

Aesthetica

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DEFINING TERRITORY

A large-scale survey of Land Art's exploration of concept and material

ARCHITECTURE & ART

A new exhibition of Russian art considers the boundaries of identity

THE NEW GENERATION

A radical observation of the world through experimental photography

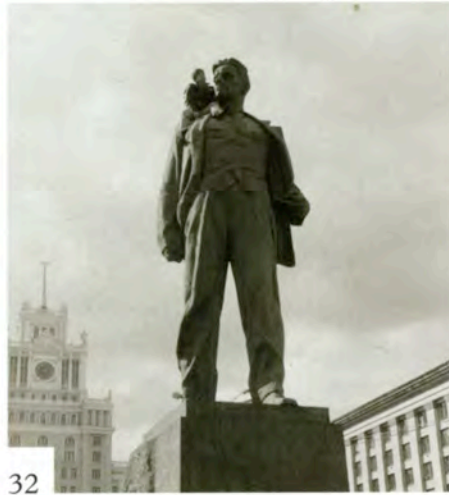
BINARY OPPOSITIONS

An examination of how Brazilian art contemplates global relationships

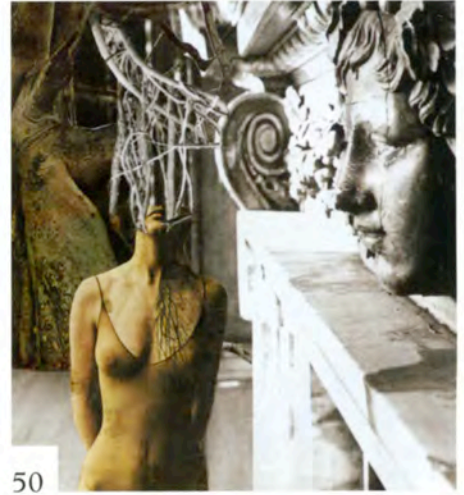




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On the Cover

Akif Hakan Celebi is an experimental fashion photographer. Inspired by Second New Wave Hong Kong filmmakers such as Wong Kar-Wai and Christopher Doyle, his goal is to widen the boundaries of established photographic styles (p.84).

Cover image: © Akif Hakan Celebi
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Fashion Stylist: Sharon Chiu.
 Hair Stylist: Geminie Li.
 Make-up Artist: Yola Hung.
 Model: Lexa @ Synergy Hong Kong.

Welcome

Editor's note

There are many things that we do each day, which will never change. You will wake up, have lunch, check emails, read the headlines, eat dinner and go to bed – this is part of a daily routine. However, it's vital to do something out of the ordinary. Only in these moments can something truly unexpected occur, and it's this element of surprise that creates some of the most exciting experiences.

This issue starts with *The Way of Enthusiasts*, a group show that utilises the context of the Venice Architecture Biennale as a platform to survey the last few decades of Russian art. Featuring over 80 artists, *Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974* is on now at MOCA Los Angeles and challenges many myths about Land Art, including that it was primarily a North American phenomenon. We also take an in-depth look at Penelope Slinger's *Hear What I Say*, which opens this September at Riflemaker in London – it's the first solo show the artist has had in the UK in 32 years. In images, *Made in Arizona* celebrates the iconic imagery of the American Southwest from 1871 to the present day. *There's Something Happening Here* opens at Brancolini Grimaldi this September and showcases the work of a new generation of photographers. Cig Harvey's delicate images seduce the imagination and capture moments of uncertainty. Finally, we introduce the work of Akif Hakan Celebi, whose experimental fashion photography is cinematic and visually arresting.

In film, we speak with Alastair Siddons about his new release *In The Dark Half* – a feature that spans across genres from fantasy to horror, and from thriller to social realism. We also interview Malik Bendjelloul, director of *Searching for Sugar Man*, a documentary about the legendary Mexican-American singer-songwriter Rodriguez. In music, we look at the apps that are changing music production and chat with Grasscut about their new album *Unearth*. In performance, at MdM Salzburg, a massive photographic retrospective celebrates the life and influence of Merce Cunningham. Finally, we chat with video artist Ed Atkins about his forthcoming show at the Chisenhale Gallery. Enjoy.

Cherie Federico



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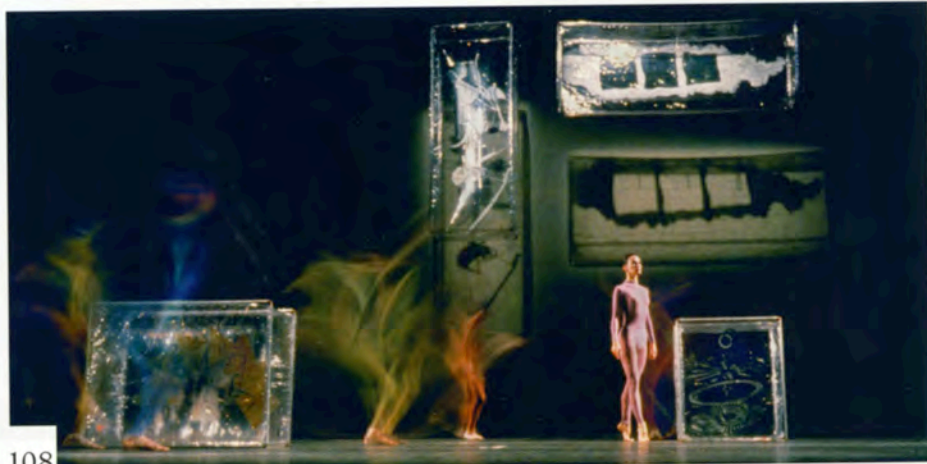
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Surrealist Explorations

Penelope Slinger: Hear What I Say (1971-1977)

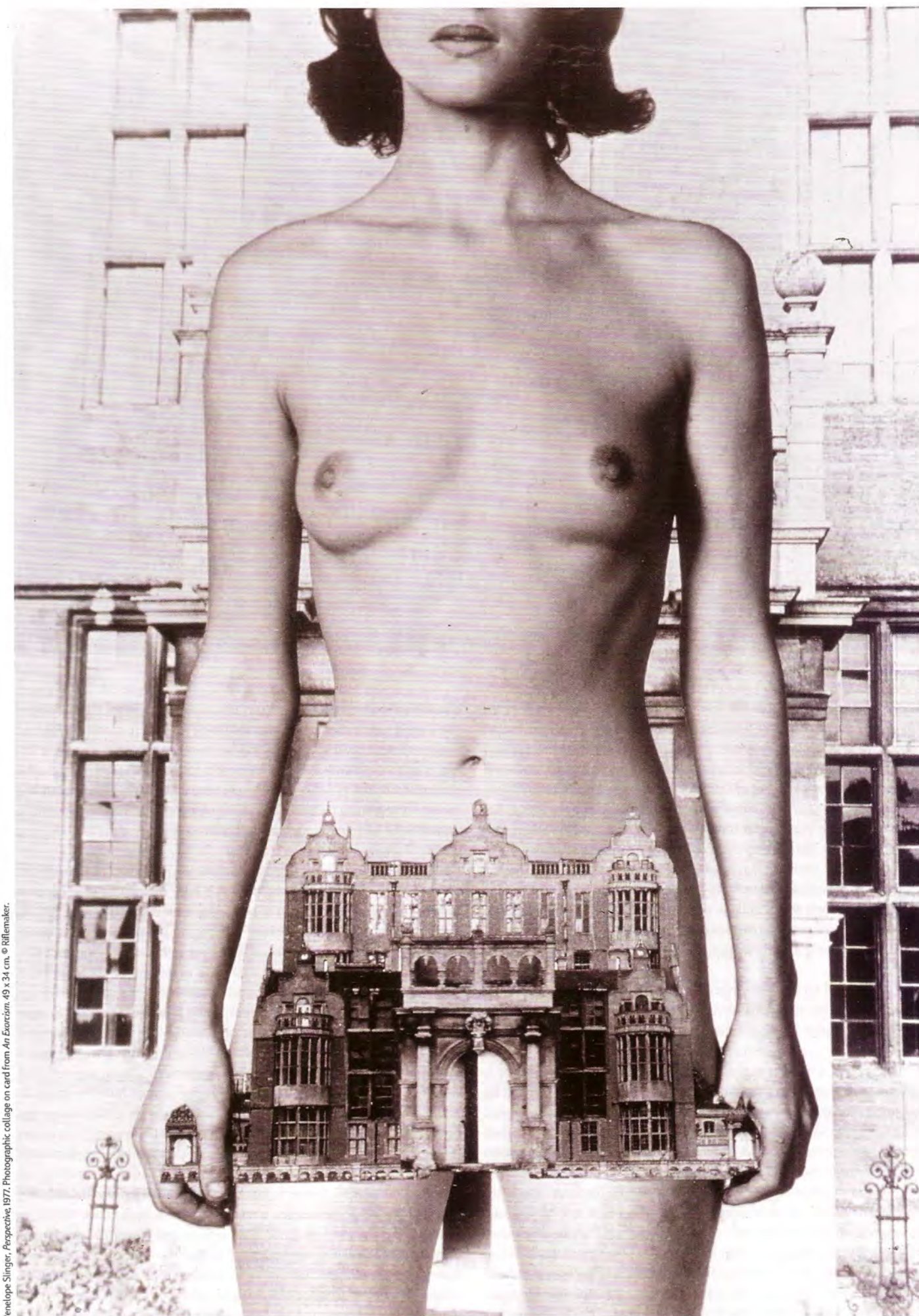
A REDISCOVERY OF THE FEMINIST ARTIST PENELOPE SLINGER PRESENTS A TIMELY REAPPRAISAL OF HER WORK FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NEARLY 40 YEARS.

The art of Penelope Slinger has been hitherto neglected in the canons of contemporary art history; like many female artists working during the 1970s who defy categorisation, her work has become a sidenote within the wider historical text. This was often the case across the board: a statement released in 1971 by the Los Angeles Council of Woman Artists in response to the *Art & Technology* exhibition staged at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art at the time pointed out that, of the works exhibited at the Museum between 1961 and 1971, only 4% had been by women. This staggering statistic was made public in response to the fact that the *Art & Technology* exhibition, which had provoked the statement, contained no female exhibiting artists. The situation has started to change over the past few decades with the establishment of several centres and institutions focused solely on Feminist Art (e.g. the Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art), and female artists of the period being the focus of high-profile solo exhibitions. One must be wary of pigeonholing Slinger as a feminist artist, though, as her work is about the feminine and the process of, as she so eloquently states, "female liberation and empowerment, a claiming of one's own sexual being and one's own sense of self and self-image." Slinger's photo-collages, which will be the focus of her second upcoming exhibition at Riflemaker, articulate visually the liberation of the female form using surrealist explorations of the subconscious. The exhibition, entitled *Hear What I Say*, will re-examine her work publicly for the first time in almost 40 years.

Slinger studied in London, completing a degree in Art and Design at Chelsea College of Art in 1969, and remained in the UK until 1979 when she departed for the West Indies. Her time at the college cemented the trajectory which she wished to pursue in her work: "The specific intention that, as an artist and as a woman, I would be my own muse. I would put myself in both places at once, as subject and object, the perceiver and the perceived." Slinger's work of the

1970s did precisely this, using her own naked body (and others) as the basis from which to explore various ideas related to desire, dreams, female liberation, sex, memory and surrealism. Unlike other female artists of the period, such as Eleanor Antin (b. 1935), who focused on the body as a literal physical site, as in a work such as *Carving: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972), in which she photographed the daily change of her body through dieting, Slinger focused on the feminine energy that she saw manifested through the physical form. Her work exists within a timeframe defined by revolt, apparent on various levels, but specifically in relation to her work, a revolt against the institutional patriarchy of the art world. The gaze, as an act of male ownership of the female form, became the focal point of much discourse, especially after the 1975 publication of Laura Mulvey's seminal text *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. Mulvey argued that desire "allows the possibility of transcending the instinctual and the imaginary"; this relationship between desire and pleasure and its visual articulation became a major focus for many artists at the time, including Slinger, who used surrealism as a means of investigating that relationship.

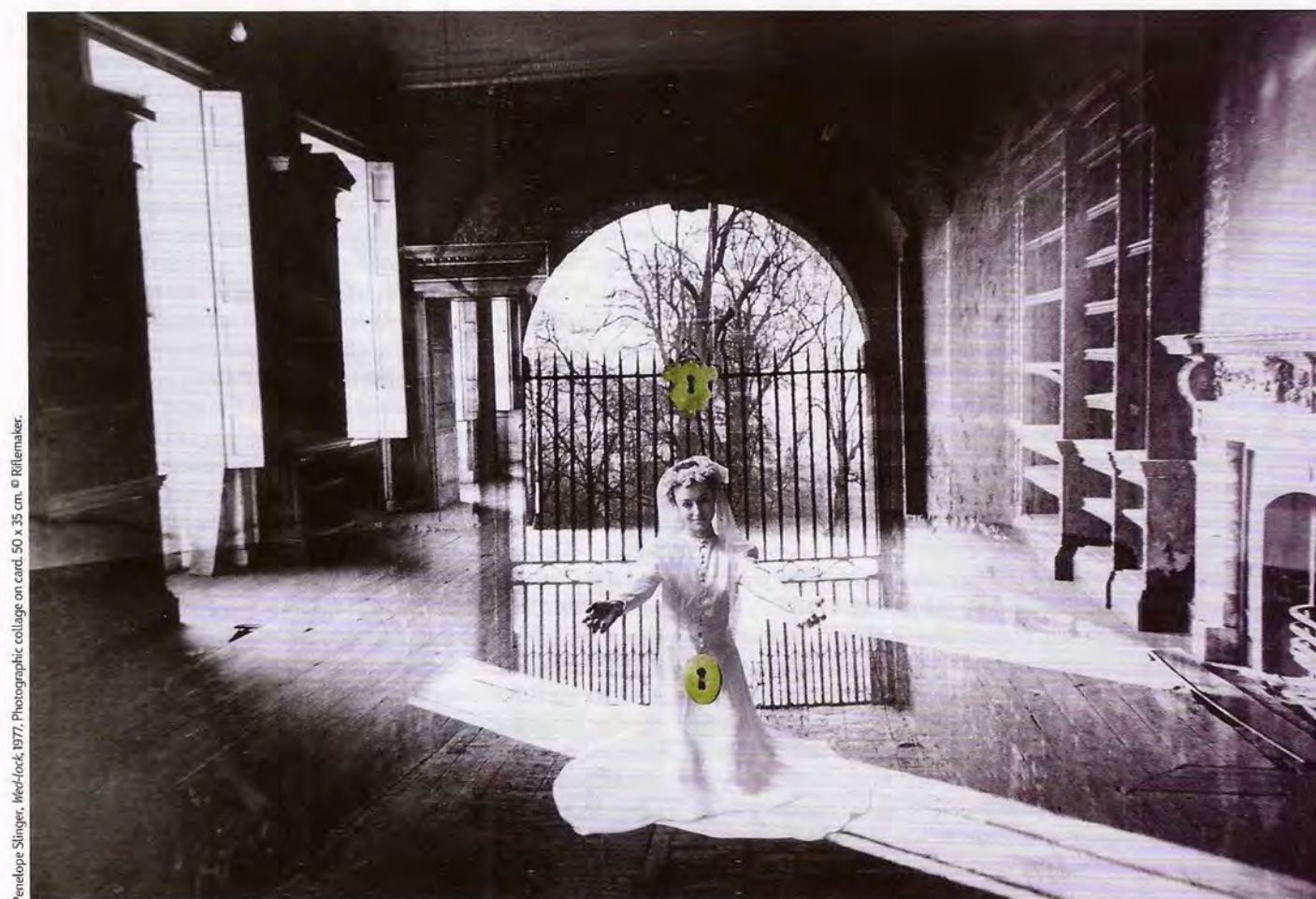
Her first exhibition upon leaving college, *Young and Fantastic*, at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, showcased her ability to use the medium of collage and montage in order to delve into her own psyche, and her work progressively focused in on the female collective psyche as a result: "I worked across the board in many different media – painting, photography, sculpture and assemblage, life-casting, printmaking, bookbinding, film, theatre and props, weaving all together in a collage of multi-faceted feminine creativity." The art-media technique of the "collage" and the "assemblage" had by this time been adopted into mainstream visual culture, specifically after the 1961 William C. Seitz curated exhibition *The Art of Assemblage*. It is perhaps quite fitting that one of the early collages, or the piece considered to be the forerunner of the



Penelope Slinger, *Perspective*, 1977. Photographic collage on card from *An Exorcism*. 49 x 34 cm. © Riflemaker.



Penelope Slinger, *Waiting Room*, 1977. Photographic collage on card, 50 x 35 cm. © Riflemaker.



Penelope Slinger, *Wed-Lock*, 1977. Photographic collage on card, 50 x 35 cm. © Riflemaker.



Penelope Slinger, *Sigh of the Rose*, 1977. Photographic collage on card, 50 x 35 cm. © Riflemaker.

perfect glyph to represent the male patriarchy ... it is the man who has the key, and the brick wall behind the door he guards represents female intuition and imagination being blocked off." For Slinger the empty rooms of the mansion provide both an escape, in terms of the inherent possibilities of each room to act as a stage for a drama, and a channel, as each room has a doorway for the narrative to exit through and continue. The idea of the house as an architectural realisation of our dreams and memories remains a constant theme in her work, and echoes Gaston Bachelard's 1958 book *The Poetics of Space*, which used the house as a starting point from which to discuss the structure of our thoughts, memories and desires. Dr Allmer states that architectural spaces, especially interiors, were and have been redefined by female surrealist artists "as the spaces inside the artist's head – spaces of memory, dream, desire, and, above all, of freedom of imagination and expression."

In her photo-collage series, Slinger focuses not only on the house, but also on the surrounding landscape, and chooses the motif of the flower, with its inherent feminine connotation, as a visual focal point. In *Resurrection*, a photographic collage on card, a female nude lies within an empty bathtub in a deserted room, colourful flower blooms laid out around her, framing her in an exquisite blanket of colour. The image is reminiscent of JE Millais' painting of *Ophelia* (1851-1852), a tragic and poignant image depicting the drowning death of this character from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Millais' painting was a romanticised version of the reality of death whereas Slinger's work subverts his version, quite literally turning it upside down: She depicts the female form as an earthly apparition: the body does not appear rigid with rigor-mortis but rather seems to float above the bath, defying the certain future of a death by drowning, buoyed by the flowers which enclose her. Slinger returns again to the flower motif with *Sigh of the Rose* (1977), an image devoid of colour save for the disparate bunches of roses scattered around the derelict mansion grounds. The one flower which is devoid of colour is the one which the female nude gently holds aloft in her hand, nose down, breathing in the smell. The title is apt as the breath (the sigh) of the female has extinguished the colour, and

hence the life, of the rose. Flowers have been used throughout art history as a *memento mori*, but to whose death does Slinger allude, if at all? Her interest in life-energy and ghosts is integral to these works as she states that she "seeks to bring the skeletons in the cupboards to light so as to identify which belong to the essential self and which are inherited from the projections of others and the collective psyche."

It is easy to revert back to the flower motif when discussing the erotic elements of her work as when flowers bloom, their closed buds open up to reveal an inner beauty, an almost vulva-like form, which has been referenced by more traditional female artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986). O'Keeffe's large-scale intimate paintings of flowers have an innate eroticism about them, whether intentional or not, as it is an element of nature that is difficult to avoid. Slinger embraces that element: "The sensuality of the inner world at the heart of the flower has always been one of my personal favourites." Slinger's more recent works, in particular those produced after her return to America in 1990, reflect her avid interest in the erotic as tied to beauty and wisdom. She cites her discovery of Tantric Art as a seminal moment in her oeuvre as it allowed her to expand her own visual and artistic vocabulary so that she no longer struggles with liberating her own femininity as she is free: "The latest work is an expression of the liberated feminine and her multidimensional, transcultural wisdom and potential." This work, a cycle of 64 images, is based on the 64 Yogini Temples of Tantric India, which are intimately tied to yoga, sexual mastery, deep insight, and steeped in history (the culture of yoginis dating back to 8th century AD). It is evident that Slinger's work is anything but cyclical; instead she builds upon her knowledge, and thus her practice, creating a wider oeuvre that is still ultimately rooted in surrealism and its defiance of constraints, whether they be cultural, personal or sexual.

Hear What I Say opens 12 September through to 30 October at Riflemaker, London. Visit their website www.riflemaker.org for further information.

Niamh Coghlan

Penelope Slinger, *Alluring*, 1977. Photographic collage on card, 50 x 35 cm. © Riffemaker.



Penelope Slinger, *Resurrection*, 1977. Photographic collage on card, 50 x 35 cm. © Riffemaker.

