

Synopsis:

JUST LIKE ANYONE ELSE

Photographic documentary by

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*"A blind person is a human being.
Look on him as a human being and not as someone with a handicap".*

This quotation from Patrice Rouby, blind from birth, illustrates the idea behind this project carried out in the Midi-Pyrénées region, in 2014 and 2015, with thirty-five visually impaired or blind subjects.

I decided not to photograph the handicap itself, which often gives rise to poignant images, but preferred to focus on these women and men who have chosen to take their destinies in hand and to integrate society, because they refuse to be considered as people needing help or « special » because of their particularities.

I deliberately chose ordinary people who seek neither sensation nor media attention. Some raise families, others are fans of sport, art or culture and have jobs, sometimes in surprising domains, even though what they have achieved has been at the price of time spent and huge determination.

Over the past few years, their social status has considerably improved, thanks to the efforts of various actors and the fact that they have been able to enter professions hitherto reserved to those with perfect sight : IT engineer, psychologist, engineer, radio presenter, trainer, physiotherapist, teacher... while at the same time, the jobs that they occupied traditionally in the past, such as receptionist, typist, piano tuner or chair renovator, are tending to disappear with the evolution of our economy.

All these people, who I met several times, participated enthusiastically in this project and allowed me to photograph them at work or elsewhere, going about their daily activities with aplomb, and finally, in ways not so different from those free of any handicap.

NB: The main associations for the blind consider that the French expression "*non voyant*", translated as "unseeing", is a politically correct and hypocritical term. They prefer to use the expression "people with visual deficiencies" which includes the visually impaired.