

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Penny Slinger**  
**50/50**

**Blum & Poe, Los Angeles**  
**November 6–December 18, 2021**

Los Angeles, CA, October 25, 2021—Blum & Poe is pleased to present Los Angeles-based artist Penny Slinger's third solo exhibition with the gallery. This presentation coincides with the fifty-year anniversary of Slinger's iconic 1971 artists' book and collage series *50% The Visible Woman* and celebrates the milestone with a new and expanded edition of the publication. With never before exhibited selections from this historical body of work, alongside new compositions, Slinger shares her long-standing investigation into the mapping and unveiling of the feminine subconscious.

Originally created in 1969 as a hand-constructed snakeskin-bound book for her thesis project at the Chelsea College of Art, *50% The Visible Woman* was Slinger's response to her discovery of surrealism and its pivotal impact on her practice. An homage to Max Ernst, the book includes photocollage and concrete poetry, artwork with which Slinger sought to rectify the fraught portrayals of women and the void of feminine authorship in a male-dominated surrealist milieu. She says: "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." The book's binding alternates between sheets of poetry and photocollage imagery; her poems are typed onto semi-transparent tissue paper, allowing the prose to interact directly with their visual counterparts beneath. Words take on curvilinear shapes in response to the images surfacing below them.

One work on view from this series, never before exhibited—*The Dialectics* (1969)—is a totem of female body parts, floating, dismembered. Some parts appear as didactic diagrams, and others are plucked from an image of a woman in mime costume, shadows reaching in every direction. The corresponding poetry reads:

*The dialectics of experience  
present a new hierarchy  
evoked in the shadows  
a presence using emblems  
like a clown  
A collage exploits itself  
A corner seeking identity  
in its absence of form*

Slinger appropriates surrealism's language and themes—woman's body as object, dream-state as entrance into the unconscious, and sexual and bodily desires—and applies them in analysis of surrealism itself and its culture. Slinger inserts herself into this art historical lineage, and takes ownership of a visual lexicon that had previously objectified her. On the occasion of this special anniversary exhibition, Slinger collaborates with musician Lydia Lunch on sonic accompaniment to her collages.

Alongside these historical and formative works, Slinger presents a new photo collage series titled *My Body in a Box*. Created during the pandemic while sheltering in place, the artist explores the psychological entrapment and fears that accompany the experience. As Slinger has done since the 1960s, here she uses

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her own image and body as subject to process a range of feelings and reactions, photographed by her creative partner Dhiren Dasu. Accompanied by her poetry and prose that are evocative of states of mind and being, Slinger's offering is one of pain and poignancy, as well as transcendence.

The 2021 edition of Slinger's artists' book *50% The Visible Woman* presents the artist's series of photomontage works and poetry unabridged for the first time, following the hand-constructed version from 1969, and the out-of-print abridged edition from 1971 released by indie press Narcis Publishing Limited. Lauded at the time for its originality and poetic narrative, *Rolling Stone Magazine* remarked in the November 1973 issue: "This book will become as important on your bookshelf as Sgt. Pepper is on your record rack." The 2021 edition also features a new conversation transcribed between Slinger and fellow artist and friend Linder. Linder says: "When I first saw that copy of *50% The Visible Woman*—which a friend of a friend had actually stolen from a library—I was mesmerized. I'd never seen a book like that before. I used to spend hours looking at it, turning the pages over and over again, trying to work out its magic. I sensed that something really profound was happening, and I couldn't quite work out how that magic worked." Available for [pre-order](#) now.

**Penny Slinger** has authored and illustrated numerous publications and has exhibited her work internationally. Recent institutional group exhibitions include *The Botanical Mind: Art, Mysticism and the Cosmic Tree*, Camden Art Centre, London, UK (2020); *Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution*, British Museum, London, UK (2020); *Cut and Paste: 400 Years of Collage*, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland (2019); *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*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, Poland (2017); *Women House*, Monnaie de Paris, France; traveled to National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C. (2017); *History Is Now: 7 Artists Take on Britain*, Hayward Gallery, London, UK (2015); *Feminist Avant-Garde of the 1970s: Works from the Sammlung Verbund*, Vienna, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany (2015); *Lips Painted Red*, Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Trondheim, Norway (2013); *The Dark Monarch: Magic and Modernity in British Art*, Tate St Ives, Cornwall, UK (2009); and *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2009); among many more.

## About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices, and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents forty-eight artists and eight estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these

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exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

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