



COURTESY OF LEVINE/LEAVITT

Sara, Icelandair.

Service with a Smile

For his new project, photographer BRIAN FINKE traveled the world to shoot an evolving modern icon: the flight attendant.



Airborne Clockwise from top left: *Harpa, Icelandair; Tiger Airways; Kate, Tiger Airways; Azriza, Lily, and Stella, AirAsia.*

RECORDING THE DAILY LIFE of mostly female flight attendants around the world—flying British Airways, AirAsia, Icelandair, JAL, and JetBlue, among many others—photographer Brian Finke has made an arresting portrait of contemporary travel. These are documentary shots, taken in airports and on planes, during training sessions and in hotels, but they have the immediate impact of fashion images: stylized, glossy, faintly erotic. Which isn't all that surprising when you think about it. Even now—decades after air travel's glorious 60's heyday—flight attendants represent a certain glamour, theatrical femininity: the uniforms, the makeup, the panto-

mimed safety procedures. Indeed, what interests Finke is the very persistence of that glamour in challenging conditions. A post-9/11 security environment. The dingy gray-and-beige interiors. And through it all, striding down the catwalk-cum-center aisle with a reassuring smile, the flight attendant. There is strangeness and comedy lurking in these images, and affecting humanity also—a glimpse of real women, working hard to make it look easy. —LUKE BARR +

A collection of Brian Finke's photography, Flight Attendants, is out now from powerHouse Books.