

Bonita Bub

Bonita Bub's most recent sculptural recitation of *The Donut* (2013/2021) further complicates the distinction between pictorial space and sculptural space, between the imagistic sense of the work and its reflexive apprehension. The reference image for her sculptural model – a postcard chanced upon by the artist – shows a freestanding bar-in-the-round, with a line of empty stools, two unfilled glasses and a bottle of wine. The bar in the postcard was designed by modernist architect Werner Düttmann (1921-1983), who is quoted as saying 'I believe in scale, and that is what I've been striving for, that concrete is concrete and wood, wood, *and that the scale remains human*'.¹ Pictured front on is the postcard, every dimension of real space is rendered flat by the photograph. Bub's physical re-construction of this iconic bar was generated through an analysis of its component parts and their internal scale derived from this exact image. She has built it out, tested and refined it, using sculpture as an investigatory tool in the service of embodied knowledge. Bub's practice reflects what Rosalind Krauss identified in early Constructivism, an ambition 'to dominate material by means of a projective, conceptual grasp of form'.² Their strategy, 'to build the object out from what appears to be a generative core', allowed sculpture to model by reflection the analytic intelligence of both viewer and maker.³

The generative pictorialism of *The Donut* is forced by Bub to conflict with the sculpture as a rational, physical object. Even though the sculpture is experienced as a bar-in-the-round, from the front it might appear as complete, but when viewed obliquely its framework is revealed to be open and the sculpture becomes partly transparent and exposed. One can experience it as both an image and as a physical construction. Bub's achievement then is not only that the sculpture provides more than one possibility, but that it shows these possibilities to be mutually incompatible. It remains open and unfinished, the bar's planar surface upholding the belief 'that the scale remains human'. While it still supports its intended function of bringing people together around the presentation of art.

Oscar Capezio

(from *Out of Place*, exh. cat., Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, 2021, pp.20-21)

¹ The iconic bar still persists in Berlin's historic *Akademie der Künste* (Academy of Art), located in the anteroom to the Akademie's events space. Architect Werner Düttmann's surviving notes regard the Akademie's space allocation for meeting, eating and celebrating, as necessary for all. Website: <https://wernerduettmann.de/en/karte/akademie-der-kuenste>

² Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1981) 67. Originally published 1977.

³ Ibid.