

SIR JOHN SOANE'S
MUSEUM

ANNUAL REVIEW 2021 / 22

TIME FOR RENEWAL

Sir John Soane's Museum

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

For Sir John Soane's Museum, 19 May 2021 will always be a red-letter day in our history, for that is the day when we reopened after the closures that cast a shadow over our activities since 18 March 2020. Behind this date were months of vigilance and preparation as we maintained the fabric and collections in readiness for reopening. Although the Soane remained before the public eye through Zoom offerings in the previous year, we were only physically open for 25 days with only 2,090 visitors. One would have to go back to the Victorian era for comparable statistics, but to see and hear the public in our rooms again has been tonic for the entire staff. Timed ticketing allowed us to scale up visitor numbers gradually, thereby reassuring the public and staff that safety and comfort were paramount.

Our year was inevitably one of reflection and renewal on many levels. Most notably, we witnessed a transfer of leadership from our outgoing Chair Guy Elliott to our new Chair James Sassoon. In addition, a new Strategic Plan came on stream in April 2021, balancing the maintenance of the buildings and collections with a renewed focus on our audiences, programming and community learning. The mortar holding these key priorities together is our digital platform. A notable example of this in execution can be seen in the addition of the Picture Room with its 118 items to *Explore Soane*, the digital flythrough of the Museum on our website. This virtual Picture Room went live in the spring of 2022 and is a remarkable achievement, enabling armchair visitors to study one of the gems of Sir John Soane's collection from anywhere on the planet.

Another focus of attention has been Soane's Drawing Office. The last major component of the Museum requiring restoration, it is the oldest surviving architectural office in this country and, as such, is of great importance. Thanks to the commitment of a select group of generous supporters, we began work on it during this financial year, and the structure will be cleaned and its walls repainted, with more than 200 plaster reliefs that adorn the walls being restored as well. The purpose behind this effort goes beyond a simple restoration; rather, it will offer a new purpose through the establishment of an artistic residency occurring each spring and autumn. In this way, a magical space will be put to use in a manner that recalls its function in John Soane's day.

Our reopening also involved the resumption of our very active series of exhibitions. The thread running through all of these shows was building a bridge between the historic collections of the Museum and modern responses to them. Sir John Soane emphatically did not want to leave behind a house-museum; instead, he saw his collections as forming the basis of an academy, where artists, architects and the public could build upon his legacy as well as enjoy it. The following pages attest to the continuing vitality of his heritage, and there is tangible proof of this in the handsome volumes that have been produced to accompany three of these exhibitions.

As every year, our varied programmes couldn't take place if it wasn't for the generosity of those who support them. We are particularly grateful for the understanding and continued loyalty of our donors through this period. Our relationship with the Soane Foundation in the US is as close and important to us as ever, and the government's extended support of museums and galleries through DCMS remains fundamental and should be commended. It surprises many how critical additional fundraising is in delivering the core of our work, not least the production of this Review. My thanks go to The Rothschild Foundation and Basil Postan for their kind support of this publication, and to all those whose friendship has enabled us to emerge from the pandemic with renewed purpose and direction.

Finally, I return to one of the year's most inspirational moments: the Soane Medal Lecture by Bangladeshi architect Marina Tabassum. In November, the lecture was given before an invited audience in the Library-Dining Room while being live streamed to thousands more across the globe. Our speaker delivered a powerful message about the importance of conservation and traditional building materials as part of the architect's armoury. Working largely in developing nations, Marina Tabassum reminded us that budgets are limited, 'but there is no limitation on innovation and creativity'. That is a lesson we try to put into practice every day at Sir John Soane's Museum.

Bruce Boucher
Deborah Loeb Brice Director



A NEW CHAPTER

The Museum's new Chair, James Sassoon, and his predecessor, Guy Elliott, discuss the challenges of the recent past, and why the future is bright for Soane's unique creation

By Hugh Pearman

Incoming Chair James Sassoon in the South Drawing Room. Photo: Matt Tidby



Reflections in the Model Room, a space created by Soane in 1834, and restored for visitors as part of *Opening up the Soane* in 2015. Photo: Gareth Gardner

It was a good time for a talk, and former Soane Chair of Trustees Guy Elliott and his successor James Sassoon made congenial companions. Following huge efforts to weather the pandemic, Sir John Soane's Museum has emerged with no loss of staff, and visitor numbers are now rising again. Pre-pandemic, the necessary visitor ceiling of no more than 85 visitors at a time in this fragile building was often reached: now, says Sassoon, some weekends it is getting back to that level again.

So, everything back to normal? Not quite, says Elliott. 'In pre-pandemic days, roughly half of our visitors would be from other countries. I don't think that's quite the case again yet.' But if the demographic has shifted somewhat, the interest is certainly there. This comes down to the unique nature of the place as a home and Museum created by one person and maintained as such by Act of Parliament ever since: 185 years so far.

'I've never been challenged when I say that there is no greater monument to the life, the work and the collections of a single creative individual,' says Sassoon, pondering a list of places with related aims: London's Leighton House, architect Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin studio in Wisconsin, US President and architect Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, sculptor Canova's house and studio in Italy. All wonderful but nothing, he contends, that can compare with the breadth offered by Soane's collections of paintings, sculptures and drawings.

Sassoon joins the Soane following a distinguished career in international finance, serving as Managing Director of S. G. Warburg (later UBS Warburg) and Executive Director of Jardine Matheson Holdings. Sassoon then entered the House of Lords in 2010, advising HM Treasury on financial regulation and becoming the Government's frontbench Treasury spokesperson. He has also served as a trustee of The British Museum.

He took over as Chair in February, and his task, as he puts it, is to continue to make this unique place relevant and exciting in the 21st century. An enormous amount happened on Elliott's watch as Chair, in particular the conclusion of the three-phase *Opening up the Soane* project (2011-16), which physically restored and expanded the Museum within the three adjoining Soane houses on Lincoln's Inn Fields. That allowed the administration of the Museum to move next door, improved access, provided an educational space



Outgoing Chair Guy Elliott (right) in January 2022. Photo: Joshua Atkins



The Architecture Drawing Prize has been hosted annually at the Soane since 2017

and shop for the first time and new temporary exhibition galleries on the first floor. Sir John Soane's original private rooms were restored as part of this process and routes around the Museum improved. In all, roughly a third more space for visitors resulted, and much better working conditions for staff and volunteers.

But at the same time, working with the Director and staff, Elliott steered the Museum to become a more outward-facing organisation, both in its exhibitions – which often feature responses by today's architects, designers and artists to the Soanean legacy, such as this summer's exhibition *The Portal Galleries* by architects Space Popular, complete with virtual reality headsets – and in initiatives such as the digitisation of the collection and virtual tours of parts of the Museum, something that particularly paid off when the Museum doors closed during the pandemic.

Prior to that, a key year was 2017, which saw the first annual Architecture Drawing Prize – a natural fit given Soane's championing of drawing skills – entered by architects of all stylistic persuasions. That same year the Soane Medal for contemporary architects, educators and critics launched, with lectures given by the winners. 'The Medal was intended to stimulate debate and discussion about architecture,' says Elliott, 'It was very much Sir David Chipperfield's enthusiasm as an architect trustee that brought it about. The lectures have been high-quality and authoritative, by some very great names. I've been impressed by the sizes of the audiences, and also by how young they are. It's something that I'm very pleased we do.'

Thus far the Medal has been awarded to Spanish architect Rafael Moneo, British-American architect and theorist Denise Scott Brown, critic-educator Kenneth Frampton and most recently Bangladeshi architect and environmentalist Marina Tabassum.

'We can deliver these things in multiple ways now, which clearly have much more impact,' adds Sassoon. 'As the new person here, I find it fascinating how the response to Soane is so alive and covers the entire architectural world.'

For Elliott, *Opening up the Soane* continues with the ongoing restoration of the Drawing Office – that elevated, somewhat cramped realm where Soane's students and assistants used to sit and which can only be seen by relatively few visitors. That naturally leads on to another initiative now underway under Sassoon's chairmanship: the launch of an artist-in-residence programme in 2023, to be based in the Drawing Office itself.

Both men acknowledge that, as with all publicly funded free museums at a time of inflation and cutbacks, times will be tough and private donors increasingly important. But the Soane has an advantage, which is its particular character. 'I hear the word "love" when you ask people what they think of the place,' concludes Elliott. 'There is of course a professional element for some people, which makes this very special, but most visitors are not architects, not students even. They find something here – the light, the magic, the extraordinary quality and range of the collections. People can really engage with it.'



AN IDEA OF PROGRESS

Pablo Bronstein explains why Sir John Soane's Museum
was the perfect setting for his blockbuster exhibition
that reimagined hell as a Baroque temple to excess

By Peter Smisek

Photographs by Gareth Gardner

Sir John Soane's Museum's major autumn 2021 exhibition, staged as UK pandemic restrictions eased in earnest, opened to a world that felt newly precarious – and newly alive to crisis, including the deepening climate emergency and rising global inequality. *Pablo Bronstein: Hell in Its Heyday*, on show from 6 October 2021 to 3 January 2022, featured 22 large-scale watercolour drawings and a film by the London-based Argentinian artist, created specially for the Museum. The film depicted exuberant scenes of production and consumption; eclectic, beaux-arts encrustations that dripped with a delicious decadence. Seeming to highlight the threats posed by our very systems of production and consumption, the exhibition was a great success. As Oliver Wainwright asked in *The Guardian*, 'Who knew hell would be so much fun?'

While something of a post-pandemic blockbuster, the show had been planned long before the events of 2020; as far back as 2017, by then-curator Owen Hopkins. Bronstein had visited the Museum numerous times as a student. 'The Soane was always on my mind in one way or another,' says the artist, whose work is chiefly concerned with architecture, in particular reimaginings of its Baroque history, in drawings and sometimes performances that blur the line between documentary and fantasy. 'I didn't want [the exhibition] to be an homage to Soane – that felt slightly less relevant to me in the context of the pandemic,' he says, but he was drawn instead to 'this gaze that shifted from my kind of architectural history to wider social issues'.

There are clear affinities between the Regency architect Soane and the contemporary artist: a penchant for magpie eclecticism, the fact that 'the spaces of the Museum and Bronstein's vision of hell are characterised by theatricality, dense configurations of intriguing objects and enticing spaces,' says Louise Stewart, Head of Exhibitions at the Museum.

Bronstein's metre-tall watercolour paintings showed few traces of reverence for any of Soane's architectural subjects, however, rather there were echoes of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's sublime capricci, and particularly the architectural fantasies of Joseph Michael Gandy, Soane's collaborator and draughtsman. But while Piranesi's *Imaginary Dungeons* are stark and monochrome, and even Gandy's drawing for *Architectural Idea of the Hall of Pandemonium from Milton's Paradise Lost* displays an ornate and polychromic classical cool, Bronstein's work is seduction itself, in saturated colours and images of indulgent excess.

Early on, Bronstein and Stewart decided to keep the exhibition confined to two separate rooms, allowing visitors to continue to enjoy the house as Soane intended – a place of pilgrimage for many. Bronstein felt strongly that the historic rooms and his art should each have their own 'breathing room'. Using a more confined exhibition space also produced what Bronstein calls a kind of 'condensation', where the new works took a prime position, and existed quite separately from the rest of the house and collection. 'Once the level of detail and scale of the finished works became apparent, we decided that anything else would be a distraction,' says Stewart. 'Bronstein's vision of hell was so detailed and rich, we felt it was best to focus on those works.'

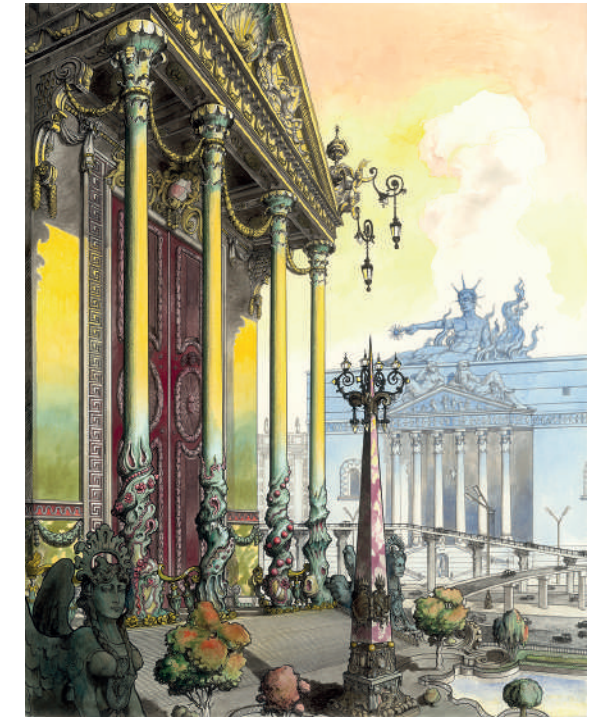
This richness, and the scale of the project – the usually modest Bronstein has called it 'the most ambitious cycle of watercolours that has been made and shown publicly in years' – was partially thanks to the exhibition's long gestation period, given its delay for a year by the pandemic.

The monumental constructions depicted in *Hell in Its Heyday* – be they mines, container ships, banks, casinos, resorts, flyovers or botanic gardens – offer a vision of unfettered consumption that, it is suggested, will ultimately begin to feast on itself. One work, *The High Altar*, inspired by





Pablo Bronstein,
Cinema, 2020-21



Pablo Bronstein, *Flight* (above left) and *Central Bank and Administrative Buildings* (above right), both 2020-21

altarpiece triptychs, reveals the ultimate source of this excess. In its centre is a large Rococo-inspired cross, seemingly inlaid with a grid representing the unrelenting logic of a spreadsheet or perhaps a kind of disembodied Cartesian rationalism feeding energy and information networks.

There are playful moments and in-jokes, too. *Pâtisseries and Confections* – a tableau of vertiginous treats set against a backdrop of high-spec skyscrapers – chimes with Stewart's doctoral research into sugar banquets in early modern England. But it can also be read as a comment on the Marie Antoinette-like characters that most likely reside in the ornate skyscrapers of the modern city.

The grand watercolours were accompanied by *Boutique Fantastique*, a 30-minute film shot in Bronstein's own home. He reimagines the domestic space as an antique shop, whose proprietor and two assistants attempt to sell

various historic objects while performing 17th-century inspired choreography. Bronstein has used Baroque dance to great effect before, including in *Historical Dances in an Antique Setting* at Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries in 2016. This earlier performance was a tongue-in-cheek mixture of styles, gently poking fun at the bombastic but rather muddled 19th-century eclecticism of the gallery, but the critique presented in the new work is more acute and unsettling, even if it possesses a more amateurish quality. Here, according to the Museum's description, 'in Hell, shopping is the ultimate cultural experience', a claim that echoes the 2001 pronouncement by the architect and postmodern cultural critic Rem Koolhaas that 'shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity'.

'I was looking towards an idea of progress at a particular moment in time between, say, the birth of railways and the 1973 oil crisis,' said Bronstein.





The *Pâtisseries and Confections* apron was created for the Soane Shop for *Hell in its Heyday*. Photo: Nathan Emery

But rather than depicting this period as a cycle of hope and eventual degradation, like *The Course of Empire* series by Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole illustrating the rise and fall of a civilisation, Bronstein ultimately captures the period as a single era, in which there is 'a surety that progress is everything and that there are limitless resources'. The implication here is that we are all complicit. As Bronstein put it: 'We are the means of our own destruction and the cause of it.'

Despite opening in a jittery, post-Covid context, the exhibition was almost fully booked for its entire run, and critics were enamoured. This support translated into commercial success elsewhere in the Museum. Eileen Gillen, the Museum's Buying and Retail Manager, explains '[Bronstein] was very supportive of any products we wanted to produce, as long as he was given approval of the artwork first,' she says. This ranged from limited edition prints of some of the watercolours – the edition of *The National Bank* sold out – alongside bestselling aprons and tea towels featuring *Pâtisseries and Confections*.

While there may be a subtle irony in producing gift-shop items bearing images that hint at consumerism as one of society's flaws, these revenue streams are a crucial component of contemporary Museum funding. The items' popularity perhaps underscores what ultimately made the show so compelling: its absence of overt moralising or finger-pointing. As Bronstein himself said, we're all complicit. But perhaps a timely reminder of just how far we've gone – after the prolonged pandemic stasis – is exactly what we needed.



Department Store
Gilt, watercolour and pencil on paper
2020-21

A haven in the city of London, where the overpriced commodities of the city are sold in a display of gold and silver, where the rich and the poor meet in a place of shared desire. The store is a place of shared desire, where the rich and the poor meet in a place of shared desire. The store is a place of shared desire, where the rich and the poor meet in a place of shared desire.



SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF PLACE

Architect and 2021 Soane Medal Laureate Marina Tabassum speaks to curator and lecturer Shumi Bose about humanitarian projects, finding her architectural vocabulary and creating something magical

2021 Soane Medal Laureate
Marina Tabassum at the Museum.
Photo: Barry Macdonald

Born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Marina Tabassum co-founded architecture studio Urbana in 1995, shortly after graduating. While Tabassum made her name with spectacular buildings such as Dhaka’s subterranean Museum of Independence, since establishing Marina Tabassum Architects in 2005, she has developed a reputation for innovative architectural responses to the climate crisis, and the possibilities for positive social impact.

Projects include the ‘sun-dappled’ Bait Ur Rouf Mosque in Dhaka, which won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2016, and temporary bamboo food distribution centres for Rohingya refugee camps. Accessible to rural communities, Tabassum also chose bamboo for the Khudi Bari – elevated modular homes – designed for Bangladeshis displaced by flooding.

In 2021, Tabassum was awarded the Soane Medal. Tabassum’s humanistic approach is, in her words, ‘the architecture of relevance’. Shumi Bose delves into what motivates the architect.

Shumi Bose: We’ve been talking for some months, since you were awarded the 2021 Soane Medal, and it’s been a pleasure to work with you on the Soane’s Developing Excellence workshops for architects and architecture students. Can you give me a snapshot of your life at the moment?

Marina Tabassum: I am at a point where I’ve gathered experience in terms of practice and life... A bit of wisdom. There’s a lot of clarity in what I want to do and how; anxieties I had in my earlier years have dissipated. Ten years ago I probably wouldn’t have imagined the work that we’re doing now – in the villages, doing these tiny houses – and I don’t know how it would have been perceived, either.

The times we’re in, the context and global perspectives all seem aligned in a way that is

quite exciting, because it gives me the platform to pursue my work. The way I see practice, it’s not just about making buildings; it’s also the research, the climatic concerns, the humanitarian issues, and how you can bring all these things together.

To step back, what kind of challenges were you dealing with 20 years ago?

In 2000, Urbana and I were fairly new in practice. I was aged 27–28 and we got this prominent project: Dhaka’s Museum of Independence. The first major challenge is convincing people that you are able to handle a project like that. It was quite difficult to work with government agencies; the public works department didn’t take us seriously. Every design idea that we suggested, they thought ‘these are a bunch of crazy kids’. That project really matured us. When you’re designing a museum, which we projected will last 100 years or more, and will stand for our entire nation, you have to immediately get serious.

I imagine that’s a moment where, naively or not, you can decide on certain principles: tell yourself, ‘OK, I’m going to do things my way’.

Absolutely. When I set up my own office, I didn’t want it to become overly commercial: it would be a very studio-orientated practice, in the sense of there being a lot of material and design research. I also decided to stay within a size that is manageable in terms of design, finance, and sustainability. This has always been a question I’m faced with: why not go bigger? With me being the principal architect, everything is driven by my own principles and ideology. Then there’s the constant practice of seeking out work that



Construction of the Panigram Resort in Jessore, Bangladesh, an eco-resort designed by Tabassum and made from indigenous materials with local labour to promote sustainable tourism. Photo: Marina Tabassum Architects



Interior of the prayer hall at the Bait Ur Rouf Mosque in Dhaka, Bangladesh, with openings in the roof to create patterns of light on the floor. Photo: Sandro Di Carlo Darsa



Panigram Resort in Jessore. Photo: Marina Tabassum Architects

challenges me. I have a certain ideology about what architecture should be. That requires me to be very selective about work.

How would you describe your ideology?

I've always cared about the idea of an architectural vocabulary. A building in a certain location has to speak the language of that place. I'm always trying to look for the basic ingredients of that location, in terms of its geography, climate, locally available materials, the history and culture of the place. I've also always been fascinated by geometry, and most of my projects are very much based on it. I wouldn't say that's an ideology, rather something that is inherent to the way I think. I've also always tried to pursue economy.

That consideration of economy and quality is what sets you up so well to take on humanitarian projects. Obviously architectural responses cannot be a race to the bottom.

Budgets are always limited, but there is no limitation on innovation and creativity. Architecturally it is possible to take a small budget and turn it into something magical.

What has the experience of winning the Soane Medal meant for you and for the practice?

Being recognised is always nice. The Soane Medal has been awarded to people who, for me, are legends. So when I received it, it was humbling. It has brought new interest to the things that we're trying to address. And in discussing and explaining all that, it does make you into a sort of preacher! But that's not a bad thing. There's a lot of need for hope at moments when everything is crumbling.

Since this wave of recognition and exposure, what kind of preconceptions have you found coming towards you, or towards Bangladesh?

At a talk in Norway I noticed that most people didn't know what a girl from Dhaka was doing there and the work I might be doing. When I presented, there was an overwhelming response and sense of excitement. First of all, because I speak in English, and eloquently. And I was presenting projects in tune with contemporary vocabulary; talking about things that are relevant to the moment. There has been an overwhelming warmth; it might have been a delight of the unexpected, so to speak.

I've encountered a sense that your practice is taking off, and you'll therefore be building everywhere. That's not your intention, is it?

If I get a good project, I wouldn't say no, but it has to really excite me. At the same time, there is a lot to do here in Bangladesh. I don't even work within the city of Dhaka so much, mostly in the periphery or even in the countryside, which is almost uncharted territory in architectural terms. Nobody – even academics – ventures too far outside of the urban environment. I have enough to do here.

So teacher to teacher, what do you notice among your students lately?

The younger generation are often far more interested in the humanitarian projects than the architecture. It makes sense: they're aware of the situation we're in, in terms of climate, the financial world and the disparity in human conditions. We're dealing with an informed generation. We were quite naive in our youth, we didn't have access to as much information.



A Khudi Bari installed in the Architecture Room of the Summer Exhibition 2022 at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 21 June–21 August 2022. Photo: Royal Academy of Arts, London/David Parry



A completed Khudi Bari in Bangladesh.
Photo: Asif Salman

There is a sense that the role of the architect is blurring at the edges and dissolving into other things. One thing I find admirable in your career is the absence of mission creep. You've held humanitarian and social concerns within the role of being an architect.

I know architecture. I'd like to make the best contribution I can with what I know, rather than trying to be something else. I've never considered myself an activist. It's always been about trying to make the best of the knowledge I have and giving as much as possible to people who would benefit from it.

I can see a kinship with Soane in your work, (differences of circumstance aside).

I've known Sir John Soane's work since studying to be an architect. I visited the

Museum before too – but in a way, after the award, it's been a rediscovery! You look much deeper into it. I find that I am able to relate to the buildings as an architect. I am more able to understand his mind and how the spaces are crafted: the fact that he considers light as a material, which I have always thought. Lots of things resonated with me in his approach.

Soane may not have considered architecture's humanitarian role in the same way, but leaving his home for future generations might share your generosity of spirit. There is a contrast in terms of privilege: Soane as a British architect during the height of the British presence in India, and the preconception that life must be hard as a female architect in an Islamic country.

I must say that I have really never had to deal with a lot of difficult situations; I come from



Tabassum giving the 2021 Soane Medal Lecture.
Photo: Barry Macdonald

a highly educated family, which has had access to, and understands the value of, education. My parents were very focused and my mother always pushed us towards high achievement. I am living my mother's dream, in a way.

Societally Bangladesh is not perfect, but there have been several women in power in recent decades. You gave a beautiful response on this to a Developing Excellence workshop attendee, about your sense of being a professional.

The question was about being in the profession as a woman, which I get quite

often. I've always seen myself as a professional – it was never about [staking a claim for] gender. In my office, I address every member of my team as professionals, and I expect them to perform as such. Of course, there might be issues around sending somebody to a site – on safety and what you might call cultural or security concerns – but not in terms of the work.

When it comes to my own work, even in my school days, I saw my classmates – who were boys – as equal competitors. I've never seen them as having any extra advantage. I don't think I've ever shied away from any crazy site or place to seek out materials. But when I became an architect, I think the most important part – whatever your gender – is to build the right kind of attitude, where people take you seriously. Not only to know your job well enough, but to get that across to people. That's something that school will never teach you.

Could you share some of the things that you're excited about at the moment?

Every project has its own challenges. Working with the UN [on the Rohingya refugee encampments, at Cox's Bazaar] was tough, but not in terms of the architectural product. Problems arose due to the nature of the humanitarian crisis, on which the government has a certain stance. It becomes a political issue. But that was also enjoyable in a way, to know that we can do something in a complex situation. That's exciting. And once you can get over that challenge and find ways to do things, the work at the end becomes much more rewarding: when you see people using your buildings, not as a luxury, but very much as a necessity.

BEYOND THE SOANE MEDAL LECTURE

Soane Medallist Marina Tabassum worked with the Museum's learning team to deliver events and activities for a range of audiences throughout the year

Younger people

The Soane New Architects Club runs weekly sessions for 11–14-year-olds between October and July, where young teens can explore architecture and the built environment. Week by week, they develop their knowledge of history, art and architecture, as well as honing their design skills. In November, the group wrote questions for Tabassum about design topics that fascinate them; her answers were filmed and screened in December.

Inspired by Tabassum's work, a half-term workshop in February 2021 presented 11–14-year-olds with an architectural brief on the theme of sustainability and co-design with communities. Participants worked in teams to create ideas for a London cultural site and created models of their final ideas.

Tabassum also attended Building Explorers, an after school club for 7–10-year-olds to give a talk about her work around the world.

Soane Youth Panel

This group, ranging in age from 15 to 24, helps the Museum to shape the programming it offers to young people, and receives training and skills development. The Soane Youth Panel completed a six-week social media project for the Soane Medal, creating Instagram Stories, posts and blog posts reacting to Marina's work, in addition to assisting with the press and marketing campaign for the Medal announcement.

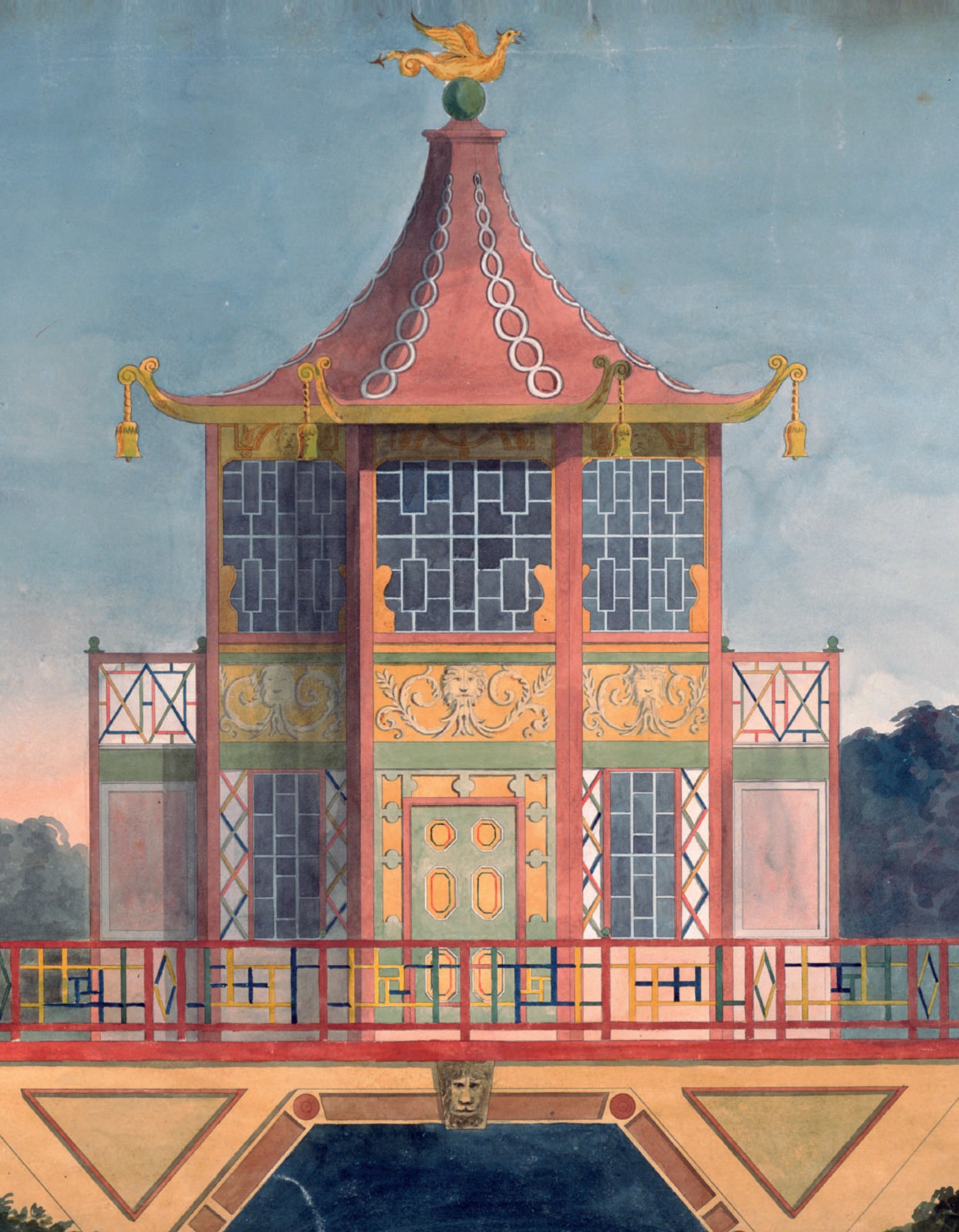
The panel's Instagram Stories featuring zoomed-in images of Marina's work accompanied by quotes from her lecture were viewed more than 1,000 times and were the Soane's most popular Stories in six months.

Tabassum also attended one of the Youth Panel's regular meetings in November 2021, where she took part in a wide-ranging discussion inspired by her lecture.

Professional workshops

Aimed at architecture students and professionals in the field, the Soane's Developing Excellence workshops in spring 2022 – led by Tabassum in conjunction with Shumi Bose – focused on themes of Light and Worship, and Climate and Community, which resonate in her own practice.

Activities in the workshops included photography, sketching, critical discussions and reflection, material research and narrative visualisation, and participants engaged with the rich environment of Sir John Soane's Museum as a site of exploration. The Light and Worship session featured a special presentation by Tabassum live from Bangladesh, discussing the Bait Ur Rouf mosque project, while the Climate and Community class offered a chance for participants to propose sites for future interventions where architecture could address the critical climate issues faced by communities.

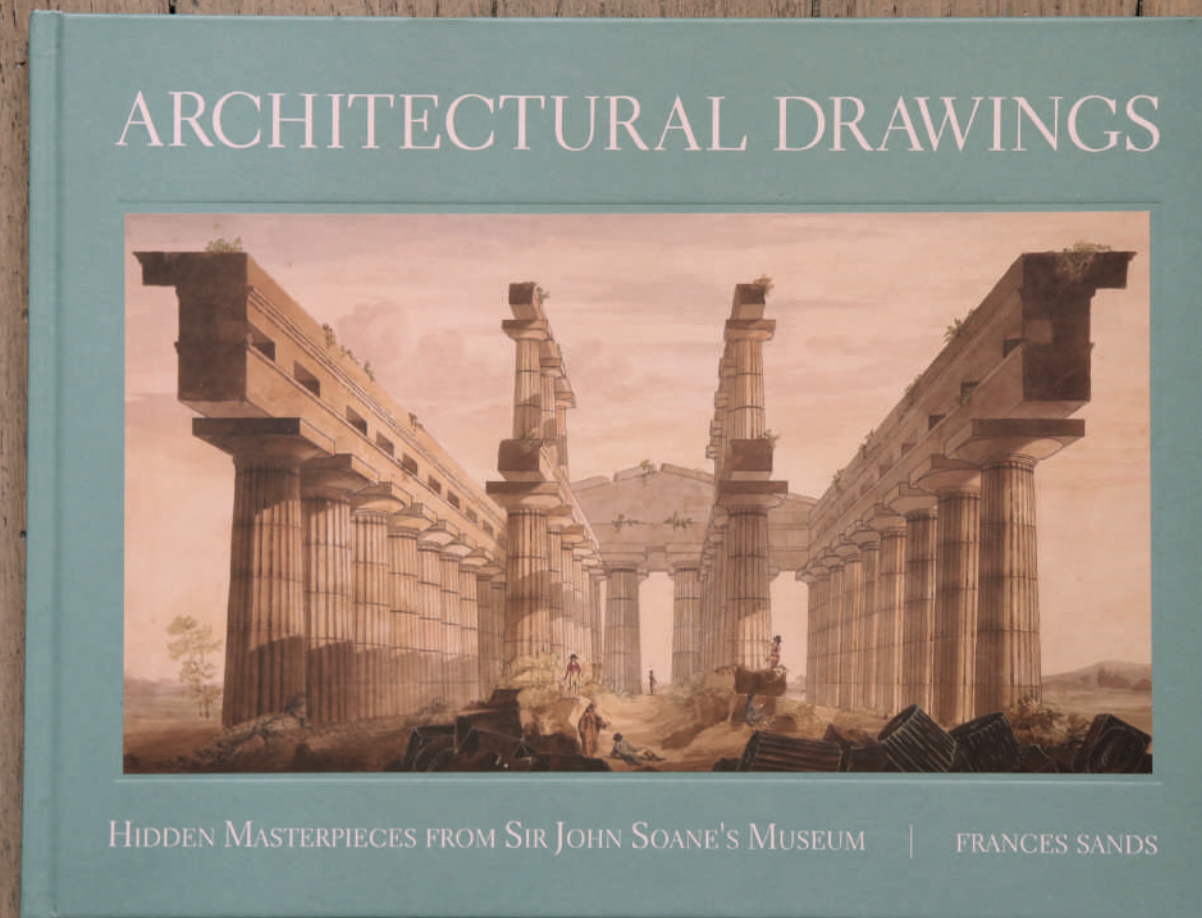


GREAT ON PAPER

The Soane has inspired a number of beautiful and enlightening books this year, finding new ways to view the architectural past, and to expand upon its programming

By Keith Miller

Sir William Chambers, *Kew Gardens House of Confucius*, taken from Frances Sands, *Architectural Drawings: Hidden Masterpieces from Sir John Soane's Museum* (2021)



Frances Sands, *Architectural Drawings: Hidden Masterpieces from Sir John Soane's Museum* (2021). Photo: Nathan Emery

How does a Museum – celebrated across two continents as one of the fullest expressions of antiquarianism there is – maintain its relevance in a changing and seemingly ever-accelerating world? And how can a collection and a building created by one extraordinary, contradictory, deeply idiosyncratic man be made interesting to as many people as possible, in as many ways as possible?

Some of these contradictions, along with ample evidence that Sir John Soane himself didn't see them as especially contradictory, can be seen in a large, sumptuous volume of architectural drawings selected by Sir John

Soane's Museum's Curator of Drawings Dr Frances Sands, and published by Batsford in 2021. Here we see drawings acquired by Soane on the hoof in Italy, as an impecunious Grand Tourist, and others bought later, from the estate of his former teacher George Dance the Younger, the niece of the Adam brothers and elsewhere; drawings produced in Soane's office; large, lucid sheets used to illustrate his Royal Academy lectures; and several of J M Gandy's extraordinary fantasias on projects variously built, unbuilt or, in the case of the Bank of England, ravaged by imaginary centuries.

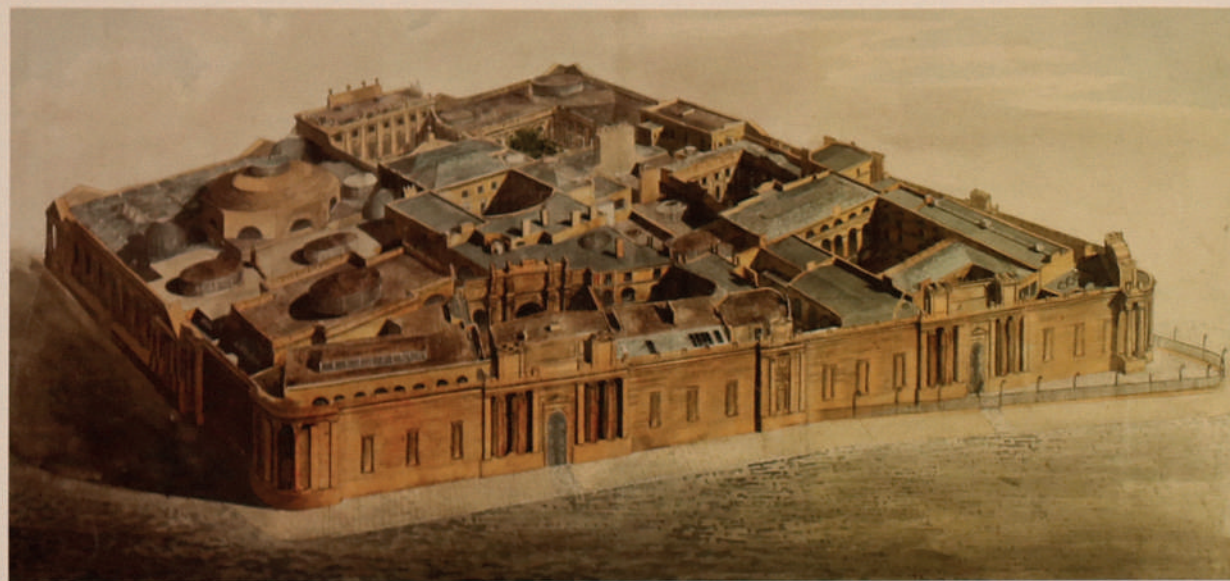
Below: Alternative drawing for the ceiling of a dressing room at Harewood House, Yorkshire, 1767, taken from Frances Sands, *Architectural Drawings: Hidden Masterpieces from Sir John Soane's Museum* (2021)

The book contains its share of surprises – the exhibition it is tied to was *Hidden Masterpieces* (9 March–5 June 2022), though of course almost all drawings are too unwieldy, fragile or both to be on permanent display – including a lovely miniature of Nur Jahan Begum, emperor Jahangir's wife from 1608-27, at her toilet. It is also unexpectedly various. As well as the usual suspects: Greek and Roman antiquity and a number of castles, we have 16th-century manuscripts, effervescent Piranesi grotesques in ink and red chalk and, from the RA lectures, three 'comparative' illustrations, including

a pair in which St Peter's in the Vatican looms, somewhat menacingly, over a stack of less roomy domed structures including St Paul's, the Radcliffe Camera in Oxford and Soane's own Rotunda at the Bank of England. We see how expressive working drawings can be in a soft pencil sketch by Soane's brilliant pupil George Basevi, and fascinating alternative iterations of what Britons think of as the Adam style in work by Charles-Louis Clérissieu and Charles Cameron.

Antiquarian in inspiration but thoroughly contemporary in outlook is another book, a joint



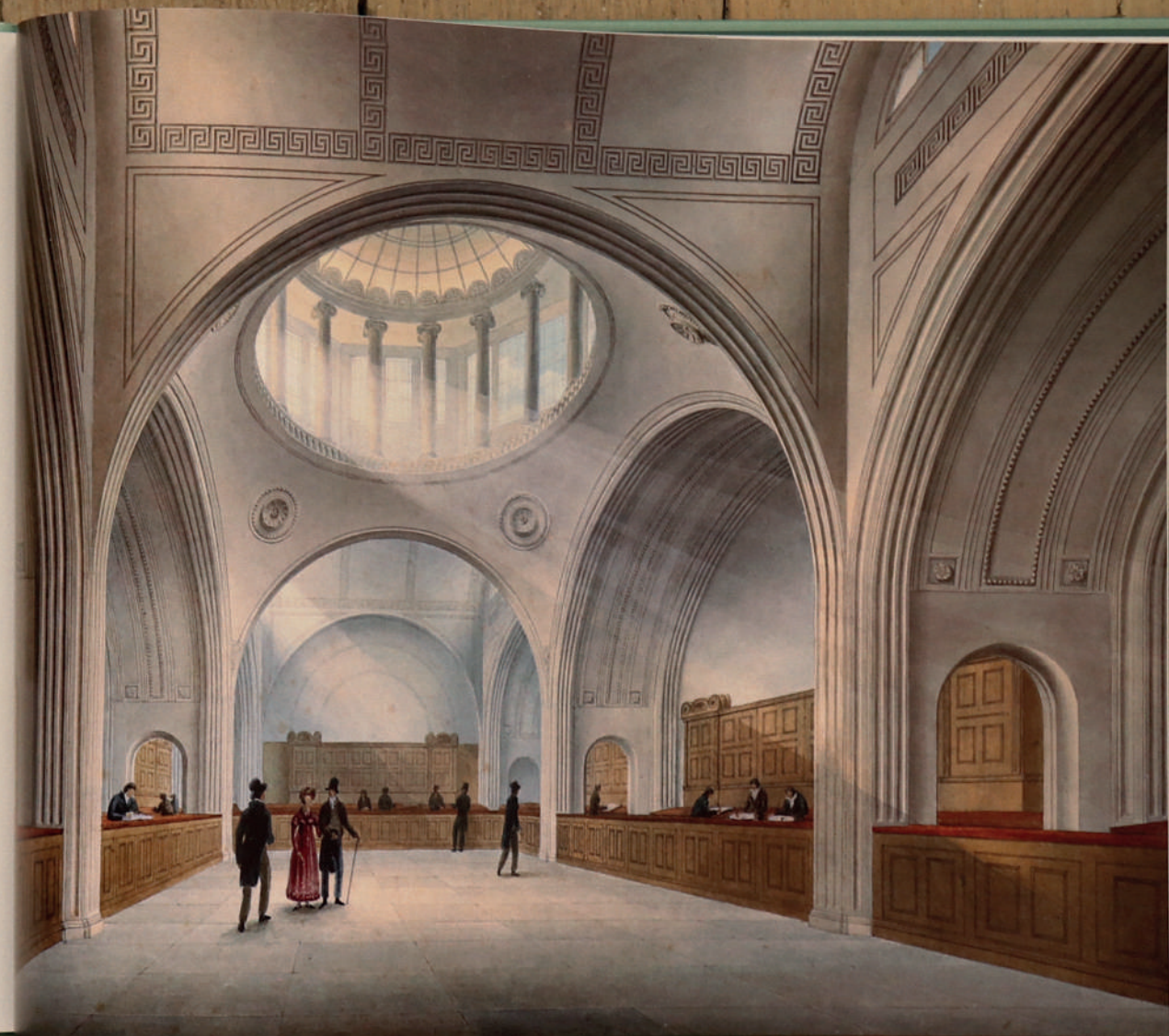


↑ Office of Sir John Soane, bird's-eye view of the Bank of England as it was 1810, 9 July 1810, SM 1/8/12. Photograph: Hugh Kelly.

→ Office of Sir John Soane, view of the interior of the South-east Transfer Office at the Bank of England, London, 1820-1, SM 11/4/2. Photograph: Jeremy Butler.

Soane's work at the Bank of England spanned the years 1788-1833 and comprised a number of different building campaigns. The South-east Transfer Office was built in 1817-23 to the south-east of Soane's Rotunda. Like the Rotunda, this space illustrates perfectly the way in which the offices and banking halls were densely packed into a single 'city block', and so it was necessary for Soane to fenestrate and light the spaces from above. This presentation

drawing often a calm and business-like view of the interior of the South-east Transfer Office, proffering Soane's interior decorative design to the Bank Commissioners for approval at around the time that the mighty fabric of the space was nearing completion. Soane's elegant and attenuated mouldings are seen here to best effect, largely thanks to the cool colour scheme of the Bank interior and the skilful depiction of sunlight streaming through the central lantern. Staffage is added in order to offer some perception of scale and thereby increase the viewer's sensation of awe at Soane's architecture.

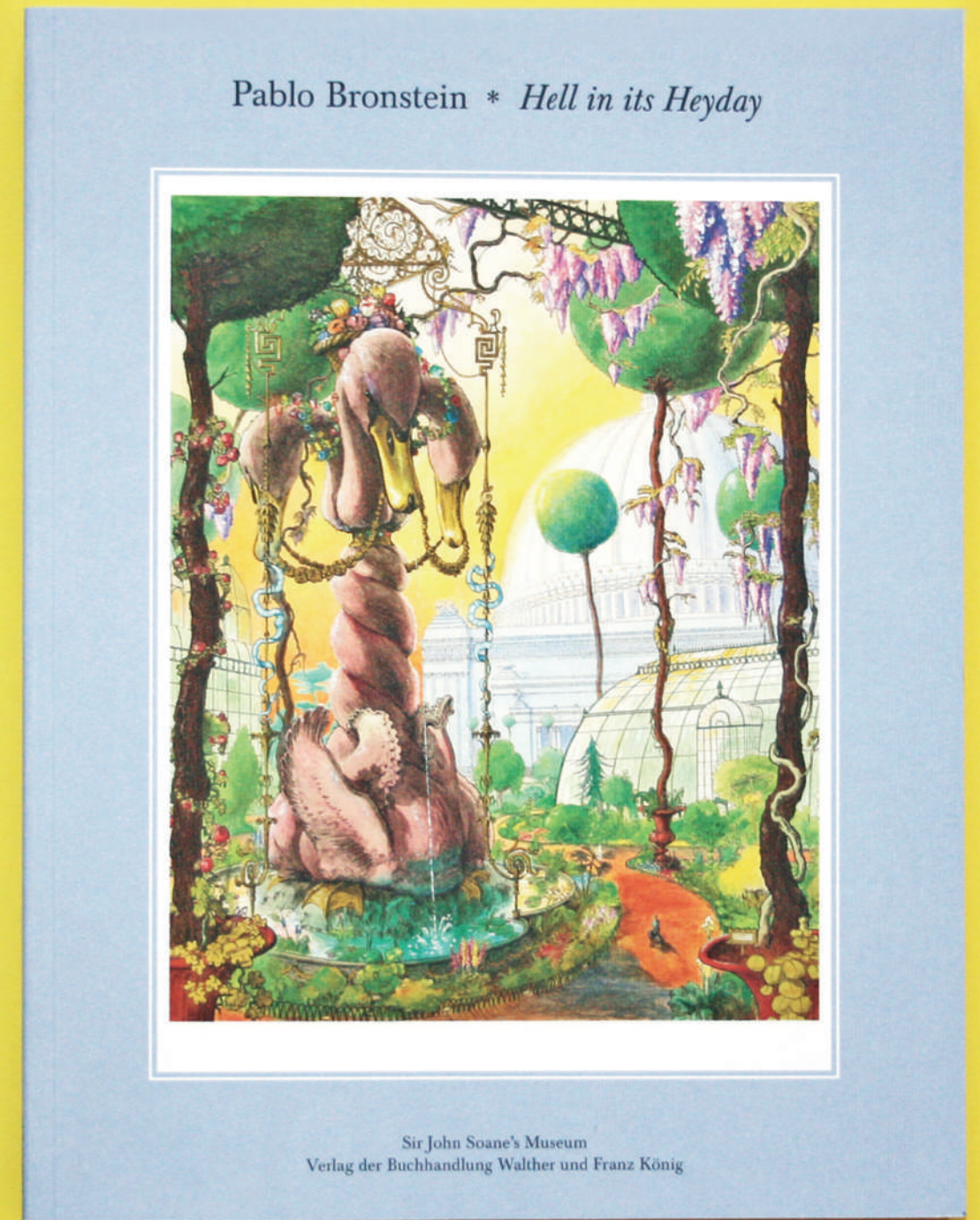
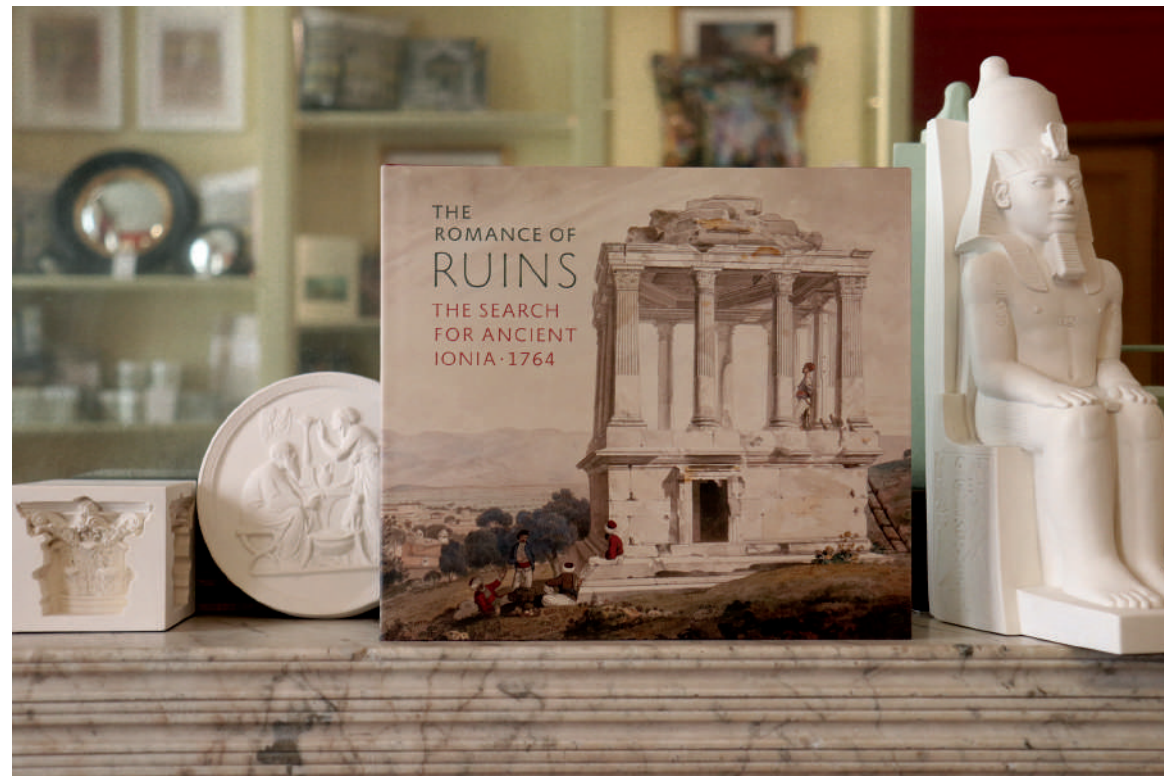


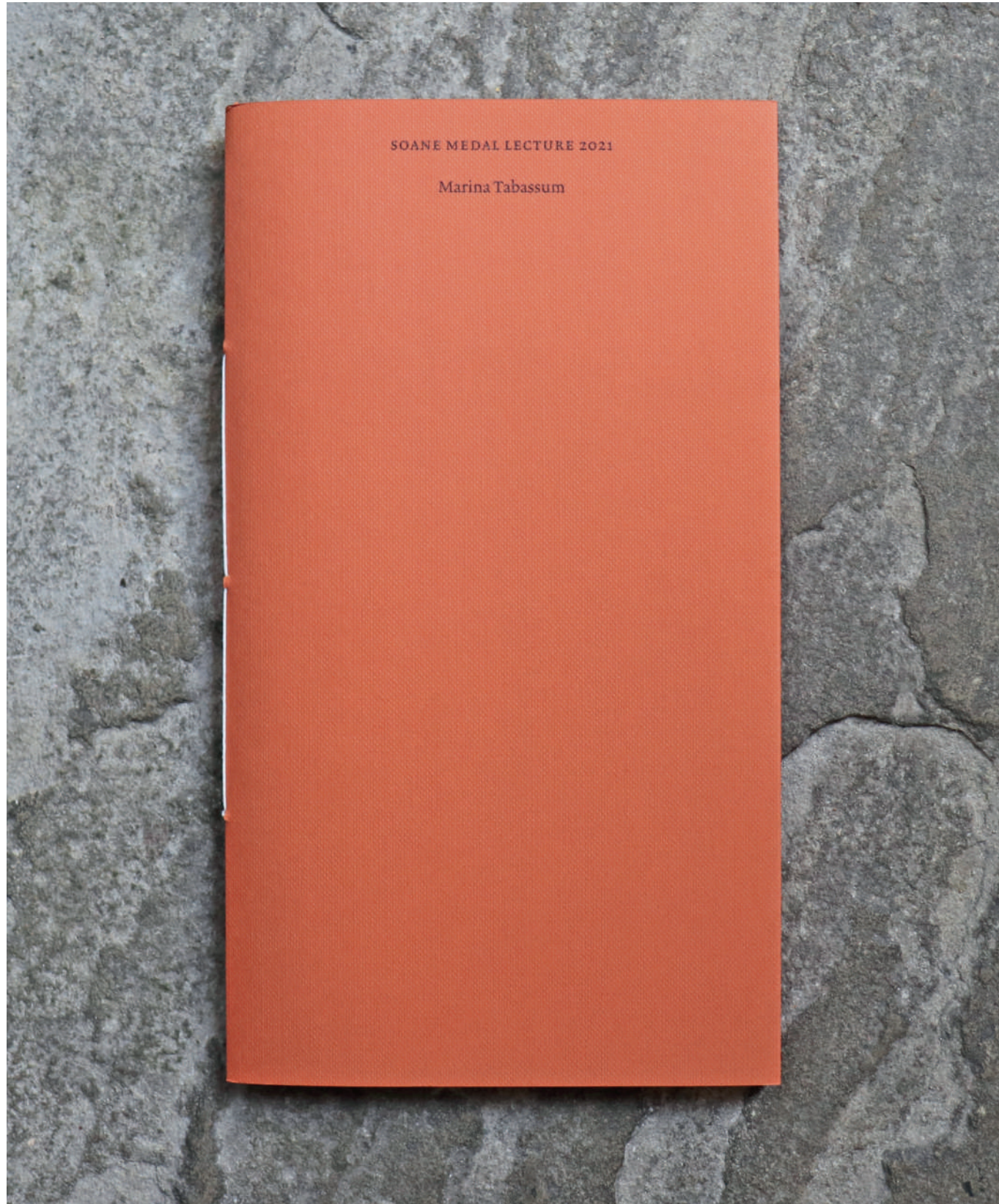
venture with the British Museum, *The Romance of Ruins: The Search for Ancient Ionia, 1764*, edited by Soane curator Louise Stewart and the late Ian Jenkins of the British Museum, to whom there is a touching dedication in the Director's introduction, and a catalogue by Celeste Farge. This expands on a successful but necessarily small exhibition held at the Soane from 19 May–5 September 2021. In 1764, the artist William Pars joined Nicholas Revett on an expedition, led by Richard Chandler and funded by the Society of Dilettanti, to what is now western Turkey, returning to Greece the following year.

The essays in the catalogue enlarge our knowledge of the Grand Tour, shedding new light on the dispute between 'Greek' and 'Roman' factions among 18th-century cognoscenti,

highlighting the compositional challenges faced by Pars as he tried to show facets of Greek monuments different to those captured by Revett on his earlier expedition with James Stuart. An essay by Tuğba Tanyeri Erdemir also examines the travellers' attitudes to the Turks, Greeks, Armenians and others they met along the way from a somewhat wider perspective than the traditional Eurocentric one.

Arguably the most spectacular new work to be seen at the Soane since the opening of its exhibition spaces was *Pablo Bronstein: Hell in Its Heyday*, a collection of large, lurid capricci in ink, wash and gouache of an imaginary society in which hyper-accelerated growth intertwines with baroque decadence and inexorable decline. In a foreword to the accompanying book, published





Marina Tabassum's 2021 Soane Medal Lecture. Photo: Nathan Emery

by Koenig Books, London and Sir John Soane's Museum, Bronstein locates the inspiration for the project in the Argentina of the early 20th century; but the pictures are steeped in various phases of the West's long dance-off between civilisation and barbarism, from Paestum Doric to music-hall Rococo, to the mid-century poolscape of a mobbed-up Miami.

I have tried to argue elsewhere that one of the ways in which Bronstein manages to work with historical architectural and decorative traditions without the results descending into pastiche or homage is by means of a drawing technique that looks back not to Old Masters virtuosity but the crisp, unsentimental style of working designers and craftsmen. This creates an interesting parallel with the *Hidden Masterpieces* show and book, in which drawings made for practical purposes achieve unmistakably 'artistic' effects. There is also a certain effect of deadpan humour in extreme imagery being rendered in such a style. The book has been largely written by Bronstein, along with a short essay by curator Louise Stewart. As with everything else produced in association with the Soane, it has passed via the Museum's Publications Committee, which meets quarterly to assess the desirability and viability of proposed books, whether they relate to upcoming exhibitions or some other aspect of the Museum's busy ongoing intellectual life.

A smaller and more specialised publication produced annually by the Museum since 2017 – with a pandemic-induced hiatus in 2020 – is the Soane Medal Lecture. This is given each year by the recipient of the Soane Medal for Architecture. The 2021 winner Marina Tabassum has mostly built in her homeland, the politically and ecologically fragile nation of Bangladesh. Describing herself as a 'work in progress' she recounts her career path against the backdrop of an evolving and not entirely uncritical

relationship with Louis Kahn's Dhaka parliament building, a powerful emblem of Bangladesh's nascent nationhood but an ambivalent symbol of its identity – designed by an Estonian-American for a nation born out of conflict and occupying only part of the territory of historic Bengal. As Kahn did, Tabassum asks her materials what they 'want'; but one could say she considers the 'essential' needs of her clients rather more extensively than he did – be they Rohingya Muslims driven out of Burma by racist violence, Sylhetis who need to be able to dismantle and move their homes when the delta floods or worshippers for whom a mosque must be not simply monumental – with a sense of mass pierced by light and a rich textural play that's more than a match for Kahn's work in Dhaka, Ahmedabad or Exeter, New Hampshire, but also homely, practical and, in an ever-more-extreme climate, a place of shelter and even survival.

These publications may all speak primarily to one or another of the Soane's several different constituencies – practising architects and architectural historians; antiquarians and classicists; contemporary art lovers and devotees of the Museum as work of art – but they tend to highlight connections between them as they go. Just as the Museum itself manages to corral together a collection that might on the face of it be thought remarkably and even perversely heterogeneous, and display it in a way that seems not only eloquent but also harmonious, and somehow inevitable, so the 2021 publications list has coherence in diversity: all four titles add to our understanding and enjoyment of this exceptional place, and further its work beyond its walls.



SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM

Opening times
Wednesday to Sunday
10:00 to 17:00 (last entry 16:30)
Open on most Bank Holidays

Entry is free

www.soane.org
#SoaneMuseum

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Visiting the Soane by candlelight is an increasing draw for visitors, and requires a team effort behind the scenes

Photography by Alexander Newton

Guests arriving for the *Hidden Masterpieces* Soane Late in May 2022



Soane's facility with lighting extended to his famous evening soirees, in which the marble sarcophagus of Seti I was rendered translucent by carefully placed illuminations. At Soane Late events today, visitors are afforded the same treat, along with a glass of wine, special collection exhibits and pop-up talks, on select dates across the year. 'After closing on a Late evening, the Museum is transformed within an hour,' says Markand Patel, Head of Visitor Experience and Operations, pictured opposite, top right installing uplights in the Sepulchral Chamber. Candles are also lit – as Patel says, 'There was no electricity or gas in Soane's day.'



Lates also maintain the architect's legacy 'by bringing in a different demographic to the Museum,' Patel adds. Chris Cashman, the Museum's Commercial Events Manager agrees: 'And they're the perfect opportunity for repeat visitors to see the Museum in a different way.' They involve staff across operations, retail, events and curatorial departments, and, says Cashman, 'the team spirit is very collaborative and creative'. It's all worth it for the visitor response: Patel's favourite moment is 'seeing the reactions as people walk into the Dome area – the audible sighs of wonderment'.

‘I think a lot of people’s imaginations come alive when visiting a place “out of hours”,’ says Louisa Catt (pictured opposite, bottom right), the Trainee Adam Drawings Cataloguer who presented drawings not usually on display at Late events this year. ‘You get all sorts of questions about the Museum, including children asking about secret passages. And it’s really special to share your enthusiasm for Soane and his collection with complete strangers.’

At one Late last year, the Soane’s Visitor Services Manager Claudia Loffredo was particularly excited to view an illustrated edition of Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, the earliest printed book in Soane’s library. She calls staff the ‘unsung heroes’ of the events. ‘The Visitor Assistants keep sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm after a full day of work, and our fantastic Volunteers come to the Museum especially for the Lates. They’re an incredible asset and contribute hugely to a great visitor experience.’





BROUGHT TO LIGHT

Scientific and scholarly discoveries have expanded our understanding of Sir John Soane's collection this year

Five lines of Arabic calligraphy from the Qur'an, taken from Vol 145 of Indian Miniatures gathered by Sir Elijah Impey

WHAT LIES BENEATH

Technical imaging of William Hogarth's celebrated satirical series *A Rake's Progress* has revealed changes the artist made to perfect his paintings and evade plagiarists



William Hogarth, *The Painter and his Pug*, 1745. Photo: Tate

Comprising eight paintings that depict the moral decline of Tom Rakewell, the dissolute son of a city merchant, Hogarth's series *A Rake's Progress* was painted around 1734, then made into engravings that were sold to paying subscribers. Sir John Soane bought the paintings in 1802, and they are some of the most celebrated works in his collection.

They were lent to Tate Britain in 2021 for its exhibition *Hogarth and Europe*, which provided an opportunity for Tate and Sir John Soane's Museum to collaborate on a technical analysis of the paintings. Tate conservation scientists took microscopic samples for assessment, Tate's expert photographers and conservators took detailed photos, which were studied by Tate paintings conservators and curators from both institutions: these revealed previous iterations of the works in progress. We spoke to curator Jo Tinworth to find out more.

Tell us a bit about what you do at the Museum.

Jo Tinworth: I am Curator (Collections) at the Museum working for Helen Dorey, Deputy Director and Head of Collections. Our remit is to record and research the 3,000 works of art and antiquities that Soane left to the nation, as well as the building itself, Soane's furniture and his possessions. Then we communicate what we've learnt to the public through online catalogue entries, digital media such as *Explore Soane*, by giving tours and lectures and writing articles or books.

Why is *A Rake's Progress* a significant work?

When it was painted it was innovative. Paintings in series telling a story like scenes in a play – particularly scenes of contemporary 18th-century life – were a novelty that Hogarth claimed to have invented. It remains significant because it's an evergreen moral tale that still resonates almost 300 years later.

Hogarth presents the consequences of Tom's choices – which are desertion, social climbing, extravagance and sins of the flesh – as being shame, debt, degradation and madness, followed by death. So it's poignant, but it's presented very wittily in a way that engaged people. Hogarth's contemporaries found the tales amusing, which made the fact that he was highlighting society's ills palatable.

This is the second series of modern moral subjects that Hogarth painted, then engraved. The first one, *A Harlot's Progress*, was so popular that it was widely pirated.



An infrared reflectogram of William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress IV: The Arrest*, 1734. Photo: Tate



Detail of infrared reflectogram of William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress IV: The Arrest*, 1734. Photo: Tate

Hogarth was so disgruntled by the associated loss of revenue that he didn't release the engravings of *A Rake's Progress* until after 25 June 1735, when an Act of Parliament he'd lobbied hard for, the Engraving Copyright Act – often known as Hogarth's Act due to his lobbying – came into effect.

What can we see from the research carried out at Tate?

The technical analysis uncovered changes that Hogarth made to his compositions as he painted them. We can see how he

developed his ideas on the canvas, and their evolution between the painted state and the subsequent engravings.

What techniques were used to reveal the development of the paintings?

They were photographed in nine different ways: views of the front and back in incredibly high resolution, and in raking, ultraviolet and transmitted light (which is where you take a photograph of the canvas, with light shining through the back). Then there were the most sophisticated options – X-ray and infrared photographs and infrared reflectograms – the latter most effective in allowing us to see through the layers of the composition.

What did you discover about how the paintings had changed?

From the infrared reflectograms, we were able to see how Hogarth adapted the composition as he worked. Once his canvases were complete, Hogarth would advertise that his studio was open for people to visit. If visitors liked the paintings, they could then subscribe to receive the prints once they were made. On occasion, other engravers would attend his studio and then make their own pirate copies: we have one example of this happening even before Hogarth issued his own engravings.

So the reason for the changes could have been to circumvent that?

Yes, absolutely. If you look at *The Arrest*, which is probably the most altered, we have real evidence that Hogarth has made a deliberate change to his composition to differentiate it from a pirated print.



William Hogarth, *A Rake's Progress IV: The Arrest*, 1734

An infrared reflectogram showed us an image of a Welshman hanging in effigy. It's important to note that it was St David's Day in this scene. Englishmen often hung Welshmen in effigy as a riposte to the Welsh, who were celebrating their national day. In a pirated version of the series, you can see the effigy in the sky. Hogarth was so incensed by the piracies he complained about them in the *London Evening Post* of 3 June 1735, and changed the painted composition and his associated prints to remove the effigy.

By 25 June, when Hogarth's prints were issued, the effigy was gone and we now know it was overpainted on the canvas.

What does it add to our understanding of Hogarth's practice?

There are two points. It's generally known that Hogarth extensively reworked his canvases and that his compositions evolved as he worked – he didn't typically make preparatory drawings – so it's wonderful to see this reinforced in one of his most famous series.

It also affirms just how far Hogarth would go to protect and defend his work. Not only did he lobby parliament for legislation, we now have credible evidence of him changing *The Arrest* to make it different from a pirated print.

MINIATURE MASTERPIECES

Indian art specialist Dr Ursula Weekes is currently cataloguing Sir John Soane's collections of calligraphy and paintings by Persian and Mughal artists. What has she found during the process?

Sir John Soane was not a major collector of Indian art, but towards the end of his life he bought two fine albums of Indian and Persian calligraphy specimens and miniature paintings, the latter dating from the 17th and 18th centuries.

Produced by highly skilled artists, the paintings depict scenes from noble life, alongside famous figures such as Mulla Dopiazza, a celebrated 16th-century Indian humourist. The calligraphy quotes Persian poetry as well as verses from the Qu'ran, and includes specimens by the famous 15th-

century Late Timurid scribe Mir Ali Heravi and the Mughal calligrapher Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri.

Two wealthy Englishmen are associated with the albums: Sir Elijah Impey, the first chief justice at the colonial Supreme Court in Bengal, appointed by the East India Company; and Shropshire aristocrat Lord Berwick. They were subsequently acquired at auction by Sir John Soane in the 1820s.

Dr Ursula Weekes, an expert in Indian art of the 16th and 17th centuries, has been cataloguing Soane's collection of miniatures. She tells us more.



Mulla Dopiazza, celebrated Indian humourist, riding an emaciated horse with a dog alongside, mid-18th-century. Taken from Lord Berwick's album (Vol 144) of Indian and Persian miniatures



A nobleman seated on a terrace with a falcon, mid-18th-century. Taken from Vol 145 of Indian miniatures gathered by Sir Elijah Impey



Close-up of a prince and his lady (perhaps intended as Baz Bahadur and Rupmati) resting in a grove with ladies in attendance, mid-18th-century. Taken from Lord Berwick's album (Vol 144) of Indian and Persian miniatures



Abd al-Jabbar, Vizier to the Golconda court, standing in a field holding a flower, c.1680. Taken from Vol 145 of Indian miniatures gathered by Sir Elijah Impey

عبد الجبار وزير الملك



A quatrain in nastaliq calligraphy, signed by Muhammad Husain al-Katib.
Taken from Lord Berwick's album (Vol 144) of Indian and Persian miniatures

How did you come to work at the Museum?

Dr Ursula Weekes: Having lived in India for six and a half years, I'm now an independent art historian specialising in Mughal India and Indian painting. I've known about the Indian albums in the collection for some time: Volume 145, which contains paintings gathered by Sir Elijah Impey, and Volume 144, known as the Lord Berwick album, which has an ownership seal and inscription indicating it belonged to the famous contemporary Mughal historian of the mid-18th century, Ghulam Hussain Khan. I expressed an interest in cataloguing the albums and the Trustees of the Museum invited me to become an academic cataloguer.

How did Sir John Soane acquire the albums?

These albums are real outliers in his collection. We know Soane bought the Impey album (Vol. 145) in the sale of the 'Extensive and Curious Library of James Perry' in 1822. We know from an annotated copy of the sale catalogue that he purchased three lots in a row: a group of Napoleonic medals and a 15th-century French Book of Hours. Between these two lots was the Indian album, and he purchased it for £21. Five years later, he acquired the Ghulam Hussain Khan Album (Vol. 144) from the sale of Lord Berwick's effects.

What have you learnt about the Volumes so far?

Sir Elijah Impey and his wife Mary were Indophiles who maintained painters and a librarian in their Calcutta home from 1774-83. They were collectors of Indian art, and this album gives a snapshot of the works they were able to buy, including important 17th-century paintings from the Mughal court, and works

from the 18th-century Mughal Successor States of Lucknow and Murshidabad in Bengal. The album was probably not fully finished in Calcutta, when Impey returned to England, but the presence of his seal on several pages, and inscriptions by his librarian on the borders, indicate the artworks were mounted in his studio. The binding dates from c.1810, and was commissioned by James Perry. The Ghulam Hussain Khan album (aka Lord Berwick album) is slightly less grand, but has interesting works – several of which emphasise an interest in paintings of Indian women. One unusual feature is its block-printed cotton borders around many of the paintings.

What are the challenges in cataloguing them?

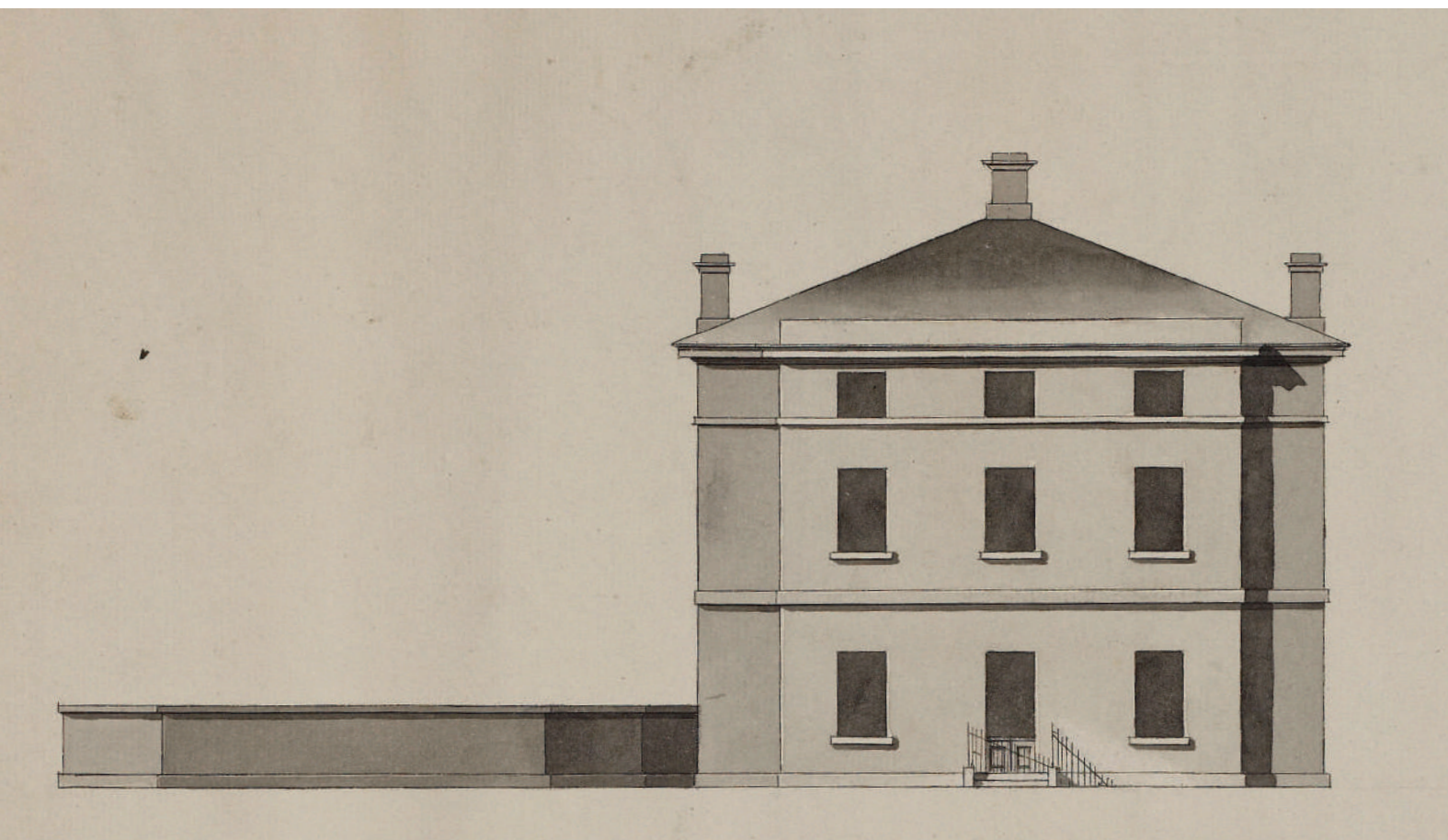
The challenge in all cataloguing is to be precise, accurately identifying where paintings were made, the artists and their likely date. These are the building blocks of further analysis. Another challenge is to identify all the Persian calligraphies, with their specific poetic, historical and prose sources. Sometimes they are signed, but others have to be attributed to renowned calligraphers; for that I need help.

What can be learned about Indian painting from your research?

Volume 145 has important works from the Mughal Imperial Atelier, Lucknow and Murshidabad. It gives a fascinating snapshot of Late Mughal painting in the 18th century, and an insight into the kind of art market available to Impey. The albums highlight the connected history between India and Britain in the 18th and early 19th century. The significance of many little-known masterpieces are waiting to be discovered in institutions such as this.

THE BUILDING THAT WAS

Cataloguer Louisa Catt reveals how she uncovered proof that an 18th-century mansion by architects the Adam brothers – previously thought never to have been built – once stood in the Scottish town of Dalkeith



Adam office, design for Woodburn House showing the rear elevation, 1792, executed

Architects Robert and James Adam were the sons of William Adam, the most famous architect of his day – and the man behind Hopetoun House near Edinburgh and Duff House in Banff, Aberdeenshire.

His sons became fashionable architects in their own right in the later 18th century, developing their father's work into the 'Adam style', which integrated architecture and interior design and laid the groundwork for the later Regency and French Empire styles.

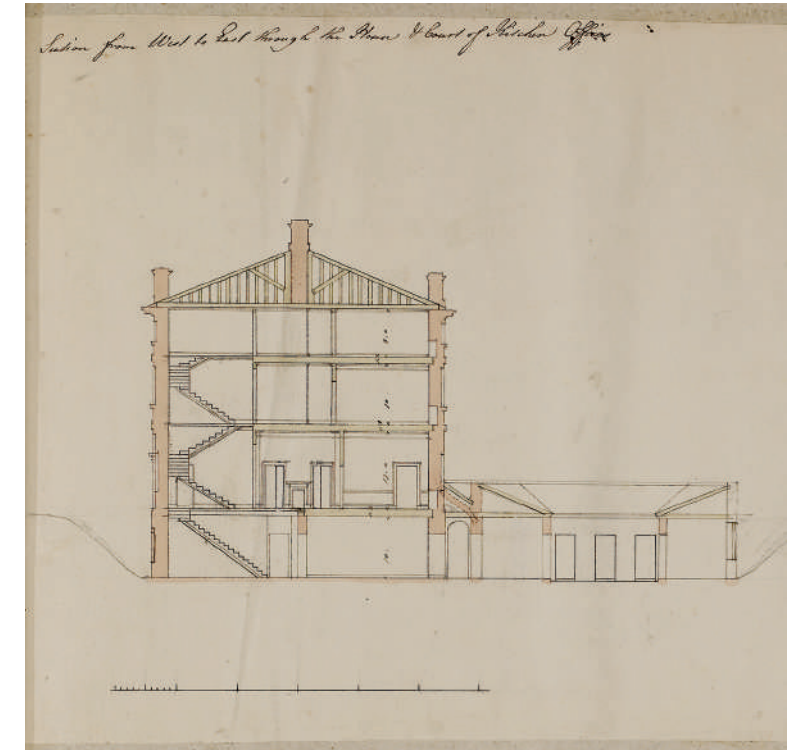
Some of their work never moved beyond the design stage, but cataloguer Louisa Catt explains how she uncovered the true history of one such building – Woodburn House.

What is your background and what do you do at the Museum?

Louisa Catt: I'm fairly new to the Soane and loving every minute of it. My background is in art and architectural history and I used to work in an historic building consultancy, but wanted to delve deeper into the history of buildings and make that knowledge more accessible. That's where the Soane fits in, as I know firsthand how incredibly useful their online drawings catalogue is. My role is at the tail end of a long project cataloguing the works of Robert and James Adam. The project has been fully funded by external donors, and I know how grateful the Museum is for the support we have received. I've been looking at later Celtic projects, predominantly in Scotland, but also in Ireland and Wales.

What have you discovered over the course of your research?

That a building designed by the Adam brothers, previously thought to have not been executed, was in fact built – probably in the early 1790s.

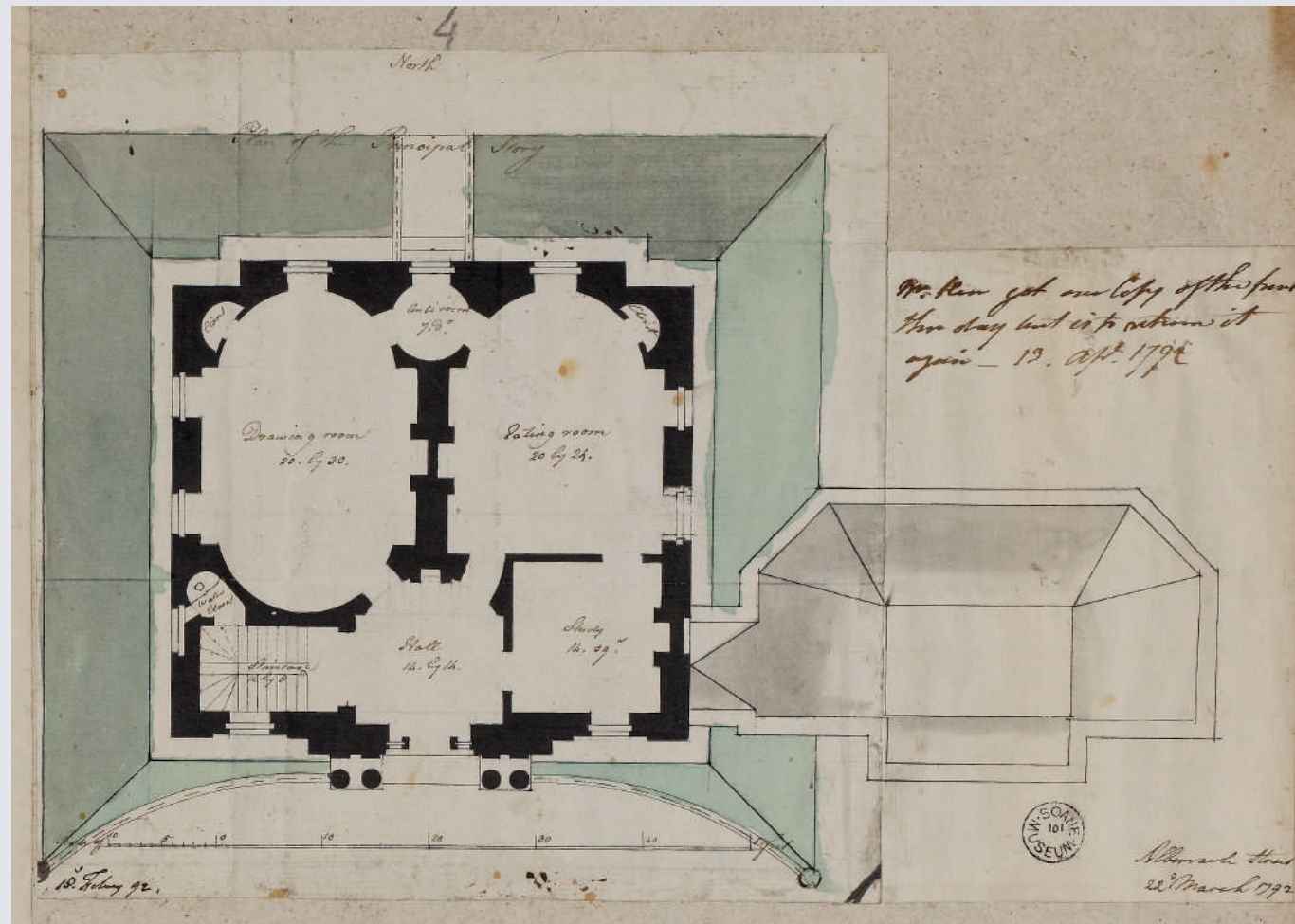


Adam office, Woodburn House

Woodburn House was a modest mansion on the outskirts of Dalkeith in Midlothian, Scotland, designed for James Ker of Moriston. He was distantly related to the same bloodline as the Marquesses of Lothian, who owned the parish of Newbattle where the house was built. It appears that the 11th Marquess of Lothian sold the estate for redevelopment in the 1930s.

What prompted you to look into the history of Woodburn House?

In *The Complete Works of Robert and James Adam* by David King, Woodburn House was



Adam office, First floor plan for Woodburn House, 1792, executed

catalogued as unbuilt. A lot of Robert Adam's works from this later period of his life weren't executed and it might have been missed because it was demolished so early. I always think that projects with less information are more interesting – it gives you a real chance to investigate and presents a challenge. I like to think of it as being a building detective.

What resources did you consult for research?

I first came across a reference to Woodburn House through Historic Scotland's database, then started to look a bit deeper and came across a pair of listed gate piers on a modern building estate, which said they were from Woodburn House – and that they were potentially by Robert Adam. That was the starting point. The Old and New Statistical Accounts of Scotland were helpful, as they often note if a building has been executed and who by, but Ordnance Survey maps are hands down one of the most useful resources for studying historic buildings. The building itself has a very peculiar-shaped service wing at its side, with a lightwell in the centre, which you can see clearly depicted when looking at these maps. We also found a historic photograph of the front elevation of the building in an article by the Dalkeith Historical Society and that corroborated everything.

Do you know which Adam brother was likely to have designed Woodburn House?

I'm getting used to their styles and being able to identify who might have designed what. The dates of the drawings are from right at the end of Robert's life and some are signed after his death. It also wasn't necessarily typical of Robert Adam's designs as it has a very awkward arrangement inside, so it's likely that James was involved.

What is the impact of this discovery and how could the information be used in the future?

It's a shame that the building has been demolished, but that doesn't make the information any less important. It furthers our understanding of the Adam brothers' work in Scotland, where many of their schemes were not constructed or heavily altered. And I'm looking forward to hopefully making more such discoveries in the future.



ESSENTIALS

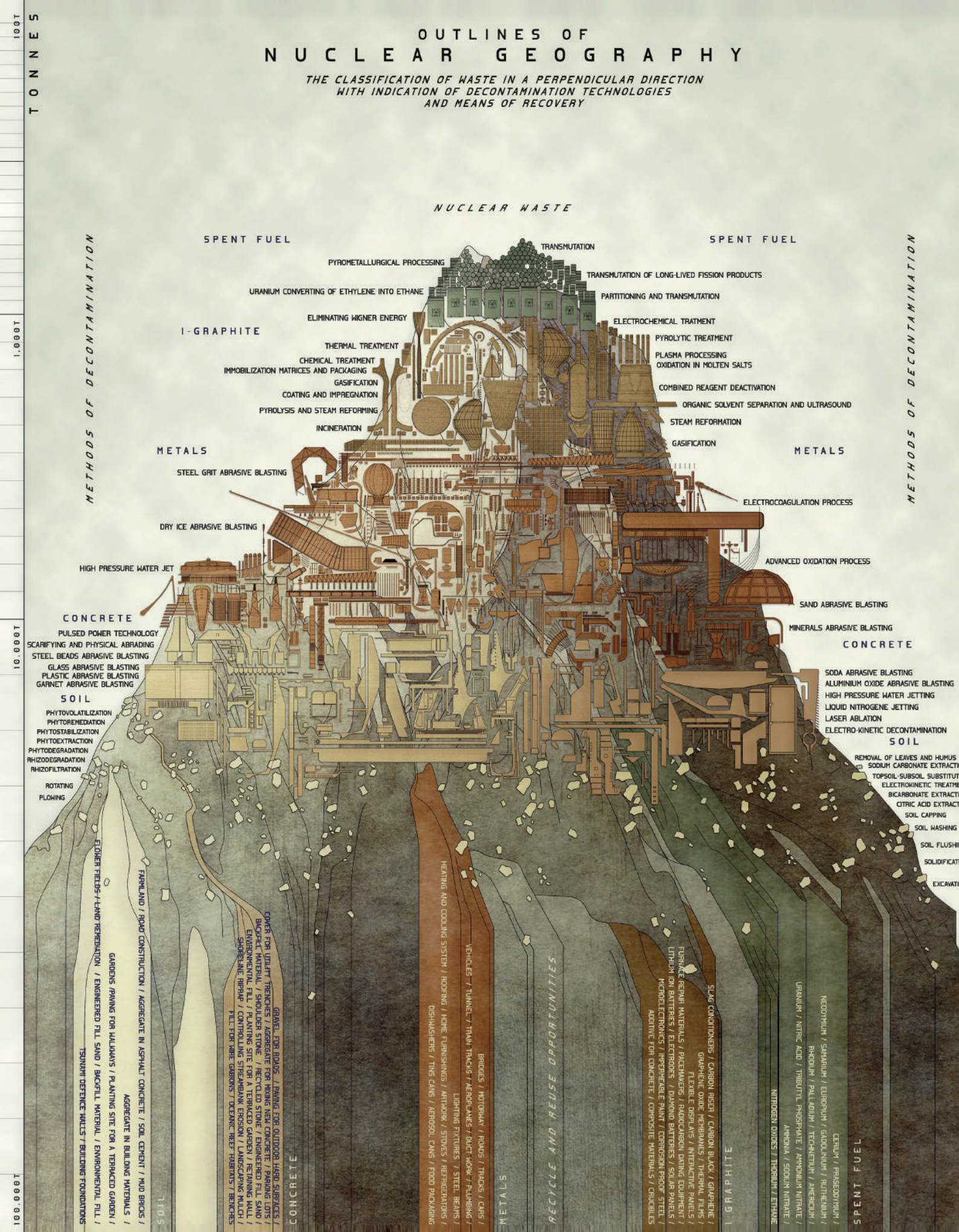
Photo: Gareth Gardner

Sir John Soane’s Museum is grateful to the following for their generous support during 2021/22	Sir John Soane’s Museum is indebted to the contribution of the members of the Inspectress’ Fund	Sir John Soane’s Museum wishes to record its gratitude to the Life Patrons	Sir John Soane’s Museum is grateful to the members of the Patrons’ Circle for their valued contribution over the past year		
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Sir John Soane’s Museum is thankful to the Directors of Sir John Soane’s Museum Foundation	Sir John Soane’s Museum would like to acknowledge those that provide ongoing advice and <i>pro-bono</i> support	Sir John Soane’s Museum would like to acknowledge the individuals who volunteered their time and expertise <i>pro-bono</i> to support our cataloguing programme	Board of Trustees of Sir John Soane’s Museum 2021/22	Directors of Soane Museum Enterprises Limited 2021/22	Board of Trustees of the Sir John Soane’s Museum Trust 2021/22
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OUTLINES OF NUCLEAR GEOGRAPHY

THE CLASSIFICATION OF WASTE IN A PERPENDICULAR DIRECTION
WITH INDICATION OF DECONTAMINATION TECHNOLOGIES
AND MEANS OF RECOVERY



The Museum gratefully acknowledges the support it receives for all exhibitions from the Government Indemnity Scheme, administered by Arts Council England.

EXHIBITIONS

The Museum's reopening on 19 May 2021 meant a return to a full exhibitions programme, and this year a total of five exhibitions were held at the Museum, with an additional two hosted virtually on the online exhibitions platform. This year also marked the first time that every exhibition at the Museum was accompanied by online content, including images, video, enhanced interpretation and more.

The Romance of Ruins: The Search for Ancient Ionia, 1764

19 May – 5 September 2021
(Soane Gallery, Foyle Space)

Produced in partnership with the British Museum, this exhibition focused on the Society of Dilettanti's 1764 expedition to discover ancient Greek ruins in Ionia (modern-day Turkey) and Athens. A series of powerful watercolours by William Pars documented the expedition. These were displayed together for the first time in the Soane Gallery, and books from Soane's library relating to the expedition were shown alongside. A map in the Foyle Space showed the expedition's route, while a spotlight on the Parthenon revealed how Pars' works were reproduced as etchings in books. A catalogue, which included Pars' watercolours, an introduction by curator Ian Jenkins and scholarly essays accompanied the exhibition.

The Romance of Ruins was supported by a digital film and an online version of the exhibition containing images and enhanced audio and video interpretation.

This exhibition was made possible thanks to the generosity of David and Molly Lowell Borthwick. The catalogue was kindly supported by the Society of Dilettanti Charitable Trust.

The Romance of Ruins was dedicated to the memory of Dr Ian Dennis Jenkins OBE, FSA 1953–2020.

'These superb monuments': Sir John Soane and Ancient Greece

19 May – 5 September 2021 (Online)

Created as a companion to *The Romance of Ruins*, this online exhibition explored Sir John Soane's interest in and relationship to the architecture of ancient Greece. That Soane's architectural style was heavily influenced by his knowledge of ancient Rome is well-known, but other classical architectural styles, including that of ancient Greece, also informed Soane's approach. Through 16 works from the Museum's collections, the exhibition explored how Soane collected ancient Greek objects, applied ancient Greek ideas to his own architectural projects and imparted these ideas to his students, articulated pupils and the wider public.

Outlines of Nuclear Geography
by Sabina Blasiotti, 2021, shortlisted in the Digital category of The Architecture Drawing Prize (19 January-20 February 2022)

Taking Good Care: Exploring the Building Archive

1 – 30 June 2021 (Online)

Programmed as part of the 2021 London Festival of Architecture, which took the theme of ‘Care’, this online exhibition explored the Building Archive at Sir John Soane’s Museum. The Archive comprises almost 1,000 items that testify to the life of the Museum and how it has changed over time. Through 15 objects from this collection, the exhibition shed light on how the building has been maintained and preserved on a day-to-day basis, and revealed instances in which Soane’s wishes were disregarded, and lasting – often damaging – changes were made to the building, which are still in the process of being reversed.

Pablo Bronstein: Hell in its Heyday

6 October 2021 – 3 January 2022 (Soane Gallery, Foyle Space)

This exhibition was the first major Museum show since 2009 to focus on Pablo Bronstein’s works on paper. Created especially for the Soane, Bronstein’s large-scale watercolours took visitors on a tour of hell as a nostalgic and ironic representation of the past two centuries. Imagined as a monumental city, Bronstein depicts concert halls, casinos, botanical gardens, car factories and oil rigs. Bronstein also presented a new film, *Boutique Fantasque*, in the Foyle Space, featuring a group of diabolical antique dealers performing a masked ballet. Borrowing from influences including *commedia dell’arte* and advertising, the exhibition conjured a highly detailed world, demonstrating a sense of drama and eclectic approach to source material shared by Soane. The exhibition was supported by an illustrated catalogue, while an online exhibition invited visitors to zoom in on the works while listening to their story. This exhibition was possible thanks to the generosity of David and Molly Lowell Borthwick, Alison Ross Green, Bob Rennie, Celia Atkin and Herald St.

The Architecture Drawing Prize 2021

19 January – 20 February 2022 (Soane Gallery, Foyle Space)

This exhibition displayed the winning and commended entries of the fourth annual Architecture Drawing Prize. Launched in 2017, the prize was conceived by Make Architects and is delivered in partnership with Sir John Soane’s Museum and the World Architecture Festival. It celebrates drawing’s significance as a tool in capturing and communicating architectural ideas, and recognises the continuing importance of hand drawing, while also embracing the use of digitally produced renderings. This year a special lockdown prize was again awarded to a drawing relating to the changes that Covid-19 will bring to architecture. The entries were evaluated for their technical skill, originality in approach and ability to convey an architectural idea, whether for a conceptual or actual building project. From 30 November 2021 to 14 March 2022 a five-year retrospective of *The Architecture Drawing Prize* was also shown at the Vault of Contemporary Art, a new digital exhibition gallery by Make Architects.

Hidden Masterpieces

9 March – 5 June 2022 (Soane Gallery)

Hidden Masterpieces provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see some of the finest works collected and produced by Sir John Soane. These are usually kept in locked drawers and among carefully stored volumes at the Museum. Works included a *Book of Hours* illuminated by two artists of the Flemish School in 1512; a drawing by Hieronymus Cock of the Colosseum, Rome, probably prepared for engraving c. 1550; an 18th-century volume of Indian and Persian miniatures; a capriccio by Giovanni Battista Piranesi of 1745-50 and other important works including drawings from the offices of Robert Adam, George Dance the Younger and Sir John Soane. This exhibition accompanied the book *Architectural Drawings: Hidden Masterpieces from Sir John Soane’s Museum* by Frances Sands (Batsford, 2021). Alongside the exhibition and book, an online display highlighted some of the most extraordinary drawings. A series of QR codes provided visitors access to additional interpretation, including audio by scholar Dr Ursula Weekes and curator Dr Frances Sands.

Anne-Marie Creamer: Dear Friend, I Can No Longer Hear Your Voice

9 March – 5 June 2022 (Foyle Space)

This exhibition comprised an immersive film, which reconstructed a lost space at the Museum – the bedchamber of Sir John Soane’s wife Eliza, who died suddenly in 1815. Soane never got over her death, preserving her bedchamber for 19 years, and later creating private allusions to Eliza throughout the Museum. Through photogrammetry, animation and voice, the film is an imagined recreation of Eliza’s bedchamber and a reclamation of her presence. The film’s haunting soundtrack uses Soane’s own memoir of grief, and those of Eliza’s friends Barbara Hofland and Sarah Smith, to create a meditation on love and loss. The production of the film and related events were supported with public funding from the National Lottery by Arts Council England, with additional support from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London.

LOANS

Musée NarboVia, France

Veni, Vidi, Bâti
17 September 2021 – 28 February 2022

- A Royal Academy lecture drawing of the Temple of Fortuna Virilis, Rome (SM 19/8/1)

Compton Verney Art Gallery, Warwickshire

Grinling Gibbons: Centuries in the Making
25 September 2021 – 30 January 2022

- Ten drawings by Grinling Gibbons (SM vol.110/24, 25, 37-40, 43, 50, 62, 64)

Museum Leuven, Belgium

Imagining the Universe
22 October 2021 – 16 January 2022

- Roman marble sundial in the form of an hour segment supported by the figure of Atlas (SM M1254)

Tate Britain, London

Hogarth and Europe
3 November 2021 – 20 March 2022

- The eight canvases making up William Hogarth’s *A Rake’s Progress* (SM P40 – P47)

Performance indicators	2021/22 (Draft – not audited)*	2020/21
Total charitable giving**	£1,146,878	£1,233,505
Ratio of charitable giving to DCMS grant-in-aid	70%	89%
Number of visits to the Museum (excluding virtual visits)	50,923	2,090
Number of unique website visits	294,693	216,226
Number of visits by children under 16	2,546	84
Number of overseas visits	6,111	63
Number of facilitated and self-directed visits to the Museum by visitors under 18 in formal education	1,772	542
Number of instances of visitors under 18 participating in on-site organised activities	1,511	374
% of visitors who would recommend a visit	80%	88%
Admissions income (gross income)	£35,115	£1,014
Trading income – net profit/(loss)	£9,570	(£41,521)
Number of UK loan venues	2	1

*Figures for 2021-22 are the draft results for the year ending 31 March 2022, not yet finalised at the time of publication. These figures have not been audited.

**Charitable giving is calculated as the combined total of donations, legacies and grants, excluding grant-in-aid, as shown in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

VOLUNTEERS

Juliet Barnett, Madeleine Beale, Sam Biddlestone, Charlotte Buchan, Margaret Bull, Erin Campbell, Cleo Cantone, Alicia Caro Cañas, Denice Celley, Michael Child, Chrysanthi Chrysanthou, John Cotton, Jill Courtneil, Celia Crowther, Alex Dean, Ann Dennis, Sammy Doublet, Terri Erdem, Hazel Featherstone, Niki Ferraro, Helen Giles, John Grant, Eileen Gunn, Leonie Hagen, Allan Hart, Marie Hawkins, Thomas Hay, Sue Hearn, Aisling Henihan, Liz Herry, Steve Houchin, Eun Mi Howie, Ann Humphries, Robert Isherwood, Viv Jennings, Lydia Jesudason, Ting Ji, Rachel Jones, Claire Joo, Petra Karafiatova, Edward Knight, Richard Kuhn, Sue Kyd, Claire Lacaden, Aiken Lau, Babs Lee, Brian Lewis, Hilary Lewis, Molly Lewis, Xinning Li, Hanyu Liu, Mary Marinkov, Bridie McAteer-Bowden, Nicola McLintock, Nikhita Morarji, David Murray, Ben Nathan, Jo Nightingale, David Perkins, Emily Philips, Joanna Poulson, Fiona Power, Valeria Remukhova, Hannah Rhodes, Daniela Riveros, Mary Roe, Ana Romanelli, Christine Scott, Ben Shaw, Phoebe Simmonds, Pauline Smith, Colin Spence, Nora Straw, Val Straw, Golnar Tajdar, Sally Trench, Brian Turner, Valentino Vecchio, Marija Vukovojac, Chris White, Lizzy Wilson, Simon Wimble, Rosalind Wippell, Victoria Witty, Stephen Wood, Lucy Worsley

FINANCES

2021/22 (Draft – not audited)	2020/21
Unrestricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £
Restricted funds £	Restricted Funds £

Charitable income

Grant-in-aid from Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	1,392,600	242,000	1,281,000	100,000
Other grants and donations	586,482	560,396	504,397	729,108
Visitors	35,115	-	1,014	-

Trading activities

Retail sales	210,925	-	43,895	-
Room hire	74,369	-	(1,854)	-
Other trading activities	66,253	-	53,357	-

Other income

TOTAL INCOME	2,383,855	802,396	1,904,514	829,108
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Expenditure

Development and fundraising	240,525	33,542	219,058	46,589
Trading and communications	493,256	71,553	332,545	125,720
Charitable activities	1,602,233	454,173	1,420,260	560,892

TOTAL EXPENDITURE

NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	47,841	243,128	(67,349)	95,907
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NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

[illegible]

Notes

1. Figures for 2022 are draft results for the year ending 31 March 2022, not yet finalised at the time of publication. They have not been audited.
2. Figures for 2021 are extracted from the Annual Report and Accounts of Sir John Soane's Museum for the year ending 31 March 2021, reported in the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities.



LETTERS TO THE SOANE

Thomas Smith

Since 2018, Woldon Architects has supported the Soane's Architecture Clubs, a series of sessions for 7–14-year-olds that take place at the Museum over the academic year. Participants explore architecture and the built environment through a variety of topics, often shaped by the interests of the group. They gain knowledge of history, art and architecture, while honing their own design skills. Some continue to the Architectural Drawing Course that is offered by the Museum to develop a portfolio of drawings in preparation for future study at art and architecture schools.

It is the volunteers and staff who enable the clubs and wider learning programme at the Museum to thrive, and I wish to thank them. Sir John Soane's dedication to education is encapsulated in the Museum itself, his prolific collecting as much an expression of this commitment as the idiosyncratic Drawing Office, which was 'peculiarly adapted for study... surrounded with marble fragments... drawers filled with architectural drawings and prints for the instruction of pupils'.

At its core, learning in architecture is founded in an appreciation of ways of seeing, as much as communicating via drawing and other media. The existence of the Museum as we know it derives from, in Sir John's eyes, a personal failure to secure his children's interest in architectural practice. He had created Pitzhanger Manor, a country house in Ealing, as a stage for their advancement in the field. The creation of the House-Museum at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1813 flowed directly from the disposal of this country house in 1812 – as an alternative place to live, to practice, to collect and to teach. That we all benefit from this is itself a testament to the complexity of the creative process.

Walking the streets of Vienna on a recent trip with my young family, an insightful comment by my 12-year-old about Otto Wagner's playful polychromatic façades momentarily made my heart sing. To witness an awakening process of seeing and interpretation is a joy, whatever follows. Sir John Soane's Museum combines a unique repository with an expression of and dedication to learning, unparalleled in the architectural sphere, and with which Woldon Architects is proud to be associated.

Thomas Smith is a Patron of the Museum, and a Founder and Director of Woldon Architects Ltd, a RIBA Chartered Practice with offices in London and the Cotswolds

Sir John Soane’s
Museum Annual Review
2021/22

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Sir John Soane’s Museum Annual Review 2021/22 is published by Cultureshock on behalf of Sir John Soane’s Museum	Louisa Catt Trainee Drawings Cataloguer (from January 2022)
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