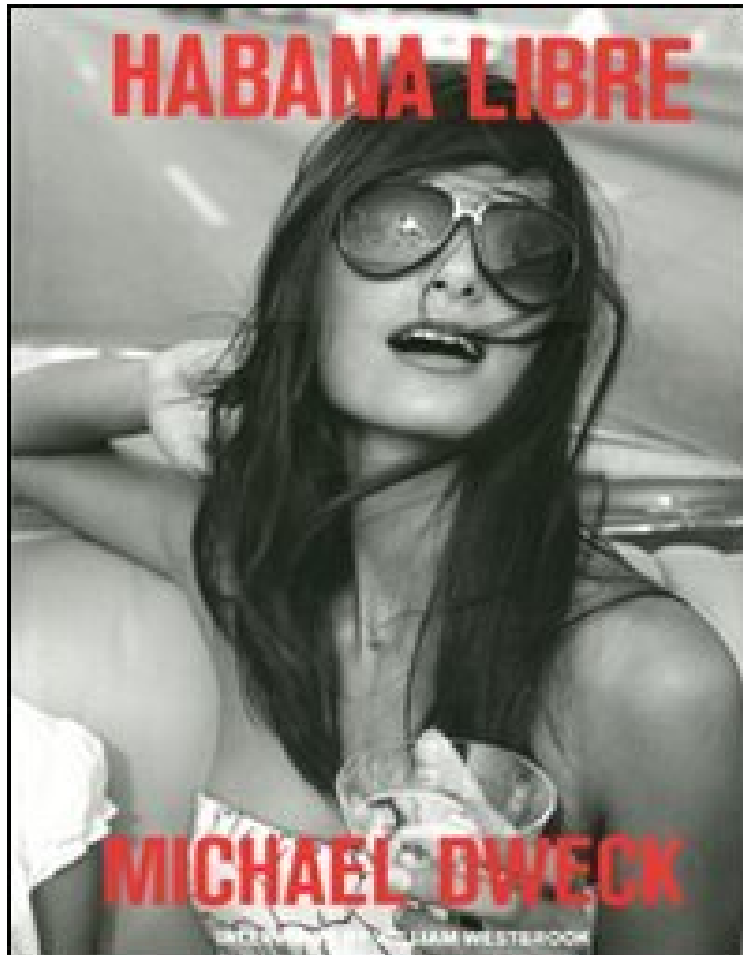


(Download) Michael Dweck: Habana Libre

## Michael Dweck: Habana Libre

*From Damiani*

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**From Damiani : Michael Dweck: Habana Libre** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Michael Dweck: Habana Libre:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Gorgeous Photography But Not An Accurate Depiction of CubaBy Lynda E.I gave 5 stars to this book because 1- the photography is pretty incredible and 2-it is very mind-blowing by and in itself that Michael Dweck was able to "infiltrate" himself in the very tight circle of the Cuban elite. It is also true that there's no freedom of almost any sort in Cuba. Most of the people live in the worst poverty and, as a country and society, Cuba has not evolved past the 1960s, which is horrible. However, I do give kudos to the author for portraying this part of Cuba is such a compelling way even if it's just for purposes of showing the world that there is a tiny group of people who live amazingly well and not according to Fidel's fake communist credo (which clearly does not apply to him or his family).0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. StellarBy CustomerFantastic book. Loved the photos. Gave me a glimpse into a special part of Cuba.2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Breathtaking Photography Offers An Intimate Look At The Beautiful People Of Cuba's Bohemian UndergroundBy

Jack Rella I have to be honest. I have a passing interest in the story that Michael Dweck tells, or rather reveals, in *Habana Libre*, about the bohemian lifestyles of the artistic elite that lives and moves about this Communist country. Sons of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara are included in this selective clique. A hedonistic world of sorts, ruled by mystery, danger, and intrigue, punctuated by art, music, and privilege, is opened to the reader from page one through the end of the book. As you read this book and take in the amazing shots of these beautiful people, you cannot help but change the way you look at Cuba. This is a tight group of perhaps 20 or 30 people who are living lives that do not seem possible under the current regime. The obvious intimacy Dweck holds with his subjects makes you feel like you are more than an observer, and when the regime finally ends and the new Cuba arises, you will feel like you have been there watching happen because you dallied among these primary players. My love for the book centers around the photography. I was first attracted to the book because of the cover photo, which I later learned featured Rachel Valdez, a Cuban artist and painter. She is simply stunning, in a purely aesthetic way and in a strong, independent manner that makes you want to know her and her world. Her own painting appears later in the book, only reawakening that yearning. The reader gets the feeling that Rachel is truly a muse inspiring the creation of Dweck's work. The collection of photographs, most rendered in black and white, are hypnotic. I found a number of photos I could imagine framing and placing in areas of my home or studio. However, as a collection, they told a deeper, more meaningful story of the life these people are living under the noses of the Communist Cuban regime. It is a well thought out, well told narrative, even before you begin to read the text. Interviews conducted by William Westbrook give the reader a first hand account of the thoughts and ideas of the members of this elitist group. He talks with Fidel's and Che's sons, as well as many others. The words of painter Rene Francisco sum up the ideas of this group: "When I was an art student they gave us everything. We had all our materials. Now the art students have nothing. They have four walls and time. No brushes. No paint. Nothing is provided to them. But I tell them: when you are an artist who has nothing, you have everything." Even if I had never read forward, the interviews, and the afterward, although I was not able to resist, I would have understood what I was seeing, known the world they were living in, and grasped the exclusivity of what I was seeing. This is Dweck's "superpower," if you will. He instinctually places his camera into the heart of the event, much like a great movie director, and subsequently places his viewers there as well. As I thumbed through the book for the first time, I was immediately reminded of movies like *The Last Seduction* or *Body Double*, created in the contemporary neo-noir style. The images appeared to be ready to jump from the photos, drive their expensive cars way to fast to the nearest night club, and create a night to remember. The stylization of the photographs was artistically done but never gave me the impression that they were altered or manipulated to offer anything but the truth about what the lens was seeing. If you are not yet convinced that you should own this masterpiece, the photographs of which were recently selectively displayed at the Modernism Gallery in San Francisco, consider this: Dweck's books, *The End* and *Mermaids*, are now out of print and selling for over \$3,000 according to a recent NY Times article. Like these two works before, *Habana Libre* has been released as a limited edition, with only 3,000 in print. Printed in Italy, no attention has been spared to the artistry and binding of this masterpiece. The colors of Cuba, red, white, and blue are pervasive throughout the book, down to the blue and white strips of fabric in the binding, itself.

*Habana Libre* is a stunning contemporary exploration of the privileged class in a classless society: a secret life within Cuba. Michael Dweck's photographs are exhilarating, sensual and provocative, with a sexy and hypnotic visual rhythm. This is a face of Cuba never before photographed, never reported in Western media and never acknowledged openly within Cuba itself. It is a socially connected world of glamorous models and keenly observant artists, filmmakers, musicians and writers captured in an elaborate dance of survival and success. Here too are surprising interviews with sons of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara as well as many others who define the creative culture of Cuba and give it texture and substance. *Habana Libre* is not a media-fabricated Cuban postcard of crumbling mansions or old American cars, but a revealing and contemporary work by a visual artist adept at capturing the quiet gesture, the sensuous eye and the proud and provocative pose of that most romantic of contradictions: Cuba. Michael Dweck is a visual artist known for his suggestive photographic style. His first major photographic work published in volume form as *The End: Montauk, N.Y.*, 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 pleasure as in the real world. In his follow-up to that success, in 2008, Dweck returned with his acclaimed project: *Mermaids*. The exhibition and accompanying volume explored the female nude refracted in still and roiling waters. Dweck's photographs were first showcased at Sotheby's, New York, in 2003, in their first solo exhibition for a living photographer. His work has become part of important international art collections and has been shown in major solo gallery exhibitions in New York, Paris, San Francisco, London, Tokyo, Hamburg, Toronto and Brussels. Michael Dweck lives in New York City and Montauk.

Dweck's contemporary collection--made possible by his inside access to the country's ascending generation - is surprisingly rich. (Lenora Jane Estes [VanityFair.com](http://VanityFair.com)) Dweck's exhilarating, seductive black and white photographs along with a visual narrative and personal interviews by William Westbrook provide a glimpse into the secret lives of one closely guarded group of friends - the underground intelligentsia who will define the country's post-Castro

generation. (LaLettreDeLaPhotographie.com)About the AuthorMichael Dweck is a visual artist known for his suggestive photographic style. His first major photographic work published in volume form as *The End: Montauk*, N.Y., 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 pleasure as in the real world. In his follow-up to that success, in 2008, Dweck returned with his acclaimed project: *Mermaids*. The exhibition and accompanying volume explored the female nude refracted in still and roiling waters. Dweck's photographs were first showcased at Sotheby's, New York, in 2003, in their first solo exhibition for a living photographer. His work has become part of important international art collections and has been shown in major solo gallery exhibitions in New York, Paris, San Francisco, London, Tokyo, Hamburg, Toronto and Brussels. Michael Dweck lives in New York City and Montauk.