

Manfred Naescher

The Wind Sings the Song of the Three Sisters

HD Video, Stereo, 4 min 22 sec, 2013

On the Myth of the Three Sisters

The Wind Sings the Song of the Three Sisters refers to a mountain in Liechtenstein named Drei Schwestern (Three Sisters), to a wind typical for the region (the *Föhn*) and to a regional myth about the origin of the mountain and its name. In the most well known version of the myth (multiple versions exist; I consulted three, two of which were religious, one was secular) the three sisters ignore a regional holiday devoted to Mother Mary (Liebfrauentag, August 15): Instead of going to church they go berry picking, and, worse, they display outright impudence to an apparition of Mary, who decides to teach them - and the audience of the myth - a lesson by turning them to stone, to the three-peaked mountain of the Three Sisters.

On the Soundtrack

The soundtrack of *The Wind Sings the Song of the Three Sisters* is based on the music of Alfred Hitchcock's 1940 film *Rebecca*. I created the score on the basis of micro-samples that I extracted from the orchestral music of *Rebecca*. I then transformed the audio material into a disorienting soundscape, a *ghost* of the music. In Hitchcock's film, Rebecca is dead, but yet she haunts the living. She is there, permanently, in every room, in the heads of the protagonists, in their conversations - she is in the world. So is the music: The original soundtrack has vanished, but its tone, its history and, most of all, its *presence* continue to exist.

On the Image

The two scenes were filmed in the village of my upbringing, in Eschen, Liechtenstein. The first scene shows the meadow behind my childhood home, and the second scene, filmed from the same position, provides a typical view of the Drei Schwestern (Three Sisters), as I saw them from the window of my childhood room and on my way to school. The mountain is a permanent image from my childhood and youth.

The handheld camera and its shaky, unsteady image convey a human presence, and therefore the presence of a personal, subjective perspective, as opposed to the more objective, neutral effect of a static cinematic image.

The myth of the Three Sisters combines elements of paganism, christianity, local geography and archaic moral views and fears that shape fascinating and powerful motifs and narrative strategies into a tale of contrasts, shifts and transformations. Making up stories is a primal means of human expression, a consolatory tool against the lack of comprehension of the world, a glue for groups and societies (see also: collage: from *coller*, french for glueing). *The Wind Sings the Song of the Three Sisters* adheres to the principle of the collage in its juxtaposition/connection of two contrasting moving images.

The mountain as a symbol of permanence stands in strong contrast with the ephemeral and subjective notion of memory. My own perspective - one of long years of absence from the place of my formative years, my first home - is mirrored in the combination of a solid geological and visually unchanged form like that of a mountain on the one hand, and a myth that long existed only in the oral tradition, a story that underwent modifications and adjustments according to a fluid set of given conditions. It is in this way that *The Wind Sings the Song of the Three Sisters* becomes a personal exploration of memory and home in sound and vision.