



a Matthew Hencke film

Megan is ready to get married. Her longtime boyfriend, Paul, is about to propose and she is elated. But when he vanishes without warning on the day of their intended engagement, Megan is left to consider the reason for his disappearance. Was it fear of commitment or did some terrible accident befall him? Will he return or has she been abandoned?

As the days pass, Megan's mind begins to crumble under the weight of the unknown. In an effort to mask Paul's absence, she lies to family and friends. Slowly Megan begins believing her own reconstructed reality and teeters on the brink of losing her sanity and her self forever.

starring



Leah Ford as Megan

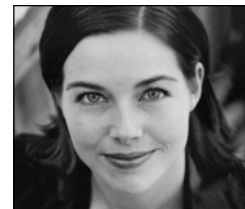
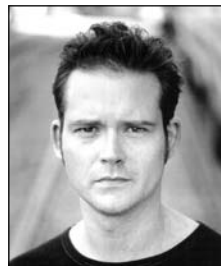


Scott Michael Adams as Paul

Amber Gerard as Hilary



co-starring (l-r)  
 Kenneth McCoy as Stuart  
 Jewel Greenberg as Layla  
 and Kathryn McCrory as Kara



With principal photography taking only nine days and a total production budget of under \$10,000, *Verschwinden* is a testament to the heights independent film can achieve with creativity and determination. Writer/director Matthew Hencke enralls and terrifies with a potent combination of dramatic lighting, highly stylized sound design and psychological visual perspective in this tale of ultimate heartbreak and painful self-deception.

Drama / Thriller. 80 minutes. Color.  
 English; brief German prologue with English subtitles  
 Contains nudity, strong language and violent images.

the crew

- Matthew Hencke - Writer / Director / Composer
- Elizabeth Howard - Producer
- Raffi Asdourian - Editor
- Joe O'Ferrell - Director of Photography
- Maximillian Hencke - Composer
- Tom Gambale - Sound Editor

Movie © 2005 Matthew Hencke  
 All press materials, photos, etc. © 2005 Black Kraut Productions  
 All rights reserved.



www.blackkraut.com

## A note from the filmmaker...

Director John Landis once asked a group of students what makes someone a filmmaker. After fielding a variety of highly intellectual answers, his reply was simply "making a film". Ascribing to this just-go-out-and-do-it mentality, I shot my first feature, *Illusions Of Grandeur*. Since I had no crew and very little money, I attempted to disguise the movie's low-budget nature with a parade of almost a dozen main characters and by dealing with a myriad of topics ranging from racism to homosexuality, religion to domestic abuse. The audience would have so much to focus on; they surely wouldn't notice my financial constraints. Needless to say, the experiment did not prove successful, but I thought it wasn't half bad for run-and-gun nickel-and-dime filmmaking. Then I saw my first Fassbinder film.

Rainer Werner Fassbinder -- maverick German filmmaker with over 32 features to his credit before his death at the age of 34. Though his later films have all the spectacle and pageant of a Douglas Sirk movie, Fassbinder's early works were often shot on ramshackle sets or in front of a bare white wall. The budget shows and yet each frame has a power, a presence that current Hollywood blockbusters couldn't touch with a thousand car chases or a hundred choreographed explosions. Fassbinder made no apologies for the bare-bones nature of his films' surroundings and instead used it completely to his advantage, carefully planning each image and capturing the essence of what independent film can be. Seeing his films made me realize how much I was abusing the medium and taking the art form for granted. The key was specificity, the idea that within every scene was the need for it to have meaning and that every shot should try to be beautiful enough to stand alone.

I wanted *Verschwinden* to center on a seemingly simple, universal theme and revel in how far and in how many directions you can push that theme without it breaking. The idea of love holds great interest for me because it is not a cut dry and thing... it doesn't always make sense. It manifests itself differently for everyone, which makes it an exciting and tricky subject to deal with in a way that will be honest for all viewers. There's an ambiguity to love. It demands and deserves a huge level of trust. I was married four years ago, and while I couldn't be happier, marriage is a mind-boggling commitment. It's intimidating to give yourself so completely to someone who could potentially leave you at any time for any reason... or possibly, for no reason at all. When a relationship fails, be it romantic or a strong friendship, and there isn't any closure, how does one deal with this sudden inexplicable finality? Even with how great it feels now, is love

worth opening yourself up to that kind of future pain? These questions organically evolved into the story for *Verschwinden*, a young woman simply refusing to face the truth that her relationship fell apart and her love that left her.

There is a surreal energy that seems to come to a head when one faces his or her own reality. We want love and companionship and yet sometimes in our lowest of lows, we'd rather just be alone, wallowing in misery and self-pity. "Ignorance is bliss" personified. *Verschwinden* is a gothic romance, my idea of a sad 80's love song, a nightmare and a middle finger to what I hate about the unknown inevitable in all serious relationships. On the surface, my movie is a character study of a young woman's descent into madness, but underneath is an indictment of the cruel games that love plays on all of us and that we in turn play on ourselves.

My whole life I have wanted to tell stories. I started out as an actor who did a little writing on the side. I enjoyed acting and have great respect for brilliant performances, but I have always been the most drawn to and affected by filmmakers. The men and women behind the camera... Their perspective. Their vision. The way they see people, themselves and the world at large. Inspiring directors like Mel Brooks kicking Brecht in the pants for a laugh, Milos Forman's focus on character, Alfred Hitchcock's legendary use of suspense and surprise, Paul Verhoeven inserting humor and satire in the most unlikely of places, Brian De Palma expertly showing that style can be substantial, David Lynch probing the darkness that lurks underneath something beautiful and becoming beautiful in the process and Spike Lee's mantra of have something to say or stay at home. These artists seemed to me more than human... their works, unattainable in their perfection. And though I desperately wanted to direct, I feared the inaccessibility of it... the need for funding, actors, crew, insurance, unions, permits and studio red tape. It was Fassbinder that made me realize a movie doesn't have to be huge to be great. It just has to come from within. Always be personal -- never be dishonest in your art -- and people will respond.

I hope you enjoy *Verschwinden* and thank you for your interest..

Matthew Hencke  
Founder, BLACK KRAUT Productions  
Writer/Director of *Verschwinden*



If admitting  
the **truth**  
means being  
**alone**,  
is it better to  
**live the lie?**

# Verschwinden

## Principal Cast



### Leah Ford as Megan Andrews

Leah joined her first professional theatre company - The Under Culture - at the age of 15 in North Carolina and eventually joined The Montage Showcase Ensemble, where she originated such roles as Belle Marshall in the world premiere of *Hannah Elias*, Sharon in *Winter Isn't Over, Yet*, and Gem in *The Contract*. Leah moved to New York to pursue an acting career toward the end of 2000. Since then, she has appeared in over 15 films, including a supporting role in the soon to be released feature film *The End*, television shows such as *Rescue Me* and *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and several national commercials. Recently, she finished her first improv-comedy show at New York's The Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. When not on stage or in front of the camera, Leah spends time honing her craft under the instruction of Lynn Singer and Peter Jensen at Terry Schreiber Studio. [www.leahford.com](http://www.leahford.com)

### Scott Michael Adams as Paul Howard

Scott's background is in Boston theatre. He has performed with Commonwealth Shakespeare Company, Boston Theatre Works, and the North Shore Music Theatre. He attended Northeastern University where he received a BA in Theatre. He has done several films and television shows since relocating to New York and is thrilled to be working on *Verschwinden* with all of its cast and crew. Scott lives in Manhattan's Lower East Side. [www.smadams.com](http://www.smadams.com)



Still images from *Verschwinden*



## Amber Gerard as Hilary Carr

A native of Washington D.C., Amber has appeared on *All My Children* and *As The World Turns*. Her New York theatre credits include Ophelia in *Hamlet*, Nichole in *Tea Taxes and Shakespeare* and Tanya in *Living the Blues*. Amber starred as Sandy Walker in BLACK KRAUT Productions' 2004 feature *Illusions of Grandeur*.

## Kathryn McCrory as Kara Howard

Hailing from the great white north - Montreal, Canada - Kathryn has been living in the Washington DC area for almost two years, where she recently graduated from the National Conservatory of Dramatic Arts.

Among her stage credits are: *Hamlet's* Ophelia, both Ladora and Isabella in the same production of Raoul Mas' *Doctor Arlecchino or The Imaginary Autopsee*, a highly charged performance of Laura in August Strindberg's *The Father*, and an uproarious portrayal of Charlotte in Christopher Durang's *Beyond Therapy*. She has also appeared in several Montreal showcases, including the Montreal Fringe Festival.

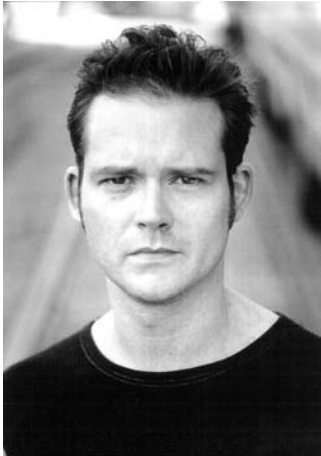
When Kathryn is not auditioning or polishing her craft, she devotes her time to a local public school as a reading tutor. She finds this time to be very gratifying and is enriched by being around her young friends.

Kathryn is very pleased to have been cast in *Verschwinden* and is thrilled to be involved in such a captivating project, surrounded by such talented people.



## Jewel Greenberg as Layla

Jewel holds a B.A. in Theatre (honors) from the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, WA where she focused on acting and directing. She relocated to DC in 2002 to begin work at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company. Jewel has since served as dramaturg and director for outreach programs at both the Woolly and Young Playwrights' Theater while pursuing her career in acting. Locally, she has appeared with the Madcap Players, Theatre Alliance and the Washington Shakespeare Company, and on the stages of the Woolly Mammoth, Young Playwrights' Theater, Open Circle Theater, Imagination Stage, and Adventure Theatre.



## Kenneth McCoy as Stuart

The Irish born actor started his training at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. He went on to study with the late Bill Wendt of the Actor's Studio; Robert McCaskill, director of Chicago City Limits and coach on the film *Girlfight*; and the famed Alice Spivak. Kenneth has worked on stage and in film under the direction of Jim Farmer, Michael Cuesta, and Harold Trumpetero. Look for him in the upcoming Duncan Roy remake of the *Portrait of Dorian Gray*.

## Janice Coffey as Mrs. Grimes

Janice first studied acting in New York with first generation Meisner teacher Bill Esper of the Neighborhood Playhouse.

After moving to Washington, D.C. she became involved in the local film and theatre community. Janice has acted in numerous independent films including John Water's Cecil B. Demented. Her acting credits include local commercials, industrials and theater productions. When not in front of the camera, Janice has been the Associate Producer and Casting Director on several films. Janice's day job is as a full time Realtor in Maryland.



## Nelson Soo-Tho as Todd



Nelson has done (and is very tired of) his fair share of schlock which he has promised to disavow if they ever come up. But he continues because "some work is better than no work," as he succinctly puts it.

*Verschwinden* (say 'F'ershwinden because it's German) is a welcome change, "finally a film I can be proud of being a part of albeit a small part," he said. Before *Verschwinden*, another film he is fond of belonging is an avant-garde twisted-reality black-and-white named, *Bit Part Players* where he plays the lead character, "Driver," contemplating suicide and in essence emancipation from an oppressive "Writer" who would only grant him lines like, "Where to sir?" and "Thank you sir." He describes *Bit Part Players* as "an ironic homage to my situation." Looking ahead, Nelson is hoping to finish writing his film script, *Take The Late Train Home* so he can start exploring what to do with it.

Additionally, he is also developing a theatrical play, *Purgatory Has Two Tents* because of his purist position that theater remains the unadulterated platform for the actors' idiosyncrasies. One angel perches on his shoulder: anything to exist outside the kungfu strata . . . for now.

## Paula Ann Douglas as Sheila

Paula hails from Washington, DC and has been performing in live theatre since the age of 16. She holds a degree in Theatre Performance from the University of Maryland at College Park. While much of her work has been in black box theatre, she also has experience in musical and classical theatre as well. Some of her favorite roles include Velma Sparrow in *Birdbath*; Gina in *One Tit, A Dyke and Gin* and as Witch in *MacBeth*. Prior to being cast in *Vershwinden*, Paula was last seen onstage in the operetta, *The Naughty Marietta*. When she is not performing, Paula works in Public Relations and is a certified Pilates Instructor.



# Verschwinden

## Crew

### Matthew Hencke - Writer / Director / Composer

Matthew is a twenty-six year old mixed race filmmaker, writer, actor and musician. He has more than 20 feature-length screenplays to his credit, as well as numerous treatments, pitch ideas and projects in development. Matthew studied acting at Carnegie Mellon University and was enrolled in the Moving Image Arts Program at the College of Santa Fe. He wrote and performed in several shorts for fellow up-and-coming filmmakers in addition to writing and directing his own short films. Frustrated by the lack of opportunities for young talent to establish themselves in the film industry, both in front of and behind the camera, Matthew founded BLACK KRAUT Productions in early 2004. Under the newly formed company, he embarked on his first feature, *Illusions of Grandeur*, which he wrote, directed and shot. Matthew's ultimate goal is to continue to write, direct and eventually produce works that challenge convention and combine the classic American narrative with the visual aesthetic of foreign cinema. He resides in New York City with his beautiful wife and frisky cat.



### On the Set of *Verschwinden*

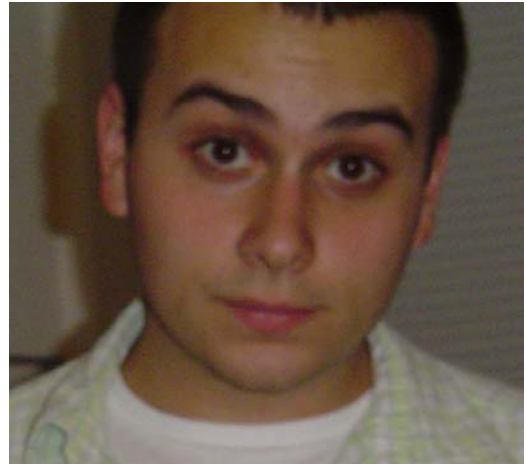


### Elizabeth Howard - Producer

*Verschwinden* is the second digital feature Liz has produced for Matthew. She graduated from Mary Washington College with a strong background in stage management and direction. Some of her favorite productions include assistant directing Moilere's *School for Wives*, directing a black box production of Lee Blessing's family drama *Independence* and traveling to Turkey with the English language debut of the Turkish play *Dead End Street*. Liz worked at the Studio Theatre in Washington, DC, where she took several of Studio's conservatory acting classes as well as stage managing their SecondStage production of *Love's Fire*. This is where she first met Matthew Hencke, who performed several roles in the production. Drawn to his passion for film and unending creativity, she has been his collaborator and partner ever since. Liz produced his directorial debut *Illusions of Grandeur* last year and is excited to have the opportunity to bring the production of *Verschwinden* back to her hometown area of Northern Virginia.

## Raffi Asdourian - Editor

The son of a Belgian anesthesiologist and Lebanese ophthalmologists, Raffi oddly enough has been interested in the world of movies from a very young age. Since his first film at the age of thirteen, he has made filmmaking a priority in his life. An honors student at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts film and television program, Raffi graduated with a total of ten short films to his credit. Among them, *Kuragannon*, a ten-minute short, debuted in a special screening at the American Pavilion in the 2003 Cannes film festival as well as showing at NYU's 2004 color sync showcase. For his thesis, Raffi adapted Albert Camus' existential novel about a man losing his mother and becoming detached from reality into the short film, *Stranger*. The film has been recently admitted into a high profile art gallery in Chelsea where it will be on display as part of a film/video showcase entitled *Rewind* and be available for sale to art collectors and other museums. Raffi currently works as a freelance editor in Manhattan while pursuing writing and making his own films.  
[www.zaffi.com](http://www.zaffi.com)



## Joe O'Ferrell - Director of Photography

Joe's career is the culmination of twenty years of experience in a wide range of positions throughout the film and television industries. He has served as the LD/Key Grip for the BET short *Tangy's Song*, gaffer on *Se Habla Espanol*, camera operator for reality shows such as *Airline* and *Classmates* as well as shooting several music videos distributed nationally and internationally. Over the past five years, he dedicated himself to independent feature films. He was the DP for the Film Brothers *Getting Even* and the zombie thriller *The Wickeds* starring Ron Jeremy. He wrote and directed *Franky's Heaven* and in the process formed "We Make It Work Productions", a highly skilled indie movie crew with a forty person staff, which later became O'Ferrell Productions. *Franky's Heaven* premiered at the historic Senator Theatre in Baltimore, MD and was a semi-finalist at the Hollywood Spiritual Film Festival.

## Maximillian Hencke - Composer

Currently in his freshman year at New York University, Max is pursuing a major in dramatic writing. In addition to his works of short fiction and prose, he is an accomplished musician, playing the guitar and singing, as well as being a songwriter and composer. Max speaks German, enjoys the study of Eastern religions and philosophies, and actively pursues an interest in all forms of visual art. His favorite band is the Pixies and his strongest cinematic influences are Federico Fellini and Luis Bunuel. This is Max's first work on a feature film and he hopes to collaborate with older brother Matthew on many more projects in the future.



No Photo  
Available

## Tom Gambale - Sound Editor

Tom's previous work includes Baraka Productions documentary feature *Aristide and the Endless Revolution* (Official Selection 2005 New York Film Festival), Comprehensive Films' award winning feature *Intervention*, 7A Productions' short film *Room 314: Nick & Stacey* (Official Selection 2005 Tribeca Film Festival), the independent short films *Voodoo Doll* and *Zapata's Gold* as well as working on the Warner Brothers documentary *Stanley Kubrick: A Life In Pictures*.