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CRITICS' PICKS NEW YORK

Will Sheldon

Cleopatra's

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Will Sheldon, *Cut outs* (detail), 2016–17, crayon, spray paint, foamcore, pen, 12 pieces, dimensions variable.

The best antidote to boredom is throwing a party, which might as well be the motto of Will Sheldon's daydreamy exhibition "Tales from a Drippy Realm, The Card Thrower." Hella *festive*, the exhibition is microdosed with fashion and fantasy, and its druggy aesthetic signals a transformative celebration.

drawings installed in unconventional locations. Hiding in the gallery's bookshelves are a goblin that covets a bejeweled egg; a mushroom-headed dancer sprouting up behind a radiator; and a craggy vine growing from a pile of skulls that envelop a crystal ball, placed above the back door. Styled like tramps and pixies, dandies and burlesque dancers, magicians and witches, Sheldon's seemingly angst-ridden creatures populate the space. Intemperance is a major theme—in one drawing, a pink corset with a wrinkly potbelly longingly slumps forward. This symbol of restraint and authority transmogrifies into an illustration of pathos, longing, and lack.

Fagin, 2017, a collaboration between Sheldon and the fashion collective Women's History Museum, is a massive pair of white felt fairy wings carrying a chaotic array of photographs, embroidery, and ribbons, drawn all over with scratchy magic marker. Deliberately dirty, the work's title discomfitingly refers to the pickpocket leader in *Oliver Twist*, a black-market merchant often derisively referred to as "the Jew." "The Jew" is the bullied kid in the stupid high school of history—but in Sheldon's exhibition, with its blend of exuberance and haute abjection, he is the supercool Semite: louche, invincible, and the life of the party.