



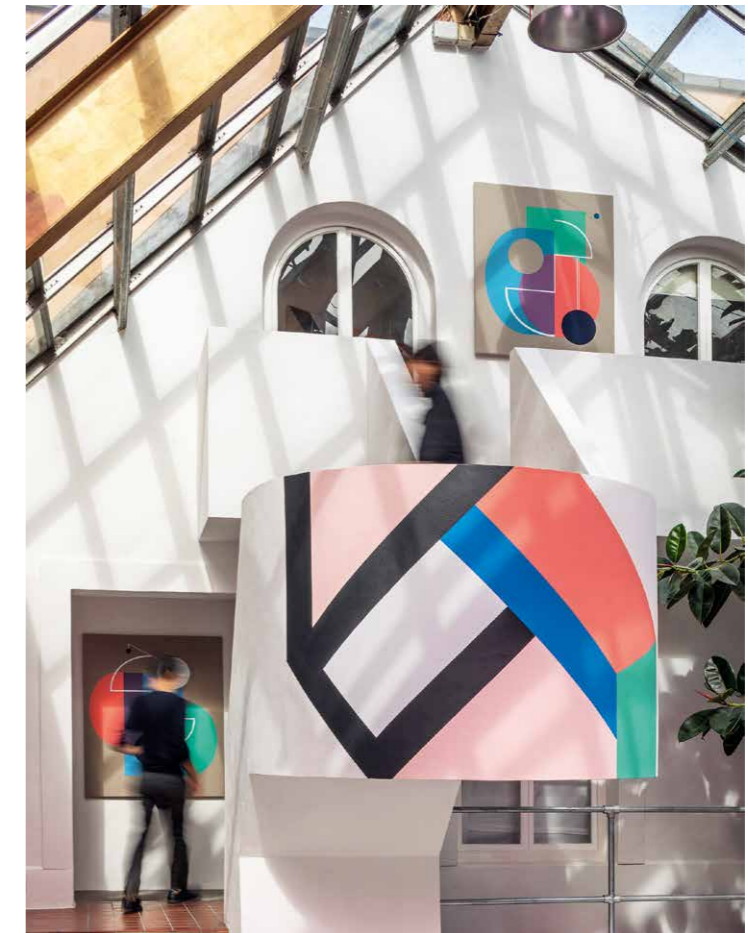
Artist Sinta Tantra will bring a colourful intervention to the Gallery's entrance this autumn, finds **Holly Black**

Sinta Tantra has always been obsessed with light. The British artist has spent much of her life travelling between London and Bali, where her family is from, and is naturally drawn to the distinct palette found so close to the equator, particularly when the sun rises and sets. "Light is transient, you can't control it," she explains, which is one of the reasons why she loves creating expansive forms of public art all across the world, from a 50-metre-long technicoloured avenue in Sharjah, UAE, to a geometric playground in Seoul, South Korea. The fact that so many elemental forces are out of her control, from the reception of an everyday audience going about their business to the effects of the weather, galvanises her creativity. "I have always been interested in the physical as opposed to the pictorial," she adds. "For example, different cultures respond to colour in different ways and the light found at a particular location can alter your perception of it."

It is fitting then, that Tantra will be bringing her unique blend of kaleidoscopic Modernism to Dulwich Picture Gallery's entrance hall this autumn, with a piece called *The Grand Tour*. The connection between her practice and John Soane's innovative architectural design, which allowed for a light diffusion that is ideal for viewing paintings, is not lost on the artist. "I find it fascinating that he was thinking about bringing the outside in, and that every piece of glass in the Mausoleum was a slightly different yellow tint. Light is never static, it is always changing, and he embraced that. It's all about bringing something transient and magical into the space."

Tantra has made similar interventions throughout her career, applying translucent vinyl to gallery windows in order to bathe her paintings in radiant pink hues, and blurring the boundaries of the conventional art space by covering entire buildings with bold slices of colour. Her sculptural work has utilised stained acrylic and glass to create subtle overlays of colour that change depending on the quality of light and the position of the viewer.

Such subtleties have acted as a starting point for the vibrant murals she has conceived for the Gallery's walls,



Above: Installation shot from Sinta Tantra's solo show *Modern Times* at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London 2020. Photo: Luca Piffaretti

Opposite: Artist Sinta Tantra in front of *Bali Birdsong*, 2020. Photo: Ian Pollard

while also referring to the distinct shapes that define this Neo-classical building. Moving beyond the two-dimensional, her holistic reimagining of the entryway involves a reconfiguration of the welcome desk and visitor amenities. This interest in the tangible experience of entering a gallery – and what can be done to make it as open and welcoming as possible – is informed not only by the tenets of the Bauhaus, where environmental design, art and architecture were given equal weight, but in the artist's personal experience as a member of the Gallery's front-of-house team, back when she was young: "I was out there selling tickets, so I know a bit about what it is like for visitors to enter the Gallery. I wanted to ask, how can we make this experience better?"

Tantra also hopes to draw connections with the *Grand Tour*, which played a significant part in the artistic education of many of the painters whose work is held in the gallery's collection. "Going to Rome was an important part of that journey, and I know the impact of that environment from my own studies there. As I said before, when you travel to different places your perception of colour and light changes, and that is definitely what happened to these people. It opened up new worlds for them. Ultimately, light and colour can transport you to a different time and place."

Holly Black is a writer and editor based in London. See Sinta Tantra's welcome area redesign when the Gallery reopens in November.