

A passage through the many layers of *Enclosed*

BY ERIC PAIN

What is the very nature of the movie I have just seen? It is as bare as a documentary, aiming at minimal explanations. At the same time, it is like drama fiction picturing a man struggling, we do not know if he will overcome the obstacles in his path. But there is more.

A first issue in this drama: a human being faces an environment causing at best friction, and at worst total impediment. But no one knows at first sight what kind of resistance will oppose each element of the environment. The metaphor of blocking is present in various forms and developed at various scales: a wood puzzle game, a wall of glass, the wall of an aquarium where the turtle lives. The door and the threshold of the house are both a continuation of this symbolism and a generalization. They represent the obstacle to overcome – with the promise of an exterior – and the next obstacle – invisible for the protagonist yet impassable: the stairs of the house. The shot-counter shot offers two points of view matching two ways to perceive the meaning of this fight: absurd and vain, as even a victory leads to a dead end. At the same time, the will of this man is universal and inspiring, the means he is providing himself and the possible consolations of his achievement: the satisfaction from a successful effort, the view of the sky, and the heat from the sun.



The staging questions my position as a spectator. Is it a story powered by a minimal but efficient drama? The fight between the man and the door lasts way too long for the movie to be a pure fiction. Had Aurélien Grèzes' goal been to sustain the illusion of fiction, another choice of editing could have been made. On the contrary, the sequence lasts long enough to cause a feeling of discomfort, enough to make my position as a passive spectator unbearable. I am on a call, I have to choose a reaction, and, one has to admit, deliberating and taking a side is never comfortable. Is this movie a slice of the everyday reality of this man? Or a scene built with a special intention; if so, what is this intention? At this moment, I feel like the turtle in the tank. Someone is knocking on the window and try to get a reaction from me. In a way, I am now part of the movie.



The director asks me to pass a new pact with him, a pact different from the one I thought I had passed at the beginning of the movie. The tacit pact, the ordinary pact, has its roots in my spectatorship, in the web of codes and conventions that prevail in the cinema, and that I thought I had recognized in the first minutes of the movie. Aurélien Grèzes' movie, as any movie, as any medium, doesn't promise anything. The spectator in me, though, expects it to conform to a certain idea I have of what a movie should be. The choices of staging and editing make me realize this. I project on the movie certain expectations. My relationship with the film, from now on, is to be rebuilt, or simply to be built.

I remember the effect of a piece of information Aurélien provided a few hours after I saw the movie for the first time as I thought about the experience I had had. This information does not appear on the screen. My reading was built around it since. The movie was shot in Robert's house, the main actor, a house he usually roams on his feet. The wheelchair is not familiar to Robert. From this moment, the movie documents an alternate reality, an exploration by Robert and Aurélien of another way to move inside and outside the house. The friction tends to reach another dimension, part consented, part searched. Searched in both meanings of desired and explored. The goal is to experience how it feels, in every aspect, some relevant to sensation, and others, more intellectual or aesthetic. The whole process can be seen as a game, where these blended feelings and thoughts produce links satisfying for the eye and for the mind, a never seen symbolics, the repetition of the same pattern at various scales and under a slightly different point of view. The spectator in me experiments with the same astonishment, this very particular distance to the movie I have the liberty to choose, and a new kind of friction: my gaze struggling with a movie escaping my expectations, long untold, of which I am becoming aware.

