



# THE BOTHERSOME MAN

(Den Brysomme Mannen)  
*A Film by Jens Lien*

*"What's a guy got to do to commit suicide in peace? In Jens Lien's wry new comedy, it's a lot. [...] Black Norwegian comedy in the cool style of Bent Hamer, whose KITCHEN STORIES was similarly bent" - Toronto Star*



Norway/2006/In Norwegian/95 min.  
35 mm / 1:1.85 / Color / Dolby SRD

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## Synopsis

A man arrives in a gray and charmless city and is given an apartment, a job, a lover. But something is wrong, something is missing. Tastes, smells, noises, emotions - things that he seems to remember from a past life and that he longs for...

## Long Synopsis

Forty-year-old Andreas arrives in a strange city with no memory of how he got there. He is presented with a job, an apartment - even a wife. But before long, Andreas notices that something is wrong. The people around him seem cut off from any real emotion, and communicate only in superficialities. The ominous "Caretakers", who make sure the city runs smoothly, keep an increasing watch over Andreas as they find he doesn't fit in. Andreas makes an attempt to escape the city, but he discovers there's no way out. Andreas meets Hugo, who has the same longings as himself. Hugo has found a crack in a wall in his cellar. Beautiful music streams out from the crack. Maybe it leads to "the other side"? A new plan for escape is hatched.

## FESTIVALS/AWARDS (EXCERPT)

WINNER - JURY'S SPECIAL MENTION AWARD, AQCC AWARD (ASSOCIATION QUÉBÉCOISES DE CRITIQUES DE CINÉMA), FESTIVAL DU NOUVEAU CINÉMA MONTRÉAL 2006

WINNER - BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE FILM, BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY, HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

WINNER, BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN, FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE CINEMA DE CATALUNYA (SITGES) 2006

WINNER - BETV PRIZE OF BEST FILM, BRUSSELS EUROPEAN FILM FESTIVAL 2006

WINNER - HR GIGER AWARD "NARCISSE" FOR BEST FANTASTIC FEATURE FILM, SILVER MELIES FOR BEST EUROPEAN FEATURE, NEUCHÂTEL INTERNATIONAL FANTASTIC FILM FESTIVAL 2006

WINNER - FIPRESCI PRIZE, MAGIC CRYSTAL, INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL "ARSENALS" RIGA 2006

WINNER - CITY OF ATHENS BEST DIRECTOR AWARD, ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION - CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006 - CRITIC'S WEEK

OFFICIAL SELECTION - KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION - TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION - PUSAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION - LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2006

OFFICIAL SELECTION - AFI FEST, LOS ANGELES 2006

## **CREW**

Director	<b>Jens Lien</b>
Screenwriter	<b>Per Schreiner</b>
Producer	<b>Jørgen Storm Rosenberg</b>
Cinematography	<b>John Christian Rosenlund</b>
Art director	<b>x</b>
Visual Conception	<b>x</b>
Art producer	<b>x</b>
Editing	<b>x</b>
Sound designer and Editor	<b>x</b>
Direct sound	<b>x</b>
Mixer	<b>x</b>
Original music	<b>x</b>
Band music	<b>x</b>
Line producer	<b>x</b>
Casting director	<b>x</b>

## **CAST**

Andreas	<b>Trond Fausa Aurvåg</b>
Anne-Britt	<b>Petronella Barker</b>
Ingeborg	<b>Birgitte Larsen</b>

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

*This film is to me a portrait of a society which has lost something. A place here everything works, but where emotions are absent, forgotten along the way. Andreas arrives in his new world. It seems perfect but he doesn't fit in. He dreams, falls in love, has longings - but this seems alien and bothersome to the others.*

*What makes 'The bothersome man' special is how it expresses the idea of a society devoid of emotion. The absence of opposing force creates an uneasy feeling which gradually builds in intensity. Andreas has no-one to blame but himself, since everyone are being friendly towards him. This lack of resistance gradually tears him apart. He is alive in a dead world.*

*'The bothersome man' is a stylistic and absurd depiction of a nightmare. A horror-film in an every-day setting. The film starts out stylistically like a western. Wide shots in a barren landscape. Dreamy music. Our hero, Andreas, arrives in this wasteland. He doesn't know where he's coming from or where he's going. He is tormented by the never-ending friendliness and emptiness around him.*

## Director Bio

In 1990 Jens Lien went to London to play rock'n'roll. 3 years later he returned as a filmmaker educated at the London Int. Film School. He started out making documentaries and commercials along with numerous short-films. Among his short-films is "Shut The Door" that was selected in Cannes official competition program in 2000 and "Natural Glasses" that was in Cannes official competition program the next year (2001). He has won numerous awards all over the world with his short films. His first feature "Jonny Vang" came in 2003 and had its premier at the Berlin Film Festival in the Panorama section and has received several awards. His latest feature film "The Bothersome Man" has been shown in the Critic's Week in Cannes 2006.

## REVIEWS



**Fri., May 26, 2006, 3:21pm PT**

The Bothersome Man

### ***Den Brysomme Mannen***

(Norway) A Tordenfilm production, in association with the Icelandic Film Co., with the support of the Norsk Filmfond, Sandrew Metronome, Norsk Filmstudio, Icelandic Film Centre, TV 2. (International sales: Bavaria Film Intl., Geislagasteig, Germany.) Produced by Jorgen Storm Rosenberg. Directed by Jens Lien. Screenplay, Per Schreiner, based on a radio play by Schreiner.

**With:** Trond Fausa Aurvag, Petronella Barker, Per Schaanning, Birgitte Larsen, Johannes Joner, Ellen Horn, Anders. T Andersen.  
(Norwegian dialogue)

### **By [LESLIE FELPERIN](#)**

**For office drone Andreas, suicide is preferable to a world where everything is spotlessly clean, everyone's nice, and every home looks like an Ikea showroom. "The Bothersome Man," the delightfully droll sophomore feature by Norwegian helmer Jens Lien ("Jonny Vang") creates a surreal dystopia that's only a taupe-colored shade from a realist depiction of contempo Scandinavia. Although marbled with bleak desperation, and sometimes gory in a harmless, slapstick way, this bone-dry black comedy could bother up bookings from niche distributors offshore and play well to offbeat-loving auds.**

Andreas (Trond Fausa Aurvag -- think Vincent Cassel but with a weaker chin and higher forehead) is dropped off by a bus in the middle of a gray-toned desert (filmed, per credits, in Iceland's Sprengisandur National Desert Reserve) and then driven into a tidy, unnamed city (actually Oslo) equally lacking in color.

He's assigned a cozy apartment, and told to report to a tower block where smiling boss Havard (Johannes Joner) hands him an untaxing accountant job.

Before long, he's effortlessly making friends with his colleagues and meets lacquered-haired interior designer Anne-Britt (Petronella Barker). The two shack up together and pursue a contented routine built around home improvement, more dinner parties and mechanical sex.

Trouble is, Andreas can't get used to this childfree world where all the food is literally tasteless, booze never gets you drunk, and no one is ever angry, sad or even ecstatically happy. More bizarre still, when he accidentally cuts off his finger it mysteriously grows back. Even an attempt to commit suicide by throwing himself under a subway train fails to finish him off, and he stumbles back to life like a human Wile E. Coyote in a blood-soaked suit.

Lead Fausa Aurvag deserves kudos for just-so balance between underplayed expression and exaggerated physicality.

Dialogue never spells out the nature of the world depicted, although the send-up of polite Scandic culture is obvious. Religiously inclined auds might see a vision here of either hell or heaven; others, just an absurdist Beckettian universe with more throw cushions.

Either way, the script by Per Schreiner and Lien's lean helming satisfyingly interlace recurring characters, incidents and strands of dialogue to form a fugue-like structure that falters just fractionally in the last reels. Final pay-off is enigmatically evocative.

Given the script was based on Schreiner's own radio play, it's unsurprising that sound design by Christian Schaanning plays such a key role in producing the pic's comic-creepy effect. Use of sound and impossible space recalls the eerie worlds of David Lynch, while the visuals' cold palette of neutrals and figure-dwarfing landscapes evoke work of Swedish helmer Roy Andersson ("Songs From the Second Floor"). Shades of Jacques Tati's menacingly modernist houses are also detectable, and just a whiff of Tati's whimsy.

Camera (Kodak color, widescreen), John Christian Rosenlund; editor, Vidar Flataukan; music, Ginge; production designer, Are Sjaastad; costume designer, Anne Pedersen; sound designer (Dolby Digital), Christian Schaanning. Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (Critics Week), May 20, 2006. Running time: 95 MIN.

Times Online

October 20, 2006

## Film

The Bothered Man

ARION MCNICOLL AT THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE



The Norwegian director Jens Lien's bleak comedy opens with a young couple kissing on a platform of the underground. They kiss deeply but with their eyes wide open, bored. Further down the platform a man watches with a mixture of fascination and horror. He turns towards camera, blinks and leaps under a train.

Based on an award-winning Norwegian radio play by Per Shreiner, *The Bothersome Man* is about a quest to find meaning in a surreal, vacuous world. The eponymous hero, Andreas (Trond Fausa Aurvåg) is deposited perfunctorily into a world of impossibly neat Scandinavian office blocks, designer furniture and soulless people. He has no memory of how he got there. He is presented with a chic apartment, a cushy job and a wardrobe full of tailored grey suits. When invited out to dinner by work colleagues, he meets a girl and they move in together, choosing agreeable furniture for their sleek, modern home. But gradually it becomes apparent to Andreas that beneath the gloss, something vital is missing. Craving sensation and excitement, he cuts off his own finger only to have it grow back again. He realises he needs to find a way to escape.

Beautifully shot and full of surreal flourishes, *The Bothersome Man* scooped a prize at Cannes this year, despite its obvious influences. After the screening Lien even admitted that he "stole the whole opening of the film from Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas*." Nevertheless, its message - about the importance of independent thought in an affluent, middle-class society - resonates long after the credits have rolled. A clever, stylish satire.

## ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement has members in over 50 states and 1200 cities. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Movement Series. The schedule includes the following films:

- Eric Eason's *Manito*
- Scott Hamilton Kennedy's *OT: our town*
- Donovan Leitch & Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Party's Over*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman
- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Happiness and Prosperity*, starring Sandra Oh
- Eric Khoo's *Be With Me*
- Ismael Ferroukhi's *Le Grand Voyage*
- Joseph Cedar's *Campfire*

