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Mac Adam, Alfred. "The Long Short March: Bruce Nauman's Tour De Force Video at Sperone Westwater Explores the Rhythm in its Opposite Number." *www.artnews.com (ARTnews)*, 14 September 2016.

ARTNEWS



Bruce Nauman, *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (still), 2015/2016, color-and-sound HD video installation, continuous loop. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SPERONE WESTWATER

Rhythm," said Stephen, "is the first formal aesthetic relation of part to part in any aesthetic whole or of an aesthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the aesthetic whole of which it is a part." James Joyce's Stephen Daedalus would have rubbed his eyes in amazement at Bruce Nauman's marching (in place), revolving (in place), and mutating (in place) video self-portraits. But what Nauman is doing in "Contrapposto Studies, i through vii," his 2015/2016 installation at Sperone Westwater, is establishing an artistic rhythm, which inevitably brings us back to relationship between the parts and the totality of any work of art: this exciting new video is a visual exploration of continuity, discontinuity, rhythm, and discord.

Nauman alludes to several traditions simultaneously. The most obvious is that of Eadweard Muybridge and his famous studies of animal and human locomotion, the forbearer of Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912), and the Futurists' and their obsession with motion—and the impossibility of replicating it in paint. Nauman's video captures motion, but does so in broken rhythms, so that the harmony of both Muybridge and the early 20th-century Modernists is disrupted, parodied. Precisely by rendering motion static—however paradoxical that may sound—Nauman transforms his dynamic self-images into a frieze.

Most surviving Greco-Roman friezes depict motion—processions or battles for instance—but our experience of those frozen scenes is also the experience of fragmentation. Nauman somehow manages to capture the essence of the frieze and translate it into his own peculiar artistic idiom. This is not the battle of

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Lapiths and centaurs but a portrait of the artist transcending the static and simultaneously admitting that dynamism and stasis can coexist.

As confirmation, Nauman presents three floors of his man, himself, marching in place, and includes what we could call “outtakes”—static renditions of what we see in the videos. One wall piece is indeed very reminiscent of Muybridge, while two models capture Nauman’s premeditated aesthetics. Nothing is left to chance here: all effects derive from Nauman’s consciousness. Brilliant, perhaps ephemeral, this show confirms Nauman’s status as an artist engaged with artistic problems that fascinate—art and motion—but which allow for no solution.

Bruce Nauman, *Contrapposto Studies, i through vii* (still), 2015/2016, color-and-sound HD video installation, continuous loop. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND SPERONE WESTWATER