PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

2027 Exhibition Programme Announced

The 2027 season at Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery brings figurative painting by women artists from the South Asian diaspora together for the first time in the UK, along with Paula Rego's celebrated *Nursery Rhymes* (1989) series and a major exhibition of large-scale paintings and sculpture by Sean Scully (b. 1945) at the historic country house designed and built by Sir John Soane (1753–1837) in Ealing.

Many Stories

6 May – 8 August 2027

Many Stories is the first major UK exhibition of figurative painting by women artists from the South Asian diaspora. It will bring together works by 17 artists, including both emerging and established practitioners.

The exhibition presents diverse visual languages, incorporating Western and South Asian painting traditions to depict natural and urban landscape, the body, portraiture and painterly process. As the title suggests, Many Stories reveals multiple perspectives of the lives, critical concerns and aesthetic interests of some of the most engaging South Asian British women artists today, including Faiza Butt, Jai Chuhan, Jasmir Creed and Naira Mushtaq.

Many Stories presents difference as much as connection across three core themes: *Identity and Migration*, *Body and Women Painting Women*, and *Navigating the Public and Private*. Across generations, geographies and practices, the exhibition explores where

differing perspectives meet, where they diverge and what they reveal about the changing landscape of contemporary British painting.

The exhibition also plays an important role in addressing the continued under-representation of South Asian British women within the visual arts and comes at a time of renewed interest in figurative painting and in broader accounts of British art, showcasing a remarkable body of works together at scale.

Many Stories is undertaken in partnership with Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, and Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. A new publication and public programme will accompany the exhibition, enabling visitors the chance to delve deeper into the work of the artists and the themes addressed in the exhibition.

pitzhanger.org.uk/many-stories

Paula Rego: Nursery Rhymes

6 May – 8 August 2027

In 1989, Paula Rego (1935–2022) made one of her most coveted bodies of works, a group of 25 prints reimagining English nursery rhymes, seemingly innocent verses that continue to be retold to children after hundreds of years. Rego transformed the characters and stories of tales such as *Little Miss Muffet*, *the Three Blind Mice* and *the Cat and the Fiddle*, into dark and complex psychological themes.

Rego's striking take on these scenes will be exhibited at Pitzhanger, in the former bedrooms of Sir John Soane's then country house on the western fringes of London.

Nursery Rhymes was made at a time when the artist was reading English story books to her grandchild, in the same way her own grandmother told her fables as a young girl in Portugal. Over an intense period of a few months in 1989 Rego worked on the etching plates for the series, travelling through the tales — also including *Humpty Dumpty*, and *Jack and Jill* — and playing out the psychological dramas in which sexual or macabre elements are disguised by an apparent innocence.

Throughout her lifetime she drew inspiration from fairy tales, nursery rhymes, literature, folklore, and personal moments in her own life. The artist was inspired by both European literature, and childhood stories, those not attributed to known authors, but handed down from generation to generation. At the heart of her work is how these stories can shape us.

Rego's *Nursery Rhymes* will be exhibited concurrently with *Many Stories*, which will be on display elsewhere in the Manor and galleries.

pitzhanger.org.uk/paula-rego

Sean Scully: Nature Never Sleeps

September 2027 – January 2028

For Autumn 2027, Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery will present an exhibition of large-scale paintings, works on paper, writing and sculpture by the celebrated artist Sean Scully (b. 1945).

The Irish-born, New York-based multidisciplinary artist is primarily known for his expressive abstract paintings consisting of layered stripes, blocks and shifting fields of colour, although in recent years he has returned to figurative art and nature.

The inspiration behind this can be traced back to his studio in the village of Tappan, New York state, as Scully explains: "*When I bought my studio, the building flooded every winter: which is why nobody wanted it. In front of it, was a car park for 67 cars. And when it rained the water was stranded, looking for a useful home. I ripped up the car park. The water went into the ground. The plants grew. The animals came back. The birds on their way to and from Old Mexico, stop off. Sing us a song and fly away. Now we have a pond full of frogs, and 600 trees.*"

At the heart of the exhibition will be works from his *Tree of Life* (2026) series, which exemplifies Scully's new strand of figurative work responding to trees, cacti and the natural world, made at a time when the effects of climate change have become increasingly pronounced and severe. Other paintings to feature in the exhibition include his *Madonna Triptych* (2018/2019), which signified Scully's return to figuration after a five-decade hiatus.

One of the two central figures in the series is Scully's son, Oisin, who was ten when the paintings were made. At the time, Scully observed: "*Because I'm so nuts about my son, I wanted to paint pictures of a child in an eternal place, representing all children.*"

The 'place' he referred to is a beach on the island of Eleuthera, in the Bahamas. Watching Oisin play with his mother on the sand inspired Scully's three vibrantly coloured oil paintings. "*I used to be a very intense portraitist, so it was easy for me to make these,*" he said in 2019.

pitzhanger.org.uk/sean-scully

Rebecca Lyons, Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, said: "*Pitzhanger was a site of radical architecture and a convening place for contemporary artists at the time of Sir John Soane. This year ahead brings the very best of modern and contemporary art in Britain to Ealing: from Peter Blake to Paula Rego, to the many stories of women artists from the South Asian diaspora, and bold painterly works by Sean Scully across both abstract and figurative traditions. We warmly welcome all of our audiences, local to international, to enjoy the historic house, garden and parkland setting and this stellar programme of world-renowned artists.*"

Notes to Editors

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE

Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, built 1800–1804, is the historic country home of one of the most influential English architects, Sir John Soane. Pitzhanger opened in 2019 following a major £12-million restoration project, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England and the London Borough of Ealing, and other generous donors. Today, Pitzhanger celebrates Soane's radical contemporary vision through high-quality, culturally engaging experiences delivered across the Grade I listed house, historic gardens, purpose-built art gallery and learning and community spaces, that are open to all. Pitzhanger is open Wednesday – Sunday, and visitors can further support Pitzhanger and enjoy year-round access to exhibitions and special events by becoming Members.

www.pitzhanger.org.uk
Instagram @pitzhanger
Facebook 'Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery'

Sir John Soane (1753–1837) was one of Britain's most visionary architects, and one of the very few of his era to rise from a working-class background. His buildings are celebrated for their inventive approach to the neoclassical tradition and his pioneering use of natural light. Soane bought Pitzhanger in 1800, demolishing much of the existing house (apart from the Dance Wing) and designing a new country estate set within 28 acres of parkland, completed in 1804. He and his family lived at Pitzhanger until 1810. The legacy of Soane's distinctive architecture, teaching, and collections has influenced generations of artists and architects, and continues to shape Pitzhanger's mission today.

For More Information, Interviews and Images

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Images

- Jai Chuhan, *Madonna*, 2022 Oil on canvas. © The artist.
- Paula Rego, *Hey Diddle Diddle*, 1989. Etching and aquatint on Velin Arches paper. © Estate of Paula Rego. Courtesy: Ostrich Arts Ltd and Cristea Roberts Gallery.
- Sean Scully, *Tree of Life*, 2026. Oil on canvas. © Sean Scully. Courtesy: the artist and Thaddaeus Ropac. Photo: courtesy the artist.