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Would you pay to see pigeons fly (and possibly poop) all over the East River?

By David K. Li

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Artist Duke Riley with homing pigeons -- the birds will be part of a project over the East River between May 7 and June 12 called "Fly by Night."

Photo: Will Star

Two thousand pigeons will swoop over the East River in a high-flying art project organizers hope will make New Yorkers see the "rats with wings" in a more sympathetic light.

The homing pigeons of "Fly By Night" will perform for a half-hour every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night from May 7 through June 12.



The pigeons, many owned by artist Duke Riley, will be stationed aboard a decommissioned naval vessel docked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

They'll be fitted with small white LED lights that organizers said will allow spectators to see them soar over the Williamsburg Bridge and neighborhoods on the Lower East Side.

Tickets for a viewing area on the Brooklyn Navy Yard waterfront are free, but must be reserved through Creative Time, the non-profit art organization presenting "Fly By Night."

Organizers are still drawing a map so spectators outside the viewing area can see Riley's collection of 2,000 pigeons from various points of their flight path.

Spectators who worry about the winged performers relieving themselves on unsuspecting people below should have little to fear.

"I can't say there's zero-percent chance of that happening," said project spokeswoman Marcella Zimmermann.

"But they don't tend to do that when they're flying."

Riley, creator of "Fly By Night," has been a long-time pal of pigeons who wants his fellow New Yorkers to appreciate them as much as he does.

"Pigeons have been domesticated for thousands of years," Zimmermann said.

"They're noble creatures and we sometimes forget about that as they live amongst us."

The shows will take place at dusk, at about 7 p.m. at the start the "Fly By Night" run and closer to 7:30 p.m. in later shows.