

BLACK & WHITE MAGAZINE FOR COLLECTORS OF FINE PHOTOGRAPHY

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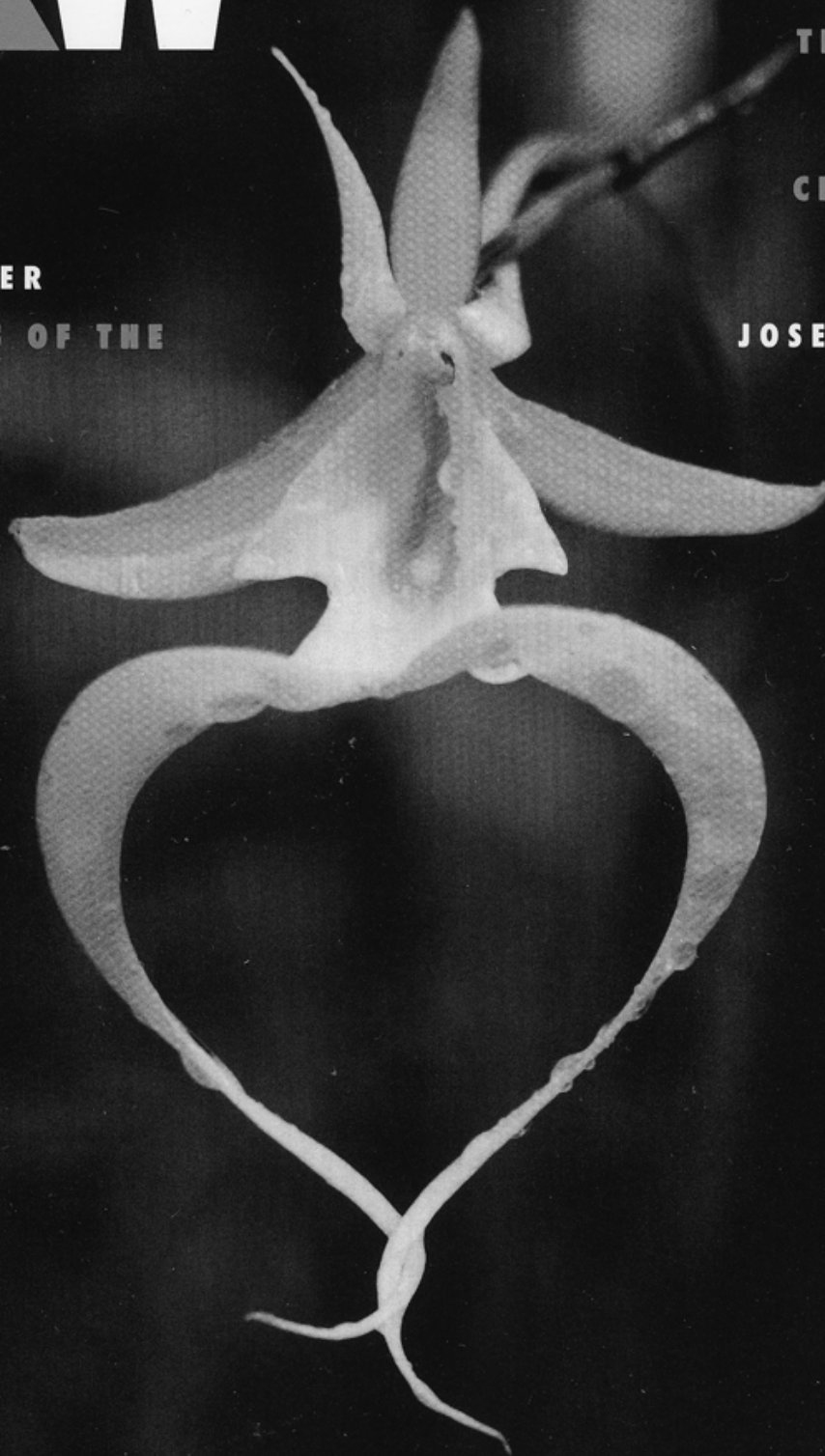
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TIME TRAVELLER

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CELEBRATION OF
SENSUALITY

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LATIN MAGIC

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MERMAID'S BALLET - 2000



MERMAID'S BALLET - SIREN'S PLAYMATE - 2000



SIREN'S OLÉ—2000

As a photographer and photojournalist, he was on the hunt for the dream's destination, to escape the pressures of his job, his wife and stressful assignments. He was attracted by the siren's call of the relaxing weightlessness and the magnificent sea creatures he encountered during the floating excursions. But until that day, he had never had the opportunity to experience his two passions—diving and photography.

When he was in the water, he felt a sense of freedom and joy that he had never experienced before. He was able to capture the beauty of the underwater world in a way that he had never been able to do before. He was able to convey my love of the ocean, I

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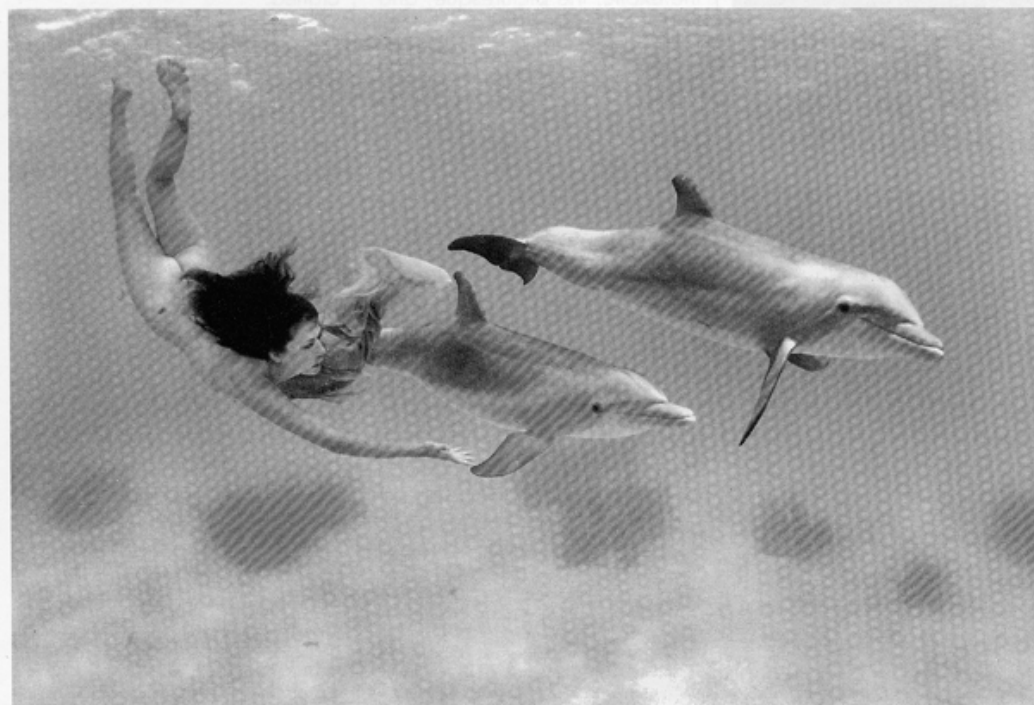
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GODDESS'S SEDUCTION—2000

and a momentary, the mystery
of the machine, and a glowing
for the dramatic, the expansive,
highly-mysterious, and marvelous



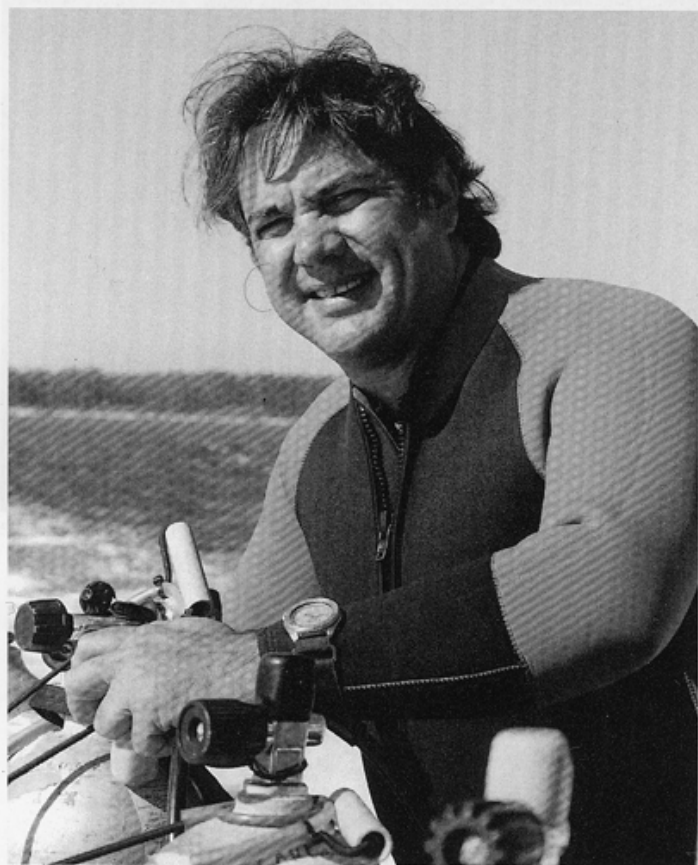
MERMAID'S PLAY—2000

And with the haunting, "distant," of the daily breeding hillocks.

Walter, but here it's a local
of Ariel Adams and Edward
as a landscape in the grand
Walter might be categorized
photographic images.
mystical, and utterly singular
inward eye, and creating a
a vast range of landscapes in
he travels the world, applying
graphy as a language. Today
Walter began shooting travel photo-
documentary," largely self-financing
note, and the interview to the
the origins to the detour,
"the records to the review,
peter," Peter Walter likes to say.

TG

ESSICK



About five years ago, while snorkeling off the Florida Keys, Florida-based photographer Todd Gary Essick had an epiphany. As a busy freelance photojournalist, he would often head for the ocean's depths to escape the pressures of tight deadlines and stressful assignments. He was attracted by the serene quiet, the relaxing weightlessness, and the magnificent sea creatures he encountered during these diving excursions. But until that day, it just hadn't occurred to him to combine his two passions—diving and photography.

"One of my assignments was to photograph the dolphin swim programs throughout the Florida Keys," Essick says. "I'd always had an interest in the underwater world when I was growing up—Jacques Cousteau and all of that. One day I was out snorkeling with the dolphins, and looking at these wonderful creatures, thinking about how there's something within us wanting to connect with these animals. You make eye contact with them and wonder what they're thinking. I decided I wanted to photograph this essence. I wanted to convey my love of the ocean. I

think there's an innate feeling in all of us, a part of our DNA, that says: 'this is home.'"

Essick had long been a fan of the work of David Doubilet, one of the world's premier underwater photographers. As Essick discussed his dream with friends, someone mentioned the underwater nudes by Howard Schatz—and it all coalesced. "I thought a beautiful nude woman, interacting with the dolphins, would make a great image. I thought this would convey how we are all part of the same fabric—the dolphins are so beautiful, as is the human form."

It took five years for Essick to realize his project, which he calls *Goddesses, Sirens, and Mermaids*. At first, the logistics seemed overwhelming. He needed models who were comfortable working 30 feet under water. And he needed dolphins, dolphin handlers, safety divers, an assistant, and a boat and captain to get them all to where they needed to be. "On top of all this, I needed the weather to cooperate," Essick sighs. "On my first shoot in the Bahamas, I had all these people out at sea and ready to go, and for the first two days we were blown out by the weather. It really began taking a toll on me, both financially and emotionally. I was beginning to realize why I had never seen any pictures like these."

On the last scheduled day, the weather turned beautiful and Essick got the photograph he had seen in his mind's eye, which he calls *Mermaid's Ballet*. "It didn't stand out as an incredible shot when I took it," he remembers. "Things happen so fast you almost

forget what you've taken. I direct my models to some extent before we go into the water. But I also tell them that they've got to think in three dimensions, and if they see something really cool, then go for it—I'll pick it up. Believe me, with my background as a photojournalist I'm trained to capture the moment.

"I'm convinced the dolphins play a big role in our collaboration. They're used to being around humans. They don't have any fear of us. They want to get close and play and be touched. The longer we work together, the closer and more curious they become."

"It seems I never get the picture I want," Essick laughs. "I'm always striving for something better. There are so many intangibles. I'm working under water with moving models interacting with these large wild animals. Anything can happen. I go in hoping all the elements come together. I can only set the stage. I can't predict what I'm going to get. I think every photographer has a vision of what they want. It's only when the planets line up just right that you get your dream picture." —David Best

■ PRINT INFORMATION

Prints are archival gelatin silver, signed and dated, and limited to editions of 10 of each size. Sizes offered are 11x14, 16x20, and 20x24 inches. Prices start at \$500.

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