Nauman in the studio, 2009
Photograph: Jason Schmidt

Nauman at MoMA
Nauman at Gagosian Gallery
Nauman at the Guggenheim
Nauman at SFMOMA

Listen to an oral history interview for Archives of American Art recorded with the artist in 1980. The next year, Nauman was the subject of a major retrospective at the Kröller-Müller Museum.

In 1988, Nauman was interviewed by Joan Simon with Art in America in anticipation of the 1988 documentary Four Artists: Robert Ryman, Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman, Susan Rothenberg.

Nauman had many solo exhibitions and gallery shows in the 1990s. A New York Times article by Roberta Smith details an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art and three gallery shows. From 1993 to 1995, A retrospective organized by the Walker Art Center traveled internationally. Read a review of that exhibition by Peter Schjeldahl.

Bruce Nauman: Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage) was on display at Dia Chelsea in 2002. A reviewer called the exhibition “a Cagean gambit and a grueling, weirdly beautiful meditation on nothingness and artist’s block.”

In 2004, Nauman installed Raw Materials in the Tate Modern’s famous Turbine Hall. Read an essay about the installation and watch a video of the “sound collage.” That same year, Time named the artist one of the 100 Most Influential People.


Nauman was selected to represent the United States in the 2009 Venice Biennale. His work was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion.

In 2010, Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin held an exhibition entitled Bruce Nauman: Dream Passage. Whitehot Magazine published an article about the exhibition.


The Tate Modern opened a solo exhibition of Nauman’s work in 2020, the first major show in London in more than 20 years.

Learn about how LACMA conservators are approaching Nauman’s Holograms and watch a series of Art21 videos about the artist’s career.
Bruce Nauman (American, b. 1941)
*Life, Death, Love, Hate, Pleasure, Pain*, 1983
Neon tubing with clear glass tubing suspension frame
Private Collection; L2021:184.1

Bruce Nauman lives and works in New Mexico, where his practice spans sculpture, performance, video, and photography. Fascinated with language, Nauman often incorporates puns, double meanings, and idioms in his work. *Life, Death, Love, Hate, Pleasure, Pain* is one of the artist’s iconic neon compositions. Nauman began working with fluorescent tubing in the mid-1960s, when he was inspired by an old neon beer sign hanging in a vacant San Francisco grocery store. In this piece, the circular ring of text lights up various combinations of words, creating an optical illusion by juxtaposing double-lined roman and italicized capital letters. These contradictory concepts – *Life, Death, Love, Hate, Pleasure, Pain* – emphasize the dualities of the human condition. In one of his rare interviews, Nauman said: “My work comes out of being frustrated about the human condition. And about how people refuse to understand other people. And about how people can be cruel to each other. It’s not that I think I can change that, but it’s just such a frustrating part of human history.”

*On view January 19 – April 24, 2022*