

Robert Wilhite
BOB's YOUR UNCLE

Wirtz Art
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Robert Wilhite uses abstraction to eliminate unnecessary distinctions between painting and frame, artwork and environment. *BOB's YOUR UNCLE (BYU)* was originally commissioned by Maxine Kopsa, director of the Kunstverein Amsterdam, as an installation and serving room at the non-profit art space (2014-2016). Over two years, the bar functioned as a venue for forty-nine artist presentations, and remains a significant part of the Kunstverein's history and Amsterdam's artistic community.

Wilhite's environment notes the complete artistic and architectural environments of Utopian-minded artists, such as Theo Van Doesberg, Gerrit Rietveld, and El Lizzitsky, whose goals were clearly stated and understood through the simple visual vocabulary exemplified in their works of artistic, decorative, and architectural unity. Wilhite is interested in the simplicity of imagery, and the utopian idea of a future return to the basic priorities in life.

Though *BYU* is a contemporary, unified artistic environment in its own right, the project's rigid artistic and political goals are aligned with these earlier historic works: the reference serves to potentially enable a significant discussion through the comparison. Wilhite takes up the idea of architecture that would become sculpture, creating tables, chairs, and paintings that are simple and unified in a timeless environment. Overt classifications—design, architecture, painting, sculpture, furniture—become irrelevant.

ROBERT WILHITE is a Los Angeles based artist. He studied at the University of California, Irvine with noted artists Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, and Ed Moses among others. His 45-year career includes sculpture, painting, drawing, design, and both theatrical and sound performances. Wilhite's practice, as he commented, is a continual juggle between the serendipitous, the conceptual, and the tangible. In the late '70s, Wilhite collaborated on four plays with Guy de Cointet. He remains involved in the re-staging of these plays today.

Image: Installation, *BOB's YOUR UNCLE*, Kunstverein, Amsterdam, 2014.

For press inquiries, please contact swg@wirtzart.com

swg@wirtzart.com

www.wirtzart.com

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