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ANDREW RAFACZ is pleased to announce *Approaches*, a solo exhibition of new work by Peter Skvara in Gallery One.

Chicago, IL, August 1, 2015– ANDREW RAFACZ concludes summer 2015 with *Approaches*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and installation by Peter Skvara. The exhibition continues through Saturday, September 5, 2015.

Imagine a cry for help transmitted through fog and panic only to go unanswered. With titles like “Your Message is Received But Not Understood” that double as distress signals, Peter Skvara’s exhibition, *Approaches*, is a haunting experience. Maybe these messages were never received or the receiver couldn’t respond in time. Skvara’s fascination with shipwrecks, specifically in Lake Michigan, is about exploring these maritime disasters as both archeological sites and as settings for cryptic legends. Exploring the mystery of these events is an attempt to comprehend the poignancy of sending one last message into obscurity before death.

All six paintings in this exhibition are based on the nautical language of flag semaphore, the alphabet signaling system using handheld flags to communicate messages at sea, including emergency situations. There are 12 different two-letter combinations of these letters that represent distress. Skvara has reinterpreted these distress signals onto white mesh and titled them with their corresponding message. For example, “I Am Drifting / Will You Give Me My Position.” The white mesh lends a ghostly quality that reinforces the melancholic mystery of pondering these symbols as someone’s last words, broadcast out to the sea, never to be returned. These messages were lost at sea, like the ships and their passengers.

Beyond the melancholy in Skvara’s work there is a playful, adventuresome streak in his interest (obsession?) with maritime catastrophe and history. He has spent years researching the history and archaeology of the Great Lakes and collecting rare books on the subject, indulging in the duality of fear and beauty that can make nature so gripping. *Approaches* reveals an infatuation with the fragile romance with nature and adventure. The ship is a perfect symbol of man’s complex need to tame a natural element that is both spellbinding in its beauty and terrifying in its power. It is both the sublime and beauty can that produce pleasure. But only the sublime can also produce fear.

Skvara also embarked on his own archaeological endeavor for this exhibition, collecting pieces of marine detritus from Lake Michigan. These items together, museological in their arrangement on the floor of the gallery, comprise a work entitled *Flotsam, Jetsam, Lagan, and Derelict*. This assemblage is an attempt to comprehend, categorize and organize the forgotten evidence of a symbolic shipwreck. Like the paintings, these objects were explicit maritime symbols turned evidence of misfortune, or at least the forgotten. Skvara’s methodical arrangement of wreckage and appropriation of nautical messages salvages them both from obscurity and gives them a second life. (Whitney Stoepel)

PETER SKVARA (American, b. 1985) lives and works in Chicago, IL. He received a BFA from Columbia College Chicago in 2009. Recent exhibitions include *Flaneur*, Black Tan Exotic, New York, NY; *Seven Borders*, Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, Louisville, KY; *Resource*, Jean Albano Gallery, Chicago, IL; *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; *Won-Hause*, Johalla Projects, Chicago, IL; and *BUNK* at The Happy Collaborationists Exhibition Space, Chicago, IL. He will present a solo project, *Timelines*, at The Mission, Chicago, IL, in September 2015. He is included in numerous private and public collections. This is his second solo exhibition with gallery.