

Philip-Lorca DiCorcia at the ICA

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Philip Lorca Dicorcia, Mario, 1978

Finally, a major photography show has arrived in Boston. There are many aspects of the show that I could talk about considering this is DiCorcia's largest solo show to date, but there are two aspects that are the most important to me. Firstly, why DiCorcia is such an important figure in contemporary photography, maybe more than similar photographers (Jeff Wall and Gregory Crewdson) and also how this exhibit functions in the Boston art scene.

What draws me to DiCorcia's work so is the kinship between the act of photography as a document while also being a constructed image. This balance comes through in the photographs as DiCorcia is extremely successful at projecting his ideas onto his subjects. In many ways his work does not utilize the subject as the center issue of the picture, but rather focuses on the psychology of our own ideas about the subjects and the myths they hold. For example, his series *Hustlers* is not solely about the men that DiCorcia photographs but rather about the idea of fantasy in our society. After all he did make the images in Hollywood.



Philip Lorca DiCorcia, 'Ike Cole, 38 years old, Los Angeles, CA, \$25'

Obviously this push and pull of subtle cinematic staging has become worn-out in contemporary photography. Alec Soth wrote a little about this subject this week. Nonetheless, I feel that DiCorcia with some restraint in the amount that he contrives his images compared to other photographers working in similar ways comments on how photographs function in our society as puzzle pieces rather answers.

For a new museum such as Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art the Philip-Lorca DiCorcia show represents it's ability to put together a major show on a very large scale. It also represents as Greg Cook stated in his review for the Boston Phoenix, a show that "is a safe, easy choice for the new ICA's first big artist retrospective." It is interesting that the Edward Hopper show is also in town at the same time at the MFA as not only do both artists share many similarities but they also represent two art museums putting together very large survey exhibitions. Are art museums unwilling to take risks by putting together exhibitions that challenge our ideas in sacrifice to sell more tickets.