

## Re-interpreting Ruskin with Respect to the Wall

**Authors :** Anjali Sadanand, R. V. Nagarajan

**Abstract :** Architecture morphs with advances in technology and the roof, wall, and floor as basic elements of a building, follow in redefining themselves over time. Their contribution is bound by time and held by design principles that deal with function, sturdiness, and beauty. Architecture engages with people to give joy through its form, material, design structure, and spatial qualities. This paper attempts to re-interpret John Ruskin's "Seven lamps of Architecture" in the context of the architecture of the modern and present period. The paper focuses on the "wall" as an element of study in this context. Four of Ruskin's seven lamps will be discussed, namely beauty, truth, life, and memory, through examples of architecture ranging from modernism to contemporary architecture of today. The study will focus on the relevance of Ruskin's principles to the "wall" in specific, in buildings of different materials and over a range of typologies from all parts of the world. Two examples will be analyzed for each lamp. It will be shown that in each case, there is relevance to the significance of Ruskin's lamps in modern and contemporary architecture. Nature to which Ruskin alludes to for his lamp of "beauty" is found in the different expressions of interpretation used by Corbusier in his Villa Stein facade based on proportion found in nature and in the direct expression of Toyo Ito in his translation of an understanding of the structure of trees into his facade design of the showroom for a Japanese bag boutique. "Truth" is shown in Mies van der Rohe's Crown Hall building with its clarity of material and structure and Studio Mumbai's Palmyra House, which celebrates the use of natural materials and local craftsmanship. "Life" is reviewed with a sustainable house in Kerala by Ashrams Ravi and Alvar Aalto's summer house, which illustrate walls as repositories of intellectual thought and craft. "Memory" is discussed with Charles Correa's Jawahar Kala Kendra and Venturi's Vana Venturi house and discloses facades as text in the context of its materiality and iconography. Beauty is reviewed in Villa Stein and Toyo Ito's Branded Retail building in Tokyo. The paper thus concludes that Ruskin's Lamps can be interpreted in today's context and add richness to meaning to the understanding of architecture.

**Keywords :** beauty, design, facade, modernism

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