



WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY FER VAN DER HOFF

BIOGRAPHY

Fer van der Hoff obtained his Master of Arts degree from Erasmus University in 2019. As part of his master's program, he studied directing and screenwriting at San Diego State University. Upon returning to the Netherlands, Fer worked on various film sets as a production and directing assistant to find his way in the Dutch film industry. In 2021, it was time for him to create his own film, *KOERS*, for which he returned to his roots as the child of a skipper.

Fer believes in the power of films that help us step into the perspective of others, fostering understanding and connection. His ambition is to tell stories from the viewpoint of individuals and groups who are less often seen and heard. As a queer filmmaker, he wants to amplify the voices of queer people in his future projects. By seeking the universal truth in each unique narrative, Fer strives to create an experience that moves, connects, and enlightens the audience.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Saying goodbye is difficult for any child—but what if you're still far too young to do so? This film is about the moment a child is forced to stand on his own too soon, having to leave behind everything he knows—his familiar surroundings, his family, his sense of safety—at an age when he's not ready for it.

The film is inspired by my own childhood, in which I—and many other children of inland skippers—were sent to boarding school at the age of six. In the skipper community, it was seen as self-evident and a practical decision, as ships often traveled to Germany and Belgium, while the child was expected to attend school in the Netherlands. But for the child, it was a drastic and often traumatic experience—far too young to understand why. Within Dutch society as well, boarding schools for children of skippers were seen as 'normal' and common, simply a consequence of their parents' profession. The impact this had on the child was rarely acknowledged at the time—and often still isn't—and it took me many years before I found the words to speak about it myself. Those who experienced this as a child often still deal with the consequences of that lack of recognition and support.

With this film, I want to make visible what too often remains unseen: the silent pain that children experience in situations like these. We know that a child has to say goodbye—but do we truly see what that does to him? What it feels like to be left behind in a world he does not know? Through Kay's eyes, we witness what it means for a child to part with everything that feels safe and familiar: his belongings, his room, his home, and the slow emotional fading of his parents—until, eventually, they are gone. It causes a sense of losing grip, confusion, and loneliness that cuts deep. In situations like these, the focus tends to lie on the practical side—on systems, rules, and obligations. But a child doesn't live in systems or rules. A child lives in feeling, in closeness, in the unquestioned certainty of home. When that falls away, a misunderstood emptiness remains—a feeling of not being enough to be held or to be loved. These feelings do not disappear. They remain, leaving behind a pain you may not immediately understand as a child, but that stays deeply anchored within you. With this film, I want to give that feeling of loss a voice—for all the children who experienced detachment at a young age and lost their sense of safety.

I hope this film not only shows the child's emotional experience, but also opens up a conversation about how we can better support children when they are forced to say goodbye. Not just about children growing up in the inland skipping world, but about all children who are taken from their safe environment at a young age. About how important it is to truly see them.