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Chicago, IL, May 8, 2020 – **ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to announce participation in **Frieze Viewing Room**, the online platform hosting **Frieze New York 2020**, with a solo exhibition of new work by Melissa Leandro. Originally scheduled to open in New York City in early May, the fair has been recalibrated as a web and app-based edition and runs from May 8th to the 15th, with VIP previews on May 6th and 7th.

Launching this spring, **Frieze Viewing Room** is a platform dedicated to creating meaningful connections with the world's leading galleries. Opening during the originally planned dates of Frieze New York 2020, Frieze Viewing Room will host the fair's participants exclusively. Read more about the launch of Frieze Viewing Room and the fair details here: <https://news.artnet.com/market/frieze-new-york-digital-platform-1833342>

As a specially dedicated section at the fair, Frieze Viewing Room will pay homage to the pioneering women artists of Chicago, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the ratification of women's right to vote. Curated by **Julie Rodrigues Widholm** (Director and Chief Curator, DePaul Art Museum), who was just named 'Chicagoan of the Year' by the Chicago Tribune, the section will unfold throughout the fair, featuring presentations by eminent artists such as **Gladys Nilsson** (Garth Greenan), **Suellen Rocca** (Matthew Marks Gallery), **Clare Rojas** (Kavi Gupta), **Evelyn Statsinger** (Richard Gray Gallery), **Faith Wilding** (Anat Ebgi), **Torkwase Dyson** (Rhona Hoffman Gallery), **Melissa Leandro** (Andrew Rafacz), amongst others. Read more about Rodrigues' curated section here:

<https://frieze.com/article/julie-rodrigues-widholm-joins-frieze-new-york-2020>

For our participation in this esteemed section of Frieze New York 2020, we present a series of new stretched textile works by Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist Melissa Leandro. Leandro continues to investigate place and time through personal memory, creating vibrantly layered, topographical compositions filled with her collected imagery. Specifically, the works for Frieze chronicle the last year of the artist's travels, where she found herself oscillating between the landscapes of the west coast of Florida, the grass prairies of the Ragdale Foundation in Lake Forest, Illinois, and the sand dunes in Southern Michigan. Her recordings of these recent environments were combined with earlier weavings that the artist revisited, illuminating her continued exploration of overlapping memory and personal timeline.

'My time in Florida was spent walking through jungle-like vegetation on winding wooden walkways which surrounded my studio space and cabin. Each day I would spend my time documenting these huge piles of what seemed like yard remnants, palm tree and swamp debris that would accumulate on the winding dirt rounds that surrounded the preserve and the nearby neighborhoods. These huge mounds of swamp debris were ubiquitous and I started to realize they

were as much a part of the landscapes as everything else that was still living. There were heavy rains and thunderstorms every late afternoon and these piles of plant remnants would start to decay and lose their color or dry out in the sun. I spent much of my time walking and wandering during mornings or late afternoons, observing the piles disappear and then build back up the very next day. I began making cyanotype prints on fabric of the different discarded elements in these heaps as well as small painting sketches using marker, spray paint, water color, and acrylic paint to represent this tropical and jungle-like environment. These studies and cyanotype prints were later translated into the woven pieces.

During this time of travel and relocation, I was becoming accustomed to taking long walks through grass prairies in Illinois and then switching to hikes in the dunes of Michigan. Several of the new works I'm exhibiting at Frieze have a combination of various dyed colors blending into one another---bright reds and pinks, dark blues, washes of green and orange, and they directly document my routine of walking and wandering,

This series of works have images of palm tree-like forms, tall prairie grass shapes, floral doodles, repetitive winding or oblong pathways, and brick-like shapes stitched into the textile in bright warm colors. Parts of the textiles were brought together using appliqué or reverse appliqué, with repetitive, small stitched lines that reference undulating waves or long mounds. Serpentine line work is scattered throughout the surface, an immediate indication of my desire to remain spontaneous and intuitive with my imagery. This is a foil to the other methods of my practice that can be naturally slow building and labor intensive.

Each of these new works is a patchwork of many different personally experienced moments. They work as an abstract collage of the various locations I've been observing and collecting from this past year, but they also contain the symbolic imagery that has become central to my practice. The patterning and choice of shapes in the work attempt to push past the original earthly environments I'm referencing, aiming to feel at times celestial or otherworldly.'
--- Melissa Leandro

Originally intended as an immersive installation, seamlessly stretching the physical walls of our booth, we present these dynamic works individually as sovereign parts of a whole, and a summation of Leandro's current, densely layered practice.

MELISSA LEANDRO (American, b. 1989) lives and works in Chicago, IL. She received an MFA in 2017 and a BFA in 2012, both from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has had recent solo exhibitions at The University Club of Chicago (Chicago, IL), Union League Club of Chicago (Chicago, IL), Rockford University (Rockford, IL) and the Wright Museum of Art (Beloit, WI). Recent group exhibitions include DePaul Art Museum (Chicago, IL) and The Arts Club of Chicago (Chicago, IL). Leandro will have a solo exhibition with ANDREW RAFACZ in September 2020. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections.

For more information about Melissa Leandro, visit our website at <https://andrewrafacz.com/artists/melissa-leandro/>