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THE SICILIAN FILM FESTIVAL OPENS A "WINDOW TO CUBA"

Miami – The Sicilian Film Festival, which runs at the Miami Beach Cinematheque from April 11–17, opens a “Window to Cuba” with three events honoring the rich art, culture and history of its people, which like Sicily, is an island with a global cultural impact. On Monday, April 9th, 2012, the festival will open with the photography exhibition *Cuban Faces* at the Temple Emanue-El, presenting a triptych of Sicilian photographers: **Manlio Caliri, Gio Criscione and Emanuele Pensavalle**. On Saturday, April 14th, 2012, both the book presentation, *Cuba: National School of the Art*, by **Claudio Machetti, Gianluca Mengozzi and Luca Spitoni**, as well as the documentary *Un Sueno a Mitad*, directed by the actor and director **Francesco Apolloni**, will tell the compelling story of Cuba’s **National Art Schools**.

CUBAN FACES, Monday, April 9th, 2012, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Temple Emanu-El, 1701 Washington Ave, Miami Beach

RSVP: <http://tesobe.yolasite.com/>

Cuban Faces is a photographic study of the people of present day Cuba. It displays the work of Sicilian photographers **Gianni Criscione, Emanuele Pensavalle and Manlio Caliri**. Each photo captures its subject in a very special moment in time and the exhibition reflects the experiences of the three photographers during their years of travel through the country. All photographs are for sale, with a silent auction for the benefit of The Sicilian Film Festival. **Manlio Caliri and Gianni Criscione will be in attendance.**

About the Photographers:

Born in 1967 in Syracuse, **Manlio Caliri** had an early initiation into traveling and different cultures, while accompanying his musician parents to performances. For more than 30 years his photojournalistic drive has taken him to places like Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Nepal, Ecuador, Argentina, Venezuela, Panama, Canada, United States, and almost all of Europe. In December of 2010, Caliri drove over 1500 km through Cuba, from Pinar del Rio to Baracoa. The images in *Cuban Faces* trace this journey. Also born in the Greek city of Syracuse, in eastern Sicily, **Gio Criscione** naturally assimilated the sailors’ passion for sea changes and the exploration of island life. His professional life began as a real estate agent, who fell in love with photography, while taking stills of houses for his clients. His growing interest in photography found its true expression in people’s faces, and islanders. Traveling to Cuba, Criscione found that like Sicilians, the faces of people in Cuba reveal the lives and souls of those who come from the sun in a strip of land surrounded by sea. **Emanuele Pensavalle** has a degree law and works as a notary public in his hometown of Syracuse. While traveling in Cuba, his passion for photography crystalized in the faces of the people he met, including his current girlfriend, with whom he now lives with in Sicily.

A WINDOW TO CUBA, Saturday, April 14th, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Presentation of the book *Cuba: National School of the Art*, followed by

the documentary *Un Sueno a Mitad*, directed by Francesco Apolloni, Italy 2011, 60 min.

In January 1961, the Cuban revolutionary leaders Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, having finished a game of golf and now enjoying a drink at the bar of Havana’s formerly exclusive Country Club Park, pondered the future of a country club whose members had all fled the country. Guevara proposed the creation of a complex of tuition-free art schools to serve talented young people from all over the Third World. He conceived the schools as highly experimental and

conceptually advanced to serve the creation of a “new culture” for the “new man”. The design of the National Art Schools, created by Ricardo Porro, Roberto Gottardi , and Vittorio Faratti, last two being Italian, ran contrary to the International Style of the time.

Cuba’s National Schools of Art, the book by **Claudio Machetti, Gianluca Mengozzi and Luca Spitoni**, introduces this modern masterpiece through stimulating interviews with artists of different generations, who talk about their experiences, apart from dogma and sterile academia. The book also illuminates the politics that sparked the Cuban revolution.

The extraordinary story of The National Schools of Art in Cuba is also the theme of ***Un sueño a mitad*** , by Italian director and actor **Francesco Apolloni**, which will be screened for the first time in Miami. Another documentary with the same theme, “Unfinished Spaces” sold out two screenings at the Miami International Film Festival this year. Not surprising, it is a gripping story. **Cuba’s National Art Schools** represented an attempt to reinvent architecture in the same manner that the Cuban Revolution aspired to reinvent society. The story stands as a metaphor for the downfalls of the Revolution. Through their designs, the architects sought to integrate issues of culture, ethnicity, and place into a revolutionary formal composition hitherto unknown in architecture. The American art historian John Loomis called the Schools of Art “one of the most eloquent signs of magical realism and landscape architecture.”

To learn more about this year’s Sicilian Film Festival, 7th Edition visit www.sicilianfilmfestival.com.
FOR PRESS INFO, PLEASE CONTACT PUBLICIST DILIANA ALEXANDER AT dilianaye@gmail.com

At the Miami Beach Cinematheque located at: Historic City Hall, South Side, Ground Floor,
1130 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139

The VII Sicilian Film Festival is made possible with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor, the Board of County Commissioners, the support of the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority and the City of Miami Beach.

