White Columns

Anthony Torrano

Concrete Spirit

March 13–April 25, 2026
Opening Reception: Friday, March 13, 2026. 6-8pm.

White Columns is pleased to present the debut exhibition by Anthony Torrano (b. 1992, San Francisco.) Torrano makes paintings that use frottage and other printmaking techniques as a method of embedding objects, sites and surfaces onto canvas. Though often referencing both personal and social narratives, the artist's tendency towards abstraction fragments a linear reading of these histories.

As a title, *Concrete Spirit* distills the complex interplay between interiors and exteriors that marks much of Torrano's work. In *Notes on Awkwardness* (2025), rubbings of a 19th-century manhole cover are surrounded by plaster casts produced from the artist's family's wooden mooncake mold. Collapsed into the same dimension, i.e. that of the canvas, the contrasting public and private source images are thus reconciled. The abiding transformational force here is pressure: whether as in the pressure applied to take a rubbing of a city street or that by which people themselves are formed by their cultural environs. For Torrano, the application and subsequent removal of paint from the canvas' surface serves similarly as an analog for the leveling effects of cultural assimilation, an interplay of accretion and abrasion that creates something new.

Throughout Torrano's work the negotiation of images variously expresses the slipperiness of memory and experience. In smaller works like *Translator* (2026), propagandistic illustrations of Chinese-American schoolchildren taken from a 1960s school notebook are desaturated of their cheery hues and surrounded, relic-like, by silver leaf, which recurs in the nearby *Loot* (2026.) Torrano's enduring fascination with the translation of surfaces reveals his early formal training as a printmaker. In his persistent use of frottage, Torrano's paintings have the indexical quality of direct impression and that of marks made at distinct points in time and space. These indexical marks are constantly negotiated by the corresponding presence of the artist's hand, as in the painting *Concrete Spirit* (2026), in which a rubbing of a commemorative street plaque in San Francisco's Chinatown is bound at the bottom edge by a great rusty wash of color.

Expressed in layers and fragments, Torrano's work is a rumination on the relationship between geography, history and memory and an argument for the potential of the painted space as a means of place-keeping and place-making.

Anthony Torrano (b. San Francisco, 1992) is an artist based in New York City. He is a recent graduate of the Hunter College MFA program (2025) and received his BA at the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a focus in painting and printmaking. Anthony was a recipient of the 2015 Susan Benton Irwin Scholarship at UCSC, a 2021 Artists Corps Grant recipient from the New York Foundation of the Arts, and a 2022 Frederieke Sanders Taylor Studio Fund Grant. He has exhibited in the San Francisco Bay Area, and in New York at SWIM Gallery, ProArts, Incline Gallery, Adobe Books, Room284 and Shelter Gallery.

A new publication by Torrano, produced on the occasion of the exhibition, will be released under White Columns' zine imprint "The W.C."

For further information about this exhibition contact: violet@whitecolumns.org

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11am to 6pm.