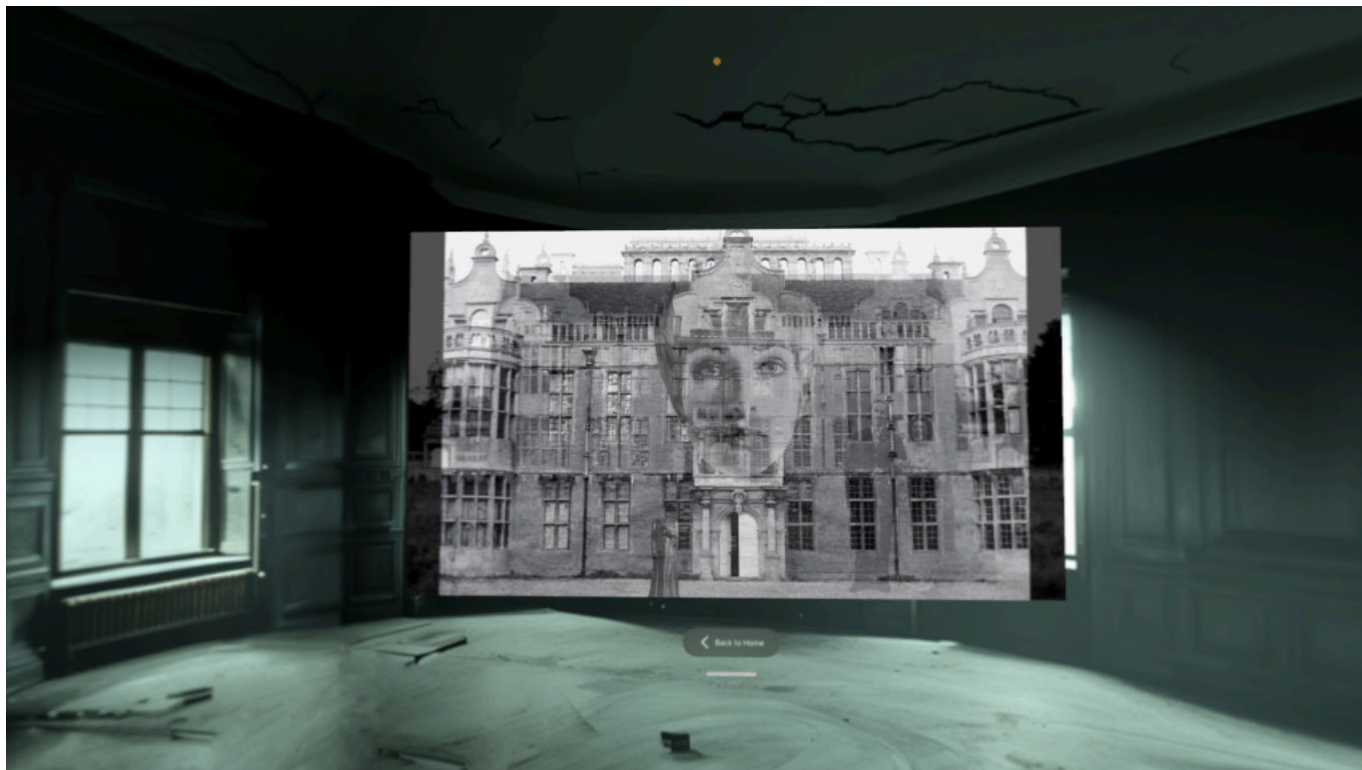


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
## At 77, Feminist Photographer Penny Slinger Wants Augmented Reality to Catch Up With Her

The Surrealist photographer has partnered with blockchain platform Kaleido to experiment with its augmented reality app for the Apple Vision Pro.



A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows the immersive environment designed by Penny Slinger for the release of her video "An Exorcism" inside Kaleido's Art Universe app. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

**Adam Schrader** (<https://news.artnet.com/about/adam-schrader-34468>) December 23, 2024

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The famed [77-year-old feminist surrealist Penny Slinger](https://news.artnet.com/market/frieze-presentation-sex-work-tests-market-overlooked-art-historical-chapter-1102604) (<https://news.artnet.com/market/frieze-presentation-sex-work-tests-market-overlooked-art-historical-chapter-1102604>), best known for her provocative photo collage books has taken on a new medium: augmented reality. The artist recently partnered with the blockchain art marketplace Kaleido as the first celebrity artist to experiment with its [new augmented reality app Art Universe](https://artuniverse.com/) (<https://artuniverse.com/>), for the Apple Vision Pro.

Kaleido's Art Universe app promises to showcase contemporary art in a spatial environment, meaning it allows a mixed-reality experience where owners of digital art can place art, virtually, on their walls at home to be seen when wearing the headset. So far, the app boasts some 120 popular artists whose works are available for purchase and digital display. But Slinger's new piece debuts the app's ability to create immersive environments for experiencing digital art.

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Slinger heralded the technology as the epitome of modern collage-making and has now debuted her never-before-publicly-available film *An Exorcism-The Works* on the platform coinciding with a major [solo show at the Richard Saltoun Gallery](https://www.richardsaltoun.com/exhibitions/128-penny-slinger-exorcism-inside-out/) (<https://www.richardsaltoun.com/exhibitions/128-penny-slinger-exorcism-inside-out/>) in London that ended in September, which included analog immersive components like custom-made digital wraps and video.

"It's so very tactile and very vividly real," she said. "So, I'm very excited about what we can do from here on in, blending worlds and creating this doorway into the imagination which we haven't had the technology to support before."



An installation view of the now-closed Penny Slinger show "An Exorcism: Inside Out" at the Richard Saltoun Gallery in London. Photo courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery

Despite her age, Slinger may be the best artist to champion the platform; she has already long been celebrated for creating immersive experiences in the analog world and was an early adopter of digital collage-making. For example, in 2019, she [transformed Christian Dior's historic atelier](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeG7LAgH_IM) into a moody, nature-themed dreamscape populated by feminine creatures, using hundreds of square feet of custom-designed wallpaper.

Slinger has been aided in her efforts by her creative partner, Dhiren Dasu—himself an accomplished photographer, collage artist, and animator whose large-scale photo collage prints likewise have elements of "augmented reality." Dasu said the pair were approached for the collaboration by Kaleido founder Ian Panchevre.

Panchevre, previously acquainted with the artistic duo, was shown Slinger's unpublished *An Exorcism* film in 2022. A year later, in June 2023, Apple publicly acknowledged the Vision Pro, and Panchevre obtained an early developer version. He dived into developing the app and approached Slinger to give her a demonstration of its capabilities. He said he had been "blown away" by her film and thought it would be perfect for Kaleido.



An installation view of Penny Slinger's now closed show "An Exorcism: Inside Out" at the Richard Saltoun Gallery in London. Photo courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery

"Throughout her entire career, she's been an innovator with her art with her practice. Even today, this technology was not forced upon her. She wanted to be a part of this. I just really admired how much of a rabble-rouser she is," Panchevre said. "She's just been an awesome collaborator, too. She pushed us. She challenged us."

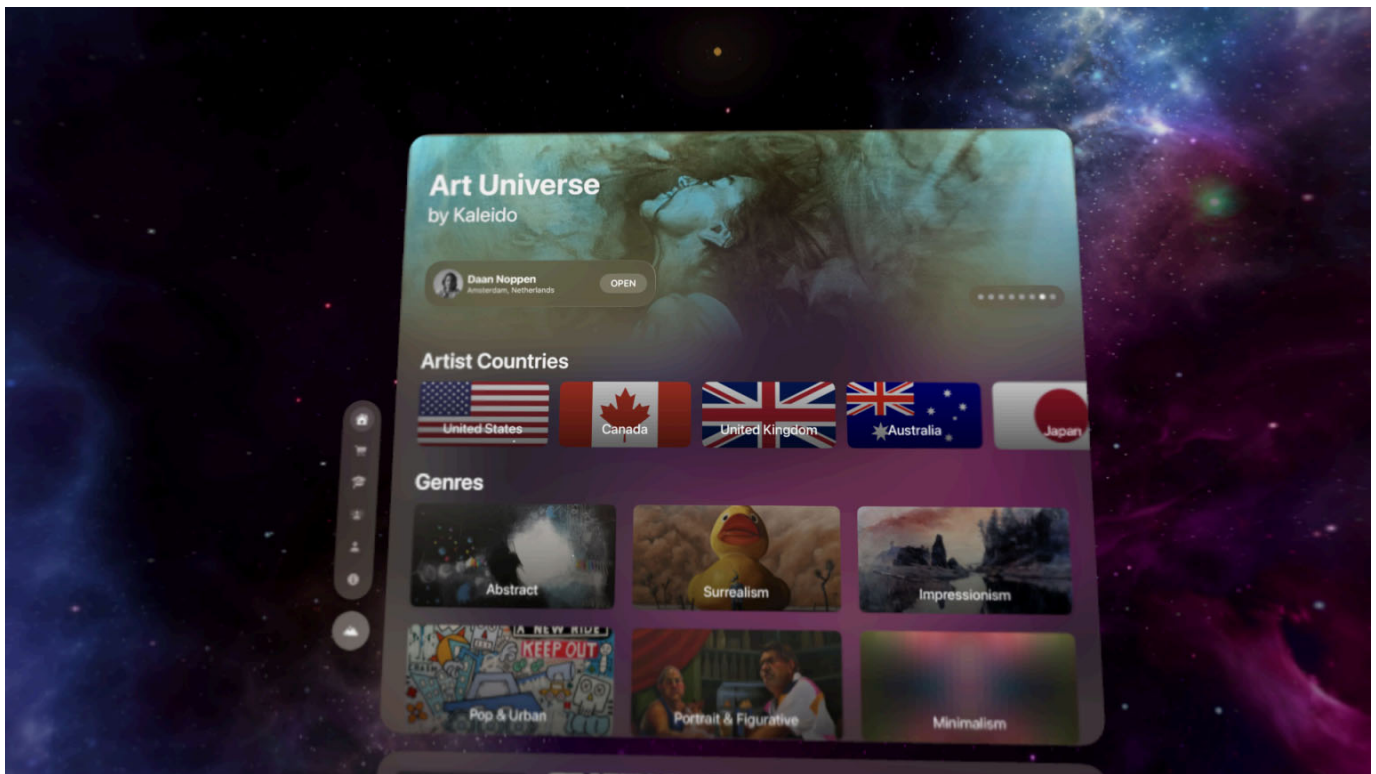
Slinger said that what really sold her during that demo was when she was able to reach out her hand and have a butterfly land on her finger.



An installation view of Penny Slinger's now closed show "An Exorcism: Inside Out" at the Richard Saltoun Gallery in London. Photo courtesy of Richard Saltoun Gallery. The Richard Saltoun exhibition on view in London was based on one of Slinger's seminal books from the 1970s called *An Exorcism*, set in an old mansion house in the north of the U.K. Slinger created an analog immersive experience for that show, with the Vision Pro experience as an extension of that. The book was also republished with extended text and double the number of images.

"I wanted to create a world people would go into," Slinger said. "The Vision Pro was a way of approaching that with a different collage technology to offer an immersive experience beyond the physical space. This could be something that people could experience in their own homes, and could experience for many years, not just at the one time that it occurred."

Slinger said she provided Kaleido with photographs of the empty rooms the collage series is set in. When the headset is put on, the viewer engages in a series of *Minority Report*-like hand gestures to navigate through the application to a 3D rendering of the inside of the old mansion where a 30-minute film, in more of a two-dimensional format, is shown floating in the air. The headset, which retails for \$3,499 for the base model, announces the film can be watched for a \$10 purchase.

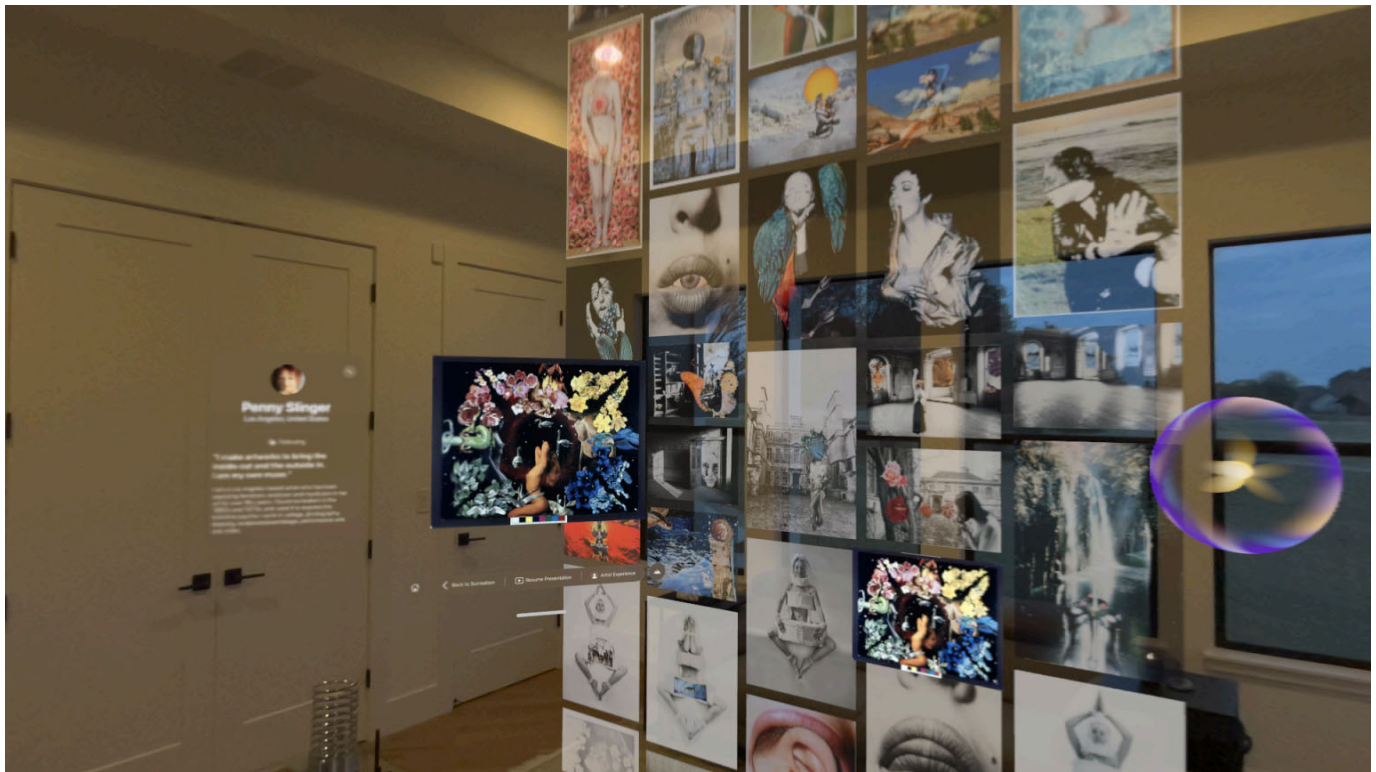


A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows the main page of Kaleido's Art Universe app after opening it on the device. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

"We recreated like a scene from the film where you're in the mansion. So, the effect is as if you were watching the film from inside the film. It's kind of meta, but that's exactly the kind of vibe she was going for," Panchevre said.

When the headset is worn, a virtual assistant in Art Universe named Aura notes that proceeds from the viewing of the video are split between the company and Slinger directly. "Please note that because of its erotic nature, the film is not suitable for viewers under 18 years old," it warns.

Dasu said that to create the short film, Slinger found the original plates for the backgrounds of the collages, which were scanned. They then overlaid individual elements and reconstructed them again digitally in Photoshop, before polishing everything in After Effects. They also used a virtual camera to do some, not very complicated, zooms and pans and tilts—enough to trick the eye into thinking flat planes look 3D.



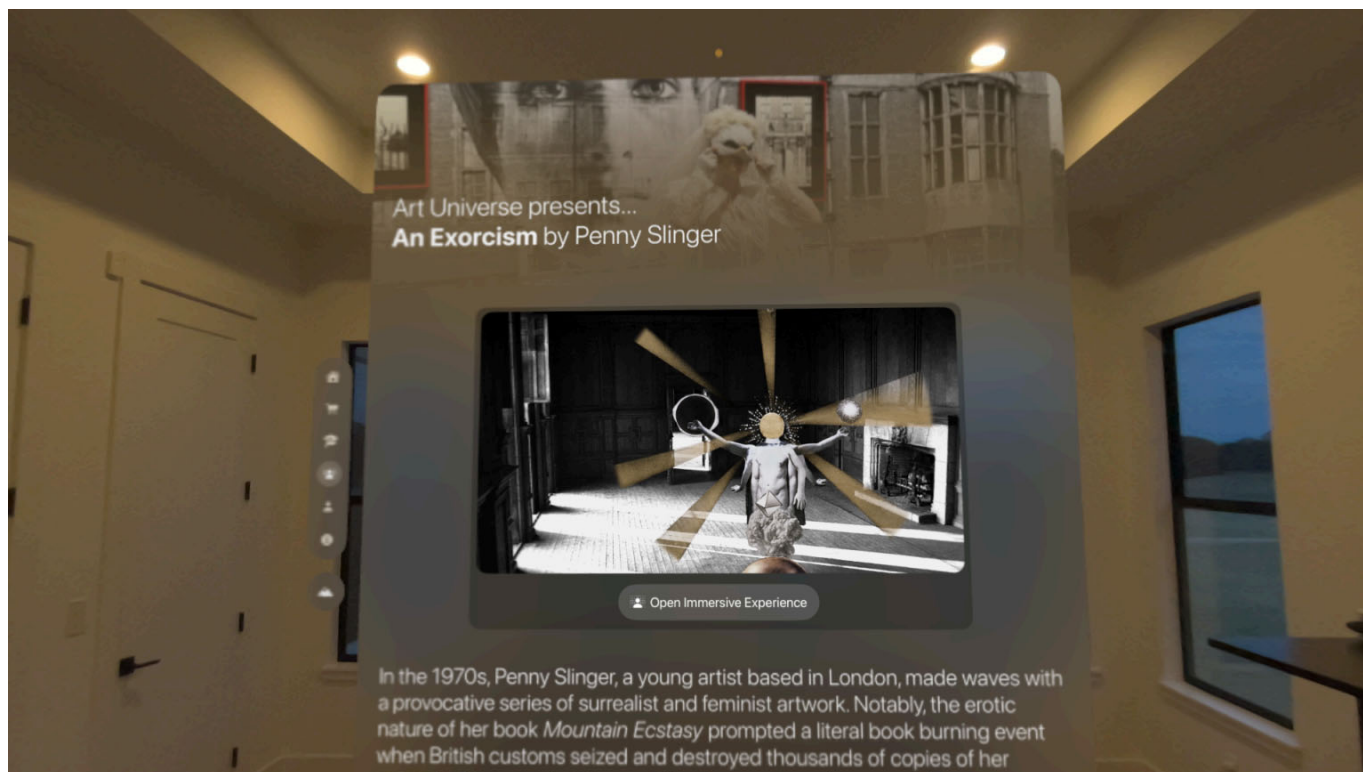
A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows a cascading waterfall of Penny Slinger's work on Kaleido's Art Universe app as seen in a mixed-reality environment in the office of the company's founder Ian Panchevre. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

"It was very interesting for us, from a deconstruction standpoint, to be able to take works that were made 50 years ago, break them apart and reconstruct them again digitally, and then make it an immersive thing," Dasu said.

During that process, Kaleido also sent a cameraman to film an interview between Slinger and another journalist in which they walked through the space. The team intended to have that included in the Kaleido app as a truly interactive augmented reality experience.

Slinger also filmed a performance art piece called *Bird Woman*, where she dons a bird mask and wedding dress and is intended to move through the space with the audience. She said neither of those additions has been included yet because of limitations still with Apple Pro. But she hopes that will be doable soon. Right now, they are presented in a 2D format.

"All the material is there, so it can be shown at the moment looking more like a normal video, but hopefully, before too long, we'll be able to show that fully immersive experience with me traveling through the space in a way that feels viscerally real to people," she said.

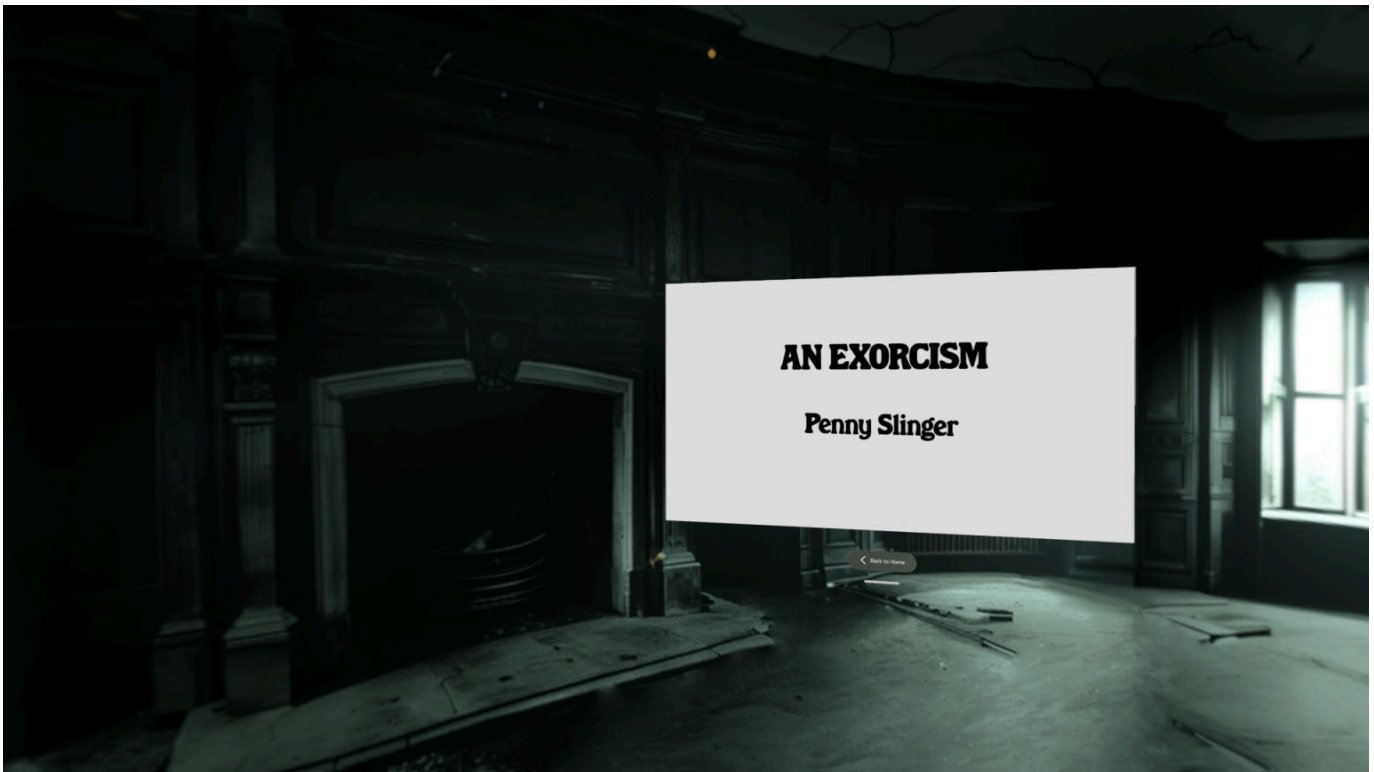


A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows the landing page for Penny Slinger's "An Exorcism" augmented reality project in Kaleido's Art Universe app as seen in a mixed-reality environment in the office of the company's founder Ian Panchevre. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

Slinger was first attracted to collage through the surrealist work of Max Ernst in his collage books, and quickly approached her own "sticky mix" of using translucent overlays to blend images and text with her first book, *50% The Visible Woman*, which was reissued by the Blum gallery in Los Angeles in 2021.

She described Kaleido's app as much closer to where her imagination took her when she first made her *An Exorcism* series half a century ago. This latest medium can help express her themes of feminism in her work perhaps even better than her analog art can, she said.

"At this point, collage is probably the most prevalent art form in the universe. As in all advertising, every visual thing we see at this point is most likely a collage. They're different elements put together, there's very little straight photography," Dasu said. "Every special effects sequence in every movie, like a *Star Wars* green screen, is basically a collage."



A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows the immersive environment designed by Penny Slinger for the release of her video "An Exorcism" inside Kaleido's Art Universe app. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

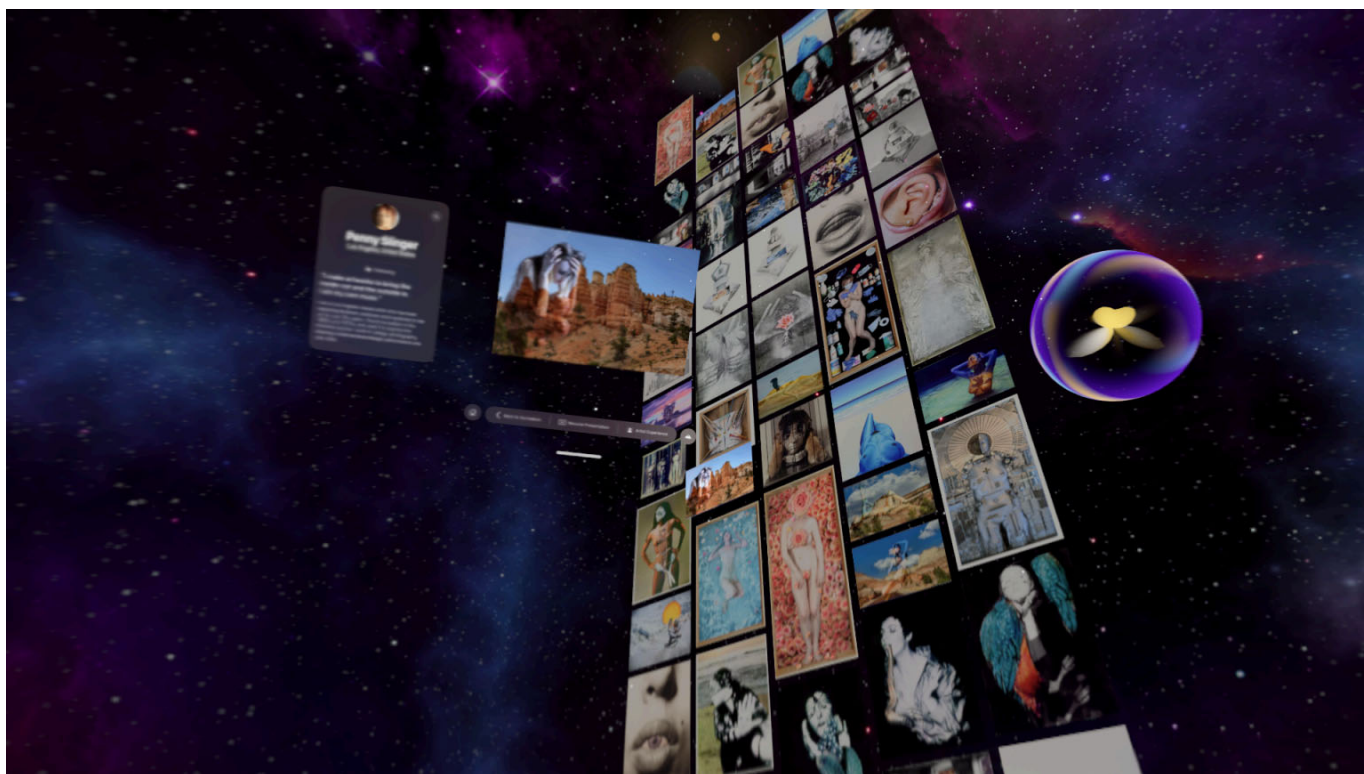
When asked if she thought that advances in collage technology would lead to losses for the visual aesthetic of things like traditional 2D collage, Slinger responded that she hopes not.

"I have friends who grew up making cut-and-paste collages who don't want to touch digital media. But for me, I've used cut and paste. I've used, digital and I like to use the tools that are available to us," she said. "These are like the magic of our times, and so to avoid them will be like trying to be back in the Stone Age. So, I enjoy going between the different realms and hopefully, the different realms, and the value of them, will remain."

Slinger hopes her fans see her work like viewing a jewel from different angles when consuming it in different mediums, from the original *An Exorcism* book to the latest augmented reality video.

Dasu added that there is a narrative arc to the original book. With the book, the viewer can go through at their own pace. "There's more writing to digest with the heroine's journey through the story," he said. In the film, the viewer gets an abridged version with an expanded sensory experience.





A screenshot taken using an Apple Vision Pro headset shows a cascading waterfall of Penny Slinger's work on Kaleido's Art Universe app as seen in an environmental rendering of outer space. Photo courtesy of Ian Panchevre

"With the film, we use music which we crafted specially to evoke the sentiments and emotions of each section," Slinger said. "The music helps you to feel those things that the words could convey in the book."

She said most of the unseen content from the *An Exorcism* project was created long ago and ready to be published in a second edition of the book shortly after the first edition was published. But that was all put on hold when authorities confiscated and burnt copies of her book *Mountain Ecstasy*, as they were being imported to the U.K. from The Netherlands.

Slinger also has new books in the works, including one she will release with Hat and Beard Press in the spring, called *A Muse Unto Herself*. "It's a self-penned monograph where I'm giving the curve of my life as art, and I've kind of constructed it and signed myself as a large collage and with supporting text," she said. "But it's anything but academic."

Right now, the artist is also digitizing more than 25,000 slides, 3,000 videos, and other media in her archive that she hopes to place with an institution. But her dream is to create a virtual museum, an online repository of her life as an artist.

And though Art Universe does not yet have gamelike elements like the ability to interact with or hold art objects virtually like the butterfly that landed on her finger, Slinger hopes to be able to deploy virtual touch soon.

Panchevre said "The future of media is immersive-ness" when asked if artworks may become more gamelike when interactive mechanics are added. "I think experiencing visual art is one of the most compelling uses that this device can offer," he said.



Adam Schrader

News Reporter

(<https://news.artnet.com/about/adam-schrader-34468>)

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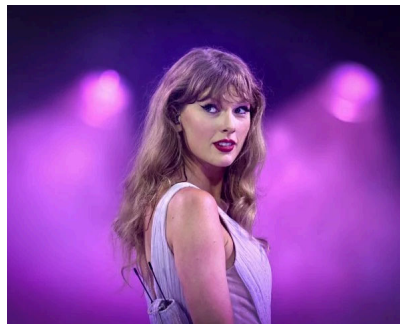
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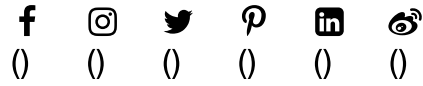
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