

# Bruce Nauman

Bruce Nauman was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1941. He acquired an MFA from the University of California, Davis, in 1966. His debut show was at the Nicholas Wilder Gallery, Los Angeles, in 1966, and since then his work has been exhibited widely in North America and Europe, including Documentas 4 (1968), 5 (1972), and 7 (1982), in Kassel, Germany, and the Whitney Biennials of 1984, 1991, and 1997. Several major exhibitions of his work toured, principally in Europe, in the 1980s, and in 1994–95 the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC, organized a retrospective. Recent exhibitions have been organized by the Milwaukee Art Museum (2006) and the University of California's Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (2007). Nauman represented the United States at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. Since 1979, Nauman has lived on a ranch near Galisteo, New Mexico, where, in addition to continuing his studio practice, he breeds horses.

1. *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2001

DVD projections (black-and-white, sound),  
DVDs transferred to media players, chairs,  
and inkjet on paper

Dia Art Foundation; Partial gift, Lannan  
Foundation, 2013

2. *Left or Standing, Standing or Left Standing*,  
1971

Monitors, DVD players, video laser discs  
(color, silent) transferred to DVDs, fluorescent  
lights, text on video, and wallboard

Dia Art Foundation; Partial gift, Lannan  
Foundation, 2013

3. *Body Pressure*, 1974

Ink on paper  
Exhibition copy

Friedrich Christian Flick Collection

4. *Corridor Installation (Nicholas Wilder Gallery,  
Los Angeles, California)*, 1970

Video cameras, scanner and mount, video  
monitors, DVD player, DVD transferred  
from videotape (black-and-white, silent),  
and wallboard

Friedrich Christian Flick Collection

5. *South America Circle*, 1981

Steel, cast iron, and wire  
Dia Art Foundation; Partial gift,  
Lannan Foundation, 2013

6. *Hanged Man*, 1985

Neon tubes and wood

D. Daskalopoulos Collection

7. *Indoor Outdoor Seating Arrangement*, 1999

Wood and steel

Exhibition copy

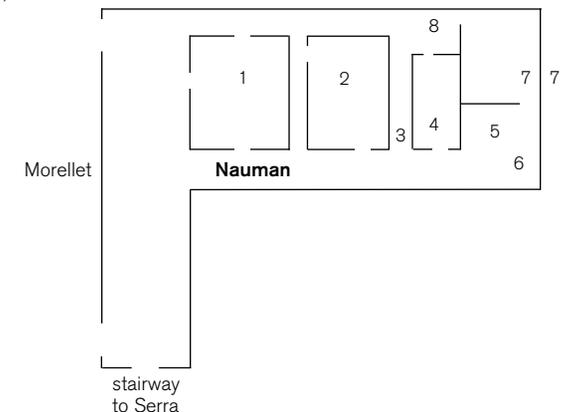
Friedrich Christian Flick Collection

8. *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body  
Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals*, 1966

Neon tubes, electrical wire, transformer, glass,  
rods, and wall connectors

Exhibition copy

The Philip Johnson Glass House Collection



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In the mid-1960s after graduating from art school, Bruce Nauman began to explore issues related to the practice of art making and the studio. His concerns centered around the very notion of the professional artist. As he explained, “there was nothing in the studio because I didn’t have much money for materials. So I was forced to examine myself.” In a series of exacting performances that began in the mid-1960s and were often orchestrated for the camera, Nauman put his own body under duress to engage the prevailing conceptual concerns of the moment, such as duration, process, and repetition. In his earliest neon work, *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals* (1966), and other indexical casts, he made use of his most basic and personal tool—his body. The question of process is particularly important to understanding *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals*. Not only does the title suggest how Nauman arrived at the formal configuration, but the material functionality of this light object is plainly visible through the exposed wires of the work.

Nauman later translated his performances into architectural environments that invited viewers to interact, while also tightly choreographing their movements. As evident in his *South America Circle* (1981), these installations show an abiding preoccupation with issues of power as they pertain to the realm of aesthetics and to the relationship between artist, artwork, and beholder. *Left or Standing, Standing or Left Standing* (1971) consists of an architectural environment of harsh fluorescent lighting that simultaneously invites viewers to physically engage with the work while also creating a tense feeling of hesitation. Similarly, *Corridor Installation (Nicholas Wilder Gallery, Los Angeles, California)* (1970) incorporates surveillance cameras and closed-circuit video systems that function like electronic mirrors. A strange, frustrating sense of dislocation is engendered by denying physical access to what can be seen.

For the multiscreen projection *Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)* (2001), Nauman returned to the themes that defined his early career. During the summer of 2000, he set up infrared cameras in multiple areas within his studio to track the nocturnal activities of mice, moths, and other creatures. Edited down to approximately six hours per projector, the installation’s footage offers a wryly elliptical take on the mundane qualities of daily studio activity, replete with languor and moments of visionary insight.