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Northeast Miami-Dade



Artist to decorate MiMo with local faces for Art Basel

A PHOTOGRAPHER LIVING IN THE MIMO DISTRICT IS HAVING A PHOTO SHOOT TO CAPTURE FACES IN MIAMI-DADE. HE PLANS TO DECK 27 BLOCKS OF BISCAYNE BOULEVARD WITH IMAGES OF 2,000 FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, SOME OF WHICH WILL BE DISPLAYED DURING ART BASEL.

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Or don't. You can frown, wink, grimace, gasp, roll your eyes or pout your lips in a come-hither look.

All you need is to live in Miami-Dade County and be over 18. Artist Louis Dalmau will enlarge your face and dangle it above the boulevard for all to see.

Dalmau, who lives in the Upper Eastside, is asking folks from all over the county to meet him at the Spanish bistro Uva 69, 6900 Biscayne Blvd., on Saturday so he can capture their facial expressions for a project titled *Miami's Exposé*.

"What I'm trying to do is make a portrait of Miami, through its people," said Dalmau, who moved to Miami from New York in 1978, setting up shop in the Flagami area. "I think Biscayne Boulevard would make an ideal gallery to display art."

The project is one of several planned in the district for the annual Art Basel blowout, which over the years has become the hemisphere's hottest arts fest.

Saturday's batch of photos will go up between Northeast 69th and 73rd streets in time for Basel.

The concept is simple: Take photographs of everyday people making everyday faces. Enlarge and enhance them digitally, washing them in vivid colors. Then affix them to 8-foot by 3-foot canvases that will hang from lampposts that illuminate the 27-block Miami Modern district at night. A live band and D.J. will be on hand to entertain the models who show up on Saturday. The photo shoot will begin at 11 a.m.

Dalmau created the ART-ificial reef in 1988, an installation featuring tons of sculpted and painted cement culvert pipe in the water just off Collins Avenue and 168th Street.

About two more photo shoots will follow until Dalmau hits his goal of 2,000 faces. "Eventually, we'll have them hanging from 50th Street all the way to 77th," he said, adding that he hopes the city will let him keep them up for several months.

Dalmau said he was motivated by the long-running efforts of many folks, including the MiMo Biscayne Association and Upper Eastside homeowner groups, to revitalize a corridor gone to seed during the 1970s and '80s.

"I'm a MiMo resident. I live here, I work here," he said. "These people have done a lot to enhance this district and I want to do what I can to help."

Fran Rollason, head of the MiMo Biscayne Association, said everyone she has spoken about Miami's Exposé loves the idea. "People love seeing themselves in pictures," she said. "It will bring them into the district for the shoot and later so they can see how they look."

George Neary of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau also said he believes the project will help efforts to increase foot traffic -- and bring potential customers -- to area businesses.

"We know the important part heritage, culture and the arts play in a neighborhood's renovation," he said Thursday.