**Marking the Line: Ceramics and Architecture**

Nicholas Rena, Carina Ciscato, Clare Twomey, Christie Brown

Curated by Joanna Bird

26 July - 8 September 2013, Pitzhanger Manor and PM Gallery

**MODERN WORKS OF ART INSPIRED BY SIR JOHN SOANE FILL HIS MOST REMARKABLE BUILDINGS**

Contemporary artists present installations of abstract porcelain shapes, a lyrical concept of one thousand bowls, monumental ceramic vessels and Soane-inspired sculpture in his weekend ‘dream house’

A group of leading contemporary potters and ceramicists will fill some of Sir John Soane’s finest rooms with new works inspired by the architect, his creations and collections, as an innovative exhibition completes its tour of Soane-designed buildings in 2013.

Following spring showings at the Sir John Soane’s Museum and Port Eliot in Cornwall, **Marking the Line: Ceramics and Architecture** will open at Soane’s weekend retreat, Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing, west London this summer. Sitting in Walpole Park, central Ealing, Pitzhanger Manor is the ‘dream house’ designed by Soane as a place to entertain his friends and display his collection of art and antiquities.

Curated by international ceramics authority Joanna Bird, the exhibition aims to inspire lovers of art and architecture, presenting innovative and life-specific new works, which take advantage of Soane’s dramatic and idiosyncratic settings. The installations, abstract architectural ceramics and sculpture will provide a compelling complement to Soane’s signature convex mirrors, domed ceilings and playful use of light.

Ceramicist and trained architect Nicholas Rena’s simple but powerful abstract yellow, orange and green forms will give a sense of monumental scale and colour alongside Christie Brown’s sculptural reinterpretations of Soane’s family portraits; Brazilian ceramicist Carina Ciscato’s delicate yet tactile ceramic vessels will give a nod to Soane’s architectural quirks, while the
British artist **Clare Twomey** will introduce one thousand white bone china bowls decorated with gold, exploring the subject of legacy. Taking Soane’s own artistic legacy as her starting point, each of Twomey’s bowls will carry a quotation outlining the impression that a man would like to leave on the world.

The collected new work offers a captivating and intricate look towards the future in a historic setting. Throughout its run, the exhibition will host a whole series of free educational workshops for local communities and schools, including a ceramics workshop with Summer Arts College, a partnership with the Youth Offending Service, as well as artist and curator tours.

Joanna Bird said “Bringing the work of these artists into...houses featuring Soane’s design, will illustrate ceramic installation. Developed over the course of thirty years, installation has become a significant art form. This travelling exhibition pushes the concept even further as it is *life-specific*. The juxtaposition of classical and modern works of art in a domestic setting will highlight the impact of contemporary ceramics and inspire, affect and challenge new audiences.”

Pitzhanger Manor is the one-time home which Soane built for himself, both as a country retreat and salon and as an advertisement for his skills as an architect. In 1800, Soane bought the estate, demolishing most of the existing property and redesigning and rebuilding it to his own specification. Similar to his main London home at 13 Lincoln’s Inn Fields, now the Sir John Soane’s Museum, Pitzhanger contains some of his most impressive interiors with vaulted ceilings, interconnecting rooms, inset mirrors and stripped back classical detailing. Soane sold Pitzhanger in 1810 and it passed through several hands until, in 1843, it became home to the daughters of Britain’s only assassinated Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval.

Pitzhanger Manor Trustee and Leader of Ealing Council, Councillor Julian Bell, said “One of the reasons Sir John Soane built Pitzhanger Manor was to display his remarkable collection of artworks and antiques, so it is very fitting for it to be hosting a new collection of work by contemporary artists who have been directly inspired by Soane and his ‘dream home’.”

**VISITOR INFORMATION**

Admission is free to all visitors.

PM Gallery & Pitzhanger Manor, Walpole Park, Mattock Lane, Ealing, London W5 5EQ

**Opening Times:** Tues-Fri 1-5pm; Sat 11am-5pm; Sundays 1-5pm.

**Further visitor information** [www.ealing.gov.uk/pmgalleryandhouse](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/pmgalleryandhouse) 020 8567 1227

**Travel:** Trains & tube to Ealing Broadway. Buses 207, 65 & 83.

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**Notes to Editors:**

1. The artists and curator: Christie Brown’s practice is informed by an interest in the mythology and symbolism associated with clay and its relationship with other materials such as wax, bronze and plaster. Clay is a transformative material, which relates to ideas about metamorphoses and Brown’s artefacts can be seen as embodiments of transformation and transition through contemporary rites of passage. The re-examination of ceramics through history and new approaches to presentation such as installation and intervention are key
areas of her research interest at the University of Westminster where she is a Professor and lecturer. Recent one man shows include ‘DreamWork’ at the Freud Museum, group exhibitions (all 2010) include Crucible, Gloucester Cathedral; Taiwan Ceramics Biennale, Taipei; Contemporary British Studio Ceramics: The Grainer Collection, Mint Museum, Charlotte, USA. Brown was Artist in Residence at the International Centre for Ceramic Research, Guldagergaard, Denmark (2009).

2. Carina Ciscato is a Brazilian artist from Sao Paulo who moved to the UK in September 1999. In January 2004 she set up her own studio in Camberwell, London, having spent the previous three years working in the studios of Julian Stair and Edmund de Waal. The material that Carina uses - porcelain - is also critical to her work, characterised by delicate, torn effects that explore the limits of the material when thrown. Marks created during the making process are intentionally left in order to emphasize the pots’ tactile qualities, and honesty. There are no secrets in her work, but they are, nonetheless, mysterious. Carina has shown internationally and her work is in many museums including the V&A. She was a finalist in the British Ceramic Biennale Award Exhibition at Stoke-on-Trent, 2011.

3. Nicholas Rena trained as an architect before turning to ceramics. His bold poetic forms have a striking simplicity and potency. Ideas of ritual, the human body and features of architectural space all find a logical unity within his vessel forms, exploring archetypes of form and shape. The interplay between line, edge, interior and exterior has become more complex and pushed Rena into the forefront of a new generation of ceramic artists exploring fresh possibilities with the language of abstraction. In 2001 and 2009 he exhibited in the prestigious Jerwood Prize for Applied Arts. His work is in the V&A, the British Council, The Devonshire Collection, the Musee des Arts Decoratifs at the Louvre, The Crafts Council, Canary Wharf and the Carnegie Institute.

4. Clare Twomey is a British artist who works with clay in large-scale installations, sculpture and site-specific works. Twomey’s work has been exhibited in the UK at Tate, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Crafts Council, the Eden Project and the Royal Academy, and at the Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, Japan. In 2009 Twomey curated and participated in ‘Possibilities and Losses: Transitions in Clay’ at the Middlesbrough Museum of Art, investigating the post-industrial world in which ceramics and ceramic practitioners now operate. In 2010 she created an installation at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton of 3,000 black ceramic butterflies. She is actively involved in critical research in the area of applied arts, including writing, curating and making. As an AHRC research fellow at the University of Westminster, Twomey is investigating the impact of installation works in clay and craft practice, and the wider contemporary significance of this emerging practice in the visual arts.

5. Joanna Bird, Director of the Joanna Bird Foundation, has established her reputation as a gallerist over the past eighteen years. Joanna shows ceramics internationally and she has participated in many exhibitions in the UK and USA. She works with artists on commissions, collaborates with museums and architects, advises on acquisitions and is at present working with a young artist developing a new ceramics gallery at Chatsworth. Joanna has lectured at the V&A on Collecting Ceramics and is working on a series of lectures to be given in the USA.

6. Pitzzanger Manor & PM Gallery are owned and run by Ealing Council, which is planning a major development project that will see rooms restored and improved gallery, visitor & education facilities. The Council is bidding for £3.8m funding in total to support the restoration of the historic manor house and has been successful at the first round of bidding. Ealing Council has been awarded £275,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to support the plans for the restoration of the House and grounds. Using money raised through the National Lottery, the HLF sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy.

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