



## If The Walls Could Talk: Bonita Bub & Marilyn Schneider

*By [Rebecca Ross \(/people/13412\)](#)*

For Sydney-based artists Bonita Bub and Marilyn Schneider “Leisure Kitsch” is a first-time collaboration. Together the artists have constructed an awning that spans the main wall of the space. The fabric and structure of the work is tied to ideas of oceanic pursuits and leisure lifestyle settings.

Bonita Bub has a Master of Visual Arts from Sydney College of the Arts and has also studied in Vienna and Glasgow. Marilyn Schneider is currently completing her Masters of Fine Art at UNSW COFA and recently completed a studio residency at Red Gate in Beijing. Both artists have been involved in projects at Firstdraft Depot and Artspace in Sydney.

**Can you tell me about your collaborative work “Leisure Kitsch” currently at The Walls?**

*Bub:* “Leisure Kitsch” is a site-specific installation that plays on the fantasy of leisure lifestyles, which we (outsiders and or tourists) associate with Miami Florida, and

Miami Queensland. A yellow and white awning is attached to the walls of “The Walls” gallery, which is supported by stainless steel posts that are drilled into the concrete floor.

### **What three words would you use to describe yourselves as artists?**

*Bub:* Ego-less, academic, formalist.

*Schneider:* I agree with Bonita. Here are two more: determined and thoughtful.

### **How have you connected with the Gold Coast?**

*Bub:* We have connected with the Gold Coast in terms of perceived ideas of leisure lifestyle, which includes also “luxury” qualities inherent in resort architecture, shopping malls, casinos and theme parks.

*Schneider:* I really love the architecture of the hotels, signage and graphics. I think that what I am most interested in is how backdrops and furnishings can be reflective of a certain attitude or can reveal something about our culture. These commercial spaces also have a manipulative quality too.

### **Individually describe your artistic style and interests?**

*Bub:* Formal industrial sculptures that relate to sites. I reproduce and reinterpret existing structures - mixing fantasy and reality. I am interested in systems and processes. I produce many of the works myself using my own wood workshop and other welding workshops.

*Schneider:* Abstract, minimal site specific installations. I use synthetic or industrial materials to create imitations that re-model generic architectural models, for example a theme park. The installations aim to critique and analyse the site of investigation and to offer an alternative through a reconstruction of experience.

### **When did you realise you were an artist?**

*Bub:* When I wanted to make school projects on flat poster paper stand up as 3D objects.

*Schneider:* I would have been about 4 or 5, someone gave me a box of chalk for my birthday and I just did drawings non-stop on all the walls and floors of our house. I don't think my parents were too pleased about that.

### **How are you evolving as an artist?**

*Bub:* Slowly and with no particular strategic plan. I don't have enough distance to answer this.

*Schneider:* I am always looking for new areas of investigation, wanting the next project to be different and (hopefully) better or as good as the last. I think that with each project my methodology changes slightly too, for example with this one, it was about extracting and isolating stylised elements (to draw attention to them) that we had found through our research. I don't think I have worked directly in this way before.

### **What inspires you?**

*Bub:* Modernist architecture, Brutalist concrete architecture, concrete/industrial equipment and contemporary German sculpture.

*Schneider:* Everything! My worst fear is being in jail or somewhere where I can't be exposed to (or find) things that interest me. I'm also a city girl, so I love shopping malls, hotels, gyms and anything artificial that also tries to be a bit glamorous. At the moment I'm researching the interiors of luxury yachts and global style architecture. In previous projects I have looked at Hollywood houses, trade fairs and casinos.

### **Who or what is your muse?**

*Bub:* Manfred Pernice (German Sculptor), Charlotte Posenenske (German female sculptor who quit making art in the 1960s), Frank Nitsche (German Painter) and Isa Genzken (German Sculptor).

*Schneider:* My friends or people whom I have formed meaningful connections with. I think that the conversations that I have had with people that I admire have formed a huge influence on how I think about making work. Some of my favourite artists are Amalia Ulman, Thea Djordjadze, Ryan Trecartin, Martin Creed, and Dorit Margreiter. I also like conceptual art and minimalism.

### **What are your thoughts on your first collaborative work and how did this come about?**

*Bub:* It has been uncomplicated, fun and the artwork is more successful as a result of pooled skills and ideas. There have been no real dramas because neither myself, nor Marilyn are Diva-types. It was Dylan's (co-director, The Walls) idea to bring Marilyn and myself together. I thought it was a great idea and a bit surprised that it didn't happen earlier, considering our interest in materials and architecture. We met for coffee, I suggested that we collaborate on an awning structure that I was really excited about. She was equally excited. Then we developed the concept, sourced materials and built it together.

*Schneider:* What Bonita said! I have found it a really rewarding process.

## **What have each of you brought to "Leisure Kitsch"?**

*Bub:* I believe Marilyn has brought her interest in casino, resort and luxury mall architecture to the conceptual development of the work. Using the Knot App on her iPad, she has also single-handedly engineered all knots on the structure. I have brought my interest in Modernist architecture, industrial materials, interest in reinterpreting existing structures. I have also brought technical, repressed builder skills, as I welded the posts specifically for the structure.

*Schneider:* We can't forget about my DJ'ing skills! On the opening night we had Hed Kandi pumping really loudly, I think it really activated the space, it was like being at a pool party.

## **What role does contemporary art play in today's society?**

*Bub:* The need that can't be filled by existing forms of either entertainment or news and media.

*Schneider:* Art can't change the world but it can change the way that we think.

*"Leisure Kitsch" is in its last week at The Walls Contemporary Art Space, Miami. It closes on Saturday 3 May.*

*Published 30 Apr 2014.*