

PRESS RELEASE

Roger Ballen: Spirits and Spaces

The first monograph to present Roger Ballen's venture into colour Photography – out in September 2025



Leopard Lady, 2019 (left) | Cover of *Spirits and Spaces* (middle) | Evacuate, 2019 (right), all images: copyright Roger Ballen

For 50 years, the internationally acclaimed photographer **Roger Ballen** has been inviting viewers to explore the human condition and that place where the conscious and subconscious intersect through his exhibitions, installations, and over 20 books. ***Roger Ballen: Spirits and Spaces* (Thames & Hudson, September 30, 2025)** is the first monograph to present Roger Ballen's venture into color photography—a visual revelation that remains grounded in the haunting, absurd psychological space of the Ballenesque.

In his essay for the book, Ballen reflects on how color contributes to his considerations of the physical and metaphysical, "As I had delved deeper into color photography, I had begun to appreciate how it adds a distinct ethereality and complexity to my work, enriching the psychological spaces within my images."

Having previously worked solely in black and white, Ballen was inspired to explore this shift after receiving a Leica SL camera as a gift in 2016. Opening up to the potential of colour in his work, Ballen re-examined his images' relationships to light, depth, texture and form. With nearly 100 photographs, the much-anticipated new monograph *Spirits and Spaces* eloquently captures the bizarre world of Roger Ballen, where animals and Art Brut-like drawings dominate, and humanity is reduced to obscure figures or fragmented body parts.

Roger Ballen: Spirits and Spaces is divided into six sections each including a brief preface written by Ballen framing the particular grouping. The titles: *Childhood, Spectre, Animus, Shadow, Libido, Chaos* reference Jungian archetypes of the subconscious, and invite viewers to further deepen their

engagement with the layers present within each image. Symbolism and metaphor combine with shape and form throughout his images, to provide reference points that lure the viewer into their own subconscious and memory bank.

Created in conjunction with Ballen's artistic director Marguerite Rossouw, the new colour images in *Spirits and Spaces*, were produced in a claustrophobic space constructed of worn, wallpapered wooden panels and with minimalistic lighting. Here, in this dense, oppressive environment, Ballen creates what might be seen by many as a world that is unexplainable in words: one in which absurdity, chaos, comedy and tragedy apparently exist side by side.



Combustion, 2024, (left) | Omnipresent, 2021 (middle), Conqueror, 2019 (right), all images: copyright Roger Ballen

About the Author and Contributor

Roger Ballen is one of the most important and distinctive photographers working today. His previous books include *Asylum of the Birds*, *The Theatre of Apparitions*, *Ballenesque – Roger Ballen: A Retrospective*, and *The World According to Roger Ballen*. More at www.rogerballen.com and @rogerballen

Colin Rhodes (Introduction) is a writer, artist, and educator. He has written and lectured widely on modern and contemporary art and is a specialist on expressionism, primitivism, and outsider art.

Roger Ballen: Spirits and Spaces, published by Thames & Hudson, with an introduction by Colin Rhodes, to be released on 30 September 2025, hardcover, 91 photographs, 144 pages, size: 11.4 x 12.1 inches, ISBN-10: 0500028923 | ISBN-13: 9780500028926, Price: \$ 60 / £ 40 / EUR 49

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