

LOVERS, MUGGERS, AND THIEVES

**DUKE RILEY'S FIRST SOLO EXHIBITION IN BOSTON OPENS AT
PRAISE SHADOWS ART GALLERY FEBRUARY 4, 2021**

On view February 4, 2021 through March 7, 2021
313A Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446

Artist's Talk: Duke Riley with Curator Jen Mergel
February 4, 2021 at 7 pm ET
Register [here](#) for the Zoom session



(January 13, 2021 -- Brookline, MA) -- After a career spanning decades with museums, galleries, and cultural institutions around the world, Boston-native Duke Riley will have his first solo exhibition in his hometown. *Lovers, Muggers, and Thieves* opens on February 4, 2021 at Praise Shadows Art Gallery and will present drawings, mosaics, and video by Riley, who is now based in Brooklyn, NY. The show will also feature the premiere of original scrimshaws made from found discarded plastic, and after their debut at Praise Shadows, they will be on view as part of a major U.S. museum exhibition in 2022.

The only previous time Riley's work has been exhibited in Boston was in 1996, when Bernard Toale Gallery included him in a group show. Since then, he has garnered international acclaim, not to mention front-page articles in *The New York Times*, for his monumental public art

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performances and projects including Creative Time's *Fly By Night* in 2016, *Those About To Die Salute You* at the Queens Museum in 2009, as well as for his solo exhibitions at MOCA Cleveland, Pioneer Works, and many more.

Riley has also created a new work specifically for his homecoming: a large-scale mosaic depicting the Great Molasses Flood, also known as the 1919 Boston Molasses Disaster. On January 15, 1919, the accidental explosion of a storage tank at a molasses factory on the North End of Boston unleashed 2.3 million gallons of scorching hot molasses into crowded city streets. The wave gushed at an estimated 35 miles per hour, killing 21 people and sweeping some victims into Boston Harbor. For decades, the area still smelled of molasses on hot days. Riley's work depicts the cataclysm and near-biblical tumult of this incident in vast tile-work that recalls the color and lines of his trademark ink-on-paper drawings.

The public is welcome to join Riley and curator Jen Mergel on February 4 at 7 pm ET for an artist's talk on Zoom. Registration is available [here](#). Mergel is a Boston-born and based contemporary art curator, leader, and educator. From 2010-2017, Mergel led the Contemporary department at the MFA Boston, and from 2005-2010 organized numerous shows as curator at the ICA Boston.

Duke Riley received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and his MFA from Pratt Institute. Riley's work explores his lifelong fascination with urban waterways, their historical relationship to the transgressive culture of life at sea, and the uneasy intersections of human geography with the physical world. His signature style interweaves historical and contemporary events with elements of fiction and myth to create allegorical histories. His re-imagined narratives comment on a range of issues from the cultural impact of over development and environmental destruction of waterfront communities to contradictions within political ideologies and the role of the artist in society.

About Praise Shadows LLC

We believe that the art ecosystem is filled with untapped potential, and our work is rooted in partnering closely with artists to develop opportunities in emerging models of creativity and entrepreneurship — exhibitions, commissions, brand partnerships, new technologies, original concepts that no one has ever tried before. Praise Shadows Art Gallery is a commercial gallery space in the Boston area showing the work of emerging and mid-career artists. It opened in December 2020. Praise Shadows Art Partners advises artists and companies in the creative industries on strategic partnerships and marketing. Our work is local, global, and virtual. www.praiseshadows.com

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