

## HELENA-ALEXANDRA REUT

Born in 1982 in Minsk, Belarus, Helena Reut is the daughter of an art curator and nuclear physicist. She studied in Moscow (Russian State Humanities University, Faculty of the History of Religion; Moscow Institute of Applied Arts), and in Warsaw (Academy of Fine Arts, supervised by Piotr Welk, Warsaw School of Photography (directed by Marian Schmidt), the British Higher School of Art and Design and others.

Her work plays with Russian traditions, conventions of portraiture and the expectations of the viewer. Her quirky, arresting and often humorous style incorporates the depiction of figures from literature, history and purely fictional circumstances. In the words of the artist.....

*“The role of visual art is to express that which no other medium can convey. The exquisiteness of a painting is its inexplicable something - its striving for sacrum. For centuries it did this by exploring explicitly religious themes - biblical scenes, myths and fables. I believe this heritage is vital for the continued relevance of art, which is why I draw inspiration from, for example, the medieval period, the Fayum portraits, and difficult questions about the roots of the Slavic peoples - themes related to the art of bygone ages and the spirits of those times. The techniques used by those artists also fascinate me, and I try to employ and re-interpret their methods in my*

*own work. Walter Benjamin wrote about the aura of the work of art, and lamented its loss in the age of mechanical reproduction. I draw my subjects from history, mythology and the imagination because that is where I believe "aura" has its roots. I strive for that unspoken quantity through which a painting can enchant and even haunt its viewer, like in Gogol's famous story "The Portrait". Sadly I find that quality is missing in most of what passes as "conceptual" art today. I am convinced that contemporary art needs to turn away from loud and effective gestures and contemplate more deeply the world we live in and our relation to this world. Artists need to return to the image its original essence. "*

Helena Reut

**Selected exhibitions and projects:**

2013 Affordable Art Fair (AAF), London, UK, with Carina Haslam Art (CHA)

Cambridge Art Fair, with CHA

2012 Carina Haslam Gallery, Spring Show, Gt Missenden, UK

AAF, London, UK, with CHA

2012 "Fairytale", i2 Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, UK

2011 Carina Haslam Art, Affordable Art Fair, London, UK

2011 Individual Exhibition, i2 Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, UK

2011 Il Museo su una parete. Ar(T)cevia, Jesi, Arcevia (Ancona), Italy

2011 Individual Exhibition "What is Belarus?", King's Art Centre, Cambridge.

2009-2010 Print series (mixed technique – Photography with Etching) "Here/Now or Nowhere? / Nasi obcy".

2007-2008 Joint project with Marcin Wilczyński "From Warsaw to Terespol", Warsaw and Łuków.

2007 Scholarship Programme of the Culture Minister of Poland “Gaude Polonia” –  
Photographic Media Project “LIFE transIT”, realised in “WRO” Media Arts Centre,  
Wrocław

2006 Individual Exhibition “Circus”, Exhibition Hall of the Moscow Institute of Applied  
Arts

2006 Creative Competition of the Moscow Institute of Applied Arts, 1st place for  
Graphics and Illustration, Prize and Scholarship from University Rector

2005 Exhibition “The Invisible”, Exhibition Hall of the Moscow Institute Applied Arts.