

"Lonely Are All Bridges. Birgit Jürgenssen and Cinzia Ruggeri" at Fondazione ICA

Exploring Identity, Society, and the Female Body: Birgit Jürgenssen and Cinzia Ruggeri in Dialogue

BY PHOTOVOGUE

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Birgit Jürgenssen

Untitled (Improvisation), 1976 B/w photograph, 12.7 x 17.8 cm Private collection, Italy

© Estate Birgit Jürgenssen / Bildrecht Vienna, 2025; Courtesy Galerie Hubert Winter

Curated by **Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini**, the exhibition "**Lonely Are All Bridges. Birgit Jürgenssen and Cinzia Ruggeri**" at Fondazione ICA is a dialogue between these two artists whose practice is transversal and interdisciplinary. The exhibition title, taken from a verse by the poet Ingeborg Bachmann, "Lonely are all bridges", recalls the experimental nature of their work, moving smoothly across different disciplines.

Birgit Jürgenssen (Vienna, 1949 - 2003) and **Cinzia Ruggeri** (Milan, 1942 - 2019) never met, and ICA creates a conversation exploring the themes that both had in common: their fascination with accessories, seen as an extension of the body, the societal role of women and the space they inhabit.



Cinzia Ruggeri
Stivali Italia, 1986
Courtesy Archivio Cinzia Ruggeri, Milan

Opening with a pantograph of Jürgenssen's self-portrait, "Lonely Are All Bridges" displays the surreal gloves and hats by Cinzia Ruggieri, then hats and again gloves by both the artists, and Jürgenssen's drawings addressing the role imposed on women by society, the domestic space as the only place conceived for them. The exhibition also investigates the meanings of the women's bodies, with Ruggieri's sofa sculpture *Colombra* (1990) or Jürgenssen's photographs in which her hands seem to mutate into different figures and a starry sky through shadows and light.



Cinzia Ruggeri
Colomba, 1990
Velvet chaise longue
134 x 377 x 67 cm
Courtesy Archivio Cinzia Ruggeri, Milan

The theme of the double is explored in the fourth room with self-portraits by Birgit Jürgenssen and the famous “Italy Boots” (1986) by Cinzia Ruggeri. The imaginary bond between these two artists becomes tighter throughout the exhibition investigating the theme of the ladder and using the shoes as extensions of the body or a form of constraint, like the row of shoes facing the wall collected by Ruggieri.

Through a playful yet serious, if not tragic, way of narrating society and its incongruences, Birgit Jürgenssen and Cinzia Ruggeri reflect on clothes and accessories as a way to express identity but also as a tool to analyze the societal and physical spaces occupied by women.



Birgit Jürgenssen

Untitled (Body Projection), 1988 Color photograph, Vintage Print © Estate Birgit Jürgenssen / Bildrecht Vienna, 2025; Courtesy Galerie Hubert Winter

Birgit Jürgenssen and Cinzia Ruggeri. Lonely Are All Bridges. Curated by Maurizio Cattelan and Marta Papini