

ALBANA EJUPI

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Lisboa

**BULKY, INTERTWINED BODIES
THE GRIPPING AND MERCILESS HUMAN PORTRAITS
OF ALBANA EJUPI**

“I want to understand what it means to be human,” says Ejupi—her complete oeuvre seems to revolve around this central question of our existence. The painted world that results is intimate and emotional, provocative and challenging, but also uncanny and mysterious. The young artist has already developed an unmistakable visual language for exploring herself and the human condition. The themes—the pleasures and burdens of corporeality and sexuality, the beauty and pain of age and decay—are as old as humankind. The painting technique testifies to expertise and precision, but also an openness for artistic experiments (for instance, the elaborate use of sand as a painting material). Ejupi’s painting invents an own reality, condenses the real world; or more precisely, it is a daring venture to fathom the hidden essence of a body or face and lend it artistic form.

In contrast to many contemporary artists who draw upon media images and rework them in painting, Ejupi confronts herself directly with the living model. Ejupi has an idea in mind, but her actions are open and free during the painting process. Hence, the paintings undergo an unexpected development, tells the artist, new paths emerge and guide her way.

The intrinsically existential is also central to the realisation process. The intensity of a brush stroke and a densely spackled form conveys equally as much power as the image motif itself; through parallel work on several paintings, the intensity of the representation seems to heighten in waves. The sand she uses originates from Kosovo, the artist’s homeland. It imbues the picture with an unusual object-like quality, casts body parts, makes them seem “more real”. The spackled sand reliefs surmount the flat delimitations of the canvas and almost step out towards the observers. The materiality and expressivity of the works can only be captured in an art book to a certain extent. In order to truly experience them, one needs to see the originals. As paintings, as reliefs and objects, they enter into a dialogue with the surrounding space and invite us to inspect the dynamic gesture, the drips of paint, the grainy surface up close, but then again take a look from the distance, to view the whole picture from the front or the side, and circle around the work in the space.

...the existential and the sexual, the eternal question of the beautiful and ugly, the solitude and depravity of humans, the knowledge of the finite nature of all being.

Like how a mirror reveals the backside of a body, Ejupi looks behind the apparently obvious, under the beautiful surface. The artist shows us people in the moment of sexual union, bulky, intertwined bodies, becoming one. The major, radical theme in her painting is humans at the mercy of their physical existence, their reality in flesh. Grand emotions are prevalent in her work, the existential and the sexual, the eternal question of the beautiful and ugly, the solitude and depravity of humans, the knowledge of the finite nature of all being. We must only indulge in the perhaps challenging visual language, and form and colour, the tender and the harsh, the powerful and the fragile will begin a dialogue with us and come alive.

Visual arts make the claim to defy transience, to have the capacity to exist and take effect beyond the moment. Arguably, this is the intention that Ejupi admits into her painted works. She tells of the desire that drives us, time and again, to visually freeze a thought, an idea, to create a relevant (human) image and thereby evade our finitude. Herein resides the fundamental power of painting—a captivating potential that Ejupi takes full advantage of.

GÜNTHER OBERHOLLENZER, VIENNA, MAY 2022

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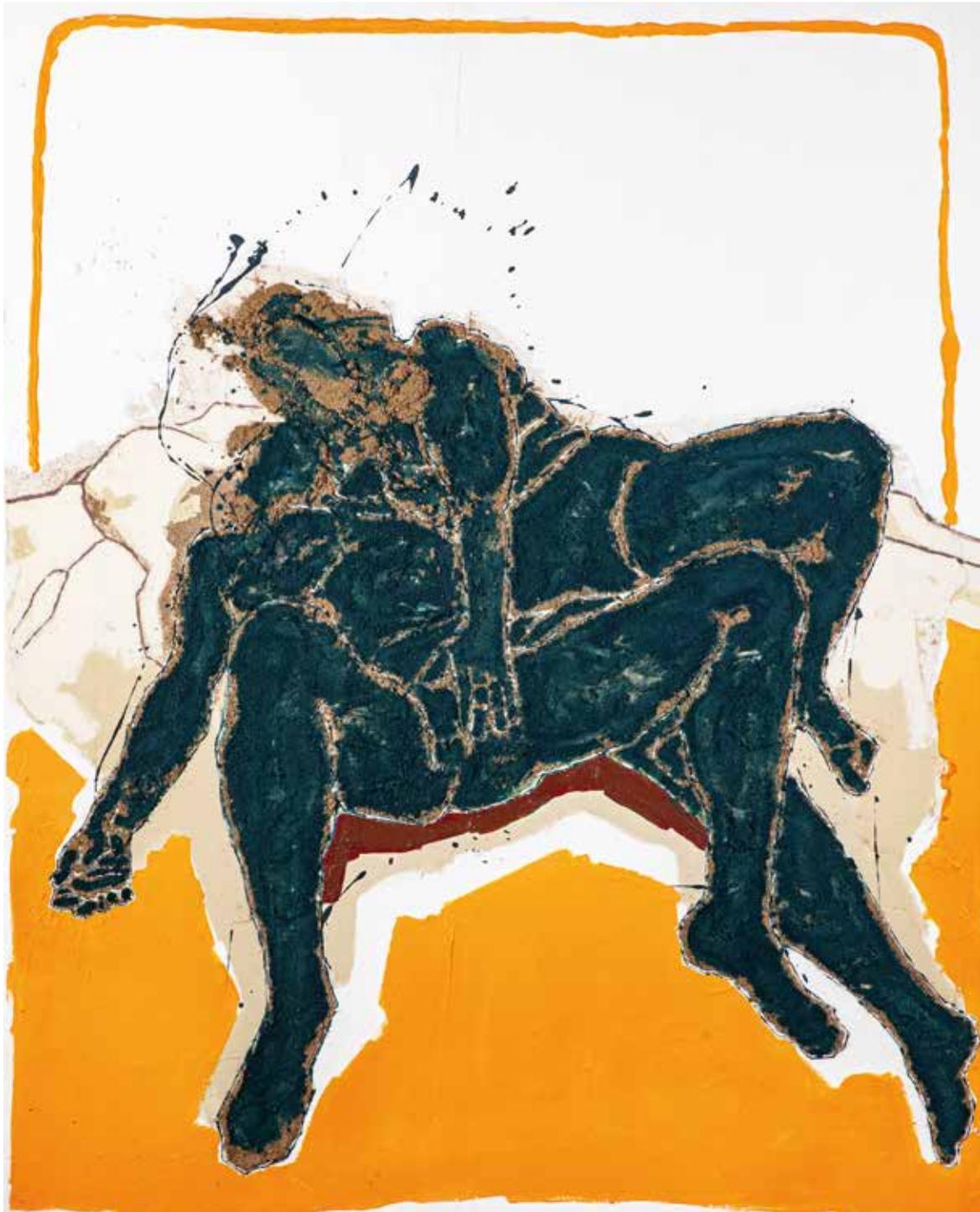
UNTITLED
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022



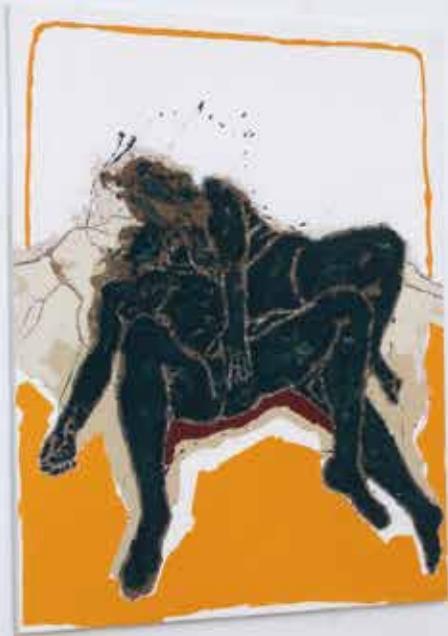
WE 1
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022



UNTITLED
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022



I STILL REMEMBER WHO WE WERE THAT NIGHT 2
acrylic, oil pastel, sand and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022





WE 2
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
180 x 160 cm, 2022



PINKY FEELINGS
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
180 x 160 cm, 2022

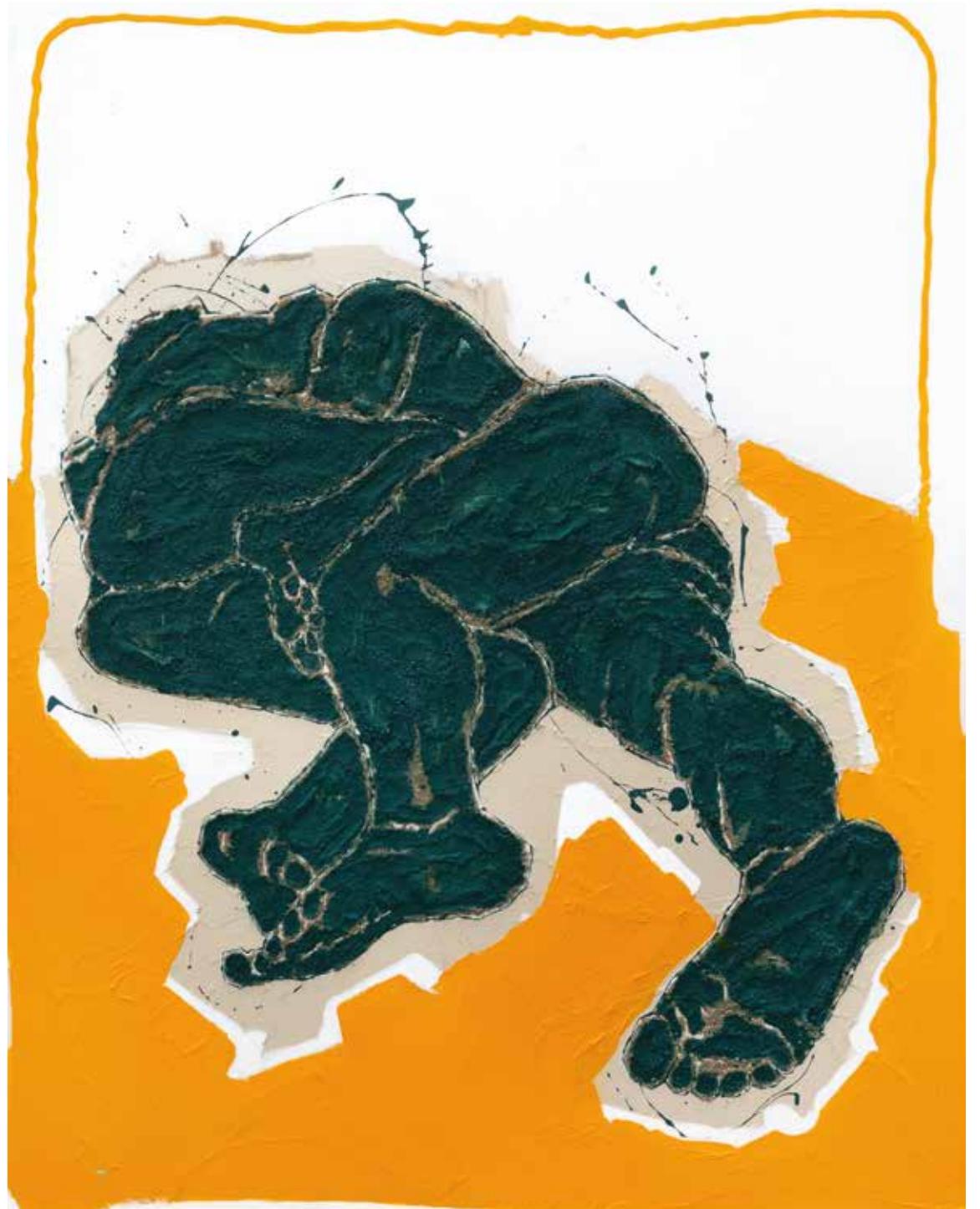


WE 3
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
180 x 160 cm, 2022



SILENCE 1
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022

SILENCE 2
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022





SILENCE 3
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
160 x 200 cm, 2022



UNTITLED
acrylic, oil pastel, sand
and textile on canvas
200 x 160 cm, 2022



BIOGRAPHY

Albana Ejupi (*1994 in Pristina / Kosovo)

Lives and works in Vienna / Austria

2012 – 2017 Bachelor degree, Academy of Fine Arts, Pristina

2017 – 2018 Master degree, Academy of Fine Arts, Pristina

2018 – 2021 Master degree, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

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