

DIRK BRAECKMAN

No Denial, No Explanation

22 May - 5 July 2025



Tim Van Laere Gallery presents *No Denial, No Explanation*, a new solo exhibition by internationally acclaimed artist Dirk Braeckman.

Dirk Braeckman is celebrated for his stilled, enigmatic visual language—one that continuously questions, suspends, and redefines the photographic medium. His austere, often monochromatic images oppose the velocity and superficiality of today's visual overload. They urge the viewer to slow down, to look more attentively, and to embrace ambiguity. For Braeckman, the essence of photography lies not in the moment of capture, but in the entire process—from the initial shot to the final image. With this approach, he engages with photography through a painterly lens, emphasizing the process of image construction. His works are not straightforward reproductions of reality, they are carefully altered, marked, deconstructed, and recomposed by the artist. As a result, the viewer doesn't just get a glimpse through Braeckman's lens, but feels his physical presence within each work.

Braeckman's personal engagement with his images unlocks a world beyond the image—built on the power of suggestion, the beauty of absence, and the poetry of destruction. He transforms fleeting moments into universal impressions, pushing the visible to the background to give form to the invisible. This desire and pursuit is evident both in his choice of subjects and in his emphasis on the textures and physicality of a photograph. Every wrinkle, blemish, or faded patch in the image serves as a reminder that a photograph is not merely a window onto reality—it is an object with its own material story. Braeckman frequently combines analog methods and traditional darkroom techniques with digital editing. The materiality of the photo—the paper, the surface, the texture—is central. His images are not just representations, but objects that evoke a near-tactile presence. Each subtle gray tone, every grain and imperfection, contributes to the distinctive blend of distance and intimacy that defines his work. In his image-making, Braeckman employs whatever tools are at hand, from chemical processes to digital manipulation and AI—always starting from his own archive. By making his interventions visible and embracing the ambiguous nature of the image, he reveals the constructed lie of each image and the multiplicity of meanings it can carry. His images raise more questions than they offer answers.

Over the past year, Braeckman has been the subject of two major solo exhibitions at leading museums in Belgium and the Netherlands: FOMU (Fotomuseum Antwerp) and the Kunstmuseum Den Haag. For *ECHTZEIT* at FOMU, he began with existing images from the museum's collection, rephotographing and transforming them through his unique process of selection, alteration, deconstruction, and reassembly. While image appropriation has long been central to his practice, engaging with the museum's archive gave it new resonance. Braeckman's own archive—an unruly, inexhaustible trove where negatives often disappear for years—operates on a time delay. The gap between capture and selection is essential: time detaches the image from its original context, stripping it of anecdote and allowing new meanings to surface. This temporal distance helps Braeckman to recognize the “right” image—one that he can continue to evolve in his studio. By exploring the museum's image archive, he has also begun to revisit his own archive with fresh eyes, giving these images the opportunity to speak of what has remained unspoken.

Dirk Braeckman (b. 1958, Eeklo, Belgium) lives and works in Ghent. He represented Belgium at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017 and was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in 2021, in recognition of his lifelong exploration of photography's artistic boundaries and his ability to create evocative, light-painted visions of reality. His work is held in numerous private and public collections around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York; FOMU and M HKA in Antwerp; S.M.A.K. in Ghent; M Museum in Leuven; Mu.ZEE in Ostend; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle; MAC's Grand-Hornu in Mons; Musée de la Photographie in Charleroi; Museum De Pont in Tilburg; Kunstmuseum Den Haag; Centraal Museum in Utrecht; Museum Voorlinden in Wassenaar; Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris; FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in Dunkirk; Musée de l'Élysée in Lausanne; and M Woods in Beijing.

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY