

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1986

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 2
October 9, 1986 - January 6, 1987

The second exhibition in the NEW PHOTOGRAPHY series, supported by a grant from Springs Industries, Inc., features color photographs by Philip Lorca diCorcia, Mary Frey, and David T. Hanson. The series was introduced last year with an exhibition of works by Zeke Berman, Antonio Mendoza, Judith Ross, and Michael Spano. "Each year New Photography will show three or four photographers whose work--individually and collectively--seems to represent the most interesting achievements of recent photography," said John Szarkowski, director of the Department of Photography.

Mr. Szarkowski writes about NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 2, "Documentary photography of the classic mode depends on the assumption that appearance is meaningful and that the relationship between the look of a scene and its significance is straightforward, even if not always easily understood....In recent years many younger photographers have used the documentary style in ways that challenge this assumption...."

Both Mary Frey and Philip Lorca diCorcia explore the uneasy relationship between documentary photography and narrative. Frey combines ordinary domestic scenes from middle-class life with brief texts similar to the language of popular romance novels. She alters the traditional relationship between caption and photograph by choosing texts that are stylistically dissonant. Ms. Frey calls her photographs "Real Life Dramas." Currently an assistant professor of photography at the Hartford Art School, Frey received an M.F.A. degree from Yale University in 1979, and is a former recipient of fellowships from the NEA and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

- more -

Like Frey, diCorcia explores photography's equivocal relationship to narrative. "His pictures invite us to consider them in theatrical terms, in part because of his use of directed light and subtly exotic color, and in part because (they) remind us of frozen frames from modern films. They invite us to wonder about the facts that lie outside the picture's edges or that are invisible from our vantage point," writes Szarkowski. DiCorcia is represented in the exhibition by work produced in Italy, Greece, and the United States between 1979 and 1986. His photographs often evoke a sense of extreme isolation, consisting of scenes that seem lifted without explanation from the flow of unfamiliar stories. A graduate of Yale University, diCorcia has been making photographs since the seventies when he studied at the Hartford Art School and the Boston Museum School of Art. He moved to New York from Los Angeles in 1982 and has been working professionally in photography since then. DiCorcia has received prizes from Yale University and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and an NEA fellowship.

David Hanson's extended documentation of the town, mine, and power plant of Colstrip, Montana, is closer in its motives to the traditional documentary photography. His work presents Colstrip from the ground in one series, and from the air in another, revealing in the latter the "terrible beauty of an unfamiliar and inhuman landscape," according to Szarkowski. Hanson sees his work as a meditation on a ravished landscape, and on the meaning of "the machine in the garden." A native of Montana, he photographed its landscape for several years before he became intrigued by the Colstrip site. Hanson was a technical assistant to Minor White in the seventies and a student at the Center for Photographic Studies in Louisville, Kentucky. He received his M.F.A. degree in 1983 at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he has continued as

an instructor. He is a former recipient of fellowships from the Camargo Foundation and from the Guggenheim Foundation.

Although NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 2 is unique in that it is supported as an ongoing series, it is but one of many important programs that Springs Industries has made possible since 1978. That year the company expressed its commitment to The Museum of Modern Art's exhibitions and publications to enhance the public's appreciation of the art of photography. Since that time Springs Industries has supported THE WORK OF ATGET series of exhibitions and accompanying publications, as well as exhibitions such as ANSEL ADAMS AND THE WEST, JERRY DANTZIC, FRANK GOHLKE, and AMERICAN LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY.

* * *

No. 89

For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.