

MoMA

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AND MoMA PS1 PRESENT FIRST MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF BRUCE NAUMAN IN 25 YEARS

Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts

The Museum of Modern Art, The Steven and Alexandra Cohen Center for Special Exhibitions, sixth floor: October 21, 2018–February 18, 2019

MoMA PS1: October 21, 2018–February 25, 2019

NEW YORK, NY, October 16, 2018—The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1 present the first comprehensive retrospective in 25 years devoted to the work of American artist Bruce Nauman (b. 1941), on view at The Museum of Modern Art from October 21, 2018, through February 18, 2019, and at MoMA PS1 from October 21, 2018, through February 25, 2019. Co-organized by The Museum of Modern Art and Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel, ***Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts*** draws upon the rich holdings of both institutions and nearly 70 lenders. Encompassing Nauman’s full career and featuring a total of 165 works, the exhibition occupies the Museum’s entire sixth floor and the whole of MoMA PS1. This joint presentation provides an opportunity to experience Nauman’s command of a wide range of mediums, from drawing, printmaking, photography, and sculpture to neon, performance, film and video, and architecturally scaled environments. *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts* is organized by Kathy Halbreich, Laurenz Foundation Curator and Advisor to the Director, The Museum of Modern Art; with Heidi Naef, Chief Curator, and Isabel Friedli, Curator, Schaulager Basel; and Magnus Schaefer, Assistant Curator, and Taylor Walsh, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition was on view at Schaulager Basel from March 17 to August 26, 2018.

“Few artists are able to sustain this level of relentless invention over a 50-year career,” said lead curator Kathy Halbreich. “Nauman has spent half a century devising new forms to convey both the moral hazards and the thrill of being alive. His work has continuously explored how spatial and psychological tensions—provoked by shifting perceptions of time, sound, language, and movement—structure human experience. Nuanced ethical questions are often masked as stark dichotomies, and perceptual tricks unsettle the ways we see ourselves. At a time when the notion of truth feels increasingly under attack, Nauman compels viewers to relinquish the safety of the familiar, keeping us alert, ever vigilant, and wary of being seduced by easy answers.”

Since 1970, Nauman has frequently worked on a monumental scale, necessitating this expansive presentation across both of MoMA’s locations. Both venues include works in all mediums and from all phases of Nauman’s career, offering distinct but complementary perspectives on his wide-ranging practice. The characteristics of the two spaces have shaped the curatorial approach to each. The flexibility of The Museum of Modern Art’s sixth-floor

galleries are uniquely suited to some of the artist's largest works, and the 50 works in this portion of the exhibition move swiftly from Nauman's early sculptures derived from his own body to room-size installations that directly involve the viewer. The suite of former classrooms in MoMA PS1's historic building houses 115 works, organized thematically to chart the recurrence of key concepts across the decades. The presentation highlights the underlying consistencies in a seemingly disparate body of work, as the artist revisits his earlier motifs and concerns with new urgency.

Disappearing Acts traces strategies of withdrawal in Nauman's art—both literal and figurative incidents of removal, deflection, and concealment. Close relatives of disappearance also appear in many forms. They are seen, for example, in holes the size of a body part, in the space under a chair, in the self vanishing around a corner, and in the mental blocks that empty creative possibility. "For Nauman," said Halbreich, "disappearance is both a real phenomenon and a magnificently ample metaphor for grappling with the anxieties of both the creative process and of navigating the everyday world."

MoMA has a long history with Bruce Nauman. The Museum of Modern Art's collection includes more than 80 works by the artist, among them the joint acquisition, with the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, Schaulager Basel, of two major installations: *Days* (2009) and *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (2015/2016). The Museum hosted the last major traveling retrospective of his work in 1995, also co-curated by Halbreich, and Nauman was among the artists included in MoMA PS1's inaugural exhibition, *Rooms*, in 1976. *Disappearing Acts* marks the US premiere of two works: *Leaping Foxes* (2018), Nauman's first large-scale sculptural work in more than a decade, and his 3-D video projection *Contrapposto Split* (2017). Shot in state-of-the-art 4K 120-fps 3-D, *Contrapposto Split* reinterprets the iconography of his seminal 1968 video *Walk with Contrapposto*. Another rarely seen work—the nearly 50-foot-long *Kassel Corridor (Elliptical Space)* (1972)—will be on view in New York for the first time.

Live performances of *Wall/Floor Positions*, first staged by Nauman in 1965 when he attended the University of California, Davis, will be presented at The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1. As no documentation of the original live event survives, a 1968 video (on view at MoMA PS1) provides the score for this solo performance. The work will be presented every hour on the hour at The Museum of Modern Art every Thursday and Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and at MoMA PS1 every Friday and Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Performances are approximately 30 minutes in duration.

SPONSORSHIP

The exhibition is made possible by Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel.

Leadership support is provided by The Sandra and Tony Tamer Exhibition Fund.

Major support is provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art and by The Jill and Peter Kraus Endowed Fund for Contemporary Exhibitions.

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TICKETS

During *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts*, MoMA PS1 tickets can be redeemed for \$10 off admission to The Museum of Modern Art. As always, a ticket to The Museum of Modern Art can be presented for free admission at MoMA PS1 within 14 days of purchase. The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1 are located just two stops apart on the E or M trains from 5 Av/53 St in Manhattan to Court Sq-23 St in Queens.

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue that offers a comprehensive view of the artist's work in all media—including drawings; early fiberglass sculptures; sound environments; architecturally scaled, participatory constructions; rhythmically blinking neons; and a recent 3-D video that harks back to one of Nauman's earliest performances. A wide range of authors—Kathy Halbreich, Magnus Schaefer, Taylor Walsh, Thomas Beard, Briony Fer, Nicolás Guagnini, Rachel Harrison, Ute Holl, Suzanne Hudson, Julia Keller, Liz Kotz, Ralph Lemon, Glenn Ligon, Catherine Lord, Roxana Marcoci, Felicity Scott, Martina Venanzoni, Jeffrey Weiss—focus on topics that have been largely neglected, such as the architectural structures that posit real or imaginary spaces as models for ethical inquiry and mechanisms of control. 352 pages, 375 illustrations. Hardcover, \$75. ISBN: 978-1-63345-031-8. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager. Available at MoMA stores and online at store.moma.org. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada; by the Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager, in Switzerland; by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König in Germany and Austria; and by Thames & Hudson in the rest of the world.

VW SUNDAY SESSIONS

Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste, *Pendulum Music: An Arrangement for Four Performers and Geodesic Dome, 2018*

Sunday, October 21, 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

MoMA PS1

On the occasion of the opening of *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts*, artist, composer, and performer Jeremy Toussaint-Baptiste presents a reinterpretation of Steve Reich's sculptural performance-composition *Pendulum Music* (1968). Originally presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1969 with Bruce Nauman as a participant, *Pendulum Music* is comprised of four individuals who swing hanging microphones over amplifiers, creating bursts of feedback that fall in and out of phase with each other. Attending to the work's legacy while also taking liberty with what is left unspecified in Reich's 1968 score, Toussaint-Baptiste simultaneously references the work's history and reveals new aural, spatial, and relational possibilities. Responding to Bruce Nauman's *Bouncing in the Corner* performances, in which Nauman uses the architecture of two walls to guide the movement of his body, Toussaint-Baptiste will use the architecture of the VW Dome to dictate the composition's sculptural and sonic framework. Joined by artists Rena Anakwe, Luwayne Glass (aka Dreamcrusher), and Greg Fox, Toussaint-Baptiste makes explicit what he sees as "the exciting and radical phenomenon of unfixed intersections which emerge from a fixed structure" within Reich's

original composition. This new commission is presented as part of MoMA PS1's VW Sunday Sessions performance series.

Free as part of MoMA PS1's Fall Open House.

Talking Nauman

Selected Sundays at 3:00 p.m.

MoMA PS1

Presented as part of VW Sunday Sessions, this series of gallery talks focuses on individual works on view at MoMA PS1 in *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts*. Featuring artists, scholars, and critics—including contemporaries of Nauman and younger figures in the field—the series provides new perspectives on the breadth and scope of Nauman's work.

Talking Nauman will include presentations from Julia Bryan-Wilson, Paul Chan, Abigail DeVille, Che Gossett, Kathy Halbreich, Mary Heilmann, Ana Janevski, Rin Johnson, Ajay Kurian, Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer, Thomas Lax, Carolyn Lazard, John Miller, and Aura Rosenberg, with more dates and participants to be announced.

Sunday, October 28 - Rin Johnson
Sunday, November 4 - Ajay Kurian
Sunday, November 11 - Che Gossett
Sunday, November 18 - Mary Heilmann
Sunday, December 2 - Julia Bryan-Wilson
Sunday, December 9 - John Miller and Aura Rosenberg
Sunday, January 20 - Carolyn Lazard
Sunday, January 27 - Paul Chan
Sunday, February 3 - Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer
Sunday, February 10 - Abigail DeVille
Sunday, February 24 - Kathy Halbreich

Free with museum admission.

VW Sunday Sessions and the VW Dome at MoMA PS1 are made possible by a partnership with Volkswagen of America, who have supported the program since its inception.

Major support is provided by the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation.

Dance programming as part of VW Sunday Sessions at MoMA PS1 is supported in part by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Six Problems in Bruce Nauman

Tuesday, November 13, 6:00 p.m.

The Museum of Modern Art, Education and Research Building, Theater 3

Inspired by Bruce Nauman's *Six Sound Problems for Konrad Fischer* (1968), this panel discussion will feature new perspectives on Nauman's work from six scholars who have studied his career in depth. Each participant will speak about a "problem" in Nauman's work that has long eluded them. Panelists include **Michael Auping**, independent scholar and former Chief Curator, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; **Carlos Basualdo**, The Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Senior Curator of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art; **Janet Kraynak**, Senior Lecturer and Director of MA in Modern and Contemporary Art, Columbia University; **Constance M. Lewallen**, Adjunct Curator, University of California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; **Joan Simon**, independent curator, writer,

and arts administrator; and **Rob Storr**, artist and curator and Professor, Yale University. The program will be moderated by Kathy Halbreich, Laurenz Foundation Curator and Advisor to the Director, The Museum of Modern Art.

Tickets (\$15; \$10 members and Corporate members; \$5 students, seniors, and staff of other museums) can be purchased via moma.org or at the information desk beginning October 13, or at the Education and Research Building reception desk on the day of the program.

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