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Chicago, IL, November 5, 2021 – **ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to announce *Be Here Now*, a solo exhibition of new works from Wells Chandler in Gallery One & Two. The exhibition opens Friday, November 5th and continues through Saturday, December 18th, 2021. This is the artist's second exhibition with the gallery.

*"Trouble* is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning "to stir up," "to make cloudy," "to disturb." We—all of us on Terra—live in disturbing times, mixed-up times, troubling and turbid times. The task is to become capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response. Mixed-up times are overflowing with both pain and joy—with vastly unjust patterns of pain and joy, with unnecessary killing of ongoingness but also with necessary resurgence. The task is to make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present. Our task is to make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places. In urgent times, many of us are tempted to address trouble in terms of making an imagined future safe, of stopping something from happening that looms in the future, of clearing away the present and the past in order to make futures for coming generations. Staying with the trouble does not require such a relationship to times called the future. In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings."

-Donna J. Haraway *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

In *Be Here Now*, Wells Chandler presents hand crocheted ecological talismans in Gallery One and embroidered drawings in Gallery Two. Best known for his immersive and monumental hand crocheted arenas that explore queer iconography, gender and community, the works in this exhibition deploy the metaphor of wildness to examine themes of kinship, collaboration and presence.

In March of 2020 the artist moved to the north Bronx in proximity to Van Cortlandt Park. In an effort to improve quality of life and health, daily walking became an essential studio ritual. The artist considers the park and its ecosystems as collaborators, guides and oddkin for this newest body of work.

Chandler pairs back and distills form until it functions iconographically. The elemental materiality of minimalism reverberates in his work through the repetition of the stitch used to construct his crocheted drawings. The energy of the forms seems to appear deep within themselves and ripples outwards towards a multitude of associative qualities connected to and porously informed by its neighbor. Installed as a whole his crocheted environments are evocative of cave painting, Egyptian tombs, Buddhist shrines, and now, more recently, the North American forest.

For the first time in the US, this exhibition will feature, in tandem, crocheted works with embroidered drawings. The keloid image in the embroidered drawings emerges beyond the veil. Pushing through from a place located within the collective unconscious, early developmental mark making is used to render an image. The quick and immediate gesture is subverted through the labor intensive embroidered process. Time and slowing down are embedded in these works.

**WELLS CHANDLER** (American, b. 1985) lives and works in Bronx, NY. He explores ecology, community, gender and queer iconography through the mediums of crochet, embroidery, drawing and cake. He received his MFA from Yale University in 2011 where he was awarded the Ralph Mayer Prize for proficiency in materials and techniques. From 2016-17 he was a recipient of the Sharpe Walentas Studio Program. He has had recent solo exhibitions at Diablo Rosso (Panama City, PA), Galerie Eric Mouchet (Paris, FR), MOCA Tucson (Tucson, AZ), Mrs. (Maspeth, NY), and Union Gallery (London, ENG). In January, Chandler will have a solo exhibition at Soloway in Brooklyn, NY. Recent group exhibitions include The Pensacola Museum of Art (FL), Leslie Lohman Museum of Art (NY), Choi and Lager (Cologne, DE), MOCA Detroit (MI), and Marinaro (NY). His work has been reviewed by Roxane Gay, Art Forum, The New York Times, Hyperallergic, The Huffington Post, TimeOut, Modern Painters, Maake Magazine, Two Coats of Paint and AEQAI. Chandler is a Visiting Assistant Professor at SUNY Purchase. His work is included in numerous public and private collections.