

PENNY SLINGER

Inside Out

Presented by the Fortnight Institute in collaboration with Blum & Poe

February 8 - March 17, 2019

Opening reception: Thursday, February 7, 6-8pm

Fortnight Institute is pleased to present *Inside Out*, an exhibition of work by Penny Slinger, hosted in collaboration with Blum & Poe. This presentation brings together film, photography, and collage from four bodies of work from the late 1960s and 70s, related in their dedication to mapping and unveiling the feminine psyche, and dismantling repressive social dynamics of power.

Slinger created her *50% the Visible Woman* collage series of 1969 in response to the epiphany of discovering the visual toolkit of the Surrealists and specifically of Max Ernst—fertile ground for confronting and mining the subconscious, yet historically lacking in its focus on the female experience. In these works, Slinger harnesses the methods of the Surrealists to develop a language for exploring and expressing the psychic territories of the distinctly feminine. Originally presented as a bound book with vellum overlays of accompanying texts, these collages feature Slinger's own body as subject—a practice that would become central to her work thereafter.

Continuing and expanding on the technique of positioning herself as both artist and muse—woman as subject viewed through a woman's lens—Slinger's body of work entitled *Bride's Cake* centers on an erotic wearable wedding cake sculpture, donned by the artist herself. A feminist commentary on the patriarchal systems of control and repression underlying the ritual of marriage as well as that of food consumption, this parody photo series documents Slinger simultaneously as bride and as wedding cake—the removable portion of the sculpture, a cake slice revealing her genitals.

Lilford Hall is the uncut footage of an unrealized film project meant to probe the metaphysics of the unconscious. A collaborative endeavor with Slinger and filmmaker Peter Whitehead, and featuring Slinger, Whitehead, and fellow artist Suzanka Fraey, the scenes were shot in 1969 in an abandoned and derelict 500-year-old estate in Northamptonshire. Although the film project never came to fruition, the footage and stills generated there proved profoundly impactful for Slinger. In an evolving series developed over the course of seven years known as *An Exorcism*, the artist plumbed this imagery to create collage works that serve as a deeply personal record of the "unraveling of the Self from dualistic limitations," a catalyst for her own psychological confrontation and transformation thereafter.

This exhibition is presented in connection to the film series "Out of the Shadows: Experimental Feminist Films by Jane Arden, Niki de Saint Phalle, and Penny Slinger," screening at the Anthology Film Archives, New York, from January 25-31. Arden, Saint Phalle, and Slinger share overlapping concerns in their experimental narratives, focusing on female sexuality, the occult, and societal taboos. Beyond these films' commonalities, the personal histories of the artists intertwine through love and friendship, most significantly in Slinger and Saint Phalle's respective personal and professional collaborations with renowned filmmaker Peter Whitehead, and in the alliance of Arden and Slinger in their radical feminist theater group Holocaust (which spawned various films featured in this program, written and directed by Arden and starring Slinger). In bringing these artists together, Anthology pays homage to three radical women whose contribution to experimental film has long been under-recognized. As we follow the protagonists of Arden, Slinger, and Saint Phalle on their peregrinations to self-knowledge, we become privy to an alternative history of second-wave feminism. This program features a documentary on Slinger, along with early film shorts by the artist, and in-person appearances by Slinger, filmmakers, and cast members. Organized in collaboration with curators Alison Gingeras and Nicoletta Beyer.

Penny Slinger (b. 1947, London, UK) is a Los Angeles-based artist who has been exploring the connection between eroticism, mysticism, feminism, and art for over fifty years. Slinger has authored and illustrated numerous publications and has exhibited her work internationally. Recent institutional group exhibitions include *Visible Women*, Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, Norwich, UK (2018); *Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired by Her Writings*, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, UK (2018); *The House of Fame*, convened by Linder, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2018); *The Beguiling Siren is Thy Crest*, The Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland (2017); *Women House, Monnaie de Paris*, Paris, traveled to National Museum in the Arts, Washington D.C. (2017); *History Is Now: 7 Artists Take on Britain*, Hayward Gallery, London (2015); *Feminist Avant-garde of the 1970s* from the Sammlung Verbund Collection, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2015); *Lips Painted Red*, Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Trondheim, Norway (2013); *The Dark Monarch*, Tate St. Ives, St. Ives, UK (2009); *Angels of Anarchy*, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2009); among many more.

For enquiries please email: enquiries@fortnight.institute or visit our website: www.fortnight.institute