

For Vincen Beeckman (b. 1973), collaboration is central. The photographer eschews the one-way photographer-subject relationship that defines so many photographic practices. Instead, he largely collaborates with marginalised and vulnerable individuals and provides visibility for communities otherwise unacknowledged.

Take Cracks (2020), a long-term project Beeckman began in 2014 in Brussels, Belgium, where he was born and still lives today. For this, Beeckman collaborated with a community of homeless individuals around Brussels' Central Station. Facilitated by the alternative cultural centre Recyclart (and later published as a book by Void), where Beeckman previously worked, Cracks saw the photographer providing the community with disposable cameras. Instead of attempting to embed, he invited them to picture themselves, and the result is an unmediated record of their lives. The images are candid: documents of the exchanges between Beeckman and the community. And the connections between the homeless individuals themselves.

Beeckman's creative approach is intense. The people on whom his projects centre are not subjects. Instead, they become long-term collaborators and friends. However, for a fortnight each year, Beeckman resets. He flies to the US and road trips across it. The images he creates are different, focused on landscapes, and devoid of human subjects. He also photographs mini-golf courses — a hobby to which he is devoted.

Joy and lightness run through Beeckman's practice despite the challenging subjects he tackles. For instance, in his series Les Intimes (2014-ongoing), Beeckman photographed the Ansquer family: single-mother Marylène and her five children. He spent years capturing their daily lives in the former industrial town of Mons, Belgium. In reality, the family was struggling. But, Beeckman's images hone in on their strength and vitality. Likewise, in La Devinière (2013-ongoing), the photographer collaborated with a historically ostracised group, allowing them to take ownership of their image. In 1956, La Devinière, occupying a farm bordering Farciennes and Fleurus in Belgium, was established to care for 19 young individuals experiencing mental health issues, many of whom remain today. The photographer visited the residence over several years. He worked alongside the residents to create an expressive and celebratory document of their otherwise marginalised lives.

The photographer's work does not slip easily into a photographic genre. It is a constellation of many. Perhaps this is because Beeckman is a multi-faceted creative: an artist, a curator, and an educator. For instance, between 2014 and 2020, he organised the extra Fort evenings at Recyclart, collectively inviting hundreds of speakers to talk about photography across half a decade of themed evenings. And he also established the Fusée de la Motographie, a travelling museum of Belgian photography composed of 100 wooden boxes, each representing a different practitioner. Indeed, Beeckman is committed to facilitating exchanges and fostering creative communities in every element of his practice.

Hannah Abel-Hirsch, 2021.

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represented by [Jacques Cerami gallery](https://www.jacquescerami.com), charleroi, be

selected solo shows

- 2023 (forthcoming), institut pour la photographie de lille, fr
- 2023 (forthcoming), fotomuseum antwerp, be
- 2022 (forthcoming), le vecteur, charleroi, be
- 2022 (forthcoming show with la devinière), musée art et marges / le botanique, brussels, be
- 2022 (forthcoming), espace jörg brockmann, geneva, ch
- 2022 les cracks & vincen beeckman, folkwang museum, essen, de
- 2021 espinho, encontros da imagem festival, braga, pt
- 2021 arts20+1 Vincen Beeckman, woluminigolf (wolubilis), brussels, be
- 2020 partout ailleurs on dirait marseille, zef, manifesta marseille, fr
- 2020 splendid, vooruit kunstencentrum, ghent, be
- 2019 claude et lilly, cerami gallery, charleroi, be
- 2019 claude et lilly, ape, ghent, be
- 2019 histoires belges, zef, photo festival marseille, fr
- 2019 local fototek foundation, recyclart, brussels, be
- 2018 espinho, tique art space, antwerp, be
- 2018 eric et moi, office d'art contemporain, brussels, be
- 2018 je pense que vous êtes plusieurs, le château d'eau, toulouse, fr
- 2018 resto chinois (part ii), été 78 gallery, brussels, be
- 2018 a castle made of sand, fondation a stichting, brussels, be
- 2016 si tu ne viens pas je te scalpe, galerie jacques cerami, charleroi, be

selected group shows

- 2022 teen spirit, bps22, charleroi, be
- 2022 fictions modestes et réalités augmentées, musée international des arts modestes, sète, fr
- 2022 von menschen und räumen (forthcoming), st wendel museum, sankt wendel, de
- 2021 bruxelles universelle – multupli.city, centrale for contemporary art, brussels, be
- 2019 amour, no'photo, geneva photography biennial, ch
- 2019 the invisible cowboy, le hangar, brussels photo festival, be
- 2018 dry and spicy, a galerie, (with alex webb), brussels, be
- 2017 marge, fotofabrik bln bxl gallery, (with frederico azevedo), berlin, de
- 2017 private choices, la centrale électrique, brussels, be
- 2016 the gang, summer of photography biennale bozar, brussels, be
- 2016 next generation please, bozar, brussels, be
- 2015 atopolis, (curated by wiels), mons european culture capital

selected books

- 2022 teen spirit, published by icvl studio / bps22, london / charleroi, uk/be
- 2021 birds of a feather opstap, published by ape, ghent, be
- 2021 espinho, published by intimate structures, tique, antwerp, be
- 2021 les éternels (with nicolas polli), published by ciao press, ch
- 2020 cracks, published by void, athens, gr
- 2020 le petit rempart, published by macaroni books, brussels, be
- 2020 filip anneessens, published by recyclart, brussels, be
- 2019 claude et lilly, published by ape, ghent, be

public space exhibitions

- 2021 pikuur, (solo show curated by centrale for contemporary art), saint-pierre hospital, brussels, be
- 2021 kiel, fotomuseum antwerp, be
- 2007 metro station anneessens, brussels, be

awards and grants

- 2021 grand prix image vevey (shortlisted)
- 2020 bourse futur pour la culture, fédération wallonie bruxelles (grant)
- 2018 platform project, fotomuseum winterthur, ch (selected artist and final nominee)

others

- 2002 - 2020 visual arts artistic director, educational facilitator, recyclart, brussels, be
- 2020 eating manifesto, "a dinner with franky and johnny", recyclart, brussels, be
- 2014 - 2020 extra fort (series of photography - themed evenings - invitation of 240 photographers / editors / curators) recyclart, tipi bookshop, pinguin space project, botanique, cfc, brussels, be
- 2014 - 2020 fusée de la motographie (travelling photography museum) – founder and performer fotofestival lodz pologne, cna luxembourg, c/o berlin, le bal paris, fotomuseum antwerpen, wiels
- 2019 performance show, "soirée belge", rencontres de la photographie, temple arles books, arles, fr
- 2019 workshops, summer camp photography, issp festival, riga, lv
- 2007 - 2015 "fotomaton" (moving human photobooth – 14000 pictures collected), brussels, be
- 2010 - 2013 "bewoner van de maand", participative project in collaboration with netwerk, aalst, be