

PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY



Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery celebrates its first five years with major acquisition of Julian Opie's *Curly Hair* – a vibrant addition to West London's cultural landscape.

For Immediate release: 9 April 2024

Ealing, London: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, the restored former 'country' residence of Sir John Soane which reopened in 2019 following a major conservation project, is thrilled to announce the acquisition of Julian Opie's LED sculpture, *Curly Hair*, 2021, marking Pitzhanger's first five years open to the public. The artwork now has a permanent home in the manor's front garden where it can be enjoyed for free, signaling Pitzhanger's programme of contemporary exhibitions, as well as its growing art collection.

The acquisition of *Curly Hair* was made possible through the generosity of the artist, Julian Opie, as well as invaluable support from a diverse group of contributors, including Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, Art Fund, McGrath Charitable Trust, Lisson Gallery and members of the public and local community, who were galvanised to secure the artwork as an important local landmark.

The artwork was first shown at Pitzhanger in 2021 as part of Julian Opie's solo exhibition, coinciding with the reopening of the gallery post-COVID lockdown. *Curly Hair*, a dynamic, double sided LED display standing over two meters tall, which portrays a figure confidently striding forward towards Pitzhanger Manor, has already proven popular with passersby of all ages.

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust, Mattock Lane, Ealing Green, London W5 5EQ

pitzhanger.org.uk

pitzhanger@pitzhanger.org.uk

020 3985 8888

Charity Registration: 1152434

Company Registration: 08278049



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Just as Sir John Soane used Pitzhanger to display his collection of classical art and sculpture alongside contemporary works by leading artists of his day such as JMW Turner and William Hogarth, so *Curly Hair* is testament to the ongoing dialogue between contemporary and historical art at Pitzhanger today.

Clare Gough, Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, said, "We are truly delighted to be able to retain *Curly Hair* at Pitzhanger for the future enjoyment of all the public—an artwork with remarkable abilities to break down the traditional barriers that visitors to museums and heritage spaces can experience. Its continued presence will enrich the Ealing community and continue to inspire children and young people".

Julian Opie said, "I'm so glad and proud that the work will stay at this fantastic museum and perfect site. He seems very happy there."

Curly Hair is now a permanent beacon for Ealing and West London, free for all to see and enjoy. It will illuminate Pitzhanger and Ealing Green, a vibrant walking figure among the local crowds and an invitation to enter and explore all Pitzhanger has to offer.

Join us on 16 May 2024 at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, to celebrate the acquisition of this striking artwork.

For further details and to be part of this celebration, visit www.pitzhanger.org.uk.

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For all media enquiries, please contact aston.law@pitzhanger.org.uk, lily.mountford@pitzhanger.org.uk and press@pitzhanger.org.uk

To be kept up to date with the latest news, sign-up to the Pitzhanger newsletter at <https://www.pitzhanger.org.uk/newsletter>

[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X](#): @pitzhanger

Listing Information

Artwork title: *Curly Hair*

Artist: Julian Opie

Year: 2021

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery

Address: Ealing Green, London W5 5EQ

8-minute walk from Ealing Broadway Station (Elizabeth, Central, District Lines & National Rail)

Opening hours:

Wednesday to Sunday 10am–5pm, including Bank Holidays (First Thursday of the Month: 10am–8pm)

[Pitzhanger's 5th Anniversary: Celebrating Julian Opie Acquisition](#)

Date and Time: Thursday 16 May 2024 5–8pm

Ticket: Free, drop-in

Programme: Speeches, participatory dance activities, art workshops, paid bar

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The evening also unveils [A Fine Line: Modern Makers at Pitzhanger](#) with a launch reception and an artist talk. The exhibition, curated by Joanna Bird, showcases exquisite ceramics and glass throughout the manor. [The talk featuring artists Joseph Harrington, Gregory Warren Wilson and curator Joanna Bird](#) from 6.45pm to 7.45pm requires tickets (£12 Standard / £9 Members).

Notes to editors

About Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund

The Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund is a government fund that helps regional museums, record offices and specialist libraries in England and Wales to acquire objects relating to the arts, literature and history.

It was established at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1881 and continues to be part of its nationwide work.

The annual grants budget, currently £725,000, is provided by Arts Council England National Lottery Funding

Each year, the Purchase Grant Fund considers some 150 applications and awards grants to around 100 organisations, enabling acquisitions of over £3 million to go ahead.

Visit the website: www.vam.ac.uk/purchasegrantfund

Quote if needed:

“The Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund supports the purchase of a wide range of material for the permanent collections of non-nationally funded organisations in England and Wales. We are delighted that Julian Opie’s Curly Hair has been acquired by Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery. As a permanent work, it will engage audiences for years to come.” – Leanne Manfredi, National Programmes Lead, Victoria and Albert Museum

About Art Fund

Art Fund is the national charity for art, helping museums and people to share in great art and culture for 120 years. Art Fund raises millions of pounds every year to help the UK’s museums, galleries and historic houses. The charity funds art, enabling the UK’s museums to buy and share exciting works, connect with their communities, and inspire the next generation. It builds audiences, with its National Art Pass opening doors to great culture. And it amplifies the museum sector through the world’s largest museum prize, Museum of the Year, and creative events that bring the UK’s museums together. Art Fund is people-powered by 135,000 members who buy a National Art Pass, and the donors, trusts and foundations who support the charity.

The National Art Pass provides free or discounted entry to over 850 museums, galleries and historic places, 50% off major exhibitions, and Art Quarterly magazine.

www.artfund.org

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About McGrath Charitable Trust

The McGrath Charitable Trust was set up in 2000 with the objective of providing opportunities and help for the underprivileged and those in need.

The Charity is located in Ealing and is funded by the McGrath family with particular interests in Education, Arts, Cancer, Ophthalmology and Criminal Justice.

www.themcgrathcharitabletrust.co.uk

About Julian Opie

With public commissions from Seoul to New York, Luxembourg to Zurich and a steady flow of large museum exhibitions internationally, the work of Julian Opie is known throughout the world. Opie's distinctive formal language is instantly recognisable and reflects his artistic preoccupation with the idea of representation, and the means by which images are perceived and understood.

Always exploring different techniques both cutting edge and ancient, Opie plays with ways of seeing through reinterpreting the vocabulary of everyday life; his reductive style evokes both a visual and spatial experience of the world around us. Taking influence from classical portraiture, Egyptian hieroglyphs and Japanese woodblock prints, as well as public signage, information boards and traffic signs, the artist connects the clean visual language of modern life, with the fundamentals of art history.

Opie has exhibited widely in the UK and internationally, with major museum exhibitions including shows at Kunstverein in Cologne; Hayward Gallery and ICA in London; Kunsthalle Bern; K21 in Dusseldorf; MAK in Vienna; Mito Tower in Japan; CAC in Malaga and IVAM in Valencia; MoCAK in Krakow; Tidehalle in Helsinki; Fosun Foundation in Shanghai; Suwon IPark Museum of Art in Korea; National Gallery of Victoria, Australia; Berardo Museum, Portugal and Mango Museum, Changsha, as well as the Delhi Triennial, Venice Biennial and Documenta.

Julian Opie was born in 1958 in London and graduated in 1983 from Goldsmiths School of Art, where he was taught by Michael Craig-Martin. He lives and works in London.

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.

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.

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Image Sheet

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