

Film Review: The Way He Looks (Daniel Ribeiro, 2014)



Modern interpretations of love are rarely subtle. Whether that's the lucid, fantastical erotica of 50 Shades of Grey or the incredible, if wildly explicit lesbian love story Blue is the Warmest Colour; love is struggling to be conveyed without a strong, sexual background. Perhaps it is that that makes The Way He Looks so sensitive. Innocent and yet profoundly mature, it does stunning things to the romance genre.

In suburban São Paulo, a blind teenage boy is desperate for more independence. Every day after school, his best friend walks him to his house, handing him to the key to the gate and saying goodbye. But when someone else takes this position, the boy's definition of relationships begins to change.

The conventional setting of a high school is counteracted with a riveting protagonist – a boy without sight. He battles through daily life facing hostile bullies and protective parents with a nonchalant saunter, brilliantly admirable and tangible in performance. Newcomer Guilherme Lobo is responsible for this. His emotive portrayal of a blind teenager is truly great stuff.

This is as much a film about friendship as it is about love. In fact, the entire film builds upon itself, and focuses on the flourishing moments of relationships rather than reaching the stage of conflicts. Thus, it leaves you feeling content and happy; eager to see what happens next.

Daniel Ribeiro has depicted love in a rare light in this deeply beautiful film. Taut, lovely and tender, you simply must see this.

The Way He Looks has a limited release October 24th.