

# A New Beginning

Photograph by Cigdem Yuksel Who are you and who do you want to become? And what if you had to reinvent yourself? In A New Beginning, photographer Cigdem Yuksel works with young people who, after their flight to the Netherlands, start a search for their (new) identity. The youngsters express themselves through tattoos, poems, rap or Instagram posts. They look cool and tough, but they are also fragile. Together with Cigdem they start searching for a way to narrate their story.

Cigdem asks them what they feel when they think back to their journey, when they think about their fears, nightmares, the absence of their parents. Which feeling, image, shape and color do they envisage? How would they depict that? With these youngsters she also takes a look at their future. How do they see themselves, now and later? What do they derive strength and pleasure from?

*Transmedia project Shadow Game*

*A new beginning* is part of the transmedia project Shadow Game by Eefje Blankevoort and Els van Driel, produced in close collaboration with journalist and translator Zuhoor al Qaisi. The project consists of a long documentary (90 min), a series of short follow-up documentaries (30 min), an impact campaign, adventure game and a multimedia series / exhibition in collaboration with Cigdem Yuksel.

[www.shadowgame.eu](http://www.shadowgame.eu)

Together with the kids from the film, they launched the manifesto 'Protect children on the move'. With four recommendations to Dutch and European politicians to better protect unaccompanied refugee children. You can read and sign the manifesto [here](#).

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CULTUURFONDS



Photography: Cigdem Yuksel  
Text and editing: Eefje Blankevoort

Curator: Frederiek Biemans

Design: Studio Parkers  
Photographer Cigdem Yuksel (1989) started her photography career at Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant*, focusing on migration, refugees, and identity. In May 2016, she traveled to Gaziantep, Turkey, with two reporters to make a harrowing portrait series of Syrian child refugees working in textile and shoe factories. Upon her return, she was awarded the prestigious Zilveren Camera Award. The jury praised the way her photo series confronts Western consumers with the consequences of our political and economic policies.

In the past two years, her focus has shifted to perception and the power of the photographer. For that reason, she started a study of our collective visual memory and the visual representation of Muslim women in the Netherlands. This resulted in a much-discussed research report from 2020, in which she examined the representation of Muslim women in the image database of the Dutch press agency *ANP*.

As a photographer, Yuksel wants to change both the historical archive and the collective visual memory in the Netherlands. Who gets to decide which photos and stories will be included in our archive and which are left out? Why is that? In order to challenge this, she started portraying the first generation of Turkish women in the Netherlands to create a new visual archive. Melkweg Expo is an exhibition space for contemporary photography and a platform for young artists, located in the heart of Amsterdam. With a focus on photography that explores identity, society, and pop culture, the exhibition space is also known to occasionally place other forms of visual art alongside photography with conviction. Characterized by a distinctly playful and accessible approach, Melkweg Expo seeks to unveil high quality art-art that is innovative, engaging, and inclusive.

Melkweg Expo's main goal is to nurture and promote emerging talent and present them to a broad audience. With the help of local and international allies, Melkweg Expo presents a unique and largely free program made up of 10 exhibitions annually, a multidisciplinary festival, events offering emerging photographers advice, portfolio reviews, enlightening talks, screenings, and numerous social gatherings. Melkweg Expo is supported by the Mondriaan Fund.

Prospektor is a documentary production agency founded by Eefje Blankevoort and Arnold van Bruggen. Prospektor makes interactive documentaries as well as podcasts, books, and exhibitions—often at the same time. They are interested in stories that bring about change, stories that can tip someone's perspective. Not from black to white or vice versa, but in a more layered and complex way—using stories that can accommodate different voices, stories that can counter uninformed cynicism.

Prospektor believes in experimentation, cross-pollination, talent development, and multi-disciplinary work. Prospektor is formed by many co-creators.

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