

the barren land [2001]

35mm, 8"32 minutes, colour, English

producer: Pieter van Huystee
script /director: Bea de Visser
the man: Richard Strange
camera: Stef Tijdink N.S.C.
sound: Mark Glyne
sound mixage: Michel Schöpping
editing / sound design : Bea de Visser
music: Peter Hoeks
production manager: Sylvia Baan
line producer: Hetty Krapels
production:Pieter van Huystee Film

short synopsis

A torn up monologue by a man who has temporary lost his tracks. The Barren Land is loosely based on monologues from the great Tragedies and other words of rumour, humour and horror. The principle character goes through stages of distortion.

He creates situations that excite him or that might bring him back on the main tracks of mind that he has temporary lost. Richard Strange plays a man who temporary lost his tracks in life. By reminding found footage texts, he holds up his thought - i.a. lines from Mae West, Hank Williams, Mick Jagger, Sophocles, Hugo Claus and the Guinness Book of Records.

Light-footed, boisterous, absurd and touching The Barren Land tells about primal loneliness, one of most individual and simultaneously most general emotions. The film is a rich chain of contrasts from silent desolation towards absurd scenes.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

I was interested how far one could go with reproducing found words by providing these with another context. In a situation of extreme loneliness, depression or even madness, the character is left by a false construction of memories rather than an identity of himself. His memory expressed through language is to a great extend a learned frame of quotes - poetry, stories, songs, etc. and thus partly representing or at least referring to a collective memory.

The text of the film is build by found phrases, found themes, found songs and also a found construction of a dramatic tension bow by the use of phonetics. Together with Richard Strange (the man), we created a dramatic line, giving the annoyed mind of the main character some kind of poetical logic. Thanks to Richard's talent to transpose the words in a resounded and daily English, the lines of the man became alive. One might find there some connection with i.e.Oedipus, the monologue of Hamlet, Hank Williams, Mick Jagger, Bert Schierbeek, Mae West, Jackson Brown, an unknown madman, Hugo Claus and the Guinness Book of Records.



photo Oscar Seykens

Bea de Visser studied design public space and painting, and left the Academy of Visual Art to electro-acoustic sound. She started her career as a performing artist, went on stage making sound works and live installations. Then she turned back to painting, followed by two years residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam ('93-'94). She works within a frame ranging from an artist initiative to a well established museum, but also the public space, the theatre and the cinema come within the scope of her work.

Other films: Just a minute Yoko ['04] - The second memory ['04] - The barren land ['01] - Another another ['99] - A breath hush ['96]

Richard Strange (Londen,UK), works as a writer, musician, performer and actor. In 2004 he works on a theatre show with Robert Wilson, Tom Waits and singer Marianne Faithful. He filmed with Leonardo de Caprio and Cameron Diaz, for the Martin Scorsese film 'Gangs of New York'. Richard played in films i.e. 'Mona Lisa' (dir. Neil Jordan, with i.e. Bob Hoskins) and 'Batman' (dir. Tim Burton, with i.e. Jack Nicholson). As an actor in the play Hamlet he toured worldwide with the Haymarket Theatre. His autobiography 'Stange, Punks and Drunks and Flicks and Kicks' appeared in May 2002. Strange started in the 70-ies as the founder of the avant-garde group The Doctors of Madness. Then he was back on stage with solo acts like The Phenomenal Rise of Richard Strange and The Engine Room.