



# My View by Robyn Sassen and other writers

THE ARTS AT LARGE BY ROBYN SASSEN AND OTHER WRITERS



ARTS FESTIVAL

## Red riding-hood, the old lady and the wardrobe

BY ROBYN SASSEN ON OCTOBER 25, 2020 • ( 1 COMMENT )



COFFIN-BUYING adventures with Sara (Juana Acosta) and Lola (Kiti Manver) in *One Careful Owner*. Photograph courtesy [imdb.com](https://www.imdb.com)

Combining a rich, yet candidly legible ensemble of platitudes and values, nostalgia and truths, without slipping into a pond of maudlin and with several hilarious and jolting bends in the tale, Bernabé Rico's *One Careful Owner* (<https://www.eurofilmfest.co.za/portfolio-items/one-careful-owner/?portfolioCats=52>) is a complete delight, which will bring on the tears of tonic and the laughter of healing like few other films can. It features on this year's European Film Festival in South Africa (<https://www.eurofilmfest.co.za/7th-european-film-festival-goes-virtual/>), which is available online and without cost from 12-22 November.

It is here where we meet the dry and straight-laced Sara (Juana Acosta) in her red coat and classical business suits. She works in insurance and is desperately, paralytically earnest, even when it comes to finding the most perfect apartment to buy. She has a whole bunch of reasons for wanting this little slice of charming Seville, not all of them are about investment.

But there's a large grey-haired, smoking fly in the ointment who isn't impartial to a bit of a tippie at times. Her name is Lola (Kiti Mánver) and the real estate contract has an inviolable term that stipulates that the sale can only go through when Lola snuffs it. This dark comedy is clustered with gems about mortality that pull rude signs at convention. Something like Hal Ashby's 1971 masterpiece, *Harold and Maude*, in its irreverent humour about life and death, illness and ageing, the work shows as rich an understanding of the role of wall paper in such a narrative as does Stephen Daldry's utterly perfect *Billy Elliot* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g1YvKDdlfc>) (2000). But it also has a generous dollop of deadpan European humour spiced with truisms about following your dreams that will make you cry, evoking Mark Rothemund's beautiful memorable work *My Blind Date with Life* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sop4qVw2A10>), of 2017.

In short, it is delicious, uplifting and sage. It is about the need to laugh in the face of missed opportunities and to have fun in the unexpected rigmarole that we call life. Exactly what you deserve in these uncertain times.

*One Careful Owner* is directed by Bernabé Rico and features a cast headed by Juana Acosta, Carlos Areces, Daniel Grao, Kiti Mánver, Eduardo Rejón, José Sacristán and Christian Vendrell. Produced by Olmo Figueredo González-Quevedo, it features creative input by Juli Awad (original music and score), Rita Noriega (cinematography) and Esther Vaquero (costumes). In Spanish with English subtitles, it is part of the 7<sup>th</sup> European Film Festival South Africa, screening online and without cost from 12-22 November 2020.