABOUT MTA ARTS & DESIGN

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of public transportation by providing visual and performing arts in the metropolitan New York area. The Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 400 commissions by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design produces Posters, Digital Art, Photography exhibitions, as well as live musical performances in stations through its Music Under New York (MUSIC) program, and the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. It serves the millions of people who rely upon MTA subways and commuter trains and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people.

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