

ARTFORUM



Zoe Barcza, *Animorphs.S01E17.Not.My.Problem*, 2015, acrylic and flashe on linen, 39 1/2 x 36 1/4».

NEW YORK

Zoe Barcza

SHOOT THE LOBSTER | NEW YORK
138 Eldridge Street
May 31–June 21, 2015

For her New York solo debut, Toronto-born, Stockholm-based artist Zoe Barcza has turned the gallery into a cryptic crime scene. Nine stretched linen canvases painted with trompe l’oeil rips and tears line the walls in a continuous band. It looks as though a claustrophobic tiger tried to claw its way out of the room. While Barcza’s painted gashes play on the actual slashes Lucio Fontana famously made in his monochromes, cheekily codifying them, they’re more than art-historical one-liners. Flat yellow stripes—visible through

some of the “tears”—suggest stretcher bars supporting the linen. By stylizing these beams instead of making them resemble wood, Barcza deliberately transforms the experience of spying them through the holes into a humorous anticlimax, undermining her own illusion.

Surrounded by these spare yet complex paintings stands a cartoony sculpture of a striding man fashioned out of curvy pieces of black-painted steel. *International Loner*, 2015, sports swooping arms, pointy shoes, and a too-small hat. He leans forward with purpose but glances back over his shoulder, as if wary of being recognized while skipping town. He carries two TVs like suitcases, one of which shows a golden wheat field undulating in the wind while the other plays footage plucked from a bizarre French porno. In it, crudely animated condoms clamber over a sleeping woman like so many dwarves merrily molesting Snow White. The baggage-laden loner could be peddling desires—the serenity of the first video, the voyeurism of the second—and we’re his marks. Or maybe he mirrors the way we all nervously tote around our ideals and the weirder, kinkier realities of longing. Together, Barcza’s sculpture and paintings, both of which partly owe strength to her light touch, create a show about confines and freedom, economically packaging these concepts into offhandedly perspicacious pieces.

— Zoë Lescaze