



# The worst person in the world

**Director:** Joachim Trier

**Country:** Norway

**Date:** 2022

**A review by Clarisse Loughrey for *The Independent*:**

If someone were to ask me what millennial anguish feels like, I might point them to Joachim Trier's comedy of crisis, *The Worst Person in the World*. Whenever its heroine Julie (Renate Reinsve) is alone – truly alone, in the way you tend to be walking home in the dead of night or early hours of the morning – she starts to cry. The modern world can be so deafeningly loud, a stampede of what the film's narrator calls “updates, feeds, unsolvable global problems”, that it's only in absolute solace that we're forced to question whether we're truly happy or not. I've cried on far too many walks home in the dark. It took until Trier's film for me to realise why.

*The Worst Person in the World* carries a shimmery feeling of definitiveness to it. It's the rare piece of art actually invested in why an entire generation can seem so aimless and indecisive. We're far too content to simply revel in the chaos of it, but Trier – a filmmaker of inexhaustible empathy – seeks something more. Julie is a modern-day Goldilocks, dunking her spoon into an endless line of porridge bowls. She goes to medical school. Then she decides to specialise in psychiatry. Then she ditches the whole thing for photography (“actually she was a visual person”, the narration notes).



She jumps into a relationship with an older man, Aksel (Anders Danielsen Lie), who's known for a series of Fritz the Cat-like graphic novels about an unrepentantly horny anthropomorphic bobcat. He wants kids now. She doesn't. “You seem to be waiting for something. I don't know what,” he tells her spitefully in return. When she flees into the arms of a mellow-minded

bartender, Eivind (Herbert Nordrum), who has no particular plans for his future, it ends up just as unsatisfactory. Trier has divided his story into 12 chapters, bookended by a prologue and epilogue – a conceit that crashes the viewer headlong into Julie's life. She's 29. Suddenly she's 30. Her hair is blonde, then pink, then brown.

Julie is stuck in the act of chasing after things – men, jobs, desires – before she even knows what she wants. It's the unintended consequence of freedom of choice without freedom from expectation. When the camera glides over a century's worth of family photographs, the narration detailing how many children each ancestral matriarch bore, it's not with any twisted kind of longing. Instead, Julie is the first of them to contend with the knowledge that any child now brought into the world will suffer the full-blooded wrath of climate change. That seems like the kind of thing you wouldn't wish on your worst enemy.

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