VISIONS DU RÉEL 2023
Critique : The Wonder Way
par Muriel Del Don

27/04/2023 - Dans son nouveau long-métrage, Emmanuelle Antille nous propose de la suivre dans un voyage imaginaire riche en métamorphoses

Cet article est disponible en anglais.

Five years after the surprising music documentary A Bright Light - Karen and the Process [+], portraying the life and vicissitudes of American folk musician Karen Dalton, Swiss artist and filmmaker Emmanuelle Antille is returning to Visions du Réel to present her latest feature film The Wonder Way in the festival’s national competition. As with her previous film, Antille invites us to follow her as she travels across the USA in search of surprising, mysterious and often forgotten characters who explore reality beyond the tangible, seeking out their own truth.

Starting out from her grandma’s garden, the first place where Antille was able to give free rein to her imagination, and ending with the immensity of the cosmos, via stop-offs in California and the Mojave Desert, The Wonder Way offers up an escape for the mind, allowing us to try out other realities we didn’t believe existed. The unusual landscapes to which the Lausanne-born director transports us are real, but the seventh art turns them into imaginary places where we can experiment with realities beyond our perception. The Wonder Way is both an inner exploration and a tribute to those who have decided to leave behind the illusory security of what’s real, in search of their own buried identity and an alternative way of experiencing reality.

Is it possible to create a world based on values which deviate from the norm? Can we dream of a life outside of conventions, in connection with nature and the cosmos? In her latest film, Emmanuelle Antille urges us to
believe in utopias, to recognise ourselves in and identify with characters who have made marginality their creed. Whether faced with better known artists such as Jill O'Bryan, whose relationship with the land and with nature influences all her works, Charles Ross, who's a cornerstone of land art, or more niche characters such as plastic artist and African-American sculptor Noah S. Purifoy, or the creator of the staggering work Salvation Mountain Leonard Knight, Antille baulks at nothing in her search for a truth which is inscribed in artistic acts. The level of fame or public recognition attained matters little; what really counts is the desire to investigate the real above and beyond conventions, to find a way of fighting apathy and conformity through art.

From an almost outsider-art angle, Antille invites us to consider the artistic process above and beyond art market conventions, in order to find a creative and creating drive born in the deep. Hereon in, art becomes a tool for (re)discovering oneself, the other, one’s inner world, and the truth nestling in the entrails of the earth. The parallel the director draws with mystical practices inducing nigh-on trance-like states is both interesting and pertinent in this respect, and the scene where the pastor of a small church in the desert persuades his believers to follow him in an ancestral rite involving venomous snake taming is likewise incredibly powerful. Overcome by a state of delirium brought about by the pastor’s voice and by the punk-themed rock music played by the musicians among them, some of the women in the community start to dance, bringing the flame of a candle dangerously close to their faces. Nothing around them seems to matter: the mystical ritual they’re taking part in seems to have sublimated their pain too.

The power of the mind, the discovery of some kind of relationship with nature, and a more intimate and cathartic form of perceptiveness which deviates from the norm are themes which run throughout the film and brand every frame. Ultimately, The Wonder Way is a powerful and poignant film which uses art as an instrument of knowledge.

The Wonder Way is produced by Intermezzo Films and Rubis Film, in co-production with RTS (Radio Télévision Suisse).

(Traduit de l’italien)

plus sur : The Wonder Way

Critique : The Wonder Way

Dans son nouveau long-métrage, Emmanuelle Antille nous propose de la suivre dans un voyage imaginaire riche en métamorphoses

27/04/2023 | Visions du réel 2023

Le programme de Visions du réel s’annonce particulièrement riche et inclusif

Avec en tout 163 films, dont 82 en première mondiale, le festival promet une édition captivante, entre jeunes talents et réalisateurs chevronnés qui feront leur retour à Nyon

06/04/2023 | Visions du Réel 2023

lire aussi

28/04/2023
Films / Critiques – France
Critique : Sur les chemins noirs

28/04/2023
Films / Critiques – États-Unis/Canada/Finlande
Critique : Beau Is Afraid

27/04/2023
Visions du réel 2023
Critique : Caiti Blues