

Director's statement

What is it that the mind lets us experience? What gets through to us; what gets shut out; what resides in the subconscious; how do we fool ourselves? All of my films toy with similar ideas: the tremendous and intense difference between knowing and feeling; the conscious and the subconscious; reality and the autopilot of everyday life; interpretation and fact – and how these are remembered afterwards. I find such processes deeply fascinating: the wonderful logic of the subconscious.

The bubble of Marieke's carefree urban life is burst abruptly. Everything grinds to a shrieking halt. Without being able to do anything about it, she is changed from a 'free human being' into a 'victim' in a matter of seconds.

How do you carry on from there? How do you survive such total mental breakdown? I have tried to provide an answer to these questions by staying as close to myself as I could: what would I do?

I would probably not want to think of it anymore (or so I think). So that is exactly what Marieke does. She shuts it off, leaves everything behind, and starts over, hoping that the hypnotising regularities of renovating her new home will restrict her from other thoughts. However, the hypnosis only clouds her mind further.

The control over her fear gives way to paranoia, and the desolation of Zeelands' landscape, wide and claustrophobically outstretched, starts to affect her in strange ways.

What is good about being alone is also bad. All you have is yourself. It can teach you much about yourself, because there's nobody to interrupt your thoughts; and on the other hand it can teach you nothing, because there's nobody to get you out of your inbreeding-like stream of thought.

With Marieke, thoughts just revolve round and round, like the swirling water just above a drain, and drag her down. She obsessively barricades her doors and windows, hardly ever goes outside, and stops taking proper care of her self. Her way out, is escaping into fantasies where she thrives on being able to control the one that hurt her. This also empowers her enough to deal with John's stampede into her life, with his broad gestures and his closed mind. As their relationship develops and without Marieke being aware of it, John changes everything.

Another question I was trying to come to grips with is: How do you deal with a legal system protecting the rights of offenders, instead of the victim's? Along with the instinctive, all-consuming feelings of vengeance from which there is no relief?

I have decided to show as little as possible of Marieke's process of radicalisation and the rigid and violent double life she leads, because Marieke, when she is with John, shuts out this vindictive life to be able to control her conscience. The fact that she finally found a purpose for her feelings of vengeance, results in her regaining control over her life. And near the end of the film we even see shreds of the carefree woman from the time before the drama begins.

I have tried to use Marieke's point of view as consistently as possible to tell the story, and to clarify her feelings by trying to make you feel what she feels, by presenting what she sees, hears and feels as a fact.

As a consequence, subjective camera positions are always the most attractive ones to me: using a multitude of points of view, over-shoulders, and subjective perspectives. I want to see what the main character sees, instead of watching her watch.

By shifting to John's perspective only during the last few scenes, we see Marieke a bit more distantly, revealing a woman who is utterly losing her battle and herself.

Here again, the stark contrasts between feelings of mind, heart, and stomach become painfully clear, something that will ultimately prove fatal, even for *Kleine*, her unborn child. The story continues; the film is at an end.

Spending lots of time on site with a very small crew, secluded in the freezing cold like Marieke, gave rise to that special kind of intensity and intimacy required for this film. And by filming chronologically, I was able to alternate between recording days and editing the recorded material, and if needed, to continue writing the script. At that point, the editing partially determined what was further required. In this way, the film was able to grow in an organic fashion.