

Bruce Nauman

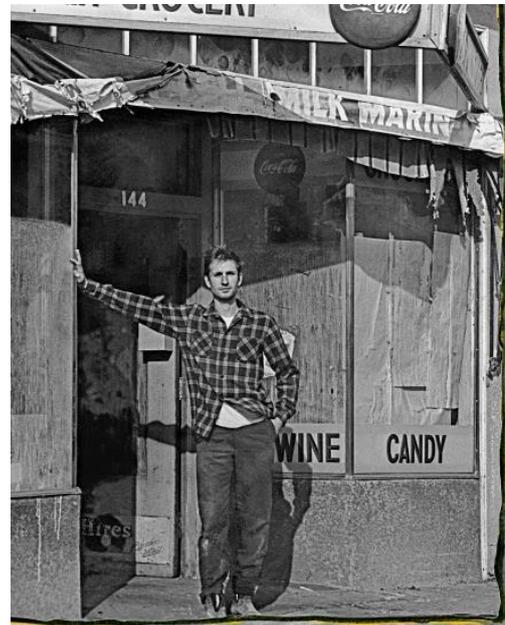
Natural Light, Blue Light Room

5 October – 12 November 2016

Private View: 6 October 2016, 4 – 8pm

*The installation is best experienced during daylight hours

Blain|Southern
4 Hanover Square
London W1S 1BP



Portrait of the Artist as Bruce Nauman V2,
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Blain|Southern presents *Natural Light, Blue Light Room* by Bruce Nauman, a significant architectural installation exhibited for the first time since its initial presentation in 1971. It is one of the earliest instances of the artist producing built environments to intentionally discomfit or disorientate the viewer.

'In the gallery, there were some skylights above one wall. I installed blue fluorescent lights below the sky lights. It messed up your ability to see the space clearly because when you got under them you started getting a lot of afterimages. Everything became a little jumpy... There was nothing else in the space. So the idea was that it would be hard to know what to focus on and even if you did, it would be hard to focus.' -Bruce Nauman

While in many ways representative of the minimalist aesthetic of the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Natural Light, Blue Light Room* also reveals a specific set of ideas that concerned Nauman at the time. He devised *Natural Light, Blue Light Room* at a time when artists were attempting to reduce to the barest minimum what was necessary for an action, object or intervention to be declared an artwork. He had already started to explore how to change the emphasis from the production of an inert art object to an installation that would create a particular physical or psychological experience for the viewer. In order to fulfil this aim, he set aside the convention of representing light, temperature or space in a sculpture or image, and instead used these phenomena as the actual raw material or media of his work.

Walking into the gallery, viewers experience a physical response to the empty space and unfamiliar light. With time, they discern two different light sources – the natural daylight and blue fluorescent lights. This initial physical stimulus grows more confusing as the atmosphere in the room changes and resets itself with the shifting light outside. Meanwhile, the blue light

remains wholly consistent, becoming a strangely tangible presence in the room, thus acting like an image or symbol, almost an object in itself, inviting the viewer to interpret their own reaction to the disorientating experience of the room.

Nauman describes the concept and effect of *Natural Light, Blue Light Room* as an experiment in 'messing up' the psychological and physiological state of the viewer. To this day he continues to investigate responses caused by presenting two sets of information simultaneously. As he describes it, he makes '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.'

We are grateful to Angela Westwater, Sperone Westwater Gallery, the artist, and Juliet Myers at the Bruce Nauman Studio for making this exhibition possible.

Notes to Editors:

About Bruce Nauman

Bruce Nauman (b.1941, Fort Wayne, Indiana) received his MFA from the University of California, Davis, and presented his first solo exhibition fifty years ago, in 1966. Regarded as one of the most diversely innovative contemporary artists, his work has spearheaded the development of art practice internationally, influencing each subsequent generation of artists. He prompted the international shift toward conceptual and performance art practice and as early as 1965 was laying foundations for the post-internet generation of artists, by upending how image-based media was employed in art.

His first survey show was held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1972) and the Whitney Museum of American Art (1973). In 1986-1987, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; in conjunction with Kunsthalle Basel, presented a solo exhibition which travelled to Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. A major retrospective, co-organised by The Walker Art Center, and the Hirshhorn Museum, opened in Madrid at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, and toured internationally to The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Kunsthhaus Zurich (1993-1995).

More recent solo exhibitions include Tate Modern's Turbine Hall commission, London (2004) and *A Rose Has No Teeth: Bruce Nauman in the 1960s* at the Berkeley Art Museum, Castello di Rivoli, and Menil Collection (2007-2008). The Fondation Cartier presented a solo exhibition from 12 March to 21 June 2015, including recent video and sound sculptures. In 2018 Nauman will be the subject of a career retrospective, held by the Schaulager, Basel and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

He is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and prizes including: the Wolf Foundation Prize in Arts in 1993, the Wexner Prize in 1994, the Golden Lion at the 48th Venice Biennale in 1999, and the Praemium Imperiale for Visual Arts in 2004 in Japan. Nauman represented the United States at the 2009 Venice Biennale, and this exhibition was awarded the Golden Lion for Best National Participation. Nauman was the 2014 laureate of the Austrian Frederick Kiesler Prize for Architecture and the Arts.

For further information on the exhibition, please contact Laura Callendar at Blain|Southern

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About Blain|Southern

Blain|Southern is a contemporary and modern art gallery based in London and Berlin. The gallery represents an international roster of contemporary artists and is the world-wide representative of The Estate of Lynn Chadwick.

The gallery's recent exhibitions include: Michael Joo, Bosco Sodi, Harland Miller, Chiharu Shiota, and Abdoulaye Konaté.

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Saturday: 10am - 5pm

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www.blainsouthern.com