



Casa Colombo Presents “I-Phone as Brush / Cell-phone as Muse”

Laura Pace (December 11, 2019)



Last Saturday, Jersey City’s Casa Colombo Italian Educational and Cultural Center hosted the successful opening of the exhibition “I-phone as brush / cell-phone as muse” by photographers Mirko Notarangelo and Kerry Kolenut. A show centered around the idea of the smartphone as a new art-making tool.

<<Located in Jersey City, [Casa Colombo](#) [2] is the heart of the history and memories of the region’s Italians and Italian Americans. Born as an immigration center, Casa Colombo has evolved over the years to become an Italian Educational & Cultural Center as well as a Center for the Arts. Today, it continues to showcase memories, keep them alive, and project viewers towards the future.>> so tells us the Executive Director of Casa Colombo, Carla Mastropiero.



Many relics of immigrant stories, from Italy to the United States, hidden treasures such as passports, statistic documents, letters and suitcases were donated to the museum, where these unique and rare gems are still on display.

In the midst of all these treasures, the Center also organizes traveling exhibits, hosting artists and photographers from Italy and elsewhere.

One of these is the incredible "I-phone as brush / cell-phone as muse" exhibit. A captivating title for a show that posits the cellphone as a photographic instrument, putting forward a new and modern perspective.

Hanging on the gallery walls are photographs by Mirko Notarangelo, an artist from Puglia, and Kerry Kolenut, a New Jersey born photographer, in a harmonious union of the two cultures.

The focal point of the show is the I-Phone, an instrument which is progressively beginning to replace professional cameras. Lighter and manageable as it may be, the shots taken through its lens certainly aren't all works of art.

"You have to not only capture the right moment, but also see beyond the image, always. Immortalizing a moment from a unique and original perspective. This has always been the role of an artist. Otherwise everyone would be a photographer," explains Mirko Notarangelo.

His images immediately catch the eye and his shots become paintings, or rather postcards. Moments stolen from the Big Apple:

"All the photographs in this exhibit have been stolen from passers-by, in the subway or on the street, while I was running around New York with my I-Phone 6. These images looked studied but they aren't. And that's what I like about them: they are real."

Mirko is a multidisciplinary artist, but he started out as a graphic designer. A work he has never allowed him to fully express his artistic flair because it tied him to specific commissions. He then decided to explore through photography. What started as a game made him see that he could express himself through this medium. Two years ago, he attended the ICP in New York and from there he started showing his work at exhibitions, discovering his talent and always looking for the truth and reality behind all the images he produced.

Kerry Kolenut, on the other hand, brings a different approach to her photos. Still starting with the idea of the smartphone as camera, she inserts it into the shot, making it the subject of her works, her muse. "The idea of making the phone the subject of my photos came to me by chance when I was on vacation in China. A celebration was taking place in the streets and I couldn't see anything because of the crowd. In front of me a man was taking pictures with his phone and that's when it hit me: I took a shot of his shot so that I could see what was happening. That's how it all started."



The show's curator, Lisa Colloduro, who has been working at Casa Colombo for the past three years, tells us why she decided to bring together these two artists: "I saw the work of these two great artists and thought it would be a perfect combination to bring them together in one exhibition. Two diverse perspectives who both share the use of cellphones, in different ways. They complement each other perfectly."

An exhibition promoted by the Association of Italian American Educators, whose president, Cav. Josephine A. Maietta, tells us:

"We are very happy to take part in this event. Supporting Casa Colombo is a true honor, the photographs are beautiful and unique. Promoting Italian culture is a mission for me, both as a teacher at school, where I teach my students to love Italy, as well as through events such as this one."

Many attended the opening, including prestigious figures such as the Honorary Consul of Italy in Clifton, New Jersey, Avv. Domenic Caruso who during the opening ceremony - as a representative of the Italian Government - delivered warm words of greetings and congratulations, the aforementioned Cav. Josephine A. Maietta, the AIAE Vice President Elisabetta Calello, and Casa Colombo's Executive Director Carla Mastropierro.

The exhibition will be on view through December 31, 2019. Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.

(By appointment only on weekends)

For more information visit this [link](#) [2]. Or email info@casacolombo.org

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[2] <https://www.casacolombo.org/>