

## Lifestyles Of The Rich & Famous: Jeremy Kost, 'Between the Lines,' Conner Contemporary Art

By Shauna Miller  
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The people who populate Jeremy Kost's Polaroid photos at Conner Contemporary Art are kind of a big deal. There's Natalie Portman, backstage at this year's Independent Spirit Awards, looking pretty miserable. There's James Franco, seeming a little bored. But then there are the drag queens, more snapshots arranged in grids of 50 or more. These characters, who make up the bulk of Kost's "Between the Lines" show at Conner, are famous in their own circles. And they are clearly having a better time performing their brand of celebrity than Portman.

The show is the first time Kost — who's been making photo series of club kids and celebrities since 2001 — has juxtaposed his two favorite subject areas.

"Everything is about facade," Kost explains. "Fame and facade is one unified thing. Drag queens put themselves together with this public face in the same way celebrities do."

His Polaroid grids and large-scale prints chronicle an evening's rowdiness, all pouty lips, stiletto heels and impossible bodily proportions and hair colors. "The goal is to have a complete look at a certain moment," he says. "As soon as I shoot, the [photos] go right into my bag. I don't look at them until I get back to the studio."

A former club kid himself, Kost started taking nightlife photos while helping throw dance parties at the now-defunct Nation nightclub in Southeast in the early '00s.

"Two and half years later, I'm in Pamela Anderson's hotel room at 4 in the morning, and [megastar fashion photographer] David LaChapelle turned to me and said, 'You know, this work is really good. You should take this seriously.'"

In this age of instant uploads, Kost's work carries a retro charm. His photos capture the heat of a modern moment but have the vibe of a night at Warhol's Factory or Studio 54. "I love that they feel a little bit timeless," he says.

### **RISING STAR**

Jeremy Kost has been steadily making a name for himself ever since fashion photographer David LaChapelle encouraged him to pursue a career in the field. "Between the Lines" is his second show at Conner in two years; he also showed his work at Pittsburgh's Andy Warhol Museum last year. A coffee-table book of his photography, "It's Always Darkest Before Dawn," was released in May.