

## Poetry of contemplation

*Alix de Morant*

(...)

On a sand dune, wooden pillars raised in a circle overlook the sea. « Saturn I » is a performance-installation created by Karl Van Welden from Ghent, as one of the satellites of his theatrical opus « United Planets ». [1] From predetermined focal distances, and within a configuration inspired by the works of Michel Foucault [2], the spectator zooms into the landscape. Just as in the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich yet faithful to the minimalist demands of land art, the work of Karl Van Welden brings to light a nature saturated by spirits, where mankind is just a fleeting apparition, a passive walk-on.

Simple grass swayed by the wind, flights of seagulls or scenes with figures, partake in this play within a play. The close-ups and long shots, sustained by pointless actions – climbing up and down an embankment, digging a hole, scanning the horizon – overlap to create a poetry of contemplation: there is no linear narrative but the development of an atmosphere. And the spectator, who passes from one focal point to the next, overcome by a slow magnetism, suddenly feels prone to melancholy. « Saturn II », more directly inspired by photography, is the urban version of the same project; one of seven accompanied by the Atelier Oerol. Under the supervision of Hans Man in't Veld and Jeroen van den Berg, Atelier Oerol confronts young professionals from all disciplines to the landscape. The artists invited in residence get to know Terschelling over at least ten days, then return to the island for brief but regular trips. Rehearsals and workshops will mark out their journey, over two festivals, to allow each candidate to design a project that imaginatively responds to the scenery.

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[1] Karl Van Welden [www.unitedplanets.be](http://www.unitedplanets.be)

[2] Reflections on panoptic architecture by Jeremy Bentham, in « Discipline and Punish », Michel Foucault, Gallimard 1977.

*Publication: Stradda #22, Oct 2011*