

PRESS RELEASE

BIRGIT JÜRGENSSEN: NOCTURNAL LIGHT

17 APRIL – 19 MAY 2018

OPENING: MONDAY 16 APRIL, 6-8PM

"It is as if we have crossed into night, where in moonlight the world appears as half shadows and emergent forms. As we make our way through the dark we become aware that things are not what they might at first seem to be. The figures and forms that are perceived in the dark can change dramatically with examination."

Julien Robson, John Hansard Gallery, *Nekyia. Night See Ride. Night Lake Crossing*, exhibition catalogue, Southampton, UK, 1987

Alison Jacques Gallery in collaboration with the Birgit Jürgenssen Estate, Vienna, presents *Nocturnal Light*, a solo exhibition of work by the Austrian artist Birgit Jürgenssen (b.1949, Vienna). Whereas Jürgenssen's 2013 solo show at the gallery focused on works from the 1970s, the current exhibition presents later work, made between 1987 – 1996. Jürgenssen, who died in 2003 aged 54, left several decades of work from performative photography to painting, drawing, and sculpture.

The title *Nocturnal Light* is taken from one of the largest works in the show, made in 1987, a mixed media on linen triptych which depicts three sources of nocturnal light: angel, moon and torch. Another painting, *Double-Moon* from the same year continues this narrative and explores the symmetry between day and night, light and shadow or reality and fantasy. This work is from a series originally exhibited in Jürgenssen's only UK museum solo exhibition *Nekyia. Night See Ride. Night Lake Crossing*, curated by Julien Robson first shown at the John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (1987). In the same year the exhibition travelled to IKON Gallery, Birmingham and the Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol.

The main focus of this show is on Jürgenssen's experimental photographic work from her fabric series. These consist of photographic prints mounted on canvas, which are screwed to iron frames that Jürgenssen constructed herself. Thin, translucent fabrics are stretched over the surface, veiling and slightly obscuring the images. The photographs themselves are created through a range of processes, including photograms, solarisation, and multiple-exposures. In some of the works, Jürgenssen employs cyanotype, a contact printing technique which creates a blue tint that reduces her figures and objects to silhouettes and dreamlike forms.

Born and educated in Vienna, Jürgenssen studied at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna (1967-71) and lectured at both the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (1980-97). Her work has been featured in museum exhibitions including *XL: 19 New Acquisitions in Photography*, MoMA, New York (2013-2014); *The 10th Gwangju Biennale, Burning Down The House*, curated by Jessica Morgan, South Korea (2014); *Women House*, curated by Camille Morineau, La Monnaie de Paris, France (2017). Jürgenssen is included in: *Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired By Her Writings*, curated by Laura Smith, Tate St Ives, UK (2018) and *The Shape of Time*, curated by Jasper Sharp, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Vienna (2018). A retrospective of Birgit Jürgenssen entitled *Snow Storm* will open at the Kunsthalle Tübingen, Germany in November 2018. Jürgenssen's work has been acquired by major museums including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; MAK, Vienna; Tate, London and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT FIONA MCGOVERN

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FORTHCOMING: MICHELLE STUART: THE NATURE OF TIME, 1 JUNE – 28 JULY.

OPENING: THURSDAY 31 MAY, 6 – 8 PM