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"En route to the Pasadena Rose Bowl swap meet, we stop at a roadside bungalow selling plants, vintage pots, and ceramics along with bric-a-brac-strewn metal storage shelves. An oval-framed relief of a colonial musketeer leaning on his weapon in the untamed wilderness catches my eye: American mythology frozen in hard, decorative plastic. Jackpot! It made me think of scenes of home decor: old books and candle sticks piled on end tables as if a founding father just stood up from his reading to make a ham sandwich."

– Melissa Brown, 2022

Chicago, IL, April 16, 2022 – **ANDREW RAFACZ** is pleased to present *Thrift Store Find*, an exhibition of paintings, objects and a poker tournament by Melissa Brown in Gallery One. The exhibition opens Saturday, June 4th and continues through Saturday, July 16, 2022. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery.

With *Thrift Store Find*, Brown presents a series of new paintings that explore her interests in the symbolic still life, the vernacular of Americana, and the never-ending quest for the to-die-for thrift store find. Brown's paintings are a hypnotic combination of different techniques — screen-printed digital photography, airbrush, stencil, and impasto oil paint — brought together to create symbol-laden, surreal tableaux. The use of contrasting painting strategies directly connects the objects in the still lives to their narrative implications and the tension between illusionistic and 'real' space. Form and content are merged as Brown's fascination with the juxtaposition of the digital and analog is directly connected to how these objects are happened upon and rendered. The objects become artistic talismans and the still life acts as a context for the gathered metaphysical moments of daily life.

American painter and Chicago Imagist Roger Brown, the artist's self-described artistic forefather (no familial relation), has been an important influence on her practice, through his analysis of American pop culture and through his interest in collecting as a form of gambling. Taking cues from his own late career 'Virtual Still Lives', Melissa Brown's objects and narratives are stand-ins for human desires.

Opposite the artist's paintings will be an exhibition-within-the-exhibition. Brown has invited a cohort of artists living and working in and around Chicago to participate in a poker game that will be held in the gallery prior to the opening of the exhibition. Each invited artist will buy into the game with a cherished thrifted or found object, and this pot — ultimately won by one of the participating artists — will be displayed on shelves installed into floor-to-ceiling pegboard walls, a direct visual nod to the quintessential thrift store experience. The installation is an acknowledgement of the long tradition of Chicago artists who privilege the vernacular as a key or guiding influence.

Participating Artists:

Maggie Crowley / Jaime DeGroot / Josh Dihle / Jenal Dolson / James Benjamin Franklin / Griffin Goodman / Max Guy / John Henley / Kenneth Heyne / Anna Kunz / Melissa Leandro / Jordan Martins / Liz McCarthy / Soumya Netrabile / Barbarita Polster / Steve Reber / Tyson Reeder / Nina Rizzo / Mindy Rose Schwartz / Kate Sierzputowski / Edra Soto / Ann Toebbe / Jeffrey Tranchell / Alberto Ortega Trejo / Lan Tuazon / Zack Wirsum / Adrian Wong

MELISSA BROWN (American, b. 1974) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her MFA in Painting from Yale University and a BFA in Printmaking from Rhode Island School of Design. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include Derek Eller Gallery (New York, NY), Anat Ebgi (Los Angeles, CA), Dodd Gallery, University of Georgia (Athens, GA), Biggins Gallery, Auburn University (Auburn, AL), Tennis Elbow at The Journal Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Magenta Planes (New York, NY), CANADA (New York, NY) and Roberto Paradise (San Juan, PR). She has participated in group exhibitions at Mass MOCA, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Klaus Von Nichtssagend, Musée International Des Arts Modestes, and Jeffery Deitch (Los Angeles, CA). In 2000 she completed the Skowhegan School of Painting program. In 2012 she was awarded the Joan Mitchell Painter's Grant and completed a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center, 2019. Her work is in the permanent collections at the Whitney Museum of Art and the New York City Department of Education. She is an associate professor in art at Lehman College, City University of New York.