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# Peacock Review: We Are Who We Want To Be

© CLAIRE FULTON(HTTPS://LOUDANDCLEARREVIEWS.COM/AUTHOR/CLAIRE/) 🗨️ SEPTEMBER 1, 2024



**Writer/director Bernhard Wenger's *Peacock* is a genuinely funny, confident and uplifting exploration of identity and self-expression.**

**Director:** Bernhard Wenger

**Genre:** Drama, Comedy

**Run Time:** 102'

**Venice World Premiere:** August 31, 2024

**U.S. Release Date:** TBA

**U.K. Release Date:** TBA

Bernhard Wenger's *Peacock* uses droll, almost absurdist humour to explore ideas of conforming and self-expression. It's a comedy that understands the importance of sincerity, utilising its humour to explore slightly serious topics in a way that doesn't ever feel forced. With confidence and a really engaging central performance, *Peacock* navigates the tricky space of **understanding yourself in an environment that constantly requires you to be someone else.**

Matthais (Albrecht Schuch) works for a company called My Companion, and he's terrific at his job. Whether it's a date, a proud son, a father or a friend, he's able to **mold himself into whoever it is the client needs him to be.** But when his girlfriend Sophia (Julia Franz Richter) leaves him because she doesn't feel like he's a 'real person' anymore, Matthais has to learn how to be himself.

Outside of work, Matthais **really struggles with expressing himself.** He doesn't particularly have any opinions or tastes of his own, and finds navigating genuine emotions quite tricky. Even his house is very carefully curated, sparse and trendy and designed for conversation rather than preference. He meticulously develops, puts on, and then boxes away his work 'characters', priding himself on his consistently exceptional reviews. But Sophia's right; he's barely a person, let alone one that feels 'real', and it's in the exploration into resolving that where *Peacock* really shines.

It is genuinely funny watching Matthais stumble through increasingly awkward situations, and Wenger, as director *and* writer, isn't afraid to swing between **moments of broad, subtle and even quite dark humour.** And Schuch really sells it, nailing the bumbling way Matthais muddles through increasingly awkward situations in a way that isn't cartoonishly robotic, but messy and so very human.



**Peacock** (I Wonder Pictures / 2024 Venice Film Festival)

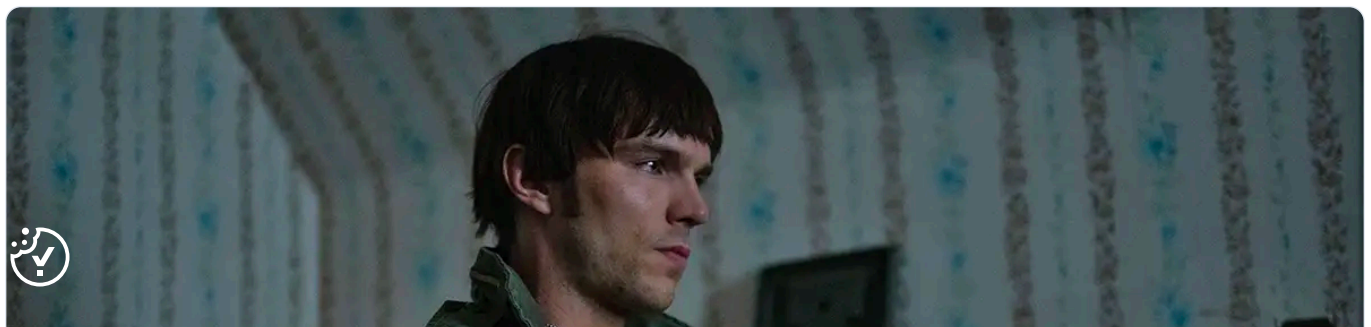
Matthais is eager to please and fit into the social spaces he needs to, but hasn't worked out how to do that authentically. **Schuch's expressive and nuanced physical performance** – especially as Matthais' carefully curated composure starts to falter – is really effective in getting the audience to invest emotionally in Matthais' journey.

Because *Peacock* is **a film about expression**. It is much more focused on Matthais' internal self-acceptance and him creating the role that *he* wants to inhabit, rather than the one determined by money and other people. It's surprisingly uplifting and deceptively sincere, especially as so much of the film leans into a more comedic role. The film feels very inspired by Scandinavian and British comedies, slightly droll and absurdist and very low-key. But it also feels very distinctly Germanic, with a – somewhat slightly ironic – self-confidence that doesn't ever waver.

Wenger's movie is more than just a comedy; it's a film about discovering who you are. *Peacock* is a film that **lets itself be very funny, yes, but it's also serious, glib, silly, weird and sincere**, all at the same time. It's complex, just like people are, and it heartily encourages self-expression, interpretation and conforming in the way that you want to, not in the way that's expected.

. . .

*Peacock* had its World Premiere at the Venice Film Festival on **August 31, 2024**. Read our review of *Familia* (<https://loudandclearreviews.com/familia-film-review-2024-movie/>)!





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