

# ANDREW RAFACZ

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**ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to announce *Praxis*, a solo exhibition of new work by Elliot Bergman in Gallery Two.

Chicago, IL, January 30, 2016– ANDREW RAFACZ opens 2016 season with *Praxis*, a solo exhibition of new works on paper and cast bells by Elliot Bergman in Gallery Two. The exhibition continues through Saturday, March 5, 2016.

As both an accomplished musician and visual artist, Bergman's art practices are uniquely intertwined. He often builds the instruments, variations on the African Mbira that are electrified and amplified, forming the basis for many of the compositions in his bands Wild Belle and NOMO. His interest in metal work led him to study bronze casting, and he has begun producing bells and bronze totemic sculptures in the last several years.

Bergman utilizes both traditional tools and found objects in producing his large-scale ink drawings, employing a process similar to monotyping. He uses these non-traditional objects as stamps, transferring their unique designs via India ink to the surface of watercolor paper. The results are heavily layered and distinctly textured, employing iteration, patterning, and space. They evoke a furtive visual code that is familiar but indecipherable. At times loose and open or densely worked, the palimpsest and repetition of marks suggests a strange, obfuscated text in an unknown language. Their compositions have a relationship to early graphic design, gestural abstraction, and Kurt Schwitter's typewriter compositions.

The artist will also present a new series of cast bronze bells as a focal point of his exhibition. Created using the lost-wax method of casting, the artist works with wax and hand carved wooden forms to shape each piece uniquely. They are left in a natural raw state, which develops a rich patina with use over time. The resultant sound vessels have powerful sustain and complex overtones when played.

As Bergman explains, "Bells have an inherent power. They have captivated me since my great-grandmother gave me some of her Swiss cowbells before she died. Since those first gifts, which still hang on my bell wall, my collection has grown as I've traveled the world. I love the sounds, shapes, forms, textures, and patinas of these instruments. Bells can sound an alarm, mark the passing of time, save a boxer from his opponent, help herd animals, punctuate a wedding or act as a portal to transcendent states of consciousness. Sound and vibration have incredible power; the power to heal, the power to move people and an ability to awaken neglected or forgotten parts of our humanity."

For the artist, the production of these bells is an exploration of these concerns. The overtones that they produce are complex and rich, and when played in concert they are sometimes consonant, sometimes dissonant. They are not tuned to a traditional scale, and they ask you to listen and explore the relationship between them, other instruments and the player.

**ELLIOT BERGMAN** (American, b. 1981) lives and works in Chicago. He received his BFA in music at the University of Michigan in 2004 where he studied Jazz, Composition, African Drumming and Gamelan Music. Since then, he has toured and recorded with a number of musical groups including Wild Belle, NOMO, Iron and Wine, His Name is Alive, and Saturday Looks Good to Me. Bergman has been an active part of the creative music scenes in Ann Arbor, Chicago and Brooklyn, where he booked bands at the esteemed and now defunct club Zebulon in Williamsburg. This is his first exhibition with the gallery.