



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brian Finke

Hip Hop Honeys

March 29 – May 12, 2018

Artist's reception:
Thursday, March 29, 2018
6.00 - 8.00 p.m.

ClampArt is pleased to announce "Brian Finke: Hip Hop Honeys," the artist's sixth solo show at the gallery. The exhibition coincides with the release of Finke's fifth monograph (powerHouse Books, Hardcover, 10 x 10 x 0.6 inches, 104 pages, \$35).

Over the course of three years, photographer Brian Finke went behind the scenes on hip-hop video shoots for such artists as Jay-Z, Busta Rhymes, and Kanye West. But, he was not focused on the celebri-ties—instead his interest was in the professional models who act in supporting roles in the music videos. Hours on set can be long and oftentimes boring. Moments of high-octane action can be followed by long periods of just waiting around. What Finke enjoys most about the photographs is the range of emotions he was able to capture—from excitement to boredom and focus to flirtation. Finke employed his signature, hyper-saturated aesthetic to document video models in their everyday work "uniforms"—often focusing on the imaginative hair, make-up, and styling that give the videos their distinction.

The artist successfully established working relationships with the models he photographed, often consulting with them when choosing the best takes from each shoot. He comments: "As a documentary photographer first and foremost, I was there to observe and photograph the scene taking place. These are people doing their job, from my perspective." He continues: "[I]t is my hope that audiences will understand this project through the broader context of [all of] my work, which is grounded in the study of people—men and women—going about their day and doing their jobs. That's what inspires me."

In her foreword to the book, cultural critic Abigail Covington explores the experiences of the models on and off set in relation to the roles they are asked to play which are "stereotypical figments of a man's imagination come to life." What she ultimately concludes is that "the models are keepers of their own fate" participating in the videos out of their own free will. She writes: "A woman's sexuality is hers and only hers to exploit, gain from, honor or preserve. What feels degrading to one woman may be empowering to another. For others, those feelings aren't mutually exclusive. Nor are they impervious to time."

Covington observes: "When a man bends his head to get the best view of a model's ass, who has the power? If she's in control of where he looks and what he pays attention to, isn't she pulling the strings?"



She concludes: "These are images of women reacting to and demonstrating agency within the hyper-sexualized world of hip-hop videos."

During his decades-long career as an esteemed documentarian, Brian Finke has continually explored individuals as they exist in the worlds of their occupations. His first major project was a formal study of cheerleaders and football players in his home state of Texas. From there, Finke has documented bodybuilders, U.S. Marshals, flight attendants, construction workers—and even bounty hunters. What this seemingly disparate catalogue of professionals has in common is simple: their everyday "uniforms" mark them as one of many—a stand-in for the profession they occupy. Through Finke's perceptive and empathetic lens, however, they become individuated. We



see each individual as a person with a unique character, far beyond what their professional attire and their setting might imply about them. Finke allows the all-too-familiar to re-emerge as unfamiliar, as something new to the eye.

Brian Finke graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York City in 1998 with a BFA in photography. His work is now represented in the permanent collections of fourteen museums here and abroad. His first monograph was named one of the best photography books of 2004 by *American Photo* magazine. Also in 2004, Finke was one of twelve artists nominated for the International Center for Photography's annual Infinity Award, and he won a prestigious New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship.

For more information please contact Raechel McCarthy, Director, or visit the gallery's website at www.clampart.com. ClampArt is open Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Top: "Untitled (Hip Hop Honeys #48)," 2013, Archival pigment print.
Bottom: "Untitled (Hip Hop Honeys #19)" 2013, Archival pigment print.