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A Rose Has No Teeth

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Davis, California, about one and a half hours north of San Francisco and just south of the state capital, Sacramento, is in a plain between the Coastal Range and Sierra Nevada mountains that drains into the Sacramento River. The University of California, Davis, one of ten campuses in the statewide system, was originally founded as an agricultural school. In the 1960s it was surrounded by orchards and grain fields, dairies and rice paddies. Bruce Nauman entered the graduate program in art, established only two years earlier, in the fall of 1964. Chair Richard L. Nelson, a painter, was known for his open-mindedness and commitment to excellence. He also proved to be a good judge of talent, as evidenced by his impressive faculty appointments. Between 1960 and 1965 he hired Wayne Thiebaud, William T. Wiley, Robert Arneson, Roy de Forest, Daniel Shapiro, and Manuel Neri, who as a group managed the delicate balancing act of pedagogy and personal artistic achievement and came to define the department.

Nelson also had the resources to make sure that there was a steady stream of visiting professors, many from New York, who could expose students to the world beyond the relative isolation of Davis and the San Francisco Bay Area. During Nauman's two-year tenure, these included Robert Kulicke, Miles Forst, Joseph Raffaele (now known as Joseph Raphael), Fred Reichman, Paul Waldman, Tony DeLap, and local artist William Allan, with whom Nauman would collaborate on several early films. Nelson could also spot artistic promise. Several of Nauman's fellow students became recognized artists-ceramic sculptors Richard Shaw and David Gilhooly, and one of the area's early Conceptual artists, Steven J. Kaltenbach. Nelson grasped Nauman's potential and attempted twice to convince the administration to waive his out-of-state tuition, writing in a letter to the dean, "Mr. Nauman is an extremely talented artist and comes to us as a top student from a very distinguished school, the University of Wisconsin." In a letter written somewhat later, he noted that although Nauman was short three units to qualify for the tuition waiver, "he has, due to the nature of his total dedication, actually done more," citing work in film and etching.¹ Both requests were denied.

Indeed, there was a buzz about Davis. Arneson would be one of the artists credited with changing attitudes toward ceramic sculpture, then widely considered a craft unworthy of being called fine art. By the time Nauman arrived, Arneson had left behind his Peter Voulkos-inspired expressionist pots and was making sculptures based on ordinary objects like typewriters and urinals, both surreal and humorous and often bordering on the scatological. Thiebaud was becoming nationally known for paintings that celebrated the everyday pleasures of ice cream cones and fruit pies, which he depicted in bright, thick oil paints. He was included in the 1962 *New Realism* show at the Sidney Janis Gallery in New York, which brought together Europeans such as Arman, Martial Raysse, and Oyvind Fahlström with the likes of Andy Warhol, Tom Wesselman, George Segal, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, and Claes Oldenburg in an exhibition that launched Pop art (though this term was yet to be coined).²

Wiley, hired directly out of graduate school at the San Francisco Art Institute, would soon be one of the few California artists showing regularly in New York. He was dubbed a "Dude-Ranch Dadaist"³ for his folksy paintings full of references to the American West, wayfaring, and his own personal brand of Zen Buddhism. His sculptures were an irreverent mélange of found objects and rustic materials like tree branches and animal hides, and they shared with his paintings wildly fanciful verbal and visual punning. Their surface casualness and dumbness, however, belied an underlying sophistication.

Nauman heard about UC Davis from Wayne Taylor, a new ceramics instructor at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where Nauman was a student. Taylor was from Sacramento and knew Thiebaud and Arneson. The latter no doubt inspired Taylor's highly unconventional ceramic sculpture, which intrigued Nauman.⁴ Nauman was also impressed by Taylor's storefront studio, a "real" studio as opposed to the office, bedroom, or garage studios of the rest of the art faculty.⁵

Nauman, who at that time was making paintings, had applied for a fellowship to Indiana University to study with James McGarrell, whose gestural figurative paintings he admired. When he didn't receive the fellowship, and because he was interested in the work of the Bay Area painters Richard Diebenkorn and Elmer Bischoff, Nauman followed Taylor's advice to look into Davis. That August he headed to California with his new wife, Judy.⁶ California has always had an allure for aspiring young artists. Those who came to the San Francisco Bay Area often did so to attend one of the many art schools and universities that were enlarging their art departments to accommodate the postwar baby boomers reaching college age. In the absence of a significant art market in the region, it was the schools, each with its particular character and aesthetic, that offered artists a sense of community and a means of financial support. Nauman first stopped at the San Francisco Art Institute, only to learn that it was too late to apply for the fall semester. He then drove to Davis with a van packed with his paintings and everything the young couple owned. Since school was not in session, no one was around the art department except the secretary, Jeanie Bernauer, who assured Nauman that they would love to have him. When he asked if she wanted to see his paintings, she replied, "Oh, no. I wouldn't know what to look for."⁷ Because its graduate art program was so new, Davis was accepting everyone who applied.

The Midwest

Nauman was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on December 6, 1941, the day before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He was the first of three boys born to Genevieve, a home maker, and Calvin, a sales engineer for General Electric. Due to Calvin's job, the family moved several times when Nauman was young—first to Schenectady, New York, for a few years, then to Milwaukee until Nauman was in third grade, and next to Appleton, Wisconsin. This made establishing and retaining friendships difficult for Nauman, who turned to such solitary pursuits as making model airplanes and learning to play musical instruments. Finally, the family settled in suburban Milwaukee, and Nauman graduated with honors from Wauwatosa High School. He was a Boy Scout and enjoyed family camping and fishing trips, which fostered his enduring love of the outdoors. He took music lessons from an early age, first learning piano, then classical guitar, and finally playing bass in polka bands and at parties and weddings. While still in high school, Nauman took a class at an art school but really had no notion of what it meant to be an artist. Drawing came naturally to him, however, and he was quite adept at it even before receiving any formal instruction. When he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin, it was with the intent to study mathematics (more appealing to him than the applied field of engineering, which his father hoped he would pursue). Although he enjoyed studying mathematics and physics, he realized that he lacked the passion for them that he saw in his friends. The mathematics that did interest him was theoretical; he was drawn to its logic and

structure and the ways logic could be turned inside out. Nauman later came to believe that artists who make important contributions are those who explore the structure of their discipline.

After two years at Wisconsin, Nauman rather abruptly switched his major to art, because, he has said, art allowed "room for both my mind and my hands to work."⁸ Before this he had briefly considered a major in music. Indeed, his love for music - Ludwig van Beethoven, Anton Webern, Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, and especially jazz - has never waned. He has often cited the blind jazz pianist Lennie Tristano as an influence on his art. What he admires about Tristano is the enormous intensity with which he played, with no buildup or slowing down.⁹ "From the beginning I was trying to see if I could make art like that," he told Joan Simon, "art that was just there all at once. Like getting hit in the face with a baseball bat. Or better, like getting hit in the back of the neck. You never see it coming; it just knocks you down."¹⁰ Nauman also likes the fact that Tristano used technology to alter a recording (once speeding up a tape), to the chagrin of many jazz insiders.¹¹

Madison was near enough to Chicago that Nauman often visited the Art Institute there, where he especially admired works by Pablo Picasso and Willem de Kooning, particularly the latter's masterful painting *Excavation* (1950).¹² He also liked the possibilities set forth in Frank Stella's early paintings, but later lost interest when "it became clear that he was just going to be a painter. And I was interested in what art can be, not just what painting can be."¹³ The art department at Wisconsin was conservative, however. Most of the professors were former Works Progress Administration (WPA) artists who worked in a social realist style and believed that "art had a function beyond being beautiful - that it had a social reason to exist."¹⁴ The painter and sculptor Italo Scanga, one of Nauman's important teachers, was somewhat of a misfit; a recent appointment, he was dismissed while Nauman was there, apparently for making Pop sculpture, a direction unacceptable to the department,¹⁵ and for his generally unconventional behavior.¹⁶

UC Davis

All graduate students at Davis were given studios in former World War II prefab barracks. (Nauman's place was nicknamed "Aggie Villa," a reference to the school's agricultural emphasis.) There was very little structure and only a few required classes. In general, graduate students were left on their own and told that they could seek out an instructor if they wanted to talk to someone, which suited Nauman.¹⁷ "They were just happy if you were working," Nauman remembers.¹⁸ The Naumans first lived in a trailer on the edge of a tomato field. "In the heat, the rotting tomatoes gave off an odor that made you feel that you were living in the middle of tomato sauce," Nauman recalls. Later they lived over a shoe repair shop on G Street, the main drag in Davis, and finally moved to Mix Canyon, near Vacaville, where Nauman had "a little studio in the crawl space."¹⁹

Although Davis was relatively isolated from the explosive political atmosphere of San Francisco and UC Berkeley at that time,²⁰ still, according to Wiley, "Everything was fucking flying open music, sex, race. It was really a creative time."²¹ Nauman played in a band with several of his teachers and friends - Allan, Wiley, Phil Brown, Frank Owen, Louise Pryor, Van and Ron Walter, Dan Welch, and William M. Yates. First called Moving Van Walters and His Truck and then Blue Crumb Truck, the band had a regular gig at Deebo's, a club in Davis, and played at several of the local schools (including the San Francisco Art Institute and Sacramento State) and museums (at the opening of the 1967 show *Funk* at the University Art Museum in Berkeley, for instance). The band can also be heard on the soundtrack of Wiley and Robert Nelson's underground film classic *The Great Blondino* (1967), starring Wiley's brother Chuck. And while Nauman doesn't seem to have been directly involved in political activity, he did attend the human be-in in Golden Gate Park,

where he remembers Allen Ginsberg reading and chanting.²²

Nauman entered Davis as a painter, providing the following description of his work in his application letter to the school:

I have included some slides of my work of the past year in the hopes that they would help clarify my statements I am expected to make here. The paintings seem to tend more and more in an expressionist direction - at the same time I have begun to add the small canvases in an effort to make a well defined shape and then to deny it with the paint and color - in other words, to search for another kind of ambiguity besides a painterly illusionistic one. This summer I have switched to polymer paints so that I can paint over the large areas I work with in a shorter time without muddying my color changes so much. This has led to fewer and simpler shapes and color, tending at present in a hard-edge direction, though still through the process of "discovery" painting. The last painting, while not exactly representative of my present painting, is a rather extreme example of both these ideas in a transition. I am at present dealing with a large closed line - the shape pushing off the canvas - on several different paintings, and as I am doing a good deal of painting this summer, hope to have worked out a few of the problems connected with the change in style and attitude and have settled down again. Incidentally I hope to get the MA so that I can teach - preferably on the college level.²³

Even though he enjoyed manipulating paint, Nauman made a conscious decision to stop painting during his first year at Davis, because he distrusted the "lush solution" that painting represented.²⁴ "Basically I couldn't function as a painter," he has said. "Painting is one of those things that I never quite made sense of. I just couldn't see how to proceed as a painter."²⁵ In his first semester at Davis, Nauman had been making both abstract and landscape paintings containing what he has described as "strange shapes." Eventually he just made the shapes independent of the paintings - first out of welded steel and then out of fiberglass because it was lighter - and bolted them to stretcher bars.²⁶ He also experimented with ceramics under the tutelage of Arneson.²⁷ In two small, unglazed ceramic cups done in 1965, *Cup and Saucer Falling Over* and *Cup Merging with Its Saucer*, he attempted to convey movement in a way that recalls the Italian Futurist sculptor Umberto Boccioni's 1912 *Development of a Bottle in Space*. The toppling cup is an image that has appeared often in Nauman's work (for example, in the photograph *Coffee Thrown Away Because It Was Too Cold*, 1967), suggesting that toppled cups were a common occurrence.²⁸ Another curious work, *P.P.G. Sunproof Drawing No.1* (1965), reveals Nauman's ambivalence toward painting. The "drawing" isn't a drawing at all, nor is it "sunproof."²⁹ In Duchampian terms, it is an altered readymade: to create it, Nauman turned a color chart on its side and reproduced it as a sepia-toned blueprint, thereby denying its original function and its relationship to painting.³⁰

At Davis, Wiley became Nauman's most important teacher and a friend. Only four years older than Nauman (and most of his students), Wiley was inspiring, always open and receptive to unorthodox ideas, and carried no preconceptions. His own work has always been a by-product of his life (the synchronicity of art and life is shared by many artists in the region), and anything and everything was potential content. He included puns and riddles in his paintings and assemblages, which, while not explicitly political, illuminated "the human condition and its fragilities."³¹ Nauman has said that Wiley was the "strongest influence I had. It was in being rigorous, being honest with yourself - trying to be clear - taking a moral position....Wiley had great personal involvement with students. He might say it was terrible work but he would first get at *why* they made work. Bill was one of the first that gave me an idea of moral commitment, the worth of being an artist. It's that [San

Francisco] Art Institute morality, that art is an ethic."³² Wiley conducted weekly seminars during which he would wait however long it took for students to begin the conversation. If a half hour or forty-five minutes went by in silence, he would say that if no one had anything to contribute they all might as well go home. Although Nauman has commented that he wasn't directly influenced by Wiley's artwork, he did learn from him not to worry about how a thing looked, and that it was okay to work, as Wiley did, in multiple styles and mediums.

Wiley recognized that Nauman was different from most entering graduate students. He attributed it to Nauman's having studied mathematics, music, and philosophy before concentrating on art, so that he didn't arrive with the usual "baggage" of art majors. Nauman's more open attitude and interest in words also set him apart. As an example of Nauman's originality, Wiley recalls a particular show of graduate work that took place in an empty room, "a terrible exhibit space": "Bruce comes walking in with a board under his arm, a one-by-three cut so that you can lean it at an angle against the wall. He had painted the whole thing about the color it was anyway and then added a slightly darker stripe down the side of it - something you could just barely distinguish from an arbitrary piece of wood. That really knocked me out, really impressed me with that kind of thinking. Counter to everybody, with this little dinky thing that he just flicked aside. I thought it was great."³³ A more senior faculty member, the painter Roland Petersen, recalled in a 2002 interview that Nauman was one of the most intellectual graduate students at Davis, adding, "He certainly brought new ideas into the graduate program that made other students sort of reconsider how they were thinking. I remember one time that Bruce Nauman brought in a fan, and he turned the fan on before the whole group, and he was describing how aesthetically pleasing this fan was in terms of form and sound."³⁴ Chris Unterseher, a fellow student, recalls that Nauman was regarded as eccentric, but "he was a guy that everybody knew was going to go somewhere, he just had that aura about him."³⁵ Another classmate, Nina Van Rensselaer, agrees that Nauman always stood out and was "wildly original." He was regarded more as an equal to his professors than as a student.³⁶ Kaltenbach recounts that other students thought Nauman was "aesthetically challenged." He describes a piece Nauman made of latex rubber:

I believe it was four kind of like petal-like shapes, but they were square, they came off of an axis in four directions, maybe they were triangular. But basically, it was about a three-by-three-foot square and the way it was shown was that you stood back and you threw it into a corner... it just sort of landed. We all thought Bruce was crazy. He just diverged too much from our aesthetic. The fire marshal had heard that we were using flammable materials and decided to inspect, and he brought a photographer with him because he wanted to take photographs of dangerous practices and things that needed to be changed. So, Bruce had this piece laying over in the corner and the guy comes in with his uniform on and this guy with the camera. He pointed to Bruce's sculpture and said, "Get a picture of that accumulation over there." And we all just cracked up. But it was a very enlightening moment for me, because I think it was the first time I consciously realized that it was possible to seriously do something that was so unrecognizable as art that it could actually be seen as trash.³⁷

Indeed, Nauman is credited with creating "the first viable mutation" of Minimalism, then at its apogee.³⁸ (Though Minimalism never had a stronghold in Northern California, artists in the region were certainly aware of its hegemony.) Artists like Eva Hesse, Robert Morris, Barry LeVa, Lynda Benglis, and Richard Serra on the East Coast and Paul Kos and Terry Fox in the San Francisco Bay Area were investigating new processes and nontraditional materials such as dirt, ice, dust, latex, and felt that produced results that didn't resemble anything that had been considered art until that time.

While most of these artists continued certain Minimalist innovations, such as placing their sculptures or objects directly on the floor rather than on a pedestal or platform, they rejected the strict geometry and symmetry that characterizes classic Minimalism. Moreover, for the most part they crafted their works, rather than having them produced by an industrial fabricator. In essence, according to Maurice Berger, "anti-form overturned the conventions of connoisseurship, where the relative quality of sculpture was evaluated on the basis of beauty and refinement of its form, offering instead an indeterminate object with an indefinite set of sculptural possibilities."³⁹ Robert Pincus-Witten dubbed such work Post-Minimal; alternate terms were "anti-form" and "process art," which took into account tendencies such as Arte Povera in Italy.

Performances

Another new area of interest to adventurous young artists was performance, not in the theatrical sense, but rather as an extension of sculpture. In part, this interest grew out of a desire to circumvent the way art was being exhibited and marketed (though for Nauman, as a student, this probably wasn't much of a concern). More importantly, for a certain group of young artists no longer interested in painting and sculpture, the body represented another new "material" to be explored. The painter Frank Owen remembers Nauman, who was a teaching assistant for Thiebaud during his first semester at Davis, saying that one day he had a revelation - that it didn't make sense for students to sit in a circle all drawing a model in the middle. Then and there he decided he would use his own body as material.⁴⁰ In 1965 - several years ahead of Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, Joan Jonas, and others who became leaders in the medium - Nauman gave a performance that involved putting his body through a series of poses.⁴¹ He described the performance in a 1970 interview with *Avalanche* magazine editor Willoughby Sharp: "I did a piece that involved standing with my back to the wall for about forty-five seconds or a minute, leaning out from the wall, then bending at the waist, squatting, sitting, and finally lying down. There were seven different positions in relationship to the wall and floor. Then I did the whole sequence again standing away from the wall, facing the wall, then facing left and facing right. There were twenty-eight positions and the whole presentation lasted for about half an hour." In a second performance, *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube* (1965), he explained, "I was using my body as one element and the light as another, treating them as equivalent and just making shapes."⁴² With the use of the light fixture, an obvious reference to Dan Flavin's Minimalist fluorescent tube sculptures, Nauman was both claiming and subverting a Minimalist paradigm.

In only two other instances did Nauman perform in public: first with his wife, Judy, and Meredith Monk in connection with the Whitney Museum of American Art's 1969 exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*,⁴³ and in 1970 with Monk and Serra at the Santa Barbara Arts Festival.⁴⁴ However, Nauman continued to explore his body as subject and object in various media. In 1967, for example, he began an extended series of films and videos with *Thighing*, a short film in which he manipulates the skin and flesh of his thigh with his hand.

Fiberglass and Rubber Sculptures

Nauman's early performances led to a series of abstract but anthropomorphic, cast-fiberglass sculptures. (Several drawings from early 1965 make clear the figurative aspect of Nauman's first sculptures.) A very early example is an untitled fiberglass sculpture in the shape of a squat, truncated pyramid that sits solidly on the floor but hugs the wall. Most of Nauman's subsequent fiberglass sculptures are long and slender and simply hang on the wall (as would the rubber sculptures that followed), while others, some of which have two elements, engage the wall and floor, as Nauman did with his body in performance. During this period, Nauman saw two sculptures

by Richard Tuttle at the San Francisco Museum of Art, later recalling that "they were both made out of wood. They were kind of wiggly, and one was kind of like a golf club shape and was brown and the other was silver [*Silver Picture*, 1964]. They were bigger in scale than he mostly works now [in 1980], they were five or six feet long."⁴⁵ Gerald Walburg, a sculptor from Sacramento, remembers that he and Nauman saw sculptures by Tom Doyle - curvilinear wood forms on the wall-that interested Nauman.⁴⁶ Seeing strong contemporary works that suggested an alternative to Minimalism gave Nauman the confidence to continue in his own direction.

During the spring 1965 semester, Nauman took a course in casting from Tio L. Giambruni at Davis. He made his first fiberglass sculptures from a handmade clay form, which he layered with coats of polyester resin and sheets of fiberglass (the clay was from Arneson's ceramic studio in Temporary Building 9, or TB9); later he used hard-edged plywood and corrugated-cardboard molds. Nauman was interested in the confusion between the inside and outside of the sculptures. "One side is smooth so that it looks like the outside, and the other is rough because that's the way fiberglass is cast, but you can see it as well," he told Sharp.⁴⁷ He chose to leave visible "the parting lines and the seams - things that help to locate the structure of an object, but in the finished sculpture usually get removed."⁴⁸ Nauman considered the marks of the process - even the plaster chips that adhered to the fiberglass during casting - integral to the finished work. Once he had accomplished what he set out to do conceptually, Nauman didn't see any point in superficial refinement (an approach still evident in his work today). In addition, he consciously used materials that were not durable so that, as Coosje van Bruggen has noted, "a lot of preciousness would be removed."⁴⁹

A somewhat atypical, untitled work in this series has two greenish arced arms; the top of one leans against the wall, while its mirror image curves out into the space. As van Bruggen points out, the piece is a series of reversals: "What the half toward the wall expresses as inside or back, the outer half expresses as outside or front. In part, this disturbing of back and front, inside and outside, constitutes a meditation on process. In traditional casting, what is inside the mold is considered art, but the container itself is thought to be merely functional and often destroyed."⁵⁰

Some of Nauman's 1965 fiberglass pieces resemble works by other artists, such as Hesse's *Accretion* (1968). However, unlike Hesse, Nauman added color - usually green, pink, or yellow - to his. (He mixed the color into the plastic rather than painting it, to avoid interfering with the surface.) As a result, Nauman's translucent fiberglass works generally have a pale, off-color cast. Sometimes the color is more intense or variegated, as in the most complex of the fiberglass series, a stepped arched vertical sculpture that has frontal bands of deep mauve (*Untitled*, 1965), the swirling purple and green *Untitled* (1965-66), and the red and purple *Untitled* (1965). Lucy R. Lippard described Nauman's color as "spiritlessly urban, but not commercial - like a shrimp pink house badly in need of a paint job."⁵¹ Nauman's continued use of color, albeit almost always very muted color, set him apart from most other process artists, like Hesse, Morris, and Serra.

Even though Nauman's fiberglass works are distinct objects, he was already thinking about sculpture in relationship to the space it inhabits, as exemplified in several recently discovered drawings from early 1965, the beginning of his second semester at Davis. In these drawings Nauman indicated the floor and wall planes of rooms and sometimes added a written notation, such as "rubber 'Y' shaped piece in a large bare room." His concern with the placement of his sculpture is also evident in a 1965-66 student project, *Pictures of Sculpture in a Room*, an eight-page book consisting of photographs of four fiberglass sculptures.⁵² Nauman's intent was to make a book that was an object, "to confuse the issue a little bit. It is a total object, but it has pictures - however, it is a book, not a catalogue."⁵³ Nauman subsequently made other artist books, as they became known, such as *CLEA RSKY* (1968)⁵⁴ and *Burning Small Fires* (1968). The latter consists of photographs of pages from Edward Ruscha's book *Various Small Fires and Milk* (1964), burning. Nauman was

paying humorous homage to Ruscha, who pioneered the artist book with his *26 Gasoline Stations* (1963).

Following the fiberglass works (he would not return to casting until much later, at the end of the 1980s, in his flayed animal series), Nauman continued his deconstructive investigations of sculpture in several latex rubber pieces composed of a single sheet cut into strips, which derived from experiments with paper sculptures (none of which have survived). Most of these rubber sculptures hang on the wall, although one folds into a corner (and is the first of several pieces, such as the cardboard-and-paint *Untitled* [1966], that focus on a corner space).⁵⁵ David Whitney wrote of this work and others like it, "Late in 1965 Nauman began to work with latex rubber on cloth backing. Here the 'throw-away' look became intensified, some of the works resembling nothing more than piles of rags. The limp, sagging quality gives the impression that the intended product has collapsed."⁵⁶ Nauman explained later that casting with soft materials gave him a way to move beyond the formal problems that arose in fiberglass casting.⁵⁷ Soon, however, he found the fiberglass and rubber sculptures too resistant to his incorporation of other areas of interest to him, such as language.⁵⁸

Several of Nauman's teachers - Wiley, Arneson, de Forest, Neri - were often grouped under the rubric "Funk," a designation derived from the 1967 exhibition at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, of the same name. The exhibition organizer, Peter Selz, defined Funk, a term borrowed from jazz, as "a matter of attitude." He wrote in the exhibition catalogue, "Funk is at the opposite extreme of such manifestations as New York's Primary Structures or the Finish Fetish sculpture which prevails in Southern California. Funk art is hot rather than cool; it is committed rather than disengaged; it is bizarre rather than formal; it is sensuous; and frequently it is quite ugly. Although usually three-dimensional, it is non-sculptural in any traditional way, and irreverent in attitude. Like the dialogue in a play by Ionesco or Beckett, the juxtaposition of unexpected things seems to make no apparent sense."⁵⁹ Nauman was never a Funk artist (he has noted that the height of Funk had already passed by the time he arrived in California), but, like those associated with Funk, he eschewed matters of taste and finish in his fiberglass and rubber sculptures, which also partook of Funk art's casual, homemade look.⁶⁰

The Slant Step

The "Slant Step" exemplifies the prevailing attitude among the Davis group and their like-minded Bay Area cohorts.⁶¹ The story goes that Wiley took Nauman to the Mt. Carmel Salvage Shop on Lovell Street near his Mill Valley studio to see a strange object that looked like a step stool, but that was angled in such a way that one could not actually stand on it. Crudely constructed of wood covered with green linoleum, the step stayed in Nauman's mind, and he finally asked Wiley to buy it (it cost about fifty cents) and bring it to Davis. Nauman kept it in his studio for most of 1966, using it as a footstool that worked well enough if he tilted his chair on its back legs. He showed it to artist friends who likewise became intrigued by this homely object of no apparent function. It didn't take long for the Slant Step to acquire a certain mystique, so that when the poet William Witherup was invited to do something at the Berkeley Gallery, a co-op run by Marion Wintersteen,⁶² he, along with Wiley, Allan, and William Geis, invited artists and poets to create works in response to the Slant Step. *The Slant Step Show* opened on September 9, 1966, at the gallery's new location at 555 Sansome Street in San Francisco.⁶³ Nauman's contribution was *Mold for a Modernized Slant Step*, a two-part plaster mold made from a wood and plaster master that he originally intended to cast in another material but decided to leave as it was.⁶⁴ The night after the show was installed, a few of the artists went to Allan's studio and, fortified by a considerable amount of whiskey, later returned to the gallery, where they took art off the walls and pedestals and stacked everything into a corner so

that when visitors arrived they had to paw through the pile. During the run of the show, Serra, on a visit to his hometown, absconded with the original Slant Step and took it to New York.⁶⁵

Nauman drew the Slant Step a couple of times, once from memory before Wiley bought it and once from life. He and Allan also built a facsimile for a film (both the facsimile and the film are lost). Christopher French observed in a review of *The Slant Step Revisited*, a 1983 re-creation of the Berkeley Gallery show, at UC Davis, "Today, of all the artists in the current exhibit, only Nauman retains the ideas and methods of working implied in the Slant Step, ideas he had begun to explore just before happening on the object."⁶⁶ Nauman has confirmed that the Slant Step intrigued him because he had been "trying to make an object ... that appeared to have a function and so there was apparently an excuse for formal invention ... but in fact didn't have any actual function."⁶⁷ In 1965 and 1966 Nauman went on to make other works in this vein, among them the several nonfunctional "device" sculptures that resemble industrial models, including *Device to Control the Flow of Air in a Room*, *Device to Hold a Box at a Slight Angle*, two works titled *Device to Stand In*, and the related *Untitled (Eye-Level Piece)*, a shelf-like object that juts out of the wall at eye level, aggressively, counter to the fragility of its material and construction (cardboard and pins). Nauman's interest in objects that only appear to be functional persists, as can be seen in his late-1990s *Indoor Outdoor Seating Arrangements*.

Early Films

Nauman made his first films in 1965, using a cheap 16 mm wind-up camera he bought in a pawnshop. All silent and black-and-white, Nauman's earliest films are short-three minutes long or less - and record simple actions. *Manipulating the T Bar* relates to Nauman's performance *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube*, as well as to fiberglass works he made around the same time. In the film, Nauman goes through a series of manipulations of two long plumber pipes in the form of a T, each change separated by a blank screen created by turning the camera off and then on again. The title of a related film, *Sound Effects for Manipulating the T Bar*, is amusingly and deliberately misleading, as is the disingenuous text with which the film opens: "Film of an actor pretending to be myself making a tape of the sound effects of the film *Manipulating the T Bar*." The work is silent, but Nauman, pretending to watch the aforementioned film off-screen, knocks two pieces of lead together to create "sound effects" each time he takes a step. In his third film, *Uncovering a Sculpture*, the first of many works that deal with concealment, Nauman rolls back a carpet to reveal a wedge-shaped sculpture (reminiscent of his 1966 sculpture *Felt Formed over Sketch for a Metal Floor Piece*). Again, as in *Manipulating the T Bar*, Nauman simulates the effect of animation by switching the camera on and off. A fourth film, *Smoke* (1966), was shot in Frank Owen's overgrown Sacramento backyard and shows Owen, Yates, and Edward Higgins smoking.⁶⁸

In his next four films, Nauman collaborated with William Allan. Allan has said the idea for these films came out of conversations they had at Davis, in which they agreed on "the humble beginnings of a piece."⁶⁹ They shared the intent, Nauman has said, of "making a film without considering art."⁷⁰ Allan claimed he "knew Bruce could just do it straight, without any kind of artifice... and it was important to both of us that they be done with the simplest, commonest idea, with the most simple things." He explained further that they intuitively understood, in the spirit of the time, that if you put together the right people and materials in the right situation, something interesting would come out of it. In less than a week, the two artists made all four films, each of which records an activity and ends when the task is completed. The first, *Fishing for Asian Carp*, was shot at Putah Creek near Davis and features Allan, an avid fisherman to this day, doing just as the title describes; the film ends when he hooks a fish. Nauman and Allan made the film in the form of a travelogue, with narration provided by the filmmaker Robert Nelson (who was also responsible for the sound

recording and editing, which neither Allan nor Nauman knew how to do). Nauman operated the camera and added sound effects by sloshing water in a bucket. He admits the film would have been "really dumb and boring"⁷¹ but for the last scene, when Allan picks up the hooked fish with his finger in the gills and Nelson says, "Well, Bill, I see you've caught your fish now and you're picking it up with your fingers like that." Allan replies, "Well, when you don't have a gaff or a net, I guess you call it finger gaffing." This elicits an extended laugh from Nelson.

Nauman and Allan made the other three films at Muir Beach, where Allan had a studio. *Abstracting the Shoe* (a parody on abstract art) and *Legal Size* were shot in the deadpan style of shop films. In the former, Nauman applies black roofing tar to a wood shoe form, and in the latter Allan sits at a table as he carefully extends the length of a standard envelope using tape, scissors, and paint.⁷² In *Span*, Nauman and Allan, armed with wood two-by-fours and a toolbox, take turns (with assistance from Richard Pervier) building a frame to span a creek. They then suspend from the frame a dark plastic tarp, which gently moves with the air current. As the film ends, the camera is back and the plastic curtain gradually disappears against the foliage and shadows. (One cannot help comparing this simple, poetic intervention to Christo's later monumental *Valley Curtain*, 1970-72.) In 1999 Nauman made a digital video titled *Setting a Good Corner (Allegory and Metaphor)*, which, despite its higher production values, doesn't deviate from the basic philosophy of his earliest work in film—the straightforward recording of a task from beginning to end.

A Rose Has No Teeth

A Rose Has No Teeth (Lead Tree Plaque) (1966), a lead plaque with the title words stamped on it, is a distinctive and significant piece in Nauman's early oeuvre and prefigures much of his later work. It is his first word piece, the first work he intended to be displayed outdoors (in this case to be affixed to a tree), and the only one in which his intense reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* is made manifest.⁷³ By the end of the 1960s Wittgenstein had achieved a cultlike status among Minimal and Conceptual artists, but Nauman seems to have been aware of his writings in the early years of the decade. He has said that he learned from Wittgenstein how to think about things.⁷⁴ The title of *A Rose Has No Teeth* is a direct quote from Wittgenstein, who takes the phrase "The law has no teeth" through a series of logical permutations until he arrives at the final absurd proposition. Nauman has commented that he liked "the clarity of the process ... and the fact that he [Wittgenstein] developed an argument to the point of logical absurdity - the point where logic and language break down."⁷⁵

Believing that, in general, outdoor sculpture is never a match for nature, Nauman purposely designed a work that would disappear under vegetation: if the plaque were attached to a tree, it would gradually be covered by bark. Once the plaque entered the collection of Thomas Ammann in Zurich, where it was not going to be destroyed by nature, Nauman took the mold he used to make the lead plaque and made a tinted polyester cast, which he sent to his former teacher Italo Scanga, who would, presumably, carry out his wishes.⁷⁶ However, it, too, was not nailed to a tree.

Nicholas Wilder

Just before receiving his master's degree in June 1966, Nauman had his first important one-person show at the Nicholas Wilder Gallery in Los Angeles. Wilder, a young Stanford art history graduate, first saw Nauman's work at Tony DeLap's house. Nauman had taken a class with DeLap his first semester at Davis, and the two artists had eventually traded work. DeLap remembers it this way:

I traded him one of those [fiberglass] pieces, a yellow one, for, I think, a print and hung it in my house in San Francisco. One day Nick Wilder came by and saw Bruce's piece hanging

up in my house. I was in the studio, which was separate from the house, and Nick came in and said, "I just saw probably the worst piece of art I have ever seen in my life." Those were almost his exact words. And I said, "Oh yeah, Bruce is one of the students at Davis, and he is actually an interesting guy." About two weeks later Nick asked, "Do you mind if I come over and see that piece again that you have hanging there?" He drove up and looked at it for a while and said, "Would it be possible to meet this guy?" So one of the days when I went up to Davis to teach, Nick came with me, and I introduced him to Bruce, and that is really how they got together.⁷⁷

In a 1988 interview, Wilder described the Nauman piece he had seen at DeLap's and his response to it: "It was about forty-six inches wide, a kind of khaki-colored thing that was cast plastic that dropped about forty or so inches down the wall ... it wasn't quite clean ... it didn't quite fit the wall. He didn't have it quite down, I thought. Well, I was wrong. I wasn't getting it. But I got home and I couldn't forget it." Not long after visiting Nauman in Davis and seeing more of his rubber and fiberglass pieces, Wilder offered him a show.⁷⁸

The exhibition took place from May 10 to June 2, 1966. Nauman showed *Mold for a Modernized Slant Step* (the piece he had made for *The Slant Step Show*); *Device to Hold a Box at a Slight Angle*; *Shelf Sinking into the Wall with Copper-Painted Plaster Casts of the Spaces Underneath*; *Untitled (Eye-Level Piece)*; and an untitled cardboard corner piece installed eight feet above the floor (all 1966). He also showed fiberglass pieces, including *Platform Made Up of the Space between Two Rectilinear Boxes on the Floor* (also 1966), the first of his works in which he concretized negative space.

The latter work and other fiberglass sculptures demonstrated Nauman's abiding curiosity about the underside and backside of things.⁷⁹ According to the artist, *A Cast of the Space under My Chair* - the culmination of Nauman's negative space works, finalized in 1968 but conceived in 1965 - is "the sculptural version of de Kooning's statement, 'when you paint a chair, you should paint the space between the rungs not the chair itself.'⁸⁰ A simple concrete, notched, rectangular solid, this work can be seen as a critique of Minimalism as well as a subversion of the function of the object from which it derives. Chairs served as surrogates for Nauman's body as he began to move away from its direct use, and they would recur with more sinister effect in his later work, notably the "South America" hanging-chair series begun in the early 1980s.⁸¹

According to Katherine Bishop Crum, who ran the gallery with Wilder, few works were sold from Nauman's exhibition. Crum bought two sculptures; John Coplans, then a contributing editor at *Artforum*,⁸² bought a T-shaped fiberglass piece, which he returned a week later because friends talked him out of it; and *Artforum's* publisher, Charles Cowles, bought a fiberglass piece.⁸³ John Baldessari saw the show and remembers it as signaling a sea change in how he thought about sculpture.⁸⁴

San Francisco

After receiving his master of arts degree with an emphasis on sculpture (over the objections of some of the older Davis faculty), the Naumans moved to a former grocery store at 144 Twenty-seventh Street in San Francisco's Mission District. He had been offered a part-time teaching job at the San Francisco Art Institute by Fred Martin, then director of the college of the institute, on the urging of Robert Hudson (who was leaving the institute to teach at UC Berkeley).⁸⁵ No longer part of a community and with no other commitments apart from teaching one class at the San Francisco Art Institute (which he would continue to do through spring 1968), Nauman had a lot of time on his hands and very little money. As his classes were in the early morning, he had little contact with

other instructors. According to several of his students, he was reticent, but what he did say made an impact. For example, he advised John Woodall that the most important thing for an artist to do is to decide what to do, which Woodall felt was "a very meaty comment."⁸⁶ Another student, the filmmaker Peter Hutton, notes that Nauman represented a new generation of teachers who were conceptually oriented (most of the other sculpture faculty members were still working within an Abstract Expressionist idiom) and that Nauman would work right along with the students, sometimes bringing in his own work as a way to stimulate ideas.⁸⁷ Nauman was also known to give provocative assignments to his students. Fellow teacher Richard Shaw remembers once needing a project for his class, and Nauman suggesting that he ask the students to make something in their pockets.⁸⁸

Although in the fall of 1966 the Art Institute gallery's director, James Monte, gave Nauman a show with Geis,⁸⁹ Nauman told Sharp, "I had no support structure for my art then ... there was no chance to talk about my work." Therefore, he said, "I was forced to examine myself, and what I was doing there."⁹⁰ Self-examination took the form of body casts, films of simple actions, floor works, his first neon sculptures, and photography. Nauman acknowledged to Sharp that a fundamental shift took place in his work at this time, marked by a tendency toward conceptual and process-oriented works and away from his "form-based" pieces.⁹¹ A list titled "Codification" provides insight into Nauman's concerns at the time:

1. Personal appearance and skin
2. Gestures
3. Ordinary actions such as those concerned with eating and drinking
4. Traces of activity such as footprints and material objects
5. Simple sounds-spoken and written words
 - Metacommunication messages
 - Feedback
 - Analogic and digital codification⁹²

Some of these ideas are easily matched with realized works; for example, "Personal appearance and skin" relates to *Art Make-Up* (1967). *Flour Arrangements* (1966) and *Composite Photo of Two Messes on the Studio Floor* (1967) contain traces of activities. Other ideas he would explore in later works: "Simple sounds" describes the ambient sound in *Mapping the Studio (Fat Chance John Cage)* (2001), for instance, and "Feedback" is evident in the corridor installations. Michael Auping points out that over the course of Nauman's career, "Each of these themes would play an interchangeable role in what Nauman would summarize as 'Metacommunication messages'" - messages that are greater than the sum of their parts.⁹³

Body Measurement and Cast Body Works

Although Nauman's work shifted in emphasis at this time, he continued to make body-related works. Some were based on systems of measurement, such as the fiberglass *Six Inches of My Knee Extended to Six Feet* (1967)⁹⁴ and several drawings that converted body measurements into columns and planes. In another fascinating set of drawings that show how Nauman uses that medium to develop an idea, he transformed a tree into a hand and finally into a shoulder, which then assumed its final permutation as the plaster sculpture *Device for a Left Armpit* (1967).⁹⁵ In another piece based on measurements of his own body, *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals* (1966), Nauman fashioned arcs from green neon tubing.⁹⁶ As in all of his neon sculptures, and consistent with his practice of revealing the working process, Nauman made no attempt to hide the transformer and wires. Nauman had experimented with neon tubing in conjunction with some of his cast-fiberglass sculptures as early as 1965, but *Neon Templates* was

his first in which neon was the predominant material. This strangely poetic self-portrait is recapitulated in several drawings (some made before and some following the neon) that explore unorthodox methods of making visible the contours of the left side of the artist's body. In one, glass sheets along an axis replace the neon tubes; in another, templates are separated by grease; and in a third, wax templates of abstracted body parts from the head to the calf are stacked in such a way as to evoke a Cubist sculpture.⁹⁷

Another body-related work, *Wax Impressions of the Knees of Five Famous Artists* (1966), is in actuality not made of wax but of fiberglass and polyester resin. Nauman not only purposely misstated the material in the title, but also misled the viewer into believing that the knee prints were made from other artists when they were actually made from his own knee. In a drawing made a year later (he often makes drawings after the fact to further explore ideas broached in a finished work), Nauman identified the "five famous artists" as de Kooning (although de Kooning's name is crossed out and replaced with "self"), Wiley, Larry Bel, Lucas Samaras, and Leland Bell. Cognizant of the power of language, Nauman was here "interested in the idea of lying, of not telling the truth," and in the "functional edges of language ... when it ceases to be a tool of communication."⁹⁸ As in *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals* and other works, Nauman connected the sculpture with the body, removing it from a strictly formal reading. "Making the impressions of the knees in a wax block was a way of having a large rectangular solid with marks in it. I didn't want to just make marks in it, so I had to follow another kind of reasoning."⁹⁹ Again, as in mathematics or in any other field Nauman engages, it was the structure and the act of pushing a theory or idea to absurd extremes that most interested him.

After the fiberglass and rubber series, Nauman began to give his works elaborate titles, which he said came out of Dada and Surrealism. The titles provided a kind of rationale for what he was doing.¹⁰⁰ *From Hand to Mouth* (1967), a cast made from moulage (a very accurate casting material Nauman found in a police shop), makes visual the idiomatic expression in the title, depicting only those parts of the body referred to in the words. (The piece might well be an allusion to Nauman's meager finances at that time.) This was the first of Nauman's visual puns. It is generally acknowledged that Wiley, and to a lesser extent Arneson, influenced Nauman in his use of puns, as did his reading of Wittgenstein and Vladimir Nabokov. No doubt Nauman also had in mind Jasper Johns's casts of body fragments in such works as *Target with Plaster Casts* (1955). He must also have been aware of Duchamp's punning titles, as well as his body casts, such as *With My Tongue in My Cheek* (1959), a self-portrait in the form of a drawn profile combined with a plaster cast of his cheek pushed out by his tongue. While Nauman has said that Duchamp wasn't a major influence, he has also acknowledged that all artists who were exploring conceptual or idea-based ways of making art were indebted to Duchamp - and although his commitment is generally to the material and physical, Nauman does occasionally riff on the Duchampian readymade. For example, *Wedge Piece* (1968), comprising two steel woodcutting wedges, both painted red, one engraved with the word "like" above the word "keil," and the other with the word "wedge" above the word "keil," offers a play on words that Duchamp would have appreciated: "wedge" in German is *keil*, which is an anagram of the word "like." The wedge form is also a vaginal symbol and thus relates to Duchamp's *Coin de Chasteté* (1951), created by pressing dental plastic into a vagina.

In *Untitled* (1967) Nauman joined a cast of a body fragment with a knotted rope that extends from each upper arm and from which the sculpture is suspended,¹⁰¹ drawing a visual parallel between the position of the arms and the knot. (This visual resemblance is even more explicit in his 1967 drawing *Square Knot*.) Knots appear in several of Nauman's drawings and sculptures from around this time, including *Knot an Ear* (1967) - a wax earlike sculpture that is not an ear in the same sense that the pipe in René Magritte's *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* is not a pipe - and *Westermann's Ear* (1967).

Nauman has cited Man Ray's *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* (1920), a sewing machine wrapped in cloth and tied with twine, as one source of his knot imagery, but he has also noted that on a symbolic level it represented his feeling that he was "tied in a knot" and having difficulty working at that time.¹⁰² Additionally, Nauman learned knot-making techniques as a Boy Scout. The reference to H. C. Westermann goes back to an amusing interchange with the artist initiated by Wiley and Nauman. Both artists admired Westermann's ability to successfully combine sophisticated ideas with folk art traditions. Wiley especially related to Westermann's Surrealist objects and was dismayed to learn after the fact that Westermann had been living in San Francisco for a couple of years. As Wiley tells it:

Both Bruce and I were aware of and liked Westermann's work and after we noticed that Man Ray's *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* was sometimes also titled *The Riddle*, Nauman suggested we write to Westermann and see what he thought about this discrepancy. So we wrote to him care of his gallery in Chicago. Bruce suggested that we include with the letter these funny lozenge-shaped pieces of carbon paper that would record the marks of handling en route to Chicago. We got this card back from Westermann, a kind of a valentine that he had decorated, on which he wrote, "I know you are going to think I am some mean old thing, but that card you sent me was almost an enigma in itself. Slow down, what is your hurry? Sincerely, Cliff."¹⁰³

Another of Nauman's absurdist puns-made-literal (and another in which a knot plays a part) is *Henry Moore Bound to Fail* (1967), a wax and plaster sculpture, also done in a cast-iron version (1967-70). The relief is not a cast from his body; rather, it was based on a photograph of the back of his torso with his arms tied together with rope (see *Three Well-Known Knots [Square Knot, Bowline and Clove Hitch]*, 1967, and *Eleven Color Photographs*, 1966-67/70). Later Nauman made plaster and then sand casts from the wax original, which he used to make an edition in cast iron.¹⁰⁴ While an earlier drawing titled *Bound to Fail* was perhaps an indication of Nauman's attitude toward failure (the flip side of the sentiment expressed in his *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths [Window or Wall Sign]*, 1967), when he tacked on the name "Henry Moore," the phrase took on new meaning. Since the 1940s, Moore had dominated British sculpture, but by the 1960s young British sculptors not only felt oppressed by the weight of his importance, but also rejected his brand of monumental figurative sculpture. Although Nauman wasn't particularly fond of Moore, he felt that "they should really hang on to him, because he really did some good work and they might need him again sometime."¹⁰⁵ So as to "preserve" him for the future, Nauman conceived of a storage capsule, which he realized as a drawing reminiscent of Moore's bomb shelter drawings of the 1940s. He also metaphorically "trapped" Moore's spirit (some saw Moore imprisoned by his own success) in two large photographs titled *Light Trap for Henry Moore, No. 1* and *No. 2* (1967), in which a swirl of lines - made by manipulating a flashlight in a dark room - suggest a cage.¹⁰⁶

Photographs

In the fall of 1966 Nauman saw the first exhibition in the United States to present the full range of Man Ray's work, which opened on October 25 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Man Ray's photographic work led Nauman to explore that medium, and his "rayograms" (Man Ray's term for photograms) inspired Nauman's *Light Traps*. Man Ray's protean output also struck a chord with Nauman, who has often spoken of his inability to stick with one medium or direction. Nauman also preferred Man Ray's workmanlike approach and lifestyle (he made his living as a fashion and portrait photographer) to Duchamp's more rarified art-about-art philosophy and relatively leisurely

existence. Nauman admits that this probably has to do with a particularly American work ethic that he had absorbed not only from his family, but also from his socialist-leaning art teachers at the University of Wisconsin. Nauman has said, "I really mistrust art that's just about art," commenting further that he "needed to work out of a broader social context."¹⁰⁷ However, he admired both Duchamp's and Man Ray's use of language. He has explained that he started using words in his work because he needed to get more of what interested him - his reading, for example, and the way words function - into the work.¹⁰⁸

Jack Fulton printed Nauman's oversized black-and-white *Light Trap* photographs, as well as a series of large photographs Nauman made in 1966 that are almost lurid in their coloration.¹⁰⁹ At that time, according to Fulton, "both color and something of that scale were not very much practiced in photography except perhaps by an ad agency with a lot of money." Fulton had experimented with color printing before, but had given it up because it was "too difficult." However, he agreed to try again with Nauman. Together they photographed the set-ups using bicolored lights and Nauman's 2 ¼ x 2 ¼ Yashica. To print the images, Nauman made "nice but funky trays from one-half-by-two inch molding and Masonite from a lumber store," and Fulton bought the chemicals, paper, and coffee cup heaters to warm the chemicals; Fulton used color-printing filters in his black-and-white enlarger. Fulton recalls: "It took about forty-five minutes in the dark to make a print in those days, so we'd make a test and go at it again until it looked good to both of us. We'd hang it in the dark in my darkroom. The coffee cup heaters kept the chemistry at a constant temperature. I may have purchased a safelight made for a seven-watt bulb no closer than eight feet from where one worked, and if that was the case I then placed a forty-watt bulb in it so we could see." According to Fulton, the prints looked good to both of them at this point, but, knowing color photographs tended to fade readily in light, he washed the prints doubly long and also used washing agents and some formaldehyde, believing it would help prevent fading.¹¹⁰

In these photos Nauman continued to explore the relationship between words and images in visual and verbal puns. In most, such as *Feet of Clay*, *Eating My Words*, *Bound to Fail*, and *Waxing Hot*, Nauman is seen engaging in activities that illustrate common expressions. In a couple that hark back to his early ceramic cup objects - *Coffee Thrown Away Because It Was Too Cold* and *Coffee Spilled Because the Cup Was Too Hot* - he reenacted what must have been real-life incidents. (He would do so again much later, in his 1993 video installation *Coffee Spilled and Balloon Dog*.) The signature image of the group, *Self-Portrait as a Fountain*, relates to a black and-white photo of 1966-67, *The Artist as a Fountain*, in which Nauman is seen spewing water in a backyard garden, and to a 1967 drawing of a figure spouting water into a wading pool. These fountain works both spoof garden sculpture - as early as 1965 Nauman was exploring unconventional fountains in such drawings as *Flat Fountain* - and, along with Nauman's several manifestations of *The True Artist Is an Amazing Luminous Fountain*, refer to Duchamp's 1917 *Fountain*.¹¹¹ The subject would make a return in the monumental 2005 installation *100 Fish Fountain*.

Neon Signs

Along with artists such as Martial Raysse, James Rosenquist, and Joseph Kosuth, Nauman began incorporating neon as an illuminated linear element in his sculptures in the mid-1960s. Attracted by materials not normally associated with art, he used neon in *Neon Templates of the Left Half of My Body Taken at Ten-Inch Intervals*, in *My Last Name Exaggerated Fourteen Times Vertically* (1967), presented as if an aerial map, and in *My Name as though It Were Written on the Surface of the Moon* (1968). Robert Pincus-Witten wrote that this latter work appeared "as if a repeatedly beamed electronic signal forming the letters of Nauman's first name had bounced off the moon and returned to earth at constant intervals."¹¹² In both name works, Nauman evoked the self but, as always,

obliquely, since he distorted his handwriting beyond legibility. This self-declaration was first suggested to him when, as an undergraduate, he saw Barnett Newman's bold signature on one of his paintings at the Art Institute of Chicago. It was, he has said, "so real and so there."¹¹³ Nauman's response was to make works consisting solely of his signature. Most artists who were exploring neon didn't imitate its commercial function as a sign. The idea to do so came to Nauman from a neon beer sign that hung in the window of his San Francisco studio. Nauman liked that you could see it both from the street and from the interior, where the message was confused. In other words, as in his fiberglass sculptures, he was still interested in making works that dealt with exterior/interior inversions and also artworks that might not immediately be understood as such, that "would kind of disappear" (as he had literally intended *A Rose Has No Teeth* would do) - "an art that was supposed to not quite look like art."¹¹⁴ Nauman designed a blue and pink spiral sign with the rather grandiose assertion "The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths," had it fabricated, and hung it on the plate-glass window of his studio, alongside a related work from the year before, a Mylar window shade with "The true artist is an amazing luminous fountain" printed around its perimeter.¹¹⁵ These oft-cited works, made at a time when Nauman, only recently out of school, was grappling with what it meant to be an artist, are usually interpreted more as questions than as convictions. "On the one hand I believed it," he has said. "It's true and it's not true at the same time. It depends on how you interpret it and how seriously you take yourself. For me it's still a very strong thought."¹¹⁶

Nauman has continued to make neon works throughout his career, first with superimposed words, as in the three-layered *Sweet, Suite, Substitute* (1968), in which each of the three words, in red, yellow, and blue, is lit for about five seconds (the title is a variant of the title of a 1940 Jelly Roll Morton song about substituting affections), and later with increasingly complex word plays and imagery. Nauman added a witty notation on the fabrication drawing for *Sweet, Suite, Substitute*, playing on the word "substitute": "Art to replace your favorite furniture." Jane Livingston comments, "It cannot be insignificant that the word 'substitute' appears in this context, in that he continuously sparred with the notions of art as substitute for experience."¹¹⁷ Nauman has said that his text pieces came out of his reading, and he remembers a journal that had a strong impact:

There was a magazine that I read when I was at school: *Art and Literature*. There was always a lot of poetry, there would be interviews, and there were, I think, descriptions of things. It was an interesting range of stuff, and it opened up ways of thinking about things, and I learned what other people were doing.¹¹⁸

Floor Works

Spending time in his virtually empty San Francisco studio, Nauman was forced to consider what it was that constituted an art activity. He eventually concluded that whatever he did in his studio was art.¹¹⁹ One such activity consisted of rearranging piles of fine, white Japanese flour on his studio floor with a two-by-four. He photographed each new design and chose a set of seven photographs to document the month-long process. In an obvious pun, he named the set *Flour Arrangements*. Nauman was among the first artists to preserve such activities as photographic documents. Very soon this practice became a primary tool of earth and Conceptual artists, such as Robert Smithson, whose *Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey*, a photo essay of found earthworks, was published in the December 1967 issue of *Artforum*, and Michael Heizer, who began photographing his interventions in the land the same year. Nauman and other Conceptual artists did not consider themselves photographers, were not trained as such, and weren't much concerned with the fine photographic print. In fact, they pointedly distanced themselves from the tradition of fine art

photography. Nevertheless, the photographic document, displayed on a gallery wall, assumed the status of art.

The *Flour Arrangements* photos have a blue-green cast that Fulton, who printed them, thinks was caused by using daylight color film in a fluorescent-lit interior. Because of their cool color, and the way the flour mounds are isolated and shot from above, providing no clue as to scale or surroundings, they could easily be mistaken for floating icebergs. As for the genesis of the idea, Wiley recalls that once when Nauman visited him, Wiley had laid out a wood grid covered with white felt that he was going to cover with flour and name *Japanese Flour Arranging*. Soon after, Nauman asked Wiley whether or not he had finished the piece, and Wiley said he hadn't been able to figure out exactly what to do with it and had more or less abandoned it. Nauman asked if it was okay for him to appropriate the idea, and Wiley said yes. Afterward Nauman joked to Wiley, "You've been influenced by my work long enough. I thought I could take something from you."¹²⁰ A related work, *Composite Photo of Two Messes on the Studio Floor*, is a multipart photo-collage that depicts the remnants of the flour piece along with other projects. Livingston notes that these works relate to LeVa's contemporaneous scatter sculptures.¹²¹ They also recall Duchamp and Man Ray's 1920 photograph *Dust Breeding*, which records the dust that accumulated on Duchamp's *The Large Glass* while it lay in his studio.

The year after he made *Flour Arrangements*, Nauman was invited by William Allan to reenact his flour arranging on film. Allan was an artist-in-residence at the Rockefeller Foundation - funded Experimental Television Project at KQED, the Bay Area's educational TV channel. In the amusing film that resulted, made on October 22, 1967, Allan and Peter Saul act as the hosts of a mock TV talk show, as Nauman, filmed from above, uses a two-by-four to manipulate fifty pounds of white flour on the studio floor. The camera moves back and forth between Saul and Allan, smoking a pipe and a cigarette, respectively, and Nauman. The two "hosts" ad lib on a variety of subjects and comment from time to time on Nauman's flour patterns. Occasionally Nauman asks for their opinion about a specific arrangement. For a split second, one can see projected on a wall behind Allan and Saul a shot of the film *Sound Effects for Manipulating the T Bar*. Toward the end Nauman presses parts of his body into the flour, recalling such works as *Wax Impressions of the Knees of Five Famous Artists*, and the film ends when Nauman, at the request of Saul and Allan, signs "Bruce" in the flour.

Mill Valley

In the summer of 1967 Nauman and his family, which now included his one-year-old son Eric, sublet Wiley's Mill Valley studio and apartment at 24 Summit Avenue while Wiley took a year-long sabbatical on the East Coast. *Art Make-Up* is one of the first film works Nauman made in Wiley's Mill Valley studio and is unique in his body of film work.¹²² It consists of four ten-minute films designed as loops to be projected simultaneously on the four walls of a room (as such it foreshadows Nauman's monumental multiscreen installation *Mapping the Studio [Fat Chance John Cage]*, 2001).¹²³ Nauman told interviewer Jan Butterfield that he made the films for a show at the San Francisco Museum of Art, but that when the museum's director, Gerald Nordland, discovered that Nauman had submitted films rather than sculpture, as was expected, he did not include him in the exhibition.¹²⁴

In *Art Make-Up* Nauman uses his body as a canvas, covering his face and torso successively with white, pink, green, and black paint. Nauman has admitted that the piece had "whatever social connections it had with skin color," but that it also had to do with the idea of "making up art."¹²⁵ *Art Make-Up* is an early example of self-erasure or masking in Nauman's work. Later he made several works in which he replaced himself with the figure of a clown, a traditional surrogate for an artist in

modern art practice and, as "the abstracted idea of a person,"¹²⁶ a vehicle for dark humor, frustration, or even humiliation. Nauman has always had ambivalent feelings about self-revelation, but he recognizes:

to present yourself through your work is obviously part of being an artist. If you don't want people to see that self, you put on makeup. But artists are always interested in some kind of communication... You spend all of this time in the studio and then when you do present the work, there is a kind of self-exposure that is threatening. It is a dangerous situation and I think that what I was doing [was using] the tension between what you tell and what you don't tell as part of the work. What is given *and* what is withheld becomes the work.¹²⁷

Studio Films

An abiding leitmotif in Nauman's work is what the artist does in the studio. "It generally goes back to the idea that when you don't know what to do, then whatever it is that you are doing at the time becomes the work."¹²⁸ This statement describes the condition that gave rise to his studio films of 1967-68, although, as proof of the consistency of Nauman's philosophy, it was said in reference to the genesis of *Mapping the Studio (Fat Chance John Cage)*, created over thirty years later. The immediate impetus for filming his studio performances, Nauman has said, was that "no one at that time was interested in presenting them. I could have rented a hall, but didn't want to do it that way."¹²⁹

Before filming his performance activities, Nauman used a still camera to record himself trying to levitate in his studio. The double-exposure photograph *Failing to Levitate in the Studio* (1966) shows him balanced between two chairs and then falling. This exercise in concentration relates to two of Nauman's videotapes of 1973 - *Elke Allowing the Floor to Rise Up over Her* and *Tony Sinking into the Floor, Face Up and Face Down* - and to later works that deal with equilibrium. Like photography, film and videotape became widely used to document made-for-camera actions or performances during the late 1960s.¹³⁰ Nauman described his attitude toward film to Raffaele: "Films are about seeing. I wanted to find out what I would look at in a strange situation, and I decided that with a film and camera I could do that." He was also intrigued by the perceived veracity of the medium: "You tend to believe that what is shown on a film is really true - you believe a film, or a photograph, more than a painting."¹³¹

There was an active underground film scene in San Francisco, centered mostly around the Art Institute, and it was possible for Nauman to borrow or rent equipment for as little as a few dollars a day. He conceived his studio films as simply and directly as he had conceived the films he had made as a student. Most are approximately ten minutes long (the duration of a hundred-foot film reel) and are descriptively titled: *Bouncing Two Balls between the Floor and Ceiling with Changing Rhythms*, *Dance or Exercise on the Perimeter of a Square*, *Playing a Note on the Violin while I Walk around the Studio*, and the like. Nauman has always believed that all human activity, no matter how commonplace, is worthy of being examined, and he found a literary parallel in Beckett, whom he began to read at this time.¹³²

Another influence was avant-garde dance. At a party in San Francisco, he had briefly met multimedia artist Meredith Monk, who introduced him to the concept of body awareness and voice as an instrument, and the Bay Area was on the forefront of a new concept in dance pioneered by Anna Halprin, which was constructed around ordinary movement. Several of the dancers who were to become chief proponents of new dance - such as Simone Forti and Yvonne Rainer - trained with Halprin at her Marin County studio and went on to become founding members of the Judson Dance Theater in New York. Nauman was also aware of Merce Cunningham and John Cage (he had seen

Cunningham's company perform at the University of Wisconsin) and was influenced by their transformation of "normal activity into a formal presentation."¹³³ Nauman's films and first videos were "specifically about doing exercises in balance. I thought of them as dance problems without being a dancer, being interested in the kinds of tension that arise when you try to balance and can't. Or do something for a long time and get tired."¹³⁴ Nauman's reading of Gestalt therapy and body awareness was another important reinforcement,¹³⁵ as was the Minimalist music of La Monte Young, Steve Reich (whom he met in San Francisco through Wiley), and Terry Riley, all of whom based their compositions on repetitive structures that, like those of Nauman's jazz idols John Coltrane and Tristano, seemed as if they could continue indefinitely. Despite his sense of isolation and lack of financial resources, 1966 and 1967 were enormously productive years for Nauman.

Southampton

In the fall of 1968 Nauman received an Individual Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Paul Waldman, whom Nauman got to know when he was teaching at Davis, offered Nauman and his family the use of a summer house and studio in Southampton, New York, that he co-owned with Roy Lichtenstein. The Naumans occupied the house during the winter of 1968-69. For the most part Nauman continued to perform for the camera, but instead of using film, he explored the new medium of video with equipment his dealer Leo Castelli purchased for his use. (When Nauman returned it, Castelli loaned the equipment to Serra, Keith Sonnier, and others.) Nauman approached video much as he had film, choosing the medium based on the availability of equipment.¹³⁶ He soon appreciated the advantages of video - he could lengthen his performances or actions to the sixty minutes of a videotape reel, rather than being restricted to the ten minutes of a film reel. Video also allowed for immediate feedback (looking at a monitor of himself in real time helped him position himself for *Wall-Floor Positions*, 1968) and thereby enabled him to make test tapes. By contrast, performances for his films had to have been fairly well worked out in advance, since Nauman could only afford to rent the 16 mm equipment for a day or two at a time.

Nauman experimented with changing the orientation of the camera, "partly because you could get more into the picture that way and partly as a concession to art - so it looks as if I did something, changed it,"¹³⁷ something he had already explored in *Manipulating the T Bar*. Some writers criticized Nauman's body-related works as narcissistic,¹³⁸ but his attitude was always impersonal. In fact, in many tapes - including *Bouncing in the Corner, No. 1*; *Stamping in the Studio*; and *Walk with Contrapposto*, all 1968 - his head is cut off or he is seen from the back. Other writers found Nauman's real-time tapes boring (real time was a value shared by pioneering video artists), but Nauman never intended them to be viewed from start to finish. Rather, he presented them as he would a sculpture in a gallery, along with other works. Nauman is credited with being among the first to show video in a commercial gallery, as part of a solo show at Nicholas Wilder in January-February 1969.¹³⁹

Although Nauman performed ordinary actions like pacing, bouncing, and so on for his videos, sustaining them over sixty minutes required concentration and exertion, which in turn occasion tension in the viewer. He based *Slow Angle Walk (Beckett Walk)* (1968), one of his most laborious videos, on writings by Beckett in which the author describes tedious, repetitive actions (for example, Vladimir, Estragon, and Lucky exchanging hats in Act II of *Waiting for Godot*). Nauman, taped at a ninety-degree angle, puts himself through an arduous exercise of kicking and pivoting (precisely diagrammed in a drawing) to advance very slowly in the space. Nauman felt an affinity for Beckett's spare staging, his relentless focus on the futility of existence, and his examination of "the dark aspect of the human condition"¹⁴⁰ (a focus that has become increasingly apparent in Nauman's work as well).

During the time he was primarily engaged in his studio films, Nauman also designed objects such as *Lighted Center Piece* (1967-68), an aluminum square illuminated from four sides by thousand-watt halogen lamps. All attention is focused on the blank surface, as if on an empty stage. A somewhat later but related sculpture, *Lighted Performance Box* (1969), is a human-scale rectangular column containing a thousand-watt bulb that shines a bright white square on the ceiling.¹⁴¹ In both of these works, human presence is suggested by its absence. As in Nauman's decades-later *Mapping the Studio* (*Fat Chance John Cage*), the spectator is left to conjure up the actor.

Corridors

A dream about being in a long, dimly lit corridor inspired Nauman's corridor pieces: "I had the dream many times and I kind of figured it must be part of myself I hadn't identified. It seemed important to objectify myself."¹⁴² As a prop for one of his video performances, *Walk with Contrapposto*, he built a twenty-inch-wide passage, so narrow that he needed to swing his hips from side to side in an exaggerated manner to navigate through it. Nauman re-created the corridor and presented it as a sculpture in its own right, without the companion video, in the 1969 exhibition *Anti-Illusion* at the Whitney Museum of American Art.¹⁴³ Nauman was somewhat uneasy about presenting it without instructions, because he "didn't want people to make their own performances. I wanted to control the situation." The two sides of the corridor stop at a wall, creating a dead end that Nauman admits he hadn't thought of before but found appealing.¹⁴⁴ As van Bruggen observes, Nauman "has always been curious about the effects of physical situations on human beings, such as the uncomfortable feeling of being in too compressed or too large a space."¹⁴⁵ He would develop this theme in his room installations of the early 1970s, culminating in the powerfully unsettling *Double Steel Cage Piece* (1974).

Despite its title, his next corridor, *Video Corridor for San Francisco (Come Piece)* (1969), was a virtual rather than a physical construct, created by cameras and monitors. Nauman placed two closed-circuit video cameras, two monitors, and a mirror in such a way that viewers traversing the gallery space saw themselves partially concealed by a lens covering or upside down or sideways, but could not stay in the picture because the linearity of the space was confounded. Nauman followed this corridor work with increasingly elaborate and discomfiting examples throughout 1970 and 1971.

As his first participatory works and first architectural installations, the corridors form a significant aspect of Nauman's early work. (Nauman would not use his own body in his work again until his 1988 video installation *Green Horses*.) As with his performances, word pieces, sound works, films, and videos, with the corridors Nauman again anticipated a mode that soon occupied many other artists - particularly, in the case of interactive video installations, one that has come to be dominant in contemporary art.

Slabs and Other Works

Nauman traveled to New York for the first time for a show at the Leo Castelli Gallery - his first solo show with Castelli - which took place from January 27 to February 17, 1968. Castelli was introduced to Nauman's work through David Whitney (then working for Castelli) and the dealer Richard Bellamy, both of whom had seen his 1966 exhibition at the Nicholas Wilder Gallery. Castelli's gallery was the leading New York venue for new art, representing Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, Pop artists Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol, Minimalists Donald Judd and Robert Morris, and Post-Minimalists Keith Sonnier and Richard Serra. Nauman's exhibition featured a wide range of work - fiberglass sculptures, body molds, films, photographs, "device" sculptures, and square metal slabs. The slabs are among the most reductive of Nauman's work and

at first could easily be mistaken for classic examples of Minimalist sculpture. But, as always, Nauman added an element that belied a pure Minimalist intent. The sheer weight of these works - several hundred pounds to over two tons - is impressive. Some, as made explicit in their titles, are reifications of mental processes, such as *A Cubic Foot of Steel Pressed between My Palms* (1968), in which Nauman posits the impossible act of pressing steel with one's hands (a concept that is played out in several related drawings).

In *John Coltrane Piece* (1968) and *Dark* (1968) Nauman deals with the idea of concealment. The latter, an outdoor piece weighing more than two tons, refers to Nauman's first work made for the outdoors, *A Rose Has No Teeth*; in both, words are hidden, or are meant to be. On the underside of *Dark*, Nauman wrote the title word in yellow with permanent-pigment steel marker, so that the piece can only be fully comprehended conceptually. According to a statement by Nauman in the 1972 catalogue of his first survey exhibition, *Dark*, "paradoxically unassuming and conventional," was a watershed work. "*Dark* is one of the first pieces having to do with a leftover feeling. This feeling has been important in my work ever since. It's partly the idea of 'Given this piece of information, there's nothing you can do about it.' Of course, the obvious thing is establishing a place you can't get to - you have no control over it. It's sort of like trying to think about the universe. The difference between *Dark* and the point I've reached now is that now I wouldn't actually put the word on the slab. I wouldn't need to."¹⁴⁶ He later noted: "The feelings I had about that piece and the way it functioned for me were important for a long time. I was able to make a statement in it that let things out of me that I hadn't been able to get out before."¹⁴⁷ *Dark* won a purchase prize from Southwestern College in Chula Vista, California, in 1968, much to the consternation of many on the campus and in the local community. John Baldessari, who was then teaching at the school, had been one of the two artists on the four-member screening committee to vote to allow the piece to be in the selection pool, and UCLA art history professor and critic Kurt Von Meier was the juror. In response to those who petitioned to rescind the award, John Baldessari submitted to the school newspaper, *Athapascan*, a written rebuttal to some of the criticisms. To those who complained of its cost (\$1,900) compared to the price of steel (\$26.50 per ton), he wrote, "If art is to be judged by cost, the materials for a Rembrandt are only \$25." To the comment that it was an eyesore, he wrote, "Does that mean it offends the sight? Most psychologists that deal with the nature of perception tell us that simple forms are easiest to perceive. Perhaps what is meant is that the eye doesn't get sore enough." And, to the comment that the school could use the money for a better library, Baldessari rejoined, "True. But wouldn't life be dull without art?"¹⁴⁸

Concealment is one of the motifs that has emerged and receded in Nauman's work from the start. The film *Uncovering a Sculpture* and the related object *Felt Formed over Sketch for a Metal Floor Piece* are early examples, as is the 1966 *Untitled* corner piece installed eight feet above the floor, which is hidden in plain sight. Sometimes concealment is a Dada-like element, as in *Dark* (reminiscent of Duchamp's 1916 readymade *With Hidden Noise*), but in all cases it is consistent with the artist's penchant for not revealing the whole story. His "Notes and Projects," published in *Artforum* in December 1970, includes the notation "Withdrawal as an Artform." At the time, he was considering how much information could be removed from a situation and still have it be effective,¹⁴⁹ but the phrase also applies to Nauman's need for self-withdrawal, whether it be geographic or metaphoric (as in *Art Make-Up*).

Untitled (1968), a forty-seven-inch square made of two metal plates, one steel, one lead, is one of three pieces in which Nauman drilled a small hole in the center to be filled with water so that the plates would rust from the inside out. *Untitled (Wedge between Two Metal Plates)* (1968), which exists in two sculptural versions and a related drawing, is also composed of two metal sheets, but here a red tongue of lead is wedged in between. This piece bears a note worthy, but probably

coincidental, relationship to Joseph Beuys's *Snowfall* (1965). Like Nauman's "wedge," Beuys's sculpture is a square, floor-bound object, but Beuys's is made of thirty-two layers of soft blankets into which the artist wedged three fir-tree branches. Many have observed that there are certain similarities between the young Nauman and the considerably older Beuys, mainly in their choice of nontraditional materials and emphasis on process, and this no doubt contributed to Nauman's relatively swift acceptance in Europe. Beuys himself said, in a 1969 interview, that the American artist with whom he felt the closest affinity was Nauman.¹⁵⁰ While Nauman had heard of Beuys during his student days through the German curator Kasper Koenig, who visited California in 1965 or 1966, he didn't see any of Beuys's works until he began showing with the German dealer Konrad Fischer. In his book on the subject of Beuys and the American anti-form artists, Dirk Luckow points out that the two artists used similar materials and were interested in the sensual experience of everyday objects, but only for Beuys did these have personal associations. And while Beuys's charismatic persona, which had to do with his faith in the unity of body, soul, and mind, was central to his art, Nauman was skeptical and critical of Beuys's nature mysticism.¹⁵¹ Nauman does not think that art can change the world in the way that Beuys did, but rather believes that art is political only indirectly, "in the sense that it pokes at the edge of what's accepted."¹⁵²

Wider Exposure

Once Nauman joined the Castelli stable, he gained much wider exposure both in the United States and in Europe. Because he was receiving so many requests to participate in exhibitions, Nauman began submitting written instructions for actions to be carried out by others.¹⁵³ He also created or had fabricated on-site in Germany the works for his 1968 and subsequent shows at the Konrad Fischer Galerie in Düsseldorf, in part to avoid shipping costs, and therefore the works for these shows tended to be more conceptual than object-based. For his first show at Fischer, *Six Sound Problems for Konrad Fischer*, Nauman had recorded, on reel-to-reel audiotape, activities or exercises-walking, bouncing balls, playing the violin, and so on - and played a different tape on a loop in the gallery each day, cutting the actual tape to fit the space. Van Bruggen describes the installation as follows:

On the first day of the piece, a visitor entering the gallery was confronted with a scene that might have been a stage set for a production of Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*; there was nothing in the space but a chair and a table, placed in the center of the room. On top of the table was a tape recorder playing the smallest loop of sound tape. On the following day, however, a visitor would find, strung diagonally across the space, ever longer loops of sound tape, at one end threaded through a recorder head and at the other wound loosely around a pencil fastened to the chair with masking tape. Each day the chair would be located in a different spot, with the tapes eventually forming a radiating pattern.¹⁵⁴

Fischer sold *First Poem Piece* (1968) to the Belgian collectors Martin and Mia Visser, who had it fabricated from Nauman's drawing. This work was his most extensive word piece up until that time and had its genesis in *A Rose Has No Teeth*. As in the latter, the words were meant to slowly erode over time. The first line engraved in the gridded surface of the 500-pound steel plate is "You May Not Want to Be Here." In each successive line words are omitted and the words "here" and "hear" are interchanged, producing different meanings. A similar work, *Second Poem Piece*, was completed in 1969. Both prefigure a series of seven granite slabs Nauman created in 1983-84 on which he carved the seven virtues and vices, and the texts reappear as spoken words in Nauman's 2005 sound installation *Raw Materials*.

Nauman's work had already been seen in New York prior to the Castelli show, in Lucy R. Lippard's prescient exhibition *Eccentric Abstraction* at the Fischbach Gallery in the fall of 1966.¹⁵⁵ This first public manifestation of an anti-form aesthetic also included work by Alice Adams, Louise Bourgeois, Hesse, Gary Kuehn, Sonnier, Frank Lincoln Viner, and Don Potts (the only other San Francisco Bay Area artist who would be included in the *Funk* exhibition at the University Art Museum, Berkeley, the following year). Although Minimalism had only just been institutionally recognized, in the *Primary Structures* exhibition at New York's Jewish Museum in April 1966, Lippard had noted an anti-Minimalist tendency emerging among artists on both the East and West Coasts, something she described in an article in *Art International* as "a merging of Minimalism and Surrealism." Nauman's wall-mounted latex rubber sculptures, she wrote, were "unconcerned with conventional manipulation of form in space and more involved in perverse, sometimes bizarre expansion of the limits of art." She also noted the West Coast artists' individualism and relationship to the Funk aesthetic, but saw in Nauman's work a "much cooler kind of Funk" and described his sculptures as "carelessly surfaced, somewhat aged, blurred and repellent, wholly non-sculptural and deceptively inconsequential at first sight."¹⁵⁶ Nauman himself has spoken of trying to make a "less important thing to look at" in response to the seriousness of Minimalism.¹⁵⁷

A more specific context for Nauman's work was established in *Nine at Castelli*, a December 1968 exhibition organized by Robert Morris (who had published a repudiation of Minimalism in *Artforum* earlier that year), held at Castelli's uptown warehouse. Max Kozloff characterized this show as an "attack on the status of the object."¹⁵⁸ In *Artforum*, Morris cited the balance between control and accident in Jackson Pollock's performative process as a precedent for anti-form works, writing also that in these new pieces, "Considerations of ordering are necessarily casual and imprecise and unemphasized. Random piling, loose stacking, hanging give passing form to the material. Chance is accepted,"¹⁵⁹ Nauman's works in *Nine at Castelli* - *John Coltrane Piece* and *Steel Channel Piece* (1968) - were among his more Minimalist-looking sculptures, but both were characteristic Nauman subversions of the Minimalist specific object. For example, Nauman inserted a sound element into *Steel Channel Piece*, an audiotape on which he intones anagrams of the phrase "lighted steel channel": "It was a loud whisper. Let's see, how did it go... 'Steel channel, lean snatch, lean channel, steel snatch.' 'Lean snatch' is a cheating anagram of 'Steel channel.'"¹⁶⁰ For the most part the other artists in the show - Hesse, Kaltenbach, Sonnier, Serra, Bill Bollinger, Alan Saret, and two Arte Povera artists, Gilberto Zorio and Giovanni Anselmo - showed process-oriented works that more closely adhered to Morris's description. Morris himself presented *Continuous Project Altered Daily*, a floor piece consisting of earth, water, paper, grease, plastic, and wood, which he manipulated every day. (Except for the materials, this piece had an uncanny resemblance to Nauman's *Flour Arrangements*.) It was also in this exhibition that Serra made the first version of *Splashing*, a performative lead sculpture created by flinging liquid lead from a ladle into the spot where the floor and wall met. DA QUI

Nauman is always interested in what is unique about a specific medium and in exploring all that can be done with it. In this spirit, in 1968 he made a series of body works in holography, a scientific process only invented in 1964 and four years later still unexplored as a creative medium. Rehearsed in a series of infrared photographs taken by Fulton, in which Nauman contorts his face with his hands,¹⁶¹ these haunting three-dimensional illusions are powerful enough "to dominate the technical aspect of the medium."¹⁶² Recently, Fulton scanned several outtakes from the series that had remained in his files since 1968, and Nauman approved four for use on the cover of this catalogue and in the exhibition. The genesis for the series can be found in a 1967 drawing by Nauman in which lips are pulled into exaggerated positions.

Sound was another new medium Nauman explored toward the end of the 1960s in a series of

audiotapes collectively called *Studio Aids II*. One of the tapes in the set, *Get Out of My Mind, Get Out of This Room* (1968), is often exhibited separately. This was the first instance of Nauman using his own voice to communicate directly with the viewer. As viewers enter a small room, they are assaulted with the frightening sound of Nauman screaming, growling, hissing, and otherwise distorting his voice as he issues his threatening command. As Michael Auping observes, "The pacing and different emphasis of Nauman's vocalizations are emotional, poetic, deadpan, dramatic, even musical at times." He then quotes Nauman: "Music plays a role in a lot of my work. Even when there's no music!"¹⁶³ Nauman states that *Get Out of My Mind, Get Out of This Room* was in part a response to the intense pressure to produce work he was then experiencing, but its relevance to him has endured, as evidenced by its inclusion in *Raw Materials*.

Generalized anger and frustration have always been motivating factors for Nauman,¹⁶⁴ but from the late 1960s on they became more apparent in his work. From the relatively mild anti-war sentiment expressed in his flashing neon palindrome *Raw War* - fabricated in 1970 but conceived in a 1968 drawing on which he wrote "sign to hang when there is a war on," adding, "you can always find yourself a war somewhere" - Nauman moved on to works that expressed his dismay "about how people refuse to understand other people. And about how people can be cruel to other people."¹⁶⁵ Such feelings culminated in the "South America" hanging-chair installations of the 1980s that Nauman created after reading accounts of political torture. But even disturbing works like these - and the flayed animal series that followed - contain an element of ambiguity so that they are experienced first as art.

Leaving

By the time he left New York, Nauman says, he "felt very drained."¹⁶⁶ The demands that had been placed on him made him feel as if he had "used up every idea I had in six months."¹⁶⁷ The Naumans stayed briefly with his parents, who had relocated to Los Angeles many years earlier, before moving in with artist Richard Jackson, an old friend from Sacramento, who was living in Walter Hopps's large house at 167 North Orange Grove in Pasadena. One reason Nauman became disaffected with the Bay Area was the ultra-romantic ethos of the artist that Clyfford Still had propagated at the Art Institute when he taught there in the 1940s, which Nauman felt had become distorted and overcodified. While Nauman shared the Art Institute position that "art ought to have a moral value, a moral stance, position," an attitude he derived from his midwestern background and education, as well as from Wiley (via the Art Institute, where he had studied), he was put off by the anti-intellectualism and distrust of success that characterized many of the artists around the school, by "the frustration and anger used on hating New York and Los Angeles... the incredible paranoia among most of the people I knew."¹⁶⁸ For an artist of Nauman's curiosity and intellect, there were few people with whom he found he could share ideas. There were exceptions - Wiley, who was off on sabbatical, and Jim Melchert, "who was wonderful... someone you could talk to about something you read and would take seriously a lot of ideas" - but for most, Nauman has said, "it was against the rules to read books."¹⁶⁹

While Nauman never came into direct contact with Paul Kos, Terry Fox, Tom Mariani, and Howard Fried, who were to become the leaders in the Bay Area Conceptual art movement (even though Fried and Kos were students at the Art Institute while Nauman was teaching there), he did have an influence on their work, primarily through his 1969 exhibition at San Francisco's Reese Palley Gallery, which included *Art Make-Up*, *Video Corridor for San Francisco (Come Piece)*, and other film and video works.

Conclusion

As a young artist, Nauman displayed an unusual precociousness and intensity of purpose. He flourished in the permissive environment at UC Davis and drew ideas and inspiration from other disciplines, resulting in a radical and diverse body of work. Reflecting on his time at Davis, Nauman has said, "It still puzzles me how I made decisions in those days about what was possible and what wasn't. I ended up drawing on music and dance and literature, still using thoughts and ideas from other fields to help me continue to work. In that sense, the early work seems to have all kinds of materials and ideas in it, [and it] seemed very simple to make because it wasn't coming from looking at sculpture or painting."¹⁷⁰ Likewise, in making a place for himself in the contemporary art world, he has proceeded on his own terms. Moving from Pasadena to New Mexico (first to Pecos and, more recently, to Galisteo), he has maintained a strict privacy in ever more remote areas. From the start, he recognized the danger of being too much of a public figure. Melchert remembers the young Nauman warning him that if you make yourself too available, "you will lose touch with who you are."¹⁷¹ If the Minimalists took sculpture off the pedestal, Nauman was among those who made the creative process fully evident in the work's final form. The form itself might be ephemeral - the artist's body - or insistently non-art in materials and appearance. In essence, Nauman was investigating the nature of the artist's role and the very structure of art in a way that caused viewers to question their own assumptions. Rather than providing answers, Nauman opened up areas of thought. At the same time, as conceptually oriented as the work may be, engagement with physical materials is what gets Nauman going:

In the end, I think most of my work ... [is about] why anybody continues to make art. It's always interested me how one does any work in the studio at all, what it's supposed to be about, how you get things started or make any sense of the process. Even though the work is coming from somewhere inside you can't put your finger on the source and it never happens twice the same way. When you can't do any work, you can't figure out how to get it started and, once it's started, you can't figure out where it came from.¹⁷²

¹ Richard L. Nelson to Byran R. Houston, Graduate Dean, September 10, 1964, and January 8, 1965, Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis, files.

² The Sidney Janis Gallery represented major Abstract Expressionists such as Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, Philip Guston, Robert Motherwell, and Mark Rothko, who were outraged by this new, brash attack on abstraction and the beliefs they held dear. Meeting a few days after the exhibition opened, this contingent voted (with the exception of de Kooning) to leave the gallery.

³ Hilton Kramer coined this term; see Thomas Albright, *Art in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1945-1980* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 121.

⁴ Information on Nauman's early life through his student years at the University of Wisconsin is from Michele De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman" (1980), in Janet Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words: Writings and Interviews* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 197-295.

⁵ Interview with the artist, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 8, 2005.

⁶ Nauman remarked that aspiring artists "either went East or West and I went West, I think maybe thinking that the East was a little too frightening." De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 220.

⁷ Interview with the artist, December 8, 2005.

⁸ Quoted in Coosje van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 7.

⁹ Dieter Koepplin, "Reasoned Drawings," in *Bruce Nauman: Drawings 1965-1986* (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1986), 73.

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- ¹⁰ Joan Simon, "Breaking the Silence: An Interview with Bruce Nauman," *Art in America* 76, no. 9 (September 1988); reprinted in Robert C. Morgan, ed., *Art+ Performance: Bruce Nauman* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 271.
- ¹¹ Telephone interview with Dan Max, June 22, 2005.
- ¹² Conversation with the artist, Chicago, September 17, 2005.
- ¹³ Quoted in van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 8.
- ¹⁴ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 273.
- ¹⁵ Interview with Max, June 22, 2005.
- ¹⁶ Conversation with the artist, September 17, 2005.
- ¹⁷ As Hilarie Faberman notes, there was an unusual opportunity for close interaction between students and teachers in the open environment of Temporary Building 9 (or TB9, as it was known). Faberman, *Fired at Davis: Figurative Ceramic Sculpture by Robert Arneson, Visiting Professors, and Students at the University of California at Davis, the Paula and Ross Turk Collection* (Stanford, Calif.: Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, 2005), 18, 22.
- ¹⁸ Interview with the artist, December 8, 2005.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ The Free Speech Movement took place at UC Berkeley in 1964 and the first march against the Vietnam War in 1965.
- ²¹ Interview with William T. Wiley, Woodacre, California, May 26, 2004.
- ²² Joan Simon, "Hear Here" (interview with Nauman), *Frieze*, no. 86 (October 2004), 143.
- ²³ Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis, files. Dan Max, a fellow student at Madison, remembers an unconventional painting made by Nauman: a modular painting made up of many small stretched canvas squares, each one essentially a different painting, put together so that they were at different surface levels. (Interview with Max, June 22, 2005.)
- ²⁴ Quoted in Neal Benezra, "Empowering Space: Notes on the Sculpture of Bruce Nauman," in Benezra, ed., *Affinities and Intuitions: The Gerald S. Elliott Collection of Contemporary Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990), 17.
- ²⁵ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 321-22.
- ²⁶ Lorraine Sciarra, "Bruce Nauman, January, 1972," in Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please*, 156. Wiley was adhering sticks and laths to his paintings at this time.
- ²⁷ Apparently, the footprints on Arneson's 1965 *Scale* are Nauman's. See Cary Levine, "Robert Arneson at George Adams," *Art in America* 93, no. 8 (September 2005), 157.
- ²⁸ I derived much of the information about individual works for this essay from Joan Simon's notes in her catalogue raisonné in Simon, ed., *Bruce Nauman: Exhibition Catalogue and Catalogue Raisonné* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1994). (Catalogue raisonné numbers are hereafter denoted by the abbreviation "CR.")
- ²⁹ Nauman would continue to give misleading titles to certain works. His Wax Impressions of the Knees of *Five Famous Artists* (1966), for example, in reality comprises impressions of Nauman's own knees in fiberglass and polyester resin.
- ³⁰ Gerhard Richter made the first of a series of color-chart paintings in 1966. These paintings, like Nauman's "drawing," are appropriations that satirize Minimal painting (although Richter could not have known of Nauman's piece).
- ³¹ Albert Stewart, "Mr. Unnatural," *Images and Issues*, Spring 1981; reprinted in *William T. Wiley* (Tallahassee: University Fine Arts Galleries, School of Visual Arts, Florida State University, 1981), 4.
- ³² Quoted in Beth Coffelt, "Beyond the Flesh, Beyond the Bone," *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, May 29, 1977, "California Living" magazine; reprinted in William T. Wiley, 10-12.
- ³³ Interview with Wiley, May 26, 2004.

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- ³⁴ Paul Karlstrom, interview with Roland Petersen, San Francisco, September 17, 2002, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- ³⁵ Interview with Chris Unterseher, Alameda, California, June 19, 2004.
- ³⁶ Conversation with Nina Van Rensselaer, San Francisco, November 2, 2004.
- ³⁷ Telephone interview with Steven J. Kaltenbach, June 25, 2005.
- ³⁸ Maurice Tuchman, *American Sculpture of the Sixties* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1967), 35.
- ³⁹ Maurice Berger, *Labyrinths: Robert Morris, Minimalism, and the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 69.
- ⁴⁰ Frank Owen and Phil Weidman, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," in *The Slant Step Revisited* (Davis: Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California at Davis, 1983), 6-8.
- ⁴¹ The performance is alternately titled *28 Positions Piece*, *Wall-Floor Positions*, or *Seven Consecutive Poses*.
- ⁴² Willoughby Sharp, "Nauman Interview," *Arts Magazine*, March 1970; reprinted as "Two Interviews: Interview I," in Morgan, ed., *Art+ Performance*, 241-42. Nauman reenacted both performances for the video camera; the resulting video pieces are titled *Wall-Floor Positions* (1968) and *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube* (1969).
- ⁴³ In this performance, titled *Bounce*, based on his 1968 video performance *Bouncing in a Corner*, Nauman, Judy Nauman, and Meredith Monk stood with their backs to three corners of the room. They fell backward against the corner, stood back up, and fell again for an hour. The thumping sounds of the falls varied as each fell in his or her own way. According to Marcia Tucker, one woman in the audience found the performance so painful to watch that she left in tears, begging them to stop. (Tucker, "Bruce Nauman," in *Bruce Nauman: Work from 1965 to 1972* [Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New York: Praeger, 1972], 35.)
- ⁴⁴ Nauman and Serra performed physical actions that broke into the continuity of Monk's part: Nauman aligned himself along the edge of the stage, from time to time lifting Monk up and carrying her to another place, while Serra twirled in the wings until he got dizzy and fell onto the stage. (Christine van Assche, "Heart Beat and Silence: Interview with Meredith Monk," in *Bruce Nauman* [London: Hayward Gallery, 1998], 77; author's phone conversation with Meredith Monk, June 8, 2006.)
- ⁴⁵ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 226-27. Nauman saw Tuttle's works as part of the exhibition *The Seventh Selection of the Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art: A New York Collector Selects*, at the San Francisco Museum of Art from January 22 to February 14, 1965. Tuttle derived the shape of *Silver Picture* by tracing a portion of his body - thereby using his body as a template, as Nauman would soon do in several works.
- ⁴⁶ Interview with Gerald Walburg, Berkeley, California, July 20, 2004.
- ⁴⁷ Sharp, "Interview I," 237.
- ⁴⁸ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 324.
- ⁴⁹ Van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 8-9.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Lucy R. Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," *Art International* 10, no. 9 (November 1966); reprinted in Richard Armstrong and Richard Marshall, eds., *The New Sculpture 1965-75: Between Geometry and Gesture* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1990), 57.
- ⁵² Nauman's attention to the relationship of the object to its architectural setting anticipates Morris's explication of what would become known as installation art in his 1966 *Artforum* article "Notes on Sculpture" (reprinted in Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1993], 242).
- ⁵³ Christopher Cordes, "Talking with Bruce Nauman," in *Bruce Nauman: Prints 1970-89* (New York: Leo Castelli Graphics, 1989); reprinted in Morgan, ed., *Art+ Performance*, 363.
- ⁵⁴ Nauman took a required course in typography while an undergraduate student. At first he "hated" the course, but ended up liking it, and he credits the experience with influencing the way he would later use lettering. (Interview with the artist, December 8, 2005.)

⁵⁵ These works recall Joseph Beuys's *Fat Corner* of 1963, an accumulation of fat shaped into the corner of a room. Fat was one of Beuys's fetish materials, meant to recall his salvation by Tartars after a military plane he was flying during World War II crashed in the frozen tundra of the Crimea. The Tartars wrapped his body in fat for warmth.

⁵⁶ From the brochure accompanying Nauman's 1968 solo exhibition at the Leo Castelli Gallery, New York.

⁵⁷ Sharp, "Interview I," 237.

⁵⁸ Cordes, "Talking with Bruce Nauman," 304.

⁵⁹ Peter Selz, "Notes on Funk," in *Funk* (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California at Berkeley, 1967), 3.

⁶⁰ "When people first saw my work, they thought it was Funk art. In my mind it had nothing to do with that, it just wasn't my background at Wisconsin. It looked like it in a way but really I was just trying to present things in a straightforward way without bothering to shine them and clean them up." (Sharp, "Interview I," 236.)

⁶¹ This account was taken from *The Slant Step Revisited* (see n. 40 above), which contains an interview with Nauman by Frank Owen and Phil Weidman, as well as "The Slant Chant" by William Witherup and letters from Wiley, Peter Saul, William Allan, and others.

⁶² Marion Wintersteen is now Marion Parmenter, director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists Gallery.

⁶³ The exhibition's participants - apart from Nauman, Allan, Geis, Wiley, and Witherup - were Bob Anderson, Jerrold Ballaine, James Balyeat, Earl Eder, Jack Fulton, Gary Groves, Paul Heald, Robert Hudson, James Melchert, Robert Nelson, Richard Pervier, Louise Pryor, Dan Welch, Charles Wiley, Dorothy Wiley, and Jeanette Wiley.

⁶⁴ Nauman had also made a wood sculpture, *Modernized Slant Step* (1966), that was the same size and had the same proportions as the original *Slant Step*, but with rounded corners. (Cynthia G. Foley, interview with Nauman, December 9, 1982, Richard L. Nelson Gallery, University of California, Davis, files.)

⁶⁵ Serra took the piece from the exhibition while Nauman and Heald, who were minding the gallery, were in the back room. When Serra met the Sacramento collectors Judith and Malcolm Weintraub at a dinner in Philadelphia, he asked them to bring the step back to Nauman, which they did. Nauman then took it to Yates's house in Bolinas. It continued its odyssey until finally coming under the protection of the New York Society for the Preservation of The Slant Step, administered by Art Schade and Frank Owen. Owen now keeps it in his studio in upstate New York.

⁶⁶ Christopher French, "Slant Step Reappears," *Artweek*, January 29, 1983, 1.

⁶⁷ Foley, interview with Nauman.

⁶⁸ According to Nauman, "There were some other very short films from that time: *Ladder Falling Over* (ladder leaning against a tree falls over - pulled by a string, I think), *Door Closing* (I think it was slammed, but no figure is apparent and no sound anyway), and *Window Shade Going Up* (again, it snaps up, as on its own, but is a silent film)." (Interview with the artist, December 8, 2005.)

⁶⁹ Interview with William Allan, San Rafael, California, May 13, 2004.

⁷⁰ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 241.

⁷¹ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 241.

⁷² Interview with Allan, May 13, 2004. Allan said that the intent of *Abstracting the Shoe* was to teach his father what art was, but that it didn't work.

⁷³ "Does the word 'teeth' allude to the prickliness of the rose? Or is 'a rose has no teeth' a play on the sounds of the words, suggesting something like 'teeth have rows but a rose has no teeth'? Or is it a response to Marcel Duchamp's famous alter ego 'Rose Selavy', Rose being the most banal name he could think of, and the whole phrase being a phonetic play on the phrase 'Eros c'est la vie' as well. Nauman's phrase also recalls Gertrude Stein's 'rose is a rose is a rose'. But none of the above explanations fully unravels the enigma. It turns out that Nauman selected the cryptic inscription for his plaque from a passage in Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*: 'A new born child has no teeth'-A goose has no teeth'-A rose has no teeth'-This last at any rate - one would like to say - is obviously true! And yet it is none so clear. For where should a rose's teeth have been?' (van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 113).

⁷⁴ Sharp, "Interview I," 245.

⁷⁵ Cordes, "Talking with Bruce Nauman," 293. Sol LeWitt would propose a similar strategy in his landmark "Sentences on Conceptual Art," *Art-Language 1*, no. 1 (May 1969); reprinted in *Sol LeWitt: Critical Texts*, ed. Adachiara Zevi (Rome: AEIUO, 1995).

⁷⁶ Interview with the artist, December 8, 2005.

⁷⁷ Telephone interview with Tony DeLap, June 23, 2004.

⁷⁸ Ruth Bowman, interview with Nicholas Wilder, Los Angeles, July 18, 1988, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. According to DeLap, the piece Wilder saw was actually "a hanging sculpture, approximately 72 x 4 x 2 inches. It was constructed by applying fiberglass over clay and then removing the clay to leave a fiberglass shell. The uneven surface was painted a gloss yellow." (The work he describes is CR 7A.) Telephone interview with Tony DeLap, June 23, 2004.

⁷⁹ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 324.

⁸⁰ Simon, "Hear Here," 144.

⁸¹ This series was a direct response to the Argentinean journalist Jacobo Timerman's book *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number* (1981), his firsthand account of official torture.

⁸² *Artforum* had started publishing in San Francisco in 1962 but, plagued by financial difficulties, had moved to Los Angeles in October 1965. Charles Cowles replaced John Irwin as the publisher at this time, but Philip Leider continued as the editor.

⁸³ Interview with Katherine Bishop Crum, New York, May 1, 2004.

⁸⁴ Telephone interview with John Baldessari, September 10, 2004.

⁸⁵ Interview with Fred Martin, Oakland, California, May 12, 2004.

⁸⁶ Telephone interview with John Woodall, June 8, 2004.

⁸⁷ Telephone interview with Peter Hutton, June 29, 2004.

⁸⁸ Telephone interview with Richard Shaw, June 18, 2004.

⁸⁹ The exhibition took place from September 26 to October 22 and included *Cup and Saucer Falling Over*, *Frosted Plastic Piece with Baffles* (now lost), *Brass Floor Piece to Stand In*, and *Felt Formed over Sketch for a Metal Floor Piece*.

⁹⁰ Sharp, "Interview I," 237.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Written in 1966, the original text no longer exists. A copy of it appears in Tucker, "Bruce Nauman," 41.

⁹³ Michael Auping, "Metacommunicator," in *Bruce Nauman: Raw Materials* (London: Tate; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004), 9.

⁹⁴ This work has a parallel in Samuel Beckett's Molloy, who complains of his enlarged knees. For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Nauman and Beckett, see Gijs van Tuyl, "Human Condition/Human Body: Bruce Nauman and Samuel Beckett," in *Bruce Nauman* (London: Hayward Gallery, 1998), 60-75; and Ingrid Schaffner, "Circling Oblivion: Bruce Nauman through Samuel Beckett" in Morgan, ed., *Art+ Performance*, 163-73.

⁹⁵ Nauman made a plaster cast from shoulder fragments and used it as a base for a tree branch. The sculpture was destroyed.

⁹⁶ For a thorough analysis of this work, see Janet Kraynak, "Signs and Systems in Nauman's Neon Templates and Other Works," in *Elusive Signs: Bruce Nauman Works with Light* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Milwaukee Art Museum; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), 41-55.

⁹⁷ Nauman was using the classical system of proportion as a way of avoiding the need to devise a formal system. See *ibid.*, 53.

⁹⁸ Janet Kraynak, "Bruce Nauman's Words," in Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please*, 35.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Baker and Joseph Raffaele, "The Way-Out West: Interviews with Four San Francisco Artists," *Art-news* 66, no. 4 (Summer 1967); reprinted in Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please*, 106.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 105-6.

¹⁰¹ Judy Nauman was the model for both this piece and *From Hand to Mouth*.

¹⁰² De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 236. Coosje van Bruggen notes that the notion of concealment in Man Ray's *The Enigma of Isidore Ducasse* is manifest in works by Nauman such as *Felt Formed over Sketch for a Metal Floor Piece*, although this work might also have been inspired by Beuys's felt-covered trees, which Nauman learned about through Kasper Koenig (van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 12).

¹⁰³ Interview with Wiley, May 26, 2004.

¹⁰⁴ 104. Nauman's Saint Louis dealer, Joseph Helman, commissioned the edition. When his New York dealer, Leo Castelli, suggested that he create editions of other of his cast body works, he declined, as some damage occurred to the wax version of *Henry Moore Bound to Fail* in the process of making the plaster cast. (Conversation with Joseph Helman, San Francisco, July 1, 2004.)

¹⁰⁵ Sciarra, "Bruce Nauman, January, 1972," 160.

¹⁰⁶ Nauman's interest in light as a material dates back to the performance *Manipulating a Fluorescent Tube* (1965) and later video (1969).

¹⁰⁷ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 231.

¹⁰⁸ Cordes, "Talking with Bruce Nauman," 369.

¹⁰⁹ The Leo Castelli Gallery published an edition of these photographs with the title *Eleven Color Photographs*, in 1970.

¹¹⁰ Email correspondence, December 4, 2005.

¹¹¹ *Fountain* is the name Duchamp gave to his 1917 readymade, an upended porcelain urinal, which he signed "R. Mutt."

¹¹² Robert Pincus-Witten, "Bruce Nauman: Leo Castelli Gallery," *Artforum* 6, no. 8 (April 1968), 65.

¹¹³ Brenda Richardson, *Bruce Nauman, Neons* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1982), 24.

¹¹⁴ Simon, catalogue raisonné, in Simon, ed., *Bruce Nauman: Exhibition Catalogue and Catalogue Raisonné*, 216.

¹¹⁵ Nauman used the phrase in the form of cut-out letters in the 1968 exhibition *The West Coast Now: Current Work from the Western Seaboard*, at the Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon, and in *The Repair Show (a follow-up to The Slant Step Show)*, organized by William Allan for the Berkeley Gallery in the spring of 1968. Thomas Albright described Nauman's piece in the latter show as blue and gold cut-out letters lying in a heap in a corner amid dust balls collected by a guard at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. (Thomas Albright, "Kooky Group 'Repair' Show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 19, 1969, 41.)

¹¹⁶ Koeplin, "Reasoned Drawings," 18.

¹¹⁷ Jane Livingston, "Bruce Nauman," in *Bruce Nauman: Work from 1965 to 1972*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Simon, "Hear Here," 132. *Art and Literature* was an international review published quarterly by the Société Anonyme d'Éditions Littéraires et Artistiques, Lausanne, with editorial offices in Paris. The editorial board consisted of John Ashbery, Ann Dunn, and Rodrigo Moynihan. A total of twelve issues were published, between March 1964 and spring 1967. A typical issue, number 11 (Winter 1965), contained an article on Nicolas Poussin by Philippe Sollers; a dialogue with Philip Guston by Bill Berkson; poems by Osip Mandelstam, George Seferis, and Allan Kaplan; and an article by Scott Burton on Ann Arnold's animals.

¹¹⁹ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 322.

¹²⁰ Interview with Wiley, May 26, 2004.

¹²¹ Livingston, "Bruce Nauman," 16.

¹²² This work has sometimes been dated 1966-67, but according to the artist it was made in Mill Valley in 1967.

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- ¹²³ The piece has often been presented on a single screen with one film following the next, but the preferred viewing situation is simultaneous projection on four walls.
- ¹²⁴ Jan Butterfield, "Bruce Nauman: The Center of Yourself," *Arts Magazine* 49 (February 1975); reprinted in Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please*, 174. According to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art librarian Barbara Rominski, the exhibition Nauman referred to is probably *Untitled 1968**, an invitational co-organized by the museum and the San Francisco Art Institute that included twenty-three American painters and sculptors.
- ¹²⁵ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 265.
- ¹²⁶ Paul Richard, "Watch Out! It's Hear!," *Washington Post*, November 3, 1994; reprinted in Morgan, ed., *Art+Performance*, 219.
- ¹²⁷ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 326-27.
- ¹²⁸ Auping, "Metacommunicator," 15.
- ¹²⁹ Willoughby Sharp, "Interview," *Avalanche*, no. 2 (Winter 1971); reprinted as "Two Interviews, Interview 11," in Morgan, ed., *Art+Performance*, 252. Nauman's seminal early films and videotapes are elaborated on by Robert R. Riley in his essay "Bruce Nauman's Philosophical and Material Explorations in Film and Video" in the present publication.
- ¹³⁰ Sony introduced portable video cameras in 1967.
- ¹³¹ Baker and Raffaele, "The Way-Out West," 105-6.
- ¹³² van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 18. Beckett also played with language and non-narrative forms, like other authors Nauman admires, among them Nabokov, Malcolm Lowry, and Alain Robbe-Grillet.
- ¹³³ Chris Dercon, "Keep Taking It Apart: A Conversation with Bruce Nauman," in Kraynak, ed., *Please Pay Attention Please*, 311.
- ¹³⁴ Sharp, "Interview II," 253.
- ¹³⁵ Sciarra, "Bruce Nauman, January, 1972," 166.
- ¹³⁶ Dercon, "Keep Taking It Apart," 311.
- ¹³⁷ Baker and Raffaele, "The Way-Out West," 105.
- ¹³⁸ Robert Pincus-Witten, for example, accuses Nauman of "infantile narcissism." (Pincus-Witten, "Bruce Nauman: Leo Castelli Gallery," 63.)
- ¹³⁹ David Ross, "A Provisional Overview of Artists' Television in the US," in Gregory Battcock, ed., *New Artists' Video: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 138-65.
- ¹⁴⁰ Quoted in van Tuyl, "Human Condition/Human Body," 64.
- ¹⁴¹ This work recalls the wood column Robert Morris made in 1961 for the Living Theater, designed to hold a performer, which some consider the first Minimalist sculpture.
- ¹⁴² Amei Wallach, "Artist of the Showdown," *Newsday*, January 8, 1989; reprinted in Morgan, ed., *Art+Performance*, 41.
- ¹⁴³ For the exhibition, Nauman called the corridor *Performance Area*, but he later changed it to *Performance Corridor*.
- ¹⁴⁴ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 258-59.
- ¹⁴⁵ Van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 18.
- ¹⁴⁶ Livingston, "Bruce Nauman," 22.
- ¹⁴⁷ Cordes, "Talking with Bruce Nauman," 367.
- ¹⁴⁸ John Baldessari, "On Bruce Nauman's Sculpture: An Explanation," *Athapascan* 7, no. 28 (May 10, 1968).
- ¹⁴⁹ Auping, "Metacommunicator," 11.

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- ¹⁵⁰ Vincent Labaume, "Bruce Nauman, Are You Roman or Italic," in *Bruce Nauman* (London: Hayward Gallery, 1998), 44.
- ¹⁵¹ For a thorough analysis of their relationship, see "Chapter Komplexe Vergindungen: Bruce Nauman und Beuys," in Dirk Luckow, *Joseph Beuys und die amerikanische Anti-Form Kunst: Einfluss und Wechselwirkung zwischen Beuys und Morris, Hesse, Nauman, Serra* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1998), 155-240.
- ¹⁵² De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 269.
- ¹⁵³ He did so for *Art by Telephone* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, *Konzeption-Conception* at the Städtisches Museum Leverkusen (both 1969), and others. Once he confessed to Baldessari, who admired one of these works, "You know, I get so tired of all these show requests, I just... make up these things and wonder whether anybody will really do it." (Telephone interview with Baldessari, September 10, 2004.)
- ¹⁵⁴ Coosje van Bruggen, "Sounddance," in Morgan, ed., *Art+Performance*, 55. (Reprinted from van Bruggen, *Bruce Nauman*, 235-40.)
- ¹⁵⁵ The exhibition took place from September 20 to October 8, 1966. There is no record of the exhibition's contents, and neither Lippard nor Nauman can remember precisely which of Nauman's works were included. Nauman believes that one of his fiberglass floor sculptures was in the show, along with *Untitled* (1965-66; CR 59) and perhaps other works.
- ¹⁵⁶ Lippard, "Eccentric Abstraction," 57. This article formed the basis of a lecture by Lippard at UC Berkeley in the summer of 1966.
- ¹⁵⁷ Baker and Raffaele, "The Way-Out West," 106.
- ¹⁵⁸ Max Kozloff, "Nine in a Warehouse," *Artforum* 7, no. 6 (February 1969), 38-42.
- ¹⁵⁹ Robert Morris, "Anti-Form," *Artforum*, April 1968; reprinted in *The New Sculpture 1965-75*, 101.
- ¹⁶⁰ Sharp, "Interview I," 244.
- ¹⁶¹ Five of Fulton's 1968 infrared photographs were used to produce a set of screenprints, *Studies for Holograms (A-E)*, which were published in 1970 by the Leo Castelli Gallery.
- ¹⁶² Sharp, "Interview I," 244. The four outtakes were recently published as Epson UltraChrome K3 inkjet prints by Gemini G.E.L. LLC.
- ¹⁶³ Auping, "Metacommunicator," 11.
- ¹⁶⁴ Martin Gayford, "His Raw Materials: Bruce Nauman on His New Installation at the Tate Modern," *Modern Painters*, December 2004-January 2005, 69.
- ¹⁶⁵ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 281.
- ¹⁶⁶ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 251.
- ¹⁶⁷ Quoted in Wallach, "Artist of the Showdown," 37.
- ¹⁶⁸ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 237. Nauman remembers Bruce Conner, mild-mannered, serious, and always nattily dressed in a seersucker suit and tie, as atypical of the majority of the San Francisco Art Institute faculty. (Conversation with artist, September 17, 2005.)
- ¹⁶⁹ De Angelus, "Interview with Bruce Nauman," 237-38.
- ¹⁷⁰ Simon, "Breaking the Silence," 272.
- ¹⁷¹ Interview with James Melchert, Oakland, California, May 5, 2004.
- ¹⁷² Quoted in Richardson, *Bruce Nauman, Neons*, 22.