

ROGER BALLENG





CONTEMPORARY

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BIO

One of the most influential and important photographic artists of the 21st century, Roger Ballen's photographs span over forty years. His strange and extreme works confront the viewer and challenge them to come with him on a journey into their own minds as he explores the deeper recesses of his own.

Roger Ballen was born in New York in 1950 but for over 30 years he has lived and worked in South Africa. His work as a geologist took him out into the countryside and led him to take up his camera and explore the hidden world of small South African towns. At first he explored the empty streets in the glare of the midday sun but, once he had made the step of knocking on people's doors, he discovered a world inside these houses which was to have a profound effect on his work. These interiors with their distinctive collections of objects and the occupants within these closed worlds took his unique vision on a path from social critique to the creation of metaphors for the inner mind. After 1994 he no longer looked to the countryside for his subject matter finding it closer to home in Johannesburg.

Over the past thirty five years his distinctive style of photography has evolved using a simple square format in stark and beautiful black and white. In the earlier works in the exhibition his connection to the tradition of documentary photography is clear but through the 1990s he developed a style he describes as 'documentary fiction'. After 2000 the people he first discovered and documented living on the margins of South African society increasingly became a cast of actors working with Ballen in the series' Outland (2000, revised in 2015) and Shadow Chamber (2005) collaborating to create powerful psychodramas.

The line between fantasy and reality in his subsequent series' Boarding House (2009) and Asylum of the Birds (2014) became increasingly blurred and in these series he employed drawings, painting, collage and sculptural techniques to create elaborate sets. There was an absence of people altogether, replaced by photographs of individuals now used as props, by doll or dummy parts or where people did appear it was as disembodied hands, feet and mouths poking disturbingly through walls and pieces of rag. The often improvised scenarios were now completed by the unpredictable behaviour of animals whose ambiguous behaviour became crucial to the overall meaning of the photographs. In this phase Ballen invented a new hybrid aesthetic, but one still rooted firmly in black and white photography.

In his artistic practice Ballen has increasingly been won over by the possibilities of integrating photography and drawing. He has expanded his repertoire and extended his visual language. By integrating drawing into his photographic and video works, the artist has not only made a lasting contribution to the field of art, but equally has made a powerful commentary about the human condition and its creative potential.

His contribution has not been limited to stills photography and Ballen has been the creator of a number of acclaimed and exhibited short films that dovetail with his photographic series'. The collaborative film I Fink You Freeky, created for the cult band Die Antwoord in 2012, has garnered over 85-million hits on YouTube. He has taken his work into the realms of sculpture and installation, most recently at Paris' Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature (2017), Australia's Sydney College of the Arts (2016) and at the Serlachius Museum in Finland (2015) among others

His most recent project has been The Theatre of Apparitions (Thames & Hudson, 2016) and its related animated film, inspired by the sight of hand-drawn carvings on blacked-out windows in an abandoned women's prison. For this series Ballen started to experiment using different spray paints on glass and then 'drawing on' or removing the paint with a sharp object to let natural light through. The results have been likened prehistoric cave-paintings: the black, dimensionless spaces on the glass are canvases onto which Ballen has carved his thoughts and emotions.

In September 2017 Thames & Hudson will publish a large volume of the collected photography with extended commentary by Ballen titled Ballenesque: A Retrospection. In February 2017 the new Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town named its photographic facility the Roger Ballen Foundation Centre for Photography thereby ensuring that Ballen's contribution to photography in Africa, and beyond, will continue into the future.

From: Ninja
Date: October 12, 2010 6:03:57 PM GMT+02:00
To: Roger Ballen
Subject: ¥o-landi speaking

Dear Mr Ballen

When we first discovered your work a few years ago our minds got totally blown and we have never been the same since. I remember clearly that when me and ninja saw your photographs we decided right there and then to put an end to all the music and art we had been working on up till that point. Immediately we began working on a new project called DIE ANTWOORD.

MASTERS OF REALITY – If someone punches you in the face fokken hard, it makes you stop thinking about everything except, 'What the fok just happened?' and 'Who the fok just punched me in the face?' This is what happened when NINJA and ¥O-LANDI first got hit by the photography of Roger Ballen.

First it totally blew our brains out. We were like, 'Who are these people?' 'Where is this place?' 'What the fok is going on here in this picture?' Then we found out these photographs were all taken in South Africa and our minds got fokked even worse than before!

Suddenly we stopped liking all the music and art we had made up till this point and decided to throw it all away. This new dark comic book world was The fokken Answer! We wanted to move into this world and leave our old reality behind. This new world was so alien but also so strangely familiar. So mysterious and comforting and exciting. And above all, so fokken South African!

Two years later little ¥O-LANDI VI\$\$ER got the guts to ask Mr Ballen if he would take a photograph for DIE ANTWOORDS album cover.

NINJA doesn't normally get nervous around anyone, but I was fokken nervous when me and ¥O-LANDI met with Mr Ballen for the 1st time in Johannesburg to discuss if this album cover photograph would work or not. Mr Ballen told us soon after we met that it probably would not work. Mr Ballen said that good images are very difficult to capture. He said an image is impossible.

In the deepest places of their hearts NINJA and ¥O-LANDI knew that if Roger Ballen created their \$0\$ album cover, then everything would get better. We called Die Antwoord album \$0\$ because if it didn't work, then we was fucked.

The \$0\$ limited-edition album cover is very special to us. This was the first photograph anyone ever took of Die Antwoord. It represents a beautifully desperate time of our lives when we thought we was going fokken mental. This image marks the beginning of NINJA and ¥O-LANDI's new magical mystery life. Dis mooi ne?

From: Yo-landi
Sent: 17 April 2012 07:50 PM
To: Roger Ballen
Subject: Re: roger ballen

Dear Mr Ballen

We learned a lot from working from Mr Ballen
because he is a genius.
He taught us that every single element in an image
should mean something.
You can stop on any 1 frame in the I FINK U FREEKY video
and you will be looking at a perfect photographic image.
That video is a masterpiece.
Roger Ballen is also hands down our favourite artist alive on Planet Earth.

His is on the same level as Salvador Dali and Hieronymous Bosch.
We just painted the inside of our whole house (walls, ceilings,
windows and
floors) to look like Roger Ballen's world.

We invited Mr Ballen for dinner recently.
He kept smiling the whole time like a psycho and talking to the
pictures on
the walls.



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Roger Ballen *Bath*
Scene, 2012
Pigment Print
Edition of 50
28 x 35 cm
POA



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Roger Ballen
Shack Scene, 2012
Pigment print
Edition of 50
28 x 35 cm
POA



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Roger Ballen
Yo-landi and Rats, 2012
Pigment print
Edition of 50
28 x 35 cm
POA



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Roger Ballen
Confrontation, 2018
Pigment print
Edition of 25
50 x 50 cm
POA



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Roger Ballen
Thrown Out, 2018
Pigment print
Edition of 25
50 x 50 cm
POA

ROGER BALLEEN | CV

EDUCATION

- 1982 PhD, Mineral Economics, University of Colorado
- 1982 MS, Geology, University of Colorado
- 1972 BA, Psychology, University of California. Berkeley

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 The Jewish Museum, New York, United States – to be confirmed
The Cleveland Museum, United States – to be confirmed
M Contemporary, Sydney
- 2017 Yu Deyao, China
The Centro Cultural Matucana 100, Santiago, Chile
Les Rencontres de la Photographie, Arles
Gamma Galeria, Guadalajara, Mexico
Hamiltons Gallery – London, United Kingdom
Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, United States
La ERRE Cultural Soace, Guatemala
Origins Centre Association, Johannesburg, South Africa
Guandong Museum, China
Akershus Kunstsenter, Lillestrom, Norway
Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand
Tauranga Art Gallery, Tauranga, New Zealand
Biennial Fotografica Bogota, Columbia
John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota Florida, United States
Stadtmuseum + Kunstsammlung Jena, Jena, Germany
- 2016 Gallery Momo, Johannesburg
Gallery Momo, Cape Town
Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, Australia
James Fuentes, New York City, United States
Natalie and James Thompson Art Gallery, San Jose State University, San Jose, United States
Carpentier Gallery, Berlin, Germany
Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia, Italy
Centro Fotografico Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mexico
Von der Heydt-Kunsthalle, Wuppertal-Barmen, Germany
Southeast Musuem of Photography, Daytona, United States
Etherton Gallery, Tucson, United States
Central Academy of Fine Art Museum, Beijing
Anzenberger Gallery, Handmade Show, Austria
SIPF Gillman Barracks, Singapore
Photokina, Cologne, Germany
Foto Museo de Cuatro Caminos, Mexico City
Izzy Gallery, Toronto, Canada
Hydra and Fotografia, Mexico
SNAP! Gallery, Orlando, Florida, United States
Wei-Ling Contemporary, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
City Gallery Palffy Palais – Bratislava
Sunaparanta, Goa Centre for the Arts, India
TEA Tenerife Space of Arts, Tenerife
Barbado Gallery, Lisboa, Portugal

- 2015
- Zemack Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel
 - Aura Gallery, China
 - Bogotá Photo Festival, Bogotá, Colombia
 - CAFAM, Beijing, China
 - Chazen Museum of Art, Wisconsin, United States
 - David Krut Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
 - Frigoriferi Milanese, Milan, Italy
 - Fried Gallery, Pretoria, South Africa
 - Galerie Karsten Greve, Köln, Germany
 - Galerie Rudolphe Janssen, Masks, Brussels, Belgium
 - Galerie Senda, Barcelona, Spain
 - Kafka House, Prague, Czech Republic
 - Kyotographie, Kyoto, Japan
 - La Fabrica, Madrid, Spain
 - Montserrat, Barcelona, Spain
 - Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil
 - Museum of Image, Braga, Portugal
 - Photoink, New Delhi, India
 - Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland
 - Serlachius Museum, Mänttä, Finland
- 2014
- Atlas Sztuki, Lodz, Poland
 - Christophe Guye Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland
 - Circa Gallery, Johannesburg
 - Festival de la Luz, Buenos Aires
 - Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden
 - Galerie Karsten Greve, Paris, France
 - Galerie Karsten Greve, One Man Show "Asylum of the Birds", Paris Photo, France
 - Kulungwana, Maputo, Mozambique
 - Kunst- und Kulturzentrum Monschau, Aachen, Deutschland
 - Moscow Media Centre, Moscow Russia
 - Musée Nicéphore Niépce, Chalon-sur-Saône, France
 - Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome, Italy
 - Museu Oscar Niemeyer, Brazil
 - Museum Dr. Guislain, Gent, Belgium
 - Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany
 - Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa
 - Paris Photo, Grand Palais, Paris, France
- 2013
- Samara State Art Museum, Samara
 - Tolyatti State Art Museum, Tolyatti
 - Belfast Photo Festival, Belfast, Northern Island
 - Galerie Clairefontaine, Luxembourg
 - Johannesburg Art Fair, South Africa
 - Maison De L'Image Documentaire, The CèTávoiR Association, Paris, France
 - Museum of Old and New, Hobart Australia
 - Nikolaj Copenhagen Contemporary Art Center, Denmark
 - Photoink, New Delhi, India
 - Pingao International Photography Festival, China
 - Palm Springs Art Museum, California, USA
 - Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington DC, USA
 - Westlicht, Schauplatz fur Fotografie, Vienna, Austria
- 2012
- Perm State Art Gallery, Perm
 - ROBA Gallery, Omsk
 - ROSPHOTO Museum Exhibition Centre, St. Petersburg, Russia
 - Novosibirsk State Art Museum, Novosibirsk
 - Metenkov House, Museum of photography, Ekaterinburg
 - Erdmann Contemporary & the Photographers Gallery za, Cape Town, South Africa

Guate Festival, Guatemala de la Asunción, Guatemala
 Kleinschmidt Fine Photographs, Wiesbaden, Germany
 Kunstalle, Vienna, Austria
 Manchester Art Museum, England
 Marta Herford Museum, Herford, Germany
 Musee de l'Elysee, Lausanne Switzerland
 Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Northwest University Museum, Potchestroom, South Africa
 Novosibirsk Art Museum, Russia
 Rosphoto, St. Pieterburg, Russia
 Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel
 2011 Fahey/Klein Gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA
 Fondazione Terre Medicee, Seravezza, Italy
 Galerie Alex Daniels – Reflex Amsterdam, The Netherlands
 Galleri Tom Christoffersen, Copenhagen, Denmark
 Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, Canada
 Mc Dermott Gallery, Siem Reap, Cambodia
 Museum Het Domein, Sittard, Netherlands
 Omsk Museum, Russia
 Sammlung Prinzhorn, Heidelberg, Germany
 2010 Bozar, Brussels
 Centro de Arte La Regenta, Las Palmas, Spain
 Comune di Arco/Galleria Civica, Italy
 Festival of Photography of Savignano, Italy
 Fondazione Terre Medicee, Italy
 Galeria Max Estrella, Spain
 Galeria Senda, Barcelona, Spain
 Galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris, France
 Galerie Sabine Knust, Munich, Germany
 Gallery Photographer RU, Moscow, Russia
 George Eastman House, Rochester, USA
 Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
 Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta, USA
 Lismore Regional Gallery, Australia
 Photonet Galerie, Wiesbaden, Germany
 Rooke Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa
 Sammlungsleiter Fotomuseum, Munich, Germany
 Stenersen Museum, Oslo
 Sydney Biennale, Australia
 Ubuntu, Berlin, Germany
 Ubuntu, Salzburg, Austria
 University of the Orange Free State, South Africa
 2009 Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand
 Aura Gallery, Shanghai
 City Museum of Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Gagosian Gallery, New York, USA
 Galerie Wolfsen, Denmark
 Galerija Fotografija, Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Hamiltons, London, United Kingdom
 Johnen Gallery, Berlin, Germany
 Massimo Minini, Brescia, Italy
 National Library of Australia, Canberra
 Ontario College of Art and Design, Toronto, Canada
 Triennale, Milan, Italy
 University of Johannesburg, South Africa
 University of Pretoria, South Africa

- 2008 AEREA / Christian Larsen, Stockholm, Sweden
BWA Gallery, Katowice, Poland
Galeria vanGuardia, Bilbao, Spain
Hertzelia Artists Host Centre, Tel Aviv, Israel
Omaggio a Federico Vender at Palazzo dei Panni of Arco Trento
Su Palatu, Sardinia
- 2007 Aura Gallery, Hong Kong
Art Gallery of Western Australia
Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto, Canada
Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany
Galerie Photonet, Wiesbaden, Germany
Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta, USA
Johannesburg Art Gallery, Johannesburg
Robert Klein Gallery, Boston
Trafo Gallery, Oslo, Norway
YOURS Gallery, Warsaw, Poland
- 2006 Museum voor Fotografie, Antwerp, Belgium.
Deichtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany.
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.
The Consejería de Cultura y Deportes de la Comunidad de Madrid.
Atlanta College of Arts, GA.
Sheppard Fine Arts Gallery, Reno, NV.
Sasol Art Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa.
Oliewenhuis Art Museum, Bloemfontein, South Africa.
Berlin Biennial, Berlin
Galerie Johnen + Schöttle, Cologne
Galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris
Guido Costa Projects, Torino
Jackson Fine Art, Atlanta, USA
Photographer's Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
Sasol Art Museum, Stellenbosch, South Africa
- 2005 Aura Gallery, Shanghai
Gagosian Gallery, New York
Reflex Gallery, Amsterdam.
Museum voor Fotografie, Antwerp, Belgium.
Frans Hals Museum, Amsterdam.
Durban Art Gallery, South Africa.
- 2004 State Museum of Russia, St. Petersburg.
Roger Ballen Photographs, Berkeley Art Museum, University of California.
Le Chateau d'eau à Toulouse, France.
Dieci Comme Ltd., Tokyo.
- 2003 Galleria Carla Sozzani, Italy.
Galerie Mennour, Paris.
- 2002 Galleria D'arte Moderna Bologna, Italy.
Gagosian Gallery, Beverly Hills.
Musée Nicephore Niepce, Chalon-sur-Saone, France.
Museo Nazionale Italy, Brescia, Italy.
Nuku Gallery, Oulu, Finland.
Museet for Fotokunst, Odense, Denmark.
Russian Museum, Museum Ludwig, St. Petersburg, Russia.
Museum for Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA.
Sala Rekalde, Bilbao, Spain.
Centro Cultural de Maia, O'Porto, Spain.
Gallery of Photography, Dublin, Ireland.
OUTLAND, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy.
OUTLAND, Gagosian Gallery, New York.

- 2001 Rupertinum, Salzburg, Austria.
 Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, South Africa.
 Fotoforum, Frankfurt, Germany.
 Association for Visual Arts, Cape Town, South Africa.
 Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany.
 Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.
 Hasselbald Center, Goteborg, Sweden.
 International Photo Festival, Herten, Germany.
 PhotoEspana, Madrid.
 Kicken Gallery, Berlin.
 Michael Hoppen Gallery, London.
 Encontros da imagem, Braga, Portugal.
 Krefelder Kunstmuseen, Krefeld, Germany.
 Printemps de Septembre, Toulouse, France.
- 2000 Royal Theatre of Namur, Belgium.
 Month of Photography, Thessaloniki, Greece.
 Noordlicht, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
 Sani Festival, Greece.
 Museum of Photography, Athens, Greece.
- 1999 Fait & Cause, Paris.
 Melkweg, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
 Month of Photography, Bratislava, Slovakia.
 Month of Photography, Cape Town, South Africa.
- 1998 Kunstal Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.
 Lumo '98, Finland.
 Kunsthau, Zürich.
- 1996 Eindhoven Photographic Festival, Holland.
 Tarranto Gallery, New York.
- 1995 Arles Photographic Festival, Arles, France.
 Royal Festival Hall/Hayward Gallery, London.

COLLECTIONS

Centro Fotografico Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Mexico
 Museum of Contemporary Art, Italy
 Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, China
 Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia
 The Jewish Museum, New York City, United States
 Pori Art Museum, Pori, Finland
 Serlachius Museum, Mänttä, Finland
 Berkeley Art Museum, California
 Biblioteque Nationale, Paris
 Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Alabama, USA
 Brooklyn Museum, New York, USA
 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France
 Durban Art Gallery, Durban, South Africa
 Fotomuseum, Munchen, Germany
 George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, USA
 Haifa Museum of Art, Israel
 Hasselblad, Goteborg, Sweden
 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, USA
 Johannesburg Art Museum, South Africa
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA
 Louisiana Museum, Denmark
 Maison Europeene de la Photographie, Paris
 Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester. United Kingdom

MONA Museum, Hobart, Tasmania
Musée de la Photographie à Charleroi, Belgium
Musée de l'Elysee , Lausanne, Switzerland
Museet for Fotokunst, Denmark
Museo nazionale Della Fotografia, Brescia, Italy
Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany
Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, USA
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA
Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa
National Museum of Film and Photography, Bradford UK
Palm Springs Art Museum, California
Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia
Oliewenhuis, Bloemfontein, South Africa
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Spencer Art Museum, Kansas, USA
State Museum of Russia, Moscow, Russia
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Tate Britain, London, UK
Tel Aviv Museum, Israel
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Virginia, USA
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, USA

AWARDS

The Asia Pacific Brands Foundation Legendary Award, 2017
Suddeutsche Zeitung Magazin, Artist of the year, 2014 (See Issue 46, November 14 2014)
Lucie Award, Finalist for Solo Exhibition of the year, George Eastman House, 2010
PhotoEspana 2009, Madrid Spain, Honourable mention
Best Photographic Book of the Year for Boarding House
Art Directors Club Award Photography 2006
Top 10 Exhibition 2004, Matthew Higgs, Artforum, December 2004
Honorable Mention, UNICEF Photo of the Year 2004
Top 10 Exhibition 2002, Vince Aletti, Artforum, December 2002
Photographer of the Year 2002, Rencontres d'Arles, July 2002
Photo-eye, Best Documentary Title, Best Photography Books of 2001
Special mention : UNICEF Photo of the Year 2001
PhotoEspana 2001, Madrid Spain, Best Photographic Book of the Year
Sani Festival, Thessaloniki Greece, Best Solo Exhibition, February 2000