

Light is Therefore Colour

Sinta Tantra and Eileen Cooper

Turner's House in Twickenham is delighted to announce *Light is Therefore Colour*, a two-person exhibition featuring works by Sinta Tantra and Eileen Cooper. Titled after Turner's iconic quote, the show marks the launch of the museum's first-ever contemporary art programme, with Tantra and Cooper showing new work made in response to the architecture and historic setting of the painter's former home.

Cooper is renowned for her dream-like paintings that explore different aspects of the female experience, weaving together autobiographical elements with mythology, fairy tales, and art history. For this exhibition, she imagines the families that lived in the house after Turner, capturing their presence through poetic, other-worldly scenes. A series of paintings in the small parlour respond to the house's setting – once rural before London's expansion, yet still closely linked to the river Thames and Richmond Park. In these works, women rest or commune with nature, accompanied by deer that, like the animals throughout Cooper's work, serve as quiet companions, guardians and symbols of latent wildness. Meanwhile, bodies of water and a blue half-light evoke a sense of transition – between different periods of time, but also emotions and ways of being. Inside the house, Cooper was drawn to the spiral staircase, imagining it as a portal between past and present, where the spirits of former inhabitants linger. In one particularly arresting work, a woman leans back against the handrail, appearing to communicate with her own unruly shadow, while pale blue light drips eerily through the space.

Tantra was similarly drawn to the staircase, not just to its grandeur but to the influence it appears to draw from the architecture of John Soane, who was a close friend of the artist. Tantra plays on this relationship through an architectural invention: a gold-leaf painted panel placed inside the staircase's curved alcove. The painting is only partially visible from the bottom of the stairs, unfurling as visitors ascend while also amplifying the shifting effects of light through the window above. At the top of the stairs, a painting in deep blue with organic golden forms appears as the panel's inverse, playing on the transition from day to night. A red circular-shaped canvas, hanging above the fireplace in the dining room, appears to unite these opposing temporalities into a

striking focal point, drawing on the ways in which Turner used light and colour evoke particular moods in his paintings while also building on Tantra's own inquiries into femininity and otherness as a British artist of Balinese descent.

In this way, both artists bring an unapologetically female perspective to Turner's former home. Through their works, they challenge the weight of history and tradition, asking: how might we engage with and inhabit spaces imbued with the past in ways that make them newly alive, open, and resonant today?

Sandycombe Lodge

40 Sandycombe Road, Twickenham TW1 2LR

Opening: Wednesday, 28 May 2025

Opening Hours

Wednesday to Sunday – 12pm – 4pm (Guided tours at 12:30pm, 1:30pm, and 2:30pm

– ONLY when a guide is available)