

DAVIDSON

Joe Rudko: *Afterimage*

February 23 – April 1, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 23 | 6:00 – 8:00pm



Davidson Gallery is pleased to present *Afterimage*, a solo exhibition for visual artist Joe Rudko. Rudko's work blends techniques of photography, painting, drawing, and collage. Each new work is composed of found images – “forgotten photographs” as the artist terms them – which are then disassembled and meticulously rearranged to create rippling patterns and visual vibrations.

Rudko's process of photomontage is informed by the more traditional processes of quilting and mosaics, but also by more modern digital forms of manipulation. In his use of photographs, Rudko is coopting and repurposing other people's uses of the medium as a means of remembrance and memorialization, sometimes using the content or form as an outline or starting point for his own work, and sometimes abstracting it beyond its own recognizability. The show's title, *Afterimage*, refers to the perceived remnants on the retina of what is no longer visible; an afterimage itself is an illusion, and can take the form of an outline, color, light, or form. Much like a photograph, afterimages can be negative or positive, and vary widely in detail. Ultimately, they are not accurate representations of what was.

The source photographs for *Afterimage* were collected from the basements and attics of friends, family, and a variety of internet vendors. They are comprised of over a hundred years of printed photographs and their varied surfaces depict diverse subjects: a mountain landscape, a resting hand, a waterfall, a camera flash, or even an unfocused blur. Black and white prints are intertwined with color fragments from the 1990s, and images are reversed to reveal product branding. Handwritten annotations such as “flowers”, “me”, and “genuine” are scattered across the surface, adding a tactile and historical aspect to the work. The palette of recycled tones creates an alchemy of materials, celebrating the photograph as a malleable document of memory, ever-changing in response to the present moment.

Joe Rudko lives and works in Seattle. His work is in the permanent collection of The Getty Museum, Portland Art Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Tacoma Art Museum, and most recently in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York. He received his BFA in Photography and Drawing from Western Washington University in 2013. This is his third solo exhibition with Davidson Gallery.