

*"Girl I ain't never
felt anything like it"*



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IDA APPLEBROOG



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Saturdays

Ends Saturday, October 27

IDA APPLEBROOG, "Photogenetics," multimedia. That the likeness of a person may be simultaneously hideous and gorgeous is demonstrated to powerful effect by "Photogenetics," an exhibit of new work by Ida Applebroog. In her first solo show in Chicago since the 1980s, she proves to be a profound and sensitive artist who more than merits her international fame; here the absolute command of an innovative, demanding technique in the service of a haunting expressiveness all but overwhelms. The key to this triumph would seem to be a deep involvement with her subjects and her commitment to a painstaking process; only after a series of stages--which include clay modeling, photography, print-screening and painting--do their mixed media portraits come into aesthetic being. They are labor-intensive, yet also strangely ethereal; and though verging on the grotesque, even ghoulish, they move through their emotional acuity and humanity. Applebroog's way with eyes and mouths is particularly striking; in one of the two "Brians" on display, a railroad-track scar bisects the brows of one who sees feelingly, while the smile of her "Monalisa" is a squashed strawberry. Emerging from a charged tension between transparency and painterly texture that evinces complex skill, these pictures reward repeated, lingering looks. (Sean Francis)

rowlandcontemporary

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