

# PITZHANGER

## MANOR & GALLERY

### **Artists at Home: Erin O'Keefe** **Opening 29 June 2023**

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery presents *Artists at Home*, a new series of displays across Sir John Soane's Manor. This carefully curated programme explores the interplay between contemporary art and the architectural details of the grade-I listed historic Manor. Once home to illustrious artists such as Canaletto and Turner, *Artists at Home* will restore Pitzhanger Manor to Soane's original conception; populating his living spaces with an art collection that ranged from historic to contemporary.

The inaugural artist in the *Artists at Home* series is Erin O'Keefe, an artist celebrated for challenging and redefining spatial perception.

Based in New York, O'Keefe's artistic practice is shaped by her dual expertise in architecture and photography. Her vibrant photographs are set to animate the Manor's intimate domestic spaces.

Praised by Frieze for her "dizzying triumphs of aesthetic engineering", and Art Forum for producing artworks that "induce pure retinal pleasure", O'Keefe's work merges photography and architecture. Her captivating geometrical compositions, with bold colour palettes and visual tensions, blur the line between three-dimensional space and two-dimensional imagery, a transformative element that lies at the core of her work.

As Sir John Soane used the Georgian Eating Room and the Small Drawing Room at Pitzhanger for intimate gatherings, business interactions, and displaying works of art, Erin O'Keefe's thought-provoking installations will inhabit these spaces, instilling them with the creative energy and visual curiosity that were dear to Soane.

Erin O'Keefe said: "*The perceptual gap between an object and an image of an object is the place where I want this work to operate. What are we actually looking at? I see it not only as a destabilizing puzzle that prods the viewer to consider and reconsider their own assumptions, but as a way to open a space for other possibilities.*"

Alongside O'Keefe's works will be three accompanying displays which highlight Soane's architectural influences: *Model of A Villa at Acton*, designed by Sir John Soane in 1800; a rare collection of Eighteenth-century prints of Roman frescoes from the Villa Negroni, etched by Angelo Campanella; and scale models of Anthony Caro's sculptures.

The Villa Negroni was excavated in Rome in 1777, one year before Soane arrived on his Grand Tour. The frescoes caused a sensation across Europe and left a mark on Soane, informing his architectural style in a significant way. From the arched doorways and domed ceilings to the colour palette and iconography, Soane's architectural style at Pitzhanger Manor bears the profound influences of these Villa Negroni frescoes. Displaying these prints allows us to share a richer understanding of the inspirations that guided Soane's architectural style.

# PITZHANGER

## MANOR & GALLERY

The prints, generously bequeathed by Antony Page through Art Fund to Pitzhanger, will accompany Soane's model in our library, loaned by Sir John Soane's Museum. Both the model and the prints offer a unique opportunity to delve deeper into Soane's influences and contributions to the world of architecture.

Renowned for his ingenious use of light and space, Soane initially intended to construct this villa for himself in nearby Acton. Eventually, he adapted his original plans to the distinctive features of what now forms the site of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery. The model reveals how Soane reimagined his grand designs to suit the realities of a specific location, incorporating an existing wing he himself had contributed to as a fifteen-year-old apprentice under the tutorship of architect George Dance.

Alongside our current exhibition, *Anthony Caro: The Inspiration of Architecture*, the scale models create a stimulating dialogue between the shared design philosophies of Soane and Caro. Caro's exhibition features a collection of smaller models crafted in response to architectural designs on display in the Small Drawing Room at Pitzhanger Manor. Caro, like Soane, was fascinated with models, and both artists shared a unique understanding of light and space, thus sparking a visual conversation between two artistic and architectural eras.

# PITZHANGER

## MANOR & GALLERY

ENDS

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

For all media enquiries, please contact [aston.law@pitzhanger.org.uk](mailto:aston.law@pitzhanger.org.uk) and [lucy.edwards@pitzhanger.org.uk](mailto:lucy.edwards@pitzhanger.org.uk)

For all other enquiries, please contact [pitzhanger@pitzhanger.org.uk](mailto:pitzhanger@pitzhanger.org.uk)

To be kept up to date with the latest news, sign-up to the Pitzhanger newsletter at [pitzhanger.org.uk](http://pitzhanger.org.uk)

Instagram | Twitter | Facebook: @pitzhanger

### **LISTINGS INFORMATION**

Address: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, Walpole Park, Ealing, London, W5 5EQ

Nearest Station: Ealing Broadway (Elizabeth, Central & District lines)

Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am-5pm (late opening Thursday: 10am-8pm)

### **ABOUT ERIN O'KEEFE**

Erin O'Keefe is a New York based artist and architect working in photography. Her work presents the viewer with images of simple geometric shapes in rich colours, painted objects accentuated by precise lighting and shadows. Paint is roughly applied, and her hand is legible in textured brush marks. The compositions initially resist and tease the viewer - the scale of the objects is uncertain, and flatness and depth appear unreliable. The pleasure of colour and shadow are used against the viewer, in a series of perceptual games played with brush and camera. The image enclosed in the glazed frame is an arranged tableau of painted wooden shapes, photographed to form perceptually impossible objects, the monocular vision of the camera collapsing space.

### **ABOUT PITZHANGER MANOR & GALLERY**

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery's objective is to promote 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.

# PITZHANGER

## MANOR & GALLERY

### **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.

### **ANTHONY CARO CENTRE**

<https://www.anthonycaro.org/>

### **ABOUT ART FUND**

Art Fund is the national fundraising charity for art. It provides millions of pounds every year to help museums to acquire and share works of art across the UK, further the professional development of their curators, and inspire more people to visit and enjoy their public programmes. Art Fund is independently funded, supported by Art Partners, donors, trusts and foundations and the 135,000 members who buy the National Art Pass, who enjoy free or discounted entry to over 850 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and receive Art Quarterly magazine. Art Fund also supports museums through its annual prize, Art Fund Museum of the Year. The winner of Art Fund Museum of the Year 2022 is Horniman Museums & Gardens. [www.artfund.org](http://www.artfund.org)

### **SEVENTEEN GALLERY**

<https://www.seventeengallery.com/>




### **SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM**

<https://www.soane.org/>

# PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

## IMAGES

Image	Credit
	<p><i>Hurry Up Please It's Time</i> © Erin O'Keefe</p>
	<p><i>Stop Making Sense</i> © Erin O'Keefe</p>
	<p><i>Model of A Villa at Acton at Pitzhanger</i> © Pitzhanger Manor &amp; Gallery</p> <p>Loaned by Sir John Soane's Museum</p>

# PITZHANGER

## MANOR & GALLERY



Set of engravings after the Roman frescoes from the Villa Negroni, late 18<sup>th</sup> century © Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery

Donated by Art Fund