



Art

11 Artists Having Breakout Moments in 2026

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Jan 15, 2026 8:16AM



Pat Oleszko *The Trojan Horse*, 1987. Courtesy of David Peter Francis, New York.

Pat Oleszko

B.1947, Detroit. Lives and works in New York.



Portrait of Pat Oleszko with *Three Bozos* (1985) at SculptureCenter 2025 Photo by Charles Benton © Pat Oleszko. Courtesy the artist and David Peter

In 2026, Pat Oleszko gets a long-overdue institutional reckoning. The 78-year-old pioneer of feminist performance and sculpture blends humor, confrontation, and bodily exaggeration to challenge gender norms and institutional authority. Both the artist and her work are easily recognizable: Oleszko often wears playful outfits that feature cartoonish, inflatable breasts and exuberant hats. Indeed, costume and quirky, inflatable figures have become Oleszko's signatures. Over the last 50 years, the artist has steadily earned critical regard and staged performances and presentations at major museums like MoMA, but she's remained relatively under the radar.

In 2024, New York's David Peter Francis gallery staged Oleszko's first New York solo show in nearly 25 years. The next year, they announced their representation of the artist and mounted a solo presentation of her work at Art Basel Miami Beach. It memorably included 13-foot inflatable legs and feet inspired by the Wicked Witch of the East from "The Wizard of Oz." In 2026, Oleszko will be included in the Whitney Biennial and in "Fool Disclosure" at SculptureCenter, her first New York solo exhibition in 35 years. These milestones will honor her influence and reintroduce her radical practice to contemporary audiences.