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Ron Jude: Dark Matter
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Gallery Luisotti is pleased to present Ron Jude: Dark Matter. In this new body of work, Oregon-based photographer Ron Jude revisits source material he first explored in *Alpine Star* (2006). Named after a weekly newspaper published in Jude's hometown in central Idaho, *Alpine Star* appropriated and cropped images from the paper, to produce a series with an iconography that suggested histories both personal and collective. *Dark Matter* expands the project, upscaling prints, and working in color, the combination of which further emphasizes texture: the half-tone signature of photo-mechanical printing as much as the damage and vulnerability those images convey.

As with *Alpine Star*, *Dark Matter* is a project that deliberates on processes and materials central to the history of photography: the archive and inscription. Lacking any revealing textual references – no captions, no dates – *Dark Matter* splits images from intention, allowing for new combinations that read like historical fiction. Both countering and corroborating their narrative potential, the images of *Dark Matter* also reiterate the value of photographic archives to chronicle past occurrences, be they significant or inconsequential events. In *Dark Matter*, we bear witness to the contours of a grisly place: indications of criminal probes, star athletes gone lost, snowbound car accidents, arson under investigation, bodies covered, bodies rescued, and storms that left their mark on a community's memory.

Dark Matter creates a panorama of Americana, producing narratives and juxtapositions of masculinity, violence, and destruction. Revisiting material from a foundational body of work, and one so deeply entwined with personal history, *Dark Matter* also provides Jude an opportunity for self-reflection. Made during the Covid-19 pandemic, *Dark Matter* may be read as a tragic reflection of the state of the nation. While reprising *Alpine Star*, *Dark Matter* also encompasses themes of place and temporality that resonate with the artist's other earlier works. *Lick Creek Line* (2012), for example, was a sequence of original photographs whose subject – a fur trapper – is both elusive and never pictured, while perceptible through images that convey a distinct sense of realism.

12 Hz (2020), meanwhile, was a monochromatic (all black-and-white) exploration of geologic transformation, imaging natural phenomena from lava tubes to tidal flows. The breadth of Jude's practice indicates an artist as engaged in photographic materiality, as he is in the significance of his subject matter to contemporary social, political, and environmental concerns. *Dark Matter* emphasizes photography's ability to trace the past while absorbing us in the elusive and enigmatic in the present.

For more information, please email us at: info@galleryluisotti.com or visit us at the gallery, 432 South Alameda St, Los Angeles, 90013 and on our website at www.galleryluisotti.com.

