

# ANDREW RAFACZ

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**ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to announce *Orion over Baghdad*, a solo exhibition of new work by Jason Lazarus.

Chicago, IL, October 31, 2009 – Andrew Rafacz continues the fall season with a installation by Jason Lazarus in Gallery One. This is the artist's third solo exhibition with the gallery and continues through Saturday, December 5, 2009.

Over the last several years, Jason Lazarus has developed a body of work split between conceptual photography captured with a camera and vernacular, found images shot by someone else and appropriated in various ways. This has culminated with pieces such as *Recordings ("Big Storm" January 30, 1967, Mom)*, which is currently on view at the Art Institute of Chicago, an installation of found snapshot photographs with text and other markings on their reverse, presented directly on the wall with the back becoming the visible field. The viewer is left to wonder what the corresponding images might look like, but ultimately, the signifier becomes an end in itself and the need for an image to complete the equation disappears. The trace is what is left and it reveals a power and presence that may have been initially underestimated.

With his new installation *Orion over Baghdad*, Lazarus continues to examine the evolution of personal snapshot writing as it's been refitted by current technological advancements. Collecting the titles of digital images posted by soldiers in Iraq to the website Flickr.com, the artist has amassed an archive of new snapshot writing. He has assembled these texts as uninterrupted fields produced as large-scale silver gelatin prints, formally acknowledging the historical trope of war photography. The result is a memorial to what is not there, the collective trace of a seemingly infinite number of charged moments. As the war lingers, Lazarus' response functions as an open-ended bookend, addressing a situation that has gone beyond its limit but demands more than ever to be acknowledged. As soldiers continue to upload content in real-time, the way war is mediated changes.

Presented in the same aesthetic as the large-scale works, Lazarus has also singled out one hundred of the most intriguing titles and created individual photograms that draw the viewer more intimately into the war experience. The title of the exhibition comes from one of these photograms and documents a single soldier's experience. "Orion over Baghdad" suggests one soldier looking beyond his or her terrestrial confines and reflecting on the vastness of the world. It is also an apt title for a project that is engaged in the same concerns. As with much of Lazarus' conceptual photographs, the private and the public are intertwined with each other, reminding the viewer that there is always something larger than them, however distanced from it they may be.

**JASON LAZARUS** (American, b. 1975) lives and works in Chicago. He received his M.F.A. in photography from Columbia College in 2003. Recent exhibitions include *On the Scene: Jason Lazarus, Wolfgang Ploger, Zoe Strauss*, at the Art Institute of Chicago (Modern Wing), and *Black Is, Black Ain't*, which began at the Renaissance Society, Chicago, and ended at the H & R Block Museum, in Kansas City. He has shown widely at art fairs including FIAC, VOLTA New York, and VOLTA Basel. Upcoming group exhibitions include *Prethunderdome* at White Flag Projects, St. Louis, MO in November. He will present *The top of the tree gazed upon by Anne Frank while in hiding (Amsterdam, 2008)*, a video installation, at the Spertus Museum, Chicago, opening October 28th and *Footnotes*, an installation, at Northeastern University, November 1st. Recent acquisitions include the Art Institute of Chicago and Bank of America.