

ARTFORUM



Jen Catron and Paul Outlaw, *How do we discuss a tragedy and a conspiracy?*, 2018, resin and acrylic paint, 24 x 15".

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Jen Catron and Paul Outlaw

POSTMASTERS

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Jen Catron and Paul Outlaw's "an idea of god, or a toothbrush" offers a shaded view of the American dream: full of sugar, laced with poison, and topped with a cherry for your tasting pleasure. The art duo, lauded for their ostentatious performances and installations, have targeted the dark heart of the United States in eighteen mixed-media sculptures that feature, among other things, depictions of delectable cakes, gooey slices of pizza, and one enormous ice cream sundae.

This vision of America—the land of Pizzagate, The Jim Bakker Show, and WikiLeaks—is defined by unchecked paranoia, doomsday prophets, and routine catastrophes. *Child's Dollhouse #infowars (Alex Jones' Bathroom)*, 2018, reveals the toilet lair of the titular right-wing commentator, his medicine cabinet overflowing with quack products like "Alpha Power" and "Prosta-Guard." Meanwhile, *909 Solo Cups*, 2017, and *In The Future the Past Will be Different (Part 2)*, 2016, reimagine the mass murder-suicides of Jonestown and the Heaven's Gate cults, respectively, as the wild aftermath of a frat house party and an unnervingly stilled college dormitory.

Three colossal sculptures try defusing the anxiety in the room. *Bright Shiny Object*, 2018, is the aforementioned sundae, a monstrous dessert more than five feet tall. *Sin(k)*, 2018, is a running fountain and could be soothing if you try to ignore the piss-like fluid pouring from its faucet. *Tipping Point*, 2018, is a grotesque, dismembered torso with a refrigerator built into its back, offering visitors



frozen treats to help ease the horror. Almost lost between these gargantuan works is *How do we discuss a tragedy and a conspiracy?*, 2018—twenty minuscule backpacks scattered across a pedestal, representing the children murdered in the 2012 Sandy Hook shooting. There's nothing to diffuse the palpable emptiness between each tiny bag, just the free popsicle to help temper the bitter flavor of reality.

— Gabriel H. Sanchez

