

## Josef Bull: The T Party at SITUATIONS

[artefuse.com/2017/05/13/josef-bull-the-t-party-at-situations-125050/](http://artefuse.com/2017/05/13/josef-bull-the-t-party-at-situations-125050/)

By Osman Can Yerebakan





Josef Bull does not look far for inspiration; he has a particular eye for where the potential lies.

Through his acute observation, intricacies embedded within the mundane unravel scenarios in which he is either the agent or a spectator. In Bull's hands, Proust's famous bite of a madeline translates into an arbitrary click on e-Bay or a quick conversation with a stranger.

Akin to dominoes crashing one another, instants in life—the good, the bad, and the ugly all in all—intertwine and amalgamate. In *The T Party*, his first solo New York exhibition currently on view at SITUATIONS, Bull utilizes tea as a catalyst to initiate a train of thoughts, memories, and facts that infuse through the artist's equally circumstantial and research-based process. The eponymous mixed-media sculpture lies in the center of his study and of the exhibition. This Duchampian hybrid of basketball hoop backboards and the serving tray poses equally pristine and satirical with its untouched and meticulous juxtaposition as well as the absurd display of found commercial objects that are scattered or hidden. Dissecting each element to understand Bull's mental map, the viewer discovers startling parallels and coincidences the artist came across while building the sculpture.





A presidential tea cup the artist found online honor Ronald Reagan with Chinese motifs, sitting

atop a 99 cent Arizona brand ice tea can in which the artist placed a light source to emphasize the cup's embellishments. On top of the main section of the serving tray, one finds a tea pot mimicking Reagan's head. While the pot appeared to the artist on a British online store that sells Reagan and Thatcher memorabilia, Bull added final touches onto the item and turned the late president into drag with make up. The lower rack hosts a large size high platform shoe that could be potentially used in drag performances, although a closer inspection reveals that the item is no other than a tip jar. With a lid-like cap added to its sole to collect cash and a tip hole that could easily serve as a pourer, this footwear item seems not much different than a tea pot either.

Bull's fascination with Reagan brought to his attention such online finds; however, his story of finding the basketball hoop backboards is sensational. Looking for the right platform to carry the serving tray while sandwiching the scrolling text screens at the bottom, Bull realized the exactness of these backboards to the screens in terms of width. While the screens read haphazard words that universally or personally relate to tea according to the artist, his intention to create infinity feel on the surface is accomplished thanks to the plexiglass boards he found online. Additionally, mounted onto the tray's handle is an iPad streaming a collage of web-sourced videos with directly or obliquely tea-related references among which are the current Youtube sensation of autonomous sensory meridian response (ASMR) videos. Shot amateurishly to trigger sensory feelings on the neck part of the audience, these videos commonly include an anonymous voice whispering to the camera while rubbing and caressing a random object—unsurprisingly, the footage Bull edited includes tea can as the fetish object.

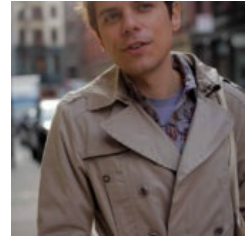




In conversation with this central piece is Tall T-shirt in which an extra large size shirt made out

of tea towels hold traces of an ample range of sources including a vacation the artist had in Boca Grande in Florida where he came across a Bush family wedding while eating at a restaurant called Pink Elephant. Images of leprechauns who are often times depicted as shoemakers or one shoe missing pair with Bull's fascination with the basketball team Boston Celtics and their leprechauns logo. Furthermore, the single shoe myth ties to the high heel platform in the core of the tray. Tea towels that the artist embellished with patches of various images of pop culture (playing cards, mushrooms, and infinity symbol, for example) and added a note about Reagan's visit to Ireland in 1984 are sewn together and turned into a giant shirt. Hanging on an abnormally stretched finger, the finger sits inside a mini basketball hoop.

**Tags:** [exhibition](#), [Josef Bull](#), [SITUATIONS](#), [T Party](#), [Tall T-shirt](#)



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<http://www.radiatorarts.com/works-reflections-of-failure/>