ANDREW RAFACZ is pleased to announce Anthotypes, a solo exhibition of new works by John Opera.

Chicago, IL, April 2, 2011 – ANDREW RAFACZ continues the 2011 season with new anthotypes by John Opera in Gallery Two. This is the artist’s third solo exhibition with the gallery and continues through Saturday, May 14, 2011.

The Anthotype harkens back to the seminal moments of photography’s prehistory. During the mid 1800s, it was discovered that pigmented solutions derived from various flower and fruit extracts are light sensitive enough to be used as rudimentary print emulsions. This process takes up to three weeks of exposure in direct sunlight to render an image. The process was quickly abandoned when silver nitrate was discovered to have a much faster reaction time.

Extending his deep interest in the natural world and its possibilities, Opera forages his own fruits and vegetables to create natural dyes in many of the same locations that his previous photographs were captured. He has incorporated a direct relationship to nature as an essential part of the process in making these new works.

The complex natural forms that are the subjects of his Anthotypes are photograms (or contact prints) of ink-on-water drawings that have been created as fleeting compositions in a glass tray. He records the compositions on film in order to make a negative. The negatives are digitally enlarged for use during the very lengthy process of making the prints.

Opera’s intention is to use the Anthotype process first to emphasize the dialectic between photography’s surface qualities and its qualities as illusionistic and indexical space. These works also make reference to the inherent relationship between liquid chemical reactions inside the natural world and their connected activity that brings a traditional photographic image into being.

JOHN OPERA (American, b. 1975) lives and works in Chicago. He received his M.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago in 2005. Opera has had a two-person exhibition with Amir Zaki at Shane Campbell Gallery and a solo exhibition at Macalester College Art Gallery, St. Paul, Minnesota in 2007, and was part of the three-person exhibition MP3, at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago in 2009, which resulted in a catalog published by Aperture. He recently had a solo exhibition (with Matthew Sheridan Smith) at CAM St. Louis, curated by Dominic Molon. This is his third solo exhibition with the gallery.