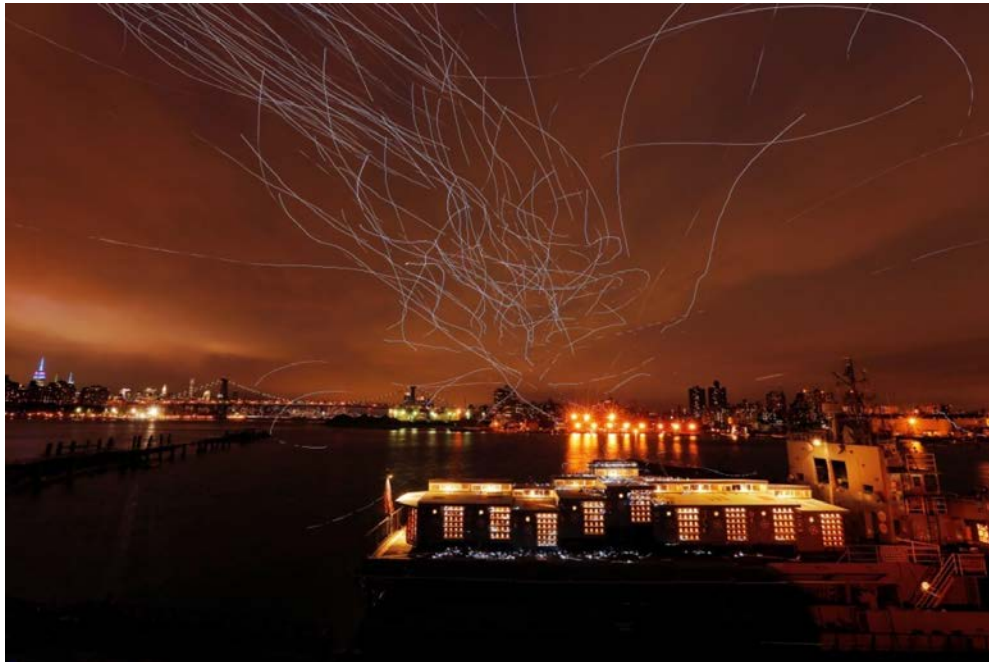


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A strange sight: Pigeons light up the sky over New York

By [Jenny Starrs](#) May 9



LED lights attached to pigeons leave light trails in the sky while they fly as part of the “Fly By Night” art installation by Duke Riley above the Brooklyn borough of New York. (Reuters/Lucas Jackson)

The Brooklyn Navy Yard ushered in a new public artwork, “Fly by Night,” this weekend. Artist Duke Riley turned one of New York’s most loathed creatures into a work of art by attaching LED lights to a flock of trained pigeons’ ankles. He and a crew communicated to the birds with whistles and bag-waving from atop the flight deck of a decommissioned Navy ship, conducting the performance to bleachers full of onlookers.

MAGNANMETZ GALLERY

“It is a collaborative project between me and the pigeons,” Riley told [Reuters](#). “It’s a performance or maybe it’s just a drawing that they are doing in the sky.”

The drawing in the sky became even clearer when photographers left their shutters open to capture the pigeons’ light trails. The effect was stunning.

This isn’t Riley’s first time turning pigeons into an artistic statement. In 2013, far before the United States and Cuba restored diplomatic ties, Riley created the performance piece “Trading With the Enemy,” in which homing pigeons carried cigars from Havana to Florida in protest of the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

While “Fly by Night” is less politically motivated, Riley hopes it resonates with viewers as more than a unique light show.

“I also hope that a few days later, when someone who came to the show is walking around the city, they’ll think about pigeons differently, or they’ll think about the waterfront and what these places have meant to generations of New Yorkers,” the artist said to [Gothamist](#). “I’ll be happy if this show inspires people to re-imagine their relationship to their city and their neighbors.”

The show is sponsored by Creative Time, and will be repeated every weekend evening through June 12, weather permitting.