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5 Under-Recognized Artists Getting Their Due in New York This Season

BY **ALEX GREENBERGER**

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Installation view of "Pat Oleszko: Fool Disclosure," 2026, at SculptureCenter, New York.

CHARLES BENTON/PHOTO COURTESY SCULPTURECENTER, NEW YORK/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND DAVID PETER FRANCIS, NEW YORK

Pat Oleszko at SculptureCenter



(1)

Pat Oleszko with *Three Bozos*, 1985.

Photo : Charles Benton/Courtesy the artist; SculptureCenter, New York; and David Peter Francis, New York

The artist of the season—under-recognized or otherwise—is Pat Oleszko, who is now in her late 70s and is still making **brash sculptures skewering the patriarchy**. Ahead of an appearance in the Whitney Biennial this spring, Oleszko received the retrospective she deserves at SculptureCenter, where visitors are greeted by works such as *Womb with a View* (1990), a giant inflatable depicting a nude woman spreading her legs. Seemingly like an homage to **Niki de Saint Phalle's *She* (1966)** the sculpture lives up to its name: you can press your face close to an aperture in its rug-like mass of faux pubic hair and gaze

inside at a bobbing phallus titled *Red Dick* (1993). “omen always deliver ,” Oleszko notes in an accompanying brochure. With these two sculptures, she has certainly done just that.

The oldest works in this show date back to the '70s, when Oleszko made performances and sculptures about the expectations lavished upon women. A series of mannequins strewn around one corridor wear extravagant get-ups that send up female types of the era, including the subservient secretary and the devoted feminist; most have enlarged breasts. Other nearby works obliquely nod to the threat of misogynistic violence. *Coat of Arms (Maquette)*, a 1982 version of a costume made to mark Surrealism's 50th anniversary, is festooned with leathery gloves that paw at its wearer, who can only escape being fondled if they shed this uniform.

In the decades since, Oleszko has applied her wacky sensibility to serious topics, such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, as in *The Domino Effect* (1990), a pile of inflatable people emblazoned with words like “Hungary” and “Poland”. Works like that one implies that Oleszko isn’t always joking. And certainly, despite its punny title, few would find much humor in one of the newest works in this show, *The Fall of Democracy* (2025), a plushy column accompanied by parchment leaves printed with the Declaration of Independence and overlaid with the names of Renee Good and Alex Pretti, who were respectively killed by agents for ICE and Border Patrol in Minneapolis last month. During a new season of discontent, Oleszko has found little to laugh about.

44-19 Purves Street, through April 27
