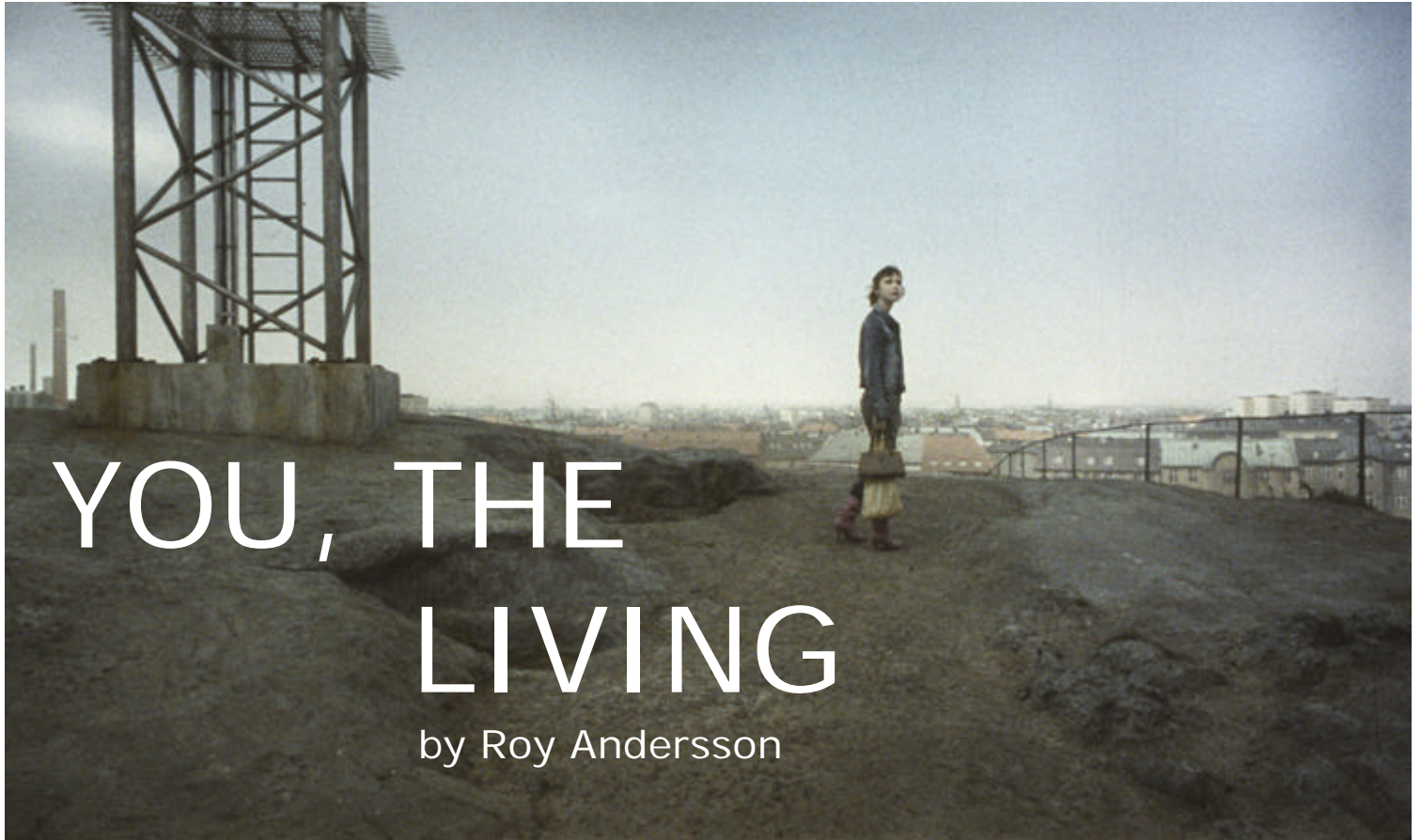


Roy Andersson Filmproduktion present



FESTIVAL DE CANNES  
OFFICIAL SELECTION  
UN CERTAIN REGARD



Sweden, Germany, France, Denmark, Norway • 2007 • 94min • 1.66 • 35mm • Colour • Dolby SR  
In Swedish with English Subtitles  
Classification: M Sex Scenes (in New Zealand)

“Be pleased then, you the living, in your delightfully warmed bed, before Lethe’s ice-cold wave will lick your escaping foot.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Roman Elegies



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# INTRODUCTION

Premiered at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival, as part of the Un Certain Regard selection, YOU THE LIVING is a fluent succession of short sketches, each filmed in one take. Most of them have a tragicomic undertone.

# SYNOPSIS

"YOU, THE LIVING is about the human being, about her greatness and her miserableness, her joy and sorrow, her self-confidence and anxiety. A being at whom we want to laugh and also cry for. It is simply a tragic comedy or a comic tragedy about us."

Roy Andersson

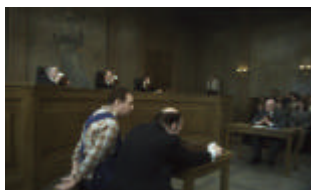
# DIRECTOR'S COMMENT

You, the Living  
*A film about the grandeur of existing*  
by Roy Andersson

There is a proverb in a collection of old Icelandic poetry called "The Poetic Edda" that says: "Man is man's delight". I like this idea that man is not alone on earth, but is dependent on others. Nevertheless, if man is the joy of others, he is also the source of his problems and pain – this is as true for important moments in history as it is for the little moments of everyday life. Man fascinates man: that is how I interpreted this concise piece of thousand-year-old wisdom and adopted it as a device for the film. My film is composed of a series of tableaux that illustrate the human condition. The characters represent different facets of human existence. They face problems, large and small that range from issues of day-to-day survival to the big philosophical questions. I hope that *You, the Living* will give audiences the impression of watching moments of their own existence. My study of man's fascination with man sheds light on the underlying philosophy of the film. Contemporary cinema often ignores these values and favours storytelling that is in line with conventional dramaturgy. The intention is not to condemn this type of cinema, but instead to develop a cinematic language that is less predictable. My film breaks with classic narrative structure to tell its story via a mosaic of human destinies.

The tableaux show the misunderstandings and mistakes made by people who meet but don't really, because they feel so pressed for time, in their pursuit of what seems important to them. The film is about people's lives, their work, how they behave in society, their thoughts, worries, dreams, sorrows, joys and unquenchable thirst for acknowledgement and love. These phenomena, what they're made of as much as their appearance and motivation, have as many variations as there are people on earth. And this is why "man is man's delight".

## SCENES



**Judge 1** : Life sentence, in my view.

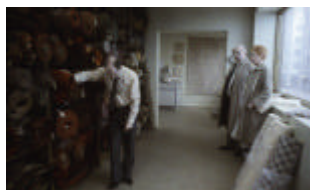
**Judge 2** : That's not enough.

**Judge 1** : The electric chair perhaps. Precisely. The electric chair?

**Judge 2** : Yes!

**Defence lawyer** : The electric chair.

**The accused** : That's life.



**Salesman** : It's quite simply not my day. I've had a fight with my wife.

**Client** : It happens.

**salesman** : The thing is, I happened to call her a hag.

**Client's wife** : That wasn't very nice.

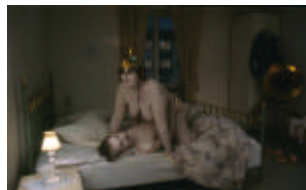
**Salesman** : But what about her? She called me stuck-up.

**Client** : Sorry?

**Salesman** : Stuck-up!

**Client's wife** : Personally, I think hag is worse. Don't you think so Gustav?

**Client** : Oh, I don't have a bloody idea. Let's go.



**Man** : You simply have bad luck some times, I've played 39 times in the military orchestra so far this year. And played at 48 funerals.

**Woman** : Nice!

**Man** : All money went to my retirement funds. And now I find out... All that money, just gone down the drain. It's really a shame.

**Woman** : Oh, so nice!



**Child**: What's wrong, ma'am?

**Woman**: My husband called me a hag.

**Child**: What's that?

**Woman**: You'll have to ask him?

# INTERVIEW WITH ROY ANDERSSON



## Subject and humour

How do we spend our time on earth? I show examples from people's lives and hope that the result is humorous. Yet, my stories are also sad, because life is tragic as we all die one day. At the end of one's life, we probably

all realise the mistakes we've made. The film doesn't want to make viewers feel guilty, but instead wants to invite them to think about the way we spend our time. My last film, *Songs From The Second Floor*, treated a serious subject: historical and collective guilt. *You, the Living* deals with more tangible questions like "how to behave around others". The film is constructed around 50 odd scenes, with recurring characters in often burlesque situations. Living is complicated for each one of us and humour saves us. In this way, I see *You, the Living* as a farce about the human condition.

## Concise Tableaux

Important events and the destinies of others are passionate subjects. But we also enjoy silently watching people from a café patio. I find this simplicity of everyday life in the paintings of Millet and van Gogh: Millet's depiction of peasants labouring in *Les Glaneuses* is as interesting as the Delacroix paintings of epic battles. Millet's paintings are executed with such care, precision and empathy that it seems there couldn't be anything more important to depict. I try to compose scenes that are as intense and refined as possible so as to create a desire for them to be seen again. I'm trying to change the relationship audiences have with cinema. As an artist it is important, even necessary, to shake up old habits. My film defies conventional cinematic narrative structures. That's my way of being provocative.

## Narrative Structure

When I make a film, I don't rely on a classic screenplay, but rather on a theme, a philosophical concept or a particular atmosphere. For *You, the Living*, I created tableaux that put characters in commonplace, everyday life situations with great attention to detail. Together these scenes form a whole that resembles the chaotic structure of a bustling marketplace. First and foremost, I wanted to set up the scenes in a way that left them open to development that allows for surprise and the unexpected. The scenes are linked by recurring lines of dialogue and situations. More than once, the spectators will find themselves in a bar at closing time, where a slightly drunk character will murmur that "No one understands me". In addition to its humorous quality, this repetition accentuates the universal aspect of the characters.

## Visual Style

I like scenes that have a disciplined simplicity, filmed in wide shot from a single angle and in one take. There are very few camera movements in my films. To film in wide shots, I needed to acquire a certain maturity as a director. But this way of working allows me to locate the characters in the world that surrounds them as opposed to isolating them. It's often said

that we see someone's soul in their eyes. I don't do close-up shots because I find that I understand people better by

observing them in the space that they inhabit, the environment they choose to live in.

### **Atmosphere**

In my films, the marriage of soft lighting, faces lightly painted with white make-up and a monochromatic colour scheme – often in green tones – creates a particular atmosphere. My first films were influenced by Italian neo-realism, notably Vittorio de Sica's *The Bicycle Thief*, and by the Czech Nouvelle Vague. But I soon discovered the limits of this kind of realism. So I developed a style that condensed and simplified scenes. Today this more abstract aesthetic seems to me to be more powerful than realism.

### **Dreams and reality**

For this film, I wanted to alternate real scenes with dream sequences, a mixture that fascinates me. When we enter into a dream sequence, we can speak about life more freely without worrying about exact representation. You can be as brutal and open as you like. In Luis Buñuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, I very much appreciated when one of the characters says to a group of people: "Yesterday I had a dream," and then we see this dream. Buñuel showed a kind of liberty and spirit that I find incredible. This liberty inspired me a great deal.

### **Sets and lighting**

All the scenes, apart from one, were filmed in our Stockholm studio – Studio 24. We built around 50 sets, some of them very large. This allowed me to achieve the kind of simplicity and pureness that I adhere to. In the studio, I can create all the conditions necessary for complete freedom as a director. We lit the scenes with very soft lighting that casts no shadows. In this way, man has nowhere to hide.

### **Actors**

I choose my actors very carefully. It doesn't matter to me if they're professionals or not. What counts is their authenticity and their presence on screen. I think it's more interesting to choose from the millions of people in Sweden rather than restrict myself to the pool of two thousand or so Swedish actors. In general, I prefer new faces, and I often find my actors on the street, in restaurants or amongst my acquaintances.

### **Music**

I like to have original music composed for my films. In this case it was inspired by many different styles (jazz, Mozart, Russian hymns). Yet the melodies are very close to New Orleans-style jazz, which I used to play on the trombone when I was young. Originally I wanted the music to be played live in the film, so that we see and hear people playing. Finally, I found certain scenes to be so musical in themselves that I changed my mind and pushed even further: Sometimes characters start to sing.

### **Conclusion**

I like to deal with existential questions through common and seemingly banal situations. We have seen neo-realism and absurdist cinema – today, I am trying to introduce "trivialism".

# ABOUT ROY ANDERSSON

Roy Andersson was born in Gothenburg, Sweden in 1943. His first feature A Swedish Love Story won the main prize at the Berlinale IFF 1970. Giliap, his second film, was presented at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes 1976. In 1975 he started making unusual and very successful commercials, which won a total of eight Golden Lions at Cannes. In 1981 he founded Studio 24 in order to produce and make his films in total freedom. After Something Happened (1987) and World of Glory (1991), two shorts that returned with the most prestigious awards (a.o. Clermont-Ferrand), he shot Songs From The Second Floor in his studio (March 1996-May 2000) and won the Special Jury Prize in Cannes 2000. You, The Living is his fourth feature film.

## Feature films

2007 You, The Living  
2000 Songs from the Second Floor  
1975 Giliap  
1970 A Swedish Love Story

## Short films

1991 World of Glory  
1987 Something has Happened

## / CAST

Jessica Lundberg, Elisabet Helander, Björn Englund  
Leif Larsson, Ollie Olson, Kemal Sener, Håkan Angser  
Birgitta Persson, Gunnar Ivarsson

## / CREW

Editing	Director of Photography
<b>Anna Märta Waern</b>	<b>Gustav Danielsson</b>
Sound	Producer
<b>Jan Alvermark, Robert Sörling</b>	<b>Pernilla Sandström</b>
Sound Mixer	Scriptwriter & Director
<b>Owe Svensson FSFL</b>	<b>Roy Andersson</b>
Music Recording	Production
<b>Robert Hefter</b>	<b>Roy Andersson Filmproduktion</b>
Assistant Cameraman & Special	Co-Production
Constructions	<b>Parisienne de</b>
<b>Fredrik Borg</b>	<b>Production/Philippe Bober</b>
Casting & Key Costume	<b>Thermidor</b>
<b>Sophia Frykstam</b>	<b>Filmproduktion/Susanne</b>
Backdrop Design & Painting	<b>Marian</b>
<b>Magnus Renfors, Elin</b>	<b>Posthus Teatret/Carsten</b>
<b>Segerstedt</b>	<b>Brandt</b>
Economy & Administration	<b>4 M /Håkon Øverås</b>
<b>Johanna Wennerberg</b>	<b>Sveriges Television, Arte</b>
Carpenter & Special Constructions	<b>France Cinéma, WDR/Arte,</b>
<b>Jacob Björkander</b>	<b>Style Jam</b>
Props & Scenic Artist	With support from
<b>Anna-Märta Waern</b>	<b>Svenka Filminstitutet,</b>
Production Manager & Assistant	<b>Eurimages Council of Europe,</b>
Director	<b>Nordisk</b>
<b>Johan Carlsson</b>	<b>Film &amp; TVFond, Filmstiftung</b>
	<b>Nordrhein-Westfalen, Danske</b>
	<b>Filminstitut, Norsk Filmfond</b>
	<b>with Canal</b>