

Keegan Monaghan***Threads*****August 3–September 27, 2020**

James Fuentes is thrilled to announce “Threads,” Keegan Monaghan’s second solo exhibition with the gallery, opening to the public on August 3, 2020 and running through September 27, 2020. This will be our first exhibition in the gallery since closing on March 13, 2020.

The exhibition’s largest painting, *Clouds* (all works 2020), depicts a crowd of people rendered with thick daubs of color that coalesce as bodies and shadows only from a distance. Like many of the paintings in this exhibition, the work vacillates between impressionistic abstraction and intimate representation. Monaghan started *Clouds* in October of last year, before a global pandemic and uprisings in support of Black lives reshaped our understanding of mass gatherings and collectivity in general.

Peas, a companion painting of sorts, echoes the composition of *Clouds*: a cluster of rounded forms gathering together, cast in natural light and viewed from above. Here, however, the forms are not bodies but peas in a blue bowl. The juxtaposition of the two reveals Monaghan’s interest in moving between micro and macro scales. *Peas*, with its zoomed-in, close-cropped vantage point, also draws out a connection to photography. *Clouds* deploys the widest lens while *Peas* and other works like *Button* (2019–20) and *Threads* (2020) zoom in on minute details, fragments from the same universe.

Button and *Threads*, in particular, emerge from Monaghan’s desire to paint the body without depicting it—to make works that are bodily but not quite representational. For him, figuration can close down interpretive possibilities: all bodies are specific, and all people relate to the world through our bodies in specific ways. Honing in on a certain detail—the button on a shirt, the interwoven threads that make the shirt—is a way of approaching the body that’s precise yet anonymous.

Threads, the painting that gives the show its title, hews close to abstraction: it offers an intensely magnified view of blue threads woven to form a grid across the canvas. The brushwork here is looser, more spontaneous, and the painting balances the banality of its subject with a sense of precarious uncertainty. That uncertainty reveals an emotional undercurrent woven through all of these paintings. Whereas Monaghan’s previous show at James Fuentes, “Incoming” (2018), was characterized above all by a mood of frantic anxiety, the works in “Threads” hold a number of conflicting feelings at once: loneliness but also intimacy, apprehension but also a slow, deliberate sense of care.

Keegan Monaghan (b. 1986, Evanston, IL) holds a BFA from The Cooper Union. His solo exhibitions include “Incoming,” James Fuentes, New York (2018); “You decide to take a walk,” On Stellar Rays, New York (2016); and “Total Recall,” OLD ROOM, New York (2015). Recent group exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2019); “Eighteen Hundred Showers,” Simone Subal Gallery, New York (2017); “I Pledge Allegiance,” On Stellar Rays, New York (2016); “CCCC: Ceramics Club Cash and Carry,” White Columns, New York (2015); and “Material Stackers,” OLD ROOM, New York (2015). He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Gallery hours are Tuesday–Saturday, 10–6. Individual or small group appointments are also possible Monday. For further information about the show or to schedule an appointment please contact us at info@jamesfuentes.com.