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ANDREW RAFACZ is pleased to announce *I Rule with a Broken Heart*, a new installation of figurines, video, and a performance by Rachel Mason. The gallery will also present a new artist book, also titled *I Rule with a Broken Heart*, as well as two newly editioned series of figurines.

Chicago, IL, February 6, 2009 – Andrew Rafacz begins the new year with *I Rule with a Broken Heart*, our first solo exhibition with Rachel Mason. The gallery will have a reception for the artist on Friday, February 6, from 5 to 8pm. A performance will take place the following day, Saturday, February 7th, at 7pm. The exhibition continues through March 21, 2009.

Since 2004, Mason has been sculpting political figures and imagining herself as one of them. The project has extended to live performances, video, albums, and writing. The body of figures began as a project called *The Ambassadors*, as Mason sculpted herself as an imagined ambassador to wars in her lifetime. For this exhibition, we present a literal timeline of Mason's life as a fictional ambassador to conflicts, in figurines set on a shelf that wraps around the perimeter of the gallery. Mason is interested in using her own personal experiences to address the public experience of these historical, and very real, human beings. Reading a passage in a Shambala Buddhist text led her to think of the leaders as being heartbroken, and her own interpretation is deeply empathetic, attempting to imagine what it might be like to be Saddam Hussein, Jimmy Carter, or Deng Xiaopeng.

Throughout the course of her project, Mason's curiosity led her in many directions, trying to understand what it might be like to know these individuals. Ultimately, the artist attempted direct contact, writing to Manuel Noriega, Jean-Bertrand Aristide's lawyer, and speaking to Ramsey Clark, the counsel who defended Saddam Hussein. In reaching out to certain political figures directly, she gained a more intimate understanding of these influential personalities and their own private and public existences. From these experiences, Mason created her own series of fragmented verses, ruminations on the ambassadors, entitled, *I Rule with a Broken Heart*. This limited edition artist's book, produced on the occasion of this exhibition, is at the center of her project. Viewers are invited to read intimate sketches in the minds of the political figures that Mason has spent the past four years sculpting. The book brings the reader into an intimate dialogue with the artist and her imagined subjects.

On Saturday February 7th, Mason performs a cycle of songs in costume, accompanied by a video projection. In the second gallery, we will present a collection of Mason's recent performances in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, and Zurich, as well as a new film of the aforementioned performance that will take place at the gallery.

RACHEL MASON (American, b. 1978) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received her BA at UCLA in 2001 and her MFA in Sculpture at Yale University in 2004. She has had recent solo exhibitions at Circus Gallery, Los Angeles and Jessica Murray Projects, New York. Recent group exhibitions include *Warlord* at Smith-Stewart, and *Funny, Not Funny*, Bellwether, both New York. Last year she performed at the Park Armory, during *Democracy in America*, hosted by Creative Time. Her work is currently on view as part of *In-Practice*, at the Sculpture Center, New York. This is her first solo exhibition in Chicago.