

PORTRAIT OF A NEW GENERATION MAXIME BALLESTEROS' SUBJECTIVE REALITY

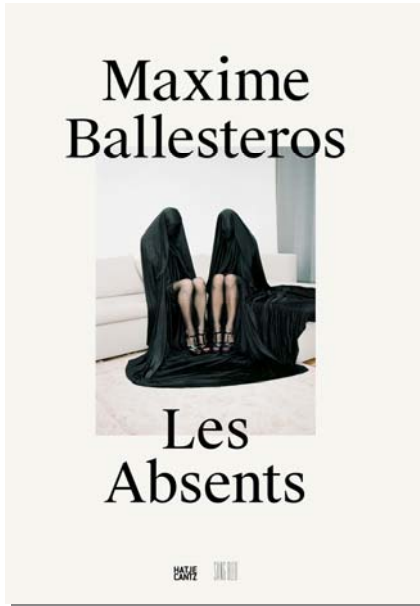
Strong, emphatically physical, and always a bit surreal, the Berlin-based artist Maxime Ballesteros uses flash and analogue images to paint his view of a world in which borders are dissolving and a subjective reality comes to light. Now, Hatje Cantz is publishing his first monograph, *Les Absents*.

Berlin, June 27, 2017 — “I do carry a camera with me all the time. And take photos everyday or almost. Which I guess is very banal in today’s instagrated world. But more than the need to document everything, it’s more a need of being ready when I see something.” From the time the French photographer Maxime Ballesteros (*1984) first picked up a camera as a teen, he hasn’t put it down. He shoots photographs in the moment, following his protagonists to wild parties, private apartments, and the beach at dawn—shimmering and excessive, sharp and always in style. No wonder that fashion and lifestyle magazines such as *Purple*, *Numéro*, *Vice*, and *o32c* are so eager to book the Berlin-based artist.

Whether he’s working on commission or on his own, Ballesteros always takes analogue photographs, and this technique creates a desirable lag between an event and its reproduction. It’s particularly appealing when he’s capturing scenes from a night of partying and there is already a big appetite for his pictures during the evening. But this approach also works for commissions: “Would it be on a commissioned shoot or in a personal situation, neither you are the subject are able to see what’s happening. So you have to trust each other. And I like that the subject is not confronted to an image of themselves. They can forget about themselves a little bit more I think, open up. So we can really share something together. We see in each other movements, eyes, attitude what works or not. It becomes very sensitive.” Ballesteros compares analogue photography to archery: “It’s maybe a bit like shooting an arrow and try to hit what you are aiming for in your head, versus a machine gun, shooting away being sure you’ll hit something.” Even though his pictures often look as if they’ve been shot on the spur of the moment, closer inspection reveals stringent features: “Never use a zoom, if you have to get closer, use your body. Never reframe or crop an image. If it doesn’t work the way you took it originally, you just have to aim and anticipate better. And don’t take two frames of the same thing.”

Ballesteros lives to take pictures, to visualize his subjective view of things. His photographs show a section of the world. If the artist adds a flash, a transformation occurs. The photo becomes part of Ballesteros’ reality, his power of imagination. “The same way the world from the nights, our dreams and nightmares, lives and share part of our brain with the world we experience with open eyes,” says the thirty-three-year-old in an interview with Hatje Cantz photo consultant Nadine Barth.

Les Absents is now the cutting-edge artist’s first monograph, produced in cooperation with the visionary culture and fashion network *Sang Bleu* in London. The publication contains 217 large color illustrations on just about 280 pages. Parallel to the book release, selected works by Ballesteros will be shown from July 5th to July 16th at the Gallery Johann König in Berlin.



**MAXIME BALLESTEROS
LES ABSENTS**

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Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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