Discovering Birgit Jürgenssen

By Scott Indrisek, October 22, 2013


The work of Austrian artist Birgit Jürgenssen, who passed away in 2003, is a revelation. (A selection of pieces from the '70s are currently on view through November 16 at Alison Jacques Gallery in London.) Her work includes performance documentation and staged photographs (like Housewives’ Kitchen Apron, 1974-8, in which the young artist wears what appears to be a clunky glove) to painted-on photographic self-portraits, gnarly miniature wax sculptures, and elegant colored pencil works. Jürgenssen’s art veers from erotic to playful, coy to grotesque; I’m ashamed to admit that this was my first encounter with her work, though I might not be alone, as this posthumous survey is her first U.K. solo exhibition. After the jump, a few highlights from the Alison Jacques show.
Housewives’ Kitchen Apron, 1974-5. Photograph.

Untitled (Olga), 1979. 80X76 Polarsld, manipulated.

You, Jane, Me, Tarzan, 1974. Pencil and colored pencil on handmade paper.