

As Borges wrote, the first letter of the alphabet – A, Alpha or Aleph – is the beginning of everything and contains all of the world's knowledge. Like a shade of white encapsulating all colours to represent a blank canvas, a fresh start and a hint at endless possibilities. As a liberation of sorts, as if being reborn in the present and the present only. It is a mantra *Aleph* embraces beautifully as it zooms into the present of a multitude of characters scattered all over the world, observing and absorbing those ties that bind to expose a larger question and a bigger picture. A human shuffle of sorts, it implicates us as viewers, giving us the responsibility to look beyond the film and become active participants in our own dreams, in this life. One could call it a cinematic twist on speed dating – speed dating for both dreamers and existentialists alike, through internal dialogue and external conversation, through reframing and reimagining personal and collective truths – to end up with a beautiful reminder and a renewed conception of the unexpected and surprising impact of human connection.

*Aleph* is a free-associative labyrinthian journey set in a world devised by a dreamer and tied together by a narrator: our lucid dreamer of dreams, responsible for creating and recreating memories. Each narrative thread leads us closer to the centre of Borges's inspired unimaginable universe: through textures and melodies, through deconstruction and contrast, through the said and the seen, leaving us in a constant state of wonder. As in dreams, the film keeps on slipping through our fingers, with faces turning nameless and names turning speechless, as an effect of that ever-evolving inner world. *Aleph* wants to escape interpretation to get as close as possible to that unattainable object of our desire: Lacan's *objet petit a*, again in line with *Aleph*, in line with that beginning, to challenge us to embrace diversity and an open mind. It's up to us and no other to make us feel too much. To make us feel all the emotions of the world. To have me versus the world evolve into me and the world.

*Aleph* is intuitive, *Aleph* is sensitive, *Aleph* is heartfelt. The stage is nowhere and everywhere. The film feels like endless wordplay: a constant stream of going back and forth between the characters, the viewer, and the filmmaker, where we all converse around a T.S. Eliot-inspired cup of tea, going from one side of the screen to the other, while we wander and get lost in that forest of eyes, as if we're window-shopping those windows to the soul. We've entered a game of truth or dare in a world where truth no longer matters as everything has become subjective. We stir and stare at that swirling universe captured in that mysterious, lavishing porcelain cup of tea until we stop asking ourselves: do I dare? Do I dare? Do I dare disturb the universe?

This is only a dream, the first words uttered, and maybe it was, but it was a hopeful one and that's the essence after all. Where it all starts from, hope. To end with, I've seen nothing, and I've seen it all. All with a capital A. As in *Aleph*. As in the beginning of it all.