

Pat Oleszko: Fool Disclosure

Jan 29–Apr 27, 2026

SculptureCenter

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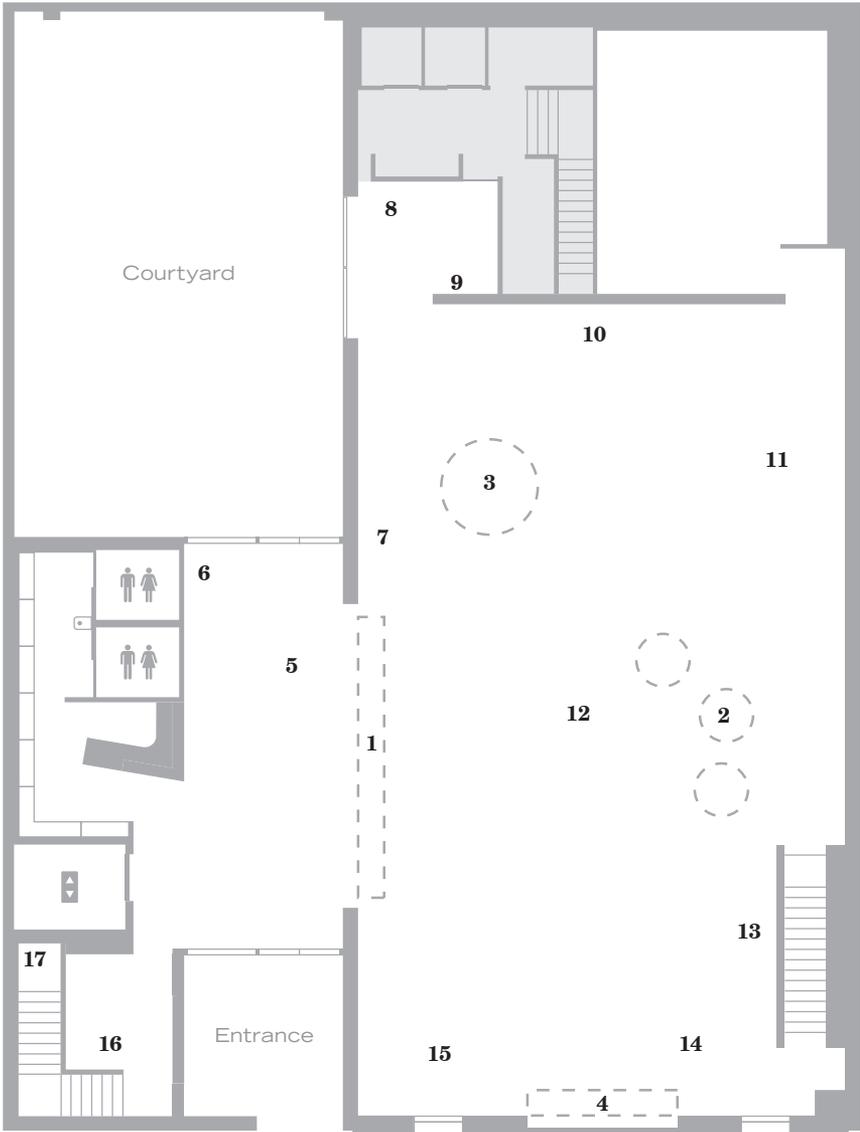
Pat Oleszko's practice is rooted in humor, sharp social commentary, and defiance of all forms of authority. Her sculptures lend themselves to raucous performances that use linguistic wit to address various ongoing concerns about the state of the world. As her work developed from the 1970s on, Oleszko devised some defining strategies: using her body, which led to costumes, and using air, which produced large inflatable works. In both cases, her art "walked out the door," in her words, and she began "using all the world as a stooge."

Spanning SculptureCenter's two floors, this survey exhibition is constructed around Oleszko's singular inflatables, which first appeared in the 1980s, and brings together dozens of these airy, monumental works for the first time. The lower level of the exhibition expands on recurring themes such as the representation of women, political concerns, anti-war activism, class struggles, and climate awareness through archival ephemera with posters, postcards, and photographs; wearable tableaux manifesting as intricately handcrafted costumes, shoes, jewelry, and hats; and a selection of moving image works.

The exhibition features *Blowhilda* (1980), one of her earliest inflatables, from the performance *Inflation: The Air Apparent* (1985). This showed her the material's potential to grow exponentially and shrink in size within a matter of seconds, making it easy to transport and add to performances from street to stage. It also gathers key works that have made hundreds of appearances in festivals, theaters, museums, and public spaces worldwide. Multiple costumes and props often appeared in signature performances such as *The New Yuck Women* (1971); *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of Wives* (1985); and *Roamin' Holiday: A View from A Broad* (1999). Characters would often be reassembled for other stagings and also changed in their titling, which is an extension of Oleszko's characteristic play with words and forms of worldbuilding.

Other early inflatables include *Big Pussy* (1989), an homage to her mentor in burlesque Rose La Rose, and *The Domino Effect* (1990), made in an artist residence in Berlin around the fall of the wall. More recent works include *WarUSaurUs*, *3 Miss Ills*, and *General Dismay* from the *Department of Corrections* (all made in 2007) in response to George W. Bush's war in Iraq. Altogether, the works gathered demonstrate Oleszko's place as a modern-day jester with a distinctive blend of satire, humor, and subversion.

Works in the Exhibition



Ground Floor Plan

Ground Floor

All works in the exhibition were part of performances and had iterative lives afterward.

Oleszko's performances were staged internationally, at major museums like MoMA and ICA Boston, recurring exhibitions such as documenta, universities, theaters, clubs, artist-run spaces, Central Park, and even the Vatican.

The following artwork descriptions were made by Oleszko, "in her own write."

Overhead

- 1 *The Trojan Horse* (from *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives*), 1987
Nylon and blower
17 ½ x 4 x 9 feet (533.4 x 122 x 274 cm)

The performance *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives* featured the lives of the wives rather than that monstrous husband. Each woman embodied one of the Seven Deadly Sins and starred in updated fairy tales as charismatic survivors.

- 2 *Three Bozos* (from *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives*), 1985
Nylon and blower
21 ½ x 10 x 9 feet (655 x 305 x 274 cm)

The fat buoys were the foil for Oldilocks, an interloper who, after the original conflicts about food and lodging were resolved, was finally accepted by that Arm-y of Three when she began serving booze-laced porridge and life improved all 'round.

[*Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives* had its premiere at the ICA Boston in 1989 and then toured the US at theaters and festivals in New Mexico, California, Texas, and Florida.]

- 3 *Octopussy* (from *The Rat That Stole the Tiber*), 2003
Nylon and blower
23 x 8 x 9 feet (701 x 244 x 274 cm)

The tri-o-pus [*Octopussy*] was created in Rome for a performance that spoke to the writhing waters and the rising seize of the mad and bad Berlusconi.

- 4 *YNV?* (from *Nora's Art: Pa't Too*), 1993
Nylon and blower
17 x 2 ½ x 7 ½ feet (518 x 76 x 229 cm)

The performance pondered the premise that I was the one chosen to run the Ark to triumph through an imagined media storm that ravaged the world. The inflated letters question "Why envy?" as thousands of images from *Frank Film* (1973) by Frank Mouris are projected onto them, bombarding the eye.

[*Nora's Art: Pa't Too* premiered at The Kitchen (New York) in 1993 and was filmed for an MTV special. The performance was also presented at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995.]

Ground Floor

- 5 *Big Feet*, 1995
Nylon and blower
Two elements, 9 ½ x 4 x 13 feet (290 x 122 x 396 cm) each

[This work framed *The Errant Space Museum*, a packed exhibition of inflatables at Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center in Buffalo, New York.]

- 6 *Pat Ad*, 1978
Single-channel video
59 seconds
- 7 *Udder Delight* (from *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives*), 1987
Nylon, blower, and fiberfill
6.8 x 4 x 6 ½ feet (207 x 122 x 186 cm)

One of Bluebeard's wives who struggled thru a series of addictions, from booze to drugs to shopping until she landed at plentiful sex and declared herself cured.

Pillars, 1989

Nylon and blower
105 x 132 x 24 inches
(266.7 × 335 × 61 cm)

- 8 *The Domino Effect*, 1990
Nylon and blower
15 x 7 x 9 ½ feet (457 x 213 x 290 cm)

A tribute to those joyous moments when the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. Poland stands first amidst the Eastern Bloc that collapsed communism in rubble without pause.

- 9 *Airtopia Game Plan*, 2003
Cut paper and pencil on paper
24 x 36 ½ inches (61 x 92.7 cm)

- 10 *Swish Guard*, 1999
Nylon and blower
8 ½ x 3 ½ x 12 feet
(259 x 107 x 366 cm)

Duh Nincompope, 1999
Nylon and blower
12 x 4 x 9 feet (366 x 122 x 274 cm)

Temple of Been Here, 1999
Nylon, blower, and clothesline
20 x 11 x 12 feet (610 x 335 x 366 cm)

These expansive works were part of the performance *Roamin' Holiday: A View from A Broad* that started with my street/walking events as various Saints from the viewpoint of a sinner. Never mind that I was in residence at the esteemed American Academy in Rome and eventually landed in the slammer for posing as *Duh Nincompope* at the Vatican, a tiny rendition of pomposity toting a Supersoaker filled with holy water.

[Works from *Roamin' Holiday: A View from A Broad* were presented throughout Italy and in venues in the US, including P.S. 122 (now Performance Space) in New York, and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh.]

- 11 *Yupasaurus* (from *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives*), 1987
Nylon and blower
19 ½ x 7 ½ x 9 feet
(594 x 229 x 274 cm)

The *Yup* starred in a film and performance chronicle of *The Free Little Pig*, as an artist who was constantly forced to relocate because of ever-avid real estate monsters. Finally, after building her dream house, acclaim comes to the *Free* world and, she doesn't sell out.

- 12 *General Dismay*, 2007
Nylon and blower
4 x 3 ½ x 10 feet (122 x 107 x 305 cm)

3 Miss Ills, 2007
Nylon and blower
11 ½ x 3 x 3 feet
(350.5 x 91.5 x 91.5 cm)

Miss Ill Cluster, 2007
Nylon and blower
8 x 6 x 6 feet (244 x 183 x 183 cm)

WarUSaurUs, 2007
Nylon and blower
7 ½ x 11 x 7 feet (229 x 335 x 213 cm)

This grouping is from *The Department of Corrections* (2007), a performance in response to Prez George Butch's attack on Iraq and the consequential War on Terror.

[*The Department of Corrections* was first presented at MoCAD, Detroit in 2007.]

- 13 *Big Pussy*, 1989
Nylon and blower
13 x 4 x 11 feet (396 x 122 x 335 cm)

Rose, 1989
Fabric, fiberfill, wire, artificial roses, and velcro
80 x 30 x 36 inches
(203.2 × 76.2 × 91.4 cm)

An homage to my mentor, burlesque queen Rose La Rose (who named me "Pat the Hippy Strippy") during my side gig stripping while in college, an early and lifelong exploration and benign exploitation of female forms and forms.

14 *Blowhilda* (from *Inflation: The Air Apparent*), 1980
Nylon and blower
8 x 4 x 10 feet (244 x 122 x 305 cm)

The first performances with inflatables characterized newspaper stories blown out of proportion. *Blowhilda* represents the Munich Opera in protest. The opera staged a ‘mouth-out’ strike during the final act of *Die Meistersinger Nürnberg*, where singers moved their lips but emanated no sounds. They got their raise.

[*Blowhilda* was part of *Inflation: The Air Apparent* which was first presented in Central Park and toured throughout the US, in venues including the New Museum (New York), Cranbrook Academy of Art (Detroit), and Smith College Museum of Art (Northampton, MA).]

15 *Mr. Green Jeans*, 2000
Nylon and blower
5 ½ x 6 ¾ x 8 ¾ feet
(172.7 x 208.3 x 269.2 cm)

Womb with a View (from *Nora’s Art: P’at Too*), 1990
Nylon and blower
8 ¾ x 16 x 18 feet (268 x 488 x 549 cm)

Inside *Womb with a View*, 1990:
Red Dick, 1993
Nylon and blower
88 x 56 x 26 inches (224 x 142 x 66 cm)

This earth Mothuh was created as an aquatic vessel into which the beleaguered flood victims entered via the vagina as they sailed forth to escape inanity. What better boat to sail la vie! Women always deliver.

She [*Womb with a View*] was also presented as a street peep show in Prague where participants inserted their heads into the inflated womb for blessings and rapport with the tiny *Duh Nincompope* within and were rewarded with a squirt in the face of wholly water.

16 *Patty Cake*, 1972
Fabric, fiberfill, cardboard, and wig
9 ½ x 5 x 5 feet
(290 x 152.4 x 152.4 cm)

This confection appeared on any number of occasions with great delectation, a surfeit of calories and eventual disdain. In her day she appeared in all the ripe places—museum openings, private parties, *Esquire* magazine, and always to a certain acclaim. But then, like so much puff pastry, she fell, the girl outta the cake routine had come and gone, with the Ms/taking all the attendant glamour ‘n clamor into political correct/nest.

17 *Charles Patless*, 1980
Fabric, fiberfill, and wig
80 x 40 x 20 inches
(203 x 101.6 x 50.8 cm)

Barbells for Charles Patless, 1980
Fabric, cardboard, and styrofoam pellets
21 x 65 x 25 inches
(53.3 x 165 x 63.5 cm)

I read the ads. I got the books. I could be the man I’d always wanted to be. Pumping irony was my game. Sew and ye shall reap.

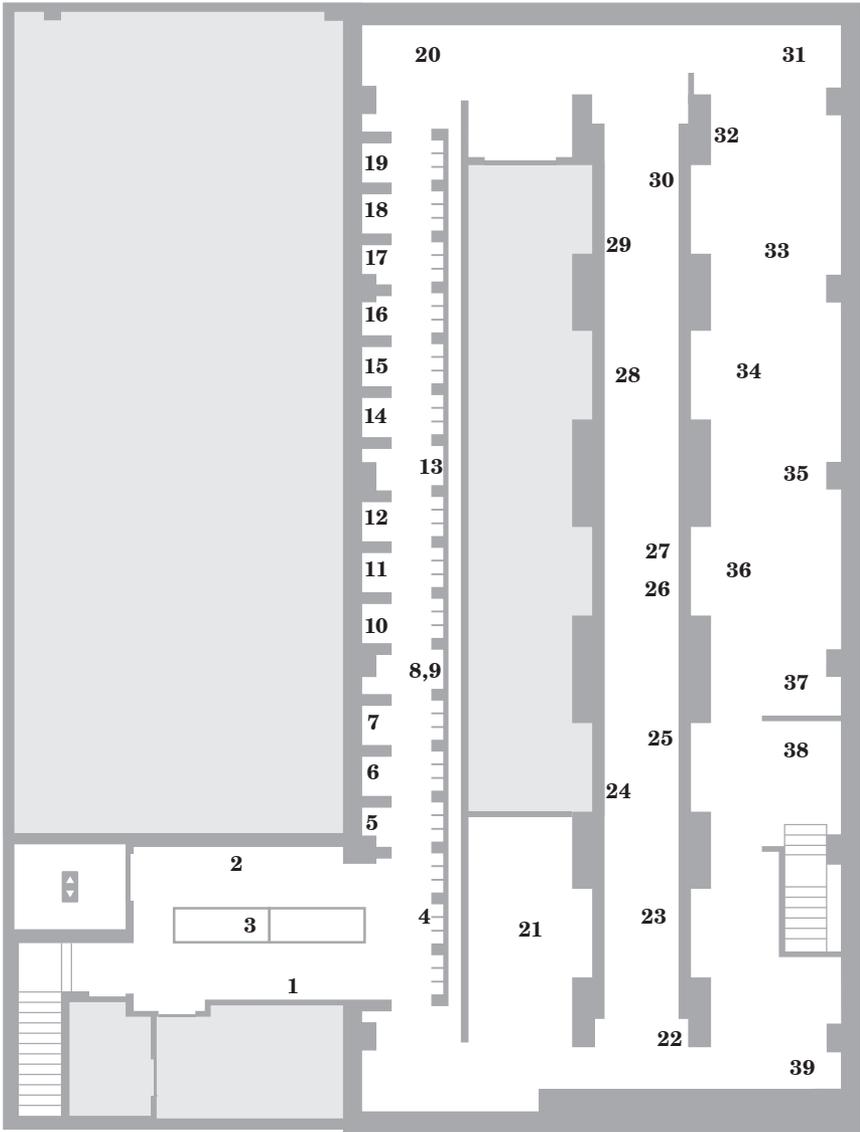
All works courtesy the artist and David Peter Francis, New York.

The archival materials, moving image works, hats, and costumes in this section of the exhibition highlight recurring themes in Oleszko's practice. The archive display features performance posters and postcards, originally wheatpasted across the city or sold after shows, that announced her appearance in live events, films, or magazines.

A selection of hats, worn daily, at protests, or in special appearances, reflects her interest in fusing art with everyday life. Examples from the 1990s to 2025 are shown alongside maquettes of signature characters like the *Padettes of P.O. Town* (1982), made in homage to Motown Records and *The AndrogyNuts Bozos* (1982).

Also reunited here for the first time since they were made in 1971 and premiered at the Museum of Art and Design, is her complete New Yuck Women series, which presents characterizations or stereotypes of New York women.

The screening room gathers over ten moving image works from the 1970s to the 2000s, demonstrating her long engagement with the medium. Over her lifetime, she has produced more than 70 works. Some document live performances, some were made to be played during a performance and others extended the lives of her characters. They feature figures present throughout the exhibition, such as *The Handmaiden* (1975), which, along with the *Coat of Arms* (1972), was made for the anniversary of André Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto*; *Sam Sebastian* (1999), a baldly exaggerated American capitalist; and other one-off characters, such as the *PATSQUATCH!* (1991) made out of pinecones, which stopped traffic and received an emergency visit from the Army Red Cross.



Lower Level Plan

Lower Level

The following artwork descriptions were made by Pat Oleszko, “in her own write.”

Archive Room

1 Selection of posters designed by Oleszko, except where noted*, for the following exhibitions, performances, and other events (left to right):

The Pats To Suckcess, 1975

Pat Oleszko Superstar, 1976

15th Ann Arbor Film Festival, 1977*

Pat Oleszko: Anne Undiscovered Giant in CLOTHE YOUR EYES (Revue) at Modern Art Galerie (Vienna), 1979

All the World's a Stooge at The Kitchen, NYC, 1980

Tour de Farce, 1981

PAT OLESZKO: MAKES A SPECTACLE OF HERSELF..., 1981

PAT OLESZKO: MAKES A SPECTACLE OF HERSELF..., 1981

The Soiree of O at P.S. 122 (now Performance Space) in New York, 1984

War'n Piece: Where Fools Russian at HOME for Contemporary Art and Theater (New York), 1987

Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives at P.S. 122 (now Performance Space) in New York, 1990

Nora's Art: Pat Too at The Kitchen (New York), 1993

2 Drawings (left to right):

The Coat of Arms (Falling), 1978
Spray paint on paper
39 7/8 x 28 1/4 inches (101.3 x 71.8 cm)

Rachel Tension, 1978
Spray paint on paper
38 1/4 x 25 1/2 inches (97.1 x 64.8 cm)

Selection of drawings: *Big Feet, Dancing Dicks, the Trojan Horse, Miss Trixie of the Universe, Happy Man, Anchored-Bat*, 1994
Spray paint on paper
Dimensions variable

3 A detailed map and autobiographical timeline, pulled from Oleszko's forthcoming publication with SculptureCenter, accompany the archival materials in the vitrines.

Please see the “Vitrine” section of this guide, or refer to the laminated info sheet in the Archive Room.

Narrow Corridor

Art is life, life is art. In pursuit, I've made jillions of hats, jewels and attendant accoutrement over the years worn for special occasions, protests and performative events. The corridor features selections from the 1990's to the present along with maquettes of favorites like the *Padettes of P.O. Town* and *The AndrogyNuts Bozos*.

- 4 *The Pat and the Hats*, 2023
Fabric
80 x 116 inches (203 x 294 cm)
- 5 *Mother's Glove*, 2003
Leather, fabric, felt, and fiberfill
11 x 16 ½ x 10 ½ inches
(28 x 42 x 26.6 cm)
- 6 *The Wordhouse*, 2024
Scrabble tiles, board, wood, cardboard, dictionary, artificial birds, and pencil
13 x 11 x 16 inches (33 x 28 x 40.6 cm)
- 7 *Padettes of P.O. Town (Maquette)*, 1982
Celastic, wire, and paint
27 x 40 x 19 inches (69 x 102 x 48 cm)
Collection of Jules Augur

The primary-colored group is the newest swinging sensation that's ever hit this fair nation. Growing up in Detroit, my whole life I wanted to be a Motown vocalist, or, failing that, The Temptations—all of them. The *Padettes* were the solution: they dance in perfect sync, without rehearsal and as a one-person snow. I'm the dummy in the middle.

- 8 *Cinderella*, 1998
Shoes, glass, and silicone
7 ½ x 5 x 12 ½ inches each
(19 x 12.7 x 31.7 cm)
- 9 *Bedroom Slippers*, 2003
PVC, wood, fabric, and fiberfill
7 x 8 x 12 ¼ inches each
(17.7 x 20 x 31 cm)

- 10 *The Distance to the Moon*, 2014
Fabric, wood, cardboard, and string
28 x 30 ½ x 31 inches
(71 x 77.5 x 78.7 cm)
 - 11 *Turkey, Pining*, 1991
Pine cones, fabric, and metal
19 x 21 x 12 inches (48 x 53 x 30 cm)
Collection of Antonia Josten
 - 12 *Spooli O*, 2010
Thread spools, fabric, fabric felt, and gloves
22 ½ x 28 x 23 inches
(57 x 71 x 58 cm)
 - 13 *The Clown Jewells*, 1981
16mm color film on single-channel video
8 minutes 8 seconds
- Booty is in the aye of the beholder. If the Fool shits, wear it.
- 14 *The AndrogyNuts Bozos (Maquette)*, 1982
Celastic, wire, wood, and paint
Yellow Bozo: 30 x 26 x 15 inches (76.2 x 66 x 38 cm); Red Bozo: 30 x 16 x 15 inches (76.2 x 41 x 38 cm)
Collection of Ruth Reichl
 - 15 *The Fall of Democracy*, 2025
Fabric, polyester, artificial leaves, and parchment
Hat: 15 x 11 ¼ x 12 inches
(38 x 28.6 x 30 cm);
Each bracelet: 6 ½ x 10 x 6 ½ inches
(16.5 x 25 x 16.5 cm)
 - 16 *DUMP DA TRUMPTY ON HIS GREAT THRONE*, 2025
Plastic, cardboard, paper, fabric, fake hair, wire, buttons, and toilet brush
21 ½ x 13 ½ x 22 inches (55 x 34 x 56 cm)
 - 17 *Nora's Ark*, 2025
Felt, cardboard, animal crackers, fabric, and fake ducks
Hat: 62 x 10 ½ x 22 inches (157 x 27 x 56 cm); jacket: 37 x 25 x 7 inches (94 x 63.5 x 18 cm)

18 *Pool Cues*, 1996
Glass and fabric
22 ½ x 28 x 23 inches (57 x 71 x 58 cm)

19 *Question Mark*, 2013
Aluminum, felt, and fabric
27 x 12 x 10 inches (69 x 30.5 x 25 cm)

20 *The O-men*, 1974
Fabric, aluminum, umbrellas, and
fiberfill
86 x 161 x 42 inches
(218 x 409 x 107 cm)

These guises were originally featured as the lead spooks/men for an outdoor extravaganza entitled *CLOTHE ARTPARK: DE NATURE TAKES A BOUGH GRASP ROOTS VARIETY SHOW*. The piece included putting costumes on trees and making them sing and dance. Humans disappeared within natural materials, trees and rocks starred in man-made fabrics and the River Sticks burned throughout the glade that warmed as it raged. A moveable feast for the eyes, frightening and fab, it was “Tree Bien” – Time Magazine.

[*The O-men* was part of a performance at Artpark, Lewiston, NY.]

Screening Room

Film and video fulfill many aspects of my practice: some were made to give an extended life, others were played during performances and some documented live events. The selection of films shown in this room spans from the 1970s to the 2000s.

21 *Patty Cake*, 1976
Single-channel video
8 minutes 24 seconds

*Kneel and Dimples: Hon-Knee-Moon
in Knee York*, 1979
Single-channel video
5 minutes 40 seconds

The bridal couple tour Lower Manhattan seeing that whirled from a short vantage point. They trek thru subway and streets and society to the top of the World Trade

Center and eventually meet misfortune at Coney Island.

Handmaiden: Git Yer Hands Off Her,
1980
Single-channel video
6 minutes 24 seconds

Tool Jest, 1984
Single-channel video
5 minutes 24 seconds

Not a Petty Slight, 1986
Single-channel video
3 minutes 12 seconds

The Free Little Pig, 1989
Single-channel video
3 minutes 49 seconds

Inflation: The Air Apparent, 1989
Single-channel video
10 minutes 14 seconds

De Light Fool, 1989
Single-channel video
2 minutes 14 seconds

PATSQUATCH!, 1991
Single-channel video
3 minutes 30 seconds

AIRTOPIA!, 2008
Single-channel video
4 minutes 07 seconds

Patty's Inferno, 2008
Single-channel video
1 minute 34 seconds

Goldman Sex, 2012
Single-channel video
2 minutes 17 seconds

Arched Corridor

[All of the following costumes were made for the exhibition *Act Three: The New Yuck Women* (1971) at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York.]

A nine-part series done in rapture capturing the bodily caricatures that stroll the streets of New York. Installed in the Museum of Art and Design, I daily ventured forth in costume doing whatever that person would ordinarily do, gleaning the wide and wild response socio-illogically, a mutually transformative experience.

- 22** *Upper East Side Swinger*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, fur, boots, wig, fake fur, and cord
73 x 30 x 25 inches (185 x 76 x 63 cm)
- 23** *Sally Sex-retary*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, wig, boots, and metal
73 x 30 x 25 inches (185 x 76 x 63 cm)
- 24** *Little Old Lady*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, hat, bag, gloves, wig, and glasses
75 x 27 x 32 inches
(190.5 x 68.6 x 81 cm)
- 25** *Model Model*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, hat, coffee cans, and leather
84 x 25 x 17 inches
(213.4 x 63.5 x 43 cm)
- 26** *DAR (Daughter of American Revolution)*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, pingpong balls, wig, glasses, and shoes
73 x 39 x 37 inches (185 x 99 x 94 cm)
- 27** *Baby Hippy*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, wig, cord, and fake fur
74 x 30 x 19 inches
(188 x 76 x 48 cm)
- 28** *Fishwoman*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, and buttons
58 x 66 x 34 inches (147 x 168 x 86 cm)

- 29** *Women's Libber*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, cardboard sign, jacket, and boots
82 x 44 x 30 inches (208 x 112 x 76 cm)
- 30** *Playboy Bunny*, 1971
Fabric, fiberfill, fake fur, wire, shoes, stockings, and wig
85 x 31 x 33 inches (216 x 79 x 84 cm)

Large Corridor

- 31** *The Handmaiden (Japan)*, 1975
Fabric, fiberfill, styrofoam, and rhinestones
78 x 56 x 49 inches
(198 x 142 x 124.5 cm)

The costume was used in a striptease performed to a quickening chant (*Git your hands off her!*) with every conceivable pun on hands, arms, and armor as I disengage each grasping appendage and finally free myself of the paws—and effect.

- 32** *Coat of Arms (Maquette)*, 1982
Elastic, wire, and paint
24 x 17 x 29 inches (61 x 43 x 74 cm)

The original costume was created for a party celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Surrealist Manifesto. The character has since become a signature piece used in diverse performances with a reach that far surpassed its grasp.

- 33** *Tourist Grope*, 1999
Muslin, foam, fiberfill, and paint
83 x 60 x 60 inches
(210.8 × 152.4 × 152.4 cm)
- 34** *Agatha*, 1999
Fabric, plastic funnels, cardboard, lace, and cord
92 x 52 x 52 inches
(233.6 × 132 × 132 cm)
- 35** *SAM SEBASTIAN*, 1999
Foam, muslin, wooden skewers, and sunglasses
75 x 52 x 30 inches
(190.5 × 132 × 76 cm)

36 *Lucy*, 1999

Horsehair fabric, glass eyes, rubber,
wood, and satin
98 x 28 x 25 inches
(249 × 71 × 63.5 cm)

37 *Gaggle of Nuns*, 2000

Fabric, PVC, buckram, plastic, gloves,
and leather
80 x 80 x 60 inches
(203 × 203 × 152.4 cm)

Eight modern day martyrs were created for a project entitled *Saints Alive! From Unction to Function* that updated the lives of the saints and put them back out into the streets and piazzas from whence they came. Apart from the beloved *Pasta Madonna* (now gone forever), every character was booted off whatever premises they embarked upon with spatial ire directed at the *Nincompope* thereby fueling the continuing persecution of the Saints but happily giving me enough material to do a piece.

[**33, 34, 35, 36, 37** are from the performance *Roamin' Holiday: A View from A Broad*, which also includes the inflatables *Swish Guard*, *Duh Nincompope*, and *Temple of Been Here on the Ground Floor*.]

38 *Knee-o-Fashism: Wendy Wear-With-All and Her Sole Sister, Ms. Trixie*, 1994

Fabric, plastic, glass, wire, foam,
feathers, cardboard, and makeup
46 x 30 x 13 inches
(116.8 x 76.2 x 33 cm)

The New York Times Magazine invited a few artists to interpret the Spring Collections. I was a shoe-in candidate given my suffering of de feet, their large size causing plenty of dis/dressed sighs. However, given the opportunity, I brought fashion—to its knees.

All works courtesy the artist and David Peter Francis, New York, except where noted.

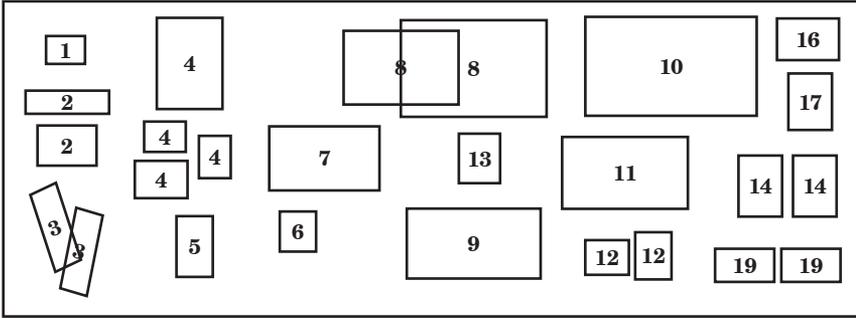
39 *Sadman with Snakes*, 2006

Nylon, blower, and fiberfill
8 x 7 ½ x 8 ½ inches (20 x 19 x 22 cm)

Snakes A-Writhe!, 2006

Nylon and blower
13 x 4 x 8 ½ inches (33 x 10 x 22 cm)

Vitrines



The following entries are excerpted from Pat Oleszko's autobiographical timeline for her upcoming publication, which will be released in 2026.

Hundreds of events in heavy dis/guise
 Thousand yards fabric for inflatables' rise

Millions of word/plays deployed to prosaic
 Blazing bonfires roast work gone archaic

Continuous dis/play of the Pat and the
 Hats
 Short films, big con/cepts, small feats in
 all that

Awards from alined authorities large
 assets
 Yet brushes with malign authority's big
 asses

Close encounters with the latter day
 saints:
 Rose La Rose, Bette Midler, Flann
 O'Brien, John Cage

Oodles of gigs tho surely never sold out
 That might be what this *Time's Flyin's*
 about.

THE TIME'S FLYIN' TIME LION
 With apologies to Mies, more is more

1 1961 Spends much time in Jr. High
 School banished to hall detention for
 hijinks. Early evidence of becoming

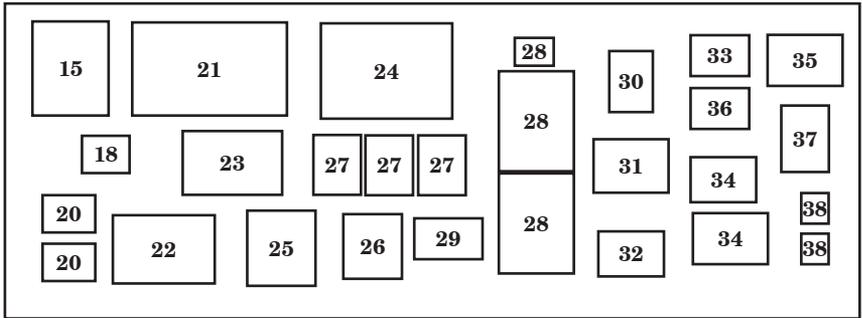
a glamorous stripper and an artist of
 serious intent.

2 1965 Enters Art School at University
 of Michigan. Studies with George
 Manupelli, and Milton Cohen who
 chastises class, "Look at the way
 you're dressed. You're supposed to be
artists!" Causes genetic damage.

[Milton Cohen with friends (top) and
 Oleszko with George Manupelli (bottom)]

3 1965 *Who knew Ann Arbor was the
 Berlin & Bauhaus of its time. Massive
 protests against the war in Vietnam,
 the first Teach-ins, Black Studies
 established, the Weathermen were
 neighbors, Milton Cohen performs
 Space Theater weekly and affects
 everyone he meets. Warhol and the
 Velvet Underground, Oldenburg,
 Rauschenberg, Norman Mailer,
 Morton Feldman, Buckminster Fuller,
 John Cage and Allen Ginsberg visit
 and perform. The legendary Once
 Group forms and George Manupelli
 founds the Ann Arbor Film Festival
 that becomes the wildly artistic
 highlight of the year.*

Starts presenting six non-
 cinematographic shorts before nightly
 showings at the *Ann Arbor Film
 Festival*, a tradition that continues
 for years. Creates enough memorable
 moments to be labeled *Festival Queen*.



4 **1969** Wins *Amateur Striptease Contest* at Esquire Burlesque, Toledo, Ohio. Under tutelage of proprietor Rose La Rose, develops side gig as *Pat the Hippy Strippy*, and another platform for her work.

[Photo of Oleszko with the cast of strippers and comedians (top) and with Rose La Rose (bottom)]

5 **1969** Sees *Dionysus in 69* by *The Performance Group* which features nudity and controversy. In response, makes *Baby Pink*, first stuffed “nude” body, that begins a series dis/playing the roles women play.

Baby Pink premieres extemporaneously at the *Once Group’s Trial of Anne Opie Wehrer and Unknown Accomplices For Crimes Against Humanity* and positively resonates.

6 **1970** Leads Art School graduating class across the stage wearing boots with bicycle horns embedded that honked loudly stepping into the few/sure. Moves to the Bowery in New York. Home becomes Paradise Loft and with Ruth Reichl and Doug Hollis, artistic hub, diner and flophouse for friends.

7 **1970-1972** Working at Max’s Kansas City and the St. Adrian Company, uses job to become different type of waitress every night. Gains avid audience with big, er, tips.

[Oleszko wearing her “superwaitress tool belt,” used to transform into different characters.]

8 **1971** Meets Richard Weigand, art director for *Esquire* and uses work as “visual editorial” for *Esquire*, then *Ms.*, *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *New York*, *Oui*, *Gala*, *Pardon*, *Nova*, *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic* and *Sesame Street Magazines*.

[Sketch by Weigand of a possible billboard ad with Oleszko’s character *Fat Tuesday* (left) and Oleszko featured in *Sesame Street Magazine* (right)]

9 **1971** *Act Three*, *New Yuck Women* show at Museum of Contemporary Crafts, now MAD with eight characters’ rambling citywide performances, causing a ruckus, or not, depending on dis/guise.

10 **1972** Bursts out of *Patty Cake*, the *Girl Outta the Cake Routine* and does burlesque on burlesque for *Eat Art Show* at Cincinnati Center for Contemporary Art, paving the way for the Robert Mapplethorpe’s art of the nude NEA brouhaha. Two years later, *Patty Cake* performance is featured in the Xmas issue of *Esquire* magazine.

Becomes bread and butter piece until it becomes too politically incorrect even for her.

[*Patty Cake* is on view on the Ground Floor of the exhibition.]

11 1972–1982 Enters various booty contests with visual subterfuge: *Ms Subways*, *Miss Polish America*, *Mr. West Village*, *the Roseland Easter Bonnet Contest*, etc. that became known as the *We Know Who Came in Second*, *Who Came in First?* chronicles.

1972 For party celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Breton's Surrealist Manifesto, makes *Coat of Arms* that becomes signature piece. *The Handmaiden (Japan)* soon follows, with arms peeled off to every possible wordplay on arms, armour, hands, and gloves.

[A maquette of the *Coat of Arms* and *The Handmaiden (Japan)* costume are on view in the Large Corridor.]

12 1973 *World Trade Center towers finished*. Takes picture of Twin Towers from bathroom window. Takes picture of bathroom window from the Twin Towers. Conceptual art hard to resist.

13 1973 For the third and final time, a phalanx of police officers hauls her fowl ass out of the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade for—entering as a *Turkey!* Depositing her in subway car, they wait until it is out of the station before bidding her a final adieu. Word has it she dusted the competition.

14 1976 *Clothe Artpark* in upstate New York, a-dressed the trees and the local juvenile delinquents for a lithe event. Notably, all petty crime stopped during the O/let's/go residency.

[The photographs feature the characters *Charles de Gaulle* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.]

15 1976 As *Libertease A Broad*, was pulled 5 miles on wheeled Island by *Tug-a-Luggin'* in 4th of July Parade, Bristol, Rhode Island. Tumbling off her pedestal, Portuguese immigrants rushed to right *Libertease* and push her to the finish line *con brio*.

16 1976 Inspired by hometown Motown, creates the *Padettes of P.O. Town*, a Michelin-esque dancing trio. Sewn together they dance ever in perfect sync.

17 1977 *Pat's Picasso: The Three Musicians* installed on a podium in the Sculpture Garden at MoMA, moves like a windup toy and band for the two-hour Opening, fooling some, not all.

18 1978 Burns field of scarecrows comprised of old costumes in *Planting the Polish Cornfield Hoe! Hoe!* at Artpark, upstate. Fire becomes a convenient yet meaning/fool way to get rid of old work and aid the transmigration of those souls.

1979 Films *Footsi* with David Robinson, finger puppets that traverse the body and the big bad outdoors, and *Kneel & Dimples*, *Hon-Knee-Moon in Knee York* where the knee-ple visit tourist sites, Coney Island and get eaten by a shark.

[*Kneel and Dimples: Hon-Knee-Moon in Knee York* is on view in the Screening Room]

19 1980 *The Soiree of O* at PS 122 features the *You're-A-Vision Song Contest* with singing characters created on various nude body parts dis/played on a faux TV. The same performance is later halted by the presenters in Italy for chrissake. Later, in 1987 it storms, or at least stirs, *Documenta*.

20 1980 Artist-in-residence or comic relief? Creates sculptural photo booth for the Lake Placid Winter Olympics in the *Winner OlymPix*. As *Charles Patless* with a team of bulbous *Bozos*, erupts conspicuously in many world-class events.

21 1980 *The Tool Jest*, an anthropomorphic tool set is commissioned by the Herman Miller Company to troll competitors' showrooms. Later performs on the steps of the Met, Diana Vreeland notwithstanding.

[Sketch of *The Tool Jest* characters]

22 1985 A-dresses the absurdities of war, *War'n Piece: Where Fools Russian* premieres at PS 122 [now Performance Space] and tours widely spreading doom'n gloom in an irreverent fashion. Before those canons goes the Fool.

23 1985 Art breakthrough with captured air as armature; first inflatables constructed. *Inflation: the Air Apparent* premieres in capacious Central Park Bandshell, then in minuscule La Mama's Club akin to staging the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in the wreck room. Memorably confrontational butt in a good way.

24 1986 *Artforum* publishes Sorcerers and Apprentices, a photographic panoply of recurring characters such as the *Coat of Arms*, the *Padettes*, *Tom Saw-yer* and *Mike Hammer*. The *Card-carrying Artist* authenticated the arrival.

Offers to sell drinks at *PS 122 Benefit*. Dressed to impress, told she looks 'too fab to hawk hops' and becomes the *Lottery Queen* thus starting a 12-year stint of interpreting the *Benefit* concept sartorially, with inflatables and additional cast having to outdo herself exponentially. H'art work indeed.

[*C See Cup Cape* character was featured in *Artforum*.]

25 1987 *Bluebeard's Hassle: The Writhes of the Wives* features the lives of those wives with inflatable cohorts such as the *Yupasaurus*, *The Trojan Horse* and *Udder Delight*.

[The program copy of the premiere is seen here, and the listed inflatables are on view on the Ground Floor.]

1988 Performs *Handmaiden: Git Yer Hands Off Her* in feature film *Crossing Delancey*. Residuals now generate enough for maybe one six-pack a year.

[*Handmaiden: Git Yer Hands Off Her* is on view in the Screening Room.]

1989 *Berlin Wall falls* triggering a series of extreme changes in the political landscape of Eastern Europe. Often referred to as the *Domino Effect*, it inspired an inflatable of the same name.

[*Domino Effect* is on view in the Back Gallery of the Ground Floor.]

Films *The Free Little Pig* whose Manhattan homes repeatedly get overtaken by the gentrifying *Yupasaurus*.

[*The Free Little Pig* is on view in the Screening Room.]

26 1992 *Guise on Dolls: Signatures at an Exhibition*, a survey show with the diverse works, opens at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, DC and tours 11 venues nationwide.

1994 Commissioned by the NYTimes Magazine to interpret spring fashion trends, creates *Knee-o-Fashism: Wendy Wear-With-All and Her Sole Sister Ms Trixie*. Wins the *Society of Newspaper Design Award of Excellence*. While buying six inch heels for the Knee-ple, is mistaken for supermodel Veruschka who also has size 13 feet. There the similarities end but she can now die happy.

[*Knee-o-Fashism* is on view at the entrance of the Large Corridor.]

27 1998 Wins Rome Prize. Plying the jury with cannolis had nothing to do with it. Creates *Roamin' Holiday* updating the lives of the saints for which they all are baldly ejected from their presumed habitats. *Duh Nincompope* was arrested and thrown in the Vatican slammer for 5 hours for impersonating the Pope with an Aqua Pistole. This is success.

[Several characters from *Roamin' Holiday: A View from A Broad* are featured in these postcards and are on view in the Large Corridor.]

28 2002 Presents *Rubble Without Pause* nationally, focusing on her long relationship with the Twin Towers, comic, tragic, even sexual, a cathartic experience later featured in *From the Ashes: 10 Artists* and its sequel, a doc about artists living downtown in the aftermath of 9/11.

[This ID was made by Oleszko to enter the 9/11 Ground Zero zone and help with clean-up.]

2003-08 Iraq war started while onstage at the Painted Bride, Philadelphia. Appalled, stops show to watch the bombing with audience.

29 2004 *Airs to DeThrone* features the inflatables *Bush Cabinet, Osama bin Laden* and their untoward activities in the *Free|mont Solstice Parade*, Seattle.

30 2006 In *The Push-off Xmess* Pat's a tinsel Xmas Tree loses control of giant *Red Ball* in deep snow and big winds that unexpectedly turns event into slapstick, MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire.

31 2007 *Womb with a View* functions as a street-wide peep show where participants insert heads into inflated *Womb* for blessings and rapport, Prague Quadrennial.

[*Womb with a View* is on view on the Ground Floor of the exhibition.]

2007 *The Department of Corrections* featured a phalanx of air and error-fueled war mongers including the *WarUSaurUs*, *General Dismay* and *The Empire's Nude Clothes* at MoCAD, Detroit.

[*WarUSaurUs* and *General Dismay* are on view on the Ground Floor of the exhibition.]

32 2008 In *Odds at Sea Bahian Odyssey*, based on local Candomblé mystics, myth/ticks and angst, she then swims to Island of Fear, Sacatar Foundation, Brazil.

2009 Starts a mighty conflagration of Pat's past in *Patty's Inferno* at the MacDowell Colony.

[*Patty's Inferno* is featured in the Screening Room]

33 2012 *Goldman Sex* and *Global Warning Bi-Polar Bear Club Meltdown* posed two aquatic presentations with wide and wild ranging concerns at Indian Lake, NY.

[*Global Warning Bi-Polar Bear Club Meltdown* is featured in this photograph and *Goldman Sex* is on view in the Screening Room.]

34 2013 An 11-hour *Darwin's Nightmare* features beleaguered *Bottle-back Turtles* and marooned *AstroNuts* at Cape Canaveral, Florida.

35 2015 *Gay Wedding Parity* celebrates the Equal Rites Amendment as a bravura em/body/ment of entire all-female wedding party.

36 2015 Leads audience happily astray with *Hello Folly: The Floes and Cons of Arctic Drilling* at ICA, Boston with the cast-off dozens, Bi-polar Bears on a Mission and intrepid community participation. "Who knew eco-activism could be so much fun!" comments one audience member.

37 2020 *STOKE THE VOTE!* stalks Manhattan as a billboard of visual exhortations to civic duty.

38 2025+ And sew, forth. In the streets with *Hands Off!*; *Dumpty Trumpty vs The Resist Ants*; *We are the Resist Ants*; *Know Kings* and other visual aids at protests, NYC.

[Oleszko during the No Kings rally with The Ladies Who Launch: Sandra Greuel, Carrie Skoczek, Geralyn Shukwit, and Erica Connerney (top) and with Greuel, Connerney, and Skoczek from left to right (bottom)]

Catalog

On the occasion of the exhibition, SculptureCenter will publish the artist's first institutional publication (to be released in 2026), which expands on the performance histories around her sculptures with newly commissioned essays by Columbia University professor and art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson; New York-based cultural worker, writer, and researcher Marie Catalano; Budapest-based curator, writer, and artist Gyula Muskovics; and American chef, food writer—and close friend of Oleszko—Ruth Reichl, along with a biographical timeline by the artist in her own idiosyncratic language. The publication will be designed by Tiffany Malakooti.

On View Concurrently

In Practice: Ana Gzirishvili
Jan 29–Apr 27, 2026

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Sun, Mar 22, 1–4pm

Sun, Apr 26, 1–4pm

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