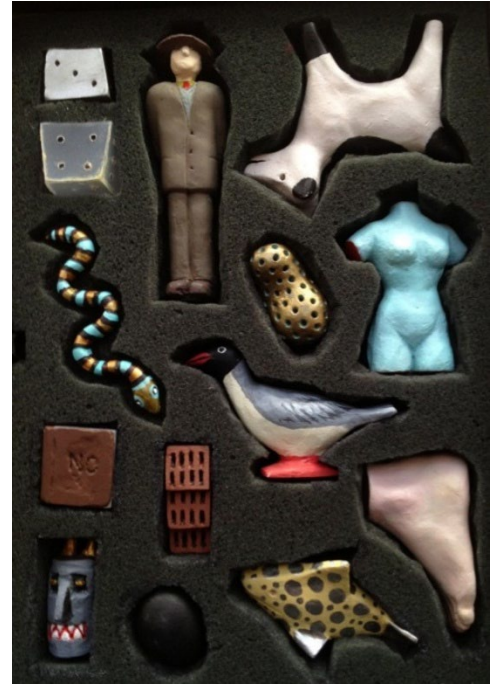




Above left: Madelon Vriesendorp in her studio. Photo: Tilly Buckroyd

Above right: Critical Pursuit Home Analyses Kit. Photo courtesy of Madelon Vriesendorp

Madelon Vriesendorp: Mind Games

15 July - 20 September 2026

A major retrospective celebrating the surreal, subversive practice of artist Madelon Vriesendorp will open at Sir John Soane's Museum this summer.

Madelon Vriesendorp: Mind Games will feature over 50 works created or collected by the 2025 Soane Medal winner, which reveal the artist's ability to transform everyday materials into unexpected sources of humour, beauty and inspiration.

“I make things that make me laugh” says Vriesendorp. Laughter, games and collecting are central to Vriesendorp’s work. Ranging from early etchings, drawings and book covers to more recent work including jewelry, new works on paper and sculpture, the exhibition will explore the creativity and imagination of an artist whose unique way of seeing the world continues to influence architects and artists today. A large-scale version of her celebrated *Mind Game* will also be showcased, allowing visitors to closely examine a series of purposefully chosen objects that comprise a psychoanalytical toolkit.

As Soane Medal winner, Vriesendorp (b.1945) was recognised by a panel of architects, critics and curators for her major contribution to architecture, becoming the first UK-based female practitioner to win the award since its inception in 2017.

Vriesendorp studied etching at London's Central St Martin's before moving to New York in 1972 where she co-founded the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) with Rem Koolhaas and Elia & Zoe Zenghelis. Here she produced paintings in support of the firm's work, and her own drawings – including her best-known New York series – that were used for book and magazine covers, all of which visually contextualised OMA's early years.

Over the decades, her work has been embraced by architects and architectural writers alike, and has given architectural theories memorable identities, helping to explain complex ideas behind modern and postmodern architecture. Vriesendorp's work tends to be both surreal and playful, showcasing a lifelong interest in games and investigating how the perception of the viewer can change the nature or meaning of an object.

This can be clearly seen in *Critical Pursuit Home Analysis Kit*, commonly known as the *Mind Game*, which has been fascinating audiences around the world for two decades. Part boardgame, part psychoanalytic diagnostic, the work comprises miniature items such as an egg, a bird, a pair of dice, a human foot, amongst others, where a person – normally a visitor to Vriesendorp's house – is tasked with arranging them in a tableau in which revelation is at play. Each game piece has a meaning, assigned by Vriesendorp, and collectively they give psychological insights about the person arranging them. A large-scale version of the *Mind Game* will be shown in the Foyle Space at Sir John Soane's Museum, leading up to the original creation on display in the Exhibition Galleries. Members of the public and Soane staff will be invited to rearrange these pieces at several points throughout the exhibition's run.

The exhibition will also feature a recent series of sculptures – *Plastic Surgery* – made from recycled plastic bottles and packaging, for example swans made from milk bottles as well as elephants and priests made from cleaning bottles. Other unusual materials include eggs, which have been transformed into dictators from the last 100 years. Prising out new meanings from everyday items, and often elevating their materials, these sculptures are an example of how Vriesendorp creates new ways of interacting with the world around us.

Etchings produced and exhibited during her early years living in London will also be on display, showcasing how Vriesendorp has developed her often humorous and subversive ideas and themes. They also give a glimpse into her career-long collections which, like Soane's, inspire her work and that of others. These range from postcards to toys and skyscraper models.

The exhibition promises to be an exciting showcase of why Vriesendorp was an obvious choice for the Soane Medal. It will uncover how seeing through objects has influenced a unique practice, informed by looking at the world around us through a surrealist lens, which continues to inspire the architects, designers and artists of today and tomorrow.

Dr Erin McKellar, Assistant Curator at Sir John Soane's Museum, says: *"No one is like Madelon Vriesendorp. Spending time seeing through her eyes reveals a world where things aren't always as they seem. Serious things become unserious, unserious things are elevated in stature. Humor, laughter and wittiness find their way into everything around us. Most importantly, she reminds of the serious, and often subversive, power of play."*

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Madelon Vriesendorp

Madelon Vriesendorp is a Dutch artist, sculptor and collector. A founding member of the Office for Metropolitan

Architecture (OMA), her graphics and anthropomorphic architectural paintings provided important visual context to OMA in its early years, and her drawings and illustrations have been significantly influential for generations of architects ever since. Mainly based in London since 1976, Madelon has been working across a wide range of media on the expanded field of architecture, including costumes, built objects, paintings, murals, exhibition design, illustration, and short stories.

About Sir John Soane's Museum

Sir John Soane's house and collection at No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields has been a national museum since the early nineteenth century. Designed by renowned architect Sir John Soane and filled with his world-class collection of paintings, sculptures, artefacts and models, the Museum retains the same fabric and design as at the time of Soane's death in 1837. Today, the Museum encourages access to Soane's legacy in its broadest sense: architecture and design, creative originality, a commitment to learning and enquiry, and the connections between past and present that the Museum and its collections reveal. The Museum is open Wednesdays to Sundays, 10am to 5pm. Entry is free. There is no need to pre-book – you can walk in on the day. Sir John Soane's Museum, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3BP. More at www.soane.org | #SoaneMuseum | @soanemuseum

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO ARRANGE INTERVIEWS

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