

PRESS RELEASE | January 2021

PALAZZO GRASSI - PUNTA DELLA DOGANA  
Campo San Samuele 3231 / Dorsoduro 2 - Venice

**The exhibition “Bruce Nauman: Contrapposto Studies” at Punta della Dogana should open on 23 May 2021.**

Palazzo Grassi – Punta della Dogana announces that the opening to the public of the major exhibition dedicated to Bruce Nauman (1941, Indiana, USA) at Punta della Dogana – initially due to open on 21 March 2021 – is postponed until 23 May 2021, should the health conditions allow it. The enduring uncertainty due to the evolution of the pandemic does not enable to confirm the calendar established for the setting up of the exhibition as it involves people and works of art travelling from the United States.

“Bruce Nauman: Contrapposto Studies”, curated by the Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Caroline Bourgeois, curator at Pinault Collection, in close collaboration with the artist, is an homage to one of the major figures of the contemporary art international scene and to his constant exploration of the artist studio as a space where creation takes place, of the body through performances and of sound.

Bruce Nauman was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale in 2009 and his work has been exhibited in numerous shows around the world. The unique exhibition at Punta della Dogana brings together older works and the most recent ones, some of which have never been exhibited in Europe before.

From the 1960s to today, Bruce Nauman has constantly experimented with different artistic languages – from photography to performance, sculpture and video – to explore and mine their potentialities in a body of work that interrogates the very definition of what constitutes artistic practice. The exhibition in Venice is focused on a series of recent video installation that Nauman has developed in the last five years and are related to a single channel video from 1968, “Walk with Contrapposto.” In classical art, the term *Contrapposto* refers to a pose in which the standing figure slightly twists off-axis so that the upper and the lower bodies turn in opposite ways, in search of a balance. The adoption of the contrapposto revolutionised sculpture in Ancient Greece and was further developed in painting and sculpture throughout the history of art – from the Renaissance, all the way to Nauman’s contemporary experiments with moving images.

Palazzo Grassi  
Punta della Dogana  
**Pinault  
Collection**

The series “Contrapposto Studies” (that includes “Contrapposto Studies, I through VII”, 2015/16; “Walks In Walks Out”, 2015; “Contrapposto Split,” 2017, and “Walking a Line,” 2019), represents the first time in which Nauman has explicitly revisited an earlier work to use it as the point of departure for his practice. Initially, he aimed to go beyond the limits imposed by the technology available in the late 1960s, the time when he produced the first “Walk with Contrapposto” in which we see the artist walk in a narrow wooden corridor built inside his studio while trying to maintain the classical pose.

“Bruce Nauman: Contrapposto Studies”, curated by Carlos Basualdo and Caroline Bourgeois in close collaboration with the artist himself, is part of the series of monographic exhibitions organised by Palazzo Grassi with the active participation of the artist at the heart of the show. The institution aims to create unique exhibitions, conceived specifically for the Venetian spaces of the Pinault Collection, that offer a new point of view on the work of major artists.

A series of *Art Conversations* entitled “Nauman Archive for the Future” with curators Carlos Basualdo and Caroline Bourgeois together with artists, art historians, dancers, performers and musicians from around the world will lead up to the opening of the exhibition. They will take the show in Venice as the starting point to reflect upon Bruce Nauman’s work and its potential future influence.

Nairy Baghramian, Elisabetta Benassi, Boris Charmatz, Teodor Currentzis, Anne Imhof, Lenio Kaklea, Elisabeth Lebovici, Ralph Lemon, Paul Maheke, Philippe Parreno and Tatiana Trouvé are the guests invited to take part to the debate.

The series of conversations will be presented online on the YouTube channel and on the website of Palazzo Grassi – Punta della Dogana, as a preview of the exhibition.

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