



LONDON ART NETWORK



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Exhibition

27 Sep 2011

05 Nov 2011

Mon-Fri 10 - 6pm Sat 12 - 6pm

Riflemaker

79 Beak Street, London, W1F 9SU. UK

020 7439 0000

www.riflemaker.org

Free

Start

End

Times

Venue

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Cost



PENNY SLINGER: 'A Photo-Romance' - Riflemaker



The art and the life of Penny Slinger (b.1947 London) are inextricably interwoven. 'A Photo-Romance' focuses on the artist's photographic collages from the mid to late 1970s. In these seminal works, Slinger uses the tools provided by Surrealism to penetrate the feminine psyche, presenting herself as both subject and object in a group of collages and montages which sidestep the prevalent themes of 1960s and 70s contemporary art. Exhibited in London in 1977, the work's explicit depiction of 'feminine power' and its anarchic approach to life, both challenged and outraged many of her peers as well as the critics. The artist left Britain in 1979, never to return. 'A Photo-Romance' will be her first solo exhibition here for thirty-two years. Initially published in book form under the title 'An Exorcism', the series, seven years in the making, was created in the tradition of the classical 'photo-romance', taking its cue from Max Ernst's 'Une semaine de bonté;' and 'La femme 100 têtes'. In these expressive works the artist explores the ultimate romance - the death and rebirth of Self. The series followed on from Slinger's first photo-book '50% The Visible Woman' (1971) and the showing of her 3D works at the groundbreaking 'Young

and Fantastic' at the ICA in 1969, when the artist was aged twenty-one. The final collection of the period 'Mountain Ecstasy' (1978) achieved a unique combination of the erotic and the mystical. In the works to be exhibited at Riflemaker, the action takes place in a deserted country mansion, the empty rooms of which represent the many chambers of a woman's being. Each image is a meditation on a particular state of consciousness. It represents a place where the lines between the world of dream and that of so-called 'reality' are undefined, as the subconscious is opened to the light of conscious scrutiny. The narrative has a 'mise en scène' which can be attributed to the artist's work with the all-women theatre troupe Holocaust (1971) and her appearance in and art direction of the feature film 'The Other Side of the Underneath', (d. Jane Arden: re-issued this month in a special edition by the BFI). In that year she also worked on the production and design for Picasso's play 'The Four Little Girls' at the Open Space Theatre, London, at the same time developing an interest in Tantric Art which would guide her artistic and spiritual direction throughout the 1980's. She was named one of the 'Women of the Year' in New York 1982, other recipients of the award being director and union organiser Ellen Burstyn and US Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick. Slinger describes her output as a "map of the journey of the Self". Surrealism allowed her to delve into the subconscious and emerge with archetypal glyphs. The next logical step for the artist was to include Tantric and Visionary influences which brought a further dimension to her artistic journey. She has, since then, woven her own mode of Surrealism together with a radical approach to spiritual energy which can form a bridge from the subconscious to the superconscious, the realm of unlimited potential. Her many works include 'The Secret Dakini Oracle' (1978), her illustrations for 'Sexual Secrets: the Alchemy of Ecstasy' (1979 & 2000), 'The Secret Dakini Oracle' (1979) & 'The Path of the Mystic Lover' (1993). From 1980-94 she lived in the West Indies, subsequently moving to the US where she currently resides in Boulder Creek, California. In 2009, her collages were exhibited at Tate St Ives as part of 'The Dark Monarch: Magic and Modernity in Modern Art', Tate, and in 'Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists & Surrealism', Manchester Art Gallery.