

November 21, 2018

## Artist Duke Riley Joins Andrew Edlin Gallery

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to announce the representation of artist Duke Riley, who will be exhibiting a recent, large-scale work on paper in the gallery's presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach, December 6-9, 2018 (Booth # H1).

Widely celebrated for his 2016 Creative Time project *Fly by Night*, which presented scores of pigeons with attached LED bulbs elegantly soaring through the twilight skies above New York's East River, Riley is an artist who knows no bounds. Inspired by the pigeons that flew hundreds of miles at night to deliver messages during World War I and II, the artist constructed an enormous coop on the deck of a decommissioned ship in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where he orchestrated weekly performances with 2000 birds to the delight of mesmerized viewers. Flying in tight formations, the flock looked like moving constellations, shooting stars and airborne drawings against the darkening skies.

As one of Creative Time's most popular public projects, *Fly by Night* garnered critical attention from the New York art press and superbly produced videos from *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New Yorker*, VICE Media's the Creators Project and CBS' Sunday Morning. Riley created a new version of his illuminated spectacle on the banks of the Thames Estuary in East London this past spring, with 1500 LED-lit pigeons in flight to commemorate the centennial of the end of WWI.

A Brooklyn-based artist, Riley was born in Boston and studied at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he earned a BFA in Painting in 1995, and at the Pratt Institute, where he received an MFA in Sculpture in 2006. A recipient of multiple awards and fellowships, Riley first came to public attention in 2007 when he was arrested for floating his homemade, Revolutionary War-style submarine too close to the Queen Mary 2 in the New York Harbor— a project he conceived to draw attention to national ideological shifts and the encroachment of civil liberties in Post-9/11 America.

In 2009, when New York's art institutions were struggling to survive the impact of the global financial crisis, Riley created the performance project *Those About to Die Salute You* at the Queens Museum of Art. Staging a live, Roman-style naval battle in the flooded reflective pool outside the museum, he rallied artists and art workers from Manhattan, Brooklyn, The Bronx and Queens to a rivalrous skirmish before a toga-clad audience, while he triumphantly presided over the action in the guise of a Roman emperor.

"Duke Riley pulled off one of the finest performance events in recent memory, his own demented simulacra of a Naumachia," Jerry Saltz wrote in his *New York Magazine* review, with "Naumachia" being a reference to the Ancient Romans' staging of mock naval battles for mass entertainment.

Nautical and maritime subjects—themes that are rooted to his early life in Boston—surface in many of Riley’s other projects and related artworks. His exhibition “An Invitation to Lubberland” at Cleveland’s Museum of Contemporary Art in 2010 re-envisioned the history of Kingsbury Run, a now-buried river in Cleveland that was once the makeshift home of transient workers. Using video, mosaic, drawing, found objects, photography and sculpture, Riley constructed a new narrative about Kingsbury Run from the vantage point of the hobos who once lived there.

Riley spent four years planning and eight months breeding and homing 50 pigeons for his project *Trading with the Enemy*, which was first exhibited in 2014. Flying from Havana to Key West, 25 of the birds carried contraband Cuban Cohiba cigars in body harnesses while the other 25 wore body cams to film the journey. The birds that completed the 90-mile crossing were exhibited in a coop cobbled together from materials salvaged around the Keys, along with video documentation and portraits of the birds. Adding a bit of irony, Riley named the birds with cigars after notorious smugglers, while the ones with cameras bore the names of famous filmmakers who have had brushes with the law.

Riley has also been commissioned to create a number of works and projects, with the interactive installation *Come Rub My Stone*, which he created for the 2013 Armory Show, being one of the most notable. Tasked by Warhol Museum director Eric Shiner to make work for the Focus USA section, Riley created a wallpapered room with his drawings and mosaics roundly displayed on the walls. Embedded in the room’s wooden floor, that the artist made with recycled wood from docks damaged by Superstorm Sandy, were an engraved stone with a seafaring tale and a stack of paper for rubbing off impressions, which visitors could take for free.

At this year’s Art Basel in Miami Beach, the gallery is exhibiting Riley’s *It’s Coming Through a Hole in the Air*. Depicting a wild, fantasy realm that grows up from the deck of the ship that he used for the Creative Time project and into the waters below, the massive piece—measuring some 11 by 8 feet—casts mermaids, sailors, pigeons, dogs, rats and an assortment of other comical characters in an allegorical tale of debauchery and corruption. Drawn with ink on a homemade paper, the detailed work references maritime illustrations, scrimshaw, folk art and tattooing—something the artist is also famously known for.

Duke Riley’s works are in numerous public and private collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Queens Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, 21C Museum Louisville and the Pizzuti Collection at the Columbus Museum of Art.

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