

## **BRUCE NAUMAN: DISAPPEARING ACTS**

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

17 March to 26 August 2018

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

From 16 March 2018 on, Schaulager is presenting 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 seminal artists of our time. The exhibition brings together rarely exhibited pieces alongside renowned key works. The show includes the world premiere of the artist's most recent works, the monumental sculpture *Leaping Foxes* (2018) and a 3D video titled *Contrapposto Split* (2017), as well as the European debut of the monumental video projection *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (2015/2016). In addition, three works of Nauman's from the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation will be presented at Kunstmuseum Basel. The exhibition "Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts" is organized in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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 The Museum of Modern Art. The Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation, whose holdings are stored at Schaulager, has been collecting Nauman's work since the early 1970s. These works will be complemented by loans from over 70 renowned institutions and private collections from all over the world.

### **Some 170 works spanning an entire career**

Bruce Nauman is a crucial protagonist 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 over 170 works, representing all phases of Nauman's career from the mid-1960s to the present day. From several different angles, the exhibition reveals the artist's unique mastery of a steadily expanding spectrum of media ranging from video, drawings, prints and photographs to sculptures, neon works, sound pieces and installations that quite literally draw viewers in.

Rarely seen works will be showcased, for example the impressive sculpture *Model for Trench and Four Buried Passages* (1977) or the video installation *Green Horses* (1988), alongside familiar key works, including early performances recorded on video such as *Walk with Contrapposto* and *Wall-Floor Positions* (both 1968), the architecturally-scaled piece *Corridor Installation (Nick Wilder Installation)* (1970), the iconic 1967 neon spiral *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or Wall Sign)* and the video installation *Mapping the Studio II with color shift, flip, flop, & flip/flop (Fat Chance John Cage)* from 2001.

The wide-ranging retrospective also offers a chance to examine Nauman's drawings in depth – from sketches to detailed studies and technical construction plans.

### **Two world premieres and a European premiere**

The exhibition features the world premiere of Nauman's *Contrapposto Split* from 2017. The work takes a new approach to challenging perception and undermining expectations. Here, as earlier in his career, Nauman employs state-of-the-art recording technology. An extremely complex 3D imaging process gives the impression that the artist's studio has extended into the space of the exhibition: it is as if we ourselves were there with the artist, as he paces back and forth alternating between supporting leg and free leg, his hands folded behind his head. The video was filmed in high resolution (4 K) and is projected at a rate of 120 frames per second (120 fps), thus transmitting a considerably greater density of visual information than viewers are ordinarily accustomed to seeing in films and video.

Schaulager is happy to announce another premiere, the new sculpture *Leaping Foxes* (2018), a pyramid constructed out of animal forms that are used in taxidermy, suspended upside down from the ceiling.

In addition, "Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts" presents the European premiere of the monumental HD video installation *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (2015/16), a joint acquisition of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation and The Museum of Modern Art. Here Nauman takes up the same motif as in the 1968 video *Walk with Contrapposto* and relies once again on his own body as the point of departure.

### **New interpretation of a live performance of 1965**

In addition, the performance *Wall-Floor Positions* will be reenacted at Schaulager. Nauman first performed the work live in 1965, and in 1968 he reprised the piece in one of his most iconic videos, on view in the exhibition. Throughout the run of "Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts," the physically exacting performance will be presented live by professional dancers, Thursdays and Saturdays at 2 PM, and Sundays at noon.

### **Disappearing Acts**

As a curatorial leitmotif, "Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts" traces the various forms of disappearance in Nauman's work. Kathy Halbreich, Laurenz Foundation Curator and Advisor to the Director, The Museum of Modern Art, explains the frequent appearances of disappearance in Nauman's work: "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."

### **Closely related to 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, and over the course of some 45 years, one of the world's most important bodies of work by the American artist has been assembled in Basel.

During the exhibition at Schaulager, three important works from the collection of the Emanuel Hoffmann Foundation will be on view at Kunstmuseum Basel: *Untitled* (1970/2009), a video installation projected on the floor and on the wall; the room-sized 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; and the sculpture *Henry Moore Bound to Fail, Back View* (1967/1970). To give visitors the opportunity to study Nauman's work in depth, tickets to "Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts" at Schaulager are valid for three visits (CHF 22 regular admission, nontransferable), including a visit to the Kunstmuseum at no extra charge.

### **Richly illustrated catalogue, scholarly reader and art education programme**

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue. A detailed introduction to Nauman's oeuvre and the curatorial concept underlying the exhibition is followed by 18 essays, addressing themes that have been underrepresented in the existing literature on the artist, such as the role of color in Nauman's work and the filmic potential of his neon sculptures. A reader complementing the exhibition is published by the Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel in collaboration with Eva Ehninger. It contains six in-depth contributions by renowned writers on the latest research into Nauman's oeuvre.

"Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts" is accompanied by a conference, lectures and conversations as well as a wide-ranging art education programme, for the general public as well as private groups, schools and universities.

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

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

The exhibition is curated by Kathy Halbreich, Laurenz Foundation Curator and Advisor to the Director, The Museum of Modern Art, New York; 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/media](http://www.schaulager.org/en/media)

## **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

### **Bruce Nauman: Disappearing Acts**

Edited by Kathy Halbreich with Isabel Friedli, Heidi Naef, Magnus Schaefer and Taylor Walsh.  
With a foreword by Maja Oeri and Glenn Lowry, and essays by 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 and Jeffrey Weiss.

375 reproductions in colour and black-and-white, hardcover

356 pages, 24x30.5 cm

Available in German and English

CHF 75

### **Bruce Nauman: A Contemporary**

Published by the Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel, in cooperation with Eva Ehninger.  
With a foreword by Maja Oeri, an introduction by Eva Ehninger and essays by Eric C.H. de Bruyn, Heather Diack, Eva Ehninger, Sebastian Egenhofer, Stefan Neuner / Wolfram Pichler and Gloria Sutton.

262 pages, 13x19.5 cm

109 reproductions, softcover

Available in German and English

CHF 28

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