



Tchoban Foundation  
Museum für  
Architekturzeichnung

## Press Release

Berlin, 17.08.2015

# In Pursuit of Antiquity: Drawings by the Giants of British Neo-Classicism

Tchoban Foundation. Museum for Architectural Drawing  
Christinenstraße 18a, 10119 Berlin

Exhibition opening on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015 at 19:00

Press conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015 at 12:00

Exhibition dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2015 – 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2016

Opening times: Mon.- Fri. 14:00-19:00, Sat.–Sun. 13:00-17:00;

Tickets: 5 Euros, concessions, 3 Euros

Important architectural drawings held by Sir John Soane's Museum, one of the most significant collections of its kind in Great Britain, will form a new temporary exhibition at the Museum for Architectural Drawing in Berlin.

The exhibition illustrates the ambition of leading British architects of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century who strove to create new architecture in the Classical tradition that could compete – in terms of public works, private houses, mausolea, interior detail and even furnishings – with the glories of the Ancient World.

Illustrating this central theme, some of the finest drawings and designs by Sir John Soane himself, Robert Adam, George Dance the Younger, Sir William Chambers and James Wyatt will be shown for the first time in Germany.

The exhibition: *In Pursuit of Antiquity: Drawings from the Giants of British Neo-Classicism* is curated by architectural historian and author Jeremy Musson, and was originally shown at Sir John Soane's Museum in 2008.

Musson's selection from the Museum's unrivalled collection will include an astonishingly detailed cutaway drawing of Holy Trinity Marylebone, one of Soane's three neo-classical churches. Such designs are a reminder of the passionate belief held by Soane and his architectural contemporaries that the quality of a society could be judged by its public buildings. London was, then, the centre of the largest empire since Rome, and the exhibition will include Soane's design for two huge triumphal arches (celebrating Waterloo and Trafalgar) at each end of Downing Street. The deliberate association of ancient and modern empires is clear.

Alongside designs for monumental public architecture, *In Pursuit of Antiquity* will also include more intimate details, such as chimneypieces and domestic furniture, whose Egyptian, Grecian and Roman nuances reflect aspirations for the birth of a new golden age.

*In Pursuit of Antiquity* will focus on Ancient Rome and its great monuments as a source of inspiration to the architectural students of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries who exhaustively measured, studied, surveyed and above all, drew these structures as part of their education. The exhibition will also explore the idea of an architectural drawing – from sketch to final presentation. Drawings by French and Italian artists such as Percier, Clérisseau and the great Piranesi, all represented in Soane's collection, will illustrate the links between these architects and British architects.

Often described as “the father of modern architecture”, Sir John Soane (1753–1837) brought together a magnificent collection of architectural drawings intended to provide exemplars for himself, his sons and his assistants. It was to be a source of reference, inspiration, ideas and comparison and later became a key aspect of his conscious creation of a museum collection.

Today, the outstanding drawings held at Sir John Soane's Museum stand alongside the collection of the Royal Institute of British Architects as the two pre-eminent collections of architectural drawings in the country.

Jeremy Musson is an architectural historian, broadcaster and author. He is the author of *The Drawing Room: Country House Design and Decoration* (2014), *English Country House Interiors* (2011), *How to Read a Country House* (2006), and series editor of books published from the archive of *Country Life*, including: *The Regency Country House* and *The Country Houses of Adam*. He also contributes to the *British Art Journal* and the *Georgian Group Journal*. He lectures regularly, including for the University of Cambridge, the Attingham Summer School and the Royal Oak. Born in London in 1965, he lives in Cambridge with his family.

## Images

(All images are by courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum)



John Soane

*Drawing showing a Student measuring a Capital of the Temple of Jupiter Stator (Castor and Pollux), Rome*

Pencil, pen and watercolour, 1010 x 730

23/9/3



John Soane

*Presentation drawing showing a cutaway perspective of Holy Trinity, Marylebone, 1824*

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour & bodycolour, 650 x 967

15/4/6



John Soane

*Presentation drawing for the proposed rebuilding of Downing Street with two Triumphal Arches in perspective, c. 1827*

Pencil, pen and ink, watercolour & bodycolour, 725 x 1302

15/5/5



William Chambers

*Presentation drawing showing a perspective view of an unexecuted design for a Mausoleum for Frederick, Prince of Wales, initialed and dated 1751*

Pencil, pen and ink & watercolour, 490 x 705

SM 17/7/11



Giovanni-Battista Piranesi

*Imaginary Composition*

Red chalk and pen & ink, 550 x 770

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