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Press Release

Harmony Korine. AGGRESSIVE DR1FTER Part II

Hauser & Wirth London
9 May – 17 July 2024



Over the last 30 years, American artist and filmmaker Harmony Korine has cultivated a multidisciplinary practice built upon tireless experimentation. A second chapter to Korine's 2023 exhibition, 'AGGRESSIVE DR1FTER', at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles, this exhibition in London features a series of paintings drawn from his newly released film 'Aggro Dr1ft', which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2023 and was notably shot using infrared cameras. The exhibition's acid-hued oils display an unprecedented fusion of Korine's painting and filmic practices. These hallucinatory works, like his films, blur the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' in ways that simultaneously attract and repel viewers with their hypnotic, otherworldly atmosphere.

About the exhibition

Within Korine's creative output—from paintings to films and photography—the notion of a singularity between forms begins to emerge. As such, 'every medium gets expanded and de-specified: a film can turn into a painting, a painting can become a film,' as remarked by Isabelle Graw, German art historian, educator and publisher of the journal *Texte zur Kunst*, in a conversation with the artist. Wanting to go beyond normal photography-based film, the infrared images capture a world consisting of colors and energy. Translated onto canvas with oils, the resulting paintings capture both a stylized world and an essence, a feeling, as in 'STILTS ZOOON X2' (2023). As relayed to Graw, Korine said, 'I wanted to make paintings that feel like they're basically alive. I wondered if one can make works and imagery that look like nothing has preceded them? This project is almost closer to a futurist take on visuals, painting and film.'

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Some paintings, such as 'Drift XI' (2023), focus on close-ups of heads, reflecting the importance of details for the artist. In close to mid-range framing, the infrared camera is able to sensitively detect variations in thermal energy, heat, which is then transformed into a more detailed image. Harnessing the aesthetic potential of infrared, Korine explains 'the closer you get, the more heat is pulled from the image and the more alive it looks.' The resulting paintings evoke a visceral reaction in which viewers can visualize and almost feel heat from the body, an immersive experience that Korine describes as 'close to the idea of being inside of a video game'. The technological workings of the camera mean that, within wide shots, lines are softened and the figures' features are de-emphasized. The further away from objects, the more impressionistic the image, producing an unearthly quality. Korine comments that 'The colors and the grain structure start to explode the whole idea of lines. They become more about depicting the vibration of the energy.'

The artist spent time mixing paints to intensify the strength and luminosity of the pigments, seeing how far he could push paint, the film and the idea of energy. With influences ranging from Martin Kippenberger's playful paintings to William Eggleston's vibrant photographs, Korine's eccentric color palette of blues, greens, pinks and oranges—dictated by the infrared imagery—not only heightens the sense of liveliness but also the element of science fiction. 'REVELATOR MAXIMUS' (2023) shows a walking figure, its surroundings marked by overwhelming monochromatic hues. Variations in shade are important here, from teal to cobalt, forming an unnatural yet ethereal environment. For the artist, 'the colors are so full of life [...] At the same time the subject matter and the characters are so grim and dystopian so there's this interesting discourse between the two.' Compelled to tell a story with his films, Korine's paintings offer a more immediate encounter with his fantastical world, their subject matter borne from color and energy.

For the full transcript of Harmony Korine's conversation with Isabelle Graw, visit Ursula magazine [here](#).



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About the Artist

Harmony Korine is admired internationally for the improvisation, humor, repetition, nostalgia and poetry that unite the disparate aspects of his output. Everything he has made since has been guided by memory, emotion and physical sensation as opposed to strategy and rational thought. Of his art, he has said, 'I'm chasing something that is more of a feeling, something more inexplicable, a connection to colors and dirt and character, something looping and trancelike, more like a drug experience or a hallucination.'

Korine's work has been exhibited at institutions worldwide, including the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, Belgium (2000); Whitney Biennial, New York (2000); CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2001); Contemporary Art Gallery, Art Tower, Mito, Japan (2002); 50th Biennale di Venezia (2003); Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, Germany (2009); Swiss Institute, New York (2010); Casino Luxembourg–Forum d'art contemporain, Luxembourg (2013); Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery, Nashville (2009); the Frist Center for Visual Arts, Nashville (2016); and Centre Pompidou, Paris (2017).

'Aggro Dr1ft,' Korine's new film from which the paintings in Hauser & Wirth's exhibition are drawn, premiered at the 80th Venice International Film Festival on 1 September 2023. For more information, please visit: <https://www.labiennale.org/en/cinema/2023/out-competition/aggro-dr1ft>

Press contacts:

Alice Haguenaer, Hauser & Wirth, alicehaguenaer@hauserwirth.com, +44 7880 421823

Hauser & Wirth London

23 Savile Row
London W1S 2ET

Gallery hours:

Tuesday to Saturday
10 am – 6 pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy:

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Harmony Korine
Drift XI
2023
Oil on canvas
156.2 x 182.9 x 3.8 cm / 61 1/2 x 72 x 1 1/2 in
Photo: Sarah Muehlbauer

Harmony Korine
STILTS ZOON X2
2023
Oil on canvas
247 x 368.9 x 5.4 cm / 97 1/4 x 145 1/4 x 2 1/8 in
Courtesy Private Collection
Photo: Keith Lubow

Harmony Korine
BLZZRD
2023
Oil on canvas
155.3 x 184.2 x 4.4 cm / 61 1/8 x 72 1/2 x 1 3/4 in
Photo: Keith Lubow

Harmony Korine
REVELATOR MAXIMUS
2023
Oil on canvas
61.6 x 92.7 x 5.1 cm / 24 1/4 x 36 1/2 x 2 in
Photo: Keith Lubow