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Shedding light on life after dark

CLAUDIA CALLE, THE AWAREHOUSE, POPLIFE, GRAND CENTRAL, YIYA'S BAKERY

NiteTalk: Photo Star Claudia Calle Turns Her Lens on China

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When the Colombian-born, MIA-based lenswoman Claudia Calle turned her keen eye and camera on China, the resulting images took the International Photography Awards' "Best of Show." On Saturday night The Awarehouse is throwing an opening party in her honor --

and yes, the vivid pics will be on display.

Why China? I had the privilege to visit China three years ago as I have always had an interest in learning about the culture. I love to travel and learn about new countries, people, food, culture, religion, and passion.

It's a long way from your native Colombia, in many aspects, isn't it? Yes, it is. Coming from Colombia to Miami itself was a long way. But I've been in this country for more than ten years now. Going to China is a long trip, but well worth taking! It opened my eyes to amazing people, and I also found similarities with my native country -- Colombians are friendly, hospitable, honest, hard workers, just like the Chinese.

How much time did you spend in country and what was one of the most surprising things you learned? I was in China for a month and I was surprised by the misconception I had about their culture. I thought they were stiff, mass-producing, insensitive robots. I was so wrong! They are lovely, sensitive people with true values about their family and culture.

I was most impacted by the pollution. They are destroying their ecosystem for future generations just to please a global consumer and to become a powerful country. I saw Chinese people adopting western culture and forgetting about their heritage and methodologies. They eat at McDonalds, drink Starbucks, dream about buying new cars and wear foreign brand clothing (ironically, almost all of it is "Made in China"). The illusion of progress is changing their "Long Life" philosophy for a lifestyle that is fast, solitary, unhealthy and stressful.

Were there any other preconceived notions that were dispelled while you were there? Yes. In fact, perhaps all my preconceptions were dispelled. I thought Chinese people looked alike; not true at all. I thought they produced only cheap quality stuff; again, not true at all.

Your China series earned the "Fine Art Collage" first place

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Poochie Party



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"Bad Girl" Kristen Guinane on Miami TV Show: "It Was Like"

achievement from the International Photography Awards. I understand the competition was quite stiff, no? My "Republic of China" series was selected among 15,000 submissions from 103 countries. I was also hand-picked to appear in the IPA "Best of Show" Exhibit in late-October in New York. I was extremely honored.



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This wasn't the first time you were recognized by the International Photography Awards though, was it? No, last year I won two honorable mentions for two photographic series -- "Living in Silence" and "Between Frontier: The Longneck Story." These pictures were taken during a trip to Thailand, where I had the magical opportunity to spend time with the Longneck tribe in an isolated area in the borderline of Thailand and Myanmar.

If you had to cite one photographer, living or dead, whose work serves as a source of inspiration, who would it be and why? Annie Leibovitz: Years ago, photography was a "masculine" career and it was very hard for women to transition into the photography scene -- Annie successfully accomplished this. As a woman, I love that her style is about the subject and the beauty of the moment. I also started photographing music acts and worked for a magazine. I believe she is the epitome of the new generation of women photographers.

Word is you'll have some pretty swingin' DJs at your Warehouse opening. Wanna fill is in? I'm fortunate to have amazing DJ friends like Aramis, Kiko de Gallo and Mr. Pauer, and they'll all be spinning on Saturday night. This event happens during the Wynwood Art Walk and everybody is invited to pass by!

Isn't there some kinda after party as well? Yes! We will continue the party at Grand Central with my friends from Poplife.

When you're not out shooting the world, where in town (besides Grand Central) do you most dig hanging out? I spend most of my time at my studio creating, painting. When I get hungry I usually go to Yiya's Bakery, Sabor a Peru on Biscayne and 24th, Buena Vista Bakery, Café Barcelona, Cafeina Lounge. I like to support independent and upcoming businesses in my area.

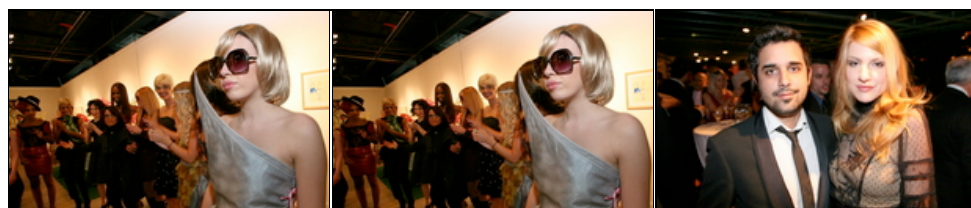
What's coming up for Claudia Calle? I focus on living in the present. I'm sure great things are ahead as everything I do is with 100% passion. During Art Basel, I will showcase new pieces at my studio and that is always a great experience.

BY JOHN HOOD // WEDNESDAY, OCT 6, 2010 AT 09:05 EDT

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SHOCK: IT WAS LIKE 'Jersey Shore' Invaded"



"Bad Girl" Starlet Lea Beaulieu: We Ran in Same Circles as "Jersey Shore" Cast



Elizabeth Newman

Liz is a lifestyle writer and a self-proclaimed pop culture junkie. While never knee deep into the Miami club scene, she is always on the quest for a new hole-in-the-wall -- or at least anywhere with decent beer on tap.



Peter Bailey

Peter is the co-author of Trick Daddy's forthcoming memoir "Magic City: Trials of A Native Son." His award-winning work has appeared in the Miami Herald, Time and Newsweek.



John Hood

John Hood bylines for a plethora of publications, from Miami to Glasgow. His beat is to cover the keen and the colorful, no matter what they do.



Jipsy Castillo

Since launching her site in 2005, Jipsy's photos have graced countless newspapers, magazines and websites. Documenting Miami's nightlife and social scene, her images remind us that there is more to party pictures than a smile and a pose.

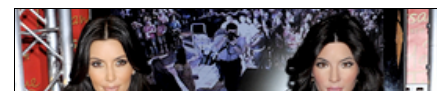


Stacey Russell

Since arriving in Miami, this celeb-obsessed Midwestern girl has never taken "You're not on the list" for an answer. Stacey is a pop culture junkie who loves the high-gloss of the red carpet but also has a place in her heart for reality TV.

Got something good? Dish here: niteside@nbcuni.com

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