

FICTION

What happens during those terrifying seconds of a car crash you can't remember afterwards?

The Art of Crashing

PETER VERHELST

On 23 April 2013, author Peter Verhelst's car hit a runaway truck wheel on the motorway. His vehicle turned over three times, but he miraculously crawled from the wreckage with hardly a scratch. This incident inspired 'The Art of Crashing', in which Verhelst does not want to write about the accident itself, but about the three seconds of the accident that he cannot remember.

A disturbing, poetic and enchanting book

WDR 3

The novel opens a timeless chink in reality and lets parallel worlds slide over one another. The reader meets young Raoul, who lives in a dictatorship, where he develops from a painter into a resistance fighter. Raoul survives a plane crash, goes missing, and finds himself on Sandy Island, which has been deleted from the maps but still turns out to exist as a world between worlds for all living creatures that have lost a few seconds or hours. Meanwhile, the history of photography pioneer Eadweard Muybridge is also presented and, in the last part, the author goes in search of what connects everything.

'The Art of Crashing' is a novel about the 'gap' inherent in the human condition and about the equally human desire to keep filling that gap with stories. It is a wonderful, stylistically astonishing trip that completely overwhelms the reader.

An impressive tribute to the losers, the lost, the missing, the abandoned, those who have disappeared without a trace ****1/2

DE MORGEN



AUTHOR



Peter Verhelst (b. 1962) is a novelist, scriptwriter, myth and theatre maker, poet and picture book author all in one. As a child he wanted to become a painter, but decided to write from a live model instead. His work has been praised for its powerful images, the sensuality and richness of its language and the author's unbridled imagination. His breakthrough came in 1999 with the novel 'Tonguecat', which won him the Gouden Uil and the Flemish State Prize for Literature. In 2018, he wins the Sybren Poet Prize for Literature, a prize for authors with an experimental literary oeuvre. *Photo © Chris Ward*

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