

JACQUES SONCK – 14th May - 11th July 2026

'Gallery FIFTY ONE: Jacques Sonck' on May 18th 2026 on L'oeil de la photographie

L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

Gallery FIFTY ONE : Jacques Sonck

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L'Œil de la Photographie

May 18, 2026



Gallery FIFTY ONE presents a solo exhibition of **Jacques Sonck** from May 14 to July 11, 2026. On the same dates, **FIFTY ONE TOO** will host a solo exhibition dedicated to **Vivian Maier**.

These two exhibitions bring together singular yet resonant perspectives. Each artist, in their own way, has made the real and the human condition the core of their practice. Jacques Sonck and Vivian Maier share a deep attentiveness to individuals, their silent presence, their gestures, and what subtly emerges beyond appearances.

Jacques Sonck's work centers on the encounter and the constructed portrait. He often makes close-up photographs of his subjects standing in front of a wall, which erases the context of the street. Most of the time, his images could be taken anywhere in Belgium, and across a broad timespan, so as viewers we do not know when they were made. Yet this uncertainty is not essential, the subject remains the person posing frontally for the camera, confronting it with a quiet intensity.

Born in 1949 in Belgium, **Jacques Sonck** developed his photographic language from the 1970s onward, traveling extensively across his country. Working primarily with a small-format camera, he approaches strangers in the street and invites them into a direct, often frontal encounter. His portraits, marked by a striking clarity and absence of artifice, isolate the subject from context, giving full presence to faces, bodies, and expressions. One may think of August Sander, Diane Arbus, or Richard Avedon. But where others classified, provoked, or stylised, Sonck observes with patience and respect without judgment. They are a space in which the other person can simply exist. The background is often ordinary like a wall in a street or a stretch of sea. Yet this restraint is part of the power of the work. Nothing distracts the eye. What remains is the direct encounter between the person portrayed and the viewer. Some portraits make us smile, others surprise us, and others leave a feeling harder to name. Taken together, they become a social memory of Belgium, preserving lives and faces that might otherwise have vanished.

Upcoming book: Jacques Sonck, *ENCOUNTERS TOO*

Jacques Sonck

from May 14 to July 11, 2026

GALLERY FIFTY ONE – FIFTY ONE TOO

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