



P.L. diCorcia

*In this
photographer's
world, seeing is
deceiving.*

If Philip-Lorca diCorcia's pictures seem to tell a story, he isn't giving away the ending. "I don't want to pin it down," says the New York photographer, whose work has been shown at the Museum of Modern Art. DiCorcia thinks that to reveal too much to his audience would be a mistake in strategy. "Other people's conceptions," he says, "might be better than mine."

DiCorcia's photographs certainly invite the viewer's speculation, because the events they depict are familiar to us all. His characters greet the family dog, wait for the subway, paint a room. DiCorcia avows a fascination with stock photography, in which categories of human activity are illustrated in a clear, guileless way: Things are exactly what they appear to be. But beneath the comfortable surfaces of diCorcia's genre scenes, something is awry. The signals are subtle, conveyed by gesture—an awkward turn of the wrist, an unnatural stiffness—and by an odd, anomalous light.

To achieve that light in a picture of a man looking for a snack in his refrigerator, diCorcia placed a flash inside the appliance. The strange and disproportionate glow it creates tells us that the man's inspection is more than a halfhearted search for the Velveeta. It's as if the character is confronting the meager contents of his life.

Magazine art directors looking for editorial photography with that kind of resonance have latched onto diCorcia's work; it's appeared in *Esquire*, *Connoisseur*, and elsewhere. "I'm not willing to have the picture end at the appreciation of how well it's done," says diCorcia—an attitude that betrays the soul of an artist.

—RUSSELL HART

Mario, 1979

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PHILIP-LORCA DICORCIA







*“I often have
a concept I
want to
project onto
somebody.”*

*“I certainly
hope I’m not
making people
feel too
comfortable.”*



