

**ROGER BALLEEN*****BOARDING HOUSE***

The art of Roger Ballen is impossible to forget. It goes deep. Gets at places we didn't know were there. Maybe hoped weren't there. It makes us wild. It opens us up to those uncertain, shocking and frighteningly banal aspects of the waking dream, twitching between animal and human, the clean and the unclean, the animate and the inanimate, the lived and the imagined, the natural and the performed. Blurring the boundaries between documentary photography and art, his work is both a powerful social statement and a complex psychological study.

Max Estrella Gallery is pleased to present the latest work by Roger Ballen, a new collection of photographs by the South African photographer. This is Ballen's most formally sophisticated work to date. The tableaux have a greater emphasis on drawn and sculptural elements, and the sense of collaboration between the artist and his subjects is increasingly relevant.

**Boarding House** is a space of transient residence, of comings and goings, of people sheltered in a place they are using for their immediate survival. Basic and fundamental, the structure is furnished with objects necessary for an elementary existence, decorated with evocative drawings, and littered throughout with animals. Remnants function there as physical symbols of events that have occurred in the space; broken pieces of a functional reality exist as the leftovers of scenarios that have been played out there. The altered sense of place of this temporary abode creates a sense of alienation, which acts as a jumping off point for the imagination to run wild. Whether the place is real or imaginary is both indecipherable and irrelevant. It is a place where Ballen's subconscious and the viewer's inhibitions can occupy its own universe.

**Roger Ballen** was born in New York in 1950. Since 1982 he has been living and taking photographs in South Africa. In 2001 *Outland* (Phaidon Press) received the Best Photography Book of the Year Award at PhotoEspaña. In 2002 Ballen won the Photographer of the Year Award at the inaugural Rencontres d'Arles Awards. Since 2002 Ballen has had over fifty exhibitions worldwide, including one-man shows at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and Gagosian Gallery in New York. His work is represented in many museums, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern

Art in New York and, recently, BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels held a retrospective exhibition of his work.

**Roger Ballen**

**GALERIA MAX ESTRELLA.** Santo Tomé, 6 (patio). Madrid, Spain.

December 14<sup>th</sup> 2010 to January 29th 2011.

Monday to Friday: 10 am to 2 pm / 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Saturdays: 11 am to 2 pm / 5 pm to 8:30 pm.

Opening: Tuesday, December 14th at 8 pm.