

UNLEASHED

ROGER BALLEEN AND HANS LEMMEN



© Hans Lemmen and Roger Ballen

Like an exquisite corpse, Roger Ballen – a major photographer on the international stage – and Hans Lemmen, an artist masterfully inspired by the questions surrounding the representation of nature, indulge in the disturbing game, working as a pair, pushing one another so each incorporates the approach of the other. A constraint that stimulates, beyond the artistic game, awakening more formal echoes that reveal a deep affinity between their two artistic worlds.

Between Roger Ballen and Hans Lemmen the clear community of their imagination erases the distance that separates them. In the Netherlands, Hans Lemmen reduces Roger Ballen's photographs to simple fragments. He then completes the resulting pieces, or inserts them into graphic compositions. Thousands of kilometres away, Roger Ballen uses certain of Hans Lemmen's drawings that he then includes in an installation in turn destined to be photographed. Since moving to South Africa, Ballen continues to explore the troubled margins of mankind, where precariousness is extreme and, solely concerned with surviving, mankind has neither the capacity nor the vanity to seek an escape from nature. This lack of definition is reflected in particular in man's extreme closeness, his promiscuity with animals.

However Roger Ballen does not only restrict himself to this political interpretation. In the manner of Samuel Beckett, whom he sees as the source for his approach, his work is universal in scope. His images express the absurdity of the human condition. A strong statement that is equally a work of psychological investigation. The images of those who have been left behind, who pose for the camera, are so many self-portraits as if, in their poverty, Ballen's models hold up a mirror that reflects the dark side of the photographer himself. They explore the worrying and uncertain morphology of his psyche.

In a cultural and social context very different from that of the African continent, Hans Lemmen explores in his own way the imaginary territory where man and animal mix. In his graphic work, as in his sculpture, the artist pursues a tireless quest for origins. Fascinated from childhood by the footprint left in the ground by our prehistoric ancestors, he remains nostalgic for the time when man did not live as if he were external to nature. Through a certain artistic primitivism, he denounces the suffering of the earth and of living species battered by modernity.

The exhibition at the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature offers an opportunity to follow the creative process of the two artists. The artists themselves, represented by two life-size seated figures with the eyes of animals, welcome visitors through an installation they created jointly. They sit in the first room, accompanied by their pets and surrounded by contemporary parietal art: an illustration that runs along the four walls and across floor of the room. The second part of the exhibition, devoted to personal and individual work, precedes the unpublished graphic works born of the collaboration between Ballen and Lemmen, on the principle of inclusion and reciprocal borrowing. To conclude the exhibition, a video documenting the production of these works, so foreign to their respective practices, show how art thrives on constraints such as those defined here.

The exhibition is co-produced by the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht where it will be shown in 2018.

CURATORS

Claude d'Anthenaise
and Jan-Philipp Fruehsorge

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

62, rue des Archives
75003 Paris
The museum is open daily except
Mondays and bank holidays,
11:00 am to 6:00 pm and 11:00 am
to 9:30 pm on Wednesdays.
Full price: 8 euros
Reduced price: 6 euros

A bilingual catalogue (French/
English is published to coincide
with the exhibition by Kerber,
directed by Jan-Philipp Fruehsorge.

In partnership with
Bonnefantenmuseum in
Maastricht, the Mois de la Photo
du Grand Paris, Art Paris Art
Fair, Drawing Now Salon,
Mondriaan Foundation,
the Karsten Greve gallery

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PROJECTION

**WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH
AT 7:30 PM**

ROGER BALLEEN'S OUTLAND
Directed by Ben Jay Crossman (4'50")

FOLLOWING OBSERVATION II
Directed by Hans Lemmen,
Composer : Armeno Alberts
(15', 2015)