



Denver + Marfa rulegallery.com
info@rulegallery.com 303-800-6776

Signal and Return

Joe Clower & El Disco

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 4, 6-8p

On view: April 4 – May 23, 2026

RULE Gallery 204 E. San Antonio St, Marfa, TX | Open Wednesday – Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm

(Marfa, TX) – RULE Gallery presents: *Signal and Return*, two concurrent solo exhibitions featuring paintings by Joe Clower (1937–2024) and Polaroid works by the artist collaborative El Disco. Installed in adjacent galleries, the exhibition explores the image as both instrument and event - simultaneously a signal transmitted outward and an encounter received in return.

Joe Clower's independent studio practice developed a visual language shaped by speculative architecture and idiosyncratic narrative. Working in watercolor and gouache, Clower constructed scenes in which forms hover between assembly and invention. Drawing from classical scientific mechanisms, comic-book imagery, and a distinctly Western horizon, his paintings compile improbable architectures and symbolic objects into systems of relation. Coils spiral around antennae, forms extend atop plinths, and structures appear poised as if awaiting transmission—suggesting environments where tension, speculation, and narrative coexist without assumed interpretation.

In parallel, the exhibition presents a focused selection of Polaroids from El Disco's expansive archive, produced throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Inspired by observed phenomena, El Disco formed in 1987 as a three-artist collaborative between Joe Clower, Steve Thomsen, and Michael Davey (Tennyson Woodbridge). More than documenting unusual objects in the sky, El Disco's Polaroids record the invisible tensions between belief, environment, and image, blurring the line between witness and interpretation. The Polaroid process itself, a chemistry of diffusion, migration, and time-released meaning, echoes the shifting mystery of light and craft across Western horizons.

Together, the two galleries trace an evolving alchemy of meaning and belief, asking how both continue to reshape evidence long after the initial moment of exposure.

About the gallery: RULE Gallery, founded in 1991, champions investigative practices by emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and estates. Operating between Marfa, Texas, and Denver, Colorado, RULE presents thoughtful, context-driven exhibitions grounded in sustained engagement with artists and place. The gallery maintains rotating exhibition programming in Marfa alongside an expansive viewing room and art lounge in Denver, with a satellite exhibition model that activates intentional sites. Across all platforms, RULE is committed to supporting artists' long-term careers and fostering meaningful encounters between artists, artworks, and audiences.

Joe Clower, (b. 1937 Norfolk, VA – d. 2024 Denver, CO) received his BFA in 1963 from the University of Georgia, Athens, GA, and his MFA in 1967 from the University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. While at CU Boulder he became connected with many of Colorado's new wave of artists as a member of Boulder's Armory Group and later the Criss-Cross artist co-operative. Clower has exhibited his work nationally since 1964, including exhibitions in New York City, NY; Los Angeles, CA; San Diego, CA; Chicago, IL; Seattle, WA; and throughout Colorado. His museum exhibitions include the Denver Art Museum, MCA/Denver, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Kansas City Art Institute, Whitney Museum of American Art, Center on Contemporary Art Seattle, The Harwood Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Alaska State Museum, in addition to numerous University institutions around the country. His work is in the public collection of The Art Institute of Chicago, The Eli and Edythe Broad Collection, the National Gallery of Australia, Security Pacific Bank, Warner Brothers Records, and many private collections. **(CNTD on page 2)**



Denver + Marfa rulegallery.com
info@rulegallery.com 303-800-6776

Steve Thomsen (b. 1953, Los Angeles, CA) has been a central figure in the West Coast avant-garde art and sound-art scenes for over 35 years. He co-founded the Los Angeles-based art collective World Imitation in the late 1970s, leading to the formation of Monitor, an experimental art/music band active in the late '70s and early '80s. He later co-founded the bands Solid Eye (1992) and Swan Trove (1995) while continuing to produce collage-based chapbooks and releasing solo works on cassette and CD. In 2015, the Neurec label released *Skeleton Works*, a five-CD retrospective of his visual and sound art. His work has been exhibited nationally in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, and Tokyo, with notable presentations at The Box and Track 16 in Los Angeles and The Brooklyn Museum in NY. Thomsen now resides in the southwestern U.S., where he explores mine shafts and caves for phosphorescent formations and geological curiosities.

Michael Davey / Tennyson Woodbridge (b. 1963, Long Beach, CA) is a multidisciplinary visual, conceptual, and performance artist. He earned his BFA in Studio Art from the College of Creative Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and his MFA in Painting from the University of California, Los Angeles. Woodbridge has exhibited in Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Orange County, and Palos Verdes, California, as well as internationally in Havana, Cuba. His work has been shown at Cirrus Gallery, the Paley Center for Media, the Palos Verdes Art Center, the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art, and UCLA's Dickson Art Center. He has participated in artist residencies in Saxnäs, Sweden, at Ricklundgården, producing large-format in-camera panograph series capturing the Scandinavian solstice light. In 2021, he established his studio in Vallejo, California, where he continues to create, perform, and facilitate visual arts.