



HUSEYIN SAMI *Rhythm and Cuts*

Sumer
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland
31.01.2025–01.03.2025

by Samuel Te Kani

Huseyin Sami's *Rhythm and Cuts* is as close to a fuck-you as it gets in conceptual and contemporary art, short of the artist shanking you in the eyeballs. Which I'm sure is a thing somewhere. Though, please, don't interpret that as anything but praise.

When you enter the gallery, Sami's paintings (though that feels like a misnomer) jump out at you—or at least they did for me—with labial obviousness. The sensation that I was looking at a room full of vaginas did not wear off even after I left the gallery. And, even then, pushing through for more nuanced takeaways felt like I was doing that initial impression an injustice. If only because that impression is both funny, and oddly accusing. As if Sami's pieces were cunning Rorschachs throwing patrons back on themselves, daring them to speak simple truth, and more than happy to laugh at whatever knotty explanation the higher browed may or may not insist on.

The works consist of acrylic paint on canvas, a different colour on each side, stretched so that once the artist makes a single, specifically

placed cut, the panel itself rears open. The result being almond-shaped flaps. Most of them pink. You get the idea.

That said, two very different panels—both titled *Untitled (Bucket Painting)*, featuring crumpled, colour-blocked sheaths of paint stuck to the canvases—and a series of collateral, back-room sculptures made from the plasticky crusts of congealed paint from bucket handles and pot lids, act as a cipher for these experiments in colour and form. Sami is exploring the texture and materiality of paint itself, its mutable solidity even as a typically fluid substance prone to clotting. Stimulated correctly, the works open up (no pun intended) as deceptively simple, their frankness masking an obsessional pursuit of possibility, of the time and effort it takes for one thing to become another thing. *Rhythm and Cuts* is an understated forum on the art of rebirth.

Huseyin Sami, *Rhythm and Cuts*. Installation view, Sumer, February 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Sumer