Obituary - David Seidner

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One of fashion's leading photographers, **David Seidner**, 42, died of AIDS June 6. Born in LA and bred in Paris, Seidner shot his first magazine cover at 19, and quickly developed a highly prized portfolio that combined a cutting-edge fashion style with high art. Borrowing from romantic painters like John Singer Sargent, Seidner infused his images for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vanity Fair* with a distinctive dreaminess and wit.

Colleagues recall Seidner as a perfectionist who nearly melted fashion models under hot lights while orchestrating every detail. "David was both brilliant and fastidious," says Seidner's partner, Daniel Wenger. "Before he died, he made sure that photos with even slight imperfections were destroyed." Yet this aesthete whose taste trended toward Gucci and French philosophy could get down and dirty about AIDS. He was an advocate of street activism and community-based research and a critic of the Red Ribbon, against which he once railed at mem-orable length in *The New Yorker*.

Moving to Miami shortly before his death, Seidner continued his decade-long advertising contract with designer Bill Blass, and won *Life*'s Eisenstaedt Award for Portrait Photography. His last project, a series of orchid portraits that was also a coy homage to Robert Mapplethorpe, appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* in April. "It's only natural that after years in Paris photographing dresses, I'd find myself in Florida photo-graphing orchids," Seidner said. "They're nature's couture."

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