

I'll begin by saying that for most of our readers [Andrzej Jakimowski](#) is the same unknown quantity as he was for me before I watched this film. After finding out about him later it became apparent that is a movie painted with the same gentle, sure hand and containing the same ideological depths as, his previous festival favourite. During the festival many very good films were screened, but this year there were only two that utterly and unquestionably delighted me, both of which by a strange coincidence dealt with the issue of blindness. While *Tricks* showed the world through the eyes of a child in a small Polish town, the English-language *Imagine* takes place in Lisbon, and the central character is an adult. Similarly to *What They Don't Talk About When They Talk About Love* the film is set in a centre for the blind, although here the students are an international group (most of the patients are played by people who really are blind). A newly-hired teacher, also blind, arrives there with completely unorthodox ideas. The ingenuity of his ideas relies on his blind patients liberating themselves from their white canes and overcoming their disability by using heightened senses, the intellectual analysis of their sense impressions – and their imagination. Meanwhile, all the residents at the centre are putting more and more obstacles in his way.

The pivot of intrigue might have been drawn from a clichéd TV film, but Jakimowski's masterful treatment of the material takes *Imagine* up to the heights of a lyrical metaphor about trust, the sense of reality, perspectives and coping in life, showing at the same time how difficult it is to acquire incontestable knowledge. Jakimowski craftily questions the central character's credibility. Are his incredible spatial orientation abilities based (at least partly) on trickery? (Many of the main characters begin to doubt if he really is blind. The issue is cleared up in what was probably one of the most astonishing scenes of the entire festival.) Is he so influenced by convictions about his own perfection that he cannot resist the temptation to overestimate his own abilities? Is he simply a dreamer who has problems distinguishing lies from the truth and who risks the lives of his patients by taking them to town on experimental expeditions? I changed my mind at least 5 or 6 times during the screening. In precisely this way Jakimowski peels the subject layer by layer like an onion, which makes *Imagine* so fascinating. Each time we think we understand everything another twist in the plot occurs which leads us even further into the unpredictable and the unknown. Furthermore – to a greater extent than the Indonesian film – the story told in *Imagine* is more convincing in its depiction of what it is to be blind.

It is mainly expressed by presenting images in such a way that Jakimowski doesn't let us see what is off camera in scenes shot in extreme close-up, forcing us to be blind to the same degree as the main characters are.