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Bacalaitos & Fireworks



Synopsis

New York City has been home to a Puerto Rican population since the mid-1900s, with the most noticeable migration boom beginning in the 1950s. As Puerto Ricans settled in New York over the years they stamped the city with their culture, indelibly altering neighborhoods like the South Bronx, the Lower East Side, Williamsburg, and downtown Brooklyn with rhythm, style, flavor, art, language, and claro, Latino cuisine. Arlene Gottfried, herself a native New Yorker, grew up side by-side with the burgeoning Puerto Rican community, never straying far from its influence whether living in Brooklyn or the LES. In the heart of the barrio, Gottfried began shooting pictures inspired by her bohemian friends and using them as subjects—in apartments, on the streets, and in the park, in times of radiant joy and heart-breaking sorrow. *Bacalaitos & Fireworks* is Gottfried's ode to Nuyorican life and style, from the 70s to the present, shot with an unfailingly lyrical eye and full of vibrant personalities: eccentric bad-boys, white-clad church-goers, an afro-sporting poet in a groovy leisure suit, a gambling grandpa with painted-on eyebrows and a cowboy mustache, and even your grandparents beloved, plastic-covered furniture. This is the New York of broken televisions littered throughout the streets, burned-out abandoned buildings, neighborhood fiestas with pigs roasting on spits, and home to outcasts living in poverty. Gottfried offers first-hand testimony to the pain of alienation, neglect, drug addiction, and ultimately crime, prison, and death. But there is also evidence of the lively and intimate community that helps them overcome these obstacles.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Gottfried is well known for photographing her life in Manhattan since college in the 1970's. Her signature is capturing deeply personal and public moments that build upon an endless diary of the city that is slowly disappearing with time and gentrification." TIME Lightbox "The book is a beautiful look at the Loisaida/Nuyorican culture of the Lower East Side in the 1970s."

Arlene Gottfried was born in Brooklyn and graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She has freelanced for top publications, including The New York Times Magazine, Fortune, LIFE, and The Independent in London. Gottfried has also exhibited at the Leica Gallery in New York and Tokyo and at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., among others. Gottfried is the author of three books: Sometimes Overwhelming (2008) and Midnight (2003), both published by powerHouse Books, and The Eternal Light (Dewi Lewis Publishing, 1999). Gottfried lives and works in New York City.

I found after just looking at the cover I was looking for pictures of my younger self. The images are vividly honest. Although they reminded me of the poorer sights of my childhood, they captured the innocence of the time. That is, many of us who grew up in NYC around this time and in the neighborhoods pictured here would say, "I didn't know how broke we were." We were too busy being kids despite the poverty or the seemingly strange characters we grew up around. Ms. Gottfried is so right. She celebrates the color and pulse that is NYC! It's a must have for any artist in the performing arts to have as a resource!

Arlene captured incredible moments during a very hard time for Puerto Ricans during the diaspora.
RIP Arlene Gottfried

Arlene Gottfried is a fantastic photographer and documentarian.

Fabulous!! She really captured so many moments in time that only a native New Yorker would fully understand.

Ugly and humiliating portrayal

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