

# DIMIN

Whit Harris

*I'm Just Trying to Find a Little Joy Here*

September 12 – October 25, 2025

DIMIN is pleased to announce *I'm Just Trying to Find a Little Joy Here*, the gallery's first solo exhibition with New York-based artist Whit Harris. With her newest body of work, Harris explores the thresholds between painting and sculpture, staging environments where figures appear to move beyond the flat surface of the canvas and press into physical space. Gesture is key—forms stretch, twist, and strain against containment, while color provides a shifting undertone rather than a fixed anchor. Complimented by figurative ceramic sculptures, this interplay between two and three-dimensional medium echoes Harris's deeper concern: how to render experiences that cannot be contained in a single frame, whether personal or collective.

As per its title, the exhibition is deeply informed by Harris's lived experience of seeking happiness, most recently through summers at Jacob Riis Beach, where the ocean has long provided both grounding and memory. For the artist, the beach is a site of continuity, a place where cycles of grief and resilience are counterbalanced by joy, community, and renewal. These experiences surface in the work as scenes where bodies and backdrops entwine, recalling both the stage set and the shoreline, spaces where presence and absence are felt simultaneously. In her painting *Deep Water*, this convergence becomes especially personal: Harris returns to an image of her mother in a red bathing suit, one many photos taken by her father on family beach trips. "I have this image burned into my mind," she says. "Sometimes I forget the feeling of my mother's presence, but I never want to forget her beautiful face." The painting holds this fragile balance between joy and grief, where the ritual of leisure and submersion is bound up with longing and remembrance, transforming the ocean into a site of mourning and renewal.

Heads recur throughout Harris's practice, recalling one of her earliest sculptures as a child: an unfired clay likeness of her mother's face, with no shoulders or neck, which sat on her mother's nightstand until it crumbled. For Harris, the head became a container—both literal and metaphorical—for memory, grief, and play. In *Sweltering Head*, a disembodied face appears half-buried on the beach with a lit cigarette, its smoke curling upward in another familiar motif for the artist. Both motifs extend into three dimensions in *Smoking Femme*, a ceramic sculpture of a head and neck, where the gesture of smoking collapses nostalgia, humor, and familial memory into a single, smoldering form. Harris also renders imagery from more recent memory, specifically materials found on the beach—thick rope, glass bottles, driftwood, seaweed, sand, umbrellas, even the watermelon and cooler—objects that carry layered associations of leisure, sustenance, and survival. Many of these images coalesce in *Tide Pool*, her largest and most abstracted painting on view. Combining her pigments with sand and other fragments from the beach, Harris merges nature, detritus and gesture into a dense, oceanic field.

The exhibition was initially conceived in dialogue with the Saturn–Neptune conjunction, a rare astrological alignment that symbolizes the tension between structure and dissolution, the tangible and intangible. Harris draws on this cosmic metaphor to frame her works as staged vignettes in which backdrops and figures blur, echoing both theatrical productions and the shifting edge of the sea. "I realize the relationships between the different aspects of my work," Harris

explains. "It is about surviving a deep ocean of grief, feeling tossed around by it, and relating it to the suffering others experience. The harsh reality of suffering binds us to this world and to one another." This entwining of the personal and the universal gives Harris's practice its urgency, as figures and environments continually merge, separate, and reconfigure.

Whit Harris is a multi-disciplinary artist working across drawing, painting, and ceramic media. Her work features representations of the dissolute experience through disjointed depictions of the human body. Figures stretch, recline, wriggle, twerk and otherwise contort themselves in exaggerated expressions that oscillate between naturalistic and cartoonish forms, and recall the DuBoisian premise of "double consciousness" underlying contemporary Black identity. These figures become metaphors for the artist's psychological adaptation to unpredictable and hostile environments borne out of anti-Black social structures and reflect the tenacity and ingenuity of Black femme imagination as political resistance. Born and raised in New York City, Harris received a New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) 2024 fellowship in painting. She has presented solo exhibitions at Peninsula, New York (2024); and Lauren Powell Projects, Los Angeles (2022); and has participated in group exhibitions at Brooklyn College, Brooklyn; Hauser & Wirth, New York; Galerie Christine Mayer, Munich; and Swivel Gallery, New York. Harris is represented by DIMIN and currently serves as Adjunct Professor at Brooklyn College. She holds an MFA from Hunter College, New York.

DIMIN is located in Tribeca at 406 Broadway, Fl. 2, New York, NY. For all inquiries, please contact [gallery@dimin.nyc](mailto:gallery@dimin.nyc).