

# CORSAIR

## Magic of Venice through photos

By Marvin Farber  
Corsair Staff Writer

Every week thousands of locals and tourists stroll the boardwalk on Venice Beach. They enjoy the avant-garde, the colorful street performers, the myriad vendors, the muscular gymnasts, the diversity of people, and the beauty of the ocean. But what they feel and see is only what their eyes observe.

In contrast, Marc Lo Porto, in his recently published "Fantasy Land," searches beyond the limits of the naked eye to fathom the inner and outer core of this unconventional, world-famous beach community. He focuses his camera and uses his pen to unravel the spirit and soul of the people of Venice Beach. Lo Porto's "Fantasy Land" embodies an intense photographic journal invigorated with the intimate feelings and thoughts as spoken directly by real-life characters in the book.

The visual messages start with the symbolic humor of the book's first photograph, which cleverly takes the eye upside down to note its prophetic caption "the next time you see Venice, you will look at it." The photos that follow are dazzling studies of diverse people who in their unique, individual way express the body and mind of Venice Beach.

Lo Porto ends his photo journal with a stunning sunset over the Venice Pier hauntingly covered by a continuous flow of alto-cumulus clouds over quiet ocean waters.

When Lo Porto, now age 24, journeyed from his family home in Paris four years ago to attend Santa Monica College, he opted to live in Venice near the ocean waters he loves to surf. He first started to create "Fantasy Land" while a student in Rod Lyons' News Photography class at SMC. Lo Porto has since received his Associate of Arts Degree in Journalism, after which, he subsequently completed and published "Fantasy Land." He contigugs to take classes at SMC.

To fulfill his quest, Lo Porto had made friends with 27 colorful Venice people who live and work along the beach. They are his subjects. They include street performers, artists, a stripper, the homeless, an engineer, a cop, rock singers, rappers, athletes, the elderly, a psychic. They are Venice "regulars" crossing all racial and religious lines.

Lo Porto won the trust of each individual which permitted him to ask for responses to deeply personal questions regarding self-image, goals, dreams, religious beliefs, philosophies of life, drugs, love, human nature, opinions on our society, daily life.

Lo Porto sensitively records the actual words of each individual whose accompanying photograph vividly tells a visual story. The common thread connecting each character is the notion that Venice Beach is an eclectic community in which each person is free to live his own lifestyle and fantasy.

Not only is Lo Porto the innovative photographer and author of "Fantasy Land," but he is also publisher of his



Corsair photo by Jennifer Shim

**Young Author** — Marc Lo Porto wrote and published "Fantasy Land."

book. Determined to see his book in print, Lo Porto systematically researched each step of the publishing process. This included copyright procedures, designing pagelayouts, raising funds, and ultimately the organization of his own publishing company. He succeeded in having the book printed in France.

"Fantasy Land" is a visually exciting book from a multi-talented young photojournalist. And finally, for the piece de resistance, don't miss Lo Porto's glittering self-portrait photograph following his closing acknowledgements.

The book is presently available at many independent bookstores in the L.A. area.