

Steven Beckly

New Romantics

Supported by PATTISON Outdoor Advertising and Nikon Canada

Curated by Heather Rigg

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Two grappling arms merge in stillness. A bridge's shadow zigzags across a concrete wall. A cluster of stars cloaks a nude body. Glowing light meets an open hand. These four images, placed at the intersection of Dovercourt Road and Dupont Street, comprise Toronto-based artist Steven Beckly's public installation *New Romantics*. Void of advertising, and placed next to the changing light refracting through an abandoned glass building, each photograph tangles the perception of light and shadow, figure and ground, surface and

space, arousing a fraught tenderness.

Cultivating moments of intimacy, Beckly approaches photography as both a sensual and a social practice—an act that connects rather than distances, feels rather than explains. The project's title draws upon the spirit of New Romanticism. Stemming from the early 1980s, the British movement elevated images of "glam rock" stars, such as David Bowie and Boy George, bringing gender bending and androgyny to the public consciousness. Invoking

a similar freedom of expression and fluidity of experience, *New Romantics* calls for the revival of a civil romance amid a seemingly bleak and fractured world. By focusing on images that evoke sensations of love and closeness, Beckly's large-scale images bring visual poetry and optimism to the streets at a moment when the political climate is increasingly hostile and exclusive. Embodying a sense of hope, desire, and social togetherness, his project advocates a public intimacy built by an emotionally-connected humanity.

Billboards at Dovercourt and Dupont
May 1 – 31
4 laser prints on blueback paper
10×20' and 16×12'



Steven Beckly, *Untitled*, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.



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