

# An interview with Renate Reinsve

*Conducted by Lindsay Pugh*

*From the upcoming ebook “Existential detours: Joachim Trier’s cinema of indecisions and revisions” published by Seventh Row*

**R**enate Reinsve first worked with Joachim Trier on *Oslo, August 31st* in 2011. She had one line in the film: “Let’s go to the party.” Almost a decade later, she worked with him again on *The Worst Person in the World* in a lead role written specifically for her. Reinsve’s stunning, subtle performance as Julie won her the best actress prize at Cannes in 2021, along with increased media attention. [In an interview with Vulture that took place a few days after the film premiered, she said,](#) “One day I woke up and puked.”

Reinsve told me that one good thing about living and working in Norway is that she’s just seen as a normal person there. Being humble is part of their culture and something that I immediately noticed when talking to Reinsve. She was very quick to credit all of the on-set collaborators and emphasized how much she loved the collective experience of working on a Trier film. Instead of feeling a ton of pressure in her first starring film role, she said that “everyone felt equally important and that we were really all together on this.”

As Julie, Reinsve communicates volumes without even speaking. Many scenes show her thinking in silence, something that could be boring but is consistently compelling. Julie is a quiet character, but she’s far from stupid or uninteresting. Even when she’s quiet, the viewer always gets the sense that her mind is running wild. In the opening scene of the film, she stands in profile, smoking a cigarette on a balcony with the city of Oslo behind her. Occasionally, she turns to face the camera, the city, or to look at her phone. Despite the beautiful locale and her elegant ensemble, Julie looks withdrawn, like she’s in the midst of calmly contemplating a problem without an answer. Immediately, the viewer wants to know more about her. Without Reinsve’s expressiveness, this scene wouldn’t work at all. It hinges on her creating intrigue around the character, something that isn’t easily accomplished with body language and facial expressions alone.

Later in the film, we return back to the locale from the opening scene with additional context. Julie is at Aksel’s comic book release party, feeling shitty because everyone in attendance is treating her like a vapid trophy wife. As she walks away from the party, blinking back tears, she stops to look out at the city, again in profile, with eyes that convey some kind of revelation. When I first saw this scene, I knew that a breakup between her and Aksel was on the horizon. At first, Julie seems shocked and saddened by whatever thought has crossed her mind. As she walks toward the camera, her mouth is upturned in a bemused almost smile that quickly turns sombre. We don’t know exactly what she’s thinking, but the range of emotions that pass across her face tell us that she’s experiencing some kind of internal turmoil. When I

asked Reinsve about this scene, she said, "It's a roller coaster... you can be here, and then suddenly, you're somewhere else emotionally. The character has no control over what she's feeling, and she gets surprised by her own feelings." This, of course, is easier said than portrayed, but Reinsve makes it look effortless in her performance.

When we spoke over Zoom, she had just gotten back from the 59th New York Film Festival and through severe jet lag, talked to me about her trajectory as an actor and the strategies she used to get inside Julie's head. She said that she knew the character was a good one when she felt moved by her but unable to understand her completely. Julie is the type of character that we don't see enough of in film. She's not a manic pixie dream girl, brought to life to save or serve a man, and she's not quirkiness personified, but a quiet, complex woman trying to figure out what she wants. She only verbally expresses a small percentage of her thoughts and desires, but there's never any doubt that she experiences more than what is vocalised. Reinsve adeptly portrays Julie's rich inner life. Even when she's completely silent, the viewer can see that Julie is constantly mulling over things in her head. It's hard to imagine another actor bringing this level of understanding to the role and executing on it with such ease.

**Seventh Row (7R): How did you get into acting? Did you always know that you wanted to be an actor?**

**Renate Reinsve (RR):** I had a childhood that wasn't so good. I grew up in a very, very small place, and I didn't have any art, books, music, or films. Where I grew up, there was nothing. There were a lot of farms and like... emotionally underdeveloped people. People [acting like] bullies were normal. It was like any small place where you don't really get liberal opinions. Anyone who sees that and doesn't fit in kind of wants to leave.

I had a family who was very much in conflict. When my grandmother got me [involved in] this children's theatre group, I found that I could talk about stuff that happened at home. I could talk about what happened in my society. I could actually explore things that I only felt a little bit. I was [only] nine years old, but I [realised that this place helped me to] actually understand stuff [in my life]. That's what I loved about it. That love for it never stopped, it just grew and evolved. I did mostly theatre my whole life. I'm now thirty three, and I did theatre every day, every year until Joachim got me this role.

**7R: How did you begin working with Joachim?**

**RR:** I did a few TV [shows] and films. I had a small part in *Oslo, August 31st* where I had one line which was, "Let's go to the party." In TV and film, I would always get cast in humorous stuff and be the funny, charming girl or the weird, funny girl. In theatre, I would have big, heavy, dramatic parts, so I got to evolve both of those [skill sets] in different platforms. Joachim knew that. He also knew me a little bit from *Oslo, August 31st*. We would meet here and there, and we would talk about all these big questions, like, "Why is love so chaotic?" [When we talked about] our [respective] relationships, we [found that we] were aligned on what the confusion was. I think that all of this combined made him [consider me] when he wrote the script.

In *Oslo, August 31st*, I had to have a lot of energy, and I think Joachim saw that I was fun to have on set. He said it back then, too... that he wanted to work with me again. Even though it was just one line, I had to be there for nine days because he wanted this perfect lighting that passed so quickly [so it had to be shot over several days]. He's a perfectionist.

He did many rounds of casting for my small part [in *Oslo, August 31st*]. He's very thorough in casting, which is one of his greatest talents. The way he sees people is exceptional, which you can tell by his characters. They're so complex, and he doesn't judge anyone, so they're very freeing to see. He's very good with psychology and is reflective and wise and educated. It's remarkable to be in his project. And I think that goes for everyone. Everyone feels very safe and seen.

**7R: Anders [Danielsen Lie] said something similar about Joachim's ability to read people. He also mentioned struggling to tell himself apart from his character [in *Oslo, August 31st*]. Did you have any moments like that where it felt like the line between you and Julie was blurred?**

**RR:** I really, really did. [Joachim explores] situations or themes in life and philosophises around them. That's what he does when he writes and when he talks about the scene with the actors. Of course, that also makes you think about your own life.

He goes very deep and is very honest. He loves honesty, and he thinks it's so exciting to see people's actual feelings around these themes of love and shame and loneliness. You can go really deep without being scared because he doesn't judge you. It's such a joy to be in that situation; it's very therapeutic in a way. I think that's why it's so difficult to separate yourself from the character... because you are discovering things about yourself and others in the process.

Of course, I got into acting to do that. I guess it's hard to not bring yourself into work. It's almost idealistic, the way we all want it to get deeper and deeper, more and more honest, and more and more complex. It's like discovering that, "Oh, yeah, I had this super strange thought and this super strange reaction to something that wasn't really right." Or [you think] that no one talks about *this* type of reaction to... to love or to cheating. Joachim gets excited talking about those things that people haven't really [explored] in films and books before. He's very open to himself and others.

**7R: Aside from the size of the role, were there any big differences between working on *Oslo, August 31st* and *The Worst Person in the World*? Did both roles involve some improvisation?**

**RR:** [*Oslo, August 31st*] was my first film. It was also my first paid job as an actress. I came there, and I was like, wow, so this is what it's like! I felt so safe, and we had so much fun. We were four people supposed to be [partying], so we just did that. It was, of course, improvisation, but very much around the characters and the situation they were in... two guys showing girls around the city, the beautiful Oslo city, and us taking them to a party. We didn't decide on anything; we just went with the flow.

All the other films I've done after, I've been so scared. I got such a shock after doing a film with Joachim. [On my next project,] people didn't give me messages, and the director was in the back, screaming some stuff and not really taking care of anyone. People were fighting, it was so much stress, and we couldn't really finish the scene. The script wasn't really finished. More and more in Norway, I felt that it wasn't that bad. If that was my first experience, I probably would have gotten used to it, but because I worked with Joachim first, it was just a shock of reality.

**7R: One of the best things about getting older is understanding yourself a lot better because you have enough distance and experience to see things from a less critical perspective. It feels like that's a big part of *Worst Person*. Julie is trying to understand herself as an independent person instead of letting the men (or work) in her life define her. Do you remember what you thought about Julie when you first read the script?**

**RR:** I felt very moved. And I felt very close to the character. But at the same time, I didn't really understand who she was. And I also understood that I was never going to understand her fully, just like I couldn't understand myself or other people fully. That was how I knew it was a very, very good role. And I thought, I'll just go with that, [I'll just accept that] I am never going to decide who she is. Joachim was very open to that idea.

We did a lot of rehearsals on the actual scenes to analyse from one beat to another. He talks a lot about beats. It's kind of musical, but it's also how to drive the scene from one place to another, the twists and the turns. If it [didn't feel] natural, Joachim would tell me to be loose or lose control. No one's ever asked me to try to lose control that much, and it's actually quite scary.

There's [a lot of] pressure standing in front of the camera. [*Worst Person*] is shot on film, so it's very expensive. The sound [of the film] is [a constant reminder]. But Joachim actually makes it easy because he removes the pressure by making it a collective work. I never felt like I stood on set [alone]... like it was [only] me doing the role; I felt like we did it together, so the pressure wasn't about me, as an actress, ever. That [approach] removes the whole ego and all of the nerves because it's not about me. It's about the scene and the story and the dialogue. Joachim [makes everyone feel this way by] giving speeches all the time in front of his whole crew before we come on set to get everyone on the same page.

**7R: What aspects of Julie did you find confusing or not understand?**

**RR:** She was so confused. She feels equal amounts of different things. She wants one thing, but she equally wants something else. Where her choices come from is very hard to know. It's the way that she suddenly jumps into something new. We live in this time where we have so many choices that it's hard to actually choose.

Sometimes, you can have a very strong sense of who someone is — [like for example,] she feels very strong, she always makes the moral right choice, she always takes the choice of love — but I didn't quite understand [what motivated] her choices. In one situation, it could be fear; in another, it could be love; in a third, it

could be boredom; in a fourth, it could be loneliness, but she held [many] emotions at the same time. Maybe in one scene, she had all of those together.

There were many nuances of emotion in every scene. That's maybe what confused me... and also, that she was happy and charming but very lonely and sad and impulsive. She really loves Aksel and is very loyal, but then, suddenly, she has this thing that has built up, and she makes a big choice that comes from so many places. Humans have a way of making a very clear narrative of who we are and why we did what we did. You can try to create a [back]story of Julie [where the] troubled relationship with her dad [is responsible for her difficulties as an adult]. But I read it like it wasn't a clear narrative of where she came from or who she was. I really liked that.

**7R: Did you feel any pressure having the role of Julie written specifically for you?**

**RR:** Not exactly that, but I felt the pressure because I respected Joachim so much. I was scared of not getting all the nuances out of the scenes because I read the script and felt that it was so rich. I was very scared to not get it all in there and to not make it as good as it potentially could be. Whatever I saw in the script, I wanted to be there [in the scene]. I've never worked that hard on the script before. I read it like one thousand times.

**7R: Did you have any ideas about Julie that differed from Joachim and Eskil?**

**RR:** I felt like Eskil and Joachim had romanticised the way that Aksel defined Julie. I [interpreted it like] Julie really needed someone to define her, but that it wasn't right, so she needed to leave Aksel in the end. She couldn't live with the way that he was defining her anymore. Even though she's searching so hard for identity, she's just desperate for someone to see her in a way that she likes because she doesn't really like herself that much. So, that was one [area where we had different ideas].

Another [area involves] Aksel. Because he was articulate and could put his life into categories and see it from the outside, [the writing suggested that this] made him strong. I felt that this was unfair. I added a line in the fight scene where Julie says, "You think you're stronger than me because you can put it into words, because you can talk about it." I wanted her to be strong in the chaos. She should be able to just feel what she feels. Everything is tipping over and she has no way to put it into words, but she can also be strong [in the midst of] that. I feel that's important. But I think apart from that, everything was perfect and very, very strong.

**7R: Aksel often puts Julie's feelings into words because he's the one who likes to talk, but he doesn't always describe them accurately. You can kind of tell whether Julie agrees with his interpretation based on the way she reacts. He does act as her mouthpiece.**

**RR:** Exactly. And I got a sense from the script that [Aksel's behaviour] was seen as strong, [whereas for] Julie, not knowing and just feeling was uncomfortable.

**7R: Did Joachim recommend any reference art (films, music, books) to give you an idea of vibe or character insight?**

**RR:** We talked about *Annie Hall* early on. [Annie] has this playfulness and lightness to her [that Julie shares]. That's actually the only reference I remember. We always went back to talking about our own lives and what we thought about the situation, so we kind of left that very early.

I also talked to Joachim about whether I should try to find something that really separates Julie from me, like something physical, or some personality trait that was very different from mine, but he wanted me to just be really loose and live through it without trying anything like that.

**7R: Anders talked with us about how helpful the improvisation takes were in *Worst Person*. Can you talk about how that worked and if you found it useful?**

**RR:** We followed the script all the way, but to get into or out of the scene, we might do some improv (based on the scene). We would try different ways of doing it, and if stuff happened, then Joachim would use the mistakes. We tried to nail the scene, to go through the shifts in the scene and the beats, but if he sat behind the monitor and felt like he had something, then we would do something called a "jazz take" where we were urged to really let go and be crazy. It would always be within the [context] of the scene and the characters, but we would just try to mess it all up. Joachim would always say that he wanted it messy. It was very freeing to not concentrate on looking pretty or doing things right because he wanted a real human being.

I remember when we did the scene in the film when I run through the city, he was saying, "Your running is too elegant. You need to make a messy run." He wanted me to move away from knowing that I was seen by someone else. [He wanted me to be] how a human being would be in their own private space. Also, in sex scenes, you make funny faces and you look ugly. It's weird to watch. [The goal was not to] make it hot or pretty, but to be there in an [imperfect] human way.

Even though I had a hard time really understanding the character, I [learned more about her] further into the shoot. I had a stronger sense of where she would get more angry or why she would get really sad. She would kind of just appear. When we did improv, it was always within the boundaries of who we understood her to be throughout the shoot.

**7R: What did the crew do to make shooting the sex scenes more comfortable?**

**RR:** Joachim took charge of those scenes very well. He talked about them very bluntly... like, this is what it is. He's very brave. Everyone knows it can be uncomfortable because it's so intimate. From the start, he talked [frankly] about his plan for those scenes. We rehearsed those scenes very early and when we came to do it, he had everything choreographed. It was very technical. But of course, we could add to it and be much freer because we weren't afraid of stepping over anyone's boundaries because we just did the physical stuff that we were asked to do. On the day we were shooting, there were very few people on set and no monitors outside. He showed us and told us how it was going to go. He did

everything he could to make us feel safe. He didn't need to show us the monitors. He could have just said "They're off." But he wanted us to feel really safe because he knows how vulnerable that situation is.

He sat beside us and gave instructions as we went along. We would stop if things would get too intense or we just needed a break. Sex scenes are always vulnerable, but even more so when you're not supposed to try to look pretty, but to bring out the weirdness of sex. That's of course scary, but he guided us through it well, as with everything else.

**7R: Is it hard to rewatch yourself in those scenes? Or even just in general?**

**RR:** Yeah, of course it is. But I try to distance myself and to not to see myself in it. Since the creation of it felt like such a collective process, it's been the least painful film to watch with myself in it. It feels like we were all there; it's all of ours; it's not about me. It's usually bad to rewatch myself, but it's actually okay with this film.

**7R: What do you look for from a director on set? What kind of direction did you get from Joachim?**

**RR:** I noticed that as he got to know us better — he knew Anders very well before, but he didn't know me that well — he would [change his communication style]. He knew that I really wanted to talk about everything, but he discovered that [on set] I wanted one word or one quick [reminder]... something to cling on to. But with Anders, he would always stand for a long time and talk and talk and be very intellectual or analytical about it. But with me, I got confused with too many thoughts in my mind. He discovered that himself, so he would just start talking differently to each of us. I noticed like, oh, he's doing that to him and this to me, but okay, but it works. I need that; he needs that. Joachim is very perceptive of what people need.

**7R: Joachim told us that, in one scene, he had Herbert Nordrum (who plays Eivind) ask you a question in character but using your real name in order to get a different reaction. What did you make of that?**

**RR:** That was very powerful. When he did that, I didn't know that it was going to happen, so it was kind of an emotional ambush. I think Joachim is searching for that moment of emotion... something that gets out of control and feels like real life. You can [only] play it to a certain point.

He started doing that from the start, like the one where Eivind asks, "Renate, are you happy?" It's such a big question when it's [directed at me, as a person, and not a character]. I was supposed to be charming and smile. But I just fell apart on the inside... I just exploded. He did that from the start, and as we went along, I understood that he wanted me to lose control. He wanted me to ruin it for myself in different ways and reach into really personal stuff.

So I started doing that in a lot of scenes. It was a very good tool, but you can't do it by yourself because then it's not a surprise, so Joachim would do it here and there. It was very helpful, but not for my life outside the film. I got so confused and moved

more into the movie and more into the character. That's also probably the reason why you don't know which one is which anymore.

**7R: When I talked to Kasper, he mentioned that his background, as an actor, helped him understand more clearly what was needed from him as a cinematographer. What was your working relationship with him like?**

**RR:** Kasper was very, very important. I felt like we were acting the scenes out together, which is something I never felt with a cinematographer before. I would feel [his] emotion. It might not be the same emotion that I had, but I knew that the scene was so important for him and that he was open to be moved by the material and by us on set. He didn't impose it on us; I just felt it. The focus puller [Ola Austad] was also so involved and invested in every moment. You feel all of that, as an actress, and it makes all the difference.

**7R: I'm curious about some of the other people you worked with, like costume designer Ellen Dæhli Ystehede. Did you have conversations with her about how the costumes impacted your understanding of the character?**

**RR:** Absolutely. It's also like what I talked about before with the collectiveness of it and the way that everyone felt invested in the project. I would get a sense that Ellen had a very strong opinion of who Julie was on her end. And I thought, okay, good. This will be a great collaboration. I will not get in her way and will just be inspired by her.

We had conversations about every item she brought. She's very talented. The makeup artists made all the difference because they're the first people you meet in the morning, so they set the tone for the whole day, along with the girl that picked me up and brought me food. It's usually uncomfortable for me, this idea of feeling more important than someone else. That's maybe [specific to] Norwegian culture. But I never felt that way because I knew that everyone [I worked with] felt valuable and was respected.

Joachim got everyone into the same mindset of how the production should be, so we all took really good care of each other. It was a humanistic project.

**7R: Not to say that this never happens, but I can't imagine that there are many Hollywood film projects that share Joachim's ethos.**

**RR:** A lot of people think that all actresses are divas, and you kind of have to work against [the stereotype]. I feel that Norway is a good place for that, but mostly, it's Joachim's way of working. I learned so much about being a human and an actress.

**7R: Especially in America, the acting profession seems exhausting to me. Not the job itself, but all of the additional expectations that come with it regarding what you owe your audience. It seems like there is a better balance in Norway.**

**RR:** Yeah, I think it's very grounded, actually. It's the bright side of no one being more important than anyone else. You're just a normal person. It's good to be seen like that with everything happening after the Cannes Festival.



**7R: Going back to the costume design, were there any pieces that felt especially integral to the character or to a specific scene?**

**RR:** I guess it would have to be the blue dress that Julie wears [when she's] walking down from the party. That dress was very hard to find because it needed to be formal enough for Aksel's book event. Julie was kind of like his trophy girlfriend [in that scene]. Not exactly, but she felt a little bit like that... or I felt a little bit like that in that dress. That was good because [feeling like a trophy girlfriend] made her more unhappy and like she wanted to leave, but then the dress could also be very free. It was a small dress, so it worked well in the flirting scene [at the wedding with Eivind]. That dress was very important because it could fit [both of those moods]. It might have been the last piece that we found.

**7R: Something we've discussed a lot at Seventh Row is the fact that Julie doesn't have a space of her own for most of the film. She first moves into Aksel's apartment, then she moves into Eivind's apartment. It's not until the end of the film that she has her own place that actually feels reflective of her personality. How did her lack of personal space inform your understanding of her? Did the production designer (Roger Rosenberg) provide any insight?**

**RR:** In the last scene, she's actually making a home for herself by herself. [For most of the film] she's searching for her identity everywhere, and she kind of finds it through someone else, so she is not making that space [herself]. She has corners here and there, but she's not *there*. And she's very restless. She's almost always trying to find some way to escape because she can't settle within herself or in any place. Of course, it helps a lot with her being in someone else's apartment. Not having her space helps with that characteristic of Julie.

And then, she is suddenly very strong and on her own. The desk [in her apartment at the end] was actually originally the other way around. It was too much like Aksel's apartment when she was sitting at the desk on the same side [as it was in his apartment]. They had to reverse the image.

Julie has one blanket, one lamp, and one pillow. In all of the apartments she lives in, that is what she has. And she has some books on Aksel's shelf. I don't know if you see them at Eivind's, but I talked about that with the set designer... about which things actually belong to Julie. It's sad and makes her seem lonely and displaced in the world, which is true for her.

**7R: The first time I saw the movie, I thought that Julie was in Aksel's apartment at the end... like maybe he gave her his apartment after he died.**

**RR:** It's a different, much smaller apartment. I heard [that comment] from other people, too, but it's not intentional. It's supposed to be her own space. I think Joachim was playing around with it, which is why he wanted the desk to be on the same side as Aksel's and why Julie has the picture of his drawing behind her. He is still a part of her life. She is moving on but with him in her heart always. But yeah, then it got too confusing and they had to flip [the desk] around.

**7R: I would love to hear your thoughts on the big differences between Julie's relationships with Aksel and Eivind.**

**RR:** I think Aksel represents thoughts and ideas and philosophies and intellect. He's older, more settled. He's something safe, and it contrasts with Eivind [who is not the type of person who] can put his thoughts into words as well. Julie thinks she is much freer with Eivind, but in the end, she ends up criticising him for not being Aksel and not being able to say what he thinks about her writing. She has two very different men and loves them both, but they [each] represent something very different.

**7R: I always think about the scene where Julie is biting mean to Eivind. She's like, "When's the last time you even read a book?" and then tells him that he's the type of person who will be happy working at the coffee shop when he's fifty. It seems like she immediately regrets saying those things, though.**

**RR:** That's where she feels like the worst person in the world. She's at a low point because she just told her ex that she was pregnant before she told her boyfriend. Actually, maybe now it's the other way around in the film? I can't remember. They cut it differently than it was in the script. I don't remember exactly, but she's in bad shape and she turns mean because she's so confused.

**7R: She tells Aksel about the pregnancy before Eivind.**

**RR:** Yeah, I think she feels like a monster so she kinda really becomes that monster.

**7R: You talked about how Julie often holds two different desires at the same time, which complicates the decision-making process. Is this how you read her emotions when she found out that she was pregnant? That she both wanted to be and didn't want to be at the same time?**

**RR:** It was both at the same time, and then going from one to the other. I think that the part of her that feels like wanting to have a baby is the part that thinks that she probably *should*, but I think she also knows that she couldn't. She's not able to take care of anyone right now because she hasn't figured anything out [for herself].

She panics and gets even more confused about her own life when Aksel is continuously asking about it and putting pressure on her to have a kid. It whirls up a lot of existential thoughts about how she's living and how she has been living and what her life will look like in the near future and the far future because having a kid would be a big change.

**7R: Discussing the film with other people is so interesting. I didn't ever want Julie and Aksel to be together, and I didn't feel positively about their relationship at all. Other people I talked to thought that they were a good match because Aksel seemed to understand her and help her process her feelings. For me, his pressure about having kids negated so many of his good qualities, but I can see the other side of it.**

**RR:** I feel that everyone has a different opinion. How they see the film is as personal to them as their own lives. I remember the first journalist I talked to at Cannes. She

was probably around forty-five [years old] and was very strict and very clear, almost provoked. She was like, okay, this film is about *my* generation. Why do you play someone in my generation with my kind of themes? I was like, “Oh, no. Okay, so this is what the film was about and I've got it all wrong.”

But now we've shown it to more people, and they're deciding what the film is. I was trying to explain and trying to find out what she felt. I finished that interview a bit perplexed, and then another [interviewer] came in who was around my age. She was like, “Okay, so the film is about *my* generation.” They had totally different ideas about what the film was about. And then that just continued. I met a guy later that day and he was like, “Julie is me. I'm Julie.” So that's fantastic. Everyone has very strong opinions because the film [mirrors] life.

**7R: I'm thirty two and for me, it felt very much like a millennial story. Our generation grew up being told that we could do anything, as if that is supposed to be freeing. I actually think it's paralysing, especially if there's not just one thing that you feel compelled to do.**

**RR:** And also, the paradox of choice. They have tests on this where you have like twenty people taking different photos. Group A has ten people and Group B has ten people. Group B is told that they can only choose one picture and that they will never see their other pictures again. Group A is told that they have to choose a photo but that they can change it at any time. Group B is happy with their choice while Group A is miserable and making changes all the time.

**7R: Oh yeah, Julie is definitely in Group A for most of the film. Was it important for you to create a backstory for her outside of what's in the script? Her mother crops up occasionally, but that relationship doesn't seem as contentious as the one with her dad.**

**RR:** We talked about Julie's mother a lot. I think Joachim finds that relationship more important than I do. If there is a scene that I can't figure out, I search everywhere. I go to the backstory; I go to the future; I consider a lot of questions. But if I feel like I have a sense of it, and I know how to start the scene, then I don't really need anything else.

**7R: Were there any chapters of the film that were especially hard to shoot and/or involved a lot of prep?**

**RR:** We actually had a lot of rehearsals for the scene we talked about before where Julie is mean to Eivind. It could just be a scene of her being angry, but it had to mean even more and go even deeper. We wanted to add nuance to the different stages she went through in that scene. We struggled a lot with that scene, and I'm not sure why, but that's maybe the scene we rehearsed the most. On set, we felt like we didn't get there, that we didn't nail it, but I think that it's a very good scene in the film and works very well. Maybe we just got a hang up like, “Oh no, something's wrong. What is it? We need to figure it out.”

Of course, Joachim wanted to do all of the big epic scenes — like the running through the city frozen scene — old school with no special effects. It was a big

process of closing down the whole city and running. We didn't have much time. It's the busiest place in Oslo, so it was hard to concentrate on doing it. It was very technical. He was running after me to do it at the same pace and at the same distance. Acting and running at the same time was challenging. Kasper wasn't the one shooting that scene, so there was suddenly a new guy that I had to dance with, and that was very challenging. But it turned out nice.

The mushroom scene was also very technical. When I fell on the carpet, they didn't put me in CGI or special effects. It was a mattress with a carpet sixty meters behind me and two guys running and smashing it into my back. Two people had to hold me on my hips under the frame so that I wouldn't like [boom]. I love the really physical stuff like that.

**7R: What I love so much about your performance is how much you're able to convey without saying anything. There are so many longer takes of you just thinking. How did you approach those moments?**

**RR:** I'm actually very similar to Julie in that way. I can be in a situation, and then I can be a little bit outside of it and trying to realize what I'm actually in, and then going back into the situation with vulnerability. I have that quality myself. The thoughts are very specific and about Julie's confusion. [I work out] lines in my head of what she is thinking and how she should solve this problem and [how to define] the situation she's in. They're as specific as everything that is said out loud.

**7R: The scene I always think about is the one where Julie leaves Aksel's book party and stops to look out at the city. At that moment, it felt obvious to me that the relationship with Aksel was ending. What was the direction like for that scene?**

**RR:** We talked about Julie having a sudden realisation while looking out of the city and thinking about leaving the party. She felt very alone and then had a reaction that surprised her. It's a roller coaster... you can be here, and then suddenly, you're somewhere else emotionally. The character has no control over what she's feeling, and she gets surprised by her own feelings.

**7R: It's interesting to see her go from that scene where she's upset and realising all of this shit about her relationship to meeting and flirting with Eivind. The scenes with him are so playful and fun that it does make you wonder what the hell is going on with Julie and if she's just looking for some kind of escape.**

**RR:** We kind of built the structure of the emotion from Julie not being in touch with sadness. She feels a little uncomfortable when she leaves to go home, and then suddenly, the emotion hits her. She is very uncomfortable with the emotion and doesn't want to feel it. She gets unsettled by the sadness. She doesn't understand why she's sad. She walks to escape from her own emotions... she just doesn't want to go there. She hates her own emotions, and she doesn't want to be sad, because she's not a sad person.

So then she gets kind of destructive. She wants to ruin that moment by doing something crazy and making her own fun. It's a fight against herself to go into that wedding, and then let loose and be free. And she actually feels free. She feels so happy that she escaped the sadness. But of course, [that's not how it works]. You have to go through your emotion and not around it. That's probably why her emotions change so fast... because we constructed her as being on the brink of sadness and loneliness, but she doesn't want to go there. That's why she tries to run away from it all the time.

**7R: I was talking to someone else about how Julie is sort of similar to Anders in *Oslo, August 31st*, except his character is depressed. Julie doesn't seem depressed, but she is compartmentalising her emotions in a way that means they'll eventually catch up to her.**

**RR:** I think that was the most important thing with Julie. It was actually the first thing about her that I really wanted to explore. The film is about identity and her search for it, but I think that even deeper underneath that is her trying to run away from herself all the time. That's why she changes her job. That's why she's [always moving on to] something else.

She needs something to change, even her hair to change, just to get away from herself. And then, in the end, it's very small, but we talked about how her body changes. She can actually sit and watch the computer and be present in her work [in the last scene]. She's actually comfortable with herself for the first time in the film.

**7R: Do you think Julie is happy at the end of the film?**

**RR:** I think she's kind of surrendered to the chaos of life. She is accepting things that happened and accepting who she is. She is on the way to becoming happy. But it's a much more peaceful and safe space for her. It's a very good base for whatever comes next.