

Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts

A large-scale retrospective of the US artist from his earliest work to his most recent

17 March 2018 – 26 August 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

On 16 March 2018, Schaulager is opening a comprehensive retrospective of the work of Bruce Nauman. Born in 1941 and based in New Mexico, Nauman is widely acknowledged as one of the most pioneering and influential artists of our time. The exhibition, «Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts», organized in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art, New York (MoMA), brings together rarely exhibited pieces as well as renowned key works. The show not only includes the world premiere of the artist's most recent work, a 3D video, but also a monumental installation from 2015/16, jointly acquired by the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and MoMA. The latter is on view in Europe for the first time. At the same time, two large-scale installations from the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation will be presented at Kunstmuseum Basel.

As the first comprehensive retrospective of Bruce Nauman's work in 25 years, the exhibition spans some five decades of this exceptional artist's career. It draws on the important bodies of work held by the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and MoMA. The Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, whose holdings are stored at Schaulager, has been collecting Nauman since the early 1970s. This body of works will be complemented by works loaned from over 70 renowned institutions and private collections from all over the world.

Some 170 works spanning an entire career

With his trailblazing oeuvre, Bruce Nauman has become a foremost representative of contemporary art. He explores such issues as language, space and the body, probing the structures of power and social conventions. Time and again he challenges our powers of perception and imagination through persistent inquiry into aesthetic and moral values and ways of seeing.

The retrospective at Schaulager comprises some 170 works, representing all phases of Nauman's work from the mid-1960s to the present day. Through a variety of mutually complementary points of view, the exhibition reveals Nauman's unique mastery of a steadily expanding spectrum of media including video, drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures, neon and sound pieces, as well as technically demanding installations that quite literally draw viewers in.

Rarely seen works will be showcased, such as Nauman's first artist's book *Pictures of Sculpture in a Room* (1965–66) and his impressive *Model for Trench and Four Buried Passages* (1977), alongside exemplary key works, including early performances recorded on video such as *Walk with Contrapposto* and *Wall-Floor Positions* (1968), his architecturally-scaled piece *Corridor Installation (Nick Wilder Installation)* (1970), his iconic neon spiral *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or*

Wall Sign) from 1967 and the video piece *Mapping the Studio II with color shift, flip, flop, & flip/flop (Fat Chance John Cage)* of 2001. The wide-ranging retrospective also permits in-depth study of Nauman's drawings – from sketches to technically detailed construction drawings and studies.

Latest work on view for the first time

The exhibition features the world premiere of Nauman's latest work *Contrapposto Split* from 2017, a 3D video projection, for which the artist used state-of-the-art recording techniques. In addition, the monumental HD video installation *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (2015/16), a work jointly acquired by the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and MoMA, will be on view for the first time in Europe. Here, Nauman relies once again on his own body as the point of departure, revisiting the iconography of a 1968 video nearly fifty years later.

Disappearing Acts

As a curatorial leitmotif, *Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts* traces the various forms of disappearance in Nauman's work. As outlined by the exhibition's curator Kathy Halbreich, «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, in the nocturnal goings-on of the empty studio, and in the mental blocks that empty creative possibility. Disappearance, then, 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.»

Close relationship between the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and Kunstmuseum Basel

Bruce Nauman's artistic potential was already recognized in the early 1970s, at which time Kunstmuseum Basel and the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation began to acquire films, sculptures and drawings by the artist. Since then Nauman has been a focal point in both collections. As a result, in the course of some 45 years, one of the world's most important bodies of work by the artist has been assembled in Basel.

During the exhibition at Schaulager, two room-sized works from the collection of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation will be on view at Kunstmuseum Basel: the video installation *Untitled* (1970/2009), and the vast, 14-channel sound installation *Days* (2009), which forms an acoustic corridor in the underground passage between the main building and the new extension of the Kunstmuseum. The Laurenz Foundation has integrated a coupon into the admissions ticket for Schaulager, permitting visitors to the retrospective to view the two works at the Kunstmuseum at no extra charge.

Richly illustrated catalogue and art education programme

A richly illustrated catalogue has been published with the same title as the exhibition and is available for CHF 75. It contains essays on themes rarely addressed in the scholarship on the artist, including the role of colour in Nauman's work and the filmic potential of his neon sculptures.

Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts is accompanied by an events programme and a wide-ranging art education programme, for the general public as well as private groups, schools and universities. To allow visitors to spend ample time with Bruce Nauman's oeuvre, tickets to the exhibition (CHF 22.- regular admission) are good for three visits to Schaulager and one visit to see the two installations at Kunstmuseum Basel.



Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts runs from 17 March to 26 August 2018 at Schaulager in Basel. The retrospective will then be presented in New York, where it will be on view from 21 October 2018 to 17 March 2019 at The Museum of Modern Art and MoMA PS1

Organized by Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

The exhibition 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.

Further information and visuals

www.schaulager.org/en/medien

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