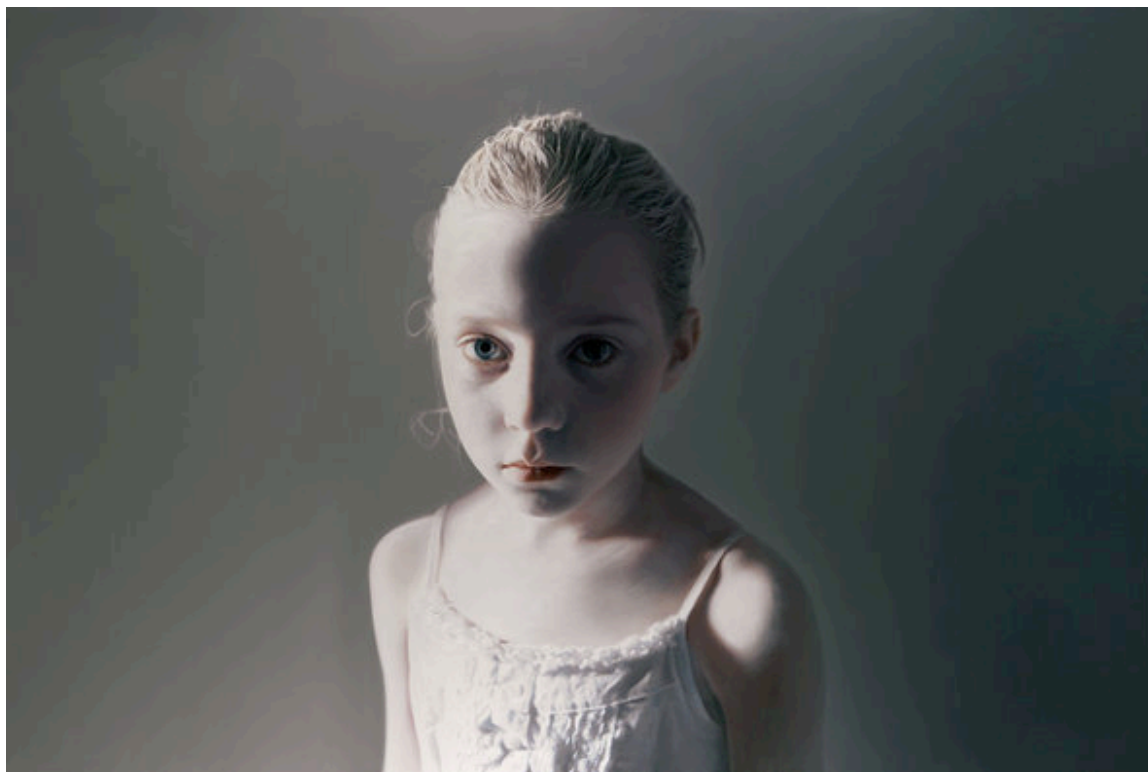


# Problem Child

CULTURE, MEN'S FASHION | BY MARK ROZZO | SEPTEMBER 2, 2010



*Courtesy Of Studio Helnwein And Friedman Benda Gallery*

The Austrian-born artist Gottfried Helnwein is perhaps better known for his Johnny Cash-like sartorial style (black everything, including the ever-present bandanna) and his neo-Gothic Irish castle (site of the star-crossed union of Marilyn Manson and Dita Von Teese) than he is for his own startling body of work: macabre paintings with photographic resonance played out on a grand scale and often in public settings. Throughout his career, Helnwein has glided easily between watercolor, oil and installation work, but his big subject has always been childhood, and not the happy sort.

Opening Sept. 16 at New York's Friedman Benda gallery, "Gottfried Helnwein: I Was a Child" is the 62-year-old artist's first major exhibition in New York; it's a curiously overdue

showing for an artist who enjoyed a retrospective at San Francisco's Fine Arts Museum in 2004 and who shows regularly in Europe (including at the State Russian Museum). But Helnwein has always flirted more with art rock stardom (quite literally, having done work for the Scorpions and hung out with the Rolling Stones) than with a conventional career path to museum-grade respectability. Some might say the artist's work is much like the artist himself: all flash and image. With titles like "The Murmur of the Innocents" (above) and "God of Sub-Humans," these works — executed with obsessive, old-master-worthy technique — can be as bludgeoning as, say, a Rammstein riff, but you can't take your eyes off them.