

voz' galerie

REVUE DE PRESSE

INTA RUKA

présentée par la VOZ'GALERIE

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Alise Tifentale

THERE WAS PHOTOGRAPHY BEFORE INSTAGRAM

HOME NEWS ARTICLES BOOKS TALKS CURATING

Photographer Inta Ruka

“Photographer Inta Ruka. [An interview with photographer Andrejs Grants],” in Helēna Demakova, ed., *The Self. Personal Journeys to Contemporary Art: The 1960s–1980s in Soviet Latvia* (Riga: Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, 2011), 364–374. ISBN 9789934801037.



Inta Ruka (b. 1958) is one of the most well-known Latvian photographers who has achieved great success in portraiture. Among her signature series are: *My Country People* (1983–1998), *People I Have Met* (1999–2004), and *5a Amalijas Street* (2004–2008). The creative development of Ruka in the 1980s is closely related to the young generation that was defining its position in the photography of this decade, “the new wave of photography.” They turned to documentary material. The documentary as “un-manipulated” or “uncompromising” realism for them opened up new avenues for photography that were opposite to the principles of image making and aesthetics cultivated in the Latvian photographic art in the 1960s and 1970s.

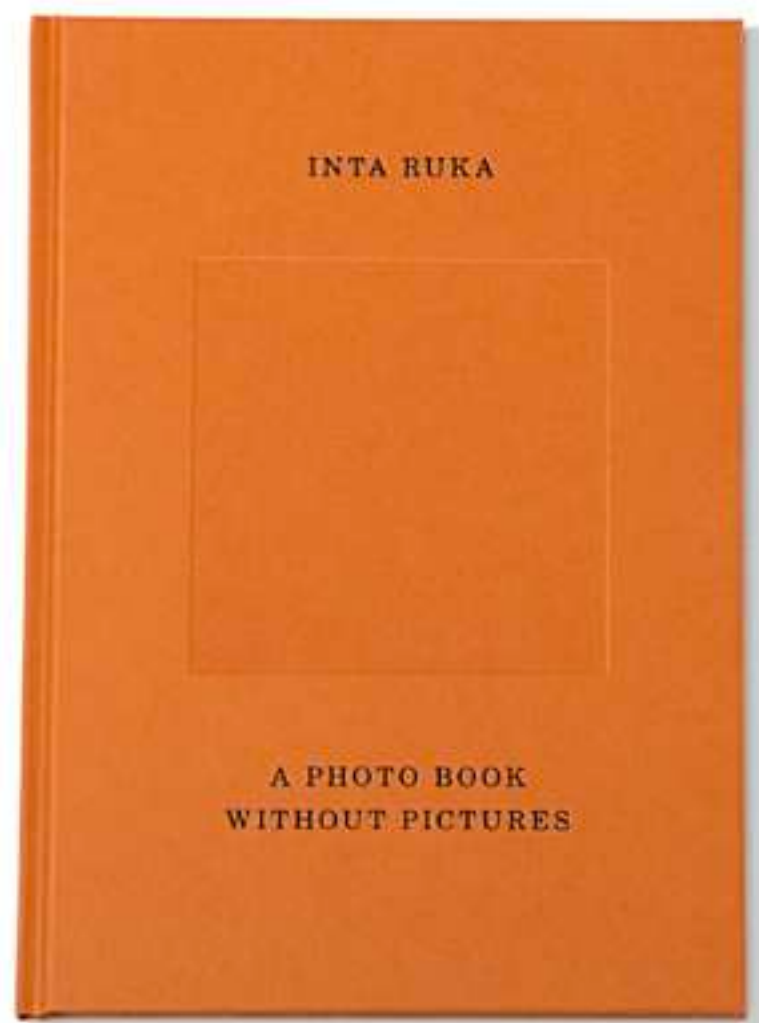
Ruka and other then young photographers, including Andrejs Grants, attracted attention of the curators of art exhibitions at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, such as Helena Demakova, Vid Ingelevics, Philip Legros, Barbara Straka and others. Reviewing the catalogues of the first important exhibitions of Latvian photography in the West in the late 1980s and early 1990s, one will always find the name of Ruka in the list of participants, along Andrejs Grants, Egons Spuris, Gvido Kajons, or Valts Kleins.

Grants and Ruka emerged from a milieu connected to The Ogre Camera Club, named after its location – a town not far from Riga. The club was led by photographer Egons Spuris, Ruka’s teacher and husband. Andrejs Grants in this conversation discusses the context and conditions under which the new wave of photography could arise in Latvia and such artists as Ruka develop.

The Bigger Picture

Printed Matter
by Chris

The Latvian photographer Inta Ruka is famous for her portrait photography. She has portrayed fellow human beings in their daily lives throughout her career, with great honesty and curiosity. The background to her intimate imagery are long conversations she has beforehand with her subjects, helping her to convey “*the whole picture*.” She also complements her photographs with texts; anecdotes, comments, stories from their calls. That way she pushes the idea of the limits of the photograph and what can be included in a photographic work. The text helps to capture the whole picture of the people she meets and portrays. Following Inta Ruka’s exhibition ‘You and Me’ at the Stockholm-based [Fotografiska](#), which took place from the 5th of October until the 8th of December 2013, and in her honor, the book *The Bigger Picture: A Photo Book Without Pictures* was published. A highly fascinating publication carrying just Inta Ruka texts written for her photographs, without the actual images. The ambition behind this fascinating project is to challenge the reader with the question what the intrinsic qualities of photography are.



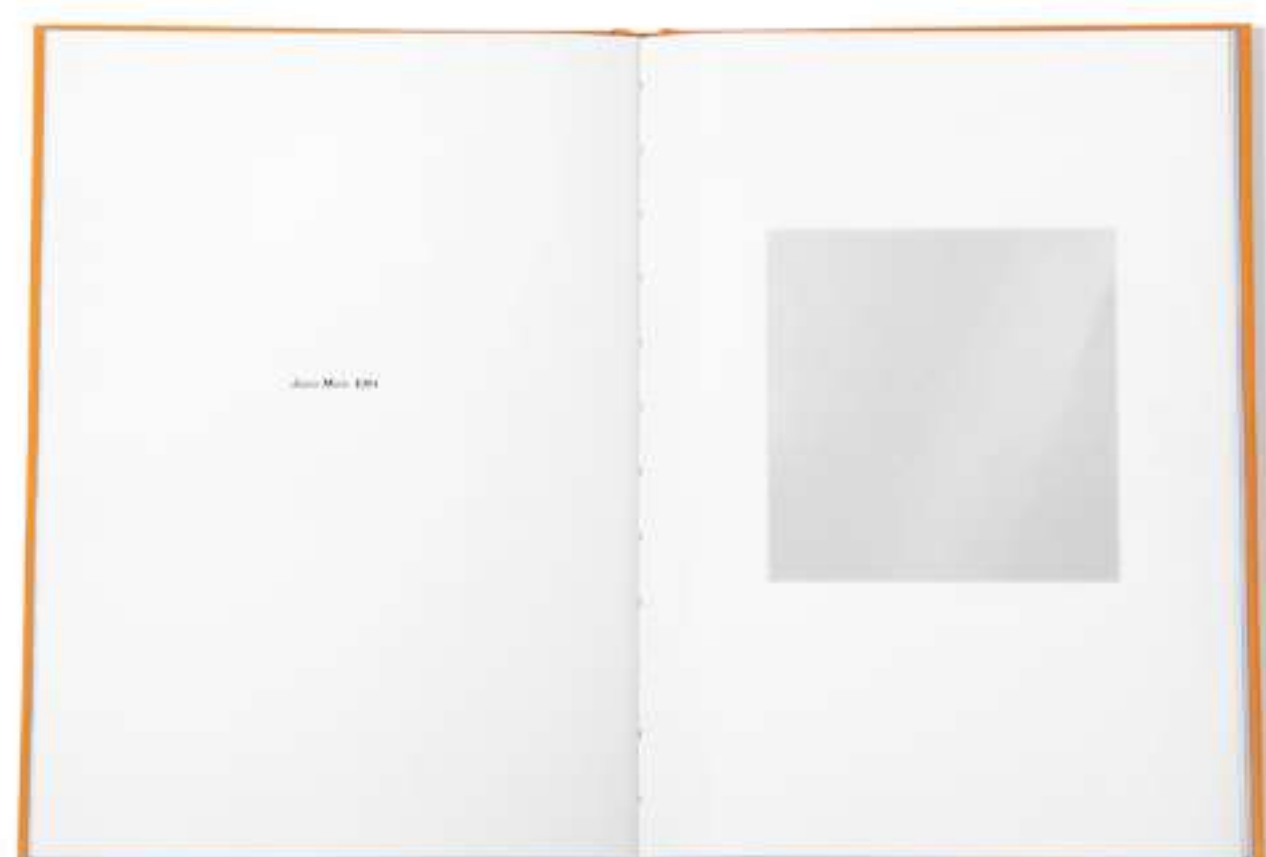
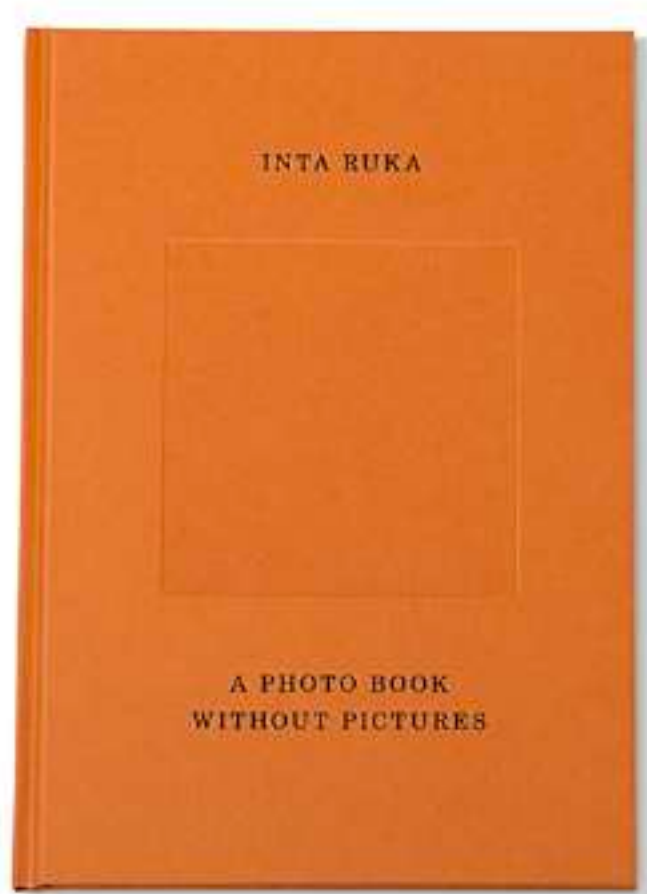
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Inta Ruka was born in Riga in 1958 and after high school graduated as a seamstress. Through her graduation gift, a camera, her life as a photographer started. Ruka received a scholarship from the Hasselblad Foundation in 1998, the Spidola Award of the Latvian Culture Foundation in 1999 and a scholarship from the Villa Waldberta in Feldafing in 2002. One year later, the Artist’s Union of Latvia awarded her the “Prize of the Year 2003.” She is known for the honesty in her works. For over thirty years, Inta Ruka curiously portrayed her countrymen. With a series of exhibitions around the world, she is today Latvia’s most internationally acclaimed photographer and she counts as one of the foremost contemporary portrait photographers. The exhibition ‘*You and Me*’ at Fotografiska consisted of more than 50 works and the documentary made by her close friend [Maud Nycander](#).

We love the beautiful work of Inta Ruka and are inspired by this conceptual publication questioning, and in our eyes empowering, the strength of photography.

For more information on the work of Inta Ruka see [here](#).



NEWS

Inta Ruka's Book Published in Sweden

Arterritory.com

23/05/2012

In the middle of May, the Swedish publishing house *Max Ström* came out with the voluminous book "People I Know", featuring photographs by the Latvian photographer Inta Ruka (1958). With text in both English and Swedish, the retrospective includes more than 150 photographs from three of Ruka's most famous photo series: "My Country People", "People I've Met", and "Amālija Street 5a". For almost 20 years, the publisher *Max Ström* has dealt in issuing mostly large-format photographic books. Seventeen people work at the publishing house, turning out approximately twenty books a year; their offices are on the Stockholm island of Skeppsholmen, right next to the Museum of Modern Art, where Ruka had a solo show in 2008. This summer, Ruka's solo show will be held at the Stockholm exhibition space *Katerineholms Konsthall*. The opening is scheduled for May 31, which will also be the official public presentation of the new book; the solo show will be exhibited until August 19.



Inta Ruka's 1986 photograph "Iveta, Edgars and Daina Tavarē, Balvi, Latvia"

Proud of the beautiful new book, we contacted Inta Ruka to learn more about its history. "Jeppe Wikström, the head of the publishing house, came up with the idea of publishing a retrospective book. He had seen my photographs in Stockholm, and had a finished idea and title for the book, before work on it had even begun," says Ruka, who is very satisfied with the results. "The book has simply fantastic type, it's very high quality work. For an artist, it's both great luck and an honor if an international publisher wants to put out a book like that." Selection of the photographs was done by Ruka's good friend and colleague, Lars Tunbjörk, in cooperation with the designer Patric Leo. An essay on Ruka's creative career, by Ute Eskildsen, head of the Essen Photography Museum, is also included in the new book.



Inta Ruka

Inta Ruka is one of today's most well-known masters of portrait photography; her international success began in 1999, when she represented Latvia at the Venice Biennial. On the homepage of *Max Ström* publishing house, Ruka is described as "the most famous photographer in Latvia". Ruka has participated in many international exhibitions, and her work can be found in various collections, such as those of the already-mentioned Museum of Modern Art in Stockholm, the Essen Photography Museum, KUMU, and elsewhere.

www.maxstrom.se

Moderna Museet

[Exhibitions](#) [Contact](#)

Stockholm



Inta Ruka

15 Nov 2008



Inta Ruka
Gerda Kristapsone and Valters Kristapsons, 2005
© Inta Ruka

INTA RUKA

Moderna Museet Now - "Amalias Street 5a"

24 October - 14 December 2008

On the outskirts of Riga lies Amalias Street 5a, a house whose tenants have been documented by photographer Inta Ruka since 2004. The photos are presented, as in all Inta Ruka's projects, together with short comments based on what the individuals have told her. The comments are about why they live the way they do, who they know, what they do for a living or want to become, their economy and family situation. In fact, the series is about the big questions – about happiness, sorrow, love and hate – about life.

Inta Ruka was born in Riga in 1958 and started photographing in the late 1970s. After a few years, in 1983, she embarked on the series *My Country People*, which she has pursued up until 2000, documenting people and life in her native region, Balvi, in eastern Latvia near the Russian border. The result was a collection of portraits of her relatives and friends and of a vanishing rural culture. Inta Ruka photographs without artificial light, using a Rolleiflex camera on a tripod. In long sittings while waiting for the right light, she gets people to relax by talking to them and trying to get to know them and the setting she is about to portray. *My Country People* represented Latvia at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999 and was Inta Ruka's major international breakthrough. Inta Ruka says that she takes photographs because she is interested in people. The camera is her way of making contact with others. This is why she has worked on developing the art of the photographic portrait. Her vision is to reveal each individual, their personality, and to show that everyone has their own special place and something to tell. Inta Ruka is a vital contributor to the Baltic contemporary photography that related and adapted to the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 90s and then documented the changes in the region during the post-Soviet era. The key to Inta Ruka's imagery is her own self. She has a unique ability to communicate and to get people to open themselves to her. Her skill also lies in inspiring confidence in herself and her work.

Curator: Anna Tellgren

www.modernamuseet.se

Promenades photographiques à Vendôme

ACTU • ILYA 7 MOIS • ERIC KARSNTY

≡ fisheye

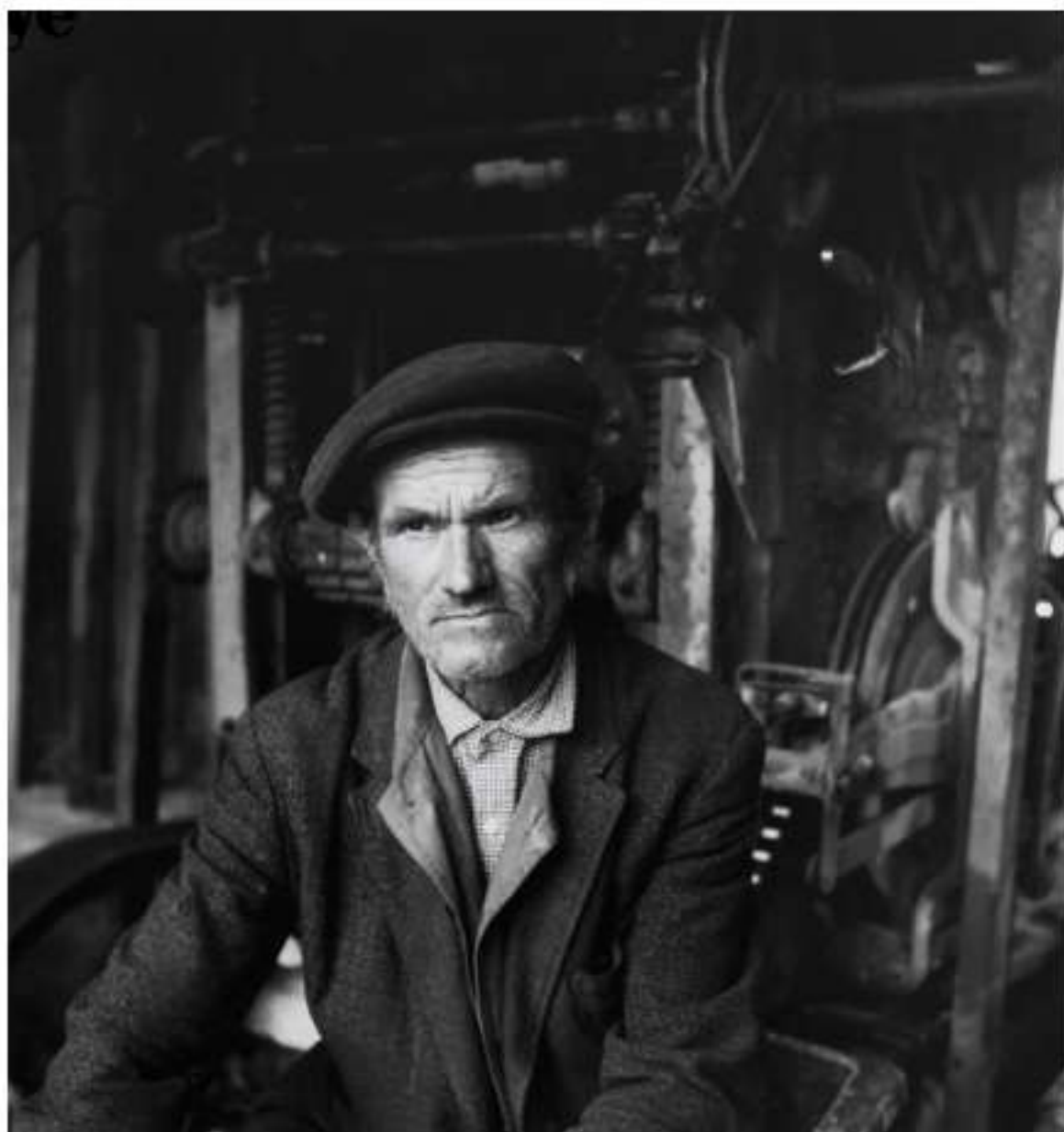
La 14^e édition des Promenades photographiques de Vendôme nous propose un joli programme associant photographes émergents et auteurs confirmés, tout en faisant la part belle aux femmes photographes. C'est aussi l'occasion pour une trentaine d'étudiants réunis dans un campus international de faire l'expérience d'une création collective dirigée par Mat Jacob, l'un des cofondateurs de Tendance Floue.

Loin de l'effervescence arlésienne où se presse tout le gotha de la photographie mondiale, surtout lors de la semaine d'ouverture des Rencontres, la petite ville de Vendôme, sous-préfecture du Loir-et-Cher, semble bien calme. Une « belle endormie » charmante, paisiblement parcourue par ses 17 000 habitants, que réveille Odile Andrieu, la fondatrice des Promenades photographiques, un festival qui monte en puissance d'année en année. Et cette nouvelle édition ne déroge pas à la règle en nous proposant une programmation alléchante.

Approche ludique et provocante

On trouve ainsi une rétrospective d'Ouka Leele, star de la movida espagnole des années 1980, qui investit la chapelle Saint-Jacques avec ses images colorées et iconoclastes. Son approche ludique et provocante contraste à merveille avec la religiosité du site pour donner plus d'éclat à son inventivité qui se déploie en grands formats. Très belle exposition aussi d'Ayana V Jackson au musée de la ville. L'artiste, qui vit entre New York et Johannesburg, explore la représentation de la femme noire en interrogeant les références artistiques classiques qu'elle revisite en se mettant en scène. « *Je réalise ce que je voudrais voir pour changer quelque chose dans le passé, pour aller droit au présent afin d'avoir un avenir meilleur* », précise-t-elle. On a aussi découvert Inta Ruka, présentée comme « *l'héritière de Walker Evans, de Dorothea Lange ou d'August Sander* » qui, avec *My Country People*, nous donne à voir la campagne lettone des années 1970 à aujourd'hui. Une fresque qui se déploie sur les cimaises du manège Rochambeau, qui concentre la plupart des expositions.

≡ fisheye



Hem > Gå och se! > Inta Ruka på Fotografiska



PUBLICERAD 17 OKTOBER 2013 AV MAGNUS BONIS I GÅ OCH SE! MED 6670 VISNINGAR

Inta Ruka på Fotografiska

När jag står inför Inta Rukas fotografier startar en resa bakåt i tiden. Hennes svartvita porträtt av människor på den Lettiska landsbygden ser ut att vara tagna på 1940-talet. Men de allra flesta är från 1980-talet. De slitna miljöerna, mönstren i personernas kläder och deras frisyrer – dessa och liknande tidsmarkörer stämmer inte alls med våra från samma tid. Inte heller är deras allvarliga blickar något jag förknippar med vårt pastellfärgade 80-tal. Människornas ansiktsuttryck rymmer tydligt erfarenheter orsakade av en helt annan historisk bakgrund. Bilderna speglar ett existentiellt avstånd som är svårt att greppa.

Ändå fångar Rukas fotografier betraktaren från första stund. Hennes klassiska kompositioner och sällsynt känsliga tillvaratagande av ljuset gör att vi omedelbart upprättar en förbindelse med personerna i bilderna. Rukas arbetsprocess grundar sig i en inväntande och respektfull hållning inför de hon porträtterar. Bilderna kommer ur ett ömsesidigt byggande av förtroenden, där tiden som lagts ner i fotografierna går att ta på.



Utställningens titel "You & Me" syftar inte bara på innerligheten som uppstår mellan Ruka och personerna i hennes fotografier. Den pekar också på vänskapen mellan Ruka och filmaren Maud Nycander. Två av Nycanders dokumentärer ingår i utställningen, dels Fotografien från Riga som är ett vänporträtt av Ruka och tidigare har visats på SVT, och dels den helt nya filmen "Road's End". Den handlar om Daina Stebere, en gammal kvinna som lever nästan helt isolerad på den lettiska landsbygden. Hon och hennes två barn förekommer i många av Rukas fotografier, men där är barnen små och i filmen har de flyttat utomlands. Dainas situation påminner mycket om Stig-Anders Svenssons, mannen som skildrades i filmen "Hästmannen" för några år sedan. Att inkludera Nycanders filmer i utställningen fördjupar förståelsen för Rukas fotografiska process, men gör samtidigt att urvalet av fotografier koncentreras till Rukas tidiga bilder. Det hade varit intressant att se även de personer som hon porträtterat under senare tid.

Adress: Stora Tullhuset Stadsgårdshamnen 22, Stockholm

Utställningen pågår under perioden 5/10 -8/12

Magnus Bons (text) Fotografiska (foto)

PHOTOPHILES

LA PASSION DE LA PHOTO

PEOPLE I KNOW

LES EXPOSITIONS PHOTO



Date: mercredi 16 janvier 2019 19:00 - dimanche 24 mars 2019 00:00

Lieu: VOZ'Galerie | **Ville:** Boulogne-Billancourt, France

Figure majeure de la photographie documentaire contemporaine, Inta Ruka est une artisane de la beauté universelle. En s'attachant aux personnages qui composent la Lettonie rurale d'aujourd'hui, l'artiste balte renoue avec sa propre histoire et son enfance, à une époque où son pays faisait partie de l'Union soviétique. Chacune de ses images révèle la grande complicité qu'Inta Ruka entretient avec les sujets qu'elle photographie. Ses portraits en noir et blanc font, en quelque sorte, ressusciter un monde ancien, promis à la disparition.

"Héritière de Walker Evans, de Dorothea Lange ou d'August Sander, Inta Ruka s'inscrit dans la tradition la plus pure des anthropologues de la photographie. Artisane de la beauté universelle, elle capte l'âme, l'humanité de tout un peuple, en s'attachant aux personnages qui composent la Lettonie rurale d'aujourd'hui. Chacune de ses images révèle la grande complicité qu'Inta Ruka entretient avec ceux qu'elle photographie. Ces visages sans artifices sont magnifiés par la seule lumière naturelle. Ses portraits noir et blanc nous livrent un souffle de fraîcheur mélancolique et de liberté." Xavier Renard.

Vernissage le mercredi 16 janvier 2019 à partir de 19h

Exposition du 16 janvier 2019 au 24 mars 2019

VOZ'Galerie

41 rue de l'Est

92100 Boulogne-Billancourt

contact@vozgalerie.com

<https://www.vozgalerie.com/>

01 41 31 40 55

Du mercredi au samedi 15h00-19h30

Du dimanche au mardi sur rendez-vous

Métro : Boulogne-Jean Jaurès

Bus 52 : arrêt rue Pasteur

Bus 72 : arrêt Victor Hugo

Station Vélib : 55 Bd Jean Jaurès

Autolib 1 : 12 bis Route de la Reine

Autolib 2 : 2 Avenue de la Porte de Saint-Cloud, 75016 Paris

Parking : 20 rue de la Bellefeuille (10 mins à pied)

INFORMATIONS

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Email contact@vozgalerie.com

Site internet <https://www.vozgalerie.com/>

Adresse 41 rue de l'Est
Boulogne-Billancourt, France



Inta Ruka ja tema ilusad inimesed



Verni Leivak
Arteri toimetaja



4. oktoober 2015, 0:00



FOTO: Erik Prozes

Kakskümmend aastat koristajana töötanud lätlanna Inta Ruka fotograafiaharrastusest sai fotokunst juba ammu. Oma taiestega on ta jõudnud nii Veneetsia biennaalile kui ka paljudesse muuseumidesse üle maailma.

Tallinna kunstihoone galeriis avatud Balti fotokunstnike ühisnäituse «Külm vesi» suurim fotolegend on kahtlemata lätlanna Inta Ruka (57). Võiks ju arvata, et see habras naine kasutab ekstra priima tulemuse saavutamiseks supermoodsat megatehnikat, ent Ruka poeb pildistamiseks riidetüki alla ning pildi teekond filmilindilt paberile saab teoks tema eramu pisikeses pimikus. Väga lihtsalt põhjuse: nii tuleb odavam!

inta ruka

du 22 juin au 02 sept.

MANÈGE ROCHAMBEAU

de 14h30 à 18h30
fermé le mardi

My country people

Figure majeure de la photographie documentaire contemporaine, Inta Ruka est une artisane de la beauté universelle. En s'attachant aux personnages qui composent la Lettonie rurale d'aujourd'hui, l'artiste balte renoue avec sa propre histoire et son enfance, à une époque où son pays faisait partie de l'Union soviétique. Chacune de ses images révèle la grande complicité qu'Inta Ruka entretient avec les sujets qu'elle photographie. Ses portraits en noir et blanc font, en quelque sorte, ressusciter un monde ancien, promis à la disparition.



Votre premier souvenir photographique, la première émotion liée à une photographie

Ma mère avait pour habitude de feuilleter des albums photo. Parfois nous le faisons ensemble. Il y avait des photos en noir et blanc, des portraits de membres de la famille, des photos de mariages ou d'enterrements. Ma mère connaissait chaque personne sur ces photos. Elle me racontait leur histoire. La mémoire visuelle, c'était important pour elle.

Le ou la photographe qui a suscité votre émotion

Egons Spuris, Andrejs Grants, des photographes lettons, ont joué un rôle très important au début de mon parcours. Ce sont de grands photographes, j'admire leur travail. Et puis, il y a eu Imogene Cunningham et August Sander. J'aime toujours autant leurs oeuvres. Avec le temps, j'ai aussi découvert d'autres photographes dont j'admire le travail: Lars Tunbjork, Walker Evans, Brassai, Robert Doisneau, Vivienne Meiers, Nan Goldin, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Joakim Brodin, Ville Lenkeri...

Votre première photo

Quand j'ai eu mon premier appareil photo j'ai fait un portrait de ma mère. J'avais 19 ans.

Le pire souvenir photographique

Un jour, c'était dans les années 1980, je prenais des photos de paysages. Je voyais une ferme en arrière-plan, elle était très loin. Le temps était parfait : le ciel était d'un bleu éclatant. Je circulais à bicyclette à travers une prairie en fleurs. A 1km environ de la ferme, trois chiens se sont mis à courir vers moi. Ils étaient très énervés. Je suis restée sur mon vélo avec mon trépied et mon appareil photo. J'ai crié comme jamais auparavant. Quelqu'un m'a entendu de la ferme et est venu me secourir. C'était de bons chiens de garde. Mais depuis cet épisode, j'ai très peur des chiens.

Votre plus beau souvenir photographique

J'ai de nombreux souvenirs merveilleux car j'ai rencontré tant de gens différents. J'aime prendre le temps d'être avec eux et d'écouter leurs histoires... En ce moment je réalise une nouvelle série qui s'appelle « Sous le même ciel ». Je vais souvent dans une petite ville à 40 km de la frontière russe. Ces gens sont formidables. L'été dernier j'ai rencontré Valdis Kamaliniš. Un homme fantastique. Quand il était petit, il regardait le ciel, en rêvant de se mettre à voler. Il a trouvé un livre russe qui expliquait comment fabriquer un avion. Il a construit un prototype. Cela a pris des années. Mais il a fait une erreur. Et l'avion n'a pas pu voler. Récemment, ne perdant pas de vue son rêve, il s'est remis à la construction de son engin. A 68 ans !

Inta Ruka

PUBLISH DATE

11 Oct 2013

WRITTEN BY

Aron Pelcman

SOCIAL



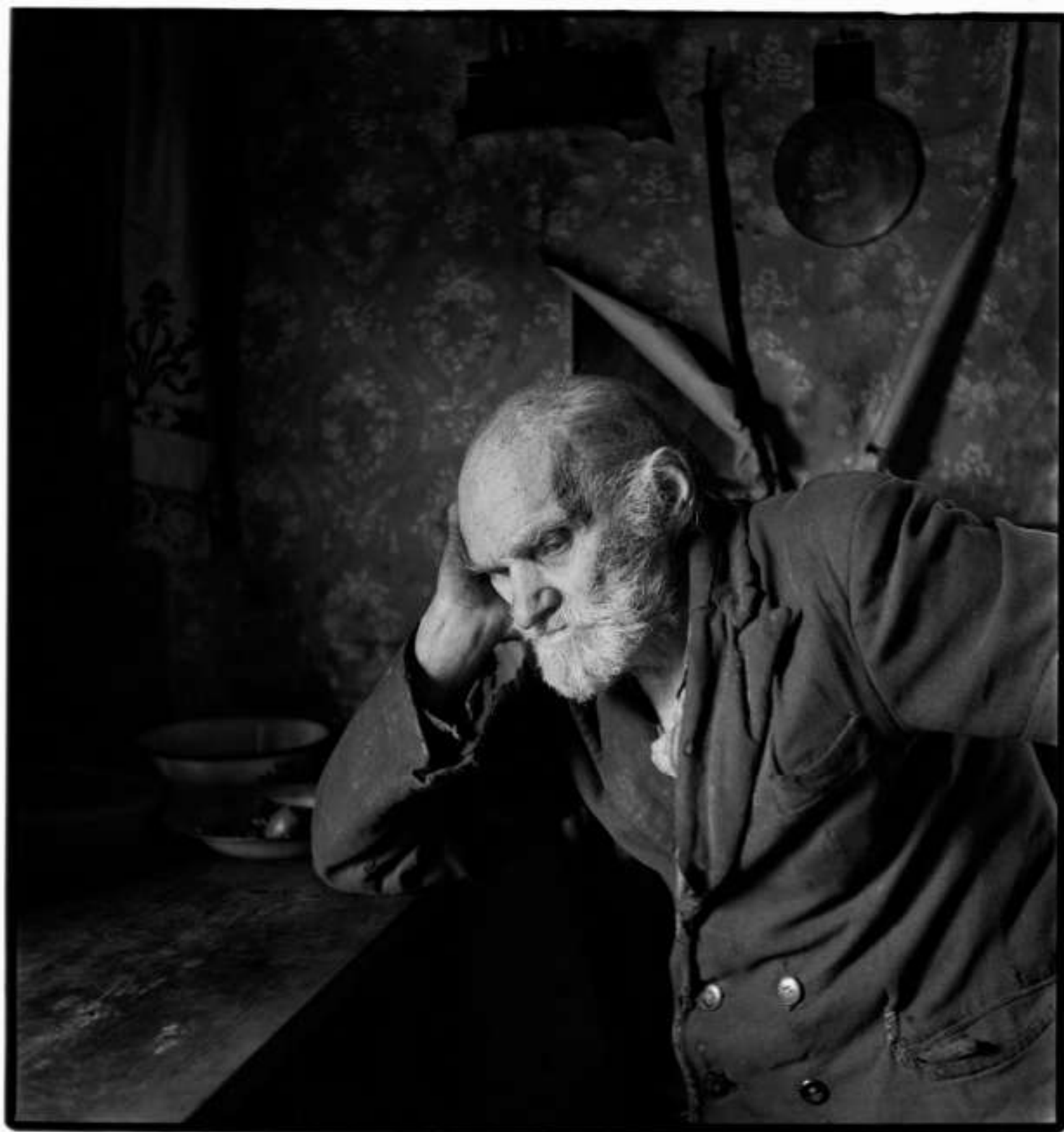
TAGS

fotografiska, Inta Ruka.

For over three decades, Latvian photographer Inta Ruka has portrayed her fellow countrymen with honesty and warmth. Now fifty of them are shown in the exhibition *You & Me* at Fotografiska in Stockholm.

For over thirty years, Inta Ruka has portrayed her fellow countrymen in Latvia. In her works she portrays workers, elders, married couples, children – ordinary people – photographed in their own environments, honestly and genuinely.

In the newly opened exhibition *You & Me* at Fotografiska in Stockholm, more than fifty of her pictures are shown together with two documentaries; *Fotografen från Riga* and *Road's End*, made by her close friend Maud Nylander.



Inta Ruka – Kuzma Judins, 1984.

“When I met Kuzma he could no longer see. He knew he would never see the photos. But he said to me, “Daughter, if you need me, just tell me where and I will sit there.”

Kuzma has brothers. During the war they fought on opposite sides.”

Inta Ruka, from *You & Me*.

Accompanying some of the pictures in the exhibition are short stories that the photographer has written about the people portrayed. While talking the pictures, Inta Ruka always takes time to talk to the models and get to know them on a personal level. In the photographs the persons portrayed always look calm, relaxed, and undisturbed by the photographers presence.

Inta Ruka was born in Riga in 1958. Her father died when she was ten, and she grew up with her mother in a small apartment. At the age of fifteen she was trained to be a seamstress, and upon graduating she received a camera from her mother, initiating her interest in photography. After work, she spent her spare time taking photographs, engaging in a photo club where she gained greater understanding of the art of photography.

She had her breakthrough as a photographer in 1999, when representing Latvia at the 48th Venice Biennale. She has never worked with commercial photography – only with her own projects. Even though she is considered one of Europe’s most important photographers, she still works part time as a cleaner at the Swedish Embassy in Riga.

*The exhibition *You & Me* will be on view at **Fotografiska** in Stockholm until December 8.*



*Photos of the artist by **Aron Pelcman**.*

Aron Pelcman



EdgarsTavars, Diana-Tavare och Iveta-Tavare,1986. Foto: Inta Ruka

▶ Inta Ruka på Fotografiska

2:29 min [⊕ Min lista](#) [↪ 21](#)

Publicerat måndag 7 oktober 2013 kl 09.14

Inta Ruka, så heter är en av samtidens mest uppmärksammade dokumentärfotografer, och hon inte minst känd för sina porträtt av människor på lettiska landsbygden. Nu kan man se ett urval av Inta Rukas bilder på Fotografiska i Stockholm - och samtidigt visas en ny film Maud Nycander - Vägens ände - där Rukas bilder spelar en viktig roll.

I samband med utställningen You and Me på Fotografiska släpps en roströd fotobok utan bilder. Här kan man läsa om Imants som flyttat hem till sina gamla föräldrar i ett försök att övertala dem att flytta med till stan. Han har väntat över ett år. Man får själv föreställa sig hur den där väntan ser ut, vad den gör med hans ansikte och hållning. Göra bilden i huvudet.

I många år har den Inta Ruka fotograferat människor på den lettiska landsbygden, och i hus i Riga. Kommit tillbaka många gånger, lyssnat på deras historier. Pratad och stannat. Människorna på kilometer till närmsta granne. Bara polisen hittar mig, inte ens brevbäraren, säger hon i Maud Nycanders film Vägens ände, som följer Daina i många år. Dottern har inte varit hemma på tre fyra sen fem år. Lars Tunbjörk har filmat. Det är magiskt, det är så mörkt i stugan och på något paradoxalt sätt framträder Dainas ansikte rispat fårat genomlevt som en Rembrandtmålning i inledningsscenen.

Det kan för oss totalurbaniserade vara svårt att förstå att det är nu. Det är ofta dråpligt, hunden som ska jaga vildsvinen heter George Bush, det är osentimental getslakt, det är kärv jargong, jag trodde du hade frusit ihjäl, säger Daina till grannen hon inte sett på nån månad. Men det finns också en historia om svek, som inte går att uttrycka med ord. Ibland kan det vara försent för förlåt.

- Recensioner
- Konst / Form
- Konst- och formrecensioner

Grunden i vår journalistik är trovärdighet och opartiskhet. Sveriges Radio är oberoende i förhållande till politiska, religiösa, ekonomiska, offentliga och privata särintressen.

➤ **Läs gärna mer om hur vi bedriver vårt arbete.**

19/6/2012

Inta Ruka

BAUKUNST GALERIE, KOLN

Riga's inhabitants form the focal point for her photographic work, for they, like the artist herself, live "on the other side of the river". Ruka's photographs are always characterized by their humanistic and respectful attitude towards the individual.

COMUNICATO STAMPA

Opening on Wednesday 20 June, Baukunst Galerie will present "the other side of the river", another exhibition in collaboration with the renowned Latvian photographer Inta Ruka (born in Riga in 1958). Riga's inhabitants form the focal point for her photographic work, for they, like the artist herself, live "on the other side of the river".

For three decades now, Inta Ruka has been producing various series in which she portrays with characteristic empathy the people from rural and urban areas alike. To this end, she directs her gaze exclusively towards her fellow countrymen. She works with a 1937 6x6cm Rolleiflex aided by a tripod, but foregoes the use of artificial lighting.

The photographer meets her subjects outside their homes either at random or during arranged meetings, on the street, in courtyards or gardens. As a result, increasing familiarity triggers changes in the environment, in which the portrait is taken. Her subjects' living conditions of often play a decisive role in Inta Ruka's photographs and simultaneously allow for an assessment of their personal relationship. Notwithstanding this aspect, the artist tends to opt for full-length portraits, semi-long shots, or close-ups. And so, the artist creates highly atmospheric silver-gelatine prints in 35 x 33 cm. For the most part, Ruka positions her subjects in a similar way to the Old Masters, namely at the centre of the frame. Despite their calm pose, sitting or standing, it still seems like a conversation had been taking place at the moment the photograph was shot. The beholder's mistaken gaze, in combination with Inta Ruka's personal dairy entries, which she has written on the walls beneath the photos in the exhibition, not only afford insights into the subject's external surroundings but into their inner world too. Ruka's sensitive, time-consuming, yet calm working process allows the masterful artist make staged photos appear completely spontaneous. This way she creates photographic portraits of the homeless and alcoholics, children, young people and families alike. She never presents images of hardship or poverty with the direct gaze employed by someone like Boris Mikhailov. Inta Ruka's photographs are always characterized by their humanistic and respectful attitude towards the individual, whose social status takes a backseat.

Back in 2000, Inta Ruka turned her attention towards inhabitants of the capital city, resulting in the "People I happened to meet" series. There, she approached people on the street at random, and then asked if she could photograph them. By way of contrast to this series, "Amalias Street 5a" involved a longer period of engagement, whereby she visited inhabitants of one district in Riga that is under increasing reconstruction regularly over a period of several years. One summer she even became a member of the district. The subjects are people who live "on the other side of the river", far removed from the modernised, representative buildings and hustle and bustle of tourists in the capital city. The beholder becomes aware that social and economical development is much less advanced, the economic expectations of the citizens much further out of reach, than Riga's touristic centre would have us believe. Owing to a lack of funds, modernisation work is moving forward at less than a snail's pace; while significant improvements to living conditions have come to a standstill. Inta Ruka uses her black-and-white photography to create a contemporary document that captures the atmosphere and situation her fellow countrymen are experiencing during this period of transition from the declaration of independence from Russia (1990), to their joining the EU (2003) to the present day.

Inta Ruka is one of the best-known contemporary photographers from the Baltic States. Her photographs can be found in the stocks of several international collections and museums, e.g. the Photography Collection at Museum Folkwang in Essen, the Fotomuseum im Münchener Stadtmuseum, the Collection de la Banque privée Edmond Rothschild in Geneva and the European Central Bank in Frankfurt. In 1999 she represented Latvia at the 48th Venice Biennale. Between 1991 and 1994, her works were showcased were featured in touring exhibitions that travelled through the USA, Canada and Europe. In 2006 and 2007, they were on display in the Photography Center Istanbul and the Barbican Art Gallery in London as part of the "In the Face of History: European Photographers in the 20th Century" exhibition. One year later, her portraits were exhibited alongside pieces by Diane Arbus, August Sander, Cindy Sherman, amongst others, in the "On the Human Being" exhibition in the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo in Seville. In 2008 and 2009, Moderna Museet in Stockholm and the Latvian National Museum of Art in Riga also dedicated major exhibitions to the artist.

Image: Gita Gaigale, Marius Gaigals, Riga, Latvia, 2011 from the Serie: "On the other side of the river" Silbergelatineabzug auf Barytpapier 35 x 33,5 cm Auflage 7

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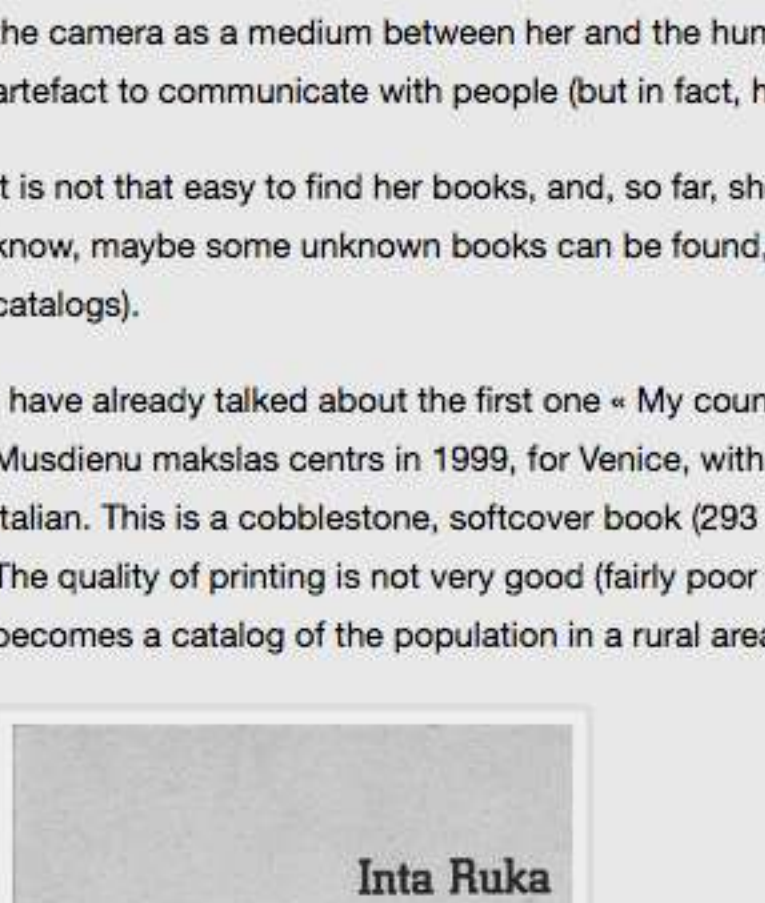
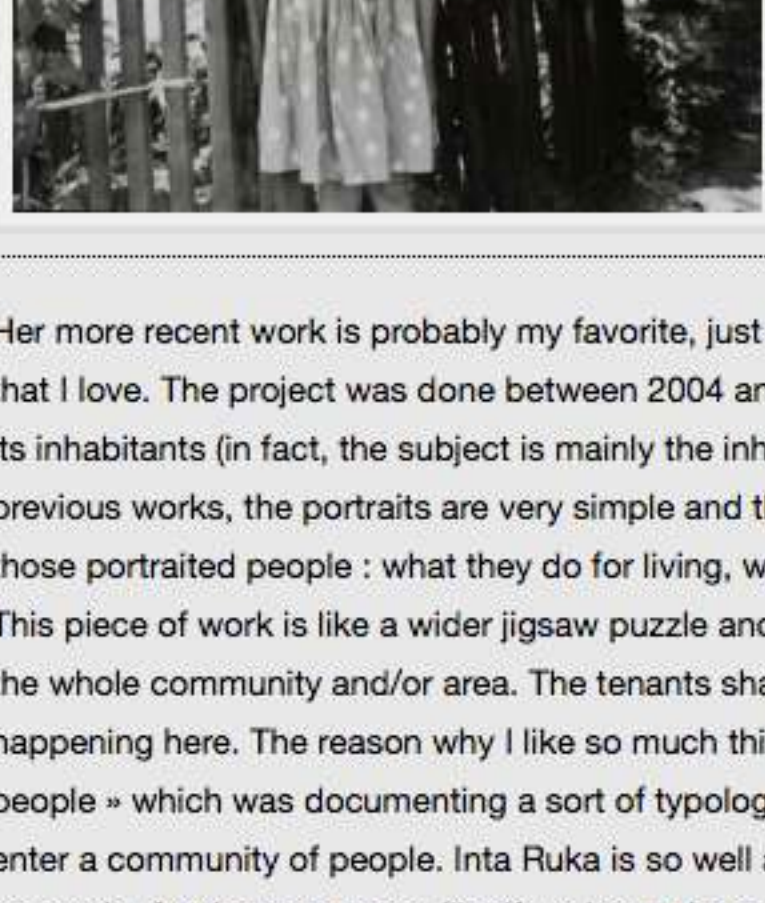


On being a cleaning woman... and a photographer : Inta Ruka

Posted: September 14, 2013 | Author: [christerek](#) | Filed under: [Photobooks](#), [Photography](#) | 1 Comment

Inta Ruka is a Latvian photographer born in 1958. She married the famous Latvian photographer Egon Spuris, and was a member of the photogroup that he created : Ogre. I wanted to talk about her for a long time now and I have been very impressed by her work which belongs to the tiny world between amateur and professional photography. Her main work being an office cleaner at the Swedish Embassy in Riga, where the ambassador gave her one day free per week to practice photography.

Probably because Latvian was a former state of USSR, Inta Ruka remained unknown till the 90's. She began photography in the 70's and she is mainly known for her portrait work. Especially in the rural environment of Balti district, where she came from. Her first important work was named « My country people » and was exhibited, in 1999, at the 48th Biennale of Venice in the Latvian Pavilion. This is how she started to be internationally known, with the publication of her first book named after the exhibition « My country people ». This is a thick book comprising a collection of portraits shot during a couple of decades in the East part of Latvia. The portraits are very subtle, in black and white, done with a medium size square camera. The high quality of those portraits is due to the invisible presence of the photographer. People are not acting, they stand proudly in their normal environment, and assume their ways of life. The fraction of time which the photo captures is like a thick slice of time in their life. Facing us proudly, we start to imagine their background, who are they, what is their work, what do they had in mind in the time of the photograph ? What Inta Ruka gives us is a portrait of a country. We can strongly have August Sander's work in mind when we look at those photographs !



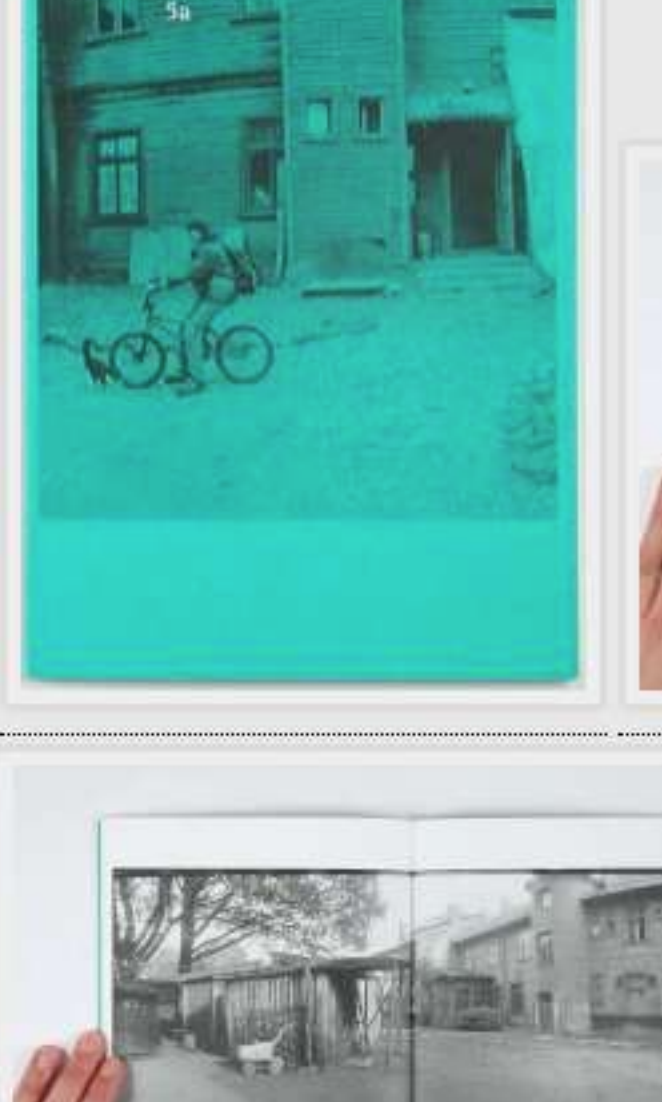
Her more recent work is probably my favorite, just because it fits so much to the photographic genre that I love. The project was done between 2004 and 2008, and the subject is a community house with its inhabitants (in fact, the subject is mainly the inhabitants !). Like she had already done in her previous works, the portraits are very simple and the pictures come with a factual caption about those portrayed people : what they do for living, what they expect, what is their family situation... This piece of work is like a wider jigsaw puzzle and each piece give you an extra knowledge about the whole community and/or area. The tenants share a yard where they can take part in events happening here. The reason why I like so much this work is that, on the opposite of « My country people » which was documenting a sort of typology of rural inhabitants in Latvia, this work makes us enter a community of people. Inta Ruka is so well accepted and integrated that we feel a real sympathy for those persons, like if we knew them as relatives or friends. We would not be surprised if we discovered our own picture on the following page. With this work we understand that she uses the camera as a medium between her and the human beings who she cares for ! Photography is an artefact to communicate with people (but in fact, has this ever been something else !)

It is not that easy to find her books, and, so far, she only did four monographies (they are those I know, maybe some unknown books can be found, and she did some books with others and/or small catalogs).

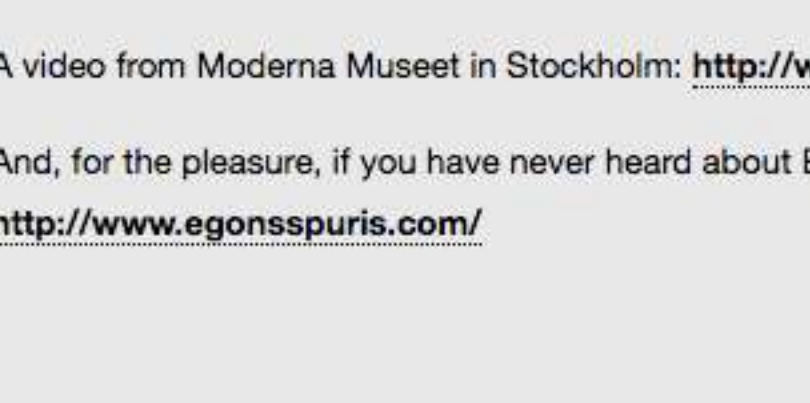
I have already talked about the first one « My country people » which was published by Sorosa Muscieniu maksas centrs in 1999, for Venice, with texts in three languages : Latvian, English and Italian. This is a cobblestone, softcover book (293 pages) with a light brown cover, not very attractive. The quality of printing is not very good (fairly poor in fact !) but, as I already referred to Sander, it becomes a catalog of the population in a rural area, a kind of survey of those who remains !



The second one, Inta Ruka « Amālijas iela 5a » (« Amālijas Street 5a ») published in 2008 by Neputns, a Latvian Publisher. A softcover book beautifully printed, in both Latvian and English, 72 pages, 20 x 25 cm. As the title indicate, this book is dedicated to Amalia Street project and is my favorite. The form of the book is just perfectly fitting to the spirit of the house photographed, all the typography is declined in different grey values. According to pragmatic considerations, the building is probably not the best place to live, but we instantly feel that life would be good in such a place !



Published the same year, Inta Ruka: Amalias Street 5a, by Heden, Den Haag – Netherlands. Another softcover small book (16 x 22 cm, 48 pages).



The last one was published in 2011 by the Swedish publisher Max Ström. This is the first retrospective book including more than 150 photos from different series like « My country people », « People I Happened to meet » and « Amalias Street 5a ». A big hardcover book of 30 x 31 cm. It was published on the occasion of many forthcoming exhibitions of Inta Ruka in Sweden during 2012 and 2013.

Some useful links if you want to know more :

Inta Ruka's blog : <http://intaruka.wordpress.com/category/photos/>

A film on Inta Ruka, VOD : http://www.onlinefilm.org/de_DE/film/26934

Neputns, Latvian publisher (one of my favorite, unfortunately, good books are out of print) :

<http://www.neputns.lv/en/>

A video from Moderna Museet in Stockholm: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atYQoZlum-Y>

And, for the pleasure, if you have never heard about Egon Spuris, just have a look here :

<http://www.egonsspuris.com/>



Photographie

Inta Ruka : People I know

On aime beaucoup | (aucune note)

Jusqu'au 23 mars 2019 - Voz' Galerie

Voir les dates

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Après le festival de Vendôme, l'exposition d'Inta Ruka est à Paris. On y retrouve des images réalisées ces vingt dernières années dans les villages de sa Lettonie natale. Les protagonistes se tiennent fièrement et naturellement dans leur environnement. Inta a pris le temps d'écouter leur histoire et de gagner leur confiance. La photographie fait son travail, figeant le temps autour de ces visages et de ces corps usés, oubliés par le confort moderne. Comme en témoigne Daina, que la photographe suit depuis trois décennies dans l'est du pays, où elle vit sans eau ni électricité avec ses deux enfants. Les tirages en noir et blanc, réalisés par la photographe, ont une luminosité chaude qui traduit avec émotion la vie dans les villages où la photographe a grandi. Une découverte !

Frédérique Chapuis (F.C.)

Tags :

Expos

Photographie

Lieux et dates

Voz' Galerie

41, rue de l'Est, 92100 Boulogne-Billancourt

infos

Du 30 au 2 février 2019

15h00

0 €

Du 6 au 9 février 2019

15h00

0 €

Du 13 au 16 février 2019

15h00

0 €

Du 20 au 23 février 2019

15h00

0 €

Du 27 au 2 mars 2019

15h00

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Toutes les dates

Médias

Photos



Best of

Photo : les 10 expositions à ne surtout pas manquer en février à Paris

Une sélection de Frédérique Chapuis Publié le 07/02/2019.



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Vivian Maier, Robert Doisneau, Luigi Ghirri... Grands noms et stars montantes du cliché s'exposent actuellement dans la capitale. Notre sélection des incontournables du moment.



Inta Ruka : People I know

Jusqu'au 23 mars 2019 - Voz' Galerie

Après le festival de Vendôme, l'exposition d'Inta Ruka est à Paris. On y retrouve des images réalisées ces vingt dernières années dans les villages de sa Lettonie natale. Les protagonistes se tiennent fièrement et naturellement dans leur environnement. Inta a pris le temps d'écouter leur histoire...

[Lire la suite](#)

L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

Exposition photo

Inta Ruka, People I know



© Inta Ruka, « Guntars Keiso, 1986 »

La VOZ'Galerie présente l'exposition « People I know » de Inta Ruka du 16 janvier au 24 mars 2019.

"Héritière de Walker Evans, de Dorothea Lange ou d'August Sander, Inta Ruka s'inscrit dans la tradition la plus pure des anthropologues de la photographie. Artisane de la beauté universelle, elle capte l'âme, l'humanité de tout un peuple, en s'attachant aux personnages qui composent la Lettonie rurale d'aujourd'hui. Chacune de ses images révèle la grande complicité qu'Inta Ruka entretient avec ceux qu'elle photographie. Ces visages sans artifices sont magnifiés par la seule lumière naturelle. Ses portraits noir et blanc nous livrent un souffle de fraîcheur mélancolique et de liberté." Xavier

Renard, commissaire de l'exposition

Pour plus d'informations: <https://www.vozgalerie.com/>

Informations

VOZ'Galerie

41 rue de l'Est 92100 Boulogne-Billancourt France

16 janvier 2019 au 24 mars 2019

Inta Ruka | You and Me

 Museum - Open today 08:00 — 23:00

SHARE



Inta Ruka presents well-rounded portraits of people who gaze into the camera in a genuinely natural manner. Her photographs are personal, revealing and disarming.

Born in 1958 in Riga, Latvia, Inta Ruka grew up with her mother in a rented apartment in modest circumstances and trained as a seamstress. Given a camera as a graduation present by her mother, she has devoted herself to photography ever since. With the camera her shyness disappeared. She joined the photo group Ogre and learned the trade.

In the early 1980s, Ruka travelled to her mother's native village, Balri, near the Russian border, to take photographs. Following the postman around on bicycle, she met all the villagers. The photographs resulted in the series *My Country People* (1983-2000), which became Ruka's international breakthrough when she represented Latvia at the 1999 Venice Biennale.

Like the Swedish photographer Sune Jonsson (1930-2009), Inta Ruka depicts a world that is about to disappear. She works like a documentary photographer but has her own approach. Not primarily concerned with documenting society, she is more interested in people and in meetings. Respect for other people's life stories is what characterises Ruka's portraits. Before she photographs someone, she meets them, talks to them and waits for the right moment. Every sitter receives a copy of the portrait and sometimes she meets them several times and takes new portraits. Some of the pictures are accompanied by handwritten captions, resembling short stories.

Each portrait requires trust. And the people in Ruka's photographs trust her because they share the same experiences and the same background. She has a unique ability to make people open up and talk about their lives. Her portraits do not appeal for compassion but convey the sense that everyone has an important story to tell.

Inta Ruka is contemporary with Maud Nylander, one of Sweden's most prominent documentary filmmakers. They ran into one another in Riga some years ago and have been friends ever since. After a few years of friendship, Nylander began filming Ruka and in her documentary *The Photographer from Riga* (2009), she presents Inta Ruka's life story. In Nylander's new documentary, *Ruka's End* (2013) – with Lars Tunbjörk as the photographer – we meet Daina, one of the women Ruka has photographed for several years. Through Inta's and Maud's friendship, issues of love, children, happiness and sorrow are addressed. The documentary *Ruka's End* will be premiered at Fotografiska.

Inta Ruka has never worked as a press photographer, only with her own projects. The slow process appeals to her. She is an autodidact and still makes prints of her images at home. She uses a classic Rolleiflex camera, always on a tripod, and works in natural light.

Inta Ruka is one of Latvia's most important photographers. She has held several successful exhibitions in, among others, the UK, France, Holland and Germany, and is represented in numerous international collections. In addition to *My Country People*, Ruka has produced the series *People I Happened to Meet* (1988, 2000-2004) and *Awake Street* (2004-2008). The exhibition *You and Me* presents a unique selection of Inta Ruka's work.

– Maria Patonella, curator



INTA RUKA

PEOPLE I KNOW

Jusqu'au 24 mars 2019

[Voz'galerie](#)

Boulogne-Billancourt

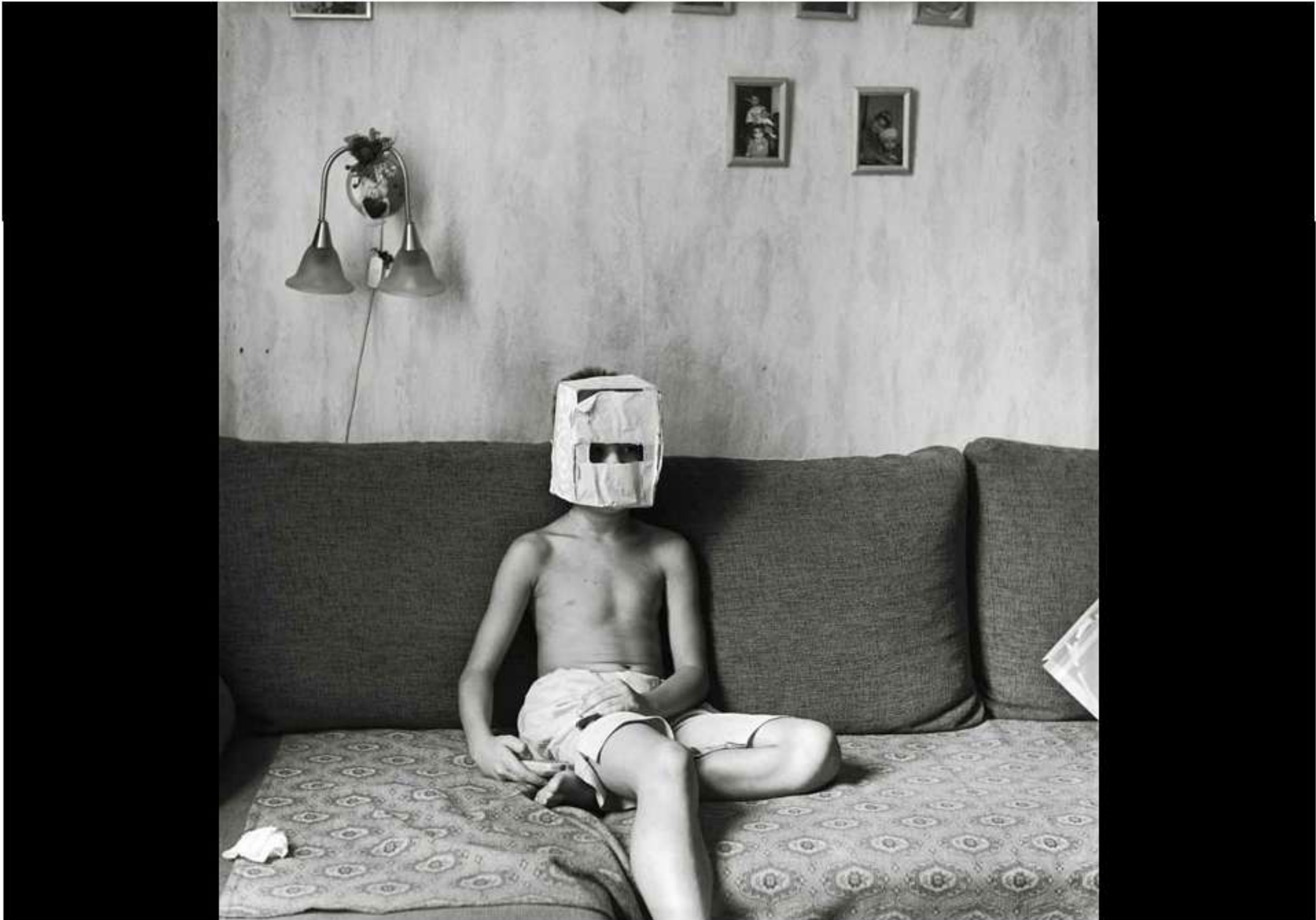
TOUT SUR BALVI

Depuis une trentaine d'année, cette photographe lettone autodidacte Inta Ruka photographie les gens de son pays principalement dans la région de Balvi, ville natale de sa mère. Elle a documenté une série de villages isolés situés près de la frontière russe actuelle, où elle s'est rendue pendant les étés avec ses parents. Elle a continué à revenir dans la région et à prendre des portraits des villageois, tout en travaillant comme couturière pour gagner sa vie. L'exposition présente ses portraits de villageois capturés dans leur intimité et leur humanité, images simples et chaleureuses d'un monde en voie de disparition. *«J'ai de nombreux souvenirs merveilleux car j'ai rencontré tant de gens différents. J'aime prendre le temps d'être avec eux et d'écouter leurs histoires... En ce moment je réalise une nouvelle série qui s'appelle « Sous le même ciel ». Je vais souvent dans une petite ville à 40 km de la frontière russe. Ces gens sont formidables. L'été dernier j'ai rencontré Valdis Kamaldinš. Un homme fantastique. Quand il était petit, il regardait le ciel, en rêvant de se mettre à voler. Il a trouvé un livre russe qui expliquait comment fabriquer un avion. Il a construit un prototype. Cela a pris des années. Mais il a fait une erreur. Et l'avion n'a pas pu voler. Récemment, ne perdant pas de vue son rêve, il s'est remis à la construction de son engin. A 68 ans!».*



**Edgars Tavors, Iveta Tavare, Daina Tavare, 1986
Inta Ruka**

Amalias Street 5a by Inta Ruka on View at Moderna Museet



Inta Ruka, Rihards Stibelis, Riga, Latvia 2006 © Inta Ruka.



STOCKHOLM.- On the outskirts of Riga lies Amalias Street 5a, a house whose tenants have been documented by photographer Inta Ruka since 2004. The photos are presented, as in all Inta Ruka's projects, together with short comments based on what the individuals have told her. The comments are about why they live the way they do, who they know, what they do for a living or want to become, their economy and family situation. In fact, the series is about the big questions – about happiness, sorrow, love and hate – about life.

Inta Ruka was born in Riga in 1958 and started photographing in the late 1970s. After a few years, in 1983, she embarked on the series *My Country People*, which she has pursued up until 2000, documenting people and life in her native region, Balvi, in eastern Latvia near the Russian border. The result was a collection of portraits of her relatives and friends and of a vanishing rural culture. Inta Ruka photographs without artificial light, using a Rolleiflex camera on a tripod. In long sittings while waiting for the right light, she gets people to relax by talking to them and trying to get to know them and the setting she is about to portray. *My Country People* represented Latvia at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999 and was Inta Ruka's major international breakthrough.

Inta Ruka says that she takes photographs because she is interested in people. The camera is her way of making contact with others. This is why she has worked on developing the art of the photographic portrait. Her vision is to reveal each individual, their personality, and to show that everyone has their own special place and something to tell. Inta Ruka is a vital contributor to the Baltic contemporary photography that related and adapted to the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 90s and then documented the changes in the region during the post-Soviet era. The key to Inta Ruka's imagery is her own self. She has a unique ability to communicate and to get people to open themselves to her. Her skill also lies in inspiring confidence in herself and her work.