



ART ► EXHIBITIONS & SHOWS

Penny Slinger's 1970s erotic Photo Romance asks: 'Is this where my story begins?'

Artist Penny Slinger's seminal 'An Exorcism', gets an immersive outing



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"A Rose By Any Other Name" (1969)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist and Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York)

BY CARAGH MCKAY PUBLISHED AUGUST 27, 2024 IN FEATURES

The tag 'feminist art' is not one that generally appeals to me. But that's not to say that I don't seek out art by women. Generally, I tend to be disheartened by Tate exhibitions on the subject these days, as I find them too mired in angsty polemic. However, for those who prefer a healthy dose of wit with their feminist art, Richard Saltoun Gallery, a tidy space in the heart of Mayfair, is the place to go. Homing in on works by female artists from the 1960s, with a bent towards conceptual and performance pieces, the shows and curation at Richard Saltoun glint with

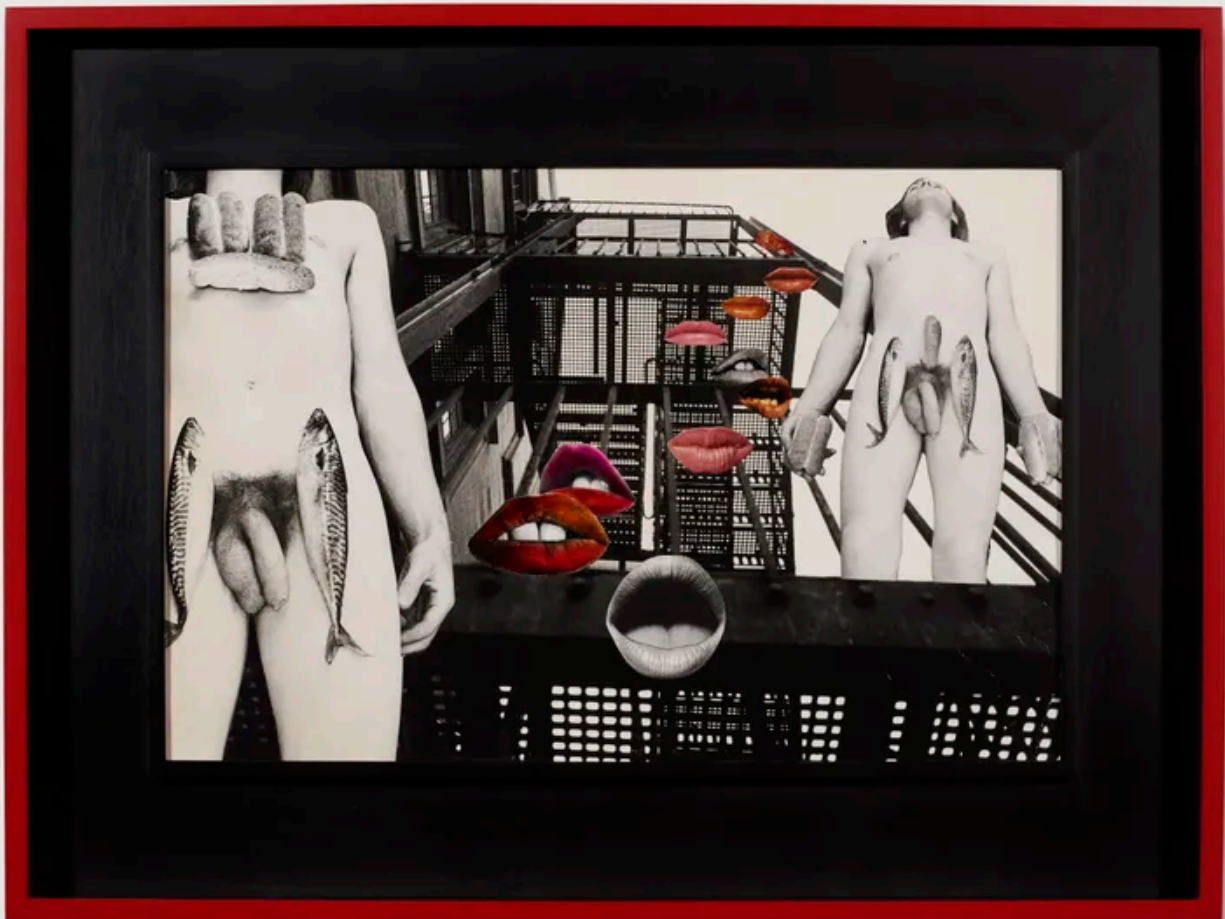
contemporary relevance. The current exhibition, 'Penny Slinger: Exorcism: Inside Out', is one of them. Now in its final couple of weeks, there's still time to see it.



Penny Slinger, *Operation Theater* (1970-1977)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist, Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York)

'Collage means for me, bringing pieces of reality into a new reality, shaking up the mundane world and allowing access to the inner world of fantasies and dreams,' says the LA-based English artist of her chosen medium. Indeed, there's a subversive humour in Penny Slinger's work, and the fact that it tended to ruffle establishment feathers when she was first producing her collections in the mid-1970s (one of her books was burned by customs officials) only heightens it.



Penny Slinger, *Loaves and Fishes* (c.1970)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist and Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York)



Penny Slinger, *Beauty is the Beast* (1977)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist, Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York)

The Richard Saltoun Gallery exhibition marks the reissue of Slinger's book, *An Exorcism: A Photo Romance*, an extended version of a previous edition first published in 1977. Now, nearly 50 years later, this installation seriously heightens the series' performative roots with its immersive staging.

Wrapping the entire gallery space in images from the original *An Exorcism* series, it pays homage to Slinger's 2019 collaboration with Dior's Maria Grazia Chiuri, when the house creative director invited the artist to transform the interior of Dior's fabled 30 Avenue Montaigne HQ into a surrealist fantasy landscape. It served as the backdrop for the autumn-winter 2019-2020 couture show.

Today, Penny Slinger reaffirms the message she sought to portray when the *An Exorcism* pieces were first shown: 'We have many works that follow "the hero's

journey", she opines. 'But how many that track that of the heroine? This journey of the embodied soul is not sexist; we all, male and female alike, need to discover who we are. It is like a detective story, in which we, both protagonists and victims, must follow the clues and unravel the plot.' Don't miss it.

'Penny Slinger: Exorcism: Inside Out' is at the Richard Saltoun Gallery, London, until 7 September 2024

richardsaltoun.com

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*Penny Slinger's An Exorcism: A Photo Romance is available from Amazon, £49.65**



Penny Slinger, *Man Eating Bird* (1970-1977)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist, Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York)



Penny Slinger, *Entrance* (1977)

(Image credit: Courtesy of the artist, Richard Saltoun Gallery London/Rome/New York and BLUM Los Angeles, Tokyo, New York)

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Caragh McKay is a contributing editor at *Wallpaper** and was watches & jewellery director at the magazine between 2011 and 2019. Caragh's current remit is cross-cultural and her recent stories include the curious tale of how Muhammad Ali met his poetic match in Robert Burns and how a Martin Scorsese Martin film revived a forgotten Osage art.

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