

sammlung

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Press Information
BIRGIT JÜRGENSSEN



Presentation of First Monograph and Exhibition
24 November 2009 in Vienna, Verbund headquarters

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Birgit Jürgenssen (1949 - 2003), one of the most outstanding artists of the feminist avant-garde, would have been 60 years old this year. On the initiative of the Sammlung Verbund, on 24 November 2009 the first monograph on the artist is being published by Hatje Cantz. At the same time, some 50 of the artist's works from the Sammlung Verbund can be seen in the Vertical Gallery in the Verbund headquarters in Vienna.

Birgit Jürgenssen has left a multifaceted oeuvre with some 3,000 works covering the following media: graphic prints, drawings, watercolours, collages, paintings, photographs (rayograms, Polaroids, solar graphics) and sculptures. As early as the age of 17 she was in contact with the "poetry of Surrealism" in Paris, successively engaging with psychoanalysis, ethnology and the socio-critical discourses of her generation. Alongside the extensive drawings, the *Hausfrauen [Housewives]* drawings, the *Schuh [Shoe]* cycle and the *Sklavin des Herzens [Slave of the Heart]* watercolours, stagings of the female body in the light of masquerade, disguise, fragmenting, fetish and turning into animals run as leitmotifs through Birgit Jürgenssen's oeuvre. A "uniform" and recognisable style was less important to her than the desire to experiment, which is reflected in diverse working methods with photographic material. "Self-irony" was "a form of autobiographical strategy" for her, as the artist herself said, "in order to convey subversive and deconstructive potential more easily." Elisabeth Bronfen explains: "With her photographic works and drawings Birgit Jürgenssen demonstrates her self-ironic play on language, which contains a potential for opening up between 'infinity' and 'the finite'."

Peter Weibel appreciates her work as follows: "Birgit Jürgenssen is the missing link that has *finally been discovered*, not only for the history of Austrian feminism between Maria Lassnig and Valie Export, but also for the international movement of women's art from Francesca Woodman to Cindy Sherman. She occupies a universal position in this spectrum because of her surrealist and structuralist (ethno-structuralist) tradition. To understand her status: Birgit Jürgenssen represents a contemporary position continuing from Meret Oppenheim and Louise Bourgeois."

The monograph is being published jointly by Gabriele Schor (director of the Sammlung Verbund) and the famous American art historian Abigail Solomon-Godeau (University of California, Santa Barbara). The essays take account of Jürgenssen's position within first wave feminism and analyse the relationship to Surrealism, literature, psychoanalysis and Structuralism, which are immanent in her work. Previously unknown works from her estate are also published in this lavishly illustrated volume.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau says of Birgit Jürgenssen: "In its most general parameters, Jürgenssen's defies the viewer's desire that meanings be fully knowable, fixed and determinate. Her art's ability to disturb and to unsettle is fully part of that refusal and constitutes its power."

Birgit Jürgenssen, a brief biography

The artist, born in Vienna in 1949, studied at the Vienna University of Applied Arts. Lecturing at the University of Applied Arts (master class Prof. Maria Lassnig) and at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts (master class Prof. Arnulf Rainer and Prof. Peter Kogler). Alongside her artistic work she was active as a curator at the Vienna Secession in 1994 ("Wenn die Kinder im Dunkeln . . ." [When Children are in the Dark]) and in 2001 for the Austrian contribution to the Cairo Biennale. Birgit Jürgenssen died in Vienna on 25 September 2003.

Her solo exhibitions included, in Vienna (MAK "Schuhwerk" 2003; Albertina 1978), Linz (Upper Austria Provincial Gallery 1998), in New York (Jack Tilton Gallery 1984; TZ' Art Gallery 1997), Southampton (John Hansard Gallery 1987), Birmingham (Ikon Gallery 1987), Bristol (Arnolfini Gallery 1987).

www.birgitjuergenssen.com

Press Conference

24 November 2009, 18.30

with Prof. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Dr. Gabriele Schor and the Chairman of the Verbund Managing Board Dipl.Ing. Wolfgang Anzengruber
Verbund Headquarters, Am Hof 6a, 1010 Vienna

Book presentation and opening of the exhibition

24 November 2009, 19.30

Speakers

Chairman of the Verbund Managing Board Dipl.Ing. Wolfgang Anzengruber,
Dr Gabriele Schor and Dr. Inka Graeve Ingelmann (Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich)

Birgit Jürgenssen Exhibition

Vertical Gallery in the Verbund Headquarters

25 November 2009 - 10 March 2010

Guided art talks every Wednesday, 18.00, on advance registration.

Information and registration at Tel: +43 1 524 98 03-11.

Symposium

Mapping the Margins: Birgit Jürgenssen in Context

Women, Art and Representation

December 11, 2009 at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

Birgit Jürgenssen / Monograph

Eds. Gabriele Schor, Abigail Solomon-Godeau

With texts by Elisabeth Bronfen (University of Zurich), Sigrid Schade (Zurich University of the Arts), Gabriele Schor (Sammlung Verbund, Vienna), Abigail Solomon-Godeau (University of California, Santa Barbara), Geraldine Spiekermann (art historian, Berlin) et al.

The book is being published in German and English

approx. 280 pages, approx. 260 colour prints

€39.80 D / E

The Bank Austria Kunstforum and the Sammlung Verbund are showing a major retrospective of the artist from 16 December 2010 to 6 March 2011.

The Sammlung Verbund was established in 2004 by the Verbund, Austria's biggest electricity company and one of the leading hydro-electric power producers in Europe. The company collection focuses on contemporary international art from 1970s to the present. The selection of works is made by a curatorial board consisting of Gabriele Schor (director), Philipp Kaiser (curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), Marc-Olivier Wahler (director, Palais de Tokyo, Paris).

The collection's maxim is "depth before breadth". Its focus is on complete groups of works, such as the early work of Cindy Sherman and of the feminist avant-garde (Francesca Woodman, Eleonor Antin, Hannah Wilke, Birgit Jürgenssen, Renate Bertlmann, Valie Export, Ana Mendieta and others) as well as works on the theme of spaces/locations (including Gordon Matta-Clark, Fred Sandback, Jeff Wall, Loan Nguyen, Teresa Hubbard/Alexander Birchler).

Since 2008 every day at dusk Yellow Fog by Olafur Eliasson has been taking place along the facade of the Verbund headquarters. The rising yellow fog is the artist's first intervention in public space in Vienna.

Collection presentations

- 2007 MAK, Vienna
- 2008 Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul
- 2010 Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome (planned)

Publications

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| HELD TOGETHER WITH WATER | Collection book, 2007, Hatje Cantz |
| Birgit Jürgenssen | Monograph, 2009, Hatje Cantz |
| Das Frühwerk von Cindy Sherman | Catalogue Raisonné, 2011, Hatje Cantz |

Impressum

sammlung

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Cover picture: Birgit Jürgenssen, *Ich möchte hier raus! / I Want Out of Here!*, 1976, b&w photograph

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