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ANDREW RAFACZ is pleased to announce *Low Relief Inferno*, a solo exhibition by Josh Dihle in Gallery Two.

Chicago, IL, April 21, 2018– ANDREW RAFACZ continues 2018 with *Low Relief Inferno*, a solo exhibition of relief wood carvings by Josh Dihle. The exhibition continues through Saturday, June 2, 2018.

For this new body of work, Dihle draws inspiration from Dante Alighieri's fourteenth century poem *Inferno* as filtered through Robert Rauschenberg's own *Thirty-Four Illustrations for Dante's Inferno*. With a nod to the proto-Pop master's use of image transfer and overlay, Dihle reaches back to medieval low relief woodcarving techniques that were common to Dante's time.

Inferno is a three-hundred-page epic poem written by a political exile with a grotesque imagination and ax to grind. It reads as a catalogue of human folly with revenge fantasy mixed in, and Dihle treats it as such. Dante's vivid punishments for "virtuous pagans," "the carnal," and "the sowers of discord" along with his countless inversions of reality are taken for reconsideration in the Age of Trump. Dihle's material, eastern black walnut, has its own unusual history. The tree's natural chemical defenses stunt the growth of surrounding plants and can produce a barren ring at the base of the tree, which is reputed to have been used in colonial times for witchcraft and Devil worship. Walnut produces a literal porthole to the Devil. In Dihle's work, carved wood becomes the nexus between Rauschenberg's pre-Pop flatbed surfaces and Dante's plunging spiral-form Hell. These surfaces function simultaneously as image and volume. Rhythmic, layered, and illusory, the picture-forms in *Low Relief Inferno* oscillate between sculpture and painting, prose and verse, horror and satire.

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 the McAninch Arts Center (Chicago, IL), Valerie Carberry Gallery (Chicago, IL), and Pleasant Plains (Washington D.C.). Group exhibitions include Essex Flowers (New York, NY), Unisex Salon (New York, NY), Annarumma Gallery (Naples, Italy), Shane Campbell Gallery (Chicago, IL), Elmhurst Art Museum (Elmhurst, IL), the University of Maine Museum of Art (Bangor, ME), and DUTTON (New York, NY). Dihle teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and codirects the Chicago artist project space Julius Caesar. His work is in numerous private and public collections. This is his first solo exhibition with the gallery.