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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Chicago, IL, November 6, 2020 – **ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to announce *Brains*, a solo exhibition of new relief wood carvings, paintings and carved objects by Josh Dihle in Galleries One and Two. The exhibition continues through Saturday, December 19, 2020. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery and first to occupy both galleries.

In *Brains*, Josh Dihle presents a series of new compositionally dense relief wood carvings, including his largest to date, and colorful, intricate oil paintings that are tied together by their visual references and complex narrative. For the artist, they are thinking pictures. As Dihle explains, they are 'not brainy paintings, mind you, but artworks that act like brains. Imaginative and elaborate, each work is a mushy contraption of image and thought, brimming with symbols, references, visual puns, and descriptive detail.'

Dihle's interests in medieval reliquaries, pulp sci-fi illustration, and plein air painting are evident in his wildly varied and overlaid imagery and heavily worked surfaces. Here and there, Dihle's paintings and carvings are embedded with found objects, small talismans that embellish the image and are enshrined by it. Fossils, meteorites, coins, toys, human teeth, and carved hands are tucked into thick mounds of oil paint or sheltered within carefully carved niches. These additions are relics collected from Dihle's secular universe; small wonders of geology and human history that meter cycles of rot and renewal, labor and play, strength and vulnerability.

Dihle's newest works take on the basic functions of cognition and the nervous system: sensation, arousal, and digestion. Outstretched hands, carved in walnut and set into large relief carvings mix a visceral sense of touch with vision, often conflating the artwork's surface with skin. These vibrant, promiscuous pictures welcome all manner of image and intervention into their surfaces, teasing at the ever-blurring boundary between painting and sculpture. Carved objects, installed on the floors and ledges of the gallery, augment this sense of exploration, while further capturing the energy and urgency of the artist's unique interiority and narrative intentions.

JOSH DIHLE (American, b. 1984) received his MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2012 and his BA at Middlebury College in 2007. Recent solo exhibitions include MPSTN (Chicago, IL), Valerie Carberry Gallery (Chicago, IL), and 4th Ward (Chicago, IL). Group exhibitions include Elmhurst Art Museum (Elmhurst, IL), Essex Flowers (New York, NY), Unisex Salon (New York, NY), Annarumma Gallery (Naples, Italy), Shane Campbell Gallery (Chicago, IL), Recinto Serra (San Juan, PR), and Ruschman (Mexico City, Mexico). His work is included in numerous public and private collections. This is his second solo exhibition with the gallery.