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Chicago, IL, July 25, 2025 – **ANDREW RAFACZ** is thrilled to announce *Lingering Bodies*, a solo exhibition of new works from transdisciplinary sculptor Serena JV Elston, in Gallery One. The exhibition opens Friday, July 25th and continues through Saturday, August 30th, 2025. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

To linger is to remain while slowly decaying—to persist in a state of becoming and unbecoming. In *Lingering Bodies*, sculptures form a permeable ecosystem where embodiment is not fixed but porous. Viewers are invited to experience each work through multiple senses—sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch—allowing the pieces to enter the body and linger there, for moments or for days. For Elston, the 'body' is never singular; it encompasses the human, the institutional, the architectural, and the ideological.

All living things will die—but what about institutions, ideologies, and structures? Can they perish, too? This exhibition probes the illusion of immortality and the certainty of death, asserting that all bodies, whether organic or constructed, require maintenance to endure. No body survives in isolation. Systems of oppression persist only because we allow them to, but this also means we hold the power to dismantle and reimagine them. The institutions that appear eternal are, in truth, as precarious as flesh. Through sculptural inquiry, *Lingering Bodies* exposes the vulnerability of these systems and asks us to see their temporality as clearly as we see our own.

The exhibition debuts *Hauntology*, a series of synthetic bone wall works that feature whispering portraits of departed philosophers Ursula K. Le Guin, David Graeber, and Mark Fisher. Two classical statuettes titled *Caryatids* flank the entrance of the gallery. Grown from living mushrooms, they will shift and evolve over the course of the exhibition. A third ceramic sculpture—*Seated Body in Pregnancy* is cast from the artist's own body in her ninth month of pregnancy.

Nearby, *Immortal Bath*, a floor standing reflection pool, contains the same mushrooms, now preserved in bronze and slowly steeping in a tea brewed from their former organic selves. The artist's correlative work *Transubstantiation* invites

visitors to drink the same tea—an offering that bridges decay and permanence, consumption and ritual.

Elsewhere, a bronze series titled *Chthonic Entities I–IV* roams the gallery on spindly, antlered legs—dancing between the animate and the inanimate, the ephemeral and the eternal. A second series of wall sculptures, *Blood Etching I* and *Blood Etching II* round out the exhibition. Memorializing violent gestures in veined marble, they are etched with the industrial cleaners often used in the cleaning up of crime scenes.

In her exhibition, Elston brings together these diverse works to form a constellation of lingering bodies—vulnerable, dependent, and impermanent. She reflects on the fragility of the myriad bodies we inhabit and rely upon, and the porosity between them.

SERENA JV ELSTON (American, b.1987) lives and works in Chicago, IL. She received her MFA in from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2023 and her BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2009. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Watershed Art & Ecology Center (Chicago, IL) with Vince Phan, and Tiger Strikes Asteroid (Los Angeles, CA). Recent group exhibitions include the Museum of Art & Art History (Lancaster, CA), G99 & Brno AIR (Brno, CZ), Co-Prosperity (Chicago, IL), Cal State LA Fine Art Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), VideoDrome Paris & S.O.F.A. (Lucca, IT), and ANDREW RAFACZ, NADA NY (New York, NY). Elston is the recipient of the Pritzker Family Foundation Scholarship, The Ignite Fund (A Regional Regranting Program for The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts), Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) Individual Artist Award, and the Transformative Climate Communities Grant for Oakland Public Library Design, among others. Her work has been featured in the San Francisco Chronicle, The Chicago Reader, Gertie Chicago, and The Latch.

Elston is the co-curator of SPACORE, an immersive 45-artist exhibition examining the labor of wellness capitalism, and creator of Siren Island, a floating stage for actively re-contextualizing the mythologies of land through live theater events on the open water.