

ART & DESIGN

# David Shaw: 'Eat Out'

Art in Review

By KEN JOHNSON    OCT. 31, 2013

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A pair of esoteric diagrams and a small bowl of water on the floor of the gallery foyer welcome Feature visitors. A wall label says that this shamanic arrangement by the artist Jesse Bransford is intended to help David Shaw, whose beautiful, trippy exhibition occupies the main gallery, with his water problems. (Mr. Shaw's New York studio has been flooded several times.) More immediately, Mr. Bransford's ritualistic presentation attunes viewers to something magical in Mr. Shaw's show, which consists mainly of three tables, each of which has a wood-framed mirror top. One is in the shape of a pentagon; a second made of two conjoined pentagons; and the third of three. They are supported on legs made from debarked tree trunks. Slender branches also are attached so they seem to be passing through the mirrored tops. Displayed on the tables are numerous pieces of dinnerware made of clear,

handblown glass. Many of these have parts that seem to be frozen in midsplash, as if they had solidified in the instant of passage from liquid to solid. On one wall strips of holographic tape in a pattern of irregular pentagons represent a cloud.

To make sense of all this it helps to know that the pentagonal motif refers to a molecular structure called the **indole**, a primary building block of serotonin as well as psychedelic substances like DMT and LSD. The whole installation prompts reflections on nature and culture, consciousness and chemistry, science and sorcery and perception and reality. It's a mind-stretcher.

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