



Jordan Strafer, PUNCHLINE

January 5 - February 6, 2022

Opening Wednesday, January 5, 5-9pm

Appointments are required. Make one [here](#).

Some kind of thing is going to happen. I think we might be flying over Florida. The intrushing air sounds like a waterfall.

I'm with the men. I'm lying down and they are standing up. One of them has diamond brooches on his shirt. Behind him there's a pregnant woman and another man. One of them says, "put two fingers in your mouth and tell me a terrible story."

I am wearing a short-sleeved mini dress. "He takes the joy out of everything," I think to myself as he waits for the story. Then I say with my mouth full, "No matter how bad things are, they could always get worse. And behind every cloud... there's a lot of rain." He says, "You're kidding." I pause and say, "Happy birthday daddy. This flight is an explosive bomb."

The group is laughing. I think to myself, "I am really funny." I say, "Let's tell each other something about ourselves." Everyone starts butting in. I say, "Hold on, hold on. Let's go in a circle."

Then we make a circle of different things becoming the same thing. I dance on the line of this circle, but I do not cross it. It is lit only from the inside.

"For the love of horror puppets and reenacting trauma," PARTICIPANT INC begins 2022 with **PUNCHLINE**, a solo exhibition by Brooklyn-based video artist **Jordan Strafer** that will premiere the artist's new video and related works on paper. Ambitious but not obnoxious, Strafer's recently completed video work **PEAK HEAVEN LOVE FOREVER** is based on a true story of kinship and betrayal aboard a transatlantic air ambulance from London to Miami. Including life-size dolls and starring live actors (in order of appearance) **Marti Wilkerson**, **Jim Fletcher**, **Alexandro Segade**, and **Cammisa Buerhaus**, the video is a psychological thriller that takes place in flight—while time moves glacially, reality becomes suspended.

PARTICIPANT INC
253 East Houston Street NY NY 10002
Hours: Wednesday-Sunday, 12-7pm

Art historian David Joselit writes of Strafer's previous work, *PEP [Process Entanglement Procedure]* (2019) in his *Artforum* "Best of 2021, 'Illiberal Arts' at HKW Berlin," "Strafer's misogynist horror shows enacted on the uncanny figures of dolls exaggerate human qualities so that they extend beyond any individual self... femininity is set loose from a biological ground—it cannot be fully claimed as the property of a man, a woman, or even a doll; it is a kind of erotic force that both channels and attracts violence." Of this force, previously called "women," the poet Lisa Jeschke writes in her text for HKW, *Women* Living Death*, "A one-sentence summary of Strafer's videos would be this: all women are dead. [...] The claustrophobia of the dead world portrayed in Strafer's films is offset by its evident symbolic artificiality. [...] The opposite of representation is not abstraction, it is death. [...] The near-total claustrophobia of this is mitigated by the fact that the initial stillness of our artificial bodies carries the potential for a coming to life: an emancipatory, exciting horror."

The ambient fallout from Strafer's *PEAK HEAVEN LOVE FOREVER*, a "terrible story, dedicated to the one I love," was shot in the chopped-up fuselage of a former luxury air ambulance; any truth of character is mitigated by prosthetics and twin makeshift dummies with photo facemasks. Strafer says the idea of vomiting one's 'terrible story' is maybe "taken from an interview I saw with Judy Garland on a talk show which I can't find so I might've made it up." Related and preliminary works on paper approximate animal/puppet/human maps and correlate themes of ruined childhood, appropriated memory, and moral ambivalence.

As noted by art critic and culture worker Darla Migan wrote in her essay, "Entrails: The Guts of Jordan Strafer's Video Art Aesthetics": "Innocence-as-ideology seems to be the ineluctable essence of the logic protecting systems of injustice. What Strafer expresses is that what is called for—problematizing her own identity posited as innocent, problematizing her position in relation to innocence, and reflecting on what it means to interpret innocence and its functional counterparts: guilt, evil, badness, etc. [...] Strafer's art asks her audience to consider: Which forms of innocence do you have access to? Which forms of innocence are you hiding behind, and what forms of violence do they serve?"

This exhibition contains images of implied murder and suicide.

PEAK HEAVEN LOVE FOREVER

Written and Directed by Jordan Strafer

Cast: Cammisa Buerhaus, Jim Fletcher, Alexandro Segade, Marti Wilkerson

Producers: Jordan Strafer, Lizz Astor, Emir West

Assistant to the Director: Emir West

Director of Photography: Carl Knight

Assistant Camera: Godfred Sedano

B camera & Sound Recording: Larry Bovik

Gaffer: Collin Leitch

Set Electric: Jonah Peterschild

Lead Props & Costumes: Vita Kurland

Props: Anne Cousineau, Chloe Cerabona, Dante Hussein, Mariana Sanchez

Lead Makeup: Caroline Mills

Makeup: Aine Vonnegut

Makeup Assistant: Dante Hussein

Production Assistant: Carlos Negron

Original Soundtrack: Wibke Tiarks

VFX: Alex Bliss

Sound mix: Aron Sanchez

Color: Alex Zandi, Carl Knight

Flight path animation: Aron Sanchez

Production stills: Mariana Sanchez

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Bill Dietz
Bard MFA
John Brattin
T De Long
Harry Kleeman
Andrew Norman Wilson
Marbles
Juliana Garcia

In Loving Memory of Holly Skolnick & Guy Strafer

Concurrently, Jordan Strafer will occupy HOME Gallery as the first organizational partnership between PARTICIPANT and HOME.

Jordan Strafer's *PEAK HEAVEN LOVE FOREVER* will be streamed on Renaissance TV, an online platform and production fund created by the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago and dedicated to moving image.

Jordan Strafer (b.1990, Miami, FL) is an artist working primarily in video based in Brooklyn, New York. She received her BFA from The New School in 2016 and her MFA from Bard College in 2019. She has participated in group exhibitions at Red Tracy, Copenhagen, (2020-21); Housing, New York (2020); SculptureCenter, New York (2020); The New Museum, New York (2021); and Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin (2021). In 2020-21 she presented a web-based project, *No Bag*, for Participant Inc's online platform, *Participant After Dark*.

Safety protocols: Appointments are required and are limited to 4 people. Visitors and staff must wear a mask and practice social distancing. NYC requires visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter.

Image: **Jordan Strafer**, *Lambchop Ring Sparkle*, 2021, vinegar, glue, airport beads, post it, inkjet print on onionskin paper. [A stained print of a blonde figure about to kiss a Lambchop hand puppet in front of a microphone. The figure's face is obscured by glowing drops where her nose and mouth would be.]

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets. Closest trains are the F (2nd Ave) and the J/M/Z (Essex/Delancey); closest wheelchair accessible stop is the 4/6 (Bleecker/Lafayette). Entry is on grade and the gallery is barrier free throughout with an all gender, wheelchair accessible bathroom. Service animals are welcome.