

## Print Article



James Franco and friends at the opening of "Rebel" in Hollywood on May 11, 2012

## James Franco REBEL IN HOLLYWOOD? by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

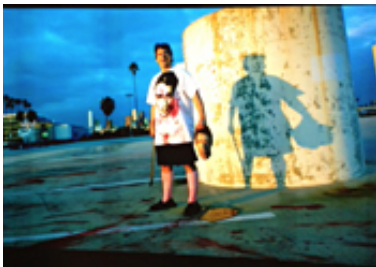
Last Saturday night, Hollywood's attractive and fashionably dressed young things swarmed the opening of "Rebel," an exhibition staged by actor **James Franco** at a pop-up location of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art -- a Hollywood warehouse owned by antiques dealer J.F. Chen. Arranged by Jeffrey Deitch and sponsored by Gucci, the denim fashion outfit 7 for all Mankind and Chateau Marmont, the show continues through June 23. OHWOW is publishing a book about the exhibition with an essay by Francisco J. Ricardo.

Franco played James Dean in a 2000 TNT movie and the research apparently inspired him to concoct this chaotic deconstruction of *Rebel Without a Cause*. **Ed Ruscha's** massive painting of the word "rebel," superimposed on a dark mountain landscape, hangs at the entrance to the show.

The exhibition includes a number of stage-set houses, their walls covered in plastic green ivy, and a recreation of the neon sign for Chateau Marmont. Lying around the set are piles of inflatable female sex dolls, both white and black. A video by **Paul McCarthy** and his son Damon McCarthy stars Franco as James Dean and re-interprets the tortured father-son relationship in the movie. (A larger version of the complex McCarthy work is on view at The Box, the gallery owned by Mara McCarthy, the artist's daughter, in its new location on 805 Traction Avenue.)



Revelers David Philp and Henry Brocklehurst at the backwards-Hollywood "Rebel" celebration



James Franco as Sal Mineo in Harmony Korine's *Caput* in "Rebel"



A scene from Harmony Korine's *Caput* in "Rebel"



A scene from Harmony Korine's *Caput* in "Rebel"



Aaron Young's ghost motorcycle in "Rebel"

Franco has played a role in several other works included in "Rebel" as well. He produced **Douglas Gordon's** captivating two-channel film installation, in which **Dennis Hopper's** son Henry Hopper is portrayed alone, naked and drawing on himself with red magic markers. Franco's voice is used by Galen Pehrson in his pornographic animation *El Gato*. And **Terry Richardson** photographed Franco in varied drag.

One great highlight is Harmony Korine's six-minute-long video *Caput*, in which Franco as Sal Mineo fights with actor Eddie Peel, who wears a James Dean mask. Each man is backed up by a gang of naked women, white for Dean, brown for Mineo, carrying silver swords and riding small bicycles in a parking lot. Hilarious and brilliant, this is deconstructive media at its best.

A few stairs lead to **Aaron Young's** oval swimming pool, which has an all-white motorcycle lying on at bottom like a drowned corpse. Completing the seduction, one can rest on a lounge chair and watch Young's video of a 1950 Ford, the car driven by Dean when he crashed, being dropped in slow motion from an enormous crane onto the floor of the desert.

And then there are the installations of Franco's own film montages, his scrawled remarks and casual drawings. About these, there is less to be said. As a friend quipped, "This is a show of seven good artists, and James Franco."

**HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP** is the author of *Rebels in Paradise: The Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s* (Henry Holt, 2011).



The poolside view of Aaron Young's installation in "Rebel"