Doris Rohr: To see the mountain in the stone, the forest in the tree
[22 July – 12 August]

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Saturday 22 July to Saturday 12 August
Open: Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm
FREE ENTRY / FREE PARKING

“Go out into your garden, or into the road, and pick up the first round or oval stone you can find [...] if you can draw that stone, you can draw anything; I mean, anything that is drawable. Many things (sea foam, for instance) cannot be drawn at all, only the idea of them more or less suggested; but if you can draw the stone rightly, everything within reach of art is also within yours.” (John Ruskin)
The Elements of Drawing 1857 in Works XV, p 48)

“For I am nearly convinced that, when once we see keenly enough, there is very little difficulty in drawing what we see; but even supposing that this difficulty be still great, I believe that the sight is a more important thing than the drawing; and I would rather teach drawing that my pupils learn to love Nature, than teach the looking at Nature that they may learn to draw” (Preface to The Elements of Drawing [1857], in Works XV, p. 13).

Doris Rohr was born in Hameln, Lower Saxony, Germany. She studied at West Surrey College of Art and Design, Coventry University and Essex University, and completed her PhD in Fine Art Drawing and Aesthetics with The Lancaster Institute of Contemporary Arts (LICA), Lancaster University. The relationship between aesthetics, morality and drawing underpins her research and teaching. Doris Rohr is Associate Lecturer in Fine Art at University of Ulster and tutor for drawing and painting at the Open College of the Arts.

This exhibition of drawings and sketches is the culmination of three and half years of practice-based research examining the natural environment through physical and...
imagined encounters. Following John Ruskin's proposed method of closely observing detail, Rohr's work speaks of ecological responsibility as the drawings are intended to celebrate and mourn a vanishing world of natural diversity. The drawings' overall intentions are to encourage a reconsideration of our relationship to the environment, promoting caretaking and respect.

Drawing is a form of looking and a means of thinking. Drawing from observation is not restricted to the eyes alone, as the act of looking is combined with other sensory impressions. So when we draw from a pebble, a shell, or a living organism, like a flower, animal or human, and when we draw the landscapes surrounding us, many sensory impressions work together in helping us translate into a drawing or a painting. The sounds of birds, the rustling of the wind, mechanical noises like cars, tractors, the atmospheric changes in the air, pressure, wind, moisture, rain, sun and light, the texture of a surface when handling an object, all these combine to varying degrees when working from life or still life. This makes drawing a very different exercise from drawing from photos, or other viewfinders like the Claude glass or Camera obscura used in the past to compress space into a two
No one knew this better than John Ruskin. He was also aware that drawing is not something reserved to artists, but is a fundamental educational tool to help us see more profoundly, to understand and appreciate the world of nature and culture, clouds, trees, plants, flowers, rocks and mineral as much as architecture, painting, sculpture and the human form. Ruskin proposes drawing as a perceptive tool, holistically combining the science of accurate observation with imagination, moreover with awe and respect for creation. This dialogue with what we see, or rather perceive, is deepened through the meditative act of drawing. In an age of rapid transition, of multi-media images and dissonance of time and place through mobile and digital devices, moments to slow down and to fully and meditatively immerse ourselves with doing one thing at a time have become precious and increasingly rare. The popularity of colouring in
books (mindfulness) attests to this. Yet Ruskin knew that we can do better than filling in other people’s outlines – we all have the ability to look and to translate this looking into our own visual language of drawing. We can be mindful and skilful and creative, drawing our own vision and versions of the world.

**Special events:**

**Saturday 22 July: Drawing Workshop** – join Doris Rohr for a one-off workshop to explore drawing in relation to Ruskin’s approach to observation and Doris’ own sensory experimentation. The workshop is free but places must be booked in advance as they are limited. Click [here](http://www.florenceartscentre.com/doris-rohr/) for full details.