GAGOSIAN GALLERY

PURPLE FASHION

FLEETWOODO, 2014, HOUSE PAINT, ACRYLIC, OIL, AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS

CREOL TEEN REVOLUTIONS, 2014, HOUSE PAINT, OIL, AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS

HARMONY KORINE BACK TO PAINTING

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARMONY KORINE IN HIS NASHVILLE STUDIO

INTERVIEW BY OLIVIER ZAHM

OLIVIER ZAHM — When did you start painting and drawing?
HARMONY KORINE — When I was a teenager. There was no car wash by my house that I used to work at, and sometimes people would pay me to draw murals inside their trunks or detail the insides of their rims with model paint. I once painted a neon dragon inside Roy Orbison’s trunk.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Can you describe your studio space in Nashville?
HARMONY KORINE — It’s called the Voorhees Building. It has a nice barbed-wire fence around it. I work in a place that was a practice stage for a local blind ballet company in the ’70s. It’s next to a swinger’s club and football stadium.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Filmmaking, besides the script, is a collaborative effort. Do you paint alone?
HARMONY KORINE — I mostly paint alone, and I have an assistant who also helps with stuff in the studio.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Do your paintings have anything in common with your film work, or are there two separate inspirations?
HARMONY KORINE — They come from the same place, mostly based on energy and feeling.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Why has painting become such a major part of your life now, after 20 years of making movies?
HARMONY KORINE — I had several shows at Andrea Rosen and Patrick Painter galleries in the ’90s and then stopped showing till now. I can’t really explain it. It’s something that built up over the last few years.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Do you approach a blank canvas with a predetermined, premeditated idea, or is it a spontaneous and intuitive impulse of color and form?
HARMONY KORINE — Everything is different. It’s mostly intuitive. I had a friend who used to pray to a Sprite bottle — sometimes it’s like that.

OLIVIER ZAHM — Where do these geometric patterns come from? Are they like camouflage that hides something else behind it?
HARMONY KORINE — Yes, these line paintings are based and looped, like a trance or an obsessive teenager doodling on the back of a notebook, trying to find some magic pattern, a stoner pattern, melted and finding forms, connecting dots. They have a connection to the more figurative works, like a shadow world.
OLIVIER ZAHM – Your human figures are pretty scary. They look like ghosts or funny demons. Do they express something about society today?
HARMONY KORINE – No, they're mostly just internal visions.

OLIVIER ZAHM – Why do you work on huge formats?
HARMONY KORINE – I like it.

OLIVIER ZAHM – How do you know when a painting is finished?
HARMONY KORINE – I'm still figuring that out. I've never really felt certain in the way things begin or end. It mostly exists in its own time and logic. More like a vision.

OLIVIER ZAHM – Do the street and counterculture influence your painting work?
HARMONY KORINE – It's hard to say. I remember as a kid I had a next-door neighbor who set his own house on fire because he was so happy. I think about that a lot when I'm working.

OLIVIER ZAHM – How has street culture in America changed in the past few years?
HARMONY KORINE – The streets are always watching.

OLIVIER ZAHM – Would you say that your paintings are influenced by graffiti?
HARMONY KORINE – I never was so into graffiti. Although, I had an older girlfriend in high school who had a tattoo that said “born too loose” above her pelvis. That was the best. She's now the mayor of a tiny town in Puerto Rico.

OLIVIER ZAHM – It's really an improbable story to go from no gallery to the biggest gallery in the world. Can you tell us about showing with Larry Gagosian?
HARMONY KORINE – He saw the paintings and proposed showing the work – I had things saved up from the last 20 years. It's been great.

OLIVIER ZAHM – When and where is your next show?
HARMONY KORINE – Los Angeles Gagosian in January will be next.