

100%
women

Penny SLINGER

Tantric Transformations

29 June – 31 August

Private view: Friday 28 June, 6–8pm

“In 1971 I visited an exhibition called ‘Tantra’ at the Hayward Gallery in London which changed my future life and art. I saw a Yantra (mystic diagram) dedicated to the Goddess Kali and understood abstraction for the first time. I recognized the visual language of the exhibit, being entranced by animal headed beings and figures whose energy centres (chakras) throbbed with mystic energy. I felt that Tantric iconography represented the evolution of Surrealism.

Over the next years I sought to discover the secrets of Tantra. Nik Douglas, an authority in the field, became my next partner and I immersed myself in the art, philosophy and practice.

This exhibit shows some of the works that emerged.”

– Penny Slinger, 2019

RIGHT

Penny as Red Dakini, 1977

Photography by Mayotte Magnus

BELOW

Penny as Shakti

Photo by Nik Douglas, 1976





Penny SLINGER 'Tantric Transformations'

29 June – 24 August 2019

Artist talk: Penny Slinger in conversation with Hettie Judah, Saturday 29 June, 10.30am

Tantric yoga: Sunday 30 June, then every Saturday until 17 August, 11am, £10



The work of Penny Slinger awakens your desires. A self-proclaimed “Feminist Surrealist”, her work combines the mythical qualities of Surrealism with the radical feminism of the 1970s – all underpinned by her long-standing interest in erotica, pleasure and the reclamation of the female body. Her exhibition at Richard Saltoun – her first with the gallery – celebrates the artist’s interest and development of Tantric art, featuring collages from the mid-1970s, Xerox body prints, vintage and new photographs created especially for the show.

Slinger was first introduced to Tantric art through the exhibition ‘Tantra, the Indian Cult of Ecstasy’ at London’s Hayward Gallery in 1971. The experience changed her life and forever altered the direction of her work: “I saw a Yantra (mystic diagram) dedicated to the Goddess Karli and understood abstraction for the first time. I recognised the visual language of the exhibit, being entranced by animal-headed beings and figures whose energy centres (chakras) throbbed with mystic energy. I felt that Tantric iconography represented the evolution of Surrealism.” As she sought to discover the secrets of Tantra, she met Nik Douglas, an authority in the field, with whom she co-authored *Sexual Secrets: The Alchemy of Ecstasy*, a definitive study on sex and mysticism with extensive illustrations by Slinger.

Born in London and now based in Los Angeles, Slinger studied at the Chelsea School of Art, where she was heavily influenced by her exploration of Surrealism, her friendship with Roland Penrose and association with Max Ernst. “Having discovered the magic of surrealism, I wanted to employ its tools and methods to create a language for the feminine psyche to express itself,” Slinger explains on her website. After graduating in 1969, Slinger travelled extensively to undertake research. It was during this period, in the early 1970s, that she developed an increasing interest in the transformative aspect of Surrealism in relation to her interest in the ancient mythology and Eastern philosophies espoused by Tantra. Tantric art, in particular, offered her ways to transform the archetypal symbolism associated with female sexuality, which she achieved via multimedia collage.

Slinger’s early collages consisted of images of her body, taken by a copy machine at the Portsmouth College of Art where she taught. She used the college’s copier during her lunch breaks to make monoprints of her face, which resulted in the series *Spirit Impressions*, aptly titled due to the work’s ghostly appearance. Later, Slinger started using ‘found images’, taken from magazines and merged together, evident in works like *Tantric Reunions* or *Offerings at Twilight* (both 1976). These works in particular represented a shift: away from the artist’s own body, which she found liberating and healing, and towards an alchemy of pornography or enlightened erotica. The works were deemed so radical at the time that thousands of copies were burnt by British Customs en route from printers in Netherlands.

Her work with the copy machine later developed into the creation of a series of scrolls, *Chakra Man and Woman*. Inspired by ancient Indian paintings of figures depicting the tantric system of chakras, Slinger created the work by laying and twisting her naked body, as well as that of her partner Nik Douglas, on the Xerox machine. Some scrolls include only the original Xerox monoprint, while others were collaged or made into silkscreens. All employ Tantric symbolism.

In the early 2000s, Slinger moved onto digital collage. A digital reprint of an original portrait of the artist, taken by the renowned French photographer Mayotte Magnus in 1977, will also be on view. Bright red, Slinger poses as Red Dakini (or Vajrayogini), the tantric, fully enlightened version of the female Buddha. The work is as contemporary today as when it was taken, with its wild, mythic and sensual appeal reaching across both time and medium.

The work of Penny Slinger (b.1947) has featured in numerous exhibitions, including most recently 'House of the Sleeping Beauties' at Sotheby's S|2 Gallery, London, UK (2019); 'Visible Women', Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery, UK (2018); 'Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired by Her Writings', Tate St. Ives, Cornwall, UK (2018); the major touring exhibition 'Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s: Works from the Verbund Collection' at the Photographers' Gallery, London, UK (2016–2017) and Hamburger Kunsthalle, Germany (2015); 'History Is Now: 7 Artists Take on Britain', Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2015); 'Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism', Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2009); and 'The Dark Monarch: Magic and Modernity in British Art', Tate St. Ives, UK (2009).

Penny Slinger will be in conversation with writer and art critic Hettie Judah on Saturday 29 June as part of Mayfair Art Weekend 2019. A light breakfast will be served from 10am, with the talk beginning at 10.30am. The event is free and open to the public, but spaces are limited. Please email rsvp@richardsaltoun.com to book your spot.

Tantric yoga sessions will be held at the gallery every weekend throughout the exhibition. The first session will take place on Sunday 30 June, with following sessions every Saturday until 17 August. All classes start at 11am and will be guided by a qualified instructor. The cost of each class is £10 and advanced booking is required via our website.

Out of the Shadows, a documentary by acclaimed director Richard Kovitch, documents Penny Slinger's life from the grey suburbs of Surrey to the art scenes of London, New York, Tokyo and Los Angeles. The film will be screened at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London on Saturday 29 June at 6.30pm, with further tour dates around the UK listed below:

2 July: Tyneside Picturehouse, Newcastle upon Tyne

8 July: Electric, Birmingham

10 July: Bonington Gallery, Nottingham

13 July: Filmhouse, Edinburgh

14 July: Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT), Glasgow

16 July: Hyde Park Picture House, Leeds

31 July: HOME, Manchester

16 August: Greenman Festival, Crickhowell

28 August: End of the Road Festival, Larmer Tree Gardens, Tollard Royal

Penny Slinger: Tantric Transformations forms part of the gallery's 12-month programme dedicated to supporting the work of female artists. Titled *100% Women*, the programme aims to remedy the gender inequality that persists in the art world and encourage wider industry action through debate, dialogue and collaboration. *100% Women* will pursue its mission through a combination of gallery exhibitions, art fair presentations, artist talks, a film and lecture series, external collaborations and digital exhibitions hosted on the gallery's new online platform.

Gallery information

Opening hours:

Monday to Tuesday, 10am–6pm

Saturday, 11am–5pm

Or by appointment

E: info@richardsaltoun.com

T: +44 (0) 207 637 1225

Instagram: [@richardsaltoungallery](https://www.instagram.com/richardsaltoungallery)

Twitter: [@RSaltounGallery](https://twitter.com/RSaltounGallery)

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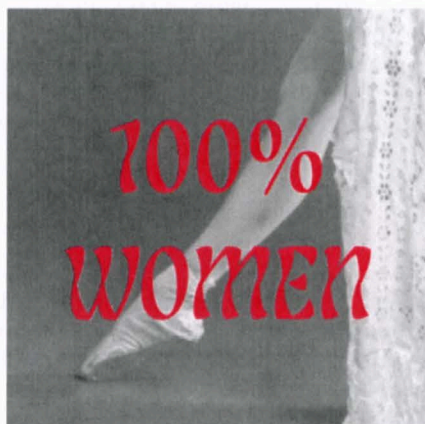
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Image: *Penny as Shakti*, Photo by Nik Douglas, 1976

100% Women: A 12-month programme to support female artists



From March 2019, Richard Saltoun Gallery is dedicating 100% of its programme to women. This 12-month programme is part of the gallery's long-standing commitment to supporting under-recognised and under-represented artists. *100% Women* aims to protest the gender inequality that persists in the art world and encourage wider industry action through debate, dialogue and collaboration.

Today less than 30% of artists represented by major commercial galleries in London are women, with only 5% of galleries representing an equal number of male and female artists.¹ In most aspects of the art world – from sales and auction results to solo exhibitions in major institutions – male artists continue to outnumber their female counterparts in the majority of activities that signify the development of an artist's career. According to the 2018 report by the Freelands Foundation, a charitable organisation founded by Elisabeth Murdoch that tackles critical issues of inequality, the

representation of women in the commercial gallery sector has reached a new low, indicating that women continue to be excluded from the mainstream commercial art market.

Through *100% Women*, Richard Saltoun Gallery aims to redress this persistent gender imbalance, whilst cementing its ongoing support of female artists. The programme will pursue its mission through a combination of gallery exhibitions, art fair presentations, a public events programme, external collaborations and digital exhibitions hosted on its new online platform – all of which will feature artists represented by the gallery as well as emerging artists and artists without direct representation in order to achieve greater inclusivity.

100% Women opened on 1 March with the gallery's first solo exhibition of work by the British artist **Rose ENGLISH**, an integral figure in the development of performance art in Britain. In April the Belgian artist **Lili DUJOURIE**, a key force in the 1970s Feminist avant-garde movement, presented her first solo exhibition in London in over 20 years, followed in May by an exhibition celebrating the life and career of the radical performance artist **Gina PANE**. Coinciding with Mayfair Art Weekend in June 2019, the exhibition by London-born, LA-based artist **Penny SLINGER** focuses on her interest and development of Tantric art, while 'Made Routes: Mapping and Making', curated by art historian Tamar Garb, celebrates two South African artists, **Vivienne KOORLAND** and **Berni SEARLE**. Paola Ugolini, curator of the inaugural exhibition 'Women Look at Women' at the gallery's location on Dover Street in February 2018, returns to present 'Feminism in Italian Contemporary Art', featuring two Italian feminist artists **Silvia GIAMBRONE** and **Marinella SENATORE**. The programme will conclude with a two-part exhibition dedicated to themes of 'motherhood'. Curated by Catherine McCormack, the first will open in November 2019, with the second opening in January 2020.

Female artists will also be promoted through the gallery's new online platform, which launched in spring 2019. The first online exhibition was curated by Lynda Morris – a pioneering curator who gave many artists their first UK exhibition, including Agnes Martin, Bernd and Hilla Becher – and focused on the effects of empire and decolonisation. Further digital displays have featured Françoise Janicot and Annegret Soltau; new work by Renate Bertlmann, coinciding with her representation of Austria at the Venice Biennale 2019 (May); Natalia Goncharova and the women artists of the Russian Avant-Garde (June); Shelagh Wakely (July); Jo Spence (August); Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt (September–October); Ann Churchill, curated by Lizzie Neilson (November–December); and Helen Chadwick (January–February).

100% Women also extends to the gallery's art fair presentations, with all exhibits dedicated to female artists, beginning with Renate Bertlmann at Independent New York in March 2019 – from which a percentage of profits was donated to A.I.R. Gallery, a non-profit organisation that supports the open exchange of ideas and risk-taking by women artists. The programme also features a newly launched series of public events, from film screenings and artist talks to lectures by some of the UK's leading academics, writers, journalists and art professionals.

¹ Statistics taken from the Freelands Foundation's 'Representation of Female Artists in Britain: Research Paper No.4' (2018) and East London Fawcett (ELF) Great East London Art Audit, 2012.

Richard Saltoun, Gallery Founder and Director, says:

“For me, supporting female artists, and equality in general, has always been a driving motivational force. As a father to two young girls, this is an opportunity for me to do something for them and help secure a better future for women. Whilst we have achieved gender parity in our roster of artists –50% of the artists we represent or exhibit frequently are women – this is an opportunity for us to discuss equality on a bigger scale. Our aim is to ensure the female artists who have made a great impact on the development of contemporary art are duly noted in art history. We want to take responsibility for this and set an example, but of course still have room to grow. Following *100% Women*, our programme will extend beyond gender equality, seeking to shine light on under-represented figures despite their race, nationality, religion or geographical location. We will continue developing our programme and taking on new artists with this in mind.”

Richard Saltoun Gallery

Founded in 2012, Richard Saltoun Gallery is based in Mayfair, London. The gallery specialises in contemporary art, with an emphasis on Feminist, Conceptual and Performance artists from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet under-recognised artists through a yearly exhibition programme at its central location on Dover Street and participation in numerous art fairs around the world.

Active on both the primary and secondary market, Richard Saltoun Gallery has established a leading reputation for promoting and exhibiting the work of female artists, including Helena Almeida, Eleanor Antin, Renate Bertlmann, Lili Dujourie, Rose English, VALIE EXPORT, Gina Pane, Penny Slinger and Greta Schödl, amongst others.

Additionally, the gallery supports and exhibits artists who have contributed to the fields of Conceptual and Performance art, including Victor Burgin, Thomas De Falco, John Hilliard, Dom Sylvester Houédard, Bob Law, Gustavo Pérez Monzón, Annegret Soltau, Edgardo Antonio Vigo, ULAY, Marie Yates and more. Until recently, many of these innovative and experimental artists were largely ignored by the broader international art world.

Richard Saltoun Gallery is also dedicated to preserving the legacy of artists through its representation of artist estates, including Helen Chadwick, Henri Chopin, David Hall, Ed Herring, Nigel Henderson, Bob Law, Bice Lazzari, Tony Morgan, Jo Spence and Shelagh Wakely.

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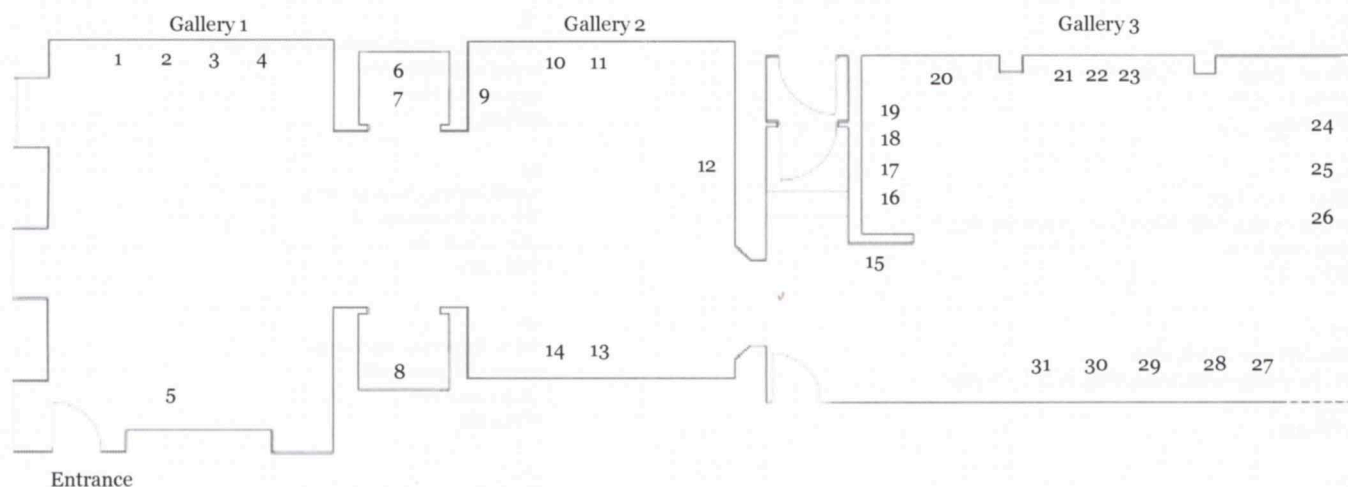
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RICHARD SALTOUN

'PENNY SLINGER: TANTRIC TRANSFORMATIONS' 29 JUNE—24 AUGUST 2019



1.
Vision of the rose, 1976
Body xerox monoprint with collage on paper, mounted on board with silk
Image: 110.5 x 20 cm
Board: 119 x 28 cm
(PSL200)

2.
Grapevine, 1976
Silk screen from xerox self body monoprint on fine paper with collage,
mounted on board with silk
Image: 124.5 x 20 cm
Board: 170 x 28 cm
(PSL207)

3.
Grapevine, 1976
Body xerox monoprint with collage on paper, mounted on board with silk
Image: 129.5 x 21 cm
Board: 137 x 28 cm
(PSL208)

4.
Lotus Woman, 1976
Body xerox self monoprint with collage on paper, mounted on board, with
silk Image: 101 x 21 cm
Board: 109 x 28 cm
(PSL212)

5.
Penny Red Dakini, 2019
Digital photo collage
53.3 x 38.1 cm
(PSL266)

6.
Penny as Shakti 2, 1976
Photo by Nik Douglas
30.5 x 20.3 cm
(PSL263)

7.
Penny as Shakti, 1976
Photo by Nik Douglas
16.5 x 25.4 cm
(PSL262)

8.
Woman with pearls, 1976
Body xerox self monoprint with collage on paper,
mounted on board with silk
Image: 162.5 x 20 cm
Board: 171.5 x 26.5 cm
(PSL202)

9.
Bouquet, 1976
Xerox self body print with collage
30.5 x 20.3 cm
(PSL243)

10.
Chakra Woman, 1976
Body xerox self monoprint with collage on paper,
mounted on board with silk
Image: 162.5 x 20 cm
Board: 170 x 28 cm
(PSL197)

11.
Woman Scroll, 1976
Body xerox monoprint with collage on paper,
mounted on board with silk
Image: 165 x 20 cm
Board: 180 x 28 cm
(PSL199)

12.
Offerings at Twilight, 1976
Photo collage on board
41.9 x 59.4 cm
On board: 50.8 x 68.6 cm
(PSL238)

13.
Primal Man, 1976
Body xerox monoprint with collage on paper, mounted on
board with silk
Image: 170 x 19.5 cm
Board: 200 x 26 cm
(PSL204)

14.
Rose Devi, 1976
Silk screen from xerox body self monoprint on fine paper,
plus collage, mounted on board
Image: 160 x 20 cm
Board: 170 x 28 cm
(PSL215)

15.
Tantric Reunions, 1976
Photo collage on paper
41.9 x 55.9 cm
(PSL237)

16.

Coco de Mer, 1976

Photo collage on board

41.9 x 29.5 cm

(PSL229)

17.

Lotus Feet, 1976

Photo collage with xerox body prints, on paper

41.92 x 9.5 cm

(PSL230)

18.

Shakti Pat, 1976

Photo collage with xerox body prints on paper

41.9 x 29.5 cm

(PSL232)

19.

She Left Her Mark, 1976

Photo collage with xerox body prints, on paper

41.9 x 29.5 cm

(PSL231)

20.

The Cosmic Couple, 1976

Photo collage with xerox body prints on board

41.9 x 58.7 cm

Board mount: 52.4 x 69.2 cm

(PSL233)

21.

La Vie en Rose, 1976

Xerox self body print with collage

29.8 x 21 cm

(PSL246)

22.

Heart Opening, 1976

Xerox self body print with collage

29.8 x 21 cm

(PSL245)

23.

Rosebuds/Touch, 1976

Xerox self body print with collage

29.8 x 21 cm

(PSL244)

24.

At the Feet of Kali, 1976/77

Photo collage on board

41.9 x 58.4 cm

(PSL235)

25.

Highway 49 Revisited, 1976/77

Photo collage on board

43.2 x 59.4 cm

(PSL240)

26.

Land of Soma, 1976/77

Photo collage with xerox body print on board

41.9 x 58.4 cm

(PSL234)

27.

Coming Up Roses/Petals Fall-1, 1974

Xerox self monoprint

29.2 x 48.3 cm

(PSL252)

28.

Coming Up Roses/Petals Fall-2, 1974

Xerox self monoprint

29.2 x 48.3 cm

(PSL253)

29.

Spirit Impressions-2, 1974

Xerox self monoprint

48.3 x 29.2 cm

(PSL258)

30.

Spirit Impressions-3, 1974

Xerox self monoprint

48.3 x 29.2 cm

(PSL259)

31.

Spirit Impressions-4, 1974

Xerox self monoprint

48.3 x 29.2 cm

(PSL260)