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SITUATIONS

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RYAN CULLEN: MESS

Sept 8 - Oct 17, 2021

RECEPTION:

Wed, Sept 8th

6-8pm

SITUATIONS is pleased to present Ryan Cullen's first solo exhibition at the gallery, titled *Mess*. The four paintings presented portray mud and pudding fetishists luxuriating in their mess. In an accompanying text, Cullen situates these people, and this particular act, within a Freudian narrative of the death drive, coupling the fetish with larger concepts of existential risk.

While Cullen's writing provides an opportunity to understand the artist's introspective process, it does not circumscribe the paintings. In his handling of this particular imagery, there is an elusive quality inherent to the subject matter of mud. Decidedly figurative paintings are consumed by the abstract qualities of rendered mud or pudding. Using paint, a substance that so closely resembles the subject matter, is in itself an allusory pursuit. Figurative representation collapses into abstraction, mirrored by the human figures submerging themselves into an amorphous mess.

The paintings are technically rendered, yet the mode of representation is not fixed. Delving into the limits of perception, Cullen deciphers infinite bright reflections and immeasurable shades and tints into one nebulous singular liquid plane. Cullen states, "in painting mud one cannot paint the mud itself, instead one only paints the reflections of unseeable sources of light and color." When a blue hat, or face, or arm emerges, it provides an anchor. Cullen's blending of genres allows for more nuanced meanings to emerge. The paintings become a vessel to explore subtleties in human depravity while wallowing in the lushness of paint. The viewer is invited to indulge in momentary pleasure and fantasy even if the world is burning, and even if that gratification is in fact causing the demise.

RYAN CULLEN (b. 1992) lives and works in New York. He studied at the Städelschule finishing in 2017 and received a BFA from The Cooper Union in 2016. His work has been exhibited in solo and two person shows in *The Meeting*, New York; *Essex Flowers*, New York; *Etablissement d'en Face*, Brussels; *Studio Picknick*, Berlin; and *Portikus*, Frankfurt am Main. He has been included in group exhibitions at *CLEARING*, Brooklyn, in 2019; *Nassauischer Kunstverein*, Wiesbaden; *Museum für Moderne Kunst*, Frankfurt am Main, among others.

SITUATIONS is located at 127 Henry Street, NYC in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan. Hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 12 - 6pm. For more information and inquiries, please write to info@situations.us or visit our website: www.situations.us