

# PITZHANGER

MANOR & GALLERY

## Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery announces two major exhibitions for 2026



In 2026 Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery, the historic country home designed and built by Sir John Soane (1753–1837) in leafy Ealing, West London will celebrate and explore a number of the themes and subjects which delighted and preoccupied the great Regency architect.

Two leading UK women artists will bring their interpretations of nature to the Manor in very different ways. Marthe Armitage explores repetition, symmetry and the relationship between the natural and man-made world, while Clare Woods delves into the beauty and perennial appeal of still-life painting.

### ***Marthe Armitage: Pattern Maker*** **19 March – 19 July 2026**

This exhibition explores Armitage's distinctive approach to pattern making in wallpaper and fabric design. The child of Dutch parents, Marthe is renowned for her hand-drawn, hand-printed patterns created in her Chiswick studio. Now aged 95, she is one of Britain's most beloved designers and is celebrated for the intricate and imaginative detail that still imbues her work, and the expert craftsmanship of her practice.

As the title suggests, *Pattern Maker* traces Armitage's artistic process — from initial sketches, tracings and lino blocks to finished wallpapers and textiles — revealing the journey behind each work.

Her designs are rooted in the landscapes, riverbanks, and architectural details of her local Chiswick surroundings — where she and her family have lived since 1939 — and translate the familiar, such as a chestnut tree or an angelica plant into the fantastical, transforming everyday scenes into immersive decorative worlds.



This focused exhibition brings together original drawings and tracings, prints, archival material, and large-scale installed wallpapers and fabric, offering an intimate insight into the life and work of an artist whose designs have quietly shaped British interiors for more than half a century. At Pitzhanger, Armitage's celebration of craft and place finds an appropriate, resonant setting, echoing Sir John Soane's own passion for pattern, narrative, and the handmade.

## ***Clare Woods: Garden Without Seasons***

**29 July – 8 November 2026**

The summer exhibition will see a multitude of works by British artist Clare Woods RA installed throughout the historic manor and its galleries.

Having initially trained as a sculptor, Woods' understanding of sculptural forms underpin her paintings, collages, and prints. Her recent works have been preoccupied with destabilising traditional art historical genres such as portraiture, landscape and still life.

Hovering between abstraction and figuration, her paintings are characterised by fluid mark-making and vibrant colours.

*Under The Dome* (2024), one of the biggest works in the show, draws its composition from a photo Woods took of the iconic Temperate House at Kew Gardens, London. In this scene, the viewer is positioned amongst the luscious tropical plants, peering up at the spiralling Victorian staircase. This glasshouse provides a sanctuary for some of the world's rarest and most threatened plants. Woods became fascinated by this manmade ecosystem and how it protects flora that otherwise could not survive the UK's cold climate. Here, the elaborate glass structure becomes a metaphor for the thin veneer between life and death.

Pitzhanger's parkland setting, historic interiors, and stained-glass windows are sources of inspiration for Woods' new works in the exhibition. Evoking the passage of time, they invite the viewer to consider the fleeting nature of life. When she was developing the concept for the show, Woods noted that absence and presence are not just abiding themes in her own works, but also powerful elements which characterise the manor and its galleries. Sir John Soane is ever-present in the building's light-filled spaces and unique architecture, yet also absent following his death almost two centuries ago and the relocation of his collections to his central London town house — now the Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields.



### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**[HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE](#)**

- Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery. Photo by Andy Stagg.
- Marthe Armitage. Photo by Jonathan Taylor.
- Clare Woods, *Under The Dome*, 2024. © Clare Woods. Courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery, London.

**Marthe Armitage** (b.1930) began her career printing her own wallpaper by hand for the family home before the acquisition of a 100-year-old hand-operated offset lithographic press enabled her to design and print for others. Today, Marthe Armitage is world-famous in the field of wallpaper design. She is a member and past Master of the Art Workers' Guild, of which the iconic William Morris was himself Master in 1892. Her *Alphabet* wallpaper was used to decorate the haunted nursery in the 2012 film *The Woman in Black* and in 2013 she was featured in a BBC 4 documentary on *The Story of Wallpaper*, as part of a series entitled *The Fabric of Britain*. Now in her 90s, Marthe continues to be as creative and innovative as ever.

**Clare Woods RA** (b.1972) is a contemporary painter, who lives and works in Hereford. She trained in Fine Art Sculpture at Bath College of Art and then at Goldsmiths College, and her career spans over thirty years of painting and works on paper including printmaking and collage. She was elected Royal Academician in 2022, and her paintings are held in many major national and international collections.

**Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery**, built 1800–1804, is the historic country home of one of the most influential English architects, Sir John Soane. Pitzhanger's mission is to promote Sir John Soane's legacy, inspiring visitors with art and architecture and nurturing creativity for all. It celebrates Soane's genius and influence, juxtaposing his landmark architecture with a programme of ambitious contemporary art exhibitions, and a vibrant outreach and events programme. Pitzhanger reopened in spring 2019 following a major £12-million conservation and restoration project to return the Manor to Soane's original design, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, Ealing Council, and other generous donors. Visitors can further support Pitzhanger and enjoy year-round access to exhibitions and events by becoming Members.

[www.pitzhanger.org.uk](http://www.pitzhanger.org.uk)

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**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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