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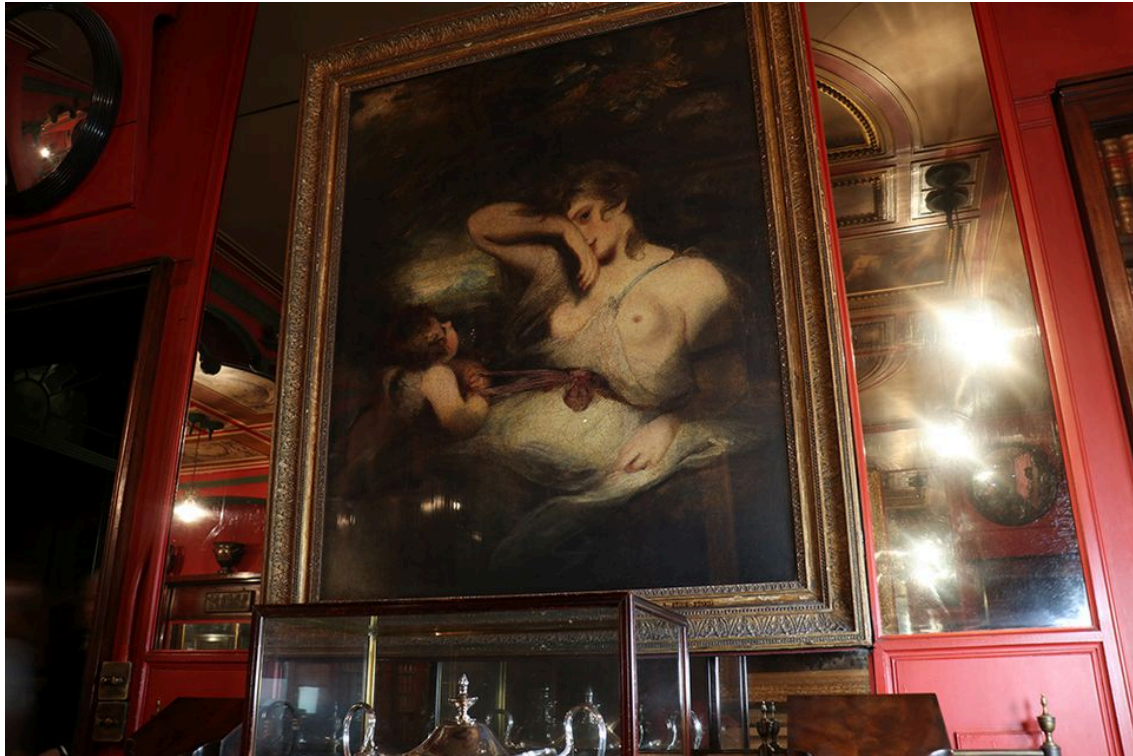

THE ART NEWSPAPER

Soane Museum starts crowdfunding campaign to restore valued frame of a Reynolds painting

Institution hopes to raise £15,000 to clean and conserve wooden structure surrounding *The Snake in the Grass*

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Sir Joshua Reynolds's *The Snake in the Grass* (1785) in the library/dining room of Sir John Soane's Museum Tom Ryley Sir John's Soane Museum in London opened a crowdfunding campaign today (22 October) to raise £15,000 to clean and conserve the original gilded frame of Sir Joshua Reynolds's *The Snake in the Grass* (1785), which has pride of place in the institution's period library/dining room.

The museum says it hopes to raise the funds by 19 November through Art Fund's crowdfunding platform, [Art Happens](#). During the first week of the effort, donations of up to £5000 will be matched by a private donor, it says.

The institution describes the work, which depicts a Classical nymph and cupid, as one of its most significant paintings. It says that the frame, however, is "desperately" in need of repair, with the gilding in degraded condition.

"The frame—made of elaborate moulded compo on

a wooden structure—would have been stunning when it was first exhibited, but over the last 200 years the surface has become dirty, the gilding flaky and unstable, and there is damage to some of the gesso,” says Jane Wilkinson, head of conservation at the museum. “If we are successful in raising the £15,000 we will be able to return the frame to its former splendour.”

She says that conservators will strive to preserve details and finishes from Soane's time. “We will test solutions that will clean the delicate surface without damaging it before cleaning the frame, consolidating unstable gold and regilding and toning where necessary,” Wilkinson says. “Finally we will apply a thin coat of gelatin over the gold to protect it from dirt and pollutants.” She says the process will take three months.

Soane, a prominent neo-Classical architect and collector who bequeathed his house and collection to the nation upon his death in 1837, attached great importance to the painting, the museum says. When he was a student, he received the Royal Academy's Gold Medal for Architecture from Reynolds, who was a mentor, and later he bought *The Snake in the Grass* for his collection.



Detail of the frame for The Snake in the Grass Tom Ryley