

LUI SHTINI***Ruminations*****May 12–June 13, 2021**

James Fuentes is pleased to present **LUI SHTINI, *Ruminations***.

Over time, Lui Shtini has formulated a pliable, responsive visual language that in equal parts emphasizes the work's composition and tactility. Shtini's work evidences a sensitive awareness of his surroundings—reflecting upon the connections between one's self and body, as it in turn forms the collective body within the world. Made over the past two years, this new group of paintings grapples with the physical dynamics of the synthetic, technological, and artificial in relation to the biological and natural. Here, figuration and abstraction fold into one another to produce a new dimension of image. Description and classification become less explicit, yet nor are the references within these works entirely abstract or unrecognizable. Although some were begun before the onset of the global pandemic, the works in this exhibition relate deeply to the period of the past year. In this regard, they act partially as premonitions, reacting at the time to oncoming signs and tremors of chaos within our global ecosystem.

Just as the experience of life is not constant, Shtini's practice is cyclical, diving into a particular feeling and then coming up for air, continually attending to a range of existing concerns. Following this process, some paintings may take a year or two to be completed. Seeking to be as porous as possible, each work is an attempt to understand existence and what is going on around us. The language of the macro and micro is at play as one looks into each composition; at which point it might transform into something else. On top of Shtini's freeform painted surfaces, specific compositional elements reappear across this series. Lines attach particular areas like ties or staples, and elsewhere act as divisions, recalling the physical power of a net or a rope. As well, dots puncture certain parts, resembling drill-holes or scattered mold. These are synthetic interventions, as if pinning or stitching something into place. Nevertheless, the works remain evasive. Between their delicately detailed and heavily textured areas, Shtini insists upon a kind of energetic, tactile reading of image and ground. These paintings prompt the sensation of seeing something for the first time—breaking away from a standard meaning, and searching for what comes next.

Lui Shtini (b. 1978 in Kavaje, Albania) attended The Academy of Arts in Tirana, Albania, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Solo exhibitions include *Tempos*, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha (2019); *Three Summers* (2020), *A Sawdust Feast* (2017), and *Some* (2014) at Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago (2020); *Body, Land* (2018), *Jinn Skin* (2016), and *Face Paintings* (2013), Kate Werble Gallery, New York; and *Fused*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, Kosovo (2018). His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; James Fuentes Gallery, New York; La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels; and Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. In 2014-15 he undertook The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, and in 2010 received a NYFA Painting Fellowship. Shtini lives and works between New York and Sardinia.

For further inquiries, please contact Katrin or James at jf@jamesfuentes.com.

Concurrently on view is Sue Coe (May 6–June 6, 2021) at **JAMES FUENTES ESSEX**, a temporary off-site exhibition series held at 81 Essex St.