

## REVIEW: JACQUES SONCK AT L. PARKER STEPHENSON

August 5, 2014

### *Archetypes*

through August 15, 2014

In *Archetypes*, Jacques Sonck's first solo exhibition outside of Europe, we are greeted by a band of standouts. Black and white images taken in the late 1980's - 1990's capture all sorts of people: children and teens; adults and elderly; people on the street, on the job, or on a holiday. His cross section of humanity gives breath to his own oeuvre, but there is nothing typical about any of his subjects. Sonck's figures are classical yet surprising. The framing and formal aspects of the work are fairly direct; the rapport between photographer and subject was immediate and extraordinary. The personalities and quirky energy of the subject comes through their gaze, pose, or geste. They are potent, direct, inquisitive, welcoming, and often playful, but always particular and just a little bit strange.

In the blink of a lens Sonck preserved the inner character of his subjects, and through the works their spirits endure. A boy dressed in a striped long-sleeve shirt and seated on a wide handlebar bike turns over his shoulder at us with an uncertain but piercing gaze. Two teen girls in black leather jackets and thigh-high boots seem surprisingly soft and inviting through their attempt at self-affirmed poses. A man in a long coat and cap almost becomes cartoonish. He carries his briefcase and turns with a crooked grin at us. We try to place his face. We do this with many of Sonck's works: we search our visual-memorial index and wonder where we saw these people. There is something familial about his subjects. It's like we know them though we know we couldn't have seen them before. We are caught almost tricked by the instant, but the connectivity Sonck was able to achieve with the work translates to us as viewers. Each frame proves a thrilling and memorable encounter.