

## Strasbourg International Film Festival

ON THE BLUE SUMMER EVENINGS, Director Xavier Guàrdia

When cinema was still a very young art form, poetry as a visual form was close to it - they thought in a similar way. Later, as we know, cinema chose the path of prose, narrative and narrative. Modern cinema has drifted so far away from the language of poetry that it no longer recognizes or understands it. Fortunately, the tradition of experimental, avant-garde cinema is still alive on the margins of the global film process, where there is still room for freedom, search and all sorts of creative laboratories.

Thus, the director Xavier Guàrdia presents his interpretation of the poem "Sensation" by Arthur Rimbaud. In his film ON THE BLUE SUMMER EVENINGS, the poem is repeated four times, in French, English, Spanish and Catalan - a very curious move from the point of view of the overall concept, given the ongoing debate about the translation of a poetic work into foreign languages. In the same way, the film's structure is built on a series of repetitions, like a musical composition composed of looped verses and choruses.

Xavier Guàrdia compiles two groups of documentary footage and contrasts them with each other, organizing a direct confrontation between the two types of images. Thus, the opening shots of "ON THE BLUE SUMMER EVENINGS" present a pastoral, idealistic landscape image accompanied by a musical composition by Frederic Oller. In the subsequent group of shots, a frantic crowd, filmed by the director somewhere in the center of a European city, argues with nature. On top of the packed street, Guàrdia layers the text of an Arthur Rimbaud poem, exacerbating the conflict between "free" nature and the big city on this more private level.

As stated, the film's original frame composition is repeated four times. Importantly, the musical piece "Somniador" by Frederic Oller develops in each "its" part, while the text of Rimbaud's poem is in a different language each time. At the same time, the dramaturgy of the proposed shots does not undergo any qualitative changes: the landscapes alternate, the streets change, but the confrontation is not resolved in anyone's favor. And it is not about the competition, but about the fact that the image is sluggish, stuck because of the author's idea, which organizes visual and semantic contrast, but in no way solves the set tasks.

As it seems, the director's initial conceptual move and the use of Arthur Rimbaud's poem do not receive any cinematic development, becoming only a background for the documentary shots. Certainly, Guàrdia's stated confrontation has potential, but it would have been necessary to reinforce it on a dramaturgical and eventual level. In the end, Frederic Oller's music is given a boost as it is told, and poetry suddenly changes its language. The audio accompaniment of the movie ON THE BLUE SUMMER EVENINGS is free from the author's intention and his concepts, and therefore exists somewhat separate from the image. Existence within the framework of a single idea prevents the frame from revealing itself, from reaching the figurative, metaphorical level, which is the basis of any poetic work.

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