

IFFR  
Home

I cimbri

Austria 1991  
director Peter Schreiner  
production Peter Schreiner  
sales S.F.B. (Sender Freies Berlin)  
length 116'

I cimbri (Die Zimbern) (IFFR 1992)

A strikingly stylish documentary shot in secure, lengthy black & white shots which almost look like photos thanks to the calm they radiate. The breathes a mood of contemplation. The direct motivation for making I Cimbri was the request by language researchers to document the almost extinct language of a small community. The group in question was the Zimbern or Cimbri, mountain dwellers in a spur of the Alps not far from Verona. The language of the Zimbern, which derived in the Middle Ages as a mixture of German and Italian dialects, is hardly spoken any more. The film was shot in the village of Giazza, where a couple of old people were still able to speak it (partly). Schreiner's interest was however not primarily ethnographic. It is significant that there is not much speaking done in the film, silence would appear to be more important. Schreiner likes to adopt an intuitive approach; the film was made without a prior plan, as the observations were made, and edited with as much feeling. I Cimbri comprises shots of people who stare into the camera silently for long periods; they are not in a hurry and do not talk more than necessary. The film is more a meditation than a reflection; the loss of a specific way of living and working, in harmony with the natural surroundings, is not presented but is made tangible. In Giazza a culture disappears before the eye of the camera while it has long since gone elsewhere in Europe. And the soundtrack records the 'original sound' just as precisely and eloquently, because 'silence' in Giazza is the same as the noise of modern society. © 2006 IFFR