

Time Out

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In one Harlem building, the animals come out at night

When darkness falls over Harlem, the windows of the Lee Building at 125th Street and Park Avenue come alive. Into the wee hours, street-level nighthawks and early-bird commuters on the Metro-North platform are privy to the sight of colored lights and wild animals moving across 12 windows of the building's second floor. It's not another Harlem apartment housing unsuitable pets—it's art, public art.

Commissioned by building owner and real-estate developer Eugene Giscome and conceived by artist Grimanesa Amorós, the light show is called *Frente Feroz*, or "ferocious front." Amorós set up giant cutouts of elephants, tigers and other exotic creatures that, when lit from behind by a looped sequence of colored lights, send silhouettes dancing across screens spanning the windows. The installation is synchronized to turn on at sunset and off at sunrise according to the exact geographic coordinates of NYC (that would be 40° 46'N x 73° 58'W).

Frente Feroz, incidentally, retains its dual meaning in translation, with *frente* referring either

to a facade or a battlefront—an ambiguity Amorós, 43, says is intentional. "I never thought about Harlem as a dangerous place," she explains, although she knows some people do. The artist, who lives in Tribeca, notes that the heavy police presence on 125th Street, partially due to the MTA station, projects both safety and danger at the same time. The fact that the work is visible only at night plays with that paradox. "I like making people think about something," Amorós says. If the work hasn't got them thinking, exactly, they are definitely noticing. When she visits the site at night, she hears comments from people staring up from the sidewalk like, "Look—a haunted house!" or "A party! Where are the limosines?" And some observations mirror the very ambivalence Amorós is sending up. One resident of the changing neighborhood, pointing out the light show, says to another, "That means someone new is taking over the building." —Emily Weiner

Frente Feroz is at 125th Street and Park Ave, dusk until dawn.