

PRESS REVIEW #3 BONANZA

DE MORGEN

Cleverly Edited Film Documentary as Theatre /America in Miniature

Miniature models are an artistic dream made real: the ultimate overview which you could never actually bring together in reality. Caroline Rochlitz, Bart Baele and Yves Degryse (Berlin) have built such a model of the third destination in their *Holoceen* cycle portraying remarkable cities. Bonanza (Colorado) is suspended in the theatre and contains five houses between its illuminated folds. What was once a writhing nest of miners and prostitutes is now home to just seven people.

Berlin catches them all in film on five screens under the miniature town, one for each house. They are unhurriedly introduced. There is the God-fearing lonely cowboy Mark. There is Ed and Gail, an older couple without TV, who occasionally call their friends to check that the world hasn't been destroyed yet. Then there are the otherworldly Darva and Shikiah, and 'the witch' Mary, whom they once had locked up for urinating in public. Pastoor Richard watches on in his fatherly way.

Bonanza is noteworthy not only for its effortless pace, the hilarious spirituality and the hardened suspicion of the neighbours, but especially for how Berlin paints their portraits. Your attention is led ingeniously to one screen, while the other four frame the focal point with quiet nature or calm household tasks. You sit as if in a surveillance camera post, but then for a guided documentary-story. From this watchpost, the montage descends step by step into the mineshafts of Bonanza.

With *Bonanza*, Berlin follows up on its surprising debut *Jerusalem* and reveals its greatest strength: the ability to hit the mark with local, but universally recognizable social problems in a film construction which is perfectly synchronised yet still retains a loose feel. Berlin surveys the world via the city, and the city via its people.