

## **Art Agency, Partners**

Art Agency, Partners is a bespoke art advisory firm founded in 2014, and built upon decades of combined experience, to provide counsel to many of the world's leading art collectors and institutions on collection assessment and development, estate planning, and innovative approaches to museum giving and growth.


---

## **Cutting-Edge Punk**

**This month's gender-bending must-see**



Linder, *The Goddess Who has Arrows* (2019). © Linder. Courtesy the artist, Modern Art, London & Monteverdi Tuscany, Italy

By  Louisa Buck

contemporary art correspondent

Published 27 June 2019 in [Must See](#)

Linder Stirling, best known as [Linder](#), came of age in the underground punk and post punk scene of late 1970s and early

1980s Manchester, where she shared a flat with [Buzzcocks](#) front man Howard Devoto and forged a lifelong friendship with Morrissey of The Smiths. It was at this time that she changed her name and took up the scalpel, finding that making photomontages suited the instantaneous do-it-yourself spirit of the times. “Musically, sartorially and graphically we started to cut things up,” she remembers.

Well versed in feminist literature, Linder critiqued and debunked gender roles by slicing images from men’s, women’s and pornographic magazines and reconfiguring them in provocative combinations. Genitals, body parts and facial features were supplanted by household appliances, plants and confectionary and her now classic cover for the Buzzcocks’ 1977 single [Orgasm Addict](#), featuring a hard-bodied naked female with her head replaced by an iron and two toothy smiles for nipples, was famously banned by the BBC.



Linder, *The Goddess Who has Sky as Hair* (2019). © Linder. Courtesy the artist, Modern Art, London & Monteverdi Tuscany, Italy

In recent years Linder’s enduringly inventive feminist images have received a more sympathetic reception. For her latest photomontages, made especially for the [Monteverdi Gallery in Tuscany](#), she continues to wield her blade to play with and off assumptions around the feminine. The gallery is in a hilltop medieval village overlooking the Val d’Orcia, a region of such outstanding beauty that it is a UNESCO world heritage site. In response to this idyllic, bucolic setting, Linder is presenting a series of nudes in outdoor settings whose bodies are disquietingly fused with plant and animal life.

Her primary source for these bizarre hybrids is [She Walks in Beauty](#), a 1964 book of airbrushed female pin-ups by British photographer and film-maker Harrison Marks, the man who coined the term “glamour” photography. Onto his exaggeratedly posed and airbrushed models Linder has added extravagant elements of flora and fauna which both accentuate and obscure the anatomies beneath. She is especially fond of roses, and whether singly or in multiples in more than half the works on show these ubiquitous symbols of love and romance erupt out of torsos and cover faces with such exuberance that they

often threaten to take over completely.

As in all Linder's work, immediately arresting imagery belies more complicated and contradictory readings. The forcefully smothering flowers, the swooping butterfly that blots out a face with a tip of its wing or the conjoined pair of spike-edged shells that seem poised to snap shut and encase the model within, all question just how benign such a close congress with Mother Nature might be. In one particularly disconcerting case a tiny sliver of buttock and a sweep of blonde hair is all that can be seen peeping out from the very edge of a shell that covers the rest of the image in a surface so shiny and pink as to be almost obscenely visceral.

Engulfed by suggestive organic forms and sometimes with various wild creatures in attendance, these sanitized 1960s pinups assume a new sexually potent identity. Each one's title is a different name for the Hindu deity Lakshmi but here, in the land of the Romans and Etruscans, their soft porn poses also seem to echo those of classical sculpture.

On the walls of Monteverdi Gallery, looking out on to the undulating landscape that rises up around Monte Cetona, which also appears to resemble a gigantic reclining nude, Linder's profane goddesses have found their natural habitat.

"Linder: Trip the Shutter", Monteverdi Gallery, Castiglioncello del Trinoro, Sarteano, Italy. Until 25 August