

## ***Janela da alma / Window of the Soul***

Directed by: João Jardim

Co-directed by: Walter Carvalho

Montage: Karen Harley and João Jardim

Production: João Jardim

Producer: Flávio Tambellini

Date: 2001

Running time: 73'

Country: Brazil

Language: Portuguese (English and French subtitles)

Availability in the UK: Queen Mary, University of London, Library

*Janela da alma* is a documentary about the sense of vision and the act of seeing in a predominantly visual world. Through interviews with 19 people who suffer from different kinds of visual impairment (short-sightedness, squint, partial and total blindness, etc.), it discusses the significance of vision in our contemporary society. It covers issues such as the physiology of vision, the impact of wearing glasses on people's personalities and body image, the meaning of seeing and not being able to see, the paradox of not being able to see the inner dimensions of human beings and the loss of the capacity to see in a world saturated by images. As Nobel Prize winner José Saramago states: 'We live in an amusement park where images multiply. We feel lost; first of all, lost to ourselves; then, lost in relation to the world. [...] We are wandering without knowing what we are, what we are for...'

Interviewees range from other celebrities such as Hermeto Paschoal, Wim Wenders, the blind Czech photographer Evgen Bavcar and Oliver Sacks, to poets such as Antônio Cícero and Manoel de Barros, to the literature teacher Paulo César Lopes, to the artist Carmela Gross, to the actress Marieta Severo, to the writer João Ubaldo, to the filmmaker Walter Lima Jr., to the councilman Arnaldo Godoy, etc. Beautiful and non-conventional images of empty deserts, burning trees and blurred streetlights at night link the various fragments of interview. There are black-and-white sequences with quiet background music.

The closing images of the film are eloquent in establishing a connection between life and sight: they show a woman (Raimunda da Conceição Filha) giving birth. The baby boy (Gabriel) is shown in close-up and extreme close-up shots, focusing on his eyes: his crying, his effort to open his eyes and the visible discomfort that his first exposure to light brings to him. Reading this closing sequence in relation to the opening images of a small fire growing and bringing light to the dark night, we can identify the visual metaphor running throughout the film: the metaphor of sight and light as life

Real characters are presented on location.

### **RELATED INFORMATION**

Other films by João Jardim include:

*Engraçadinha... Seus Amores e Seus Pecados* (1995) [mini TV series]

Other films by Walter Carvalho include:

*Moacir Arte Bruta* (2005)

*Cazuza - O tempo não pára / Cazuza – Time Doesn't Stop* (2004)

*Lunário Perpétuo* (2003)

Publications on Walter Carvalho and João Jardim include:

Koehler, Robert. 'Film Reviews', *Variety*, 27 January 2003, p. 30. [On *Janela da alma*]

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