

# SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

## *Hustlers*

Philip-Lorca diCorcia

**Sprüth Magers Berlin may 02 - june 21 2014**

[Philip-Lorca diCorcia will discuss his work with the writer Ulf Erdmann Ziegler at the American Academy, Berlin, 7:30 pm, 30 April 2014.](#)

In the early 1990s, Philip-Lorca diCorcia made five trips to Los Angeles, where he drove along Santa Monica Boulevard and nearby neighborhoods on the lookout for male prostitutes. The artist would then strike a deal: he offered each prostitute his normal rate, asking only to take their photograph. The resulting series, today called *Hustlers*, was both a breakthrough for the artist and a key episode in the now familiar mode of photography that occupies a semi-fictional space between street and stage. The historical specificity and taxonomic impulse of the project are declared in the title of each photograph: the subject is identified by his name, age, place of birth, and the money he received for agreeing to pose.

Philip-Lorca diCorcia predetermined each setting, posing his assistant to prepare the lighting and set up before returning with a man to make the final photograph. Hotel rooms, parking lots, curbs, cafes, backyards and bus stops all offer potential backdrops for the pictures. *Chris, 28 years old, Los Angeles, California, \$30* (1990-92), shows a man seated on an elevated motel walkway, the metal guardrails receding into space, his arms reaching up to clutch the highest rail. He might be lost in thought, yet the picture also conveys a sense of entrapment. *Tim, 27 years old, Orange County, California, \$30* (1990-92) depicts a shirtless man bathed in warm light, gingerly approaching an open door as if he couldn't quite tell whether it offered an escape or an alluring dead-end. The subjects convey a range of emotions or attitudes, from dignified beauty to desperation, lending poignancy to the elegiac mood of the series.

Conceived amid the AIDS crisis and during the 'culture wars' of the early 1990s, an era fuelled by the censorious rhetoric of figures such as Jesse Helms, the photographs come out of a particularly tense historical moment. In 1989, diCorcia received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and this money allowed him to embark on the *Hustlers* project, not to mention pay the prostitutes in the photographs. "None of these guys were free", writes diCorcia in a new Steidl book to mark the twentieth anniversary of the first exhibition of *Hustlers*, at MoMA, in 1993. "They charged for their services, for a faked sense of what passes for intimacy in the realm they left behind. They barely found a place to sleep or get high afterwards, but they accomplished the most sublime trade, their artistry: Nothing for Nothing. That's what was so perfect for me. It summed it all up."

Philip-Lorca diCorcia (born 1951, Hartford, USA) studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and at Yale University, where he is currently a Senior Critic. He was awarded the Artist Fellowship of the National Endowment for the Arts three times, as well as the Infinity Award for Applied Photography by the International Center of Photography and the Eisenstaedt Award by Life Magazine. Solo exhibitions include the Hepworth Wakefield (2014), Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt and Museum de Pont, Tilburg (both 2013), the LACMA, Los Angeles (2008), the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2007), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (1997), and MoMA, New York (1993). His series *A Storybook Life* was exhibited at

Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, before travelling to the Centre National de la Photographie, Paris; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; Magazin 3, Stockholm Konsthall; Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, and the Centro de Artes Visuais, Coimbra, Portugal, in 2003/2004.

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Sprüth Magers Berlin is concurrently presenting the solo exhibitions *Frankfurter Block. Arbeiten am Hohlkasten 1981 2014* by Reinhard Mucha and *Eine Ansammlung von Gegenständen* by Peter Fischli & David Weiss.

For more information and press enquiries, please contact Sina Deister ([sd@spruethmagers.com](mailto:sd@spruethmagers.com)).

Opening Times of the Gallery: Tue Sat, 11 am 6 pm