

LIGHT and THE ENLIGHTENMENT

20th Birthday Gala, 26 April 2011

Welcome & Salute Suzanne Stephens

Salute to the Founders of the Foundation, Past Board *and* Advisory Board Members

Remarks Tim Knox

Presentation SOANE FOUNDATION HONORS *to:*

ALLAN GREENBERG

Presented by A. Eugene Kohn

Toast Richard H. Driehaus

Appreciation Kathleen Elizabeth Springhorn

Dancing Bob Hardwick *and* The Bob Hardwick Sound



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Our evening salutes the founding of Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation.

We are pleased to recognize the 1991 Founders of the Foundation and Past Board and Advisory Board Members. It is only because of their contributions and those of others like them that Sir John Soane's Museum in London and the Foundation here in the United States thrives today.

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Our evening celebrates Sir John Soane's dedication to architectural education.

This evening we present honors for the fifth year. Our recipient is an ardent public advocate for excellence in architecture, design, and history.

The **SOANE FOUNDATION HONORS** award is presented to...

ALLAN GREENBERG

Allan Greenberg Architect New York, Greenwich, Washington DC

For more than 40 years Allan Greenberg has succeeded in creating a living, progressive architecture within the tradition of classicism. Today, the very name of the South African-born architect is synonymous with the American experience as manifested in architecture.

As founder and principal of Allan Greenberg Architects (Washington, D.C., New York, and Greenwich, Connecticut), Greenberg has enriched the public and private realm with large-scale university buildings and churches; commercial and retail shops; and timeless domestic structures. He is also a master of the fundamentals of historic restoration and a prolific designer of interiors and furniture. In the 1980s, he designed 38 different rooms for the U.S. State Department, including the office of the Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State, and the Treaty Rooms Suite—a body of work renowned for its beauty and perfection of detail.

Greenberg has furthered appreciation of architectural tradition as the author of *Architecture of Democracy* (2006), *Lutyens and the Modern Movement* (2007) and *George Washington Architect* (1999), among other titles; as a lecturer and teacher at such schools as Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University; and as a former member of the Board of Sir John Soane’s Museum Foundation and a dedicated supporter from the start.

Trained in classical and Gothic architecture at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg South Africa, Greenberg worked in the offices of the leading Scandinavian modernists Jørn Utzon and Viljo Revell in his early years, before completing his formal education at Yale. He is the 2006 recipient of The Richard H. Driehaus Prize for Architecture.

Past Recipients of the SOANE FOUNDATION HONORS

2010: A. Eugene Kohn ~ Susan Weber ~ Yale University Press *accepted by* John Donatich

2009: Jaquelin T. Robertson ~ Rizzoli International Publications *accepted by* Charles Miers and David Morton

2008: Robert A. M. Stern ~ The Monacelli Press *accepted by* Gianfranco Monacelli

2007: Richard H. Driehaus ~ David Macaulay

The Directors of Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation
recognize and thank the supporters of this evening.

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Listings as of 16 April 2011

The theme of our evening is LIGHT —
as in source of illumination be it natural or created
and THE ENLIGHTENMENT —
as in the growth of knowledge and understanding.

Both Light and The Enlightenment are manifested in the architecture and education of John Soane, who transformed himself from a bricklayer's son into an architect, teacher, collector, and innovator.

Soane's early introduction to construction and near-punishing pursuit of knowledge in the Enlightenment fashion undergirded his innovative applications of the neo-Classical tradition.

But what explains his use of light? One thinks of the canopied breakfast room of No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, now Sir John Soane's Museum, where natural light tumbles down from above and refracted light bounces off four round corner mirrors plus over one hundred others. Or the skylit ceiling of Dulwich Picture Gallery, which has served as a model for so many museums. And what would a contemporary lover of architecture not give to have strolled in the light-dappled rooms of the Bank of England?

Sir John Soane feared he would lose his sight, before a cataract operation forestalled that fate in his later years. To the end, the rationality of The Enlightenment and an inexplicable attunement to natural light sustained the most original design force to emerge from Georgian London.

LIGHT and THE ENLIGHTENMENT *by* Danielle Willkens

In June of 1752, a little over a year before the birth of John Soane, Benjamin Franklin was anxiously awaiting the competition of Christ Church in Philadelphia. His eagerness was not prompted by ecclesiastical interests but rather by his quest to prove the existence of a scientific higher power: Franklin wanted to use the steeple to demonstrate his hypothesis that lightning was electricity. His impatience in the construction process led to his now-legendary experiment of lofting a kite with an attached metal key to the skies during a storm while his twenty-one year old son, William, stood alongside to witness the literal spark of Enlightenment curiosity.¹ Science was no longer subjugated to superstition: the darkness cast by the fear of the unknown was expelled in favor of a search for an illuminated understanding of the world.

With a similar eagerness for knowledge, Soane embarked on his own quest in literal darkness when, at the age of twenty-six, he drew the ruins of Pompeii “by the stealth of moonlight.” Envisioning young Soane capturing the newly excavated ruins in the cool ambience of night air, it is not difficult to comprehend why he embarked on a career where architecture was used as a laboratory for luminosity, radiant color, and reflection. The conscious tracking of circadian rhythms and the use of light as an active character was a common fixture in the aesthetics of the Enlightenment. One of Soane’s favorite treatises entitled *Le Génie de l’architecture* (The Nature of Architecture, 1780), by Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, extolled the use of mysterious luminosity, and structural innovations of the era, facilitated the creation of soaring, light-filled interior expanses that had only been imagined by architects such as Étienne-Louis Boullée. The seemingly weightless glass dome of Le Camus at the Halle au Blé in Paris clearly inspired architects such as Soane, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Latrobe, who had strolled through the

¹ Coincidentally, William Franklin (ca. 1731-1813) is buried in the same cemetery as Sir John Soane at Old St. Pancras Churchyard in London.

expanses of that market. Soane translated the paradoxical lightness of construction he saw at the Halle au Blé into the groundbreaking composition for the Dulwich Picture Gallery. The purpose-built gallery is celebrating its bicentenary this year. Wandering through the top-lit gallery, visitors can behold art in lucent natural light but they can also experience amber *lumiere mysterieuse* in the solemnity of the western-facing mausoleum. At Dulwich, the circadian delight of daylight is balanced with an acknowledgment of its transience in relation to the human experience.

The Age of Enlightenment marked the first use of the word ‘atmospheric’ and Soane’s Museum may offer one of the best illustrations of this principle. With more than thirty skylights and various colors of glazing, the house museum is a spectacle in sunlight. Conscious of his created environment, Soane was known to dismiss visitors on dreary days in preference of their return on a day with optimal natural lighting conditions.² His attention to artificial light was no less scrupulous: during late March of 1825, the Museum was transformed for three evenings with the presence of hundreds of candles in celebration of the installation of the Seti I sarcophagus. Although the light surrounding the alabaster artifact gave a mysterious glow, Soane’s intentions to cultivate the imagination and ignite curiosity were far from enigmatic.

Just as the electric current of a summer tempest captivated the scientific sensibilities of Franklin, architects of the Enlightenment sought to harness, manipulate, and improve upon nature. Their experimentations with light created dynamic vessels for intellectual discourse and fueled the ambiance of illumination during the Age of Reason.

Danielle S. Willkens, Associate ALA, FRSA, is a graduate of the University of Virginia, March '08; Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation Traveling Fellowship Award '07; Cambridge University St. John's College, M.Phil '06; University of Virginia, BS

² David Watkin, ed. *Sir John Soane: The Royal Academy Lectures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Letter from the Director of Sir John Soane's Museum

This year we celebrate Sir John Soane as a master of light and space in his architecture. With his domes, lanterns, sun-tubes and other clever devices for sucking light into his buildings, no architect has ever quite rivaled John Soane in his masterly way of illuminating architectural spaces. Soane's masterpiece was the vast complex of the Bank of England – now sadly destroyed and commemorated only by drawings and photographs – with its domed banking halls derived from ancient Roman palaces and baths, its courtyards, and labyrinth of communicating corridors and lobbies. Then there is Dulwich Picture Gallery, with its combination of fit-for-purpose top lit picture galleries and atmospheric founders' mausoleum illuminated from above by panes of amber-colored glass. But best of all is the Museum itself, with its myriad of ingenious top lit spaces, and wealth of stained and colored glass. Here, darkness and shadow is as important as lighting – witness the lugubrious gloom of the Crypt, a deliberate contrast to the light-filled Sepulchral Chamber with its translucent alabaster sarcophagus.

The Soane Museum's \$12 million campaign, *Opening up the Soane*, aims to reinstate many lost features of Soane's extraordinary house-museum – not just displays of furniture and artifacts, but entire ambiances incorporating stained glass and ingenious hidden light sources. My favorite is the 'suntube' that illuminated a narrow book passage outside the architect's bedchamber, which drew light from a lantern in the roof two floors above and incorporated a mirrored setting for a youthful portrait of Soane – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* realized!

All this is doubly exciting as we have now raised all but \$1 million for the *Opening up the Soane* appeal. This is a tremendous achievement in these challenging times and a cause for celebration! Thank you to our many friends in the United States who have contributed so generously to this important appeal.

As well as returning the Museum to its state on Soane's death, *Opening up the Soane* brings other benefits, such as upgraded visitor facilities and the creation of a new Exhibition Gallery, which will allow us

to show a changing program of exhibitions. The project will also allow the museum to dedicate an entire floor of No.12 as a new Conservation Centre, which will allow us to take better care of the thousands of objects in the collection for years to come. We are delighted that the Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation has raised \$1 million towards this part of the project - a really significant gesture of support. We shall also be putting in improvements that will allow full disabled access to the Museum via the creation of two new elevators. These changes will enable us to show more of the Museum and its collections to more people and to better look after them - retaining and enhancing the special atmosphere of this unique museum.

Phase 1 of this exciting project is already on site – No.12 Lincoln's Inn Fields is currently shrouded in a forest of scaffolding – and will be completed by April 2012 – the 200th anniversary of the building of No.13 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The new Exhibition Gallery will open in June 2012 with a prestigious new exhibition on sports stadia - ancient and modern - which will be the Museum's contribution to the Cultural Olympiad that is part of London's Olympic Games celebrations. Thereafter, the remainder of the project will take approximately 18 months and should be completed by the end of 2013. It is an ambitious and complex project, arguably the most challenging the Museum has yet to undertake. Fundraising is now well underway and the Museum has only \$1 million still to find.

Thank you for showing your support of the work of the Foundation and the Museum by attending this Gala. We're thrilled with how successful this event has become, which does so much to help keep the name, achievements and legacy of Sir John Soane at the forefront of people's minds.

Tim Knox
Director

To see more about the plans and images for
OPENING UP THE SOANE
please go to the foundation web site and click on > Securing the Future
www.SoaneFoundation.com

Looking to the Future — Soane Conservation Fund

Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation is very proud of its role in the Soane Museum's *Opening up the Soane* capital campaign. The funding of the new John A. and Cynthia Fry Gunn Conservation Centre will provide crucial space, equipment and staff, very substantially increasing both the volume and extent of the conservation work undertaken by the museum. In the words of the current chief conservator at the Soane, the new Conservation Centre "*will transform our work, giving us the possibility to take a broader view of conservation than ever before.*"

Conservation is a critical core function of the Soane – the importance of this work to the quality of the museum and artifacts cannot be overstated. The Soane Foundation is committed to supporting ongoing conservation at the Soane. Following the campaign, we will be launching the *Soane Conservation Fund* for continued aid and assistance to the museum for projects.

These projects will include research and conservation on items within the collection, such as works on paper and plaster objects, including special items such as Sir John Soane's vast collection of architectural models (the largest in the United Kingdom). Other projects may focus on the care and restoration of its world famous historic interiors. There is much to be done and we are proud to be a part of this important work, now and in the future.

Thomas A. Kligerman
President

SIR JOHN SOANE'S MUSEUM FOUNDATION *in the* UNITED STATES

The mission of the Foundation is to provide unique educational programs for professionals and lay-persons who relish in-depth exploration of issues of architecture and the fine and decorative arts. The Foundation also provides a traveling fellowship each year for a graduate student or scholar to go to the Museum to further their work and research.

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~ Creative Services ~

Robert Van Nutt for creating and designing the invitation, program cover, and awards,
plus the designs on the dinner tables and throughout the space.

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Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation's mission is to promote to an expanding audience a lively educational forum in the fields of art, architecture and the decorative arts within the Soanean tradition and to assist financially Sir John Soane's Museum in London. The Soane Foundation is pleased to offer these opportunities for support. Please consider supporting us with a gift of \$100 or more!

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~ Please tear this page out and use the back for completing your membership information ~

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