

CHRIS BECHER

As a seed is shaped by its soil and water, so is everyone of us earthlings shaped by the relationship of our individual and social histories.

My consent-based photographic practice ponders on portraiture's potential to convey the modes how personhood is shaped by individual and social histories. Preceded by a dialogical process with my protagonists, I strive to reintroduce complexity, beauty and intimacy into the representation of individuals, often compartmentalised by media and dominant discourses, and seldomly approached from a sensitive and poetic angle. Outlining society indirectly by its contours, my work draws from and transcends visual legacies such as social documentary, conceptual photography, vernacular culture, figurative portraiture, and (art) history. Semi-staged, semi-intuitive, my images fuse autobiographical and my protagonists' lived experiences with an imaginary dimension. Against this backdrop I seek to portray the personal and powerful of my protagonists, interspersed with landscape and still life, and delving into the manifoldness of how we—as individuals on this planet—experience the world along the intersecting lines of our differences and more importantly commonalities. Growing up in a wide spectrum of modest, non-academic surroundings between mainly Germany next to extensive periods in North and Latin America informs my sensitivity for contemporary social identities, intercultural experiences and my anthropological eye for the everyday. Visual practices are crucial to cultivate alternative perspectives of coexistence through ethical and aesthetic choices. I consider my practice as a point of departure, a bridge where boundaries shift into beginnings in order to foster connection and engage inclusive and intersectional strategies in the production of visual representations and knowledge. As a practitioner and individual I maintain a keen awareness of my own position in-between contexts. Which is why my works include self-reflexive traces of my presence.

WEBSITES

Personal Homepage

chrisbecher.com

Co-founder/-organiser

www.instagram.com/undiscipliningphotography/

SOCIAL MEDIA

www.instagram.com/chris_becher/?hl=en

EDUCATION

- 2021 - FOTODOK Lighthouse Talent
- 2022 2021/2022 Fotodok Utrecht
- 2018 - MA Photography & Society Den Haag,
- 2021 Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten diploma
- 2016 - Mentorship Program Federal Academy
- 2016 for Cultural Education (GER)
- 2013 - Drawing & Photography National
- 2014 University Bogotá
- 2010 - Media Arts, Photography Academy of
- 2016 Media Arts Cologne diploma

EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 FOTODOK Gallery Utrecht, Netherlands
Presentation of new material of ongoing body of work 'Latencies'.
[Group](#)
- 2022 Humble Arts Foundation New York, United States
hafny.org
[Group](#)
- 2021 The Makeable Mind Noorderlicht
Photofestival Groningen, Netherlands
Selection of works of ongoing body of work 'Latencies'.
www.noorderlicht.com/en/programma/noorderlicht-fotofestival-2021/
[Group](#)

- 2021 Grad Show Royal Academy of Art The Hague, Netherlands Selection of works of ongoing body of work 'Latencies'.
Group
- 2018 Surviving the Fitness Kunstverein Wolfenbüttel, Germany Selection of works of ongoing body of work 'Our Daily Projections'.
www.kunstverein-wf.de/index.php?article_id=38&exhib=13
Group
- 2017 Our Daily Projections Tasveer Gallery Bangalore, India Postponed indefinitely.
Solo
- 2017 Verführung Stadtmuseum Hofheim, Germany Presentation of the series 'Boys'. hoepffner-preis.de/verfuehrung-marta-hoepffner-preis-fuer-fotografie-2017/
Group
- 2017 New German Photography - gute Aussichten Deichtorhallen Hamburg/Haus der Photographie Hamburg, Germany Presentation of the series 'Boys'.
www.deichtorhallen.de/ausstellung/gute-aussichten-2017-2018
Group
- 2017 New German Photography - gute Aussichten Goethe-Institut Nicosia, Cyprus Presentation of the series 'Boys'.
Group
- 2017 New German Photography - gute Aussichten Landesmuseum Koblenz, Germany Presentation of the series 'Boys'.
www.guteaussichten.org/blog/archives/tag/gute-aussichten-20162017
Group
- 2016 New German Photography - gute Aussichten NRW-Forum Düsseldorf, Germany Presentation of the series 'Boys'. www.nrw-forum.de/en/exhibitions/gute-aussichten
Group
- 2016 New Reality Altes Pfandhaus Cologne, Germany Presentation of the series 'Obsidian (Lxs)'.
Group
- 2016 Boys Moltkereiwerkstatt Cologne, Germany Presentation of the series 'Boys'.
Solo

PROJECTS

2021 Latencies Through a combination of of portraiture, landscape, writing, as well as appropriated material from media the personal family archive 'Latencies' examines normative and idealised images of Western, white heteronormativity and its complex entanglement with historical and contemporary forms of violence and stereotypical ideas towards those who deviate from this alleged norm. This way the ongoing series addresses the omnipresent, but often imperceptible, structural, social inequalities and power imbalances across the lines of gender, class, race, sexuality. Forces consolidating the fabric of contemporary societies and shaping the constitution of individual and collective, one's 'own' and the identity of 'others'. Which especially in the light of the world's recent years' socio-political climate and a global pandemic continue to unfold and lay bare once again the pervasive social inequalities structuring our minds and bodies and the world we inhabit in hyper visible ways. How do these forces shape the dynamic play of how we experience and perceive the world and humans through our commonalities and differences in a condition in which visual culture more and more slips into the misused role of a polarising instrument? 'Latencies' forms a space in which internal and external narratives collide with each other. Similarly as they often do in imperceptible ways in our everyday lives. Having an impact on how we coexist and mutually cooperate. The title 'Latencies' suggests this presence.

2018 Shivering Leaves Amsterdam, Netherlands 'Shivering Leaves' is a long-term collaboration between 'Wij Zijn Hier' (an Amsterdam-based organisation of newcomers from mostly Central Africa), delving into questions of citizenship, illegality and authorship. Due to the members illegalised and undocumented status they are forced to squat empty buildings in suburban Amsterdam or sleep outside. On request and in agreement with the members I started producing video-

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES/RESIDENCIES

2017 Goethe-Institute Bangalore, India
www.goethe.de/ins/in/en/sta/ban.html

2014 DAAD Bogotá, Colombia

2013 DAAD Bogotá, Colombia

and photo-footage for their social media platforms. Directed by its members, they were granted full agency, rights and decision making over the footage in order to represent the group in more just and non-hierarchical ways. However, over the course of the collaboration it gradually became apparent that the majority of the footage they ordered was reinforcing stereotypes, often found in mainstream media, I initially intended to counter through my approach. 'Shivering Leaves' sheds light on questions concerning the positioning as an image-maker between the poles of ethical and aesthetic responsibilities and the well-intended concession of authorship to its protagonists in order to flatten power dynamics. How to navigate appropriately in this context, swinging between the utilitarian and artistic use value of the imagery produced in such a sensitive environment? These questions culminated in the publication of an essay in TRIGGER magazine.

2017 Our Daily Projections Bangalore, India
Through the intimate narratives of thirteen protagonists originating from four different continents, 'Our Daily Projections' (ongoing) addresses the invisible, uneven nature of the way we perceive/look at the world and humans through the intersecting prisms of class, race, gender, and belief. The different voices intermingle elements of their personal stories among each other, blurring the realms of documentary and fiction, evoking assumptions and implicit biases on the side of the viewers, interwoven into the very fabric of the societies and minds we dwell. This way, 'Our Daily Projections' brings to light how the the persistent legacies of imperial histories continue to nurture stereotypes based on people's appearances, permeating the present and the eerie futures urging to meet us. ☒The conversations took place over the course of several months and various encounters in close collaboration with the protagonists on location in Bangalore, India. The work was initiated during an artist in Residency program with the Goethe-Institut India and Tasveer Gallery

Bangalore, where I conducted a research on the impact of racialised soap advertisements over the past 150 years in India, and globally.

2016 Boys Cologne, Germany 'Boys' examines the environment of male sex work and counteracts prefabricated ideas of an underground economy. In the collective opinion of our society associated with a flashily shifty milieu and with sinister protagonists it is not a marginal phenomenon but an established reality in the core of our society. Over two years carrying out open online and offline field research—often a clear distinction of these spheres was difficult—by visiting different places, private and professional environments the text plates and photographs were produced on location with a large format camera. In the hybrid form of equal photographs and text plates 'Boys' reframes the notions of this milieu in different documentary strategies—report, interview, conversation, chat communication, photographic portrait—and also reflects my own acting within the field and the occurring relationships. 'Boys' addresses notions of friendship, intimacy, desire and romantics in modern times and circumnavigates clichéd imaginations by turning our gaze on the personal stories of the protagonists and by confronting us with the structures of the society we live in.

2015 Obsidian (Lxs) Bogotá, Mexico City, Colombia Through the gender and sexual identities of 29 persons 'Obsidian (Lxs)' questions and fathoms out supposed certainties and 'the call for truth' claimed by the photographic image and text. Do the photographic representations initially seem to be unequivocal, the individual identities emerge very differentiated in the textual (self-) definitions. 'Obsidian (Lxs)' presents—by avoiding social marking—not just the portrayed persons—textually as well as visually—, but at the same time emphasises the influence of systems of power—for example language, culture, religion, politics—and the social (binary) construction of a society. Thus this

typological procedure on the one hand mirrors how photographic images, text and language create knowledge; on the other hand the juxtaposition of text and photography shows that both media produce very different identities.

COMMISSIONS

-- Available for commissions worldwide.

PUBLICATIONS

- 2021 Humming Voices. Writings On Connection, Difference And Perception. Book self-published Chris Becher Den Haag, Netherlands 80 pages. On demand.
- 2019 TRIGGER magazine #1 - Impact Book Fw:Books, Amsterdam Chris Becher and Mads Holm, Donald Weber, Ariella Azoulay, Steven Humble, Simone Kalkman, Lewis Bush, Wilco Versteeg, Oliver Vodeb, Shahidul Alam, Alberto García del Castillo, Andrea Stultiens, Andrew Jackson and Savannah Dodd, Sara Dominici, M. Neelika J Amsterdam, Antwerp, Netherlands fw-books.nl/product/trigger-01-impact/ Can we still assume photography's (age-old) impact in an image-saturated world, where fake news, the questioning of representative democracy and the return of colonial pasts are engaging different political cultures, publics, action and pression groups?" Through 20 contributions TRIGGER aims to cast impact as a re-enactment or assertion of radical intimacy, initiates a different gaze on the world and shows that impact can exist within an ecology or geography of photography too. Impact is social, participative, conflictual.
- 2018 False Positives. A Meditation on the Broken Promises of Photography. Book Royal Academy of Art The Hague Chris Becher, Shadman Shahid, Walter Costa, Mads Holm, Ana Núñez Rodríguez, Alexander Cabeza Trigg, Dmitry Kostyukov, Gita Cooper-van Ingen, Guglielmo Giomi, Marica Kolcheva, Nola Minolfi, Olga Roszkowska, Thijs van Stigt, Anastasia Zhetvina. The Hague, Netherlands www.kabk.nl/nieuws/false-positives-publication
- 2017 Verführung Catalog Marta-Hoepffner Society for photography Chris Becher, Johanna Daab, Tine Edel, Hayahisa Tomiyasu. Hofheim, Germany hoepffner-

preis.de/verfuehrung-marta-hoeffner-preis-fuer-fotografie-2017/

- 2016 Catalog Sieveking publishing Chris Becher, Miia Autio, Julia Steinigeweg, Quoc-Van Ninh, Holger Jenss, Andreas Hopfgarten, Carmen Catuti. Munich, Germany
www.guteaussichten.org
- 2016 Boys—A Photographic Field study of Male Sex Work. Book self-published Chris Becher Cologne, Germany 141 pages, two brochures in slip case.

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2021 FotoDok Lighthouse Talent 2021/2022 FotoDok Utrecht, Netherlands
- 2020 Working grant Ministry for Culture and Science NRW Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2017 Marta Hoepffner-Award for Photography Marta-Hoepffner Society for photography Hofheim, Germany
- 2017 Promotion Award, section 'media arts', nominee State Government NRW Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2016 New German Photography/Neue deutsche Fotografie Germany
- 2016 Young scholar, nominee North Rhine-Westphalian Academy of Sciences, Humanities & the Arts Düsseldorf, Germany

SECONDARY ART-RELATED ACTIVITIES

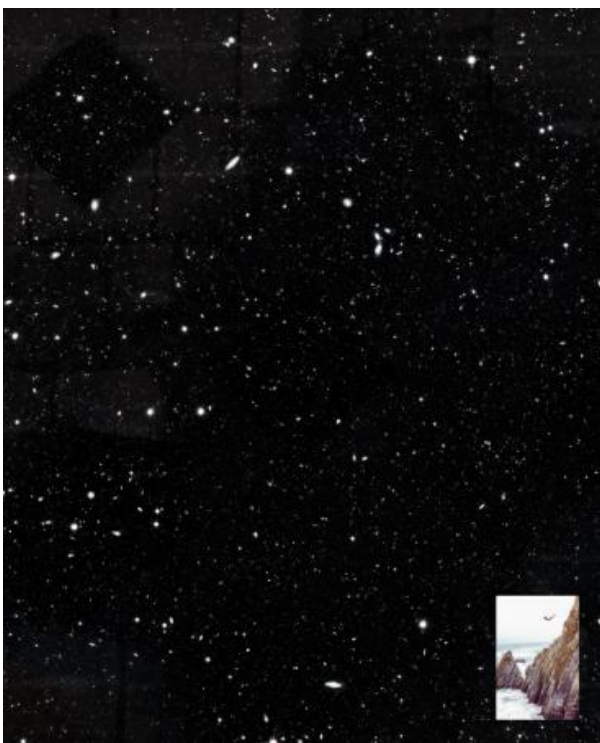
- 2021 - -- Co-founder/-organiser of 'Undisciplining Photography Symposium' On-going
- 2021 - -- Mentor at Arbeiterkind (translation: 'working-class child'), organisation supporting young adults from working-class backgrounds to enter academia. On-going
- 2020 - 2021 Mentor at BA Photography, KABK
- 2020 - -- Jury member at Marta Hoepffner Photography Award
- 2019 - 2020 Jury member at MA Photography & Society, KABK
- 2015 - 2016 Young Fellow at Academy of the Arts of the World, Cologne (GER)
- 2015 - -- Independent photographer/artist and on assignment On-going
- 2015 - 2016 Jury member at Academy of Media Arts Cologne (GER)
- 2012 - 2018 Assistant for different photographers.



Latencies, 2021



Z., 2021
Medium format, 100 x 800 x 3cm



Deep Time/Cliffjumper (1993), 2021
Altered archival material, 80 x 100 x 3cm



Bent Tree, 2021
Medium format, multiple



T., Traces of Light, 2020
Large format, 100 x 800 x 3cm



Crown of Trees/Colonial Garden, 2017

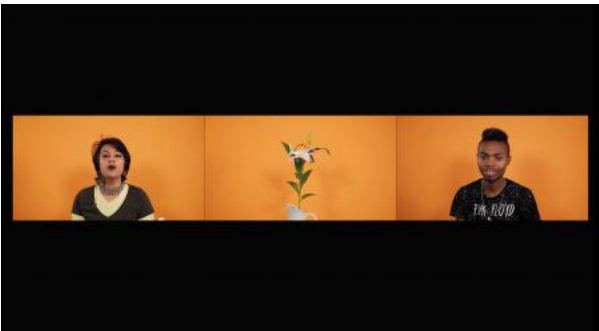
R., 2019
Large format, 100 x 800 x 3cm



, 2017
Digital video, variable



, 2017
Digital video, variable



, 2017
video, variable