



# CRIME FANTASY

LOUIS JUDKINS Thursday 10th - Monday 14th March 2022

The punchy, energetic thread of humour that runs thick within Louis Judkins work directs you match its own energy. As a writer, there is an attendant want to synthesise all of the many elements of his practice down into a pithy line or phrase that would stand and encapsulate the style he conveys. Judkins himself has already perfectly surmised his *raison d'être* in a previous artist statement – he “makes funny art for miserable people” – and that is still apparent throughout the works featured in Crime Fantasy. Scrutinising the sculpture, painting and film on display, it is evident they all consider different iterations of moral dilemmas. The works are incisive and unforgiving, yet humble and funny.

Judkins' film, *What's in my Bag?*, appropriates the synonymous YouTube format started in the late 2000s by Amoeba Records. Approached with a sitcom-esque irreverence, the work is a surreal affair. Rather than indie celebrities, two stereotypically balaclava-clad robbers arrive uninvited, with tote bags (in preparation) to climb through an open window to browse, rate, and berate the unlucky occupant's collection. Judkins has invented various musicians with such a strong and truthful visual sensibility that they feel strangely timeless, while also conjuring an exact image of the usual coterie of artists discussed by the guests on the format.

The masked figures hold the albums up to the camera and make a case for why, as proposed cultural paragons, they should be stolen. This feels particularly barbed for an act of dissent; a record collection is such a reflection of an individual owner that it feels awkward, especially as the two figures stand and pass judgement on taste and personal histories – Judkins regularly harnesses these feelings of disquiet across his works. The base act of thievery is then juxtaposed against melodramatic but eloquent debate: here the protagonists are morally bankrupt yet culturally rich. They are already aware of all of these artists: Sgraffito, Fat Thames, Edith Lowe... And yet maintain a level of ignorance to the ethics of their acts: “did you know the kick drum is actually the sound of him breaking a guy's jaw?” one of the pair pronounces, fully illustrating their insensitivity. The fact that the robbers are also playing to the camera consistently heightens this dubious feeling of either/or confusion that typifies moral dilemmas – you feel drawn into their case, but is that because you've forgotten you're the witness here?

In the final moments of the film, a policeman enters the situation, and rather than immediately apprehending the robbers, he joins in with a quip, riffing off the argument taking place on screen. This action holds an interesting dichotomy: the interplay of humour contrasting with the 'caught red-handed' apprehension of the criminals, reflects something deeper back at us. In an age when institutions like the Metropolitan Police are constantly embroiled in controversy, despite being a previous standard of virtue and morality (in the eyes of some), the artist is rightly exposing these institutions that seem so steadfast and immovable, showing us that they're no better than ourselves.

No one can be a truly moral arbiter, as Judkins highlights. The works show that if one begins to think critically about perceived divisive structures like taste, or morality, or social norms, broadly everything is contradictory. It is the magnifying of our own and society's contradictions that make Judkins' works so compelling. - **Alexander Harding**

*What's In Your Bag?*

2022  
Single-channel video  
5 minutes 53 seconds  
£-

*Caught red handed*

2022  
Alginate, gloss paint, exsposy resin, plastic & acrylic paint  
9 x 34 cm  
£40

*Dapper Dan: Chaos Theory*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Two years in jail for match-fixing referee*

2022  
Oil & pencil on canvas  
61 x 91 cm  
£150

*Anarchy In The Playground*

2020  
Plastic, matte gel, adhesive, steel & wood  
13 x 95 x 10 cm  
£150

*Sgraffito: Tape Experiments Vol. 3*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Portrait of corrupt referee Robert Hoyzer*

2022  
Oil on canvas  
61 x 91 cm  
£200

*Cannibal Death Squad: Terrorgasm*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Fat Thames: Fake Handshake*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Robert Hoyzer police line-up*

2022  
Oil, gloss paint, spray paint & pencil on canvas  
61 x 91 cm  
£150

*Raw Sunshine: Bulldog*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Edith Lowe: Sexus*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Requesting the arm of the executioner as your last meal to buy yourself a few extra minutes*

2022  
Plaster and gloss paint  
9 x 73 cm  
£50

*Fatal Squeezes: Fatal Squeezes*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20

*Tyrone King: Tie-Dye Blues*

2021  
Paper, card, vinyl record  
30.5 x 30.5 cm  
£20