

MICHAEL DWECK HABANA LIBRE



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American Photographer Michael Dweck Captures Secret Life of Cuba's Creative Elite in New Book and Exhibition

Cuba has a secret. One that has never been photographed, never reported in Western media and never acknowledged openly within Cuba itself.

Michael Dweck: Habana Libre (Damiani editore, Italy) is American photographer Michael Dweck's exploration of a compelling aspect of Cuba's contradictory status in the world today. The title, like much in Cuba, has a double meaning: Free Havana and Havana is Free. This revealing and contemporary work by a visual artist adept at capturing the quiet gesture, the alluring glance and the proud and provocative pose, brings to light a secretive social order as seen from within – a position not previously attained by an outsider.

Behind the clichéd press images of vintage cars, crumbling buildings, peeling paint and a struggling unhappy people held back from progress, lays a hidden society of Cuba's most influential people - the creative class. It is a socially connected group of keenly observant artists, glamorous models, filmmakers, musicians and writers captured in an elaborate dance of survival and success. Their lives are a constant play of appearances; they are the privileged class in a classless society.

Dweck's seductive, exhilarating, provocative black and white images, along with a hypnotic visual narrative and personal interviews by William Westbrook, provide a glimpse into the lives of those who define the creative culture of Cuba. All of his subjects are nationally and in some cases internationally recognized artists. Arguably most notable are the never-before-photographed sons of both Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

To gain entrée into this world is to be a member of several *farandulas*, small circles of friends intersecting like Olympic rings. Each ring an interest: music or fashion; cinema or art. Actual money is not always necessary for the above-average life. Social connection trumps politics, status, wealth and even race. They are sensual and warm, romantically intertwined with one another, moving easily in a tightly controlled society.

These Cubans are international, elegant and sophisticated. They have cars and passports in a country where travel is difficult if not impossible. They are fashionable, though Cuban couture is an oxymoron as there are few stores. They are socialists who would be lost without capitalism to sell their creative wares in the world's markets. And they are the pride and flesh of Cuba's culture. They put their conscience on record, their art is their vision of the country.

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Michael Dweck: Habana Libre will be published by Damiani editore (Italy) and released in the U.S. in October, 2011 and internationally in November, 2011. A collector's limited edition box set of **Michael Dweck: Habana Libre**, along with an 8x10 print both signed by the artist is also available.

The **Michael Dweck: Habana Libre** exhibition will open in San Francisco at the Modernism Gallery on September 8th. In February 2012, it will be shown in the Fototeca de Cuba Museum in Havana. The exhibition will also travel to Tokyo, Paris and New York. For more details visit www.michaeldweck.com.

MICHAEL DWECK: HABANA LIBRE

Interviews by William Westbrook

Published by Damiani editore, Italy

290 pages, 21 four-color plates, 214 duotones plates, 3 gate-folds

Hardcover, jacketed, 9.75 x 12.5 inches

ISBN 978-88-6208-184-9

Retail: \$65.00

Publication date: October 1, 2011 (US); November 1, 2011 (International)

Edition size: 3000

MICHAEL DWECK: HABANA LIBRE Limited Edition Box Set

Signed and numbered book in a stamped, custom made linen-covered clamshell box or Plexiglass slipcase, including a signed, numbered 8x10 silver gelatin print.

Retail: \$800.00

Publication date: October 1, 2011

Edition size: 100

Michael Dweck

The photographs of Michael Dweck were first exhibited at Sotheby's, New York in 2003, in the auction house's first solo exhibition for a living photographer. Dweck's first major photographic work, **The End: Montauk, N.Y.**, published in 2004, blended documentary and staged photography to produce a compelling portrait of a beach community that exists as much in the realm of memory and desire as in the real world. His acclaimed 2008 volume **Mermaids** explored the female nude refracted by still and roiling waters. Dweck's work has become part of important international art collections and has been shown in major solo gallery exhibitions around the world. Michael Dweck currently lives in New York City and Montauk, N.Y.

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