

New Approaches to Ruskin on Art and Architecture

A two-day conference, Friday 1st - Saturday
2nd December 2017
UCL and The Courtauld Institute of Art,
London

Organised by Kelly Freeman (UCL) and Thomas
Hughes (The Courtauld).

(John Ruskin, *Study of Marble Inlaying on the the Front of
the Casa Loredan, Venice, 1845*, © Ashmolean Museum,
University of Oxford).



'Nature always looks strange when she is truly rendered, and is always doing what none of us expect from her'.

John Ruskin, *Academy Notes* (1858).

'Ruskinian seeing is a set of conversions – from surface phenomena to essences or qualities to energies and finally to a pervasive sentient energy or mind of which all things are manifestations [...] This yielding of perception to conception and thought to feeling I take to be the distinguishing character of Ruskinian phenomenology, succinctly adumbrated in the well-known phrase "intellectual lens and moral [that is, emotional] retina" (4, 36)'.

Paul L. Sawyer, *Ruskin's Poetic Argument: The Design of the Major Works* (1985).

In advance of his bicentenary in 2019 this conference will provide the opportunity to gather together, present and exchange new approaches by emerging scholars to the work of the nineteenth-century art critic, art writer, art historian, artist and social commentator John Ruskin, with particular emphasis on his work on art and architecture as understood to constitute the kernel of Ruskin's engagement with human society and experience. Since the time of their publication, which spanned the Victorian era, Ruskin's writings have provided ways of thinking about the relationships between art and architecture, society and nature. Ruskin's writings are finding a new readership and critical currency given the emphasis now placed in the arts and humanities on environment, ecology, climate change, organicism and the 'anthropocene'. What of Ruskin's draughtsmanship and his pronouncements on art and architecture in this new light? If Ruskin is finding a place within contemporary discourses of the 'non-human', such as architect Lars Spuybroek's 2011 (revised 2016) manifesto for the construction of digital-Gothic cities *The Sympathy of Things*, this conference will also consider where Ruskin on art and architecture can take academic discussion about the place of the human being in a now-imperilled nature and an uncertain world.

Proposals for papers of 20 minutes are invited on topics including but not limited to: Ruskin and –

Art criticism, language, aesthetic experience, image/text, metaphor, drawing, painting, theories of art and architecture, architectural methodology, ornament and decoration, pattern, sense and sensation, perception, consciousness, imagination, translation and pedagogy, form, organic(ism), science, Darwin, the (non)human, images/concepts/theories of nature, bodies in nature and art/architecture, death, art in industrial/consumer/material culture, community, Gothic, Renaissance, revival, reform, modernity, Britain and Europe.

Owing to the interdisciplinary nature of Ruskin's work we warmly encourage proposals from a range of disciplines, including but not limited to: art, architecture, art history, anthropology, history, geography, environment and climate politics, economics and literary studies. We particularly welcome proposals from emerging scholars (such as PhD students and early career academics) as well as from our more established colleagues.

Please send proposals of no more than 300 words with CVs to **both** Kelly and Thomas by the end of 15th October.

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