

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEADSHOTS CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITURE

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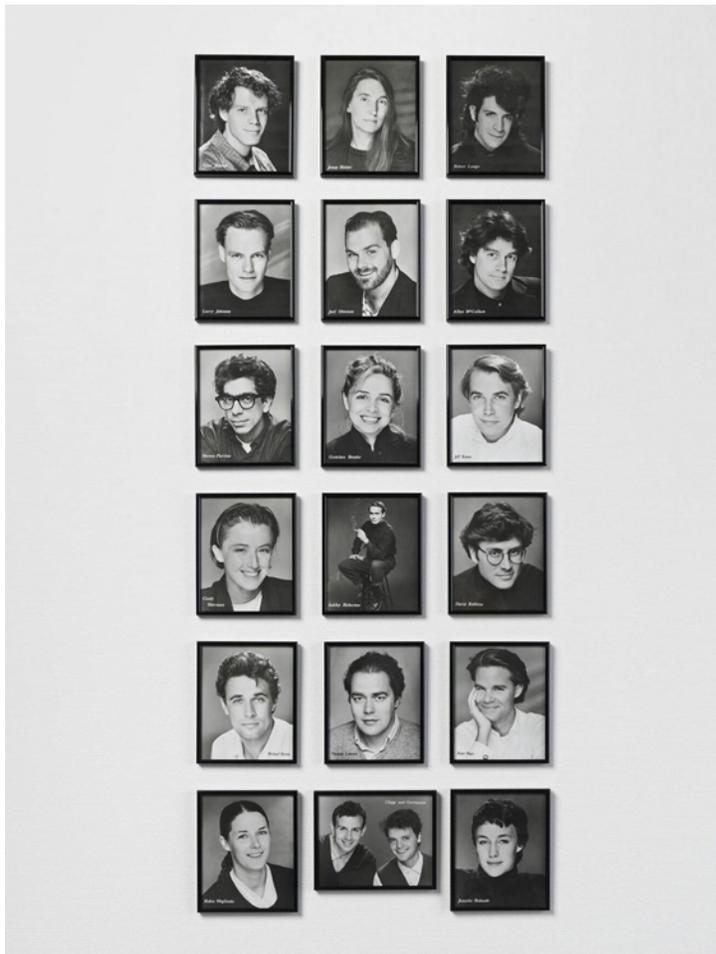
ClampArt is pleased to present “Headshots: Contemporary Photographic Portraiture,” a group exhibition including artworks by Diane Arbus, David Armstrong, Nancy Burson, Mathew Cerletty, Jen Davis, Eve Fowler, Nan Goldin, Kris Graves, Jill Greenberg, Rachel Hulin, Bill Jacobson, Andrea Modica, Yasumasa Morimura, Mark Morrisroe, Vik Muniz, Catherine Opie, Louie Palu, Jack Pierson, David Robbins, Andres Serrano, Pedro Slim, and Frank Yamrus, among others.

Recently, a familiar, iconic artwork from the 1980s by David Robbins titled “Talent” was on display in the new Whitney Museum in New York City (see page two of the press release for an illustration). In 1986, Robbins hired a well-established headshot photographer to shoot portraits of eighteen important visual artists of the day (from Jeff Koons to Cindy Sherman to Robert Longo), and this group of photographs, displayed together in a grid, comprises Robbins’ artwork. Among other things, “Talent” is a wonderful, rich, and wry commentary upon common misconceptions about artists and their role in society. But, the project also inspires reflection on the formality and convention of a headshot photograph in terms of framing, lighting, etc.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, small cabinet photos or cartes de visite would double as promotional materials for actors, and because of their purpose, the straightforward standard was established from the start—a typically medium close-up showing the top of the shoulders up to above the head with the eyes generally in the top, middle half of the frame according to the rule of thirds. A good headshot is generally a candid, unfussy likeness—a portrait without too much distracting artsiness. While imbued with more personality than what is conveyed in a generic ID photograph, the two share formal qualities. And yet, the head-and-shoulders, frontal depiction of a sitter is also commonly employed in more artful portraiture of all media.

“Headshots” explores the practice through a wide range of contemporary photographic portraits by a broad collection of artists. Whether it is Muniz’s portrayal of a world leader, Arbus’ photograph of an





anonymous woman on the street, or Robbins' depiction of a fellow artist, the artworks included in the exhibition exemplify the diversity of expression possible by means of a fairly standardized and rigid tradition. Perhaps the more things change, the more they stay the same.

For more information and images please contact Brian Paul Clamp, Director, or see www.clampart.com.

Image 1: © Vik Muniz, "Study for Mao," 1999/2000, Gelatin silver print with handmade archival pigment (Edition of 2), 20 x 16 inches, sheet.

Image 2: © David Robbins, "Talent," 1986, Eighteen gelatin silver prints (Edition of 100), 10 x 8 inches, each.