

# JAMES COHAN GALLERY

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## SPENCER FINCH: *FATHOM* May 2 – June 15, 2013

**Press Preview: Thursday May 2, 10:00 AM**

**Opening Reception: Thursday May 2, 6:00 – 8:00 PM**

**Artist Talk: Saturday May 11, 11:00 AM**

James Cohan Gallery is pleased to present *Fathom*, Spencer Finch's debut solo exhibition at the gallery, opening on Thursday, May 2nd and running through Saturday, June 15th. An opening reception for the artist will take place on May 2, 2013, from 6 – 8 PM.

To “fathom” is to comprehend the essence of something colossal or ineffable by translating it into terms we can grasp. For more than twenty years, Spencer Finch's practice addresses such a need to capture and frame experience. In site-specific installation as well as drawing and sculpture, Finch has combined scientific calibration and calculation with a romantic's engagement with nature and faith in the limitless rewards of observation.

A fathom is also a unit of measurement approximately six feet in length that is used to measure the depth of water, and a key reference point for the exhibition. After learning about Henry David Thoreau's 1846 survey of Walden Pond, in which the famed polymath performed soundings to determine the lake's depth at 102 feet and debunk a popular myth that it was bottomless, Finch received permission from the Walden Pond State Reservation to take a boat on the lake and perform that seminal survey for

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the second time. Dropping rope into the pond, as Thoreau had, while also employing an electronic depth meter — combining old and new technology — Finch further measured longitude and latitude as well as color-matching the water at each sounding point.

The resulting work is a 120-foot long rope — the rope Finch used in the soundings, and the artist's description of the depth of Walden Pond. It serves as the physical record of the findings as well as an armature: paper tags for each of the approximately 700 soundings appear along the rope at their equivalent measure of depth along with their exact coordinates and a swatch of matched color, applied in watercolor. Neither entirely documentation nor sculpture, the long line may best be considered a drawing of Walden Pond.

The main gallery will include several other works delving into the idea of delineation, from continuous-line drawings of encircling vultures observed by the artist in Spain to abstract renderings of meteorological models used to predict weather patterns. Other new and recent works on view for the first time in New York address themes as varied as the color of the light on Mars, the breeze through Emily Dickinson's bedroom window and the attempt to render wind through chalk pastel drawings of the movement of the curtains at Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's famous pavilion in Barcelona.

Spencer Finch was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1962. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions include: *Following Nature*, Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, IN (2013); *Painting Air*, Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art, Providence, RI (2012); *Lunar*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, *Rome*, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla, CA, *Between the light - and me*, Emily Dickinson Museum, Amherst, MA (2011); *My Business, With the Cloud*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, *Evening Star*, Pallant House, Chichester, UK, *Between The Moon and The Sea*, Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France (2010); *As if the sea should part and show a further sea*, Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2009). He has taken part in numerous group exhibitions, including *Light and Landscape*, Storm King Art Center, Mountainville, New York, *NEON*, *La material luminosa dell'arte*, MACRO, Rome (2012); *More Light*, Museum De Fundatie, Zwolle (2011); *Haunted: Contemporary Photography/Videol/Performance*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010); *Making Worlds: 53rd International Art Exhibition*, La Biennale di Venezia (2009); *50 Moons of Saturn*, Turin Triennial (2008); *Refract, Reflect, Project: Light Work from the Collection*, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C. (2007); *Light Art from Artificial Light*, ZKM Karlsruhe and *Colour After Klein*, Barbican Art Gallery, London (2005). Finch lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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