



Denver + Marfa rulegallery.com  
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**Soft Mirror**, guest curated by Britland Tracy

Featuring: Kei Ito, Dionne Lee, Rafael Soldi, and Tabitha Soren

Additionally in the Viewing Room: **Britland Tracy: Rupture**

Both exhibitions on view: March 17 – May 6, 2023 | Opening reception: Thursday, March 16, 6-9p

**(Denver, CO)** Rule Gallery is pleased to present *Soft Mirror*, a group exhibition guest curated by Britland Tracy and in partnership with Denver's Month of Photography 2023, featuring artists Kei Ito, Dionne Lee, Rafael Soldi, and Tabitha Soren. A reception will be held Thursday, March 16, from 6-9pm, and the show will be on view to the public from March 17 – May 6, 2023.

*Soft Mirror* unites four contemporary photographers who transform histories of violence into personal reflections on ritual, power, intimacy, and survival. Their practices stretch the material and representational functions of a photograph, reimagining it as both relic and reckoning in a culture saturated with visual input. Through alternative darkroom processes and repurposed screen-based imagery and ephemera, these artists cast their gaze onto the world while simultaneously looking back at themselves.

Kei Ito connects sunlight to his own physicality and intergenerational trauma in his annual *Sungazing* scroll, a ninety-five-foot-long photogram containing 108 of his consecutive breaths, which correspond with the number of bell tolls in the Japanese New Year. As the grandson of a Hiroshima bombing survivor and activist, Ito often engages the sun and Japanese Buddhist rituals in his work as personal meditations on destruction and renewal. Throughout the scroll, each inhale becomes an explosion of intense oranges and yellows as its duration is exposed to light, while each exhale fades to black, creating an undulating, tactile registration of life.

The body and the darkroom become spaces where Dionne Lee layers conflicting legacies of the American landscape, a stage on which narratives of conquerable vastness gave way to colonization and racial disenfranchisement, and eventually to the present climate crisis. Her videos and silver gelatin collages perform gestures of water divination and wayfinding, using her hands, organic objects, and found imagery as primal tools of discovery and reclamation.

Rafael Soldi grapples with themes of masculinity, violence, and intimacy through a rite of passage that reflects his experience growing up as a queer youth in a Catholic all-boys school in Perú. He begins with found video footage of 'Cargamontón,' a form of adolescent horseplay in which boys assert dominance by smothering and humiliating each other, and isolates specific moments that hover between bullying and homo-erotic self-discovery. These film stills are then etched onto copper plates, transforming from low-fidelity digital files into large-scale, contemplative photogravures.

Finally, the limitations of connection and information occupy Tabitha Soren's work, which illuminates screen-based devices as spaces through which our human desire to consume collides with the endless onslaught of news cycles, social media, global catastrophes, and targeted advertisements. To create the hypnotic pieces in this exhibition, she uses an 8x10 large-format film camera to photograph images of natural disasters and protests sourced from the Internet through the fingerprints and smeared debris on her iPad, conflating repetitive, compulsive touch with the fleeting dissemination of the outside world.



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**RULE Gallery**, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historic art movements to a broader audience. For more information, visit [www.rulegallery.com](http://www.rulegallery.com)

**Britland Tracy** is an artist and educator from the Pacific Northwest whose work engages photography, text, and ephemera to observe and transform infrastructures of human connection and discord. She has published two artist books, *Show Me Yours* and *Pardon My Creep*, and exhibited at the Griffin Museum of Photography in Winchester, MA, Davis Orton Gallery in Hudson, NY, Rule Gallery in Marfa, TX, Redline Contemporary Art Center in Denver, CO, the Lucie Foundation in Los Angeles, CA, the Photographic Center Northwest in Seattle, WA, the CU Art Museum in Boulder, CO, and a number of other experimental and collaborative spaces. She holds a BA in French from the University of Washington, a Certificate in Fine Art Photography from the Photographic Center Northwest, and an MFA in Interdisciplinary Media Arts Practices from the University of Colorado, where she continues to teach remotely while living and making in Marfa, Texas.

**Kei Ito** (b. 1991, Tokyo, Japan) is a visual artist working primarily with installation art and photographic-media who is currently teaching at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in NYC. Ito received his BFA from the Rochester Institute of Technology and his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Ito has participated in numerous Artist in Residence programs including the Studio at MASS MoCA(2021), the Denis Roussel Fellowship at the Center for Fine Art Photography (2021), and the Center for Photography at Woodstock (2019). His internationally recognized solo and group exhibitions can be read in reviews and articles published by the Washington Post, Hyperallergic, BmoreArt, ArtMaze Magazine, and BBC Culture & Art. His works are included in major institutional collections such as the Museum of Contemporary Photography, the Norton Museum of Art, Chroma at California Institute of Integral Studies, and the Eskenazi Museum of Art. He currently lives and works in Baltimore, MD

**Dionne Lee** (b. NY, New York) works in photography, collage, and video to explore issues of power, survival, and personal history in relation to the American landscape. She received her MFA from California College of the Arts in 2017 where she won the Barclay Simpson Award and Graduate Fellowship at Anderson Ranch Arts Center. She has exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, Yancey Richardson, and Aperture Foundation in New York City; New Orleans Museum of Art; Silver Eye Center for Photography, Pittsburgh, PA; Et Al., Oakland, CA; and the San Francisco Arts Commission, among others. Lee has been an Artist-in-Residence at Light Work in Syracuse, NY, The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, TX, and at Unseen California. Lee is currently a Post-MFA Fellow at The Ohio State University and living on the unceded territories of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe and Cherokee peoples.

**Rafael Soldi** is a Peruvian-born, Seattle-based artist and curator. He holds a BFA in Photography & Curatorial Studies from the Maryland Institute College of Art. His practice centers on how queerness and masculinity intersect with larger topics of our time such as immigration, memory, and loss. He has exhibited internationally at the Frye Art Museum, American University Museum, Griffin Museum of Photography, CLAMP, The Print Center, Museo MATE, Filter Space, and Burrard Arts Foundation, among others. Rafael has received grants and awards from the Magenta Foundation, Puffin Foundation, smART Ventures, Artist Trust, 4Culture, the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, and Center Santa Fe. He has been awarded fellowships at MacDowell, Bogliasco Foundation, Vermont Studio Center, and PICTURE BERLIN. His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Tacoma Art Museum; Frye Art Museum; and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Rafael's work has been reviewed on ARTFORUM, The Seattle Times, The Boston Globe, Photograph Magazine, The Seen, Art



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Nexus, and PDN. He is the co-founder of the Strange Fire Collective, a project dedicated to highlighting work made by women, people of color, and queer and trans artists; and co-curator of the High Wall, a yearly outdoor video projection program that invites immigrant artists and artists working on themes of diaspora and borderlands to intervene the facade of a former immigration center building in the heart of Seattle.

**Tabitha Soren** was born in 1967 in San Antonio, Texas and lived in 7 U.S. states, Germany and the Philippines during her formative and adolescent years. Her work explores the expansive power of photography by pushing its material limits and embracing its unreliable nature. She probes the surface of the photograph to unlock the rich history of the medium and experiments with sculptural and painterly interventions to further complicate the inherent uncertainty of the source. This layered approach underscores not only the bounds of the viewer's perception but also makes visible the psychological states of Soren's subject matter, creating a tension between what is seen and what lies underneath. Soren received her degree in 1989 from New York University and was awarded a fellowship from Stanford University in 1997. Her work is in many private and public collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; The New Orleans Museum of Art, LA; Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA; The High Museum, Atlanta, GA; the Oakland Museum of California; The George Eastman Museum, Rochester, NY; The Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; Pier 24 Photography, San Francisco, CA; and The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA. Her images have been featured in The New Yorker, The Atlantic, Garage, Hyperallergic, the Washington Post, California Sunday Magazine, ArtNews, Newsweek, and the Guardian, and publications include Fantasy Life (Aperture), Trace (Yoffy Press) and Surface Tension (RVB Books). She currently lives and works in San Francisco, California.