

# DIRECTOR STATEMENT

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A long time ago, I knew a girl named Asia. We were inseparable, sharing every moment and growing up together in the remote regions of Bulgaria. But each summer, I had to return to Holland, leaving her behind. Saying goodbye to my childhood sweetheart was the most heart-wrenching experience. After several painful separations, our relationship ended, and we lost touch. Life moved on, but I was always haunted by the question: What if we had found a way to stay together?

"The Cherry Tree" is my attempt to answer that lingering question. What if the boy had bridged that great distance to be with his girlfriend? Wouldn't that make a wonderful story? But with limited resources, I had to think outside the box and make bold creative choices. I decided to forgo dialogues and character faces, choosing to tell the story entirely through body language and music. This daring experiment turned out to be a rewarding success.

From the start, I envisioned "The Cherry Tree" as a burst of colors on the big screen, believing that colors can uplift the mood even during sad moments, offering a glimmer of hope. The use of colors in the film reflects my belief in the positive impact colors have on our lives.

As an independent filmmaker, I faced significant challenges: securing sponsorship, finding artists to collaborate with, and obtaining funding. Many dismissed my idea as too simple and a waste of time, but I remained determined. As filmmakers, we must believe in our projects, even when no one else does. To fund my film, I took on wedding photography on the side. My female artists and friends played a crucial role, supporting me in every possible way. As a tribute to these incredible women, I hope to one day open an all-women animation studio.

"The Cherry Tree" is not just a film; it's a journey of love, hope, and resilience, brought to life through the magic of colors and music.

*Tzveti Lazarov*