

KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

Lui Shtini

Body, Land

November 29, 2018 – January 18, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

Lui Shtini's exhibition, *Body, Land*, presents 11 new large-scale works on paper in graphite, charcoal, and pastel. The images are abstract and economical, deferring recognition by way of anthropomorphic forms that stretch, clasp, and brush. These forms sometimes recall the human body in an expanded sense, but the term "body" is elastic enough here to encompass mountains, beasts, and cells. With an eye toward the precarious present, Shtini hones in on the porousness of the body and its tendency to fill itself up with its environs.

Shtini's turn to drawing might at first seem a significant shift from those works for which he is better known, enamel and oil paint on dibond and board. Yet, for Shtini, drawing is the most direct means of visual expression, providing a more immediate ground that allows for improvisation. It is also fitting that he uses drawing to render his bodies. Drawing and movement share much in the way of vocabulary; each speaks readily of gesture.

Though Shtini first began this series of works in 2015, this exhibition marks the first time that they have been shown. These works crystalize a gradual transition in his work from smaller portrait formats to larger-scaled horizontal scenes. All but 2 of the works in this show make use of the later compositional format, typical of landscape painting, further blurring the distinction between body and environment. This turn also marks a shift in concern from the solitary individual to the interplay of multiple figures within a shared pictorial space. In Shtini's new works, body and landscape shape one another and are shaped in turn, both psychological and worldly repositories.

Lui Shtini (b. 1978 Kavaje, Albania) attended the Academy of Arts in Tirana, Albania from 1996-2000. Shtini has held solo exhibitions at Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY (2018, 2016, 2013); LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, Kosovo (2018); Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago, IL (2017, 2014); Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA (2015); and Van de Weghe Fine Art, New York, NY (2013, 2009). His work has been exhibited at venues including T293, Rome, IT; Galerie Sultana, Paris, FR; Andréhn-Schiptjenko, Stockholm, SE; Silberkuppe, Berlin, DE; Bureau, New York, NY; Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, New York, NY; Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY; James Fuentes, New York, NY; and Mason Gross Galleries, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. He was granted a NYFA Painting Fellowship in 2010, was a 2007 resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and a 2014–2015 recipient of the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program. He currently lives in Queens, NY, and works in Brooklyn, NY. He will have an upcoming solo exhibition at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, NE opening in April of 2019.