

# ARCO 2020

**Solo Project: Roger Ballen in Color**

**Madrid, 26 February-1 March 2020**

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## ROGER BALLEEN

Roger Ballen nació en 1950 en Nueva York, Estados Unidos. Vive y trabaja en Johannesburgo, Sudáfrica. Considerado unánimemente como uno de los fotógrafos esenciales y más influyentes del siglo XXI. Hijo de un editor de fotografía de Magnum, trabajó como geólogo y consultor de minas antes de empezar su propia carrera fotográfica, documentando pequeños pueblos de la Sudáfrica rural y sus aislados habitantes. Sus imágenes son tanto poderosos alegatos sociales y perturbadores estudios psicológicos. Su trabajo "Outland" se considera uno de los documentos fotográficos más extraordinarios de finales del siglo XX. Su reconocible estilo fotográfico ha ido evolucionando desde el formato cuadrado y un cuidado blanco y negro. Sus primeros trabajos tienen una influencia clara de la fotografía documental pero desde principios de los noventa, ha venido desarrollando un estilo que él mismo describe como "ficción documental".

Entre sus numerosos premios destacar el de Mejor Fotógrafo del Año en Les Rencontres d'Arles en 2002, así como el premio al Mejor Libro Fotográfico del Año en PhotoEspaña 2001 (también mención honorífica en 2009).

Ballen ha expuesto de manera individual en los cinco continentes. Su trabajo ha sido adquirido por colecciones como el MOMA, la Tate Britain, el Centre Georges Pompidou, la Maison Européenne de la Photographie, o el Musée de la Photographie à Charleroi.

## **ROGER BALLEEN**

Roger Ballen was born in 1950 in NYC, USA. He lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa. Ballen is deemed to be one of the most important and influential photographers of the 21st century. Son of a photograph editor at Magnum, Ballen has worked as a geologist and mine consultant before launching his own photographic career, documenting small towns in rural Africa and their isolated inhabitants. Their images are, at the same time, powerful social allegations and disturbing psychological studies. Ballen's work "Outland" was considered one of the most extraordinary photographic documents at the end of the 20th century. His recognizable photographic style has evolved using simply a square format and a black and white color scheme, to colour and collaborative projects with other artists. His first works have a clear influence of documental photography, but during the 90's, he developed a style that he described as "documentary fiction".

Among his numerous awards we find the Best Photographer of the Year at Les Rencontres d'Arles in 2002, as well as Best Photographic Book of the Year in PhotoEspaña 2001 (also an Honorary Mention in 2009).

Ballen's work has been exhibited worldwide and has been collected by institutions like MOMA, Tate Britain, Centre Georges Pompidou, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, or Musée de la Photographie à Charleroi.

## **THE PROJECT: “ROGER BALEN IN COLOR”**

“Roger Ballen in Color” will be the official launch of the artist/photographer’s work in color. For the first time, after shooting exclusively in black and white for over fifty years, images from this important and original photographer will be viewed in another media. The photographs proposed will have originated over the past two years and were all created in Johannesburg, South Africa, in an environment that best can be described as “Ballenesque”.

Since the mid-1990’s, my photographic practice has evolved from using the elementary sets of people’s homes in “Outland” (2001) to sporadic drawings in “Shadow Chamber” (2005) to a more elaborate visual dynamic in “Boarding House”, (2009) and “Asylum of the Birds” (2014). The period since the publication of “Asylum of the Birds” has been characterized by the transformation of my work from somewhat documentary to one that integrates other media, namely drawing, painting, sculpture through photography.

Concurrently, I became increasingly involved in video, installations, collage, and painting. My goal in working in these other media was and still is, to produce parallel art forms that expand one another to generate a wider, more encompassing aesthetic.

In 2016, Leica provided me with a digital camera to film a video that would be launched with my Thames & Hudson publication “Ballenesque, Roger Ballen. A Retrospective”. As I began this project, I began to use the camera for still color images as well as video. I was immediately surprised and inspired by the results which I believe has not only extended my work specifically, but the field of photographic art as well. Whilst the images that I proposed are shot in color, it might be more accurate to state that they are muted or occupying an aesthetic place between monochrome and color. As color by its very nature is viewed as real and my photographs have an unreal, dreamy aspect, an enigmatic visual relationship is created in these latest photographs.

## **THE PROJECT: “ROGER BALLEEN IN COLOR”**

It is clear to me that I inhabit an anomalous position as an outsider and insider. I am an insider in the sense that I am well educated, travelled and aware of the nuances of the photographic/art world. In my daily routine, I move from order to chaos, routine to breakdown, from organization to subversion...living in Johannesburg South Africa like a first-world person whilst in a few minutes I can travel to what might be characterized as Third World.

The locations I work in are often violent, socially chaotic places. People who have served time in prisons, mental institutions, or struggle just find the means to feed themselves dominate my environment. The spaces I work in and ultimate reveal in my imagery can be defined as unconscious visual embodiments of the psyche. It is clear to me that most people who view my photographs experience the fact that they have an unexplainable means of lodging themselves in their subconscious minds.































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 $9 + 9 = 18$   
 $10 + 10 = 20$



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G B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

827 = 827

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LOVE













Muchas gracias / Thank you

Piezas y precios sujetos a disponibilidad. Por favor consúltanos:

Artworks and prices subject to availability. Please enquire us:

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