

## UNNAMED ROAD

Jungjin Lee

▣ Mack

▣ Hardback, £35

This intriguing and very beautiful book by Jungjin Lee is part of a project entitled *This Place*, which looks at Israel and the West Bank through the eyes of 12 photographers, hopefully arriving at a many-faceted portrait.

Lee's approach is unusual. She writes: '...the layers of history and conflict, fear and hostility, frustrated my camera.' So, instead of turning to the people, she turns to the landscape. 'I tried to gaze at the land, without prejudice or judgement,' she says. The results are strangely unnerving, aesthetically pleasing and dramatically composed – the land, often barren and featureless, holds remnants of those who have lived in this troubled land.

The images are beautifully printed on an off-white fine art paper and the book itself is a fold-out concertina held together by its hard covers. Simply beautiful but with veiled meaning.

Elizabeth Roberts



## OUTLAND

Roger Ballen

▣ Phaidon Press

▣ Hardback, £39.95

Singly or in pairs, old men, women, children and adolescents act out a drama known only to them and, possibly, Ballen. Enigmatic and compelling, the photographs touch a nerve. This second edition has additional images that serve to further enhance its strangeness.

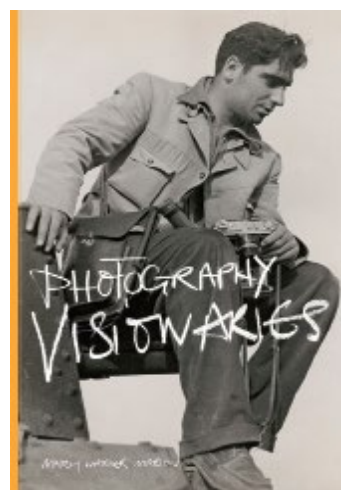
Elizabeth Roberts

To create an anthology of the most influential photographers from the 19th century to the present day is a pretty ambitious project, but Mary Warner Marien has made a good and comprehensive job of it.

Each profile contains a write-up, several key pictures, a time-line and, intriguingly, a picture of the photographer. There are few surprises among the laurelled heads – August Sander, Paul Strand, Cartier-Bresson, Cindy Sherman and Annie Leibovitz to name but a few of the exceptional photographers who have shaped photography from its outset.

*Photography Visionaries* would make a great guide for those wanting an overview of photographic history and a brief insight into individual photographers. The text is engaging and well written and the reproduction very good – a great reference book and an inspiring read.

Elizabeth Roberts

PHOTOGRAPHY  
VISIONARIES

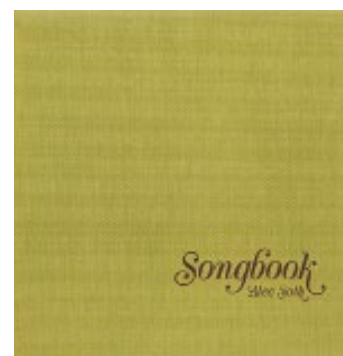
Mary Warner Marien

▣ Laurence King

▣ Softback, £24.95

When Ballen first started documenting rural South Africa in the late 1980s his work focused on the socially marginalised inhabitants of the farms and homesteads. The result was a series of unsettling psychological portraits. As this work progressed over time, he began to invite his subjects to act in a staged set that he created. The props were wires, derelict beds and sofas and broken articles of furniture, in what seems like an abandoned building. The subjects were often accompanied by small animals such as kittens, puppies and rats. The effect is disquieting to say the least.

Ballen's subjects act out a tableaux of infinite weirdness. They draw on walls, manhandle the animals, turn their backs or stare straight into the camera.



## SONGBOOK

Alec Soth

▣ Mack

▣ Hardback, £40

For two years, from 2012 to 2014, Magnum photographer Alec Soth took on the guise of a community newspaper reporter, travelling from state to state in the US, searching out and photographing meetings, dances, festivals and community events. The images in *Songbook* are the result.

Devoid of their once newsworthy content, the pictures speak of people lost, searching, vulnerable and brave – individuals as part of a community into which they fit, semi-fit or stand outside of. Tender, humorous and candid, Soth's eye is never cruel.

Shot entirely in black & white, *Songbook* is a fragmented insight into everyday American life, transformed by Soth in the act of taking a photograph. Bizarre, mundane, amusing or sad, these pictures are both a comment on society and an insightful look at what it is to be human. There are also one or two that make you chuckle.

Elizabeth Roberts

*'Songbook is a fragmented insight into everyday American life, transformed by Soth in the act of taking a photograph.'*