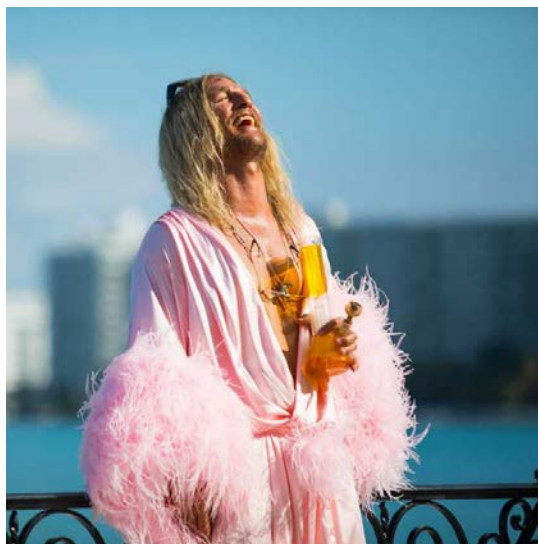


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Harmony Korine Is Totally Mainstream And Totally Subversive *The artist and director talks about his new film 'The Beach Bum' and exhibition 'Young Twitchy.'*

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Matthew McConaughey in Harmony Korine's 'The Beach Bum.' Courtesy of Cinetic Media.

Harmony Korine is undeniably an insider—his forthcoming film *The Beach Bum* stars Matthew McConaughey, and it opens in tandem with a painting show, “Young Twitchy,” at Gagosian in New York. But the director, writer, and artist seems most comfortable hiding out at his family’s home in Miami Beach, where he claims to spend much of time with Orthodox Jews at the local Chabad house. “They’ve never seen my movies,” he tells GARAGE. “That’s one of the reasons I like it.”

Korine proclaims South Florida as one of his favorite places on earth, and his daily routine doesn’t seem *that* far off from the free-wheeling lifestyle of Moondog, *Beach Bum*’s drunk, stoned, horny antihero. “I ride the skateboard, go to the studio. Take my kids to school. Watch Rodney Dangerfield movies,” he says. “That’s pretty much it.” Later he sketches a picture of a perfect Floridian afternoon: “I have a little boat in Key Largo....I usually buy a couple bags of Taco Bell Crunchwrap Supremes, get a liter of Mountain Dew, and tweak out on the water—play electronic poker and mess around.”



Matthew McConaughey and Harmony Korine on the set of 'The Beach Bum.' Courtesy of Cinetic Media.

While he might imagine himself a Sunshine State slacker—"I don't really have so much ambition," he adds—that's belied by how productive Korine actually is. But a lot of his best ideas do seem to come from a sort of restless drifting. The large-scale paintings in "Young Twitchy" had their genesis in snapshots Korine took on his iPhone X while wandering around Miami Beach late at night. "When everyone in my house would go to sleep, I'd stay up—walk around the alleyways, the docks, the boardwalk," he says. "Wherever I live, that's one of my favorite things to do."

These quick images were then modified in "crappy, generic photo apps"—including some that sport kitschy "Van Gogh" effects—allowing Korine to change colors and contrast levels before digitally sketching atop the photograph, adding a puckish figure dubbed Twitchy. He then projects the images in the studio onto canvas, and renders them in oil; the effect is akin to someone scribbling mischievously over a Richard Estes. While previous bodies of work have featured psychedelic, abstract patterns and collaged VHS tapes, the paintings in "Young Twitchy" are an unexpected detour into more figurative terrain.



HARMONY KORINE, Big Twitchy, 2018, Oil on canvas, 60 3/4 x 48 1/4 in, 154.3 x 122.6 cm. © Harmony Korine. Photo: Rob McKeever. Courtesy Gagosian.

The Twitchy character itself has been present in Korine's doodles since high school. "He's just a twitchy little bastard," the artist explains. "He kind of skateboards with no skateboard—some guy who slides around on the telephone wires and the abandoned docks, constantly entertaining himself, getting the jitters and then disappearing." Is Twitchy a benevolent spirit, I wondered? "Sometime he gets pissed when people creep up on him. But mostly I feel like he's sweet. Or *it's* sweet."



HARMONY KORINE, *Twitchy we are one*, 2018, Oil on canvas, 60 1/4 x 49 1/2 in, 153 x 125.7 cm. © Harmony Korine. Photo: Rob McKeever. Courtesy Gagosian.

Korine doesn't love drawing comparisons between his visual art and his films, but does note certain links between "Young Twitchy" and a movie like *The Beach Bum*—"tone, color, location, the kind of psychogeography of the world" among them. But whereas his latest paintings are eerily vacant—mostly empty, nighttime spaces, populated only by dogs and imaginary creatures—*The Beach Bum* captures the strange human pageant that calls that landscape home. Like 2012's *Spring Breakers*, the new film is a mindfuck of disparate styles, tones, and expectations, one that almost invites wildly off-kilter misreadings. "However radical the perception of the work is, I always want it to come out in the most mainstream way possible," Korine says. "I never liked the idea of limiting it to some type of audience that 'gets it.'"

The Beach Bum, which opens on March 29, tells the story of Moondog (McConaughey), a privileged, bohemian poet who hangs out with Jimmy Buffet and divides his time between the dives of the Florida Keys and a mansion on Miami's Star Island. Moondog is a cross between Hunter S. Thompson and that obnoxious close-talking drunk at the bar who wants to be your best friend; for him, *carpe diem* means breaking out of a rehab clinic to return to the inebriated ramble that is his life. "His character is a sensualist," Korine says. "If something feels good, he just does it over and over again. If one joint is good, why not smoke ten?" Throughout, Moondog is propped up by a cast of helpful enablers, including Flicker (Zac Efron), a fellow addict sporting a beard that looks like a panini; Minnie (Isla Fisher), his ever-patient wife; Lingerie (Snoop Dogg), whose joy revolves around procuring Jamaica's highest-grade marijuana; and Lewis, his literary agent, played by Jonah Hill with an impressively terrible Southern accent.



Matthew McConaughey in Harmony Korine's 'Beach Bum.' Courtesy of Cinetic Media.

It's possible—though unlikely—to leave *The Beach Bum* thinking of Moondog as an anti-establishment scamp, a mythically debauched role model. It's also possible to read the entire film as a harsh critique of rich, white, male pleasure and privilege. Korine says he conceives of his movies as Rorschach tests; he doesn't want to be prescriptive, and he's not trying to teach a lesson. "It's life," he says. "You have to leave a margin of the undefined. There's no simple explanation. You watch something, you project your own ideas onto it—the characters, the story, the sound, the way it looks. I want to make work that exists in its own way, that tries to fight this idea of articulation."

Both *The Beach Bum* and "Young Twitchy" succeed in that space; they convey a vague but intense feeling, and then invite you to wander around inside of it. (Korine says that he's long been a fan of Cheech & Chong, and with the new film aimed for "something that inhabited a similar cosmic America.") Doubtlessly, not everyone will get it—art-world purists will see in Korine a dilettante moonlighting at one of the world's biggest galleries; suburban moms in love with Matthew McConaughey will spend 95 minutes desperately wondering if they're hallucinating. None of that will likely matter to the artist himself, who by then will be back in Florida, binging on Taco Bell, cigars, and late-night iPhone photographs. "With the movie coming out, and the show, I pretty much just want to dream on things for a while," Korine says. "I don't really have any plans for anything after this. I'm mostly just gonna go fishing."