

Ursula Reuter Christiansen

**Whose practice is inspired by nature and myths,
and shaped by feminism and motherhood.**

Ursula Reuter Christiansen's work oscillates between symbolism and mythology, desire and hatred, beauty and abysses. Throughout her practice, she incorporates various media, from painting, filmmaking and performance to ceramics and sculpture. Having studied literature in Marburg, DE, she later graduated from the Düsseldorf Academy of Fine Arts in 1969, where she studied under Professor Joseph Beuys and became active in the emerging women's movement, which was to have a strong influence on her oeuvre. Following a great urge to leave her native Germany, together with her husband, the composer Henning Christiansen (1932–2008) she settled in a farmhouse on the Danish island Møn.

From 1992 to 1996, Reuter Christiansen worked as a professor at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg, DE, and as the first female professor of painting at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen from 1997 to 2006. She is considered one of Denmark's most influential artists in the post-war period, whose works are widely represented across Denmark – in art institutions, as well as public commissions, and is one of the founding members of Kunsthall 44Møn. Her work was included in exhibitions at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, DK; National Gallery of Denmark and Kunsthall Charlottenborg in Copenhagen; Museum of Fine Arts Leipzig, DE; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA; PS.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island, New York, USA; Vancouver Art Gallery, CAN; Kunstverein Wolfsburg, DE. Furthermore, she represented Denmark at the 49th Venice Biennale, IT, in 2001 (with Henning Christiansen) and was awarded an Eckersberg Medal in 2011.

Her recent exhibition *I Am Fire and Water*, at Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, DK, was awarded the Art Critics Prize, Best Exhibition of 2024, Association of Danish Art Critics.



Ursula Reuter Christiansen, 2024

Photo: Kavian Borhani

Courtesy of ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art



Ursula Reuter Christiansen in her garden on Møn, 2024
Photo: Kavian Borhani.
Courtesy of ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art



Ursula Reuter Christiansen, *Hide and Seek*, 2011. Oil on canvas.
Photo: Malle Madsen / von Bartha

Fable and Form: An Encounter between Barry Flanagan and Ursula Reuter Christiansen at von Bartha in Basel
June 16 to August 8, 2026

For our upcoming exhibition across the entire newly renovated gallery in Basel, two esteemed artists present a selection of career highlights in dialogue. Irish-Welsh artist Barry Flanagan (1941–2009), primarily known for his bronze sculptures, presents a handful of works, ranging from his larger-than-life cricket-playing hare to smaller, at times miniature, castings of dogs, humans, and elephants. German-born Danish artist Ursula Reuter Christiansen (b. 1943), whose practice spans more than sixty years, presents several large-scale paintings and drawings from this period. The juxtaposition of their works promises a lively, animated exhibition full of stories and fantasies.

Reuter Christiansen's paintings place the human figure at the centre of a psychological reckoning. Her subjects are exposed yet resistant, vulnerable yet insistent on their presence, in a world that feels at once raw and mythic. Each canvas unfolds a story, revealing the innermost characteristics of the subjects. As in *Woman with Serpent* (1983), the protagonist is both fragile and powerful. She looks down her nose whilst raising her chin in defiance. She is one with the snake that furtively navigates her neck.

Flanagan's bronze hares occupy a different register. Leaping, balancing, resting, performing, his figures move through the world with a lightness that belies their material weight. The hare, long a creature of fable and folklore, carries in Flanagan's hands both wit and melancholy, reflecting something irreducibly human back at us. Brought together, the two bodies of work illuminate what fables have always known: that the figures we tell stories through — human or animal, painted or cast — are never simply themselves. They are vessels for what we fear, what we desire, and what we cannot quite say directly.

Ursula Reuter Christiansen, *Woman with Serpent*, 1983
Oil pastels on paper. Photo: Malle Madsen / von Bartha





Home of Ursula Reuter Christiansen, 2024
Photos: Kavian Borhani
Courtesy of ARKEN Museum of Contemporary Art



Ursula Reuter Christiansen, *Hallucinations of a housewife*, 1977
Photo: Andreas Zimmermann / von Bartha



Ursula Reuter Christiansen, *Washed Out Faces*, 1979–2021
Photo: Andreas Zimmermann / von Bartha



Installation view, Ursula Reuter Christiansen, *Leporello*, 2013, in Art Basel's Unlimited sector, 2023.
Foto: Andreas Zimmermann / von Bartha

Video portrait of Ursula Reuter Christiansen in her studio on Møn
vonbartha.com/stories/at-the-studio-with-ursula-reuter-christiansen/



Bio: [Exhibition History and CV as PDF](#)

Kunstkritikk: [Take courage, human child!](#), 2024

Art Review: [Named but Not Seen](#), 2024

Wallpaper: [Ursula Reuter Christiansen on her art](#), 2023

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