



## HOUSTON

**Anthony Sonnenberg:**  
**"Apollonian & Dionysian"**  
**at Art Palace and**  
**"how2magpie" at Lawndale Art Center**

Anthony Sonnenberg's new work at Art Palace is all about excess. Using porcelain and stoneware, beads and lace, found objects and vintage tchotchkes, he creates elaborate wall and floor sculptures, as well as hanging chandeliers. "Apollonian & Dionysian" may be informed by Greek mythology, but the overall effect is more Baroque than Classical. In pieces like *Big Candy* and *Pair of Candelabras (Pink, Black, White)*, he joins ceramic knickknacks with porcelain and stoneware, and covers them with enamel and glazes until they become drippy amalgamations of figures, animals, flowers and various other objects. The gods referenced in the title are both sons of Zeus—Apollo is the god of reason, and Dionysus the god of wine and ecstasy. This dichotomy informs Sonnenberg's work, but his pieces more often than not fall on the side of Dionysus. Two life-sized self-portraits, titled *Apollo (Self Portrait Pillow)* and *Dionysus (Self Portrait Pillow)*, are referred to by the artist as "pillows," because, like pillows, and they are made from fabric that is sewn together and stuffed with batting. Next they are embellished with semi-precious stones, crystal beads and fringe. These, along with *The Weight*, a photograph of the artist as an overweight Greek god, reflect Sonnenberg's investigation into the effects of indulgence and restraint. Even *Shield and Admonition* contains the embroidered words, "Yield Not to Temptation." The artist considers the struggle to achieve balance between the body and brain, a matter of life and death.

Sonnenberg's recently completed yearlong residency at Lawndale Art Center culminated with a large site-specific installation in the center's front gallery. Titled *Rococo Tent Fort*, it is constructed with luxe fabrics and other materials piled and draped together to create a space wherein the artist pictures a baroque king holding court. Here, as in his other work, the artist uses a variety of materials and techniques to create an exuberant mood. Even Sonnenberg admits that he "consistently crosses the line from enough to never enough." Despite a desire to achieve balance and restraint, it appears that Dionysus has triumphed over Apollo.

—DONNA TENNANT

**"THE WEIGHT," 2016, Anthony Sonnenberg**

ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT, MOUNTED AND LAMINATED ON DIBOND, 33" x 22"

PHOTO: COURTESY ART PALACE