

ROME FILM FESTIVAL Extra / Netherlands

Life in One Day: Our Hell is time

by Gabriele Barcaro 21/10/2009



Benny and Gini are born, go to school and fall in love, in a few hours. Their world is just like ours, except that life lasts only one day, in the suitably entitled *Life in One Day* [+]. The second feature by Holland's **Mark de Cloe** screens in the Extra sidebar of the [Rome Film Festival](#) (where the project was presented at the first New Cinema Network).

People are born and die (and perhaps fulfil their dream of seeing dawn) in 24, brief hours. All experiences are unique, done for the first and last time, each moment is unrepeatable. Including sex, which serves just to guarantee the continuity of the race. Because after having consummated, desire decreases (well, that happens in our world too).

Things are different, however, for Benny and Gini. They love each other too much for it to end there. It is better to commit murder and go to Hell where, according to the catechizer, the days are (horrors!) endlessly repeated and the same.

Hell, for those who don't get it, is Time as we know it. But the punishment for the couple (the algid **Matthijs van de Sande Bakhuyzen** and **Lois Dols de Jong**) is much more painful than the death sentence they are given in court (in a few minutes, because even the judges' hours are numbered). When they pass into this valley of tears, the two lovers find themselves alone, divided.

Like them, the perspective is also divided: a split screen shows us the separate lives of Benny and Gini, who as they wait to see one another spend their days, months, years as best as they can. He who immediately loved sex becomes a successful gigolo, whereas she is less fearless and finds a boyfriend but thinks only of her great love. Will they find each other again or are the two halves destined for incompleteness (as in the myth by Plato that de Cloe cites as one of his inspirations)?

Based on a novel by A.F.Th van der Heijden, *Life in One Day* is most intriguing when it describes a world of "quotidian science fiction," in which the rule is to seize the day. It is less convincing when the action moves to (and is repeated in) Hell, where Benny's erotic evolution suffocates Gini's psychological development.

This because the script, written by the director, betrays the spirit of the writer, who in the hereafter had no place for Gini. Instead, de Cloe relies on pulling off the story mostly through the visuals, with which **Jasper Wolf's** photography and **Marc Bechtold's** editing infuse the split screen.

Produced by [Dutch Mountain Movies](#) (which also handles world sales) and [NPS](#), the film won the Movie Squad Junior Award at the latest Nederlands Film Festival

SÁBADO, 25 DE FEVEREIRO DE 2012

Life in One Day, por Tiago Ramos

Life in One Day is probably one of the most interesting premises of all the films on display at Fantasporto this year. In history we follow an alternate world where all life lasts only one day and as such, all great events and sensations are lived only once. But when true love is discovered in a world where Love is an irrevocable and unique event? How can you live those feelings again? The absolutely creative solution of the Dutchman Mark de Cloe, inspired by an A.F. Th. Van der Heijden, passes through a parallel reality (curiously known as "Hell") and where humans can experience the same situations over and over again. This literary parable is taken literally by the Dutch director and uses the aesthetic option of the split screen until the end of the film, this being a peculiar experience, since we are usually accustomed to its limited use in films.

The use of split screen allows you to focus on the two protagonists and their incessant search for each other, as two parallel lives that mirror and resonate with each other, with an interesting dramatic irony. This option allows for a range of details, between different sounds and music, and events happening simultaneously, complemented by Jasper Wolf's brilliant photography direction and Eric Bernhard's production design.

However, even this aesthetic option that makes the film resemble a great video clip, however interesting and beautiful it may be, eventually tires the viewer and makes believe that it would be better to see this idea reflected in a short film and not in a feature film . Even the original music of Johan Hoogewijs balanced with other well-known songs, at some point they overlap too much to the narrative, in a tone too high and that end up also being fatiguing. And even the story of Life in One Day ends up succumbing to too high levels of melodrama, becoming overly mellow when it could be much more subtle. However, it turns out to be a very interesting and interesting proposal and that for lovers of great love stories will surely please.