

HESSE FLATOW



Jonathan Ryan, *Horizon*, 2025 (detail). Oil, sand, and decomposed granite on canvas, 60 x 92 inches (152 x 233 cm)

Jonathan Ryan: *Among Stars and Stone*
HESSE FLATOW
May 2 – June 6, 2025

HESSE FLATOW presents *Among Stars and Stone*, an exhibition of new works by Los Angeles-based artist Jonathan Ryan. For his second solo exhibition with the gallery, Ryan will present a dynamic body of work that expands his exploration of the California landscape, transforming it through the lens of abstraction and the spiritual.

Ryan has gained recognition for his abstracted landscapes, transforming familiar scenes—such as geologic forms, deserts, and planetary elements—into surreal, dreamlike spaces. His work blends the real and the imagined, using color, texture, and perspective to create altered terrains that evoke both the familiar and the unknown. Through varying perspectives, such as bird’s-eye views and direct-on angles, Ryan challenges the viewer’s perception of space and place. The exhibition’s title, *Among Stars and Stone*, reflects this duality, where elements of nature—rocks, skies, and celestial bodies—are both grounded and transcendent.

Anchoring the exhibition is *Horizon* (2025), a large-scale painting that presents a serene yet otherworldly landscape. In this work, Ryan explores the intersection of natural elements and cosmic forces, depicting two suns that cast a glowing light over rolling mountain ridges and soft clouds. The gradient sky, transitioning from deep night blues to warm orange hues, evokes a temporal shift, while the dramatic geometry of the valleys below draws the viewer into a meditative space. *Horizon* reflects Ryan’s unique ability to blend abstraction with representation, creating a scene that feels both grounded in nature and transcendent in its cosmic scope.

In other works, such as *Archway* (2025), Ryan creates a visual balance between two radiant orbs—one of which protrudes from the canvas with a palpable volume, while the other is rendered as a trompe l’œil illusion, appearing flat yet convincing in its roundness. This tension between dimensionality and illusion is further heightened by the rich, textured surface that envelops the painting. The dark, enveloping

landscape is framed by an arch of layered color, suggesting a doorway into a world that feels both enclosed and infinite. The orbs, positioned in the sky like twin suns, infuse the painting with a haunting, otherworldly atmosphere. The soft clouds, suspended in a serene yet unsettled space, accentuate the painting's dual nature, where the viewer's perception of space constantly shifts between the real and the imagined.

Throughout each composition, Ryan's investigation into the mutable, transformative nature of landscapes unfolds. In *Twin Peaks* (2025), the artist uses sand to model terrain that seems both natural and synthetic, layering the material across the canvas to evoke a tactile sense of depth and texture. The sand—sometimes fine and smooth, other times coarser and more jagged—shapes the surface of the painting, creating a dynamic interplay between light and shadow that accentuates the fluidity of the landscape. "I treat the sand as a pigment with different transparencies and colors," the artist shared in a recent interview. "There's a natural but also an unnatural quality and my work has always been interested in human interventions to nature. Even if they seem like they're from another planet, or some dream space because of the palette, they still feel rooted to the land."

In *Among Stars and Stone*, Ryan evokes human presence not through figures, but through the altered landscapes, as if marked by an unseen hand. These transformed environments, remnants of ancient civilizations or visions of a distant future, unsettle and captivate. While calming palettes of earthy tones and jewel hues invite reflection, the skewed, desolate landscapes create a sense of a world in constant flux—ephemeral yet ever-evolving, slipping just beyond our reach.

About the Artist

Jonathan Ryan (b. 1989 Buffalo, NY) received his BFA from Louisiana State University and MFA from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. Ryan has exhibited across the US and Europe, including solo shows at the Landing (Los Angeles, CA) and HESSE FLATOW (New York, NY). He has also been in group exhibitions at Monti8 (Latina, Italy), Andrea Festa Fine Art (Rome, Italy), Gerhard Hofland (Amsterdam), HESSE FLATOW EAST (Amagansett, NY), la BEAST gallery (Los Angeles, CA), Ekru Project (Kansas City, MO), Good Mother (Los Angeles, CA), Tiger Strikes Asteroid (Los Angeles, CA), The Brand Library (Glendale, CA), Field Projects (New York, NY), and the Woodmere Art Museum (Philadelphia, PA). He has received fellowships and awards from Woodmere Museum of Art, Tyler School of Art, Vermont Studio Center, and LSU School of Art. Ryan currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

About HESSE FLATOW

HESSE FLATOW is a gallery and curatorial platform founded by artist Karen Hesse Flatow in 2019. It had its start as "Crush Curatorial", where many artists we work with today had their debut solo show. Hesse Flatow has an MBA and an MFA from Columbia University and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. The program focuses on emerging and mid-career artists with diverse voices, presenting debut solo shows and focused presentations. We are located in an accessible ground floor space in Tribeca, New York City.

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