

ARTLOT

HOT BAR

Steph Gonzalez-Turner

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Hot Bar presents new work by Steph Gonzalez-Turner: three freestanding structures made from the glass shields and metal armatures of a self-service buffet station salvaged from the cafeteria of a recently vacated Manhattan tech headquarters that cannot legally be named. The interior—designed by a celebrated architect and realized as part of an extravagant, short-lived corporate build-out—operated for less than five years before the company abruptly abandoned its lease after the pandemic. These discarded fixtures, remnants of a momentary era of tech-sector utopian opulence, become the axis of Gonzalez-Turner's inquiry.

The artist treated the glass sneeze-guard panels with a silver-nitrate mirroring process that reveals fingerprints, smudges, and grease marks as luminous residues. What once served to prevent contact now becomes a catalog of it. Shifting lighting conditions in the outdoor lot render an ever-evolving matrix, as the mirrored panes move through stages of reflectivity and translucency, presenting a forensic amplification of the city's mutable architectures of labor and hygiene.

Hot Bar takes on the aesthetics of corporate modularity—which draws equally from minimalist design and the sterile visual language of medical apparatuses—through a willful misreading of the manufacturer's claim of "complete adjustability." Networks of sockets and joinery are retorqued in extremis, producing a splaying scaffold of abstracted functionality. This operates as an inversion of Gonzalez-Turner's previous sculptural works of intricately compressed, freestanding parquetry (a wood inlay technique typically used for flooring); here, in contrast, architectural component parts undergo a radial eruption outward.

Guarded by extensive bureaucratic red tape, these materials remained proprietary even as refuse. Procuring them from the privatized disposal stream required a covert tip from an industry insider, a multimillion-dollar insurance policy, and a string of favors and lucky breaks. Having crossed over from this murky material economy of non-disclosure into the bright light of an overgrown lot in South Brooklyn, the salvaged stainless steel and glass propose an unlikely escape from damnation—or perhaps the solace of a liberatory afterlife—staging a contemplation on thresholds: between transparency and obfuscation, cleanliness and filth, asset and liability.

-Jacob Jackmauh

Steph Gonzalez-Turner (b. 1984, Philadelphia, PA) lives and works in New York, NY. Gonzalez-Turner has earned a MFA in Painting from Yale University in 2017 and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: Two-person show with Peter Halley, 'T' Space Gallery, New York; Skibum MacArthur, Los Angeles. Recent group exhibitions include: Galerie Timonier, NYC, Post Times, NYC, Pace, NYC (curated by Arlene Shechet) and Europa, NYC. She has been the recipient of several awards and artist residencies, including Yale University's Helen Watson Winternitz Painting Prize and Blended Reality: Applied Research Project, in partnership with Hewlett-Packard.