



Village Love

A Documentary by **Pamela Meyer-Arndt**

in coproduction with WDR
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90 min

The so called „flat-land“ of Thuringia is unknown to most people. The rural areas of the former DDR seem to be big black holes in the middle of nothing. A no-mans-land. Here in the area of Kyffhäuserkreis lies the small village Berka. It's close to the river Wipper and home to approximately 800 people.

More or less by coincidence three outstanding photo series originate from here, documenting the life of the villagers over decades. Surprisingly the pictures show, in large parts, a paradise, in which the villagers live and work together happily. A village idyll.

The documentary film VILLAGE LOVE depicts the thuringian village of Berka in it's transition over time, from 1949 to 2006. Two photographers, Ludwig Schirmer and Werner Mahler, photographed Berka over two decades. Their poetic photo series, depicting a functioning village community, are the basis of this film.

It's a dramatic and thrilling story about the people of the village Berka and how they have repeatedly attempted to, in a post-war period, under the pressure of socialism, during the unification of Germany and currently as citizens of the Republik of Germany, establish and maintain an existence.

The photo series are part of the narrative. They depict village life as idyllic, but also tough and merciless in some situations. The photos visualize and contextualize the past. The result is a documentation of how rural life in eastern Germany has transformed over time.