

## Reflections – Sangat and the Self 1 August 2026 – 29 August 2027



A participatory exhibition invites reflection on personal and collective wellbeing through art.

Developed by without SHAPE without FORM in collaboration with the Whitworth, The University of Manchester, *Reflections - Sangat and the Self* brings together recent works by Manchester-born, London-based painter Jasmir Creed and Birmingham-based artist Roo Dhissou, alongside key works from the Whitworth collection.

The exhibition explores individuality, kinship and healing through community and spiritual practice. Grounded in the Sikh teachings of Simran (focused practice), Seva (selfless service) and Sangat (fellowship), visitors are invited to embrace connection and care as essential daily practices.

Jasmir Creed's figurative oil paintings foreground the interior life of the individual, exploring emotional intensity, self-awareness and the role of introspection in healing. In contrast, Roo Dhissou situates healing within shared experience. Drawing on practices of gathering, compassion and mutual care her work centres community as a vital space of support and renewal. Included in the exhibition is her installation *A String of Love* (2025) composed of a contemporary handwoven *manji* (a traditional South Asian bed) under a suspended painted sky.

# the Whitworth

Works from the Whitworth collection help shape an environment of attentiveness and presence. Over 20 works by artists including John Constable, Nike Davies-Okundaye, Zhang Enli, Howard Hodgkin, Jitish Kallat, Anish Kapoor, Chris Ofili and Bridget Riley - encourage reflection on emotional and psychological states, pointing toward the potential for medicine for the mind. Interactive works conceived by without SHAPE without FORM encourage slow looking, thoughtful engagement and offer practical tools for mental wellbeing. The animation film *A Storm Within* offers insight into the nature and impact of our thoughts, while the *Whisper Box* provides a space for private contemplation and practice of Simran.

A year-long public programme runs in Manchester alongside the exhibition, with workshops, wellbeing sessions and social gatherings developed with partners, including Wellcome Collection. A programme of Manji Gatherings bring together artists, cultural leaders and health practitioners to explore belonging through shared experience.

A magazine and podcast series produced during the exhibition will expand on these themes with contributions from a range of voices, including local community groups, artists, students and Simran practitioners.

**Deep Kaur Kailey, Artistic Director of without SHAPE without FORM, said:** "In a world shaped by constant noise and distraction, this exhibition offers a space to return inward. We're delighted to have collaborated with the Whitworth to create an experience rooted in reflection, healing, and human connection."

**Ed Watts, Head of Civic Engagement and Education at the Whitworth, said:** "We're proud to have partnered with without SHAPE without FORM on the creation of this exhibition. The install highlights that healing starts from within, reflecting the Whitworth's ethos of fostering wellbeing, connection, and community through art."

ENDS

## Notes to editors

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## Exhibition Credit

*Reflections – Sangat and the Self* developed by without SHAPE without FORM and the Whitworth, The University of Manchester.

## Image credit

Roo Dhissou, *A String of Love* (detail), 2025. Photo courtesy the artist and without SHAPE without FORM.

## Listings information

# the Whitworth

*Reflections – Sangat and the Self*

1 August 2026 – 29 August 2027

The Whitworth

Free and open to all

## Public programme

An extensive public programme will accompany this exhibition, further details about this will be shared on the Whitworth website soon.

## Supporters

The exhibition and programme are supported by:

Henry Moore Foundation

Arts Council England

The Mildred Fund

## About Jasmir Creed

In her psychologically charged figurative paintings Jasmir Creed explores cultural alienation within urban and domestic environments with particular focus on the experience of British South Asian women. Using vivid colours and expressionistic style, her carefully constructed oil paintings feature anonymous crowds, iconic buildings and public monuments as well as locations significant for modern British history such as Trafalgar Square in London, alongside self-portraits and intimate room interiors. These works reflect the artist's own lived experience, highlighting the themes of detachment, the 'other' and transcultural hybridity from unique and personal perspectives. A practice-led PhD researcher at the Slade School of Fine Art, Jasmir has been featured in exhibitions such as *Dystopolis* at the Victoria Gallery and Museum, Liverpool (2019) and has participated in the Asia Triennial Manchester (2018, 2021). Her involvement in group exhibitions such as *Where is Home?* (2022), which toured to the Whitworth, explored themes of migration and identity. Jasmir's work is part of the collection of the Imperial War Museum North.

## About Roo Dhissou

Through a research-led, materially grounded practice, Roo Dhissou interrogates how knowledge, memory and authority are constructed across domestic, spiritual and institutional spaces. Working with methods that include food, publishing, sculpture, installation and dialogue, she challenges normative modes of engagement and calls for alternate ways of being with others. Roo has been involved in numerous notable projects and exhibitions across the UK and internationally, including residencies in Spain and Canada. She has collaborated with institutions like the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, The Bluecoat, Tate Liverpool and more. Her practice-based PhD, funded by the AHRC, is titled "*Cultural Dysphoria: British Asian women artists beyond binaries*." In 2024 she received the Support Structures Award from the Serpentine, London for artists working at the intersection of social justice and visual art.

## About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. Founded in 1889 for "the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester" it continues this mission today in new contexts. The gallery, its park and gardens are home to the collection of over 60,000 works of art,

# the Whitworth

textiles, sculptures and wallpapers and provides a platform for artists from around the world. The Whitworth is driven by a vision to actively seek and manifest connections between art, creativity, and their role in developing a more resilient and caring society through its exhibitions and award-winning civic engagement programme.  
[www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk) @whitworthart #thewhitworth

## **About without SHAPE without FORM**

without SHAPE without FORM is an assembly of artists, thinkers and cultural practitioners committed to making moments of self-discovery accessible for everyone. Rooted in Sikh philosophical concepts, our contemporary artistic programme enables people to have meaningful conversations about the mind. Guided by insights and tools from over 500 years of Sikh knowledge, without SHAPE without FORM explores a transformative philosophy that pursues self-mastery in the service of others, connecting courage, compassion and community with a commitment to education, collaboration and exchange. We create spaces to explore the power of the mind – through curating exhibitions, producing podcasts, publishing articles, delivering workshops and hosting gatherings for Simran (a practice of stillness and deep listening). We believe these encounters help people find peace, resilience and purpose in an increasingly noisy and fractured world. Social action and openness are central to everything we do. Our approach is boundaryless, experiential and participatory – inviting global voices to a cross-cultural dialogue about purposeful living.

In September 2025 without SHAPE without FORM opened its redesigned 7,500 sq ft contemporary art space in a former car showroom in Slough with the first iteration of Reflections - Sangat and the Self, curated in close collaboration with artists Jasmir Creed and Roo Dhissou. It also expanded internationally presenting its acclaimed touring exhibition Journey of the Mind in New York with Queens Museum. To date, it has welcomed more than 60,000 visitors into spaces of stillness and self-discovery. Future announced programming includes exhibitions at Calgary Contemporary in Calgary, Campbell House Museum in Toronto and The Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York.

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