

Shotgun Review

A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s at Berkeley Art Museum

by *Chris Sollars*

I have to add to the Berkeley Museum Nauman article clutter. This show is stuck in my mind. Heavy and immobile like the space under the chair in which I type, as my arms are bound they increase in length at 10 inch intervals, with my knees imbedded in wax as all of it is recorded on video and relayed into a corridor.

2 Words ring for me. Studio Practice. Studio Practice is one thing that I have seen SUFFER in this turn of the 21st century Art market boom.

Where can you be Free to:

**GET PISSED GET STUPID BE STUPID BE DUMB FUMBLE
HAVE FUN**

Nauman Gets TOTALLY STUPID. He gets REAL DUMB.
FUCKING FUNNY FUCKING GREAT

Flour Arranging - Pun Fun totally dumb Great. There is enough of his early work to see the thought process / studio practice of trying to understand contemporary art. List any seminal Nauman work from this time period and it is in the show. From Hand to Mouth, the early neon pieces, drawings, the Wax Knees of 5 Famous Artists, a range of sculpture installations, and all the early films and videos Wow. The film Span, a real gem amongst others, a step-by-step construction of a framed structure with a black sheet of plastic over a stream. Funny Smart all at once. The Slant Step is here, but I think even Nauman turned a step that is supposed to be horizontal vertically. Strange.

How do I, Bruce, make contemporary art? Where do I begin? He dives in and the theory-based works of the mid sixties are deconstructed, decoded and reconstructed using himself to make sense of it. Nauman grabs Flavin's fluorescent tube off the wall and puts it between his legs. Nauman's own body, his wife's body become references for understanding and how to engage us, I, and the object in space and time.

This show is charged. Walk up to the second floor photos, drawings and neon works line the walls and projections of Nauman enacting all of his studio actions are all running at once. Walking around the perimeter of a square, violins playing, bouncing balls, putting on make up. I am in Nauman's studio I am in his space. I am not cornfused as a former fellow Midwesterner Hoosier would say, I am thoroughly engaged in a physical and mental space of Nauman's thinking and actions.

It is good to see this show at an educational institution, and sad to see it not going to the Whitney, MOMA, MOCA or any other big institutional space that glorifies things. That is why it won't fit there, this show is about experiments, failure, being stupid, challenging the notions of art, and taking risks in and around a Studio Practice. Not making work for commodity, but contributing. Here at the Berkeley Museum Nauman's studio is revealed, open, exposed, and as strong as ever.

Seeing this show was like coming home. Coming back to an artist that has a huge influence on my work and process. What this show did for me was reinvigorate my energy to be stupid, be free, fuck with things more, and put my practice first.

Thank you for putting this show together.

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