

FRED TORRES COLLABORATIONS

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Art Basel Miami Beach week brings the world to Miami

By Saxon Henry



When Art Basel and Design Miami roll into town each December, the twin fairs bring with them a who's who of talent and incredible creative energy. Early last month, I attended David LaChapelle's unveiling of "Bliss Amongst Chaos," two larger-than-life photographs with Daphne Guinness as the photographer's muse. Also there that night was Luca Pizzaroni, a photographer and videographer whose eye unflinchingly scours urbanscapes to chronicle the human disposition, including ones that many of us try to avoid as we flit

through busy lives. Case in point is "Landlords," which you can see on his site by clicking on "Project Links" and then "Landlords."

The idea for one of Pizzaroni's latest efforts, the "Labels Project" (the artist is shown above surrounded by the exhibition at Fred Torres Collaborations), came to him when he was working as an artist-in-residence at American Apparel in Los Angeles. When he found himself in a massive building that housed a thrift shop, a realization struck. "What I noticed as I was sifting through the clothing is that I was seeing labels from a multitude of countries," he explains. "I was having an experience that served as a metaphor for travel."

Pizzaroni deemed this occurrence a visceral journey around the globe, one with deeper meaning. "I thought about how most people have strange perceptions of at least one country and it's because we tend to generalize about places we've never experienced," he says. "Looking at the label of a garment manufactured in any given country can shed light on that country's people and its culture." With this in mind, the artist, who was born in Rome and had just become a U.S. citizen the morning I interviewed him on a cold, blustery day in New York City, believes his exhibition serves as a geographical-psychological challenge. Precepts of this challenge include:

- look beyond the obvious
- though we have differences, people around the globe put their clothes on pretty much the same way.

The "Labels Project" is a work-in-progress, as Pizzaroni is still searching for garments from a few countries to complete the exhibition. At this moment, he's still hoping to find clothing made in Angola, Benin, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Liberia, Mauritania, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan and Kosovo. You can contact the artist if you have a piece of clothing with a label from one of these countries by visiting his web site and clicking on "About." He is also looking for opportunities to show the work at galleries around the world.

View Slideshow of Luca Pizzaroni's Label Project



The work-in-progress sculpture: one label from every country



Afghanistan



Morocco



Turkey