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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(December 13, Tampa, FL) - The USF Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present:

Duke Riley: Flights of Fancy

January 13 – March 4, 2017

USF Contemporary Art Museum

USFCAM will present a solo exhibition of Brooklyn-based artist Duke Riley, known for his ambitious and immersive projects that investigate historical and contemporary social issues, often through subversive performative action. Featuring two projects in our gallery spaces, **DUKE RILEY: Flights of Fancy** explores and celebrates Riley's history of examining the role and relationships of humans and nature through his interactions and interventions with pigeons in public space and the nautical landscape.



Detail of Duke Riley, *The Filmmakers*, 2013 (left) and *The Smugglers*, 2013 (right). Key West reclaimed roof tin, gouache. From *Trading with the Enemy*.

CAM's Lee and Victor Leavengood Gallery will feature a re-configuration of Duke Riley's project, **Trading with the Enemy** (2013), where Riley bred and trained fifty homing pigeons to fly one-way from Havana to Key West, Florida. Half of the pigeons carried Cuban Cohiba cigars, the other twenty-five carried video cameras documenting the journey across the Florida Straits. The exhibition includes a pigeon loft, the smuggled cigars, and videos filmed by the birds, which Riley refers to as the "smugglers" and the "filmmakers", as well as research material related to the historic flight training of the pigeons. This project specifically references the US trade embargo on Cuba and contributes to the evolving dialogue and diplomatic relationship between the countries as well as referencing the State of Florida's history of trade with Cuba and its direct influence on the development of the cigar industry and socio-political landscape of Ybor City and West Tampa.

CAM's West Gallery will include photographs from Riley's most recent work and largest project to date, **Fly By Night** (2016), produced for the New York-based public art organization Creative Time. Expanding on his history of working with pigeons, Riley converted a former naval ship into a floating pigeon loft and trained 2000 pigeons, outfitted with small illuminated LED bands, to fly in orchestrated performances above New York City's East River. Captured during evening performances over the six-week run of the project, the time-lapse photographs document the flight patterns of the birds, swirling, twirling and swooping as moving constellations in the night sky. Paying homage to the waning culture of pigeon fanciers, Riley's *Fly By Night* reimagines the role of the pigeon from a nuisance dweller within the urban landscape to a celebrated and revered messenger, companion and collaborator.

Riley's work encompasses drawing, printmaking (the artist will be in residency at Graphicstudio to create two prints over the course of 2017), mosaic, sculpture, video and performative interventions. His signature style interweaves historical and contemporary events with elements of fiction and myth to create allegorical histories. His re-imagined narratives, presented in his distinct scrimshaw and maritime aesthetic, comment on a wide range of issues, from the cultural impact of overdevelopment and gentrification of waterfront communities, to contradictions within political ideologies as well as commerce and the role of the artist in society and at war.

RELATED EVENTS

CONVERSATION WITH DUKE RILEY *

January 13, 6pm

USF School of Music Barness Recital Hall (MUS107)

Artist Duke Riley joins curator Sarah Howard for a conversation about his work prior to the opening reception.

DUKE RILEY: FLIGHTS OF FANCY OPENING RECEPTION

January 13, 7-9pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

ART THURSDAY: CURATOR'S TOUR

January 26, 6-8pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Join USFCAM Curator Sarah Howard for a tour of *Duke Riley: Flights of Fancy*.

ART THURSDAY: FOR THE BIRDS *

February 2, 6-8pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Come learn about the fascinating world of pigeons with world-class pigeon fancier and “Legend of the Sport” Erio Alvarez from Tampa’s own Alvarez Lofts. Alvarez will discuss the breeding and racing of pigeons and the history of the sport in the Tampa Bay region.

SYCOM CONCERT: MUSIC FOR FLIGHTS OF FANCY

February 17, 7-9pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

This two-hour concert will feature the students and faculty of USF's Composition and Electronic Music Studio performing original compositions inspired by the artworks in CAM's exhibition *Duke Riley: Flights of Fancy*.

ART THURSDAY: FLY BY NIGHT WITH CREATIVE TIME'S JEAN COONEY *

February 23, 6-8pm

USF Contemporary Art Museum

Learn more about *Fly By Night*, artist Duke Riley's public artwork of unprecedented scale and beauty produced by Creative Time, a NY-based public art agency that works with artists to contribute to the dialogues, debates and dreams of our times. Creative Time's Director of Public Projects Jean Cooney will share insights to the unique challenges presented from her experiences with temporary projects in public space.

***American Sign Language Interpreters will be available at these events.**

MUSEUM HOURS + ADMISSIONS

USFCAM Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Thurs 10am-8pm, Sat 1-4pm.

Closed Sunday and University holidays (January 16)

Admission to the Museum is free; however a USF parking permit (\$5.00 daily) or pay-per-space parking is required. Please visit our website cam.usf.edu for parking, directions, or more information on events associated with the exhibitions. Groups and organizations interested in tours should contact USFCAM to schedule at least two weeks in advance. Call (813) 974-4133 for additional information.



Duke Riley, *Fly By Night*, photo by Tod Seelie, courtesy of Creative Time.

Duke Riley: Flights of Fancy is supported in part by a grant from the Arts Council of Hillsborough County, Board of County Commissioners, and by the USFCAM Art for Community Engagement (ACE) Fund Patrons. The USF Contemporary Art Museum is recognized by the State of Florida as a major cultural institution and receives funding through the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The USF Contemporary Art Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.