

Binary Representations 12" x 16"

Oil on Canvas

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Think Piece: Binary Representations

piece confronts the obfuscating and reductive nature This of representation. Fluid and colorful symbols make up the background of the painting, representing a reality before categorization. The possibilities of nature have not been impacted by our interpretation or representations of experience. In contrast, the clean geometric white line creates two distinct squares. This act mirrors our process of representing reality, where we must simplify our experience into clear communicable categories and consequently must erase some of the complexity within our experience. The title, "Binary Representations," further explores this point by referencing a specific representational framework: the binary. Binaries are extremely salient in language and thought. Things are present or absent, Items are hot or cold, People are good or bad, Man or Woman, etc. These oppositions have clear importance within language; however, because of their simplicity, they can serve to obscure reality to the greatest degree. For example, we often represent gender as a binary distinction between man and woman. This binary has little biological basis and serves to simplify

gender and human existence into two very limited social categories. Furthermore, the continual application and assumption of this binary within society leads to implicit assumptions and categorizations that often serve to regenerate hierarchical systems and force individuals to act within their assigned binary category. As a result, our interpretation and representations of reality impact our assumptions, desires, and actions, thereby changing our reality and experience. Representation is a very important aspect of how we interact with reality and having inaccurate or harmful representations can have severe consequences on society. Sapere Aude is the undergraduate philosophy journal of The College of Wooster. Founded in 2007, it continues to showcase original philosophical work by students from institutions around the world. The successful production of this journal is made possible by the support of Dr. Karen Haely, the Philosophy Department at The College of Wooster, and our dedicated readership. We extend our sincere gratitude to all the undergraduates who submit their work. Your contributions are vital to the success of this publication.

