

A subtle and poetic portrait of three women in the Italian mountain village Sappada, where a slowly disappearing East-Tyrol dialect is still spoken. These moving experiences acquire a universal significance against a background of Alps, rain, snow and sun.

Peter Schreiner is not a prolific film maker. He takes his time for everything. Before he turns on the camera, he likes to spend some time at the place where he envisages his next film. Just as Ogawa and his crew spent months in Japan helping his film characters grow rice, Schreiner settles down among the inhabitants of his films. In Bellavista he goes to the Italian Alpine village Sappada, in the province of Belluno. Here, people speak an East Tyrol dialect that is threatened with extinction. When Schreiner, who was responsible for camera and sound, has chopped enough wood, the community opens up to him. What follows is a thoughtful, serene and sensitive encounter with three women from Sappada, each with a tragic and resilient story to tell. There are two older women, Bernardina and Erminia, who have had to perform heavy manual labour. And there is the much younger Giuliana, who rebelled by studying linguistics abroad, yet had to return to work in the local hotel. She has resigned herself to her fate; two of her brothers committed suicide. There is nothing special about Sappada; it resembles a mountain village like so many others and familiar themes emerge from the women's stories. The attentive Schreiner records experiences that are as private as they are universal. Embedded in the sequence of seasons, they acquire eloquence. (PvH - IFFR Rotterdam 07)