

Press Release

Linder

27 May – 24 June, 2011

Private view 26 May, 6-8pm

Stuart Shave/Modern Art is delighted to announce a solo exhibition of new work by Linder. This will be Linder's second solo exhibition with Modern Art and her first solo show in London for four years.

Since the mid-1970s, Linder has explored the terrain of socially and culturally reinforced norms and expectations of gender identity, sexual commodification and represented desire. Linder's early career was forged in the punk and post-punk scenes of Manchester in the 1970s, where her influence and involvement in these circles manifested itself broadly in music, performance, publishing and art making. Her position has consistently and uncompromisingly embraced radical feminist perspectives rethinking the cultural treatment of the female body in particular. In the collages, photomontages and performances Linder has made since this time, she sets about recasting and colliding the ideals of commercially and culturally rendered expectations of gender-specificity and identity.

Over the past three and a half decades, Linder has used and explored the medium of collage as a powerful vehicle with which to critically reveal and splice together elements from the fabric of images representing a common social narrative. One of Linder's iconic visual works is the collage used as cover art for the Buzzcocks 1977 single 'Orgasm Addict': a naked woman with an iron for a head and smiling mouths for nipples. Using source material drawn from magazines which were at the time overwhelmingly devoted to cars, DIY and porn for men, and those for women to fashion and housekeeping, Linder's gesture proffers a synthesis of the peculiar worlds of gender-specific interests – abruptly merging and confusing a shared attention to the female body as an intensely commodified commonality. While the radical gesture of this aggressive collision captures a precise political and cultural moment from our recent history, its sympathy follows a lineage through to an ever-present climate of enriched, entrenched and pervasive commercial exploitation of sex and gender.

This show at Modern Art presents an expansive body of new collages by Linder: image making that is both critical and seductive. Linder exhibits manual collage and concrete manipulation of found images as intimately scaled physical works and lavishly printed lightbox transparencies. These new collages draw their subject matter from the pages of contemporary pornographic and domestic magazines in a working method that sees pornography and food-photography as analogues for one other; exploring the creation and sating of desires which stem from monstrous cultural hypertrophies of base biological drives.

Linder's compositions evidence a conscious, acute awareness of the latent seduction that her collages critique and convey. Linder has traced an evolution of pornography's popular forms, along with its architectures and social demographics. Her early 'Pretty Girls' series of 1977 takes magazines of the 1960s – mid-1970s that show models awkwardly posed on cocktail cabinets and inhabiting sparse, makeshift interiors. The contemporary sense of the demise of printed magazines heightens the timeliness and charge of Linder's gesture, as her periods of making fortuitously span the gradual rise and steady decline of this kind of pornographic material. The content of print media now available offers a powerful range of source material: as niche topics dwindle and drop-out of print, those that can and do survive show themselves up as increasingly mainstream symptoms of the cultural values Linder subjects to critical gaze. Linder's recent appropriations of erotica have paid attention to material of our contemporary moment, leading her to explore the territory of hardcore pornography and the commercialised hyper-reality of its own particular aesthetics and values.

Linder was born in Liverpool in 1954, and now lives and works in Lancashire. From the age of 18 she made her home in Manchester, where she studied art at Manchester Polytechnic (1974-1977) and became a well-known figure in the progressive art and music scenes of the city. Linder co-founded the fanzine *The Secret Public* with Jon Savage in 1978, the same year in which she co-founded the post-punk group Ludus. As lead singer of Ludus, Linder performed and created the artwork seen on covers and sleeves of the group's recordings until its split in 1983. Ludus' most infamous and confrontational performance was at Manchester's Hacienda club in 1982, in which Linder wore a large black dildo beneath a dress made of raw meat. In recent years Linder's performances have increasingly revolved around a collection of themes expanding upon the sense of gender identity and politicised cultural transgression developed in her earlier performances and ongoing collage works, while further incorporating elements of avantgarde music, costumed and enacted social identity, and overlapping concerns that expand on durational and collaborative formal explorations.

In late 2012, Linder's work will be the subject of a retrospective exhibition at Musée d'Art Moderne De La Ville de Paris / ARC, Paris, France. Linder's work has been featured in museum exhibitions including *Destroy: Punk Graphic Design in Britain*, Royal Festival Hall, London (1998); *The Secret Public: The last days of the British Underground 1978 – 1988*, Kunstverein Munich, Germany, touring to ICA, London (2006-2007); *Panic Attack! Art in the Punk Years*, Barbican, London, touring to the Maison des Arts in Créteil, France (2007-2008); *Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock and Roll since 1967*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, USA (2007-2008); *Punk. No One is Innocent*, Kunsthalle Vienna, Vienna, Austria (2008); *The Dark Monarch*, Tate, St Ives (2009); and *Art For Whom?*, Tate Britain, London (2010-2011). Linder's solo exhibitions have included *The Return of Linderland*, Cornerhouse, Manchester, England (2000); *The Lives of Women Dreaming*, Futura Gallery, British Council, Prague, Czech Republic (2004); PS1/Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (2007); and *Pretty Girl. No.1*, Baltic, Gateshead (2007). Linder's performance *The Working Class Goes to Paradise* was first presented in Manchester in 2000, and re-presented in London in 2006 for the Tate Triennial. Linder made performances at London's Royal Festival Hall (2004), and at Le Magasin, Grenoble, France in 2007. In 2010 Linder made two iterations of her 13 hour performance *The Darktown Cakewalk, Celebrated House of FAME* in Glasgow and at London's Chisenhale Gallery. Linder's film *Forgetful Green* was commissioned for Frieze Projects, London, in 2010.

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