

# Presentation of John Ruskin's Shells

## *Apresentação de John Ruskin's Shells*

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### **Brief explanation of the relevance of the relationship John Ruskin, 19th century English art critic, and Sérgio Ferro**

Christopher Donaldson is currently the coordinator of the Ruskin Library, Museum and the Research Center at the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom and has kindly sent us his work on John Ruskin.

But the reader must be asking: why would John Ruskin be part of Sérgio Ferro's theme? The answer possibly lies in the theoretical foundations that inspired Sérgio Ferro to build his Theory of Architecture, based not only on Marx's Theory, but also on the proposals of thinkers, such as William Morris and John Ruskin, who somehow, agree with Ferro's proposal for the architectural production process.

And the reader must be asking, where and how does this convergence take place?

Let's see: all of John Ruskin's production is based on a Philosophy of Nature whose logic is also his ethics explained by the relationship of mutual help between natural elements.

For Ruskin, no one lives alone, everyone needs to help each other to exist individually, we are interdependent. This conception of ethics is explained here by Chris-

topher in Ruskin's shell collections, but this ethics is also present in Ruskin's Theory of Architecture.

It is in architecture when Ruskin, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*, imagined a construction site whose work ethics was the ethics of mutual aid. That is, a type of relationship between the members of the productive process where people who think, do; and people who do, think. This is different from the Renaissance and contemporary way of dividing labor where someone thinks and others do what someone thought.

Ruskin approaches Sérgio Ferro here, whose proposal for the architectural construction site is based on a type of democratic relationship where people who think, do; and people who do, think. This eliminates a hierarchical command.

In the article, Christopher shows us how this ethics occurs in one of nature's elements, the shells.