

Your Garden Plot

Op Uw Akkertje

Director:
Frans van de Staak

Script:
Frans van de Staak and
Lidy van Marissing

Production:
Frans van de Staak

Camera:
Jaap de Jonge and Herman
Meerman

Sound:
Menno Euwe

Editor:
Frans van de Staak

Music:
Bernard Hunnekink

Cast:
Sylvia Alberts, Anneke van
Lom, Joke Metman,
Paul-Arthus van Dijk,
Anthony Mertens

Running time:
91 minutes

Information:
Frans van de Staak

16 mm English subtitled

Frans van de Staak has long worked in the borderline area between film and literature where Marguerite Duras and Jean-Marie Straub are also active. Those who find the visual monotony of their work an insuperable obstacle, will have even greater difficulty with Van de Staak. Duras and Straub at least offer a coherent

script, but with Van de Staak any connection between what is seen and what is heard seems purely accidental. It is not even clear what the visual image and the script taken separately are meant to convey. Groups of people stroll along a dyke or stand around a herring stall on a path in a wood. Each person waits



politely for his or her turn to speak, but they talk at cross-purposes. What they say consists of common expressions, aphorisms, non-committal remarks and platitudes. Every sentence ends with an exclamation mark: 'My garden faces south!', 'It's not pleasant to get wet feet from emotion!', 'We're scraping the barrel!', 'Everything itches if you don't wear a vest!', 'Excessive laughter is like excessive tears: a sign of weakness!'. This stream of words (written in part by the avant-garde author Lidy van Marissing) flows on for 90 minutes without any connection or structure becoming apparent. The aim is simply to explore the interplay of monotone statements and meaningless images, on the assumption that this combination will create tension.

Van de Staak had the following to say in explanation of his film: 'The obvious meanings are neutralised and reduced to propositions, to formal linguistic actions which make new links with their surroundings. In this way language itself seems to become the object viewed, like the actions, movements and individual characteristics of the actors. Meanings are no longer encoded, but become more accidental in nature. Here the relation between literature and film is not the normal one, whereby film translates a story into a sequence of images, but rather a visual transformation of a type of writing...'

