

**PAPERS**

**Gail Hastings' Studio**

**untitled (with magazine), 1989**

Pigmented wax on wood, acrylic on wood, fabricated magazine

Six components

Overall measurement: > 2m x 2m of empty space between corner blocks

Four corner blocks demarcate an empty centre. The empty space is the sculpture, the thing to see. Except, we cannot see it. It is too alike the space outside the blocks to differentiate itself as separate. There is no delineation between the space that is an artwork, and the space that is not an artwork.

To the left is a plinth (pedestal, platform) of especially built dimensions for an art magazine that imitates *Art Forum*—first published in 1962 in the North America—in its size and paper stock. The plinth, as the traditional place for sculpture at the centre of 360 degree viewing circle, in effect denounces the demarcated space alongside the plinth as the thing to look at, by pronouncing its own contents as the sculpture, the thing to see.

Two states of sculpture sit alongside each other, a representation of sculpture in a magazine and the actual sculpture represented. The two states, however, contradict one another.

Upon opening the magazine, its pages are empty except at the centre where the pages contain content. This is opposite to the sculpture alongside that instead has an empty centre. The magazine contradicts the actual space of the sculpture in the room.

The magazine's central page depicts a part of the artwork, not the whole artwork. Again, the representation of the sculpture contradicts the sculpture's wholeness in the room.

The representation is of a solid part of the artwork, not its space. Once more, the representation contradicts the artwork.

Since the sculpture has first to be made before it can be reproduced in, for instance, an art magazine, its representation is secondary to the artwork itself. Yet, since the representation in the magazine is on the plinth, the representation takes precedence over the artwork to become, instead, primary to the artwork. This is particular to three-dimensional work due to its physical nature which takes up physical space, is often heavy and difficult if not costly to store. Pragmatic factors ally against a three-dimensional work's ongoing existence in a physical form, wherein its documentation takes precedence.

Left at that, the actual space of the artwork would remain sublated into its opposite, its reproduction. Except, in this instance its sublation into its opposite—the reproduction—and shift from primary to secondary roles coincides with a reversal to form a coincidence, a collision between opposites. The coincidence forms a turning point at which the process folds back upon itself.

At first, the representation remains primary to the now secondary artwork as long as the magazine is open at the artwork's reproduction at its centre. Once the magazine is closed to fit within the plinth's boundary once more and the reproduction disappears, the representation surrenders its primary role and the reversal begins. The representation becomes a memory secondary to the actual sculpture that regains primary existence as the artwork in the room.

Made asunder at first, the space of the artwork returns rendered anew, pinned down by four corners as the thing to see in delineation from the space outside its corners—in all its emptiness.

Gail Hastings  
November 2022