

QUEENS

Pat Oleszko

Through April 27. SculptureCenter, 44-19 Purves Street, Long Island City, Queens; 718-361-1750, sculpture-center.org.



“Pat Oleszko: Fool Disclosure,” on view at SculptureCenter. Pat Oleszko, via David Peter Francis, New York, and SculptureCenter, New York; Photo by Charles Benton

By **Travis Diehl**

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The veteran New York performance artist Pat Oleszko fills space with aplomb. You can’t miss her giant inflatable horn-blower sculpture in the 2026 Whitney Biennial.

A concurrent career survey at SculptureCenter in Queens features her deep pantheon of bombastic characters, crafted from ripstop nylon over the past four decades. Puffed-up witches, popes, generals and businessmen flub around the main hall, while a bushel of inflatable missiles from 2007, embroidered with puns like “Miss Fit” and “Miss Take,” occupies the center.

Oleszko’s creations hold a room, but these aren’t just sculptures: They’re the props and costumes for her enlightened take on burlesque street theater. Downstairs, past stuffed fabric outfits for a bodybuilder and a stripper-in-a-cake, the nooks and vaults in the

building's industrial basement display zany costumes, memorabilia and films documenting the artist's appearances onstage and on the sidewalk.

One choice example, from a projected selection of Oleszko's films and videos, has the artist in a padded red clown outfit trying to quench the puffy orange flames of an inflatable Bronx apartment building, waggling in a rubble-filled lot. She's sounding the alarm for whoever's listening.