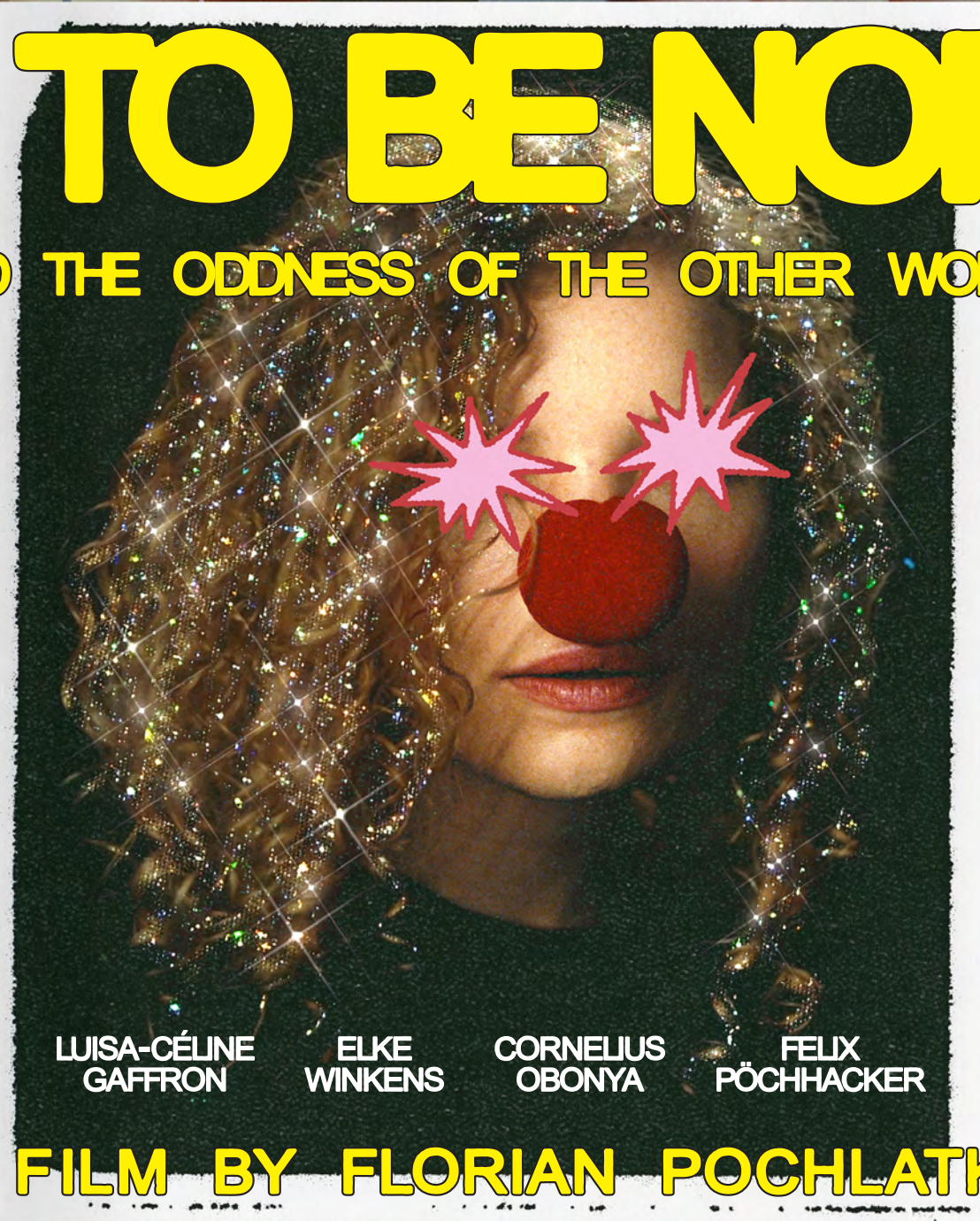


HOW TO BE NORMAL

AND THE ODDNESS OF THE OTHER WORLD



LUISA-CÉLINE
GAFFRON

ELKE
WINKENS

CORNELIUS
OBONYA

FELIX
PÖCHHACKER

A FILM BY FLORIAN POCHLATKO

GOLDEN GIRLS FILM

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Österreichisches Film Institut

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HOW TO BE NORMAL

**HOW TO BE NORMAL
AND THE ODDNESS OF THE OTHER WORLD**
by Florian Pochlatko

Feature Film / 102 Minutes / Austria 2025

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CAST & CREDITS

CAST

PIA
ELFIE
KLAUS
JONI
PAUL
LENNI
TILL
NED
LENNIS MUTTER
JULIA
LEA
KOMMISSAR FUCHS-MÜLLER
KOMMISSARIN SCHALLER
PSYCHIATRIST
And many more

Luisa-Céline Gaffron
Elke Winkens
Cornelius Obonya
Felix Pöchhacker
Oliver Rosskopf
Lion Thomas Tatzber-Poms
David Scheid
Wesley Byrne
Martina Poel
Nancy Mensah-Offei
Pia Zimmermann
Harald Krassnitzer
Jutta Fastian
Reinhold G. Moritz

CREDITS

Writer & Director
Cinematography
Sound Recordist
Production Design
Costume Design
Make-Up
Gaffer
1st AD
Editor
Music
Sound Design

Florian Pochlatko
Adrian Bidron
Nora Czamler
Julia Oberndorfinger & Attila Plangger
Anna Zeitlhuber
Nora Conradi & Tom Mayr
Alex Sprenger
Moshe Kvitelashvili
Julia Drack
Rosa Anschütz
Lenja Gathmann & Jón H. Geirfinnsson

Sound Mix
Color Grading
VFX
Casting
Production Manager
Producers

Rudolf Pototschnig
Lee Niederkofler
Valerie Wöllner & Yasmine Nasime
Martina Poel
Jeannette Ziemeck
Arash T. Riahi & Sabine Gruber

TECHNICAL DATA

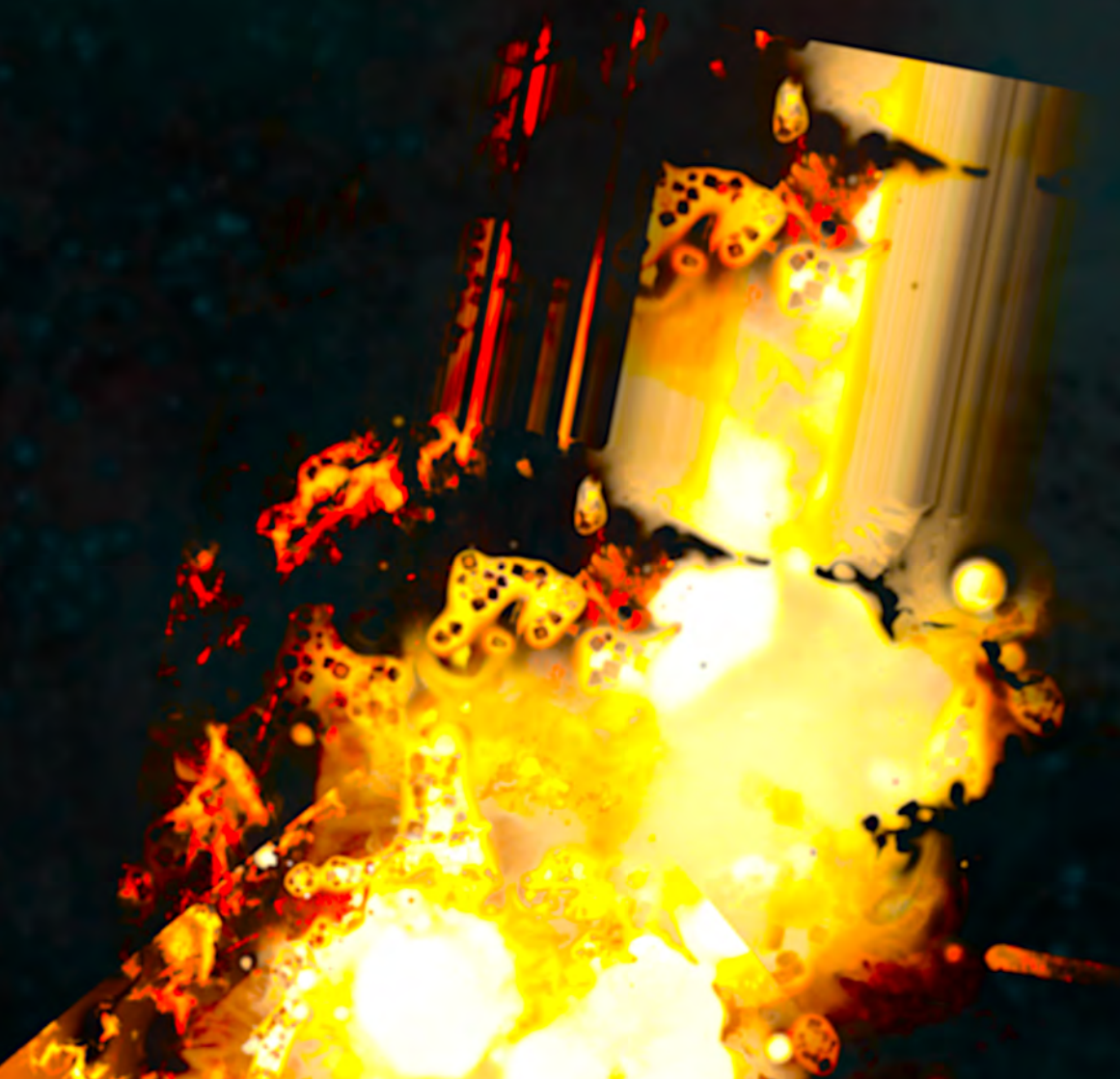
Running Time: 102 min
Original Language: German
Subtitles Language: German, English
Shooting Format: 3:2 open gate
Screening Format: DCP
Aspect / ratio: 1:1,85 DCI Flat >
Pictures/sec: 24 fps
Colour: colour
Sound Format: 5.1

FURTHER DATA

Genre: Drama
Production Country: Austria
Shooting Locations: Austria (Vienna, Lower Austria)
Shooting Period: Spring 2023
Completion: Winter 2024

With the support of the Austrian Film Institute, ÖFI+, Vienna Film Fund, ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen, Province of Lower Austria Department of Art and Culture, CINE ART Land Steiermark.

LOGLINE & SYNOPSIS



LOGLINE

Fresh out of psychiatry, Pia moves back in with her parents to rebuild her life. Juggling jobs, heartbreak, meds, and stigma, she stumbles into a world spiraling out of control / that feels as unsteady as she does.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Fresh out of psychiatry, Pia (26) moves back into her parents' house on the outskirts of Vienna—only to realize she's not the only one whose life is derailing. Her parents, Elfie and Klaus, are also struggling to keep up with a world in constant transformation.

Juggling a shaky new job, lingering heartbreak, medication, and the weight of social stigma, Pia stumbles into a reality as unsteady as she feels. Bit by bit, she begins to transform—into a giant monster threatening the world... or perhaps a heroine destined to save it.

Who gets to decide what's normal? *How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World* is a melancholic yet lighthearted exploration of identity, family, self-discovery, and a young woman's search for balance and meaning in an uncontrollable world.



INTERVIEW

HOW TO BE NORMAL AND THE ODDNESS OF THE OTHER WORLD

Florian Pochlatko

HOW TO BE NORMAL is your feature film debut. You rise to this challenge by employing a very wide range of approaches. Rather than narrating a plot, your film depicts inner states which you make visible with innumerable brief images. What did that mean for the writing process?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: My background is in improvisational work within a collective. I couldn't make a feature film that way, which is one of the obstacles I faced; I had to have a script prepared in advance. So I tried to incorporate the improvisational and collective work in the script. There was a very intense period of 20 months when I was weaving the research material into a screenplay. Before that, I had immersed myself in the subject matter by means of countless interviews and accounts of personal experiences, and I went through the material and the storyline with a lot of people.

How early was humour a dominant factor?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: Humour is a matter of attitude. You can't force it. We tend to think of mental illness as a worrying subject, or as a classic horror genre. And clearly always an incredibly difficult topic. That's why I felt it was important to create something that people can laugh about together – and laugh about themselves, too.

Your protagonist, Pia, has a mental illness that isn't clearly identified. Did you deliberately not want to place her within a specific diagnosis?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: Psychiatric patients will tell you that many of them are diagnosed with different conditions during the course of their lives. It also depends on cultural factors. Gender and skin colour often play a role, too. The European catalogue of mental illnesses differs from that in the USA. It's a spectrum without any clear lines of demarcation. By not naming her illness, I'm refusing to frame the character within a clinical description. These days in particular we are quick to label people with a diagnosis when we find their behaviour puzzling or disturbing. But it's not that simple.

Framing is an important keyword here. In HOW TO BE NORMAL, you play with various formats: are these concrete references to certain media?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: If you talk to younger people, they see strong connotations between formats and Internet language. The first filmmaker to consciously work with 4:4, which was certainly influenced by Instagram, was Xavier Dolan with *Mommy* in 2014, and this format very quickly established itself in the grammar of film language as a universal image of being constricted. I wondered how I could continue to tell a story based on this grammar. *HOW TO BE NORMAL* is very much about the way different models of reality intersect. The rounded window was an important tool for me, because on the one hand it makes the framing aesthetically very concretely visible, while at the same time it's immediately associated with Internet aesthetics.

That led to the conclusion that leaps between formats should determine the visual language, as a way of corresponding visually with the different worlds that comprise people's perception these days.

You juxtapose two worlds – the psychiatric hospital and the world of work – without adopting a position on which is the less free ...

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: I felt that these contrasts, and the mutual undermining of different models of reality, was appropriate. The Matrix is now 25 years old. It has become one of the emblematic films about our present world of capitalism and the Internet society. The punchline of The Matrix was the question What is real? In a recent interview, Keanu Reeves tried to explain the theme of The Matrix to a Generation Alpha teenager, whose response was that living in a simulation wouldn't bother him, as long as it felt real. That prompted me to develop a narrative where it's essentially irrelevant what the dream level is and what the supposed real level is. In recent years, an aesthetic of hyperrealism has developed. In design, for example, you see things pop up that look as if they come from secondary media reality like graphic novels, anime or computer games. For me, that's aesthetic evidence that a psychotic outlook and the general perception of the world are suddenly no longer so dissimilar. One new plot twist follows the next, and nothing surprises you anymore. What's next? Jeff Bezos is building a huge phallic rocket to fly into space? Elon Musk rides into the White House astride Donald Trump with his arm outstretched in a Nazi salute, to the soundtrack of YMCA? A far right politician Austrian Chancellor? Climate change: fake news? Oh, everything really is happening right now. Collective psychosis: the world.

HOW TO BE NORMAL also strikes me as quite simply the story of a conflict between generations.

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: Yes, absolutely. The very first starting point for HOW TO BE NORMAL was the generation conflict. How has an older generation defined itself socially, and how has a younger generation responded? In Austria, the post-war generation grew up lacking the power of speech. Everything was swallowed back. Problems ignored until they blow up in your face. This was followed by a generation with an extreme need to scream out all these suppressed emotions. That's how my characters were formed. I wanted to force these generations to get along under the same roof again.

How did you discover Luisa-Céline Garron for the role of Pia?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: When I met Luisa, the script only existed as a rough sketch. We met in her apartment in Prenzlauer Berg and ended up perched on removal boxes, exchanging ideas about attitude and concepts of filmmaking. It was immediately clear to me that I wanted to work with her, and I wrote the script with Luisa in mind. We just tuned in to each other for two years, came on set and were completely on the same page as far as our narrative was concerned. Cinematographer Adrian Bidron hadn't even made a short film before HOW TO BE NORMAL, but with his sensitive nature and romantic penchant for magical realism, I didn't doubt for a second that he was simply the right person for this project. After all, my background is strict Austrian social realism. But now I wanted to make an Austrian graphic novel, to create an artificiality that entails a dissociative approach to life.

The ever-present question relates to the self, the other and the alien.

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: The disintegration of the sense of self is a powerful theme. It's very difficult to generalise about mental illness, but a friend of mine who is a psychiatric doctor once said that the feeling underpinning all manifestations is fear. And I also believe that anxiety has become the background noise in our society. That's why I chose humour as a means of expression: I felt it was crucial to learn to laugh at anxiety, because if you can laugh at it, you have learned to name it – and that makes it smaller, more tangible and more vulnerable. I myself had an extreme anxiety disorder for ten years. And maybe that was what originally prompted me to make a film like this.

There are TV bulletins off-screen featuring natural disasters, there's the collapse of the family business where Pia's father had his career... How did the general fragility of the world become the background noise of HOW TO BE NORMAL?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: I studied with Michael Haneke for a long time, and it's a relic from the old school approach to write down what TV news sounds like. To capture the current state of the world. I just wanted to work with the form of the graphic novel or on a magic realist fairy tale level. The reports I put into the script are two years old now, but they could have been recorded yesterday. Since then, a lot of companies have gone out of business, there was inflation – which unsettled everyone – and since then fascism has been able to spread. The world does something to you emotionally. A lot of people sense that and wonder how to deal with being so overwhelmed that they can't escape just with their mobile phones. I wanted to make a film for the whole broken family.

... but the last sentence is... „The future is bright.“

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: I don't think I'm a cultural pessimist. If the world can be ruined in two generations, I believe it will also be possible to rebuild it in two generations. At the moment, however, the world feels really quite wild.

Editing also seems to have played a particularly important role in this film?

FLORIAN POCHLATKO: It was a huge risk, making a film that ventured so far from the beaten track without playing it safe. Just a lot of hard work. Not least during the months of editing, together with Julia Drack. She carried me through the process, and it was important to have someone who was so experienced, sensitive and patient. The fact that this balancing act has worked out is mainly thanks to the editing work. It was really tricky, because the film was permanently on the verge of collapsing. For us, the script was fragmentary, the shooting very classic, and the editing was something between emotional feeling and rational balance. I had brought people on board whose talent I valued but who didn't have any feature film experience. But then you also need a few key positions with a lot of experience to carry things through; in my case it was the production company, Golden Girls Film, and the editor, Julia Drack. You need a backbone. People on your side as assistant directors or production management, people with a black belt in karate.

Interview: Karin Schiefer | AUSTRIAN FILMS



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Florian Pochlatko is an Austrian writer, director, and editor. He studied Experimental Media Art before directing at the Film Academy Vienna under Michael Haneke and pursued Critical Studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in Diedrich Diederichsen's class. His acclaimed short film *Erdbeerland* (2012) received numerous awards and has been a fixture in Austrian cinemas ever since. After working as a visual identity designer for musicians and curating for Cultural institutions, he now returns to his roots with his first narrative feature.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

HOW TO BE NORMAL and the Oddness of the other World, feature film (2025)
Director, Scriptwriter

ANGELO, feature film (2017) Director: Markus Schleiner
Artistic Assistant

GOD OF GHOST, Musical (2015)
Director, Scriptwriter, Editor, Production

A CHURCH OF DREAMS AND BROKEN HEARTS, (experimental Assemblage) (2014) Curator, Editor

ERDBEERLAND, Short, (2013)
Director, Scriptwriter, Production

RUNNING SUSHI, Kurzspielfilm, (2006)
Director, Scriptwriter





LUISA-CÉLINE GAFFRON AS PIA

Luisa-Céline Gaffron, born in 1993 in Vienna, studied acting at the University of the Arts Berlin from 2014 to 2018. During this time, she performed at the Deutsches Theater Berlin and the Hans-Otto-Theater in Potsdam, among others. She made a significant impression alongside Devid Striesow in the miniseries 8 Tage from Sky Deutschland and was nominated for the 2019 German Acting Award for her portrayal of Nora. In the Tatort episode Monster (2020), she excelled in the role of Evelyn Kohnai as a multifaceted psycho killer. For her performance in this Tatort episode as well as in the feature film Persian Lessons, she was nominated for the 2020 New Faces Award as Best Newcomer Actress. In the feature film And Tomorrow the Whole World by Julia von Heinz, which was invited to compete for the Golden Lion at the 77th Venice International Film Festival in 2020, she portrayed Batte, the girlfriend of Mala Emde's character.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2025 How to be normal and the Oddness of the Other World | Director: Florian Pochlatko | Cinema

2022 Ladybitch | Directors: Marina Prados & Paula Knüpling | Cinema

2021 3 ½ Stunden | Director: Ed Herzog | Cinema

2021 Das Mädchen mit den goldenen Händen | Director: Katharina Marie Schubert | Cinema

2021 Mein Sohn | Director: Lena Strahl | Cinema

2021 Lieber Thomas | Director: Andreas Kleinert | Cinema

2020 Nebenan | Director: Daniel Brühl | Cinema

2020 Schachnovelle | Director: Philipp Stölzl | Cinema

2020 Und morden die ganze Welt | Director: Julia von Heinz | Cinema

2019 Brasch | Director: Andreas Kleinert | Cinema

2019 Schoko | Director: Sarah Blaßkiewitz | Cinema & TV

2019 Und morgen die ganze Welt | Director: Julia von Heinz | „Silberner Hugo“ für beste Ensemble | Cinema

2019 Performance at the Chicago International Film Festival 2020

2018 Persian Lessons | Director: Vadim Perelman | Cinema

2018 Als Hitler das rosa Kaninchen stahl | Director: Caroline Link | Cinema | German Film Award "Best Children's Film" 2020

2017 8 TAGE | Role: Nora Frankenberg | 8-part series Sky | Director: Stefan Ruzowitzky, Michael Krum menacher | TV

ELKE WINKENS AS ELFIE

Elke Winkens was born in 1970 in Linnich, Germany, as the daughter of a Dutch woman and a German engineer. She spent her childhood in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Africa. At the age of six, she began taking ballet lessons. By the age of nine, she performed on stage for the first time and then participated in countless dance and theater productions. At 18, she moved to London, where she attended the London Studio Center School from 1989 to 1991 on a scholarship. Afterwards, she moved to Vienna and took lessons in singing, dance, and acting at the der Musical School at the Theater an der Wien, graduating in 1994 with a state diploma.

She was discovered for television through performances with the cabaret group „Die Hektiker“ and landed her first roles in TV magazines such as “Zell-O-Fun” (SWR), “One” (ORF), and “Die kranken Schwestern” (ORF). She made her film debut in the movie “Helden in Tirol” (1998). She quickly became known to a wide Austrian audience. In Germany, she broke through when she took on the lead role of Niki Herzog in the crime series “Kommissar Rex” in 2002. Most recently, she appeared in the ZDF film “Rottmann schlägt zurück” in the leading role alongside Heino Frech, as well as in the comedy film “Arschkalt,” where she also played the female lead.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2025 How to be normal and the Oddness of the Other World | Director: Florian Pochlatko | Cinema

2019 Prost Mortem | Director: Michael Podogil Crime Mini-Serie | Cinema

2017 Lena Lorenz – Panama & Ko | Director: Sophie Allet-Coche ZDF | Cinema

2016 SOKO Köln – Im Zwielficht | Director: Daniel Helfer ZDF | Cinema

2019 SOKO Kitzbühel | Director: Rainer Hackstock | TV

2019 Rosenheim Cops | Director: Daniel Drechsel-Grau | TV

2017/18 Sturm der Liebe | Director: Felix Bärwald, Karsten Meyer-Grohbrügge u.a. ARD | TV

2009 Notruf Hafenkante – Harte Jungs ZDF | Director: Oren Schmuckler | TV

2005 Im Namen des Gesetzes – Blondes Gift | Director: Manuel Flurin Hendry | TV

2002–2004 Kommissar Rex | Director: Gerald Liegel, Hajo Gies | TV





CORNELIUS OBONYA AS KLAUS

Cornelius Obonya was born in 1969 into a family of Austrian actors with a long tradition. His parents are Elisabeth Orth-Obonya and Hanns Obonya, His maternal grandparents were Paula Wessely and Attila Hörbiger. He went to the Max Reinhardt Seminar Vienna to study acting at the age of 17.

However, he left after one year and trained under the cabaret artist Gerhard Bronner. Bronner was one of the key figures in his career, as were Emmy Werner, the former director of the Volkstheater Wien, and Andrea Breth, with whom he worked for many years at the Schaubühne Berlin and the Burgtheater Vienna.

His further career led him to portray „Jedermann“ at the Salzburg Festival and participate in numerous German and Austrian productions for film and television. This includes appearances in „Tatort“ and the film „Adults in the Room,“ directed by Costa-Gavras, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2022 Der Fuchs | Director: Adrian Goiginger | Cinema
2021 Alma und Oskar | Director: Dieter Berner | Cinema
2019 Adults in the Room | Director: Costa-Gavras | Cinema
2017 Einer wie Erika | Director: Reinhold Bilgeri | Cinema
2015 Die Trapp Familie – Ein Leben für die Musik | Director: Ben Verbong | Cinema
2015 Egon Schiele – Tod und Mädchen | Director: Dieter Berner | Cinema
2011 Where I Belong | Director: Fritz Urschitz | Cinema
2010 Spanien | Director: Anja Salomonowitz | Cinema
2007 Darum | Director: Harald Sicheritz | Cinema

FELIX PÖCHHAKER AS JONI

Felix Pöchhacker is an Austrian actor as well as singer-songwriter and composer. As a young man, he initially aspired to become a professional basketball player and attended a sports gymnasium.

However, after breaking his forearm at the age of 12, he switched to a music-focused gymnasium. He went on to study classical concert guitar at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna, where he was trained by notable figures such as guitarist Michael Langer.

In addition to his guitar studies, he also explored courses in composition theory and jazz theory. Later in life, Felix Pöchhacker broadened his artistic range by turning to acting, immersing himself in the world of theater and performance.

FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

2025 Schimmer | Director: Michael Poetschko | Cinema

2024/25 Bis auf Weiteres Unsterblich | Director: Hans Hofer | TV

2017 Die Unverplanten | Director: Renate Aichinger | Theater

2007/08 Die Brüder Karamasov | Director: Nicolas Stemann | Theater





GOLDEN GIRLS FILM

COMPANY PROFILE

Golden Girls Film is a collective of writer/directors and producers, combining artistic and technical skills. The team around Arash & Arman T. Riahi, Peter Drössler and Julia Horvath is focusing on timeless social and political issues.

Golden Girls Film has won more than 200 international awards. Their recent feature film "The Witness" won the Orizzonti Extra section in Venice 2024, "Eismayer" premiered at Venice Int. Critics' Week 2022 and won the Award for Best Film there, as well as the Audience Award at Les Arcs FF.

In 2019, their co-production "Born in Evin" won the Berlinale Perspektive Compass Award and "Solo" premiered in Cannes. The co-production "Once Upon a Time in Venezuela" premiered at Sundance in 2020, was Venezuela's official Oscar-entry and won Best Film at Hot Springs FF.

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FILMOGRAPHY (SELECTION):

GIRLS & GODS (103') Documentary, AT/CH 2025, Directors: Arash T. Riahi, Verena Soltiz
DIARY OF AN AMBASSADOR (77') Documentary, AT 2025, Director: Natalie Halla
HOWTO BE NORMAL AND THE ODDNESS OF THE OTHER WORLD (102') Feature Film, AT 2025, Director: Florian Pochlatko (75. Berlinale – Perspectives)
PERLA (110'), Feature Film, AT/SK 2025, Director: Alexandra Makarová (Tiger Competition Int. Film Festival Rotterdam)
THE WITNESS (SHAHED, 100'), Feature Film, DE/AT 2024, Director: Nader Saeivar, co-written by Jafar Panahi
TO CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SEE FIRE (98'), Documentary, AT 2024, Directors: Nicola von Leffern, Jakob Carl Sauer
ANDREA GETS A DIVORCE (ANDREA LÄSST SICH SCHEIDEN, 93'), Feature Film, AT 2024, Director: Josef Hader
EISMAYER (87'), Feature Film, AT, Director: David Wagner
THE BUBBLE (92'), Documentary, CH/AT 2021, Director: Valerie Blankenbyl
FOX IN A HOLE (103'), Feature Film, AT 2021, Director: Arman T. Riahi
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE ON EARTH (87'), Documentary, AT 2020, Director: Elke Groen
ONCE UPON A TIME IN VENEZUELA (99'), Documentary, VE/GB/AT/BR 2020, Director: Anabel Rodríguez Ríos
SOLO (84'), Documentary, CZ/FR/AR/AT 2019, Director: Artemio Benki
BORN IN EVIN (98'), Documentary, DE/AT 2019, Director: Maryam Zaree
THE GOOD DEATH (83'), Documentary, SK/CZ/AT 2018, Director: Tomáš Krupa
COPS (98'), Feature Film, AT 2018, Director: Stefan A. Lukacs
THE MIGRUMPIES (98'), Feature Film, AT 2017, Director: Arman T. Riahi
FREE LUNCH SOCIETY (95'), Documentary, AT/DE 2017, Director: Christian Tod
KINDERS (95'), Documentary, AT 2017, Director: Riahi Brothers
NIGHT OF A 1000 HOURS (92'), Feature Film, LU/AT/NL 2016, Director: Virgil Widrich
THE EREMITES (110'), Feature Film, DE/AT 2016, Director: Ronny Trocker

