

Bert Danckaert photographs everyday places from Cape Town to Beijing, walls mainly. We see things up close. Composition happens when the camera defines the frame around a random assemblage. Danckaert maintains, that form and content engender each other, but the systematic application of a sense of balance, symmetry and proportion is not an end to itself. We are drawn into a two-dimensional world, without apparent depth, except for the occasional effect of spatial illusion. No further action follows, no story is told. What you see are backdrops to the now, the simple present: photography's primary tense. A complex cultural filter dissects, orders and shapes an inchoate urban environment. A man reacts to overwhelming forces of historical change, as he asks: what is my role in all this?

Shawn McBride

We see in Bert Danckaert's work a strangely familiar universe: that of the unremarkable, undistinguished places in which all of us spend so much of our lives, places we pass through without giving them any notice, spaces that are just trajectories, parts of a line connecting one place with another. Places, in short, that define our lives and that of so many other people in the urbanized world.

Danckaert's work thus becomes a landmark of intercultural understanding, something that manages not to be trapped in the easy imageries of the exotic-typical, but brings us back to where things begin and end: in real human life. In an age of globalization, such levels of understanding are real, valuable forms of knowledge.

Jan Blommaert, linguist

The bizarre cityscapes of Bert Danckaert deal with the same paradox of abstractive simplicity and a complexity of meaning and metaphor. Danckaert's still lives breathe a superficial flavour, a strangeness that is found in the familiar. Coincidental installations of sidewalks, walls and street furniture refer more to minimalist art than to conventions of street photography. In these absurd scenarios a recognizable, all too banal reality appears stage-set, props and trompe-l'oeil included, while the actors are absent.

Inge Henneman, curator FotoMuseum Antwerpen