



ROGER BALLEEN
BALLENESQUE
A Psychological Journey

April 16th – May 16th, 2026

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 16th, 2026: 5-8pm

Image: Roger Ballen, *Baffled*, 2020, Archival Pigment Print

Throckmorton Fine Art is honored to announce its first-ever exhibition of works by the internationally acclaimed artist, Roger Ballen. Titled **BALLENESQUE**, this comprehensive career-spanning exhibition invites viewers into the psychological depths of one of the most influential and provocative photographers of the 21st century.

Roger Ballen's photographs span over fifty years. He achieved international recognition through his unique and powerful use of drawing, painting, and collage alongside various sculptural techniques in elaborate installations, inventing a new, hybrid aesthetic, firmly rooted in the art of photography. His strange and extreme works confront viewers and challenge them to join him on a journey into their own minds as he explores the deeper recesses of his own.

Moving away from his early documentary roots in rural South Africa, Ballen developed a unique aesthetic style. This signature approach blurs the lines between painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography, creating complex, multi-layered installations that explore the "shadow side" of the human psyche.

This distinctive style of photography has evolved using a simple square format in stark and beautiful black and white. Ballen's earlier works from the 1970s in the exhibition established his connection to the tradition of documentary photography, through the 1990s when he developed a style he describes as 'documentary fiction.' After 2000, the line between fantasy and reality became increasingly blurred in Ballen's work, employing drawing, painting, collage and sculptural techniques to create elaborate sets. There was an absence of people altogether, with photographs of individuals used as props, as well as doll or dummy parts; 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 completed by the unpredictable behaviour of animals, whose ambiguous behaviour became crucial to the overall meaning of the photographs.

The exhibition features iconic images from his most celebrated series, including Dorps, Platteland, Outland, Shadow Chamber, and Asylum of the Birds. Visitors will witness the evolution of Ballen's vision: from the stark, empathetic portraits of marginalized communities to his later, more abstract "docu-fiction" works where human subjects, animals, and stray objects interact within claustrophobic, hand-drawn interiors.

Ballen has published over 25 books internationally. Ballen has also been the creator of several acclaimed and exhibited short films that dovetail with his photographic series and was one of the artists who represented South Africa at the Venice Biennale Arte 2022.

He is also the founder and executive director of the Inside Out Centre for the Arts and the Roger Ballen Centre for Photography in Johannesburg. The Centre aims to promote awareness of International and African-related issues through art and educational programmes.

In September 2025, Thames and Hudson released *Spirits and Spaces*, Ballen's first colour book which reveals his creative vision in colour. In November 2025, Postcard in Rome, published *Inferno*, which consists of sixty-eight photographs by Ballen corresponding to the thirty-four cantos of Dante Alighieri, in the English translation by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1867), with a preface by Didi Bozzini in collaboration with Marguerite Rossouw. His works are in more than 50 major international museum collections. Including the permanent collections of the *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)*, the *Centre Pompidou*, and the *Tate Modern*.

This exhibition offers a rare opportunity for New York audiences to experience the full trajectory of his dark, witty, and deeply philosophical career. "We are thrilled to introduce our collectors to the hauntingly beautiful world of Roger Ballen," says Spencer Throckmorton. "His ability to transform the mundane into the monumental—and the unsettling into the profound—is unmatched. Bringing Ballenesque to our gallery marks a significant milestone in our commitment to showcasing masterworks of contemporary photography."

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