



palette in shades of green and black, beaded into stripes with long black fringe. *This Is Our House*, an exuberant explosion of colored beads in a chevron pattern with seven-colored layers of fringe, made an especially clear connection to Native American culture. Each bag sculpture exuded its own personality: the gold and silver “chains” of *Ain’t Got No, I Got Life*, for example, suggested fierceness, while the bright red and blue beading evoked the colors of the American flag. Although punching bags are associated with boxing and physical aggression, these strikingly embellished sculptures subverted that conventional meaning. Rather than

objects meant to be pummeled, they appeared more like totems to be contemplated and admired.

The visual motifs of the Everlast bags were echoed on beaded, placard-like wall works festooned with fringe. *Burn Baby Burn* resembled a ceremonial shield, the words rendered in beads possibly referring to a Marvin X poem written in the wake of the 1965 Watts Riots—or, perhaps less likely, a disco song. *What We Want What We Need* kept to a largely monochromatic scheme, with hints of red and blue, accompanied by a lush, visually arresting, black and white striped fringe.

Above: Jeffrey Gibson, installation view of “A Kind of Confession,” 2016. Left: Jeffrey Gibson, *All for One, One for All*, 2015. Driftwood, hardware, wool, canvas, glass beads, artificial sinew, metal jingles, nylon fringe, ribbon, steel studs, and high-fire glazed ceramic, installation view.

While the text incorporated into the works was somber in many cases, the geometric shapes, choice of colors, and unexpected materials lent a winking dynamism to the three-dimensional pieces. This contrast between gravitas and liveliness generated an interplay that made the show all the more intriguing. Even the title, “A Kind of Confession,” suggested that the confessing on view here may have been partial, or to use Baldwin’s word, oblique.

—Laura Albritton

NEW YORK
Nicole Eisenman
New Museum

Starting with a deflated *Captain America* sleeping—or knocked out—on a pilaster, Nicole Eisenman’s recent exhibition addressed cultural and gender identity. “Al-ugh-ories” opened with Captain America’s nondescript, battered brown head at rest on a worn baseball glove. The sculpture was surrounded by weird paintings of a deep-sea diver, an androgynous, long-haired Hamlet

with sword and skull, a green head, a cuffed and shackled nude maiden (*Spring Fling*), and a self-portrait of the artist in an overloaded, cramped studio/houseboat on a turbulent sea.

Gender and queer identity have always been touchstones in Eisenman’s work, but she approaches her subjects sideways, creating images that question macho notions of history. *Captain America* (2016) is deflated everywhere except for his big head and big feet, which dangle halfway down the plinth. *IT IS SO* (2014) suggests oral sex through the positioning of two cartoon-like heads, spread knees, and clasped hands. A curled cat sleeps in the foreground. No features reveal gender, but viewers of all sorts got the point. In *Dysfunctional Family* (2000), a small painting of a mother who knits and a father who smokes a bong, the naked baby at their feet mutilates its bleeding sexual area.

Shooter 1 (2016), a gun barrel pointed at the viewer, sends the message that we are all targets for someone. The painting echoes an early Roy Lichtenstein smoking gun drawing for *Time* magazine’s June 21, 1968 “The Gun in America” cover. Eisenman’s references to earlier art and to hard times abound. *Coping* (2008) is a Bruegel-esque village with major differences: its buildings come from vastly different eras and cultures; its range of people—a mummy, a smoker, a pet lover, a cyclist, and more—are thigh-high in muck. Distant mountains beckon, but the inhabitants are stuck in their collective bog.

Eisenman’s sculpture is less about narrative scaffolding and more about personal symbols. *Inhaling Object Symbol Guy* (2013), a crudely constructed plaster sculpture, towers over viewers as it raises a triangular object to its mouth. The ceramic trinkets around his neck seem personal—a leaf shape, a drawer handle, a five-pointed star, the letter “e,” and a pretzel-like



heart. Between his spread legs and feet are partly formed ceramic pieces. The most striking part is the genital area (above the viewer's head), where a rough patch of hair covers a crude hole. This is one of several plaster sculptures, which Eisenman describes as "big queer bodies," first shown at the Carnegie Museum of Art's Hall of Sculpture surrounded by white classical figures.

Hanging Man (2016) centers on an upside-down leg loosely strung to one arm of a cross-like shape. A plaid pantleg and work boot stick out of a brown ceramic urn resting on a wooden base, which, in turn, rests on a paint-stained, wood and metal worktable. The abstracted wax objects on the base include a miniature woven basket holding tiny feathers. Brushes, linseed and poppy oils, and sage incense are grouped on the worktable. Below, a shelf holds a dead rodent, a

Above: Nicole Eisenman, *Hanging Man*, 2016. Wood, wax, and mixed media, 66 x 26 x 93 in. Right: Antonia Papatzanaki, installation view of the "Exceeding Limits" series, 2016.

squeezed-out tube of paint, a geometric wire form, a bucket with a toy deep-sea diver and treasure chest, sea-like waves, and big clips for charging batteries. I missed some of the symbolism here, but the deep-sea diver and treasure chest may represent what Eisenman seeks and a nod to the painting in the opening gallery.

—Jan Garden Castro

NEW YORK

Antonia Papatzanaki
President's Gallery, John Jay
College of Criminal Justice

Greek-born Antonia Papatzanaki is a sculptor of light. Her public installations are well known in Greece, particularly in Athens, where she lives part of the year while residing at other times in New York. Her recent exhibition, "Stratifications," featured two bodies of work: "Exceeding Limits," a series of wall-mounted

sculptures consisting of metal casing and curving Plexiglas forms that emanate light from a hidden source, and the "Cellular" series, which takes its cue from cellular structures and includes both computer-generated prints and sculptures made from layers of Plexiglas. The hidden drive behind these works derives from an appreciation of light as a life-promoting energy. Though there is no direct reference to a particular religious outlook, the works in "Stratifications" honor a symbolism and spirituality based on radiance.

Untitled 18532 (2012), a medium-size wall sculpture from the "Exceeding Limits" series, consists of two stainless steel panels. The surface of the left panel is black, and the right one is silver. In the middle, a brace maintains curvilinear bands of Plexiglas—the effect is that of long hair or a flow of water cascading downward. Light rushes from the edges of the plastic strips, creating an extended fall of luminosity that spreads from the sculptural elements. There is a sense of nearly Cycladic simplicity, reminiscent of the famous harp player at the Met. But Papatzanaki's work is an abstraction, and the implications are infinite, as implied by the series title. In *Untitled 18503* (2005), which shows some

