



[The Film & Video Institute](http://www.theiac.org)

# THE IAC BRITISH INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM COMPETITION 2018

## Judges' Comments

Title: John Ruskin. Strange Genius.  
Number: 13230  
Award: 4 Stars

Tasteful opening titles ( Though one judge thought them too large. ) lead us into a beautiful looking film about Ruskin's life and his obsession with Gothic Venice.

Ruskin's own paintings and drawings are mixed with views of the modern city. Some interior shots are stills, we presume this is because filming was not allowed. The night time water front shots delightful, Shots along the Grand Canal in misty light, superb. The interior of Saint Marks, beautiful. ( Although there is a tiny jump cut in the middle. )

The commentary is informative but when describing one building after another the practice of showing the buildings name on a caption and not speaking it is a bit hard on the audience.

It was easy to fall out of step and then be puzzled by the description not matching the building you thought you were looking at. Perhaps we didn't notice the captions because they blended with the pictures too well.

The commentary sounded as if it was recorded in a very small space; a bit 'boxy'; it would be more appropriate, when describing wide canals and spacious interiors if the commentary sounded as if it was recorded somewhere larger. I missed street ( and canal ) effects. The scenes seem a bit dead if you can't hear live sound beneath the commentary. From time to time I did hear it, I think it should have been used more often. You will have noticed that the live sound of Venice is unique, you don't hear traffic, just footsteps, human voices and lapping water. It would be worth adding it to the film if you have it.

The story of Ruskin's marriage, their visit to Venice and his wife's subsequent life was clear and interesting. It might tell us something about the price of obsession.

Gordon Hunt on behalf of:

Judging Panel: Alan Colgrave ARPS, FACI.  
Stephen Green LACI.  
Gordon Hunt