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OUR MAN IN MIAMI

Riding the Wilds West of Wynwood at Warehouse

By John Hood

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Last weekend, amid the hangovers and general fatigue that inevitably lingers after another blow-out Art Basel, a cool core of a couple hundred or so with-it locals turned out at a spot West of Wynwood to hear a pop punk amalgam known as Pretty Please. In addition to the swingin' sounds, there were works from a dozen buzzy Miami visualists, among them Claudia Calle, Monica Travis, and Nicole Soden. A proverbial damn good time was had by all. But had not this spot existed, it's unlikely the racket-makers would've been staging at all that night - they certainly wouldn't have been staging amid such divine splendor. But they all were there, because there is a there there, and that there is called Warehouse.

Opened in March '09 by a collective of digital wizards, art junkies, and all-around explorers of sound and vision, Warehouse has become the scene of many a righteous night in the wilds West of Wynwood. At any given moment, there are cybernauts inventing their own algorithms, visualists assembling their visions, and sound-slingers rehearsing, recording, or taking to the stage. Not that there are clear delineations between what one does or doesn't do, mind you - hell, the lines are so often blurred they might as well not exist. But the beehive does boast boisterous action of every stripe, and it's become the kinda magnet that attracts anyone intent on making more of Miami than what's been mapped out by those touting best laid plans.

Just ask Iggy Pop. In August of last year, the punk rock legend (and Miami resident) turned up at Warehouse to help raise A/C money for Sweat Records. The main man

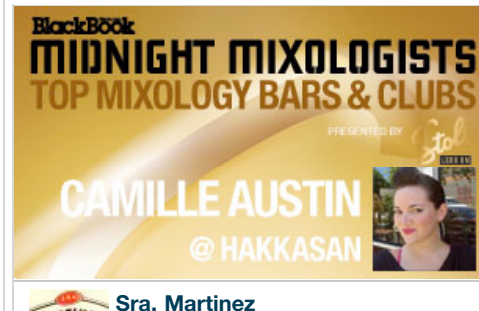
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made an entire night out of it. In fact, when Mr. Pop wasn't watching locals Jacuzzi Boys and Awesome New Republic make their patented racket, he was hobnobbing with his neighbors. N.E.R.D. and Kinky seemed to very much dig the space too, at least if their respective stagings are any indication. And each had a packed house of acolytes to help them prove it.

But it's the crème de la crème of Miami sound and vision that really makes Awarehouse a place in the sun. At one time or another, everybody takes to the place, which only makes perfect sense considering the place was built explicitly for them to take to. But of all the merry music-makers that have taken to Awarehouse, the threesome known as organicArma have taken to it the most. Why? Because they happen to be the hosts, that's why. And as such, they've taken to the place with a graciousness few bands in any land can fathom. In addition to their own stellar shows, it is oA who steps aside and offers up the space for their pals to show the world what they're made of. And in an age of cutthroat competition and petty backstabbing, that kinda kind action is as rare as snow in this town.

Together organicArma is Phaxas, Dharma, and Abraxas. The former two are responsible for the racket; the latter backs 'em up with the visually phantastic. Behind them is Sam Camera, who chronicles every nuance of their rising, and Aurax, who serves as a sorta Overseer for them and the entire Awarehouse. As an outfit, oA is riding the wave that roars over the digital divide, and they've shown that machines are nothing without a little humanity. As operatives, the five have proven that success can come from being both humane and human. Something to think about the next time you're considering sticking your foot out in front of your next best friend.



Pretty Please photo courtesy of Jeffrey Delannoy

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