

RUSKIN ART CLUB

NEWSLETTER #5

AUGUST 7, 2019

FALL 2019 – BICENTENNIAL YEAR OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN RUSKIN (1819/2019)

www.ruskinartclub.com

info@ruskinartclub.com

FROM THE DESK OF: GABRIEL MEYER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WINTER/SPRING EVENTS

As you all know, we had an exciting start to the Ruskin bicentennial festivities this year with our **February “Birthday” Concert at the historic Hancock Museum, USC**, featuring the West coast premiere of Sarah Rodgers’ chamber piece “King of the Golden River” for tenor and string quartet, based on Ruskin’s children’s story. The Felix Quartet at the Thorton School performed as did tenor Drake Dantzler who came to us from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. Dr. Amy Woodson-Boulton from Loyola Marymount University introduced the event and our own Anne Petach offered personal reflections on Ruskin’s evergreen tale.

The 20th Annual Ruskin Lecture came early this year, on March 18th rather than its customary placement at the start of the academic year in September. The reason for the change was simple: **Robert Hewison**, one of the world’s leading Ruskin scholars happened to be in the US this spring and we could not pass up an opportunity to take advantage of his expertise. Hewison lectured on “The Argument of the Eye,” Ruskin’s visual experiences and their effect on his aesthetics. The Doheny Memorial Library co-hosted the event.

Our more informal activities have not been neglected this bicentennial year. In April, I led the **Ruskin Circle** and a distinguished audience of artists and museum professionals at Denenberg Fine Arts in West Hollywood in a wide-ranging discussion of “**Ruskin in America**,” the influence of the Victorian draftsman and art critic on artists, educators, and art movements in 19th century America. In May, a group of members and friends toured the newly restored **William Andrews Clark Library** in the West Adams district. An architectural gem, the library boasts the largest collection of Oscar Wilde manuscripts and ephemera along with priceless collections of 17th and 18th century works and fine press editions. We viewed a sampling of their Eric Gill holdings, Arts and Crafts printer and associate of William Morris and several remarkable samples of their Kelmscott Press collection. We hope to return to the Clark Library for future tours and we plan to continue our discussions with them on possible collaborative events.

Now that our summer recess is quickly coming to an end, we want to alert members to upcoming events this fall. **The three principal events are:**

Wednesday, Sept. 4: Gamble House (Pasadena) – see below.

Tuesday, December 10: “The Ethics of Profit” – a group discussion of the economic and social perspectives in Ruskin’s “Unto This Last” – details forthcoming

Friday-Saturday, December 13-14: “John Ruskin: Nineteenth-Century Prophet/Twenty-first-century Inspiration,” The Huntington Library (San Marino). A conference cosponsored by the Huntington Library, the Guild of St. George, and the Ruskin Art Club – details forthcoming and on the Huntington Library website.

LECTURE EVENT



Lecture Event

A NEW AND NATURAL BEAUTY:

John Ruskin and The Birth of The Arts and Crafts Movement

Lecture by James Spates, Ph.D.

Wednesday, September 4, 2019, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

at the Neighborhood Church (Ross Chapel)

The event is free and open to the public. **RSVP is required**, please

email: info@ruskinartclub.com

The year 2019 marks the bicentennial of the birth of John Ruskin, the 19th century British art and social critic whose writings and lectures were fundamental to the development of the Arts and Crafts movement. In honor of this anniversary, James L. Spates, PhD, will lecture on the role that Ruskin's writings played in laying the groundwork for so many figures who followed him in the movement. Professor Spates, a Professor of Sociology Emeritus of Hobart and William Smith Colleges, is a noted authority on the work of John Ruskin.

The lecture is hosted by the Ruskin Art Club of Los Angeles and the Friends of the Gamble House, Sidney D. Gamble Lecture Series and will be held in the chapel of the Neighborhood Church, followed by a reception at The Gamble House next door.

Speaker bio: Jim Spates is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York. He has been studying the legacy of John Ruskin for the last quarter century, authoring, over that time, a number of books and numerous articles on Ruskin's life and works, as well as lecturing widely on both subjects in England and North America. Currently, he is working on clarifying Ruskin's contribution to the origin of The Arts and Crafts Movement, on a modern rendering of Ruskin's classic work on social and economic life, *Unto this Last*, and maintains as well a website—www.whyruskin.online—which is devoted to making Ruskin's continuing importance to the troubled world in which we live known.

Date:

Wednesday, September 4

Lecture:

6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

**at The Neighborhood Church
(Ross Chapel)**

301 N Orange Grove Blvd.

Reception:

7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

**The Gamble House
4 Westmoreland Place**

Tickets:

FREE event, RSVP required

Email: info@ruskinartclub.com

Finally, I would like to enlist the help of Ruskin Art Club members in a campaign we have launched to purchase a rare **1903 bronze statuette of Ruskin** by the American sculptor **Gutzon Borglum (of Mount Rushmore fame)**. (See attached image.) We wish to raise funds for this purchase in order to present the statuette as a bicentennial gift from those of us in American who value the legacy of Ruskin to our British counterparts, and, in particular, to the collection of Brantwood, Ruskin's home in the Lake District, now a museum and arts center.

Please find below the text of the solicitation letter drafted by Ruskin Art Club members Stuart and Beverly Denenberg who have taken a leading role in this effort. Thank you in advance for your help in this worthwhile endeavor.

[Dear members of the Ruskin Art Club:](#)

[We have a unique opportunity to acquire a rare cast of Gutzon Borglum's wonderful 1903 bronze portrait, "Seated Ruskin." It appears that not a single example of this](#)

rare sculptural portrait resides in the United Kingdom. Additionally, it is one of the only depictions of Ruskin by any American artist. The portrait is offered by the well regarded sculpture dealers in New York, Conner-Rosenkranz. Their price has been negotiated down to \$9,000. This is an amazing price--Borglum's portrait head of Abraham Lincoln (only slightly larger) is for sale at \$85,000.

In discussion with Director Howard Hull, with his blessing and agreement, if the funds can be raised to acquire it for Brantwood, the sculpture would likely reside on the center table in front of the fireplace flanked by the very chair in which Ruskin sat for Borglum's sketches. What could be a more appropriate setting? Donors would be recognized there.

Gabriel Meyer, executive director, and the Board of the Ruskin Art Club of Los Angeles have confirmed their support and endorse this campaign, with a promise to poll members of the Ruskin Art Club. Members of the Guild of St. George have also agreed to participate and we have already managed to raise nearly \$4,000 toward the purchase price.

Tax-deductible donations can be made by mailing a check payable to "The Ruskin Art Club," care of:

Gabriel Meyer
724 Bayonne Street
El Segundo, CA 90245-9693

With many thanks in advance!

Stuart & Beverly Denenberg
417 N. San Vicente Blvd.
West Hollywood, CA 90048

