



martha

up close & personal

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OCTOBER 3, 2017

Now Those Days Are Gone: An Exhibition by Artist, Duke Riley

If you're in or around New York City through October 21st, I strongly encourage you to visit [Magnan Metz' "Now Those Days Are Gone"](#), an exhibition by Brooklyn-based artist, Duke Riley.

The show is an extension of Duke's critically acclaimed 2016 public artwork called "[Fly by Night](#)", the beautiful and inspiring tribute to the pigeon and the fascinating history of pigeon flying. This exhibit includes many of the actual elements from that project as well as new pieces. Among the works - 1000 hand-painted and embroidered portraits of some of the many pigeons that participated in "Fly By Night". There are also large scale photographs showing the amazing pigeon flight patterns, and authentic facades of the pigeon coops and mobile units used to transport and house the birds. Many of the birds were from Duke's personal flock, and borrowed or rescued from pigeon fanciers in the region. Duke kept most of the pigeons as his pets. Others were returned to their original homes, or placed with experienced bird owners. As many of you may know, I am keeping a small number at my Bedford, New York farm.

I attended the exhibit's opening last week. Here are some photos - enjoy.



Here I am with artist, Duke Riley. Last year, I attended Duke's "Fly By Night" performance – the unprecedented avian air and light show presented by New York-based nonprofit arts organization, Creative Time, and the Brooklyn Navy Yard.



This is a panorama of the piece titled 'The Armies of the Night'. It includes 1000 hand-painted and embroidered portraits of pigeons from the "Fly by Night" fleet installed around the circumference of the gallery's sky lit walls. (Photo by Alex McClure)

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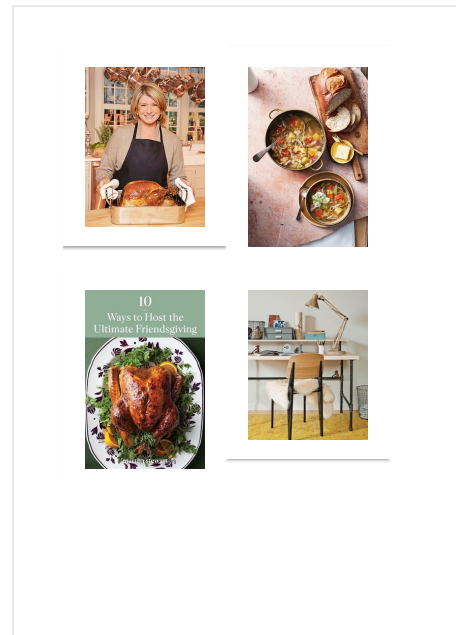
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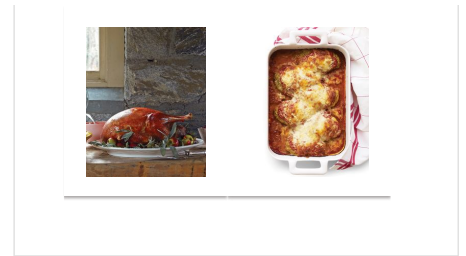
Here is a closer look at 'The Armies of The Night'. Each portrait is embroidered and painted on a piece of canvas measuring 14 by nine-inches.





Each canvas depicts a single pigeon with its moniker, the name of its loft, and the crew embroidered beneath it. I am caring for 20 of the pigeons that participated in "Fly By Night".



The information is typically found on a bird's leg band. In some instances, the different types of breeds inform the pigeons' assigned names.



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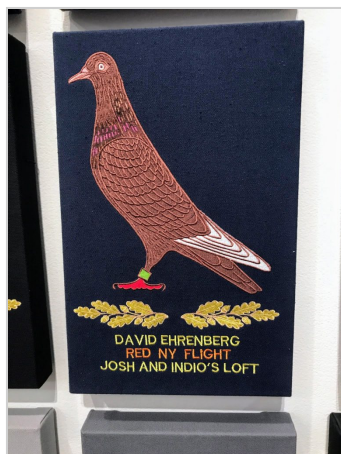
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This pigeon's name is Fresas. It is a Strawberry Bar Homer. Pigeons have been domesticated for thousands of years and kept by people worldwide for their companionship, their sport, and their loyal service.



Sometimes personality, physical traits and the artist's own sense of humor determined the naming of pigeons. One is Luke Floorwalker – he is one of the pigeons at my farm.



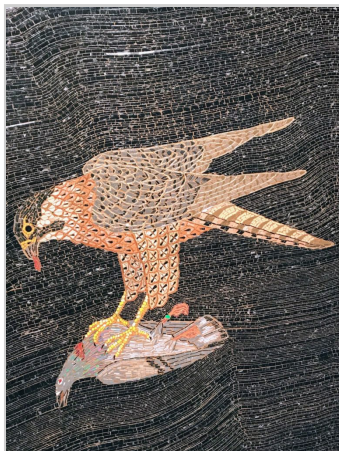
This is a Canadian Tippler. The Tippler is a breed of domestic pigeon bred to participate in endurance competitions. They can fly up to 22-hours, non-stop.



Here is a Dunn Tippler. The Tippler originated in England and was bred from high and long flying pigeons that were brought home by English sailors and soldiers from former British colonies.



This is called 'Death From Above', 2017. It is a colored tile composite mosaic on wood panel measuring 72-inches by 72-inches. It depicts a falcon attacking a pigeon with taloned feet. The winter season is when hawks most aggressively prey on New York City's pigeons.



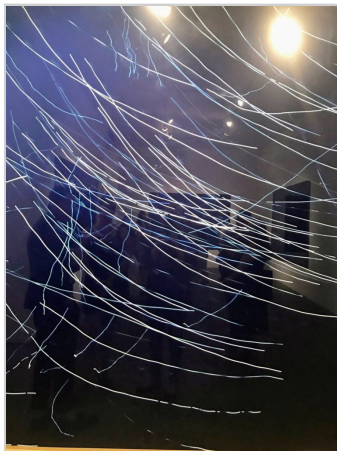
This is called 'The Nature of Abhorrence vs. the Abhorrence of Nature', 2017 – another colored tile composite mosaic.



'It's Coming Through a Hole in the Air', 2017 is an ink on Canary Paper piece measuring 96-inches by 96-inches.



The exhibit also includes several large-scale photographs taken during "Fly By Night". The images document the flight patterns of thousands of pigeons carrying tiny LED lights. This is 'Fly By Night I', 2017, a C-Print mounted on anodized aluminum.



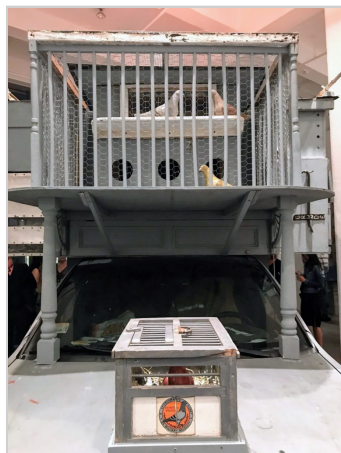
Here is 'Fly By Night VI', 2017. During "Fly By Night", the pigeons were released at dusk from a historic boat docked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, once home to the country's biggest naval fleet of pigeon carriers. The suite of photographs captures the pigeons' elegant paths above the city's East River.



This is called 'Even Before the Twin Towers There Were the Twin Towers', 2017. It shows a pigeon flight training bicycle, pigeon carriers, pigeon leg bands, flightlights, scare owl, and a training whistle.



This is one of the 'Tactical Mobile Nocturnal Homing Pigeon Deployment Vehicles of the Fly By Night Naval Squadron', 2017. It's built on a Chevy Colorado.



This shows the front of the vehicle – pigeons could fly in and be protected from predators.



This piece is 'Cobb Dock & The Red Hook Lady Fliers', 2017. It is made of wood, tin, roofing tar, latex paint, slipcast ceramic pigeons and performance ephemera from "Fly By Night". It includes a large mural painting and shows the skinned facade and side of a coop from the "Fly By Night" performance.



Here is a closer look of the facade of a coop – the pigeons would be able to fly into the unit through the small doors on the right.



Another part of the piece shows the tins holding eggs laid by the pigeons.



And this is a first aid station also shown in 'Cobb Dock & The Red Hook Lady Fliers', 2017. Cobb Dock is 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.



This is Pigeon Auctioneer Chris Szwaba and Duke Riley. Chris Szwaba, a key figure in the Brooklyn pigeon community, is the auctioneer every weekend at a pigeon auction in Long Island at EF Pigeon. The group gives much of the proceeds to charity. (Photo by Kitty Joe Sainte-Marie)



Here is the "Fly By Night" Crew: Ti Brun, Jacqueline Marino, Caitlin Mae Burke, Jess Pinkham, Kitty Joe Sainte-Marie and Victor J Webster. This group volunteered their time at "Fly By Night" in caring for, training and wrangling pigeons. For the show they came back to help hand paint the embroideries. One of my pigeons is named Ti Brun, after the volunteer on the far left.



And here I am in front of the large embroidery art piece. I hope this inspires you to appreciate the pigeons that you see flying around your community. Please visit the exhibit if you're in the area – it runs through October 21st.

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COMMENTS

I'm sure it took a lot of work and time to hand paint all these portraits but the result is so unique as each one of the pigeons. Love your outfit Martha.

With respect

Despoina

DKPDFamily.blogspot.gr - Greece

Posted by: *DESPOINA* | October 3rd, 2017 at 8:08 am

What a great exhibit! I like that Duke showcases the pigeon. A bird we all know & see but gets little recognition.

BTW/Off topic: I love the picture of your 5 dogs in the Polaris. So sweet. The 3 big orange heads & the 2 Frenchies. Adorable!

Posted by: *Joy* | October 3rd, 2017 at 10:51 am

Creative and eclectic. Martha still has it! 😊

Posted by: *DNN* | October 3rd, 2017 at 11:50 am

What an interesting exhibit! The embroidery work and detail of each piece is very impressive. Pigeons are smart and under appreciated. Thanks, Martha.

Posted by: *Judy* | October 3rd, 2017 at 12:50 pm

That was an incredible art exhibit and story. Thanks!

Posted by: *KG* | October 3rd, 2017 at 8:35 pm

Hi Martha,
Thank you for sharing this event, the artwork is amazing and heartwarming. I enjoy watching my neighbors training their lovely birds.
Thanks again,
Lyn

Posted by: *Lyn Anderson* | October 3rd, 2017 at 9:47 pm

Hi Martha,

The pigeons are amazing and the time and care are g these amazing birds! You look beautiful in the new line of fashion! I'm ordering it n qvc and please make the plus sizes! ? Thank you!

Fondly,

Karen

Posted by: *Karen* | October 4th, 2017 at 6:31 am

Wow amazing and looks like a great exhibition
Best wishes xx

Posted by: *Rowaida Flayhan* | October 5th, 2017 at 9:27 am
