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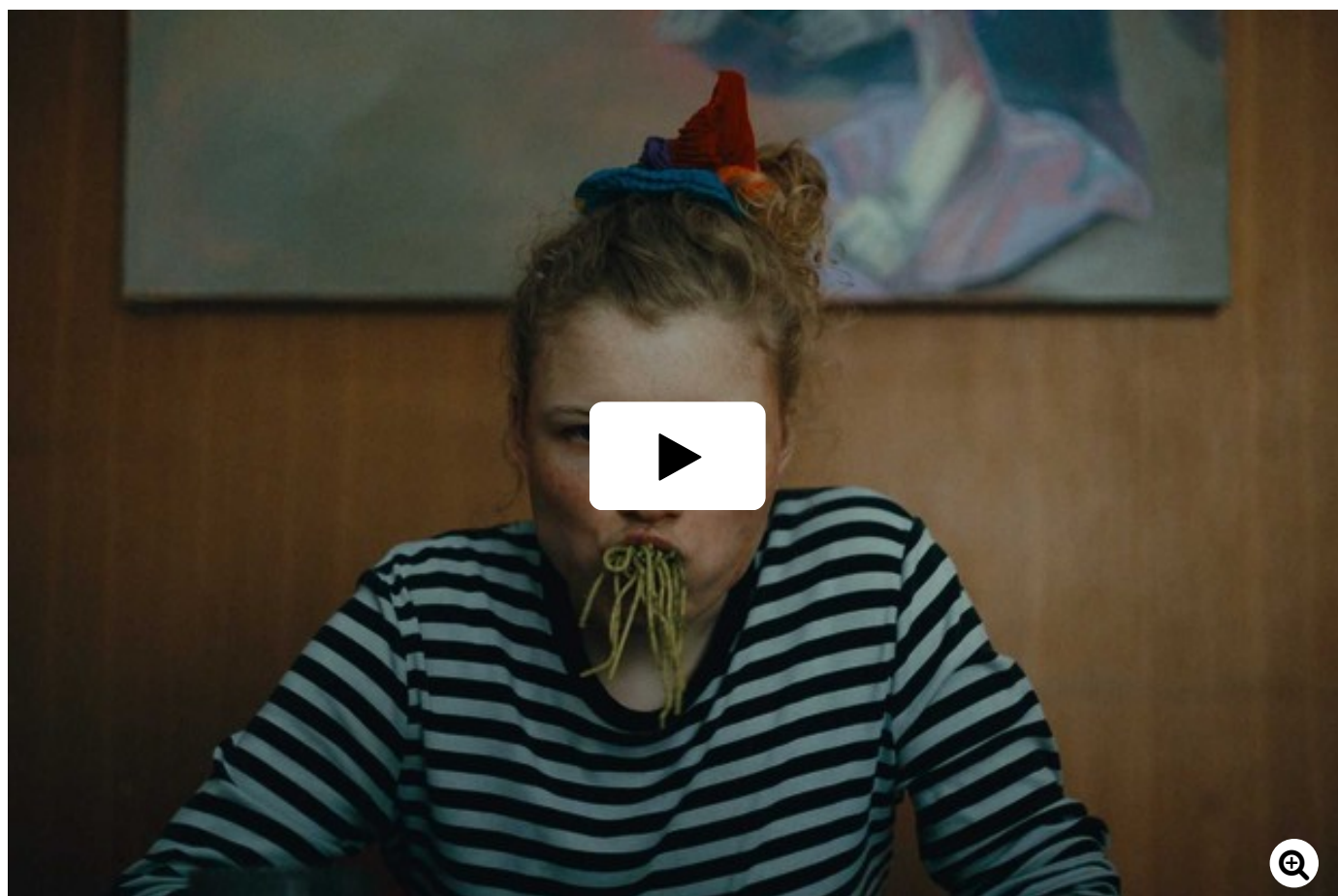
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BERLINALE 2025 Perspectives

Review: *How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World*

by [SUSANNE GOTTLIEB](#)

17/02/2025 - BERLINALE 2025: In his feature debut, Florian Pochlatko dives into the head of a neurodiverse young woman who struggles to fit into a predetermined societal role



Luisa-Céline Gaffron in *How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World*

“The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters.” These are the words of **Antonio Gramsci** that flash up at the beginning of **Florian Pochlatko’s** [How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World](#) [+]. The world that is dying, or that is perhaps already dead, is that of Pia (**Luisa-Céline Gaffron**). “In a world of unlimited possibilities, I have decided to be sick,” is the almost cheerful message that she relays to the viewer. A patient in a psychiatric ward in Vienna, diagnosed with anxiety and a personality disorder, she is about to be released again. “Cured” would be one way to describe her – stable and stuffed to the gills with pills another. She is to go back, live with her parents, Elfie (**Elke Winkens**) and Klaus (**Cornelius Obonya**), and figure out how to function in a world that values that very thing, functionality, above

all else.

It is an impressive piece of filmmaking that Austrian director Pochlatko offers up with the movie, which has premiered at the 75th [Berlinale](#), in the Perspectives section. Especially since this is not only his feature debut, but also, amongst others, that of his DoP **Adrian Bidron**, who provides a rich and multifaceted visual language. Pochlatko does not want to tread the beaten track of a heavy-handed drama. Inspired by his own experiences with medication and by talks with patients, he dives headfirst into Pia's point of view, showing her episodes, her visions and her fears in a wide array of ever-changing aspect ratios, dreamy colour gradings and rapidly edited sequences.

There is a fine line between victimising those with a neurodiverse diagnosis and romanticising them as enlightened individuals who can break out of that vicious cycle called societal normativity. Pochlatko rather unapologetically follows Pia as she sees suspicious men in suits everywhere, dreams of her lost love Joni (**Felix Pöchhacker**) and rots away intellectually at the office job her dad has arranged for her in his printing company. Her fantasies not only include those *Men in Black*-like secret agents, *Mission: Impossible*-inspired, action-packed escape sequences and an Ed Sheeran lookalike at a party: **Harald Krassnitzer** appears as a fantasy investigator called Moritz, drawing amusing parallels with his long-running stint on the show *Tatort*.

However, a question arises: is this monotony, this effort to fit in, not rather similar to the numbing life experience of a neuro-normative person? "One day, you wake up and ask yourself if things are going to be like this forever," does sound like something anyone could relate to. Along the way, the narrative often shifts to the parents. Elfie is questioning the sensationalism of the documentaries she is providing voice-overs for and is promptly deemed close to burnout. Klaus's company is about to be swallowed up by a global player, and he can only grin and bear it. The urge to keep it together is just as sickening as giving in to the breakdown. But functioning despite it, in order to save face, seems more important.

The movie doesn't aim to offer a simple answer on how to improve things. Rather, Pochlatko wants to build bridges to understand neurodiverse people, and to point out that coming off the pills, as Pia tries to do at a later stage, makes the illness even worse. The truth likely lies somewhere between Elfie's statement that "this is how the world works" and an energy healer pointing out, "If plants do not thrive, you change the living conditions. With people, it's the other way round – you try to adapt them."

How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World was produced by Austria's [Golden Girls Filmproduktion & Filmservices](#) and is distributed internationally by France's [Alpha Violet](#).

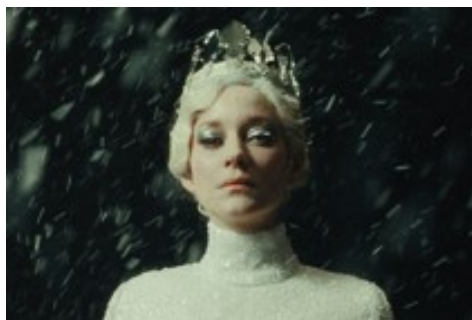
more about: [How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World](#)



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BERLINALE 2025: In his feature debut, Florian Pochlatko dives into the head of a neurodiverse young woman who struggles to fit into a predetermined societal role ▶

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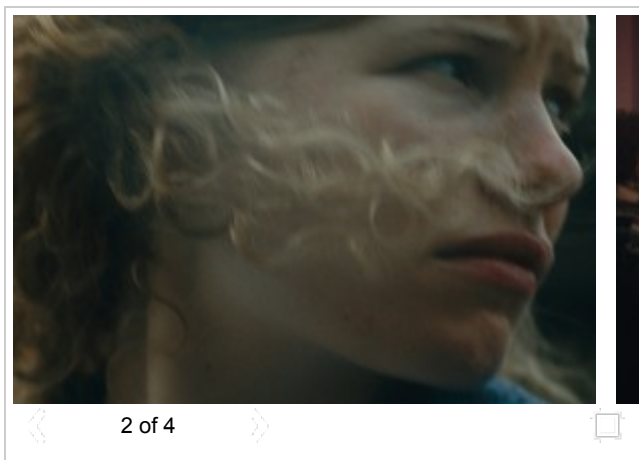
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international title:	How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World
original title:	How to Be Normal and the Oddness of the Other World
country:	Austria
sales agent:	Alpha Violet
year:	2025
directed by:	Florian Pochlatko
screenplay:	Florian Pochlatko
cast:	Luisa-Céline Gaffron , Elke Winkens , Cornelius Obonya , Felix Pöchhacker , David Scheid

main awards/selection

Berlinale Perspectives
2025

full film profile

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