

Class Proposal
(beginner, intermediate, or advanced)

Bruce Nauman: Building, Dwelling, Thinking

If sculpture takes place in space, and one's space is delineated and defined by one's relationship and dialogue with materials or objects, then perhaps sculpture operates and resides in any space: written, visual, or oral. If so, the challenge is how to reference these observations and experiences in innovative ways. Simultaneously, one must critically analyze what materials, if any, are necessary to manifest these experiences. Inevitably, it is through a critical and analytical process that the importance of thought will come about.

The focus of this course will be to investigate the relationship between space, materials, and thought through the work of **Bruce Nauman**. Although at first the task may seem quite palpable and simple, the aim of this course is to make the student aware of the endless possibilities of sculpture. We will think of how to manifest our ideas, from beginning to end, while engaging the ever present problems of presentation posed by the studio and the actual "exhibition site."

Through Nauman's visual and written work, this course will navigate the student (keeping in mind the individual student's needs) through challenging problems and questions regarding site, territory, jurisdiction, making, process, interaction and materiality. We will realize how sculpture can be a container of violence, a tool for thought, a vehicle for critique, and a manifestation of laughter.

Thus, this investigation will be a three-part process. First, this will require the investigation of what constitutes a "material" or "materiality": does the preconceived notion of "materials" stagnate or expand our visual vocabulary? Second, we must define "space," e.g., public/private, social/political, and so on. Third, what is the role of thought in this whole process? Does thought precede making, does making precede thought, or is there another space, another form of thought unique to the sculptural process?

Students will be challenged by four projects. The first will ask the student to work with non-traditional material in a non-traditional manner. The second will ask the student to work in a non-traditional space. The third project will be open to the student in order to allow them to implement their ideas and the course materials into a problem and project of their own. This last phase will allow the student artist to begin the development of her or his own manner of thinking about sculpture. Critiques and class discussions will take place by comparing theoretical reading material with Nauman's work.

Throughout this process, the student will learn of sculpture's different functions and of the endless sculptural possibilities available when the discourses of space, material, and thought are thought of and conceptualized in different and innovative ways.

Building, Dwelling, Thinking

“Analysis of the art system must inevitably be carried on in terms of the studio as the *unique space* of production and the museum as the *unique space* of exposition. Both must be investigated as customs, the ossifying customs of art.”

-Daniel Buren, The Function of the Studio

The main focus of this workshop/class is to investigate and question the implications and effects of two certain spaces: the studio and the gallery. Concurrently, this class will be an odd yet seemingly quite present combination of form and content, thought and process. Therefore, we will think of how to physically manifest our ideas, from beginning to end and through the spaces of the studio on through the “actual” exhibition site, while using some theoretical reading material that will question our preconceived notions of the function of the studio and an exhibition space.

It is also now a common practice that most artists choose, either by preference, but mostly by default, to have either/or their work and exhibition space constructed and executed by another person or group of people. This then adds a financial dilemma to the execution of the work. Therefore we will also learn material techniques and shortcut processes in the construction and building of the work, and if necessary, its space. Additionally, many artists think up interesting and unique ways to exhibit their work and ideas. The problem they face though is how to actually install the work (i.e.-gadgets, hardware, tools, etc.).

It has also been traditionally assumed that an artist’s studio precedes the execution of an artwork, and perhaps even the “true” and “official” conceptualization of an art project or object. The questions then arise: Do I need a studio? If so, what does one do in a studio? How important, if at all, is the inhabitation of a studio? Thus, we will look at artists whose practices allow for minimal if not non-existent types of studio practices.

Finally, this class will also attempt to add another dimension, which is one of skills. After graduation, many students are unable to accept jobs that require even the most basic construction skills, let alone the handling, packaging, or installation of artworks. We will also address this issue.

Thoughts for projects: Students can also present works-in-progress which they feel will need brainstorming in terms of installation ideas, or the class can finalize one group show

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of enrolled students which allows them the opportunity conceptualize a “different” and “unique” exhibition space and arrangement.

Possible Readings:

Foucault, “Of Other Spaces”

Foucault, Space and the Architects

Ignasi de Sola Morales

Daniel Buren-

“The Function of the Studio”

“Function of an Exhibition”

“Function of the Museum”

Benjamin Buchloh

Martin Heidegger, “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”