

Source: *L'Humanité*

A walk in the dark under the sway of the senses. After *Squint Your Eyes* and *Tricks*, both of which brought him numerous awards, Andrzej Jakimowski has confirmed his talent with a sensual and subtle film.

*Imagine*, Andrzej Jakimowski, Poland-France-Portugal, 1 hour 38 minutes

First we hear the panting of a dog in a courtyard full of ochre dust. The gardener opens the door to a man who knocked. Ian (Edward Hogg) is blind. He joins a care centre for visually impaired children, whom he will be teaching the techniques of echolocation, orientating themselves in space by capturing sound.

This method doesn't only have supporters, and Ian arrives at the Lisbon monastery having been fired from another institution. Here, beyond the whitewashed walls flaking in the wind, he can choose between rooms with a view and variations of silence. His boots tap on tiles. The whoosh of wings signals doves taking flight. From her window, a young woman, also blind, Eva (Alexandra Maria Lara), breathes in the new and disconcerting presence of Ian. They share in the tiniest breezes, and the clicking of seeds sprinkled for birds. Ian proves to the children why he doesn't use a cane. One should listen and feel, practice composing all one's intuitions and conclusions into a coherent whole, learn to measure the power of sound to reflect when we snap our fingers, clap or click our tongues. It's a power with uncertain boundaries, when one ventures into the unknown, into the perils of love, as well as the danger of the street.

Andrzej Jakimowski connects those two directions, as though armed with the stick used by dowsers, delicate discoverers of invisible waves. Ian's lessons in the monastery are intended to help the children overcome their limitations. In order for him and Eva to come closer, he needs to ascertain the choreography of their pas de deux, lead and hold back, describe what she is still unable to see. These movements take place by the grace of rare objects, words carefully chosen, during shots that translate into the poetic transparency of a glass and a carafe, whose content needs time and effort to calm the spilling between them. Hard work. Serrano (Melchior Derouet), a young patient, only believes in what he can touch.

It will need more than a miracle for the monk and the doctor who runs the clinic, who use fear as a restrictive measure, to relinquish the protection of their charges. Ian, like everyone else, cuts himself, runs aground in the throes of anger and jealousy, and faces the feeling of betrayal. We know, less well than him, if the acacia tree can really bend its envious branches towards a crate of cherries and if the Lisbon sea breeze bears the ocean and its great ships.

Eva and Ian sense the edge of pavements, and the wine served for breakfast outside a café, where old men play draughts interminably. They've never seen the sea, which is only two roofs away, for they'd have to look. We see everything owing to the remarkable work of sound and light, whose chiaroscuro joins the night and the blinding whiteness of the day. Variations in the depth of field let us hear distances and the echo's answers.