

Source: La Croix

A story of seeing

Following *Tricks* Andrzej Jakimowski presents a subtle film about young blind people longing for freedom.

After his two well-received films: *Squint Your Eyes* (2003) and *Tricks* (2008), Polish director Andrzej Jakimowski has made his third film – a sensitive and moving offering – about the world of the blind. *Imagine* begins with the arrival at a Lisbon school for the blind of a young English teacher, who himself is deprived of the sense of sight.

Employed in this religious institution to give the children lessons in spatial orientation, Ian doesn't long resist the temptation to teach them certain skills which he himself has acquired and which allow him to get by without a white cane; no doubt a very useful object, but which – he judges – stamps a blind person with their disability.

From the first lessons, which involve, for example, teaching the children to pour water into a glass without spilling it on the table, Ian moves swiftly to more daring lessons, helping the young residents with spatial orientation by appealing to their “effective” senses, but also to their intelligence and sensitivity.

This young man – the proponent of this technique, which is judged too dangerous by the school's head teacher, and called “human echolocation” – tries to convince the people around him that one can orientate in space and detect possible obstacles using the echoes of sounds: the tapping of heels, tongue-clicking and finger-snapping. This technique – actually used by some blind people – seduces Eva, a slightly older resident than the others, who prior to Ian's arrival had lived in isolation in her own room.

After a startled meeting, which gives the audience a pretty scene, Eva persuades Ian to let her accompany him in the city, without a cane, so that she can join in experiencing Lisbon's tortuous space, among cars, trams and ship's sirens. From that moment on *Imagine* manifests itself as a metaphor of the desire for liberation, freedom and trust, but also deception. Little by little, the film presents a discrete reflection on looking at and perceiving the reality we have; which is by necessity subjective, occasionally sublime and even invented. This lesson, which concerns both the sighted and the blind, gives *Imagine* its genuine profundity.