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Art exhibit provides insight into the tragedy of addictions in young adults

by Laurel Ensor

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A family's devastating tragedy has given birth to a exhibition for the Stevenson community.

The exhibition, titled "Elisif's Story" by artist Peter Bruun, will be on display from Oct. 15 through Dec. 15 in the Art Gallery on the Greenspring campus. The artist was inspired to create this exhibition when he lost his 24-year-old daughter Elisif to a heroin overdose on Feb. 11, 2014. She was away at a rehabilitation facility in the CooperRiis Healing Community in Mill Spring, North Carolina at the time.

Bruun received his Bachelor of Arts in art history from Williams College in



Above is a photo of Elisif Bruun, the inspiration for her father's exhibition.

1985, and his exhibitions have been substantial since then. When the Art Gallery was built on the Greenspring campus in 1997, Bruun served as the volunteer exhibition's director and helped launch Ste-

venson's exhibition program.

He said, "I saw the opportunity: I saw a beautiful gallery being built with very little thought to what use it would be put."

"Elisif's Story" features drawings by Bruun along with audio from individuals who were a significant part of her life, including caring professionals. The reflection of Elisif's journey sheds light on a controversial topic that many may avoid and offers a new perspective for those who suffer from addiction.

Bruun explained what made him decide to go public about Elisif's death: "It's simple really: I couldn't stand the thought of judgment, rumor, and innuendo regarding her passing. She deserved better than that, as so many who die as she has done."

He added that Elisif wanted a simple

life, filled with vibrancy and engagement, noting that she was always out for adventure and her creativity was so natural.

Matt Laumann, Stevenson's cultural programs manager, is in charge of managing exhibitions in Stevenson's three galleries. He chose to feature "Elisif's Story" in the gallery after visiting Bruun's studio in spring 2014, shortly after Elisif had passed away. Bruun and Laumann began discussing "Elisif's Story" at that time. Laumann said that with the artist's connection to the gallery in mind, Stevenson wanted to reach out and invite him back to campus.

"Elisif's Story" offers an intimate and loving portrait of a charismatic soul and daughter, and a cry for more humane attitudes toward those suffering from addiction and other mental health ailments," Laumann said.