bitforms gallery

**RJ**
***Transit***

**Opening reception:** Tuesday, October 21, 6–8:30 PM
**Gallery Hours:** Wednesday, October 22, 11-6PM

Presented in collaboration with Tezos Foundation

In *Transit*, RJ presents a collection of figurative digital paintings, animations and sculptures focusing on a central motif of transportation. Taken together, the dithered digital paintings and plasticine and polymer clay sculptures employ the notion of train carriages, tracks and the act of travel itself as a means of metaphorical inquiry regarding the nature of presence and place in a life lived online.

Three paintings, *Quiet Carriage, Last Train*, and *Passengers* set the scene for this expression. In *Quiet Carriage* and *Last Train*, figures exist in abstracted and flattened train carriages, each engaged directly by the phones in their hands. Created in the browser-based drawing editor Pixilart, and disrupted through the cycling of dithering algorithms, the environments these figures find themselves in gesture towards a site of liminality - the in between-ness of the train in the state of travel reflecting the state-of-mind of the passengers absorbed in and taken away by their devices. The third painting, *Passengers*, draws closer to the expressions of such anonymous individuals. Through dragging and extending, the portraits are distended and warped - the pixelated grey of the background again situating these faces somewhere transitional - outside of place and time.

A further three abstracted portraits, *System Thinking - Flash Thoughts*, *Slow Thoughts* and *Looped Thoughts* reinforce the central metaphor of transportation through allusions to systems and networks such as subway maps and tangles of tracks. Depicting the brain itself as a series of intersecting lines and crossings, these pieces imagine a mode of thinking shaped by the systems of information technologies we find ourselves embedded in today.

Two final works, *The Thinker* and *The Argument,* engage with sculpture as means to develop this exploration. Rendered in plasticine and resin, with reference to the 1904 work by Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker* explores the nature of today's internet-inflected thinking and through the rigid encasing enacted by the resin, suggests a state of physical entrapment or addiction - an inability to move oneself away from the digital. *The Argument,* meanwhile, sets a work of animation in dialogue with a polymer clay sculpture to investigate conflicting states of engagement - with one's physical surroundings and one's digital involvements. While the animation depicts a sequence of two figures in separate subway stations engaged by their phones, the sculpture enacts physically the dialogue being carried out through the depicted devices. By placing the two mediums in opposition, *The Argument* asks which presentation takes precedence, and, along with the other works of *Transit,* asks where it is we go when we go online - where do we travel to and where do we most fully exist.

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**RJ** is a digital artist based in Edinburgh, working in pixel-painting, GIFs and animation. After reading Classics at Cambridge University, he went on to study an MA in Modern literature and a PhD in contemporary American fiction, with reference to modernism, meta-modernism and theories of intertextuality. Following on from the completion of his PhD in 2021, RJ began to explore and practise digital art. Having since taught himself digital painting and animation, his art seeks to explore the ways in which we experience the digital age in which we live - how the internet affects our senses of self, our bodies and the spaces we inhabit. Creating art on various blockchains since 2021, RJ's work has been featured in various digital and physical group shows, as well as solo shows including *'Crash'* (Verse, 2024), *'Home Bodies'* (Objkt One, 2025), *'The Consequences'* (Fakewhale, 2025) and '*Waste.Land'* (Galerie Met, 2025).