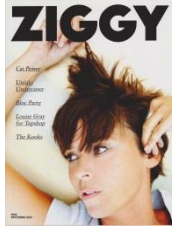
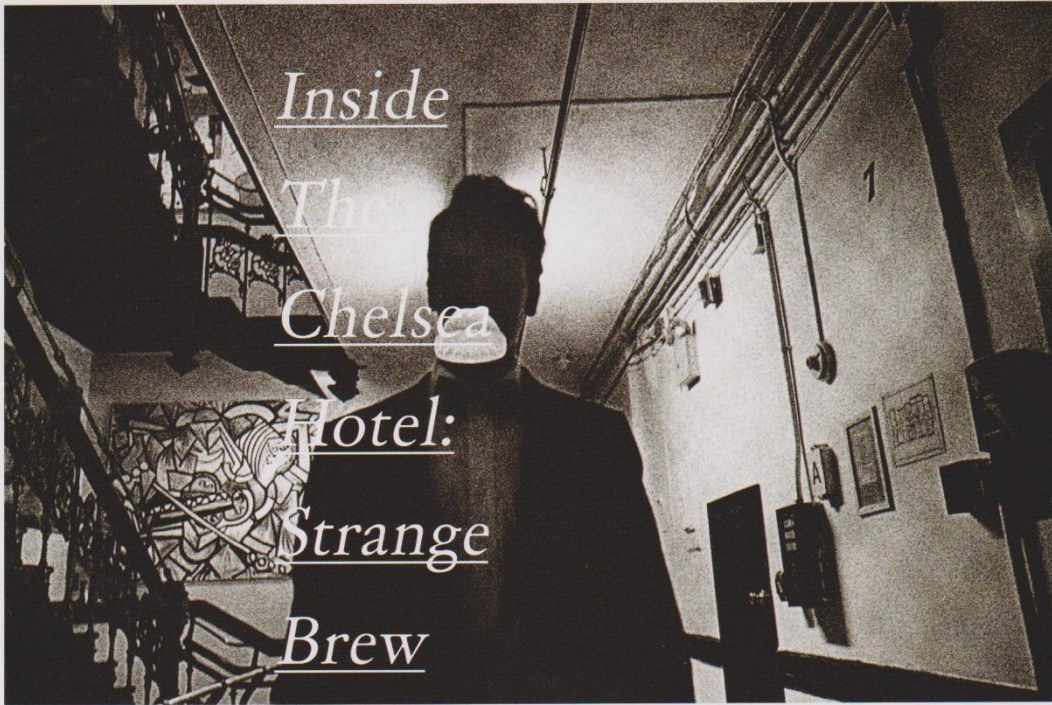


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CULTURE COUNTER



New York City's Chelsea Hotel has been the stuff of myths and also, of quite some magic and magnetism. Within its hallowed halls and corridors have literary, artistic, cinematic and musical legends like William S. Burroughs, Bob Dylan, Edith Piaf, Jack Kerouac and Jasper Johns wandered, while its rooms were once inhabited by the likes of Dennis Hopper, Patti Smith, Joni Mitchell, amongst a profusion of other such icons. Its starry occupants aside, the establishment itself has worked its way into the fabric of pop culture - Leonard Cohen, Arthur Miller and Ryan Adams have penned odes to it, Andy Warhol filmed its interiors for 1966's *Chelsea Girls* - and it remains a site rocked by both creativity (it's where Arthur C. Clarke wrote *2001: A Space Odyssey*) and scandal (also where Sid Vicious allegedly stabbed Nancy Spungen).

So what is it that's made the 120-year-old Chelsea Hotel so much a haven for artists and fertile ground

for artistry? Photographer Julia Calfee has got it partly figured: "The Chelsea Hotel is a place where excess is welcome, where the psyche can be annihilated or resurrected. It has a magical potential for transformation, whether it be rebirth or destruction." And Julia should know what she's talking about, as she made the Chelsea her home from 2003 to 2008 (whereupon the hotel was sold), got to sample its "irresistible magnetic force" in person, and photograph its spaces and inhabitants, character and atmosphere.

Calfee's now put those photos together in a series called *Inside The Chelsea Hotel* - 81 images that serve as a visual exploration into the people who've chosen to make the Chelsea their home, as well as the ghosts that still haunt its shadows. "Evoking atmospheres rather than describing situations, and working in accordance with the anarchistic mood of the hotel, I avoided any

formal, posed portraits and the use of tripods or artificial lighting," says Julia about her series, and duly enough, her own personal experience of the place means her photographs capture the spontaneity, eccentricity, creativity and intimacy that made the establishment what it was.

And as her photographer arrives on our island with a showcase of these photos from *Inside The Chelsea Hotel*, know that every glimpse of these images will ensure that the legend of the Chelsea lives on.

INSIDE THE CHELSEA HOTEL WILL BE EXHIBITED FROM 12 SEPTEMBER TO 12 OCTOBER AT ART PLURAL GALLERY, 38 ARMENIAN STREET, ARTPLURALGALLERY.COM.

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