

überaus unterhaltsamen Kinoabend: Eine große Portion Humor und Romantik, ein genauer Blick auf das Leben, mit dem sich Zuschauer identifizieren können und einer positive lebensbejahenden Botschaft, die man beschwingt aus dem Kino in die Welt tragen kann."

If you believe the ubiquitous ads on TV, in magazines, and on the internet, it seems rather simple: just exercise regularly, eat less or eat better, less fat, fewer sweets, apply a variety of beauty products from Botox to Brazilian Bum Bum Cream, have corrective surgery on numerous parts of your body, and wear new and beautiful designer clothes, and you will feel pretty and loved and be successful in your private life and your professional career.

Herfurth takes on this cult of beauty and self-improvement head on, boldly dissecting this controversial issue. She does it with a light touch, leavening her critique with humor and penetrating insights. The portrayals of the various struggles of these fictional but very real women should elicit a powerful emotional resonance with everyone who struggles with self-acceptance and yearns to be happy. Fortuitously (or not), the unconventional teacher who engages her students in such a wonderfully creative manner provides many answers to the questions raised in the movie.

Wunderschön is not a political movie, and perhaps for this reason it seldom penetrates the *Oberfläche* to look at some of the deeper causes and connections of our beauty-obsessed society. Ethnic diversity is in short supply, and some of the characters struggle to escape the gravitational pull of their somewhat stereotypical selves. Moreover, it might have been better if the movie were at least 20-30 minutes shorter to direct the attention of the audience more quickly to the positive messages and conclusions at the end. But all in all, we agree with the jury of the German film awards and give this movie a rating of: *Besonders wertvoll*.

THE GERMAN SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Friday Film Fest Series*



Wunderschön (2022)

Directed by Karoline Herfurth

January 19, 2024

• 6:30 PM •

Film, Food & Discussion

The German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia, PA 19123

Support provided in part by the
Philadelphia Cultural Fund.



Wunderschön (2022)

Director: Karoline Herfurth
Screenplay: Karoline Herfurth, Lena Stahl,
Monika Fäßler
Camera: Daniel Gottschalk
Music: Annette Focks
Production: Mark Nolting
Editing: Linda Bosch
Length: 132 minutes
Cast:

Martina Gedeck as Frauke Abeck
Emilia Schüle as Julie Abeck (Frauke's daughter)
Joachim Król as Wolfgang Abeck
Karoline Herfurth as Sonja (Julie's sister-in-law)
Nora Tschirner as Vicky (Sonja's best friend)
Ben Litwischuh as Leon
Dilara Aylin Ziem as Leyla (daughter of Julie's manager)
Friedrich Mücke as Milan
Maximilian Brückner as Franz

Commentary by: Karl Moehlmann

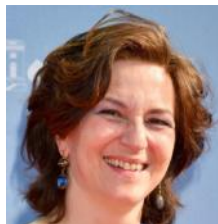


Wunderschön is the third movie in which Karoline Herfurth acts and directs. *SMS für dich* and *Sweethearts* were her first two such movies. *Wunderschön* was the #1 film in Germany after the start of the pandemic in March of 2020 and was nominated for *Bester Spielfilm*.

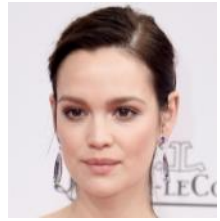
5 Frauen

Five women of different ages are confronted with questions of self-image in their quest for happiness. This movie interweaves five singular narratives, each one unique yet relevant to each of the other narratives.

Frauke Abeck: Frauke, played by Martina Gedeck (*Mostly Martha*, *Das Leben der Anderen*, *Die Wand*) is in her 50s and does not feel desirable anymore. She is largely ignored by her husband Wolfgang ("Ich bin unsichtbar geworden."), and their marriage teeters on the brink of divorce. Can a tango dance course help her with her self-image and marital problems?



Julie Abeck: Julie is Frauke's daughter and is pursuing a modeling career. She tries desperately to comply with the cruel beauty standards of the business. When her body size increases by one centimeter, she is told that her contract with the modeling agency "Perfectly Strong" will not be renewed. Forced to take a 4-week break, she works with a personal trainer in order to regain her standing at the top of her profession.



Sonja: Sonja, played by Karoline Herfurth herself, is Julie's sister-in-law. After two pregnancies, she is unhappy with her changed body and slips into a serious crisis. When we first meet her, she is connected to a breast pump, facing herself in the mirror, and opining: "*Ich fühle mich fett und häßlich.*" The fact that her husband is oblivious to her situation and seems to enjoy the company of other women in his professional life adds to her pressure.



Vicky: Vicky, played by the wonderful Nora Tschirner, is Sonja's best girlfriend. She is an unconventional art teacher who is trying to teach her students that a human being consists of so much more than mere appearance (*Äußerlichkeiten*). An assignment with this topic leads to some remarkable and insightful presentations by the students.



Leyla: Leyla is the overweight daughter of Julie's manager. Slighted by her mother, ostracized by her peers, and highly conscious of her appearance, she feels depressed and lonely until she starts to participate in an American-type sport that offers her a powerful and joyful identity as both an athlete and a young woman.



Das Ensemble

Casting these five talented actresses for this movie drew widespread praise.

"Die Spielfreude des hochkarätig besetzten Ensembles sprüht förmlich Funken und man spürt in jeder Szene, wieviel Freude das Team am Set gehabt haben muss. Der Film hat alle Zutaten für einen