

SWISS FILM FESTIVAL

CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE
ROSA MARCHANT



WHEN IT MELTS

A FILM BY VEERLE BAETENS





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WITH
CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE
ROSA MARCHANT

2023 - 111MIN.
ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL
THE MELTING BY LIZE SPIT

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SYNOPSIS

Many years after a sweltering summer that spun out of control, Eva returns to the village she grew up in with an ice block in the back of her car. In the dead of winter, she confronts her past and faces up to her tormentors.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A few years ago, the novel "The Melting" by Lize Spit was given to me with the following message: "Read it, because I think you need to direct this". At that time, I was in the middle of a shoot of a TV-series and a bit flabbergasted by this really out-of-the box idea. I had no experience in the art of film directing... However, secretly, a little seed was planted for this hidden dream of mine.

I read the book in the meantime - a best seller translated in more than 15 countries - and I was blown away. This precious story is about a young woman called Eva, trying to deal with ghosts from the past and taking her life in her own hands.

After working for many years on the script and turning the story into my own creation, I am over the moon to finally present this film to the world. I hope my film will take you along on Eva's journey, as a sensitive child that wants to be loved as well as a fragilised young adult, trying to survive in an overwhelming world that is often all about resilience, succeeding and being noticed.

The infinite loneliness of Eva touches me; her need for love, attention and understanding and her frozen, awkward condition that doesn't enable her to give and receive all of this. Eva is becoming her own enemy, and that of everybody else's.

This movie is for those who bury their pain deep inside of them, in a place where no one can see it, while it silently hollows them out. Quiet people often have the loudest minds. Only we just cannot hear them. Or do we listen well enough?

VEERLE BAETENS

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR VEERLE BAETENS

What drew you to this story when you first read Lize Spit's novel *The Melting (Het Smelt)*?

What appealed to me was the devastating loneliness of the little girl trying to belong, trying to be validated and approved by others. And then later, this woman, who is lonely and completely isolated from the world with a lot of issues of insecurity and self-esteem, which I know. I felt attracted to that part of the story. And I thought the ice block she has on this whole trip was a very good element of suspense. I immediately saw a film in it.

What were some of the challenges adapting the book to screen?

What really changed is that Eva both younger and older is a lot more active than in the book, she takes more actions to be in the group of kids in the past, and in the present, she takes more actions when she goes back to the town. In the book, she is more passive and everything is an interior monologue; I was convinced not to do a voiceover. Also, the characters are colder in the book but I really wanted people to like them underneath it all in the film. We needed to make changes without losing the atmosphere of the book, we couldn't have her become a hero all of a sudden. And in the book there are three timelines - over 430 pages - which we needed to condense into two timelines.





Was author Lize Spit involved in making the film?

I talked to her several times. She read the script two or three times. She saw an early cut of movie and she gave good remarks. My co-writer Maarten Loix helped a lot, and also gave me very good insight of what the ending should be, when I felt a bit stuck with it. Maarten and I had such perfect communication. If I wasn't happy with something, he kept questioning what I wanted to change and how that would impact other moments. He's so intelligent but also so sensitive.

What was the most difficult thing about juggling the two timelines?

You need to believe that little Eva is the same person as adult Eva. So we had to edit it in a way that you stay attached to the character. In the writing, we'd had shorter blocks of past and present and in the edit we found that we needed to have longer times with our main character in the past or our main character in the present. It's harder to be attached to Eva in the present because she's estranged from the world, she's awkward, she doesn't smile, it's more difficult to relate to her.

How did you cast Rosa Marchant as young Eva and Charlotte De Bruyne as older Eva? They don't look identical, but did you know they could play these versions of the same person?

I cast the kids first because it's much more difficult to find a great child who can act. And for the adult I knew I needed a great actress, and I saw a photo of Charlotte. I put them in the same room and asked them to mirror each other and just talk to each other – not to audition but to be together in a room. I saw it would work. For Charlotte, because we shot the past first, she could watch Rosa's performance and see her mannerisms. She took some of those on and played with it, and it's a marvelous performance.

How did you prepare Rosa for her first film shoot?

She goes to the Steiner School, which is an education system with more creativity and more liberty. She came in and was just so bright. Everything that she said was true, and you believed it. She's a very gentle, nice, sweet kid. Very fast we also saw, 'Wow, this kid has imagination!' She can be invisible and then from the moment she goes into a character, she takes the room. We had a lot of workshops and we spent a lot of time together with the kids talking to them. I wanted to build relationships and confidence in a secure environment.

The film brings up some troubling topics, did you have mental health experts collaborating on the production?

We had a psychologist who was very specialized in trauma. Quite early in the process she talked to the kids, and their parents too. During filming of the most difficult scenes, the psychologist was on set. My first instinct after a difficult scene was to grab the actor and say 'oh, poor kid,' and give a hug. But I learned it's better to just get them out of that room and start playing Tetris or do something totally different.

With the adults, because I'm an actress myself, I know it's important to have the security that I can count on my director and that he or she cares. I think that's necessary to feel safe and dare to do things, to give yourself completely, because you trust your director.

What was your biggest challenge in making the film – was it in preparation, during the shoot or in the editing process?

I felt so well prepared for the shoot – I had some preparation also with the renowned directing coach Judith Weston. I knew what I wanted, I knew what I was doing, the kids were so well prepared, so everything clicked for me on set. What was more difficult was pre-production because you feel like you're the one who has everything in her head and you need to pull and push your collaborators to explain. And post-production was the most mysterious part of the process because as an actor I'd only ever done ADR.





How did the visual language enhance the story you wanted to tell?

Our cinematographer Frederic Van Zandycke, who is amazing, came to me with the example of *Blue Valentine* – which stays close to the characters and not always showing what they see. Not installing the place they're in, you leave that up to the imagination of the spectator. If you look at Eva in the beginning, we were quite wide and then later, it's like she's stuck in the frame. There's also the language of Eva and her mother who are never in the same frame, that was important showing the distance between them.

For Eva in the present, we are very close to her from the beginning, because she's stuck in this little frame. We also shot a lot of long takes or continuous shots, that contributes to the acting and the reality. Colour wise, we just wanted to be very much summer and not to put on another layer of heaviness. It is jolly. We wanted to be like *The Goonies* or *Stand by Me*. We wanted those colours and a bit of pixelization. In the winter, that was going to feel cooler, but we didn't want to do tone on tone. Eva is often in blue colours, also in the past, so we kept that going. There's a little bit more of coldness, because it's darker in winter. But we didn't want it to look frozen and cold white.

What do you hope this film might inspire an audience to think about?

I wanted to make a movie about fragile people, who take in everything and against whom the world often takes a hard stand. A lot of movies talk about resilience, being strong. This movie is for those who bury their pain deep inside of them where no one can see it and where it silently hollows them out.

In real life, some people are a little bit awkward or reserved or cold or depressed, and it's easy to say, 'come on, snap out of it,' but that's not possible for everyone. Sometimes everything is not what it seems. I can talk about things very easily because I'm not traumatized. For some people, trauma is so buried inside of them that it's not possible to let it come out because it's too threatening. I hope the film can inspire a little empathy.

BIOS

CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE

ADULT EVA

Charlotte De Bruyne (1990) started acting when she was twelve at the youth theatre company "Kopergietery" in her home town Ghent, Belgium. This is where she met the internationally acclaimed theater company '*Ontroerend Goed*', of which she is still a core member. She made her debut on screen with *Little Black Spiders* by **Patrice Toye**. Other films and series include *Flying Home*, *Behind the Clouds* and *The Twelve*. In 2021 she was on set of the new film *Tori et Lokita* by **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne** and played the main part in *When It Melts* by **Veerle Baetens**.

ROSA MARCHANT

YOUNG EVA

Rosa Marchant (2005), is at secondary school in Antwerp, in the sixth degree. She loves to play the guitar and sings in a band called Short People. She likes to read, draw and right. Her first experience with movies, was a short called *Come Sweet Death* by **Jolke Van Aerde**. *When it melts* was her first audition ever to play in a long feature film.





CAST

ROSA MARCHANT	EVA young
CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE	EVA adult
AMBER METDEPENNINGEN	TESS
MATTHIJS MEERTENS	LAURENS
ANTHONY VYT	TIM
SEBASTIEN DEWAELE	PAPA JO

CREDITS

Adapted from the novel *The Melting* by Lize Spit

DIRECTOR	VEERLE BAETENS
PRODUCTION	SAVAGE FILM - PRPL - VERSUS PRODUCTION
PRODUCERS	BART VAN LANGENDONCK
NATIONALITY	BELGIUM - THE NETHERLANDS
CO-PRODUCTION	ELLEN HAVENITH & JACQUES-HENRI BRONCKART
SCREENPLAY	VEERLE BAETENS & MAARTEN LOIX
PHOTOGRAPHY	FREDERIC VAN ZANDYCKE
EDITING	THOMAS POOTERS
SET DESIGNER	ROBBE NUYTENS
SOUND	GEERT VLEGELS
MUSIC	BJORN ERIKSSON
COSTUME DESIGNER	MANU VERSCHUEREN
WORLD SALES	THE PARTY FILM SALES





Savage Film presents **WHEN IT MEETS** a film by **VEERLE BAETENS** based on the novel by **LIZE SPIT** published by **DAS MAG WITGEVERS** screenplay **VEERLE BAETENS & MAARTEN TOUX** with **RISA MARCHANT CHARLOTTE DE BRUYNE NAOMI VELISSABOIJ SEBASTIEN DEWAELE AMBER METO-PENNINGEN ANTHONY VVI MATTHIJS MEERTENS** **DOP** **FREDERIC VAN ZANDVYCKE** **SBC** editing **THOMAS POTTERS** ORIGINAL music **BLOOM ERIKSSON** art director **ROBBE NUYTENS** costume designer **MANU VERSCHIEREN** make up **DIANA BRESSEN** sound **GEERT WIEGELS HENNY SAERENS PE-DRIC VAN DER TACKEN** 1st assistant director **JOKE PEVENAGE** production manager **CORINE APPELMANS** produced by **BART VAN LANGENDONCK** - A SAVAGE FILM PRODUCTION in co-production with **PIPP**, **VERSUS PRODUCTION**, **VTM**, **RTBF** & **SHELTER PROD** with the support of **THE FLANDERS AUDIOVISUAL FUND (VAF)**, **COFINAGES**, **SCREEN FLANDERS**, **HET NEDERLANDS FILMFONDS**, **THE TAX SHELTER INCENTIVE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM** in collaboration with **TELENET**, **STREAMZ**, **KINEPOLIS FILM DISTRIBUTION**, **THE PARTY FILM SALES**, **TAXSHELTER.BE** & **ING**



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