

For the Best Storytellers: Piccolo Cafe Award - Fabrizio Alessandrini

M. T. (April 13, 2017)



Goosebump-worthy photography: a brand new exhibition space is launched in a Manhattan café frequented by Al Pacino and Uma Thurman. Dedicated to emerging young talents, the “Premio Piccolo Café – Fabrizio Alessandrini” awards offer recipients the opportunity to display their work in New York.

When the experience of photography was different: a camera strap around your neck, a generous dose of patience, carefully composed shots and those entrusted to instinct, and the days of anticipation before being able to evaluate the quality of the result. No notifications on a smartphone, no virtual albums to show off on social media, and digital consumerism still a long ways off. It was another era, you might say.



But no: the emotions that a photograph—a moment in time fixed on paper—can inspire in us today are stronger and more special than ever.

This is the idea behind the launch of the new exhibition/tribute-award “Goose Bumps Makers: The Best Storytellers – Premio Piccolo Café Fabrizio Alessandrini.” The exhibition's goal is to rediscover real photography in real-life spaces while building a bridge to one of the most “in” places in the Big Apple.

At the center of the project are several young Italian talents, discovered through a careful search undertaken by creative director Simone Alessandrini and Piccolo Café founder Michele Casadei Massari. Massari is the heart and soul of the Manhattan eatery that has become a favorite meeting point for stars like Julianne Moore, Al Pacino, Uma Thurman, Susan Sarandon and Daniel Craig.

The Piccolo Café will host the twelve exhibitions of the project, each lasting four weeks. The twelve young talents will present seven photographs apiece, each with its own story.

At the conclusion of the exhibition cycle, the works will be donated to the journalism school of the New York Times, located across the street from the Piccolo Café's 40th Street location. At the end of the year-long project, one of the participating photographers will be selected to receive the “Fabrizio Alessandrini” memorial prize, called “Tiramisù” for this year's first edition.

Why “tiramisù?”

“‘Tiramisù’ means ‘pick-me-up’ in Italian,” Alessandrini and Casadei Massari explain. “We want to give those who merit it the chance be ‘picked up’ and have an exhibition of their work in the most dynamic city in the world at no out-of-pocket cost. The initiative is aimed at non-professional photographers (that is, those who do not have their own studios) and brings the spotlight to images that tell a story, capable of communicating through their wordless art and evoking in the observer the “goosebumps” of the project's title.”

But that's not the only reason for the name tiramisù. New Yorkers go wild for the Italian dessert. In addition, this year's prize will be represented by the unique trophy of an antique camera preserved in clear lacquer—immersed and then “picked up” into its new form!

The “Fabrizio Alessandrini” prize is dedicated to the memory of a man who had photography in his heart and soul, a loving husband and father who passed away in 2002 at the age of only 36, four years after being diagnosed with the neurodegenerative disease ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's Disease)

Holding on tight to life despite everything, Alessandrini was among the first to “digitalize” the experience of ALS, putting Italian sufferers of the disease in contact with others around the world through the web, in a time when the internet was still an unfamiliar landscape for many.

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