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Review: *Golden Seniors*

by [MURIEL DEL DON](#)

07/12/2023 - In his latest feature film, François Kohler transports us into the minds of a group of elderly folks determined to tackle life with sage-like serenity



Four years after *Je ne te voyais pas*, an intimist film about restorative justice which played skilfully with reality and fiction, the Swiss director and former student of Brussels-based INSAS **François Kohler** invites us to follow a group of elderly individuals in search of a kind of happiness which seems to slip through their fingers. Distributed in German Switzerland's cinemas from today and hitting Ticino cinemas tomorrow - following its release in French Switzerland on 27 September, courtesy of [First Hand Films](#) - *Golden Seniors* depicts the adventures of five characters who embark upon some intense brain training as part of a scientific study aimed at assessing the impact of meditation on aging.

Five seniors between 65 and 76 years old are about to set out on a journey into the unknown, a leap without a parachute into the meanders of their minds. The protagonists of *Golden Seniors* have been chosen to take part in an intense meditation training activity revolving around full awareness and altruism, an intense and emotional experience which confronts them with their fears but which also reveals emotional resources which they might never have known they possess. Their adventure lasts eighteen months and falls under a European scientific study called Silver Santé, which looks to assess the impact of learning a language (English) and meditation on the health and wellbeing of seniors.

It is this journey which is depicted in *Golden Seniors*, a journey both intimate and collective, touching and full of touches of humour; a journey without destination towards a wellbeing which the film's protagonists didn't previously believe possible. Revolving around their inner emotions and the inevitable doubts they experience, but also their small, everyday victories, *Golden Seniors* turns a scientific experiment into a human adventure and into a fascinating juxtaposition with our inner worlds. How do we grow old "well" in an increasingly selfish and egocentric society? How do we find the strength to carry on when humanity seems to have lost all of its reference points and fundamental values? François Kohler raises the audience's awareness of the importance of the mind, of the need to train it differently, in a more benevolent and altruistic way. Through minimal narration which sidesteps the trap of voiceovers, and poetic images which try to capture fleeting moments where the body conceals the worries of the mind (fingers moving almost imperceptibly during a meditation session or bodies moved only by breathing), *Golden Seniors* shows us the importance of the present moment.

Each of the film's protagonists experiences the effects of this intense meditative training in their own way. Faced with the inevitable difficulties of life and some decidedly challenging daily exercises, some of them abandon ship or lose their initial enthusiasm, while others feel increasingly involved and reinvigorated by this lifestyle which helps them to enjoy the present as if there were no tomorrow. *Golden Seniors* isn't a scientific film, it's a touching portrayal of human beings and their transformative resources. Patience, discipline, courage and resilience become bywords for the protagonists, a solitary mantra which steadily turns into a collective cry. Is it possible to grow old "well" through meditation and self-acceptation? We can only look inside of ourselves to find out.

Golden Seniors is produced by [P.S. Productions](#), [Instant Film](#) and [RTS Radio Télévision Suisse](#).

(Translated from Italian)



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