

# PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

Press Release

For immediate release 23 January 2024

## Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Unveils Dual Exhibitions: Alice Irwin and Sinta Tantra



**Ealing, London:** Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery is delighted to announce two new exhibitions, *Alice Irwin: Chinwag* and *Sinta Tantra: The Lightclub of Batavia*, opening on 24 January 2024. The parallel showcases of works by Alice Irwin in the Gallery and Sinta Tantra installed throughout the Manor will offer a unique dialogue between contemporary art and the rich history at Pitzhanger, the Grade-I listed former country residence of Sir John Soane.

### *Alice Irwin: Chinwag* — A Playful Exhibition in Pitzhanger Gallery

*Alice Irwin: Chinwag* marks a significant moment in Alice Irwin's career as her first major exhibition in a London-based public gallery. Occupying the contemporary space of Pitzhanger Gallery, her exhibition is part of Pitzhanger's ongoing programme focused on introducing new works and emerging artists to audiences in West London and beyond.

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Over the past three years, Irwin has created a new series characterised by movement and layering of vibrant colours and animated forms. These artworks invite viewers into a safe and positive space for a conversation, where playful creativity blurs the lines between print, sculpture, and drawing. *Chinwag* reflects Irwin's interest in themes of social interaction and the human experience.

The exhibition presents an array of Irwin's new works, including colourful, multi-layered screenprints and etchings, complemented by sketches and preparatory studies that offer insights into her meticulous creative process. Drawing inspiration from Pitzhanger's history as Sir John Soane's country residence, where he entertained guests, customers and close friends, Irwin's artworks playfully question the social norms of Soane's era. Through the diverse shapes, sizes, and colours of Irwin's cast of characters, the exhibition presents a dialogue on the range of personalities in social gatherings and the evolution of social structures and hierarchies over time.

The exhibition highlights Irwin's innovative use of materials, as seen in her *Peeps*, a series of human-like 3D figures. Previously displayed outdoors at Trinity Buoy Wharf in 2022, these figures represent a bold exploration of form and colour. The exhibition at Pitzhanger will feature two newly commissioned *Peeps* in brushed metal, showcasing her evolution in sculptural experimentation. This exhibition is curated by Svetlana Panova.

### *Sinta Tantra: The Lightclub of Batavia* — Golden Reflections in Soane's Historic Manor

In parallel display across the historic Pitzhanger Manor, *Sinta Tantra: The Lightclub of Batavia* offers a visually striking journey. As the latest in the series of Pitzhanger's *Artists at Home* displays across Sir John Soane's Manor, Tantra's geometric paintings and sculptures resonate with Soane's architecture. Her works, often described as 'painting on an architectural scale', employ vibrant forms and bold colours which set up a dialogue with the neo-classical elegance of the Manor.

The exhibition showcases a combination of new and existing works by Tantra, featuring iridescent gold and Prussian blue paintings that adorn the Manor's walls and platforms, complemented by brass sculptures. These pieces, shimmering in the changing light of the day and changing seasons, offer a unique sensory experience similar to that

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achieved by Soane's use of stained glass in the Manor. Tantra's particular interest in Soane's architecture is reflected in the way her artworks interact with and enhance the space. Included in this exhibition are six new works from her miniature painting series, whose geometric compositions resonate with Soane's design of Pitzhanger Manor's Library, where they are thoughtfully displayed.

Inspired by Paul Scheerbart's *The Light Club of Batavia* (1912), from which the exhibition takes its name, Tantra's compositions explore themes of light, wealth, and the duality of beauty and colonialism. Gold, central to her exhibition, symbolises energy, vanity, and extraction, highlighting Tantra's fascination with its historical and cultural significance. Additionally, personal touches are woven into her work; silhouettes within her pieces are traced from sketches made in the tropical valley near her family's home in Ubud, Bali, adding a layer of personal narrative to the exhibition.

Tantra's exhibition at Pitzhanger Manor not only complements the historical context of Pitzhanger but also injects a contemporary vibrancy, redefining the viewer's perception of space and history.

### Invitation to Explore and Discover

Clare Gough, Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, said, "*Hosting Alice Irwin and Sinta Tantra simultaneously at Pitzhanger is an exciting venture. Continuing the tradition of giving a platform for contemporary artists across Pitzhanger — just as Sir John Soane did, set up a fascinating dialogue between new and old and makes us look at the classical architecture in a new way. Together, these exhibitions enrich each other, offering more than their individual parts and inviting visitors into a world where art and history intersect.*"

Alice Irwin said, "*I am excited to kick off the year 2024 by showing new and unseen works in my Chinwag exhibition at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery. The title was inspired by Sir John Soane's passion for entertaining, and it feels very special to have my first London exhibition in such a beautiful and historic setting.*"

Sinta Tantra said, "*Stepping into the world of Soane is like stepping into theatre, an immersive environment where arched pools of natural light bathe us, warming our spirits, even on the most wintery British days. The gold leaf glows beautifully in the natural light, ironically encouraging us to reflect more on what is happening outside*

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*rather than inside — its sheer materiality, colours, and textures transforming slowly in front of our eyes.*

*Hung inside the rooms of Pitzhanger Manor, the paintings in this context encourage me to think about Soane's desire to design homes not only to be lived in but, more significantly, homes that are themselves 'living' and constantly evolving."*

Both exhibitions, open to the public as part of the general admission, provide an opportunity to immerse in a blend of contemporary art and historical elegance. These showcases not only promise a rich sensory experience but also reaffirm Pitzhanger's dedication to artistic exploration and community involvement.

For further details and to be part of this artistic convergence, visit [www.pitzhanger.org.uk](http://www.pitzhanger.org.uk).

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## Listing Information

### ***Alice Irwin: Chinwag***

Date: Opening on 24 January 2024

Curator's Talk on 25 January 2024

Guided Tour on 1 February 2024

Artist's Talk on 22 February 2024

### ***Sinta Tantra: The Lightclub of Batavia***

Date: Opening on 24 January 2024

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Guided Tour on 1 February 2024

### **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)

### **General Admission:**

£9.00 Standard / £4.50 Students / FREE Under 16

FREE for Members

FREE for Ealing Borough residents every first Thursday of the month 5pm – 8pm, and every Sunday 10am – 12.30pm

## About Alice Irwin

Alice Irwin (b.1994, London) has studied and worked in London. She completed a BA in Fine Art from City and Guilds of London Art School and an MA in Print from the Royal College of Art, London. Irwin is known for her exploration of human identity and the innocence of childhood. Her art strikes a delicate balance between playfulness and thought-provoking elements, creating a dynamic experience for viewers.

Selected exhibitions include *Curiosity and Wonder*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2023); *Good as Gold display*, Brockley, London (2023); *Landmarks*, Sky arts/channel 11 Freeview (2021). Irwin has been awarded a number of awards, including East London Printmaker Award, Bocket Gallery, London (2018); and Travers Smith Art Programme Prize (Sculpture), London (2018).

## About Sinta Tantra

A British artist of Balinese descent, Tantra spent her childhood in Indonesia, America and the UK, where she studied at the Slade School of Fine Art and the Royal Academy

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Schools. Known for her colourful geometric paintings and site-specific murals, many in the public realm, Tantra's work explores 'painting on an architectural scale'.

The first recipient of the Bridget Riley Drawing Fellowship at the British School at Rome, as well as the first public artwork to be commissioned for the entrance hall of Dulwich Picture Gallery, Tantra's work has been exhibited at numerous international biennials, art fairs and in group exhibitions such as A New Paradise at the Saatchi Gallery in London (2022), Framer Framed (2020) in Amsterdam, the Karachi Biennale (2019), the Folkestone Triennial UK (2017) and the Liverpool Biennial UK (2012).

Tantra's work is part of the UK Government Art Collection, Museum MACAN, Jakarta; Tumurun Museum, Solo, Louis Vuitton Collection and other private international collections.

### 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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