

MUD

Benjamin Barretto

"MUD" delves into the interplay between stability and instability, groundedness and flux. Just as mud, a blend of solid earth and liquid, transforms into a malleable substance that adheres to surfaces and seeps through layers, Benjamin Barretto's paintings feature motifs that drift in and out of clarity. These paintings capture moments of sharp focus amidst muddied, fog-filled visuals, akin to eye floaters that swim in sight on one's own oculus but slip away when one attempts to focus.

Barretto's series transitions seamlessly between exterior landscapes and interior worlds, mirroring the eye's accommodation reflex from near vision to distant scenes. Pixelated, filtered, layered, and processed, his works obscure and reveal details like fragmented screenshots harking back to works of yore. This duality evokes the concept of the Ouroboros, the snake that consumes itself, symbolising a self-sustaining cycle much like the binary fission of prokaryotic cells.

Benjamin's paintings convey a sense of misconnection and fluid narratives, with unstable cliffs of understanding. This approach resonates with Paul Valéry's notion of poetry as "a prolonged hesitation between sound and sense," capturing the tension between meaning and ambiguity. These Mud covered works oscillate between repetition and interruption, balancing intentionality with randomness.

"MUD" embodies cognitive dissonance and a sense of dread, echoing the substrate becoming a space of disappearance and abstraction. By questioning where information ends and painting begins, Barretto reveals the blurred boundaries of contemporary experience, inviting viewers to navigate the fluid, unstable terrain of mediated reality.