

Drawn from the Antique at Soane Museum

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Drawn from the Antique:
Artists & the Classical Ideal
at Sir John Soane's Museum
Open Now

Until 26th September 2015

The Soane Museum is on a roll with their exhibitions this year. After the [reopening of Soane's Private Apartments](#) this summer and their recent [Inspired by Soane](#) exhibition, they have now opened their latest, *Drawn from the Antique: Artists & the Classical Ideal*. And it is brilliant.

Drawn from the Antique looks at how, from the Renaissance onwards, classical statues provided idealised models of the human form for aspiring artists to study the anatomy of the human body, gaining knowledge of both ideal form and perfect Vitruvian proportion. For five centuries this was the fundamental teaching tool for artists across Europe. Drawing antique sculpture was the traditional means of learning how to represent poses, facial expressions and emotions and it was the first stepping stone of tuition that preceded working with live models.



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Comprising 34 stunning drawings, prints and paintings, the exhibition has come to the Soane from the Netherlands where it enjoyed a hugely successful run at the Teylers Museum. But seen here at the Soane, *Drawn from the Antique* represents the perfect symbiosis of exhibition subject and museum venue. Sir John Soane's Museum is the ideal place for an exhibition that looks at how artists have studied antique classical sculpture, it was a concept that was at the core of Sir John Soane's teaching and his collection. The great 19th century architect not only encouraged his own students to study classical sculpture, but Soane himself accumulated one of the finest collections of antique sculpture and plaster cast copies in private hands.

This is the Soane's largest ever international loan exhibition bringing together works from ten leading museums in Europe and North America, including the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Rijksmuseum, the Kunsthhaus, Zürich, the British Museum, the Royal Academy of Art, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Courtauld Gallery. Many of the works on show have never been exhibited in the UK before and include incredibly precious works by Baccio Bandinelli, Hendrick Goltzius, Michael Sweerts, Charles-Joseph Natoire and Hubert Robert. Fifteen of the works are on loan from the private collection of art dealer Katrin Bellinger.

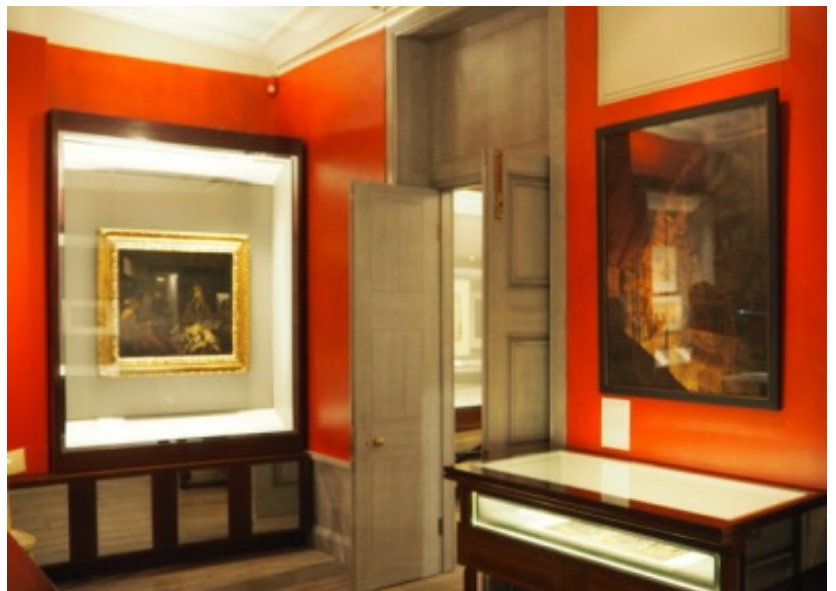


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The exhibition starts with some 16th century images of Italian art academies, showing young student artists drawing fragments of statues and small statuettes. Fascinatingly, these early examples of teaching practice show the students working by candlelight, where the flickering raking light would cast shadows to reveal the subtle musculature of the carvings for the students to see and copy more easily.

The show goes on to look at how this Italian art curriculum was exported to Northern European academies and finally to Britain's own Royal Academy. It's hard to pick out highlights, because to be honest it's almost

all highlights in these two small rooms, but do look out for Federico Zuccaro's *Taddeo in the Belvedere Court in the Vatican Drawing the Laocoön*, c. 1595 which shows Zuccaro's brother Taddeo sitting on the ground sketching the celebrated antique sculptures in the Vatican's Belvedere Courtyard. Another very special loan for this exhibition is Charles-Joseph Natoire's *The Life Class at the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture*, 1746, borrowed from The Courtauld Gallery. And for me it is always a joy to see Henry Fuseli's *The Artist Moved by the Grandeur of Antique Fragments*, c. 1778–79 from The Kunsthhaus, Zürich. I've always loved Fuseli's depiction of an artist, draped over a huge antique carved foot, clutching his head, overwhelmed by the skill of the masters of



antique sculpture. Great stuff.

The Belvedere Torso
at *Defining Beauty* at British Museum
© The London Art File

The *Defining Beauty* exhibition at the British Museum closes very soon (Sunday 5th July) but until then these two exhibitions make marvellous companions for each other. There are still a few days left to have the chance of admiring the classical ideal in two London locations – you can see the Belvedere Torso (that inspired Michelangelo amongst many others) at the BM and then go to the Soane to see Hendrik Goltzius's exquisite drawing of the same mighty headless, limbless figure. What a treat that is.

This is a wonderful exhibition that will appeal both to those with an academic interest in the subject (it is certainly not one to miss if you are a student of the history of art) and those with a more general interest in art and drawing. It is two rooms of absolute, unadulterated pleasure.



Exhibition is on until 26th September 2015

Admission: FREE

Opening hours:

Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm. Last entry 4:30pm

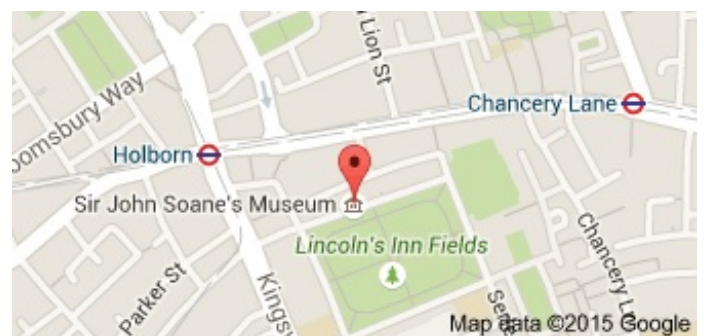
Also open on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6-9pm

Curator-led tours of the exhibition will take place on 3rd July, 7th August and 4th September and are free of charge.

The exhibition catalogue, by Adriano Aymonino and Anne Varick Lauder, is excellent with loads of great illustrations. Highly recommended.

Sir John Soane's Museum
13 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London WC2A 3BP

www.soane.org



***Drawn from the Antique* Events Programme**

A programme of events accompanies the exhibition. These include free curator-led lunchtime tours on the first Friday of each month during the run. The programme also features a Symposium, arranged by The Courtauld Institute of Art's Research Forum. There is also a vibrant programme of art workshops for adults, including a 3D modelling workshop, a monoprinting workshop and a day drawing the Cast Courts at the Victoria & Albert Museum. An exciting highlight of the workshop programme in September is the first-ever life-drawing workshop to take place within the historic spaces of the Museum.

About Sir John Soane's Museum

Sir John Soane's house, museum and library at No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields has been a public museum since the early nineteenth century. On his appointment as Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy in 1806, Soane (1753-1837) began to arrange his books, classical antiquities, casts and models so that students of architecture might benefit from access to them. In 1833 he negotiated an Act of Parliament to preserve the house and collection after his death for the benefit of 'amateurs and students' in architecture, painting and sculpture. Today Sir John Soane's Museum is one of the country's most unusual and significant museums with a continuing and developing commitment to education and creative inspiration.