

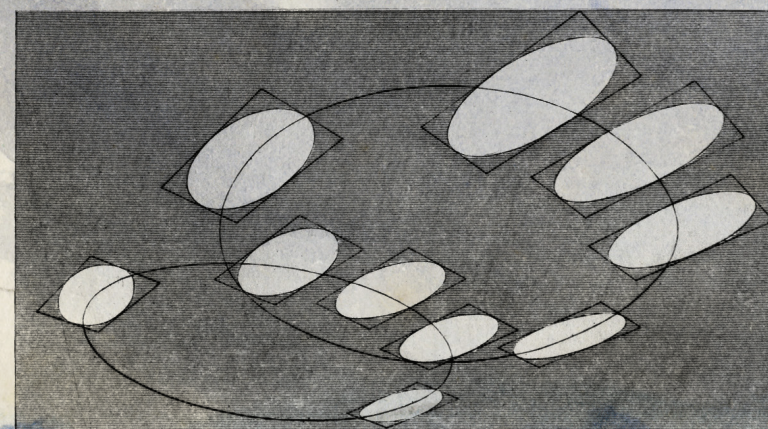
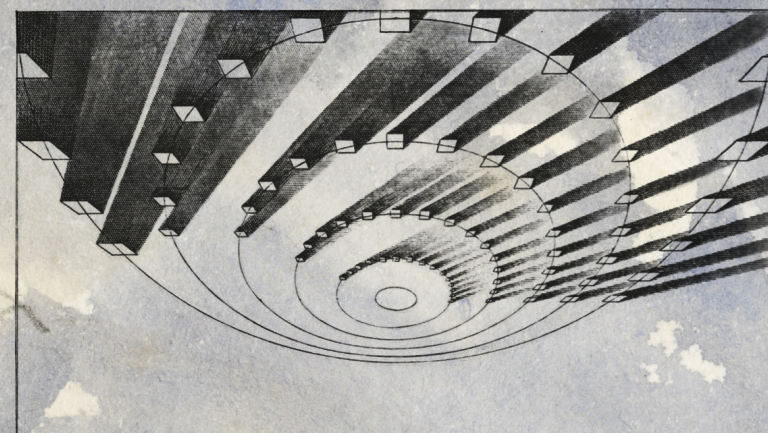
Ruskin: Museum of the Near Future

We all seek to make sense of the world, our perspectives shaped by different forms of knowledge, culture, values and beliefs.

John Ruskin (1819 - 1900) sought to encounter the world by close looking, examining the interplay between past, present and future. He conveyed his insights through a blend of images and words, cutting across science, religion, art, literature, economics and social sciences. He always connected knowledge to the intimacy of personal experience. This is what made Ruskin one of the greatest thinkers of all time.

Ruskin's motto was 'Today'. He believed that the way we see things now will shape the way we think and behave in the future. His concerns about the dehumanising effects of technology, and impact of industrialisation on the health of the planet, speak powerfully to our own era.

'Ruskin: The Museum of the Near Future' explores the relevance of Ruskin's thinking today. Inviting us to look closely, see clearly and imagine freely, his works take us into the nature of seeing and into the multidimensional nature of knowledge itself. Parables and places for imaginative encounters, they reflect our relationship, both modest and magnificent, to the world in which we live.



J. Ruskin
J. Emshie
Allen & Co. 88

65. Cloud Perspective. (Curvilinear)

Acknowledgments

The Ruskin – Library, Museum and Research Centre is home to the world's largest assemblage of work by John Ruskin (1819 – 1900), the epoch-defining writer, artist, environmentalist and social thinker. Parts of The Ruskin Whitehouse Collection are on permanent and rotating display at Brantwood, Ruskin's house on Coniston Water where he lived for the last 28 years of his life (www.brantwood.org.uk). Brantwood has its own collections, including Ruskin's Geology Collection, which are showcased in the exhibition.

To mark the purchase of the Ruskin Whitehouse Collection by Lancaster University in 2019, Ruskin's bicentenary year, and its permanent location at The Ruskin and Brantwood, the exhibition 'Ruskin: Museum of the Near Future' was designed and co-curated by Professor Sandra Kemp, Director, The Ruskin and Howard Hull, Director, Brantwood, with assistance from Harriet Hill-Payne. We are grateful to Christopher Donaldson, Mamuna Hussain, Rebecca Patterson, Jen Shepherd, Nick Smith and Diane Tyler at The Ruskin; and to Megan Griffiths, Jacob Lewis, and Helen Wharton at Brantwood, for their support on the exhibition and re-launch. Our thanks to Alan Anderson, Anna Cockman and Guy Constantine (Facilities, Lancaster University) for their tireless work on the refurbishment of the building and the exhibition build; to Chris Dixon (Head of IT Partnership and Innovation, Lancaster University) for leading on Digital & AV Design; to Nick Fragel and Caroline Costello (Development and Alumni, Lancaster University); to Simon Jennings and Gill Bartlett (Strategic Planning and Governance) and to Professor Simon Guy (Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Digital, Global, Development) and Professor Michael Hughes (Acting Dean, FASS, Lancaster University). Our thanks to lending artists Sarah Casey, Janet Manifold, Franziska Schenzk, Emma Stibbon and Patricia Townsend; and to Abbot Hall, Alan Cristea Gallery, Guild of St George, Jane Beck Heritage Collection, Museums Sheffield, Peter Scott Gallery Charitable Trust and The Ruskin Museum, Coniston.

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Welcome to our exhibition

'Ruskin was one of those rare men who ... thought and said ...what everyone will think and say in the future.'

Leo Tolstoy

Ruskin's motto was 'Today', and his works constantly reflect on how to position ourselves in the present moment in anticipation of the future. As we do now, Ruskin lived at a time of rapid change. The development of trade, travel, communications and technologies in the nineteenth century fuelled his appreciation of the connectedness of objects, actions and values and the ways that they shape people and their environments. Ruskin's vision is rooted in the particularities of the natural world (Lessons of the Peacock Feather) and their relation to forces of change and transformation (Ethics of the Dust). His works encourage us to re-imagine our understanding of our choices in the world through intense processes of visual observation.

This map invites you to explore the exhibition, guided by Ruskin himself. We have shaped the exhibition around his lectures and publications. Reflective texts were integral to all Ruskin's works. In this vein, quotations by Ruskin accompany his drawings, diagrams, models and paintings in the exhibition. Interspersed among these are works and words by contemporary artists, testifying to the relevance of his vision in the twenty-first century.

As you start your journey, we invite you to reflect on how things take shape and where tomorrow's world is today. When Ruskin says 'There is no wealth but life' we have to ask the question, what is life?

Professor Sandra Kemp
Director, The Ruskin – Library, Museum
and Research Centre

Cloud Study – Over Coniston Water, 1880. John Ruskin
© The Ruskin. **The Works of John Ruskin** (London: Cook & Wedderburn, 1905), VII, Plate 65

R
S
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K
Ruskin:

Museum of the Near Future

Look closely, see clearly, imagine freely:
parables and places to encounter our world

N:

Lessons of the Peacock Feather

Model Quill Feather from the wing of Common Tern or Sea Swallow (*Sterna hirundo*), enlarged five times, date unknown. W.E. Dawes. Paper and wood, hand painted, in custom made box. Loaned by The Ruskin Museum, Coniston
Primary Quill of the Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), enlarged ten times, date unknown. W.E. Dawes. Paper and wood, handpainted, in custom made box. Loaned by The Ruskin Museum, Coniston
Ruskin's Good Looking! (Accessory), 2018 Sarah Casey. Wax on paper © Sarah Casey
Loaned by the artist

Filaments, Thistles, Feathers
Peacock Feather with Filaments
John Ruskin. Library Edition Volume 25
Studies of an Oxalis and a Bud
John Ruskin. Pencil and watercolour
Rock Study with Lichens
John Ruskin. Pencil and wash on white card
Proserpina Plate 27, States of Adversity
Steel engraving by G. Allen
States of Adversity – Plate 27 Proserpina
Steel engraving by G. Allen
Thistles – Five Studies, 1880. John Ruskin
Pencil, brown ink, ink wash and bodycolour on buff paper
Study of Acanthoid Leaves, Marsh Thistle, 1879. John Ruskin. Pencil and ink
Perennial Cornflower
John Ruskin. Pencil and ink
Milk Thistle, 1874. John Ruskin. Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour. Letter enclosure to Joan Severn inscribed in ink: 2nd S. 17 / Fat Fitie – up in the morning early
Study of Larch Buds. John Ruskin
Pencil, watercolour and body colour
Study of Larch Buds
John Ruskin. Ink on tracing paper
Four Studies of Buds. School of Ruskin
Purple wash on paper laid on canvas
Diary Notebook 1869 – 1874. Study of Leaves. John Ruskin. Ink (facing page 47)
Notebook 1854. Study of Thistle
John Ruskin. Brown ink, watercolour and bodycolour (facing page 11)
Sow Thistle, 1865. John Ruskin
Pen, ink wash and white on buff paper
Candytuft, 1865. John Ruskin
Pen, brown ink and ink wash
Common Ragwort (*Senecio Jacobaea*)
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink and watercolour
Week of Dandelions, 2011. Rebecca Chesney. Screen print on chart recorder paper. © Rebecca Chesney. Loaned by Peter Scott Gallery (Lancaster University) and Peter Scott Gallery Charitable Trust
Leaf Studies – Front and Side View
John Ruskin. Pencil, bodycolour and white on grey-green paper
Botanical Study of Ox Tongue. John Ruskin (1819 – 1900). Pencil and brown ink
Diary Notebook 1846 – 1850. John Ruskin

Lecture Diagram
Peacock and Falcon Feather, 1873. John Ruskin. Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour

Trees
Lecture Diagram: Buttercup Leaf
School of Ruskin. Pencil, chalk, watercolour and bodycolour on paper, laid on canvas
The Aspen, Under Idealisation, 1856
John Ruskin. Pencil and ink
Ruskin's First Sketch Book, 1829. John Ruskin. Pencil and ink on white paper
Aspen Tree. John Ruskin. Pencil and watercolour on blue-grey paper

Aspen Unidealised, After Ruskin, 1875 Louise Virenda Blandy. Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour
Branches – 3 Studies of Trees and 1 Study of Flower in Seed. School of Ruskin. Sepia wash and pencil on paper laid on canvas
Studies of Tree with Leaves and Fruit
John Ruskin. Pencil
Oak Stems, 1860
John Ruskin. Brown ink on blue notepaper
Studies of Silverweed
John Ruskin. Ink and wash
Studies of Sedum
John Ruskin. Pencil and brown ink
Tree Study, Vevay, 1846
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink and ink wash
Study of Oak
John Ruskin. Watercolour on buff paper
The Road to Florence, 1845
John Ruskin. Pencil, brown ink, ink wash and bodycolour on buff paper
View near Turin, 1846
John Ruskin. Ink and sepia
Landscape in the Mist 001, 2011
Wu Chi-Tsung © Wu Chi-Tsung. Loaned by Peter Scott Gallery (Lancaster University) and Peter Scott Gallery Charitable Trust

Butterflies, Birds
Sculpture at Avallon, 1882. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink wash, watercolour and bodycolour
Studies of Leaf, Detail. John Ruskin
Bodycolour and white on purple card
Erebus Obscura, diptych II, 2010
Franziska Schenk © Franziska Schenk
Loaned by the artist

Study of Bird Wing (Fig. 9). John Ruskin
Ink. Loaned by The Ruskin Museum, Coniston
Study of Bird Wing (Fig. 6). John Ruskin
Ink. Loaned by The Ruskin Museum, Coniston
Time Unfolding, 2019
Janet Manifold. Alabaster © Janet Manifold. Loaned by the artist
Ruskin Shell Box
Unknown. Mixed Wood, Inlaid
Collection of River Shells Belonging to John Ruskin. Shell, cardboard
Catalogue of John Ruskin's Shell Collection. John Ruskin. Exercise Book
Time Unfolding (Echoes), 2019
Janet Manifold. Audio © Janet Manifold
Loaned by the artist

All works are © The Ruskin, Lancaster University unless otherwise stated.

Peacock and Falcon Feather, 1873. John Ruskin © The Ruskin, Lancaster University

Lessons of the Peacock Feather

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

Ruskin was a renowned teacher, lecturer and public intellectual, and he campaigned for education for all. His social project, The Guild of St George, and the teaching collections he established in Coniston, Sheffield and Oxford are testaments to Ruskin's vision for beauty and learning in everyday life.

Produced as visual aids for his popular public lectures, Ruskin's Lecture Diagrams and painted wooden feather models emphasize the value of objects as a teaching and learning tool, in Ruskin's time and today. Displayed alongside his large-scale diagrams and models are Ruskin's closely observed studies of form in nature, from the filament of a thistle or barb of a peacock's feather, to the branch of a tree or bird's wing. Ruskin's sketches, paintings, diagrams and models reveal his playful but informative oscillation between micro and macro scales of perception.

Works by contemporary artists highlight the connections across shape and form, and emphasis on change and transformation, throughout the Collection.

The first lesson: **see clearly**
Filaments, Feathers, Thistles / Sight

The second lesson: **understand the nature of things**
Birds, Butterflies, colour/Composition

The third lesson: **know the part things play**
Trees / Relationship / Meaning

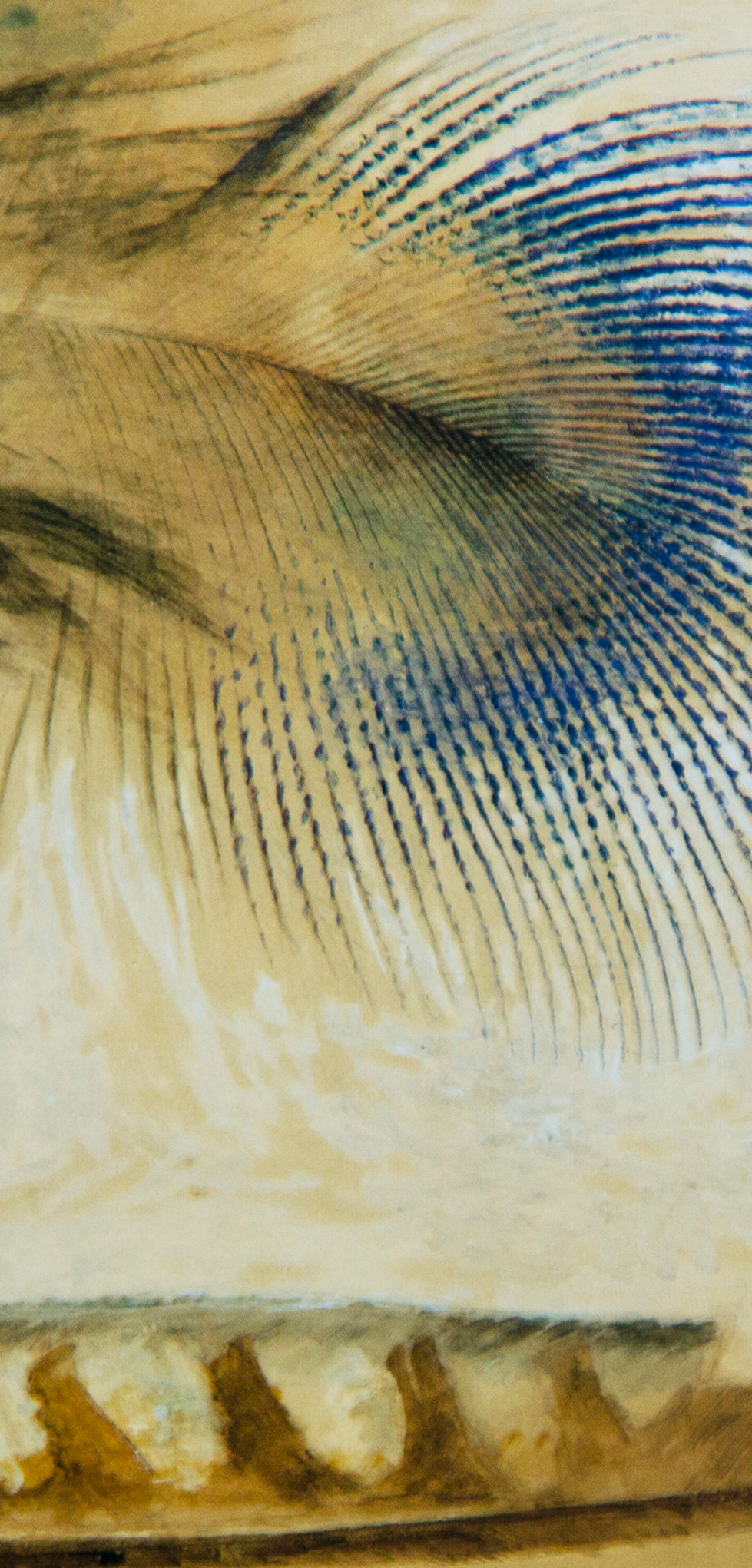
Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

'Friday last, I was persuaded to a Lecture of Ruskin's at the Institution on Albemarle Street: Lecture on Tree-leaves (as physiological, pictorial, moral, symbolical etc. objects); a crammed house. The Lecture 'broke down' as a Lecture; but only did from embarras des richesses (a rare case). Ruskin did blow asunder, as by gunpowder explosion, his Leaf-notions, which were manifold, curious; genial; and in fine I do not recollect to have heard in that place any neater thing I liked so well as this chaotic one.'

Letter from Thomas Carlyle to John Carlyle, 23rd April 1861, describing Ruskin's lecture on 'Tree Twigs'

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

What is the difference between a feather and a cloud?



Ethics of the Dust

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

From minerals to mountains, cornices to cathedrals, Ruskin's work was aided by scientific instruments of measurement and the most advanced technologies of the day. Ruskin's meticulous approach to collecting, cataloguing and taxonomy reveal his interest in understanding the forces of change and transformation. For Ruskin these teach us 'laws for life', what he called 'The Ethics of the Dust'.

Think with enduring values, not of enduring things
Architecture is a social question. The same energy and material wealth creates a Venice or a Manchester. Different values create different results.

Let nature be your teacher
We are instinctively drawn to those geological transformations of the earth which reflect our values. The clearer we see the world, the greater our empathy and the clearer we see that life itself and human happiness arise when processes of disintegration give way to periods of composition.

Take heart
Ours is a great responsibility. In both knowledge and ignorance lie life-giving choices. What lies in our hearts is everything. We give value to life.

Through their focus on the fundamental building blocks of nature, Ruskin's works act as catalysts for ideas and imaginaries. At the same time, they warn us that forms of both action and inaction can have devastating effect on our stewardship of life and our care for each other

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

'More interesting to [Ruskin] than school was the British Museum collection of minerals, ... He took the greatest pains over [cataloguing his own collection], and wrote elaborate accounts of the various minerals in a shorthand he invented out of Greek letters and crystal forms... He had made a splendid collection, and knew the various museums of Europe as familiarly as he knew the picture-galleries. In the 'Ethics of the Dust' he had chosen Crystallography as the subject in which to exemplify his method of education; and in 1867, ... he took refuge, as before, among the stones...'

W. G. Collingwood, The Life of John Ruskin, 1902

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

How do buildings grow?

Peacock Feather with Filaments, John Ruskin, 1875

Ethics of the Dust

Clouds
Storm Clouds on Cenis, 1858. John Ruskin. Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour on two joined sheets of paper
Rocks and Waves. John Ruskin
Pencil, wash and white
Shell Study. John Ruskin
Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour
Breakers at Sandgate. John Ruskin
Letter from John Ruskin to Joan Severn
Sunset at Sandgate. John Ruskin
Letter from John Ruskin to Joan Severn
Cloud Study over Coniston Water, 1880
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink and watercolour
Cloud Effect over Coniston Old Man
John Ruskin. Pencil and watercolour
Cloud Study. John Ruskin
Pencil and ink on white
Black Sun, 2017. Patricia Townsend. 4k video, 5 minutes 20 seconds (looped) © Patricia Townsend. Loaned by the artist

Architecture
Scaliger Tombs: Details of ironwork
John Ruskin. Pencil
Ironwork on the Tomb of Can Signorio, Verona, 1869. John Ruskin. Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour
Gothic Ornament – Details Drawn for Stones of Venice. John Ruskin. Pencil, ink, ink wash and bodycolour
Capitals of Two Pillars, 1849
John Ruskin. Pencil
Doge's Capital, Venice – 36th Capital. John Ruskin. Pencil, black ink and ink wash
Venice – Details of 5 Capitals. John Ruskin
5 drawings, mounted together. Pencil and ink wash
Capital at Avallon, 1882. John Ruskin. Pencil
Venice – Gothic Capital of Window Shaft, Casa Bernardo Mocenigo. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink and watercolour
Diary of John Ruskin 1851 – 1852
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink, watercolour
Venice – Notebook 'Gothic Book'
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink, watercolour
'Prudence'; Virtue from the Central Archivolt, Basilica of San Marco, Venice, (c. 1877) Unknown. Plaster cast. Loaned by the Guild of St George, Museums Sheffield
Edinburgh Lecture Diagram: decorated cusped Gothic window. John Ruskin. John Everett Millais (1829 – 1896), Lady Euphemia Millais (1828 – 1897)
Pencil, ink, watercolour, bodycolour, oil and gold paint
Venice – Capitals: Convex Group, 1849
John Ruskin. Pencil, brown ink, ink wash, watercolour and bodycolour
Stones of Venice – Cornice Decoration, 1851. John Ruskin. Pencil, ink and ink wash
Venice – Byzantine Capitals, Concave Group. John Ruskin. Pencil, black ink and ink wash
Architectural Notebook, 1848. Vaulting shaft and Mouldings. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink, watercolour
Stones of Venice – John Ruskin's notes & sketches. John Ruskin. Inscribed in ink: No 21 fr 44 ill.

Mountains
Above the Vale of Balstall, Jura; The Needles of Mont Blanc, 1833
Pencil and black ink. John Ruskin
Stelvio Pass – View From The Top, 1864
John Ruskin. Pencil touched with brown ink
Vevay, 1846. John Ruskin
Pencil and watercolour
St. Gotthard Pass, Near Amsteg, 1835
John Ruskin. Pencil and black ink
Mer de Glace, Chamonix, 1849. John Ruskin
Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour

All works are © The Ruskin, Lancaster University unless otherwise stated.

Mountain peak, Letter from John Ruskin to Joan Severn 1878 Aug 16. John Ruskin. Ink
Geological formation study. John Ruskin
Pencil, watercolour and bodycolour on white card

Geological study, cleavage from Brantwood to Scafell. John Ruskin. Pencil
Diary of John Ruskin 1855. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink

Above Baveno, looking north west to Monte Orfano, and the entrance to the Domodossola valley leading to the Simplon Pass, 1845. John Ruskin
Pencil, black ink, watercolour and bodycolour on grey paper
Ravine at Ardon, Valais. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink wash and watercolour
View from Bonneville. John Ruskin
Watercolour, pencil
Wellhorn and Watterhorn, 1835
John Ruskin. Black ink and bodycolour on grey-green paper
Convent of St Michael, Seen from Turin, 1858. John Ruskin. Pencil and watercolour
Chamonix. Les Aiguilles, 1854. John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
Chamonix. Daguerreotype
Chamonix. Mer de Glace, Mont Blanc Massif, 1854. John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley. Daguerreotype
Chamonix. Aiguille Verte and Aiguille du Dru, 1854. John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley. Daguerreotype
Ardon (Valais). Gorge de la Lizerne, 1854
John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
Daguerreotype
Ardon (Valais). Gorge de la Lizerne, 1854
John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
Daguerreotype

Ardon (Valais). Gorge de la Lizerne, 1854
John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
Daguerreotype
Ardon (Valais). Gorge de la Lizerne, 1854
John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
Daguerreotype
Relations of Form in Alternating Hard and Soft Rocks. John Ruskin. (1) Pencil and ink wash (2) Pencil and ink wash (3) Pencil and brown ink, on two sheets (4) Pencil
Mountain Peaks: Six Diagrams Drawn For Modern Painters, 1855. John Ruskin. Ink on woodblock, uncut
Range of The Aiguille Bouchard, Chamouni. John Ruskin. Ink on woodblock, uncut
Geological Cross-sections: Thun to Interlaken, Lancaster to Carlisle
John Ruskin. Pencil, ink and watercolour
Diary Notebook 1861-1865. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink, watercolour
Diary Notebook 1856-1859. John Ruskin
Pencil, ink, watercolour
Deucalion Plate IV, Amethyst – Quartz
London: George Allen
Deucalion Plate X, Modes of Crystalline Increment. London: George Allen
St. George's Diamond, 1884. William Gershom Collingwood (1854 – 1932). Pencil, on envelope of blue-grey paper
Envelope containing Ruskin's list of specimens with descriptions of diamonds, gems and minerals
John Ruskin. Loose sheets
Selection from John Ruskin's Mineral Collection. John Ruskin
Loaned by Brantwood
Chimborazo I, 2018. Indian ink, ground oyster shell on paper. Emma Stibbon © Emma Stibbon. Loaned by Alan Cristea Gallery
Chimborazo II, 2019. Indian ink, volcanic soils, ground oyster shell on paper
Emma Stibbon © Emma Stibbon. Loaned by Alan Cristea Gallery

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Sarah Casey

‘...to preserve something like a true image of beautiful things that pass away, or which you must yourself leave.’

Ruskin, LE 15. 25

Ruskin used drawing as a technique to enhance his understanding of the world. In *Ruskin's Good Looking!* (2017-19), Sarah Casey applied the process of close looking to the intimate landscape of Ruskin's own clothing.

Ruskin's Good Looking! (Accessory) shows Ruskin's hat, christening cap, trousers, neck cloth and shoes. The drawing is made with a dressmakers pin, scoring marks into the surface of a finely waxed sheet of paper. Like breath or memory, it has a fragile existence and will literally melt away if exposed to heat. These spectral drawings recall the past through evoking what is absent, but also gesture to the uncertainty of the future.

Sarah writes, 'Slowing down to examine Ruskin's clothing, through drawing, was a catalyst for reflection on what it means to draw: as a tool of preservation, a trace of something past and a reminder of the precarity of existence.'

Sarah Casey makes drawings which test the limits of visibility and material existence. She has taken drawing to a range of challenging environments, to see what the activity of drawing may share with other practices that must negotiate the delicate to reveal the unseen. She is Senior Lecturer in Drawing and Installation at Lancaster University.

Janet Manifold

‘Your art is to be the praise of something that you love. It may only be the praise of a shell or a stone.’

Ruskin, LE 15. 353

Made of alabaster - itself composed of calcium formed millions of years ago in an aquatic environment - Janet Manifold's sculpture, *Time Unfolding*, embodies the beauty and fragility of time and of self. Ruskin was deeply aware of time, wanting us to linger, walk, think, look around us, to appreciate the beauty of things.

Manifold writes, 'my love of alabaster is rooted in its materiality, and my work explores the structures and forms of aquatic organisms, evolutionary origins, and the critical role played by calcium in the functioning of all life forms both in life and death. As Ruskin anticipated, we face immense uncertainty here, now, today. However, the natural world, which bears the heavy evidence of our presence also holds the key to renewal. In the rhythms and cycles of unfolding time, it was here long before us and will be here long after we are gone. We are memory and nostalgia, imagination and anticipation: it is these things which make us uniquely human.'

Janet Manifold is a sculptor working primarily in alabaster.

Rebecca Chesney

‘Thus, in a dandelion, the little brown grains, which may be blown away, each with its silken parachute, are every one of them a complete husk and seed together’

Ruskin, LE 25. 374

Week of Dandelions was created in 2011, while Rebecca Chesney was artist in residence at Peter Scott Gallery, Lancaster Arts. The print is part of The Dandelion Archive, which Chesney describes as 'an ongoing research enquiry in to dandelions: their complexity and variety; folklore and uses; science and research plus their representation in art and material culture.' It is an invitation to 'linger on the dandelion's beauty, consider its resilience and take time to look again at this humble plant'.

Ruskin studied all elements of the natural world with the same intensity, meticulously recording detail, colour and form. His sketches, diaries, notebooks and letters are evidence of vitality, resilience and complexity found in places others might overlook - moss, thistles, seed-heads and weeds, including dandelions.

Rebecca Chesney is interested in how we perceive land: how we romanticise, translate and define urban and rural spaces. She looks at how politics, ownership, management and commercial value all influence our surroundings and have made extensive investigations into the impact of human activities on nature and the environment.

Wu Chi-Tsung

‘Your art is to be the praise of something that you love. It may only be the praise of a shell or a stone.’

Ruskin, LE 15. 353

Wu Chi-Tsung creates work to challenge perceptions of our physical and natural worlds. *Landscape in the Mist 001* is a meditative experiment in moving image, drawing on traditional Chinese painting and ink technique. As tree-forms emerge from the mist, the viewer is invited to recalibrate initial assumptions of time, place and scale of perception, and practice the slow looking which was central to Ruskin's thought.

In Ruskin's own work, and by necessity in the technologies he employed, the pace of image-making was slowed to enable close, careful scrutiny. Ruskin was captivated by the new technologies for perceiving, manipulating and fixing images offered by his age, though, for Ruskin, these were a way of enhancing – rather than a substitute for – the human eye.

Wu writes, 'I am particularly interested in the principle behind the systems and mechanisms of things. The focus of attention is usually on images because they reflect how humans see, understand, and imagine the world.'

Wu Chi-Tsung's practice deals with landscape, nature and the urban environment. Although traditional painting influences and inspires his artistic output, Wu often executes his work through video, photography and installation.

Patricia Townsend

‘A stone may be round or angular, polished or rough, cracked all over like an ill-glazed teacup ... or crystallised like hoar-frost, or veined like a forest leaf: look at it, and don’t try to remember how anyone told you to “do a stone.”’

Ruskin, LE 15. 97

The starting point for Patricia Townsend’s *Black Sun* was the unexpected discovery of a near-spherical volcanic rock on the island of Stromboli. ‘Black Sun’ is a moving image work created by animating a series of still photographs, drawing the viewer’s attention to almost imperceptible changes in the fine detail of the surface.

Townsend writes, ‘I am interested in our relationship with landscape and the way in which we project our own feelings onto our surroundings. I share Ruskin’s fascination with the visual qualities of rock surfaces and the fact that rocks connect us with the distant past. Ruskin saw all living and non-living things as organisms that change over time. He collected rocks and minerals and made many drawings, bringing out the fine detail in the stones. In *Black Sun* I animate the rock, alluding to its changing nature, inviting the viewer to focus on the fine detail of the rock surface and its infinitesimal changes.’

Patricia Townsend is an artist working with video, photography and installation. *Black Sun* was exhibited at Brantwood, Ruskin’s house in Coniston, from 2018-2019 supported by Arts Council England. Her book *Creative States of Mind: Psychoanalysis and the Artist’s Process* was published by Routledge in 2019.



Franziska Schenk

‘If I had him [Darwin] here in Oxford for a week, and could force him to try to copy a feather, his notions of feathers ... would be changed for all the rest of his life. But his ignorance of good art is no excuse for the accurately illogical simplicity of the rest of his talk of colour in the *Descent of Man*.’

Ruskin, LE 25. 263-264

Franziska Schenk’s *Erebus obscura*, developed as part of Darwin 200, uses nano-pigment technology developed for the commercial industries. This technology enables Schenk to depict the iridescent colour that formed the centerpiece of Ruskin’s attack on Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Schenk writes, ‘Ruskin’s study of a single iridescent peacock feather showing each individual filament can be seen as an attempt to gain a better understanding of the workings of these mysterious rainbow colours, and to analyse their purpose in the grander scheme of nature, evolution and art. Ruskin urged artists to ‘go to Nature, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing.’’

Franziska Schenk’s work on nature’s iridescent hues and millennia-old colour optics, complemented by scientific study, have led her to adopt new nano-materials for painting. The resulting artwork, like iridescent creatures, fluctuates in perceived colour and pattern, depending on the light and vantage. Her work, *From Mimesis to Biomimetics: Towards Smarter Art*, has most recently been shown at Max Planck Institute, Dresden in June 2019.

Ethics of the Dust

Chamonix. Mer de Glace,
Mont Blanc Massif, 1854 (detail)
John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley
© The Ruskin, Lancaster University

Emma Stibbon

‘Every day here I seem to see farther into nature, and into myself, and into futurity’.

1854, Ruskin’s Diary

Emma Stibbon’s works on paper dramatise the effects of human intervention and natural phenomena on monumental structures, exploring the fragility of existence. Stibbon’s work is stark, monochrome and often large-scale. In 2017 Stibbon was invited by Project Pressure (www.project-pressure.org) to make a new study of glaciated volcanoes on the High Plains of Ecuador. Chimborazo, Ecuador is one of the earth’s highest active volcanoes, visited by a number of Ruskin’s contemporaries including Darwin. Traces of soil collected at from the flanks of Chimborazo can be seen in *Chimborazo II*.

Stibbon writes, ‘Ruskin’s recognition that he was living through a time of unprecedented climate change now appears like a premonition of what was to come. His fascination with glacier morphology informed his writing and drawing in equal measure. Ruskin’s appreciated the tactile qualities of drawing, and the ‘unfinished’ quality of many of his drawings, where the margins of the sheet are left unworked and open, speaks to contemporary approaches in drawing practice.

Emma Stibbon is an artist who works primarily on paper. Drawing is at the heart of Emma’s practice and she has travelled widely, recording her responses to the physical appearance and psychological impact of natural and built environments. Emma was elected Royal Academician in 2013.