

Brother Sister (Bruder Schwester)

by Maria Mohr | Germany 2010 | 90:00 min.

A bold construct of siblinghood: worldly, in the family, and spiritual, in monasteries and convents and in the devotion to God. An unusual take on freedom and religion.

Maria Mohr is taking chances with the bold structure of her film, interlacing the fates of two pairs of siblings who couldn't be more different in a highly sophisticated and sometimes quite daring dramaturgical double helix. Brother-sister relationships in heaven and on earth, in the mundane and the transcendental sense, are her starting point for reflections about freedom, happiness and redemption. There is her own brother, who died at the age of 23, and there is her aunt Ingrid, who became a nun and devoted her life to the Spanish monk Rafael, who died in the 1930s. While Maria Mohr has her memories and a few home movies, Ingrid never knew Rafael, only a vision of him. She believed that she recognised a saint in his letters, drawings and poems. The two young men's fragmented biographies, both marked by sickness and closeness to death, but also by radical renunciation and inner emigration, gradually coalesce. The bohemian, architect and poet Rafael chose a Trappist monastery, where silence is the first rule, as the last place of his existence in this world, while her brother wanted only a few birds' feathers for his last journey. In her subtle balancing act between experimental, documentary and poetic narrative styles, Maria Mohr manages to surprise above all by her unusual views on religion, the veneration of relics and resurrection.

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