

CHAPTER NY

For immediate release

Eloise Hess

Picture a Train

September 5 – October 25, 2025

Chapter NY is pleased to present *Picture a Train*, the first solo exhibition by Eloise Hess at the gallery.

Through a painting practice deeply informed by photography, Eloise Hess explores the conditions of perception and the plasticity of memory. Hess works serially, each series beginning with a set of photographs. Working between photography, printmaking, and encaustic painting, she has developed a distinct material language. Rather than seeking a singular, photographic representation, she instead seeks the variable, internal representation of the photographed experience.

Picture a Train begins with a set of photographs taken at Amboy Crater, a dormant volcano in the Mojave Desert, 50 miles northeast of Joshua Tree, California. Hess lived in the area from 2017 to 2020 and visited the crater often but did not take any photographs there during that time. This body of work marks her return, driven by the absence of a photograph and the echo of her earlier encounter. Over the course of a week in April 2025 she returned to the site each day, waiting to take a picture of the train that intermittently crosses the horizon. Seen and heard from the rim of the crater, the train serves as an allegory for the process of photography, waiting for something to pass in front of the lens, and the desire to hold onto it. The paintings included in this exhibition emerge from four of these photographs, taken on a single day.

The process of observation, duration, and anticipation is central to both the subject of Hess's work and its material construction. She prints and transfers each photograph wet, pressing a partial and unrepeatable impression of the photograph onto an absorbent paper. She embeds the print into the encaustic surface and transforms the surface over time; painting, dying, carving, heating, and solidifying her materials to create an image and surface that echoes the terrain of the crater. The encaustic forms a skin-like membrane that holds a record of every touch enclosed within it. These markers of touch become integral to the final image: a merging of the initial, photographic image, and the subsequent, responsive transformation. Here, touch is both a physical act and an emotional response. The paintings evoke this layered contact, at once a specific lived experience and its resonance. Grounded in site and abstracted by time, *Picture a Train* reflects Hess's interest in the fragment— what is left, what is held, and what passes from artist, to image, to viewer.

Eloise Hess (b. 1995, Los Angeles, CA) received a BA from Bennington College in 2017 and MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University in 2024. She has held solo exhibitions with von ammon, Washington, DC; MATTA, Milan; and Helena Anrather, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at The Print Center, Philadelphia; Felix Art Fair, von ammon, Los Angeles; Zero... & MATTA, Paris; among others. She has participated in residencies at the Herekeke Arts Center, Lama, NM and High Desert Test Sites, Joshua Tree, CA, where she began this project.