

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# NANCY BURSON

## THE HAND OF GOD

September 7 – October 7, 2006

*Opening reception:*  
 Thursday, September 7, 2006  
 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

ClampArt is pleased to announce "Nancy Burson: The Hand of God"—the inaugural show in the gallery's new, larger, ground floor space at 521-531 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street. This is the artist's first formal exhibition since her nomination in 2002 for "Best Solo Museum Show" by the American Art Critics Association for her retrospective, "Seeing and Believing," and her first exhibition in a commercial space in nearly a decade. Burson has devoted the past several years to public art projects with such organizations as Creative Time, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Deutsche Bank.

Burson is best known for pioneering new technology in digital photography that has allowed her to create composite portraits which challenge notions of visual perception and identity. The software that Burson developed with scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the late 1970s also has had practical applications, eventually enabling law enforcement officials to locate missing children and adults, for example. More recently, Burson has received significant press for her Human Race Machine, which allows viewers to see themselves as a different ethnicity. Her newest work revisits the discourse of visual credulity—specifically focusing on what Burson refers to as "God Consciousness." Through her artwork, she is attempting to materialize presumed intangibles such as spiritual phenomena and the supernatural while realigning the audience's expectations of the objective camera.

In her celebrated series first exhibited in 2002, "Guys Who Look Like Jesus," Burson presents a grouping of ethnically diverse models who bear a resemblance to the icon. In this series, as well as in the companion piece, "Women Who Look Like Mary," the artist bookends the photographs with both a composite portrait of these likenesses plus another amalgam of art historical representations of the religious figure. Burson takes viewers' expectation of the appearance of the religious icon and juxtaposes it with the images of her photographic subjects.

In other photographs Burson depicts such spiritual phenomena as healing agents and energy fields. In one suite of large-format Polaroid prints collectively titled "The Vibhuti Series" (pictured at right) the artist photographed sacred healing ash which is known to fall from the hands of Indian avatars such as the infamous Sathya Sai Baba. For a photograph titled "Archangel Michael," Burson once



again collaborated with members of the scientific community to use new technology that pushes the limits of visual perception. With a gas discharge visualization camera she captured the energy fields surrounding a small, plastic figurine of the saint. And in another group of artworks, with simple point-and-shoot cameras, the artist explored the documentation of "orbs," described by geophysical researcher, John Burke, as: ". . .a form of plasma energy similar to lightning. . .(i)n a sense. . .electrified air." Photographed in locations around the world, a bulk of Burson's "orb" images were shot in crop circles in England over several years.

The opening of the show additionally marks the debut of Burson's second book of writing titled "Lineage." It is the artist's fascinating account of the miraculous phenomena appearing in her New York home during the past year which has been witnessed by members of both the arts and spiritual communities.

For more information and images, please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see [www.clampart.com](http://www.clampart.com). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Top: ©Nancy Burson, *Untitled (Vibhuti)*, 2005, Unique Polaroid print, 24 x 20 inches.

Bottom: ©Nancy Burson, *Untitled (Vibhuti)*, 2005, Unique Polaroid print, 24 x 20 inches.