Math Bass, *Newz!*, 2018, gouache on canvas, 84 x 82". From the series "Newz!," 2013–.

NEW YORK

Math Bass

MARY BOONE GALLERY | UPTOWN
745 Fifth Avenue
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Caution. Hazard. Falling rocks. With their flat, clear-cut shapes and bold colors, the paintings of Math Bass recall wordless road signs: dangers distilled to their starkest, most essential forms. What perils or pleasures lie ahead, however, are less easy to decipher. The New York–born, Los Angeles–based artist has coined a style somewhere between representation and abstraction, where communication breaks down.

But if Bass skewers visual and written languages for their inability to convey certain experiences, she seasons her semiotics with a dash of humor. Several forms—a cadmium-red cone, a rectangular box with a suggestive black slit, the open jaws of an alligator—appear in different configurations. Speech bubbles become cartoon bones and balls with truncated cocks. The paintings, all part of the artist's ongoing "Newz!" series, 2013–, could be stills from a single animation or the building blocks of an early PC game. They work best as a group, as these canvases are syllables. Together they form a Dada poem for the age of advertising, a comic strip by way of Paul Rand and Ellsworth Kelly.

Four plywood towers, *Dog and Fog*, 2018, emit recorded chants, which do not contribute much, other than noise, to the exhibition. More interesting is the anthropomorphic sculpture in the gallery's smallest room. A tapered canvas tube in speedball red lies on an electric-blue slab like a sacrificial offering. Reminiscent of an empty body bag, *Evacuated Figure*, 2018, introduces a welcome shot of pathos into what might otherwise have been a too-slick show. There are, we sense, casualties in this coded world.

— *Zoë Lescaze*