

Halmet *presents:*

LOOPHOLE and DECADENCE

Room 3

Jordan Strafer

Opening on Sunday 19. October / Exhibition until 2. November 2025

content warning: sexual abuse

LOOPHOLE, 2023

1 channel video

16:9, 24' 39"

LOOPHOLE (2023) revolves around the affair between defense attorney Ray and juror Lisa. Between manipulative cross-examinations of witness Sarah and alleged victim Holly, their clandestine relationship constitutes the eponymous "loophole," casting doubt on the credibility of the trial. Strafer mixes romantically charged scenes with intense courtroom interrogations, using artificially rhythmic dialogue, fixed gazes, and close-ups to create an atmosphere that is both intimate and threatening. Props, makeup, and costumes function as exaggerated stylistic devices as well as direct references to the real case. These include the blue suit worn by the character The Pen, modeled after Strafer's mother's outfit, and the piece of toilet paper on a cut on the defendant's neck. Here, Strafer grounds the work in real details while deliberately directing the viewer's perception toward the grotesque and speculative. At the same time, she examines the politics of visibility in televised trials: some characters are seemingly protected by a blur, while others use the witness stand as a stage for performative selfexpression.

DECADENCE, 2024

1 channel video

16:9, 20' 25"

DECADENCE (2024) is set on the Kennedy Estate in Palm Beach, after the defendant's acquittal, and links the exuberant celebration following the trial victory with a flashback to the night of the alleged rape at the same location. Despite Ray's initial triumphant speech and the extravagant party afterwards, the atmosphere remains uncomfortable. Once again, Strafer mixes cinematic elements with sequences typical of reality TV: vivid colors, gradual zooms, slow motion, and close-ups evoke the style of Hollywood thrillers, while rough amateurlike footage and hints of television clichés disrupt the build-up of suspense. In both the portrayal of female characters like The Pen and Lisa and in the exchanges among the male characters, casual sexism surfaces, laying bare the patriarchal structures underpinning the case. The presence of juror Lisa and other parties involved in the trial casts further doubt on the verdict and highlights the immunity of the wealthy and privileged.

From the booklet of Jordan Strafer's current exhibition DISSONANCE (until 3.12.2025) at Fluentum, Berlin.

Mouthful

When she came home, he would often lean casually in the corner and greet her with a nonchalant remark that made the blood rise into her downy cheeks. Slim but strong, he stood there, his young, supple body resting against the wall. Gradually, she got used to this sight, to the naturalness with which he seemed to be waiting for her there. When she eventually fell for his charm, she began taking him along more often – on weekends and dinners with friends, later even sometimes to work. She introduced him to everyone, but he was very reserved in groups and her friends didn't seem to have much interest in him; they hardly ever spoke to him and never asked whether it was he who had reawakened the glow within her.

Although this fact did not succeed in clouding her rose-tinted glasses for long, it did make her angry. At first, she tried not to show it, but she answered fewer and fewer invitations to joint activities, found more and more excuses not to pick up the phone, and so the invitations were gradually replaced by worried messages – until those, too, slowly ceased.

When they walked together, he held her hand firmly or, if she wished, wrapped his strong arms protectively around her narrow shoulders. *He was always there, silent, reliable, like a shadow accompanying her.* Whenever, during one of their walks, they threatened to run into someone she still knew from her former life, he stepped in front of her, shielding her from any potential, unpleasant encounter.

His arms were thin but supple and strong from all the work. His skin was smooth, her sweat beaded upon it and ran down his body to his shaft, which nestled hard and warm into her hand – as if the hollows and ridges on it had been made for her fingers.

At night she showed him her favorite films: *Naked Lunch*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Cast Away with Wilson*, whom she – she admitted to him, giggling and blushing – found quite attractive. She meant it jokingly, but he understood differently. That was the first time he snapped, straightened up and loomed over her. Startled, she backed away and fled, crying, into the bedroom, while he spent the night on the couch.

Something changed after that incident. Sometimes she imagined herself yelling at the lamp until it yelled back: “Why are you screaming like that?!”

She hung the hat on the rack, and at night, on her way to the bathroom, she whispered to it. Her coat draped over the chair was visibly cold. Everything around her began to move, as though the silence itself was breathing.

Who are you, who are all of you?

This unspeakable silence around her. Perhaps the world of things surrounding her couldn't bear it any longer either. And when she finally closes the front door behind her... her gathered objects spend the whole day in silence, waiting for her to return – to maybe lift the fork or the black roll, to stick it into rice or press it against her back? That seemed almost unbearably lonely to her. More and more, she began to care not only about the usefulness of her belongings, but also – above all – about their character and well-being, letting them speak all the more when she was there.

She felt slightly guilty about shoving the toothbrush into her mouth twice a day without knowing who this little stick with bristles actually was. The hairs stood stiff and forward, and sometimes she left behind tiny green spinach bits. How rude, she had thought, and took the brush with her to the shower the next time. Gratefully, the swollen toothbrush chest snuggled against her fingers.

It took a few days after that before he spoke for the first time. At first, it still felt to her as if she was imagining it – or as if she was lending him her own voice – but that feeling faded quickly, and with it, the silence.

Text by Kurt Cassady
(Translated using Chat GPT)

Curated by Divided Studios



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