

The Museum of Modern Art

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART LAUNCHES NEW SERIES DEVOTED TO CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHERS

A new series of monographs devoted to the work of international photographers in mid-career, published by The Museum of Modern Art, launches this fall with volumes devoted to the work of *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* and *Judith Joy Ross*. In **CONTEMPORARIES: A PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES**, each book surveys a decade or more of exceptional achievement in some fifty carefully selected and meticulously reproduced plates. An interpretive essay by a curator or critic introduces the work, and a chronology and bibliography complete each book.

CONTEMPORARIES marks the first time that the Museum has issued a series of photography books independent of its exhibitions. "Temporary exhibitions and the permanent display of works from the collection are essential to our program, but books also play a vital role, and they always have," states Peter Galassi, Chief Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art. "Beginning with Walker Evans' *American Photographs* in 1938 and with early monographs devoted to Edward Weston, Paul Strand, and Henri Cartier-Bresson in the mid 1940s, the Museum has taken a leading role in publishing the best contemporary photography from around the world. The goal of **CONTEMPORARIES** is to make important work widely available while it is still fresh," says Mr. Galassi.

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The series is an outgrowth of the Museum's annual **NEW PHOTOGRAPHY** series of exhibitions. Since 1985, with the generous support of Springs Industries, Inc., the series has presented the work of forty-two photographers from nine countries.

The first two monographs in the **CONTEMPORARIES** series, *Philip-Lorca diCorcia* and *Judith Joy Ross*, are now available.

Philip-Lorca diCorcia, by Peter Galassi, Chief Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art

In the late 1970s Philip-Lorca diCorcia created a new style of photography that operates in the gap between documentary realism and the hyped-up fictions of popular culture. His elegant color photographs present imagined scenarios of everyday life, which evoke the drama of the movies.

"By tampering in just the right way. . . diCorcia found that he could invest his pictures with the enchantment of fantasy without relinquishing the power of fact," states Peter Galassi in the introductory essay. "If he tipped the delicate balance the picture could easily become absurd or banal, but if he maintained it his pictures could possess both the allure of commercial gloss and the force of the real."

Through fifty-five photographs in full color, the eighty-page book surveys diCorcia's work from the domestic scenes of the 1970s and 1980s to recent street tableaux made in New York, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Naples. Also featured is an extensive series of photographs made in the early 1990s, on a strip of Santa Monica Boulevard in Hollywood.

Born in 1953 in Hartford, Connecticut, diCorcia began to make photographs in the early 1970s and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography from Yale University in 1979. His work has been exhibited widely in the United States, Europe, and Japan.

The Museum of Modern Art has presented diCorcia's work in the exhibitions **NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 2** (1987), **PLEASURES AND TERRORS OF DOMESTIC COMFORT** (1991), **MORE THAN ONE PHOTOGRAPHY: WORKS SINCE 1980 FROM THE COLLECTION** (1992), and **PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA: STRANGERS** (1993).

Judith Joy Ross, by Susan Kismaric, Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art

Working within the craft standards of traditional photography, Judith Joy Ross has created an original and deeply moving body of work. This eighty-page book surveys her extensive body of portraiture, all of it made with

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an old-fashioned eight-by-ten-inch view camera mounted on a tripod. The fifty-two duotone plates include selections from her portraits of visitors

to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and of members of the United States Congress -- pictures that answered the need of a private individual to come to terms with the great forces of history and politics. More than half of the plates, however, are devoted to Ross' pictures of children, whom she photographs with uncommon insight and affection.

"The fidelity of Judith Ross's descriptions of her subjects -- to the surfaces of their bodies and to their postures and gestures -- is rendered through the careful drawing of the eight-by-ten-inch negative," states Kismaric in the introductory essay. "In combination with her acute description of her subject's psychological state, and her choice to photograph each person floating freely in an indeterminate, often unspecified space, Ross portrays nothing less than our common existential condition -- that often terrible psychological sense of being alone in an indifferent world, and having to create meaning for our lives."

Judith Joy Ross was born in 1946 in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, and earned a Master of Arts from the Institute of Design, Chicago (1970), under the tutelage of Aaron Siskind. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States, notably in a one-person exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (1993).

The Museum of Modern Art has presented Ross' work in the exhibitions NEW PHOTOGRAPHY (1985), RECENT ACQUISITIONS: PHOTOGRAPHY (1987), MORE THAN ONE PHOTOGRAPHY: WORKS SINCE 1980 FROM THE COLLECTION (1992), and AMERICAN POLITICIANS: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1843 TO 1993 (1995).

CONTEMPORARIES: A PHOTOGRAPHY SERIES is distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. The paperbound editions, \$19.95, are available in The MoMA Book Store. The series is made possible in part by a generous grant from CameraWorks, Inc. Additional support has been provided by the John Szarkowski Publications Fund, The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art, and individual donors.

The American Federation of Arts is organizing for national tour an exhibition based on each monograph in the **CONTEMPORARIES** series.

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