



## BEAUTIFUL AND NEAT ROOM

D: Maria Petschnig, C: Charlotte Aubin, Ari Brand, Adam Ratcliffe, Marc Bracich, DOP: Jamal Solomon, AUT/USA 2025, 118 Min., English Original – German Premiere

People who live in New York don't leave rooms empty, as that would be too expensive. At least, that's how the Franco-Canadian artist at the center of Maria Petschnig's film sees it— she's certainly not looking for a subtenant out of charity. However, in casting the ideal person for the cohabitation of least resistance, her lack of knowledge of human nature repeatedly gets in the way. Petschnig never for a second gives the impression of making a cozy humanistic appeal for social justice in the face of gentrification. Instead, she unfolds with great consistency a biting absurd comedy about artist clichés, human neuroses, and eccentricities within the confined space of the apartment.

*Maria Petschnig (born 1977) is an Austrian-born, New York City-based artist and filmmaker whose work explores themes of memory, voyeurism, and eroticism through video art, experimental film, and narrative cinema. Known for her psychologically charged and often uncomfortable imagery, Petschnig challenges viewers' perceptions of intimacy and spectatorship. Her works have been exhibited internationally, including at MoMA PS1, and reviewed by major publications such as The New York Times, Artforum, and Art in America. In 2021, she released her first documentary, UNCOMFORTABLY COMFORTABLE, which follows a homeless man living in his car in New York City. The film premiered at the Duisburger Filmwoche and won the ARTE Documentary Award. Her feature narrative film BEAUTIFUL AND NEAT ROOM (2025), inspired by her own experiences of living with over 60 roommates, won the Grand Prix at the Split Film Festival. As she told The New York Times, sharing her apartment was "a way to survive as an artist in New York City." Petschnig's works have been showcased by a variety of international art fairs and film festivals, including the International Film Festival Rotterdam and Anthology Film Archives in New York. She has also given talks and presentations at institutions such as Columbia University, Vassar College, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Moscow, the National Centre for Contemporary Arts in Yekaterinburg, and The New School in New York.*

*"Her strange films suggest she's the art world's Franz Kafka." – New York Magazine*