



cinéfondation
LA RÉSIDENCE

Volcano Girl

a film by Thessa Meijer

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Since 2000, the Festival de Cannes has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or even first feature film, and the merits of their feature film project. During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.

© photography by Nick Meek

Technical Information

Title: Volcano Girl
Director: Thessa Meijer
Screenplay: Thessa Meijer
Nationality: Dutch
Genre: Drama, Fantasy
Duration: 90 min
Partner: The Netherlands Film Fund
Production: Halal
<https://halal.amsterdam>

Director's Information

Thessa Meijer (1992) is a Dutch writer and director. After graduating with honours in 2015 from the HKU University of the Arts, she made the mid-length film **The Day My House Fell** and the short films **The Walking Fish**, **Heat** and **Nervosa**.

Her work screened at festivals including SXSW, Sitges, Les Arcs and BiFan, was featured on Nowness and Vimeo Staff Pick and won several awards, including the YDA's Special Jury Prize at Cannes Lions 2019. **The Walking Fish** was the Dutch submission to the 2020 Academy Awards.

Thessa is now developing her debut feature **Volcano Girl** that received a Special Mention at Les Arcs Film Festival 2019.

Synopsis

When 11-year old Vicky has her first orgasm while masturbating, the previously inactive, nearby volcano erupts and covers the small town with black ash. Vicky gradually discovers how her behaviour is connected to the volcano's activity. Feeling terribly guilty and ashamed of what she has done, she blocks her desires. While tensed locals search for someone to blame, the volcano keeps rumbling dangerously. Will Vicky be able to save the town and herself?

Statement of Intent

Growing up in a Christian environment, my parents raised me with the idea that sexuality is something that should be protected. As a teenager looking for answers outside of religion, I found new ideas and stigmas online and in popular media. The combination of the latter had a distorting effect on my self image and expectations. Inside a confused and closed-off teen brain, a train of thought can derail quickly... While society's views on sexuality have surely progressed (and most people don't believe in dying from

masturbation anymore, like they did in the 19th century), teenagers still have to deal with so many weird, scary and frustrating standards about their bodies and budding sexuality. Religious views have made place for a new restrictive "truth", a highly commercialised ideal. *Volcano Girl* enables me to tell a positive, empowering narrative that can hopefully start an open conversation. By building a fictional world that is slightly weird and disarming, Vicky's journey will be enchanting rather than provoking, creating a safe space for the audience.

Synopsis

Lorsque Vicky, 11 ans, a son premier orgasme en se masturbant, le volcan voisin, alors inactif, entre en éruption et recouvre la petite ville de cendres noires. Vicky découvre progressivement que son comportement est lié à l'activité du volcan. Se sentant terriblement coupable et honteuse de ce qu'elle a fait, elle réfrène ses désirs. Pendant que les habitants, nerveux, cherchent un coupable, le volcan continue de gronder dangereusement. Vicky pourra-t-elle sauver la ville et elle-même ?

Note d'intention

Ayant grandi dans un environnement chrétien, mes parents m'ont élevée avec l'idée que la sexualité devait être préservée. Adolescente, cherchant des réponses en dehors de la religion, j'ai trouvé de nouvelles idées et des stigmates en ligne et dans les médias populaires. La combinaison des deux a faussé l'image que l'on a de soi et ses attentes. À l'intérieur d'un cerveau adolescent confus et fermé, le fil de la pensée peut diverger rapidement... Si la société a certainement progressé en matière de sexualité (et la plupart des gens ne croient plus que l'on peut mourir de

masturbation, comme au XIX^{ème} siècle), les adolescents doivent encore faire face à de nombreuses normes étranges, effrayantes et frustrantes concernant leur corps et leur sexualité naissante. Les opinions religieuses ont fait place à une nouvelle «vérité» restrictive, un idéal hautement commercialisé. *Volcano Girl* me permet de raconter un récit positif et responsabilisant qui, espérons-le, peut lancer une conversation ouverte. En construisant un monde fictif un peu bizarre et désarmant, le voyage de Vicky sera enchanteur plutôt que provocateur, créant un espace confortable pour le public.