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Presenting the The Ruskin collection

DATE AND TIME

Thursday, 18 November 2021

from 1800-1900 (GMT) | 1900-2000 (CET) | 1300-1400 (EST)

VENUE ADDRESS

Online

Join from your location

Link attached to event booking confirmation email

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The Silver Canvas: John Ruskin's daguerreotypes in The Ruskin Whitehouse Collection at Lancaster University

On 15th June 1885, in a letter to Arthur Browning, John Ruskin wrote: 'I never keep photographs myself, except of the Alps or Architecture'. This statement characterises the subject matter of the 125 daguerreotypes made, commissioned or purchased by Ruskin and now housed at The Ruskin – Library, Museum and Research Centre at Lancaster University. These daguerreotypes comprise one of the most important surviving groups of early photographs in the world.

Ruskin described the daguerreotype as 'the most marvellous invention of the 19th century' and his appetite for this new technology 'insatiable'. Dubbed 'the silver canvas' or 'sun pictures', and named after the French artist and inventor Louis- Jacques-Mandé Daguerre in 1839, these extraordinarily detailed images are formed on the mirror-like surfaces of silver-coated copper plates.

Whilst consistently contradictory in his views on photography, Ruskin never lost his admiration for the exquisite tonality of daguerreotype. Drawing examples from daguerreotypes in The Ruskin Whitehouse Collection, this presentation will consider Ruskin's uses of the new 'art-science' of the daguerreotype in the delineation of significant forms in architecture and the environment; and of what Ruskin himself described as 'the beautiful effects the daguerreotype alone can seize.'

This talk is open to everyone and is free but space is limited and requires booking.

The presentation will be followed by a public Q+A. Questions will be taken by Zoom chat. Your Zoom link will be sent in PDF with your booking confirmation.

Professor Sandra Kemp became Director of The Ruskin in October 2017. She led the successful fund-raising campaign to secure The Ruskin Whitehouse Collection for Lancaster University, and in 2019 – the bicentenary year of John Ruskin's birth – relaunched The Ruskin as an integrated university museum, archive and research centre with the exhibition **Ruskin: Museum of the Near Future**.

Professor Kemp is an academic and curator who has worked at institutions on both sides of the Atlantic, including the V&A, the

National Portrait Gallery, the British Museum and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. As a researcher with an international track record in working across the arts and sciences, Kemp has held academic positions at the Universities of Oxford, Glasgow and the Royal College of Art, alongside curatorial roles, until 2017 as Senior Research Fellow at the V&A. She is **Visiting Professor in the Department of Materials at Imperial College**.

Professor Kemp is currently working on an exhibition on Ruskin and Science. The Google Arts and Culture online exhibition **Painting with Sunlight: Ruskin and Science**, co-curated by Kemp in partnership with the Royal Society, and introduced in the blog post **Cloud Perspectives**, was part of the Royal Society Festival of Science in Summer 2021.

Image: John Ruskin, Frederick Crawley, *Chamonix. Mer de Glace, Mont Blanc Massif* 1854 / 1996D0075 © The Ruskin, Lancaster University

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This is an online event. The RPS will do its best to ensure that it keeps to the published timings and runs as planned. In the unlikely event that the event has to be cancelled all participants will be advised by email at the earliest opportunity. No responsibility will be accepted for any

consequential losses.