

PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

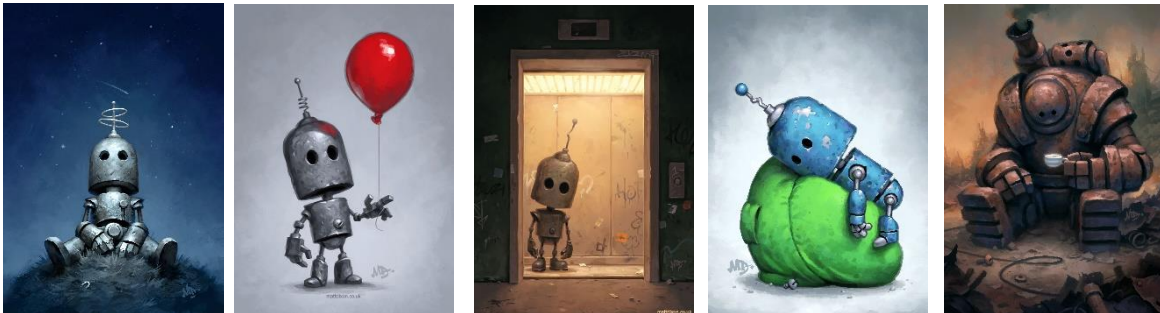
Pitzhanger presents

'A SENSE OF WONDER'

The Curious Robot World of Matt Dixon

An Audio-Visual Adventure

- Enter a magical and playful world inhabited by a series of rusty robot characters at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery from 14 October 2022 to 12 February 2023
- Journey through this audio-visual exhibition with its otherworldly soundscape spanning 100 years of music from Judy Garland to the Beatles to Billie Eilish
- Through Matt Dixon's imagination and craft see the robots experience the best of human emotions



"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk." Thomas A. Edison

Launching mid-October, curated by **Rob Dickins CBE**, renowned British music industry executive, **A Sense of Wonder: The Curious Robot World of Matt Dixon**, will be presented at **Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery**, creating a magical and playful world inhabited by a series of rusty robots.

This audio-visual adventure invites visitors into the imagination of digital artist **Matt Dixon**, who created his first robot character as part of the series *Transmissions* in 2006 – which was the inspiration behind the design of the O2 robot brand mascot, Bubl. Matt has been exploring this preternatural world ever since and this exhibition will not only present prints, canvas and sketches but introduce a cast of four-foot models, with some surprising interventions, plus an Augmented Reality (AR) experience that will bring to life some elements of the exhibition.

With references to the environment, consumerism, mental health, and other aspects of modern life, visitors will encounter the robots as they experience and express the best of human emotions: wonder, kindness, empathy, friendship, and love. Its ethereal soundscape will span 100 years of music in a garden-like setting.

A beta version of Matt Dixon's new robot video game inspired by *Transmissions* will be exclusively available for visitors to play.

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Clare Gough, Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, says: *“This exhibition will create an uplifting escape for our visitors during the autumn and winter months into an otherworldly landscape inhabited by Matt Dixon’s endearing robots.”*

Rob Dickins CBE, Curator of the exhibition, said: *“What I love about Matt’s art is that it works on at least two levels, as on the face of it, there are likeable junkyard creations but when you look deeper, there is almost always other levels which comment on the human condition and the environment, sometimes in the polluted landscapes of cities and sometimes in the calm and thoughtful beauty of the countryside. The cryptically titled pieces usually giving the viewer an idea...it is art that repays spending time with each picture. My advice is...look for clues.”*

The exhibition is supported by The Deborah Loeb Brice Donor Advised Fund.

The next in Pitzhanger’s series of exhibitions responding to the design and architecture of Pitzhanger will be *Anthony Caro and the Inspiration of Architecture*. This exhibition of works by leading British abstract sculptor Sir Anthony Caro, will open on what would have been his 99th birthday on 9 March 2023.

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For media enquiries, please contact George Franks at Borkowski/ george@borkowski.co.uk

For all other enquiries for Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, please contact pitzhanger@pitzhanger.org.uk

For the latest news, sign-up to the Pitzhanger newsletter at pitzhanger.org.uk

Instagram | Twitter | Facebook: @pitzhanger

NOTES TO EDITORS

Listings Information

- Address: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, Walpole Park, Ealing, London, W5 5EQ
- Nearest Station: Ealing Broadway (Elizabeth, Central & District lines (direct line to Reading and central/ east stations including Paddington and Tottenham Court Road from 6 November)
- Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am-5pm (late opening Thursday: 10am-7pm)
- Advance booking recommended at pitzhanger.org.uk. Tickets allow access to Pitzhanger Manor and the exhibition. Full details online.
 - Full price: £12 Thurs/Fri + £14 Sat/Sun
 - Concessions 5-15 + Student: £6 Thurs/Fri + £7 Sat/Sun
 - Half Price: National Art Pass
 - Free: Members, 4 and under, Historic Houses members
 - Entry with donation on Wed
 - Special Early Bird Offer available (book in Sept)

A programme of related events will accompany the exhibition:

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- *Members' Evening: Curator Talk (19 October, 6.30pm)* – Exhibition viewing and introduction from curator Rob Dickins CBE
- *A Sense of Wonder: Artist Talk (24 November, 6.30pm)* – Digital illustrator and concept Matt Dixon reveals his ideas and process in creating the exhibition works
- *Open Sundays (6 November + 4 December 2022 + 5 February 2023)* - Family activities inspired by *A Sense of Wonder* on the first Sunday morning of every month
- *Special Thursday Lates (27 October + 24 November 2022, 26 January 2023)* – special late programme on the last Thursday of every month with talks, creative activities inspired by *A Sense of Wonder*, bar and more

Exhibition Information

- The exhibition design is by Peter Higgins of Land Design Studio
- The Pitzhanger Shop range for *A Sense of Wonder* includes clothing, gifts, prints, children's toys, and games. shop.pitzhanger.org.uk

ABOUT MATT DIXON

Matt Dixon is a freelance illustrator and concept artist. He first began working within the video games industry more than 30 years ago and was a senior artist on Disney features, Pirates of the Caribbean, Spyro the Dragon, and Harry Potter titles. For the past 15 years, he has been a freelance illustration and concept designer. *Transmissions* is a personal body of work depicting robot characters that Dixon began in 2006 and continues to explore, including the design of the O2 robot mascot Bubl. He says: *"I do not understand the robots or the place they reside. Each image is an opportunity to reveal something new about them and their world, and that sense of exploration and discovery is part of what keeps me returning to the work."*

www.mattdixon.co.uk

ABOUT ROB DICKENS CBE

Rob Dickins is a music industry veteran and as Chair of Warner Music has signed Vangelis, Sex Pistols, Madness, Echo & The Bunnymen, Enya and Seal amongst many others and worked closely in the studio with music icons, Cher, and Rod Stewart. He was also creatively involved in the UK marketing breakthroughs of Madonna, Prince, Paul Simon, REM, and ZZ Top. As Chair of the BPI, Rob was instrumental in setting up the BRIT School.

Rob has also worked extensively in the arts, having been Chair of The Theatres Trust as well as the National Museum of Childhood and Trustee of the V&A, the NPG, Watts Gallery, Youth Music, and Handel House. He also is heavily involved in arts education, particularly in teaching popular culture and holds three Doctorates.

'A Sense of Wonder' is Rob's debut as an Exhibition Curator.

ABOUT PITZHANGER MANOR & GALLERY

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery promotes Sir John Soane's legacy, inspiring visitors with art, architecture and design and nurturing creativity for all within an extensive outreach and events programme. It celebrates Sir John Soane's genius and influence as a designer, juxtaposing his architecture with a programme of ambitious contemporary art exhibitions. Pitzhanger reopened in spring 2019 following a major £12-million conservation and restoration project to return the Manor to his original design, with support from HLF, ACE, Ealing Council, and other generous donors.

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ABOUT SIR JOHN SOANE

Sir John Soane (1753-1837) is one of Britain's most visionary architects, celebrated for his idiosyncratic take on the neoclassical style and mastery of natural light. Soane bought Pitzhanger in 1800. He demolished most of the existing manor house apart from the Dance Wing and from 1800-1804, designed and built a new house as his country estate sitting in 28 acres of parkland. The legacy of Soane's distinctive buildings, teachings and collections has influenced generations of artists, architects, and designers.