



With his extensive fashion and portrait work, Clarke brings a street-style photography aesthetic to *Cyclists*. Just about everyone in this book looks like they are on their way to a modelling job. But despite the fact that they were captured in a public place, I do feel some discomfort with the camera's invasion into private moments of each apparently unaware subject.

What is your image of a cyclist? Sidewalk-riding scofflaw? Spandex-clad racer? Commuter decked out in reflective stripes? Whatever their plumage, people on bikes stand out in a sea of cars, slipping gracefully or perilously (depending on your point of view) through choked city streets.

Lincoln Clarke busts these stereotypes somewhat in his new collection of photographs simply titled *Cyclists*. Taking candid portraits of cyclists riding down the streets of Toronto between spring 2011 and fall 2012, he focuses on the most breathtaking and stylish members of the cycling species.

Clarke is well known for *Heroines* (Anvil Press, 2002), his collection of portraits of women on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. With his extensive fashion and portrait work, Clarke brings a street-style photography aesthetic to *Cyclists*. Just about everyone in this book looks like they are on their way to a modelling job. But despite the fact that they were captured in a public place, I do feel some discomfort with the camera's invasion into private moments of each apparently unaware subject.

Aside from the introduction by Judith Tansley, which invites readers to imagine themselves sitting at a sidewalk

cafe with Clarke watching "the city's most elegant cyclists glide by," there is no text accompanying the photographs. With no names, stories, dates, times or locations attached, the viewer is free to focus purely on the physical details in the frame—the style of the bicycle, the expression on a face, the length of

visibility strategy in use at all; and even the bikes are minimalist, betraying few practical attachments such as brackets for water bottles and locks, baskets and racks. Many women wear flip-flops and very short-shorts with reckless abandon. Free of most encumbrances save a bag slung low around the body, these people do not even appear to sweat.

Of course, the images Clarke selected for *Cyclists* are perhaps but a fraction of the hundreds of images he shot over two years. There are about twice as many "ladies" pictured as "gentlemen," though many studies of cycling show women have only just started to catch up to men in terms of owning and riding bikes. But hey, they don't look as pretty. (Some of the guys wear athletic gear, even.) And as alluded to in the introduction, the risk of retribution for an unwanted picture is greater.

One of the stated goals of this collection is to glamourize the act of cycling, not only to make it look cool but also to contrast it with the environmental danger and "false freedoms" of automobiles. He certainly succeeds in choosing beautiful subjects who embody youth and fashion and sustainable transportation choices to boot. Now if only there were a wider range of people who were considered beautiful enough to be *Cyclists*. »

Cyclists: Photographs by Lincoln Clarke

Quattro Books, 2013; 150 pp; \$35

REVIEWED BY
Christine Rowlands

a skirt or shorts—as well as each subject's relationship to surrounding traffic and apparent accordance (or not) with rules of the road.

As a cyclist, I found myself looking through the pages for evidence of "bike-ness" among the photographs, admittedly to compare my own attempts at cycle chic (i.e., dressing for cycling without looking like a "cyclist") with the people on these pages. Accessories such as helmets and pannier bags are in scant evidence; reflectiveness is not a