



Philip-Lorca diCorcia, *W* (March 2000), #8,  
2000 Courtesy David Zwirner Gallery

Philip-Lorca diCorcia, *Eleven*,  
Freedman Damiani, Bologna 2011

DICORCIA – The forlorn glare of Isabelle Huppert, French cinema’s mistress of audacity, on a deserted street in nighttime Paris; Nadja Auermann, dressed to convey power, in a Bangkok conference room, judging a table of Thai women clad in little more than star-shaped pasties; two ladies who lunch, in pearls and bouclé, with a much younger man, at Windows on the World, the fabled eatery atop the late World Trade Center. These moments stand out, among many, in the body of work the photographer Philip-Lorca diCorcia created for *W* magazine between 1997 and 2008, an opulent and abstruse visual journey that takes the viewer from Cairo to Los Angeles, with stops in Paris, St. Petersburg and Havana, among other locales. Voyeuristic, claustrophobic and character-driven, the pictures have in common a film-like quality, underscored by the photographer’s use of hyper-saturated colors and atmospheric lighting.

DiCorcia’s highly produced and meticulously composed narratives also epitomize the bold imagery featured in *W* during the tenure (1993–2010) of creative director Dennis Freedman. Considered one of the great creative directors of his generation, Freedman, who was once quoted as saying “I believe that a picture is a sacred thing,” elevated the standing of fashion photography with his formidable eye for talent, inimitable taste and

carefully cultivated work relationships with some of the best names in the industry – names like Teller, Sorrenti, McDean, and Klein. He encouraged these photographers to rethink the possibilities of commercial photography and to explore ideas – aesthetic, emotional and psychological – in the pages of his magazine. Sensing early-on the increasing overlap between art, fashion and commerce that happened in the nineties and two thousands, Freedman also invited major visual artists to collaborate with the publication. The resulting editorials proved that fashion was as much about mood, place and identity as it was about clothes, and introduced the dark notions of danger, uncertainty and grit into the sunny world of American fashion magazines. Unbound artistic experimentation, however, comes at a price, and Freedman oversaw some of the most expensive shoots in magazine history; in 2004, for instance, Bruce Weber photographed haute couture on real-life elephants. With the recession of the late 2000s, the rules of the game changed and the golden era of *W* under Freedman came to a quiet end. That special moment in American magazine publishing is duly captured, however, in *Eleven*, a new book that unites diCorcia’s eleven portfolios for the magazine. It is a fitting first release from Freedman Damiani, the joint imprint Freedman started with the Italian publishing house after leaving *W*.