



**Tchoban Foundation**  
Museum for  
Architectural Drawing

**Press Information**  
**Berlin, 17.5.2013**

**Opening of the Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing with the exhibition 'Piranesi's Paestum: Master Drawings Uncovered'.**

Venue: Tchoban Foundation. Museum for Architectural Drawing  
Address: Christinenstraße 18a, 10119 Berlin  
Duration: 04.06.-31.08.2013  
Opening times: Mo-Fr 14:00-19:00, Sa 13:00-17:00  
Entrance: 5,00 Euro, reduction: 3,00 Euro

For the first time ever, fifteen drawings from Piranesi's 'Paestum Cycle' belonging to the Sir John Soane's Museum collection will be shown outside of London. Following its acclaimed presentation in London, the exhibition will open the Tchoban Foundation Museum for Architectural Drawing before moving on to the Morgan Library & Museum, New York at the beginning of 2015.

#### **A Key Work in the History of Art**

An exhibition of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's last great graphic project, the highly finished Paestum drawings, will be shown at the new Museum for Architectural Drawing, Berlin, in June 2013, deepening understanding of the graphic artist whose work has influenced designers from Escher to the makers of the Harry Potter films, and shedding new light on the considerable impact of his work on 18th century architectural taste.

For the very first time since Piranesi's death, all fifteen drawings from Sir John Soane's Collection will be exhibited together.

The Paestum drawings were the preparatory work for Piranesi's *Différentes Vues de Pesto*, finished by his son Francesco and published posthumously in 1778.

They depict views of the three great Doric temples in the former Greek colony of Poseidonia, colonised by the Romans in the late sixth century BC and re-named Paestum.



### **Paestum as Motif**

Left abandoned, and later cut off by a malarial swamp, the ruins of the colony were rediscovered in 1746 during the construction of a new road. Its massive and well-preserved Doric temples dedicated to Poseidon, Hera and Athena sparked renewed interest among artists and architects including the celebrated Giovanni Battista Piranesi and inspired drawings, prints, paintings and models which revolutionised understanding of early Greek Classical architecture.

### **Piranesi's Techniques**

Although the artist usually made preparatory drawings for his famous etchings, much of the composition was often worked directly on to the copper plate at the engraving stage.

These drawings contain a level of detail very close to the finished prints, and it is thought that perhaps, aware of his failing health, Piranesi included as much detail as possible for his son Francesco to finish the work he had begun. He uses the full repertoire of his draughtsmanship to create images that both accurately describe the architecture of the Paestum temples and bring out their evocative, rustic setting.

Multi-layering of pencil, brown and grey washes and pen and ink, sometimes with the addition of red chalk or white chalk highlights, creates a layered effect which can be compared to the repeated bitings in the resulting etchings.

The rough paper used by Piranesi is analogous with the travertine used to construct the temples - echoing its pitted and eroded texture.

He also uses the *scena per angolo* - a feature of Ferdinando Bibiena's theatrical scenery designs - to give a unique perspective to the drawings; replacing the traditional, central vanishing point with diagonal axes to heighten the three-dimensionality of the temples and add to their dramatic impact.

Dr. Jerzy Kierkuc-Bielinski, curator of the exhibition:-

'We're delighted to be able to present a focused exhibition which celebrates the impeccable quality and influence of a small selection of drawings.

The fifteen drawings in Soane's collection have been displayed in the Picture Room of No.13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, but their position, in Soane's ingenious picture planes, has not allowed close scrutiny.

We hope that the conservation and academic research resulting from the exposure of the drawings will throw considerable light on their history and the architectural legacy left by Giovanni Battista Piranesi.'

A revised, full-colour edition of Professor John Wilton Ely's *Piranesi, Paestum and Soane*, an in-depth account of the wide-ranging influence of Piranesi on Soane's architecture and his Museum, is published by Prestel and can be purchased in the museum.



**Tchoban Foundation**  
Museum for  
Architectural Drawing

### **Contact**

Tchoban Foundation. Museum für Architekturzeichnung, Rosenthaler Str.40/41,  
10178 Berlin [www.tchoban-foundation.de](http://www.tchoban-foundation.de), Tel.: +49 30 283 92 00, Fax +49 30 283  
92 0200, [mail@tchoban-foundation.de](mailto:mail@tchoban-foundation.de)

In the case of publication, we request a copy of the proof document