

**CREATIVETIME**



BROOKLYN NAVY YARD

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# **DUKE RILEY FLY BY NIGHT**



**FRIDAYS – SUNDAYS  
MAY 7 – JUNE 12, 2016  
AT DUSK**

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**#FLYBYNIGHT**



## ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

For more than 40 years, Creative Time has worked with artists to commission, produce, and present free public art that engages in the dialogues, debates, and dreams of our time. Whether it is through bold and groundbreaking projects, like Kara Walker's *A Subtlety* at the Domino Sugar Factory; presenting The Creative Time Summit, the largest global convening of artists and change agents; or publishing Creative Time Reports, the first news editorial platform that connects artists to the mainstream media, Creative Time harnesses the power of art to create inspiring personal experiences and foster social progress.

We have worked closely with thousands of visionary artists with the belief that it is essential to give artists opportunities to experiment and grow their practice, to champion public spaces as places for free and creative expression, and that artists should be weighing in on the issues of our times. Notable artistic collaborators have included Marina Abramovic, Doug Aitken, David Byrne, Nick Cave, Ragnar Kjartansson, Vik Muniz, Jenny Holzer, Takashi Murakami, Tom Sachs, Mickalene Thomas, and Kara Walker. From the Venice Biennale to Governors Island from Stockholm Sweden to the Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, from New Orleans to Central Park, Creative Time forefronts artists' voices, bringing them to broad and diverse publics in impactful ways.

*We ask that visitors refrain from using flash photography, switch cell phones to silent, and turn on screens sparingly so as not to distract the birds and disrupt the audience experience.*





## FLY BY NIGHT: AN INTRODUCTION

Dusk unfolds in several acts. It begins with a golden hour, and slowly progresses through gradations of diminishing light. There is a magic moment, somewhere between civil and nautical twilight, where the air changes and the twinkling lights of the city begin to look up towards the stars. It is in this particular moment, when your ears are tuned to the wind and your eyes begin to shift from day to night, that the artist Duke Riley reveals his largest and most ambitious project to-date, *Fly By Night*. With the keen timing of a conductor, this winged symphony weaves together the narrative threads of overlapping histories – a forgotten waterfront island, a creature we see daily in our landscape but rarely look at, and an artist who stands on a rooftop linking his past to his present in a swirling crescendo.

An explorer in the oldest sense of the word, Duke Riley centers much of his practice in the study of maritime communities around the world, and the nautical history of New York runs deep in the veins of this Brooklyn-based artist. However, it was in his ongoing relationship with Cuba, where Riley has launched several projects, that he began directly working with a global character tied to his own personal history, the pigeon. A long-time pigeon fancier, in *Trading with the Enemy* Riley flew his birds turned smugglers from Havana to Key West, marking a key moment in his practice where feathered companions became professional collaborators. Now back home in Brooklyn, *Fly By Night* brings together the many tentacles of Riley's practice, in arguably one of the grandest public works in a long artistic dialog between man and nature.

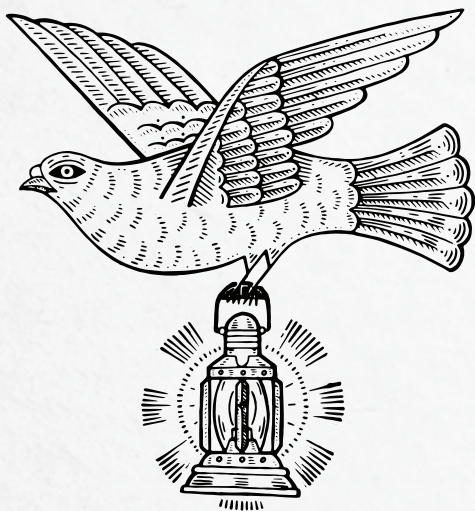
As the oldest domesticated bird, the rock dove has been part of the human story for thousands of years. More commonly known as the pigeon, these delicate and talented creatures are deeply loved by the humans who raise them and widely misunderstood by their urban neighbors. The subject of poems, paintings, and films, the pigeon calls cities in every corner of the earth home. Letter carrier, spy, camera operator, educator, and soldier are just a few of the professions cited on the long resume of this often underestimated bird.

New York itself has a lengthy and complicated history with our winged partners through time. Neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs were once dotted with rooftop pigeon coops, or lofts. As development has increased, the ability for fanciers to keep their lofts amidst the increasingly common luxury condo has decreased. Less common now is the sight of rooftop flags and the sound of whistles calling flocks back home. Although pigeons are far from endangered, the pigeon fancier is an increasingly rare breed in the landscape of New York City.

Pigeons also once patrolled the skies of New York as government workers. Avian soldiers have been trusted by military regiments throughout the world, and even awarded medals for exemplary service. Riley's use of the phrase "fly by night" harkens back to the use of pigeons to transfer messages in the safe cover of nightfall — from biblical battles, to WWII operations, to modern-day acts of resistance. Here in the States, the largest pigeon coop in the U.S. Navy was once housed at Cob Dock, a now extinct island that sat at the center of Wallabout Bay in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Homing pigeons were loaded onto naval vessels and used as the key line of communication over great expanses of sea. With the advent of modern communication, both Cob Dock and the hard working pigeons of the Brooklyn Navy Yard are now a footnote in the archive of the City.

Duke Riley's *Fly By Night* brings the rock dove back to the forefront of the New York story once again, assembling an unprecedented fleet of specially trained birds that pay homage to the inhabitants of Cob Dock over 100 years later. Housed on a former naval aircraft carrier once used to train helicopter pilots, this new flight crew made up of Homers, Flights, Rollers, Tumblers, Tipplers, and even the ancient Syrian Damascene (the artist's favorite), are Riley's winged collaborators taking to the skies above Wallabout Bay. Twirling, swooping, and gliding — together, apart, and together again — Riley orchestrates an unpredictable flying composition. Like the birds themselves, no two performances are the same. Lacing together old New York and new, *Fly By Night* asks us to stop, watch, listen, and revere this extraordinary creature that has shared the triumphs and tragedies of the human experience — uniting individuals, cultures, and generations of fanciers in a tale of both the ancient and modern city.

**- MEREDITH JOHNSON, CURATOR**



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Artist Duke Riley explores maritime history, waterfront narratives, and the struggles of marginal communities who exist, perhaps forgotten, on the borders of larger encompassing societies. From diving deep into the military history of New York Harbor, to working with seafaring pirates in East Africa, to restaging the zodiac water races of the Jade Emperor in Zhujiajiao, China, Riley's work combines the meticulous craft of a shipbuilder, the deep research of a field historian, and an explorer's persistent wanderlust. Through drawing, printmaking, tattoo, sculpture, performance, and video he makes visible the often invisible, pushing commentaries around the politics and personal stories embedded on the shores of his home in New York and beyond.

Originally from Boston, MA, Duke Riley received his B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design, in Providence, RI and his M.F.A. from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. In addition to national and international exhibitions of his work, Riley has received numerous awards, including a recent NYC Percent for Art commission, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant, and the MTA Arts For Transit commission for the Beach 98th Street Station renovation. Riley currently lives and works on the water's edge in Brooklyn, NY.



# THE FLOCK

The birds of *Fly By Night* represent a wide variety of the domesticated Rock Dove, or Pigeon (*Columba livia domestica*), and have been domesticated for over ten thousand years, making them one of the oldest domesticated animals in the world. The flock is composed of many different breeds raised for traits such as high flying, athleticism, and sheer elegance. Below are a few of the many breeds of pigeons aboard our vessel.

## HOMER



Arguably the most famous breed of pigeon, Homers come in many varieties and have the remarkable (and still unexplained) ability to find their way home from very long distances. Because of these skills homers have been trusted throughout history to carry messages, particularly during times of war.

## EGYPTIAN SWIFT

The Egyptian Swift is an old breed of pigeon likely originating in Egypt, having been found there in ancient tombs. Egyptian Swifts are known for their beautiful range of colors, agility, and their distinguishable short beak.



## SATINETTE



The Petite Satinette is a type of Oriental Frill Pigeon. Related to Owl and Turbit pigeons, these delicate little birds with short beaks and lacing have long been prized by royal courts.

## GERMAN BEAUTY

A relatively recent breed of pigeons, going back about 100 years, German Beauties are related to German Racing Homers. They have a distinct arched beak, a long elegant neck, and stand tall with lengthy legs.



## RUSSIAN HIGH FLYER



Like other breeds of High Flyers, the Russian High Flyer is famous for its extraordinary flying ability at great heights. This skilled bird is prized by fanciers throughout the United States.

## TIPPLER

The Tippler is renowned for its remarkable endurance; these birds can remain in uninterrupted flight for very long periods of time. Related to Rollers and Tumblers, Tipplers were bred to for the ability to maintain sustained flight without acrobatics.



## DAMASCENE

Still a rare breed in the United States, the Damascene is an ancient pigeon thought to have originated in Damascus. The bird is beloved for its beauty--with ice-colored feathers, sparkling dark eyes, and is said to have been an avian companion to the prophet Muhammad.



## NEW YORK FLIGHT

Originating in New York in the late 19th Century, New York Flights are known for their high flying abilities. Believed to be related to the magpie, the NY Flight is a popular bird in rooftop coops throughout the city, and are often used to lure other pigeons from one loft to another in a common rooftop game among fanciers.



## FANTAIL

The Fantail is one of the oldest breeds of “fancy pigeon”, and was even noted by Charles Darwin in *On the Origin of a Species*. These gentle birds get their name from their large peacock-like tails, and are often used in the training of other birds to signal it is time to come home.



## ROLLER/TUMBLER

“Roller” or “Tumbler” pigeons come in many varieties and were one of the first breeds of pigeons brought to the United States. Thought to have originated in India as early as the 1500s, these birds are prized for their ability to perform rapid, backward somersaults in the air.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE BEAUTIFUL BIRDS, CHECK OUT THE  
ABOUT THE FLOCK SECTION AT [CREATIVETIME.ORG/FLYBYNIGHT](http://CREATIVETIME.ORG/FLYBYNIGHT)

# CREATIVE TIME

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# WITH GRATITUDE

## OLSON KUNDIG

Duke Riley's pigeon lofts were designed in collaboration with Kristen Becker, an associate architect at Olson Kundig. Based in Seattle, the design practice is founded on the ideas that buildings can serve as a bridge between nature, culture and people, and that inspiring surroundings have a positive effect on people's lives.

## THE BAYLANDER

The *Fly By Night* pigeon lofts were built atop The Baylander IX-514, a Vietnam-era US Naval vessel, which was used as a helicopter landing trainer for the Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard. Baylander IX-514, now owned by the Trenk Family Foundation, is captained by Scott Koen.

## 10XBETA

The special LED avian legbands were designed and sourced by Marcel Botha and his team at 10xBeta, an product innovation firm based in New Lab, the interdisciplinary design and technology center at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

**Site Staff:** Charlie Crowell, Chelsea Harrison. **Fabrication Crew:** Aaron Suggs, Andrew Barrett, Devin Becker, Cullen Camic, Micah Chartrand, Daniel Colby, Hayden Cummings, Art Domantay, Robin Frohardt, George Graham, Greg Henderson, Brett Land, Julian Osti, Dan Quinn, James Vecchione, and Jaime Villaneda. **Pigeon Crew and Studio:** Kitty Joe Sainte-Marie, Sam Citrine, Preston Jahn, Maddy Joyce, Tianna Kennedy, Owen McGarry, Mikey Rollers, Eduardo Sanabria, and Alexandra Wilson, DMV. **Supporters and Consultants:** Marc Agger, David Belt, Joe Buddha, Blinkinlabs, Ranjit Bhatnagar, Judith Church, Andrew Franze and the United Pigeon Association, Frank Galeano, Bob Henry, Jose Ingles, Jim Jenner, Jason Krugman, David Lombino, Heather Lord, Dave Malone, Rita McMahon and Wild Bird Fund, Vida Mulec, Protolabs, Nick Schneider, Steeldeck, and Chris Szwaba. **Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation:** David Ehrenberg, Aileen Chumard, John Coburn, Elliot Matz, Marie Naschin, Clare Newman, and Suki Paciorek. **Brooklyn Navy Yard Tenants:** Agger Fish, BLDG 92, Duggal, GMD Shipyard, Harley Marine, and Kings County Distillery. **Sound Team:** Stephen Vitiello and Michael Raphael. A special thank you to our **Exhibition Volunteers and Pigeon Flight Attendants.**



## ABOUT THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD

The Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation (BNYDC) is the not-for-profit corporation that serves as the real estate developer and property manager of the Yard on behalf of its owner, the City of New York. The Yard is now home to over 300 businesses employing approximately 7,000 people and generating over \$2B per year in economic impact for the City. BNYDC's mission is to fuel New York City's economic vitality by creating and preserving quality jobs, growing the City's modern industrial sector and its businesses, and connecting the local community with the economic opportunity and resources of the Yard. BNYDC's vision is a vibrant and dense, modern manufacturing community where businesses are provided the stability needed to invest, grow, and thrive. BNYDC celebrates the past, present and future of the Yard through exhibits, tours, educational and cultural programs at the Brooklyn Navy Yard Center at BLDG 92.

Navy Yard tours offer a unique glimpse into New York City, American, and global history as well an opportunity to experience industry in action at a modern industrial park. Visit [bldg92.org](http://bldg92.org) for more information.

*Want Fly By Night all to yourself and your closest friends or clients? Become a sponsor and we'll host a private viewing experience for your group on a weeknight during the exhibition's run. For more information, please contact [events@creativetime.org](mailto:events@creativetime.org).*





# CREATIVETIME

Lead project support for *Fly By Night* is generously provided by Kate Engelbrecht and Jed Walentas, Philip E. and Shelley Fox Aarons, The O'Grady Foundation, Ellen and Bill Taubman, Bradley Tusk, and Lily Johnson White. Additional support provided by Suzanne and Bob Cochran, Louise Eastman, Rona and Jeffrey Citrin, Elyse and Michael Newhouse, and Marylin L. Prince.

Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc.



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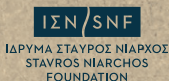


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