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You, The Living (Du Levande)

2008

Directed by: Roy Andersson

Stars: Jessika Lundberg, Elisabeth Helander, Björn Englund, Leif Larsson

Length: 95 minutes



You, The Living (Du Levande) synopsis

“A film about the grandeur of existing”, *You, The Living* has no plot or narrative structure. Made up of 50 individual sketches filmed in single takes, some characters appear multiple times and some only once. Mia (Elisabeth Helander) is an overweight alcoholic who can’t stop bemoaning her existence in a wretched world, all the while either ignoring or berating her biker boyfriend (Jörgen Nohall), who only wants to reassure her. A worn out psychiatrist (Håkan Angser) admits he gave up counselling people years ago because they’re all inherently mean and selfish; today he just prescribes pills. A businessman annoys his Arab hairdresser by making jokes about his written language and gets a bald stripe shaved through his haircut. A besotted groupie (Jessika Lundberg) pines after the rock star man of her dreams, climbing hills just to shout his name in to the wind and dreaming of their wedding day.



Opinion on *You, The Living (Du Levande)*

Sometimes it’s hard to tell if a director’s decision to abandon certain filmmaking conventions is brave and exciting, a good way to shake up the audience and make them think, a grand artistic statement...or a fatuous, self-indulgent attempt to be different, difficult or willfully obtuse. Although *You, The Living* is hard going at times, thankfully it appears to be the former.

Roy Andersson creates a bleak and uninspiring world via the ghostly pallor of his meticulously created sets and caricatured characters, but this film is actually very funny. The characters are all desperate in their individual ways; life has been sucked out of them and yet they survive. Rants and litanies of complaints manage to have snippets of humour in them and the dream sequence where the tablecloth trick goes wrong is a particular highlight.

(page 1 of 2)

[next >](#)

