

MAGNANMETZ GALLERY

For Immediate Release

Duke Riley: Now Those Days Are Gone **September 27 – October 21, 2017**



Magnan Metz is pleased to present *Now Those Days Are Gone*, an exhibition by Brooklyn-based artist Duke Riley. The show is both an homage to and extension of Riley's critically acclaimed public artwork *Fly by Night* (2016), commissioned by Creative Time and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and is comprised of actual elements from that project as well as new work inspired by it. The exhibition marks the artist's fifth show with Magnan Metz and will be on view September 27 - October 21 at 524 West 26th Street, an expansive temporary space. A selection of work from Riley's projects over the past decade will also be on view at the gallery's adjacent, permanent 521 West 26th Street address. An opening reception with the artist will take place at **524 West 26th Street** on Thursday, September 28, from 6 – 8 p.m.

Now Those Days Are Gone includes a series of large-scale photographs, each measuring 71 1/2 x 107 1/2 inches, taken during *Fly by Night*. The images document the flight patterns of thousands of pigeons carrying tiny LED lights that were released at dusk from a historic boat docked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, once home to the country's biggest naval fleet of pigeon carriers. The suite of photographs captures the pigeons' luminous and elegant paths above New York's East River; the long exposure shots create abstract images, drawings etched out of the night sky by the pigeons themselves. Creative Time stated: "Riley's *Fly by Night* (is) a tribute to the beautiful, diverse and fascinating histories of pigeon flying and New York City."

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The show will also feature 1,000 individual, hand-painted and embroidered portraits of pigeons from the *Fly by Night* fleet installed around the circumference of the gallery's sky lit walls. Each canvas depicts a single pigeon with its moniker and the name of its loft and crew embroidered beneath it. This information is typically found on a bird's leg band and is a nod to a tradition deeply rooted in New York City pigeon keeping culture. In some instances, the different types of breeds inform the pigeons' assigned names and make related references. For example, two Egyptian Swifts are named Cleopatra and Nefertiti, one Damascene bird, Nassrin Abdallah, is named after a Commander in the Syrian Women's Protection Unit, and New York Flight pigeons are named after New York streets such as Jackie Robinson, Schermerhorn and Myrtle. Lastly, personality, physical traits and the artist's own sense of humor determined the naming of pigeons like Luke Floorwalker, Foghorn Leghorn and Quilty.

A portion of the façade from one of the shipboard coops collaboratively designed by Duke Riley and Olson Kundig Architects for *Fly by Night* will also be on view. The facade features a large mural painting and references Cobb Dock, a manmade island in Brooklyn's Wallabout Bay, which housed the Navy's first and largest messenger pigeon fleet in operation from the late 1860s until 1901.

Additionally, *Now Those Days Are Gone* includes three wall-based mosaic pieces: a monumental 3 1/2 x 14 foot work meticulously comprised of seashells and two 6 x 6 foot square format mosaics each depicting a falcon attacking a pigeon with taloned feet. The creation of Riley's "Death From Above" series was in direct response to the post-2016 U.S. election turmoil, the timing of which also coincided with the winter season when hawks most aggressively prey on New York City's pigeons. Hawks have been a long-standing symbol of fascist power, and just as all pigeon fanciers are forced to remain helpless amidst the destruction of their most beloved from above, Riley simultaneously grappled with the notions of fear, paralysis and resistance in the face of the country's charged political climate.

Duke Riley (b. 1972, Boston) received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from Pratt Institute. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions and projects presented by Creative Time and the Brooklyn Navy Yard, NY (2016); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2010-11); Philagrafika at the Philadelphia Historical Society (2010); and the Queens Museum, NY (2009-10). Group shows include ones at the Brooklyn Museum, NY; MoMA PS1, NY; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana; the New York Historical Society; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; the Park Avenue Armory, NY; and the Parrish Art Museum, Watermill, NY, among others.

Riley has produced commissions for New York City's Percent for Art program (2015) and MTA Arts for Transit (2010); participated in the 10th Havana Biennial (2015); Brazil's Mercosul Biennial (2011); and held the First St. Patrick's Day Parade in Havana as part of the Havana Biennial (2009). In 2012 Riley was selected by the U.S. State Department's smARTpower project to be a cultural ambassador to China. Riley has completed residencies at The MacDowell Colony and Yaddo (2017); Creative Time's Global Residency Program for Eastern Africa (2013); Gasworks Residency in London (2012); and was a visiting artist at Ox-Bow (2012). In 2015 he received Pratt Institute's Mid-Career Achievement Award and has been awarded grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2010-11) and the Joan Mitchell Foundation (2011).

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