

**GOLDEN LION FOR BEST NATIONAL PARTICIPATION
AT THE 53RD INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**

AWARDED TO

**PAVILION OF THE UNITED STATES
BRUCE NAUMAN: TOPOLOGICAL GARDENS**

Venice, Italy, June 6, 2009—The Philadelphia Museum of Art, commissioning institution for the United States Pavilion at the 53rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, announced today that the U.S. representation, **Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens**, has been awarded the prestigious **Golden Lion for the Best National Participation**. According to a statement from the Biennale, the presentation was selected “in recognition of the sustained energy and precision of Bruce Nauman’s art. From iconic embodiments of human pain and fragility to pithy jabs at our frailties, his oeuvre reveals the magic of meaning as it emerges through relentless repetition of language and form.” This is the first time since 1990 that the United States has received the much-coveted award.

Organized by the Museum in collaboration with the **Università Iuav di Venezia** and the **Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia**, *Topological Gardens* is currently on view in Venice at the U.S. Pavilion and the two universities. **Carlos Basualdo**, the Keith L. and Katherine Sachs Curator of Contemporary Art, and **Michael R. Taylor**, Muriel and Philip Berman Curator of Modern Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, developed the exhibition with the artist and serve as the U.S. Commissioners.

Paolo Baratta, President of the Biennale, announced the award on June 6, 2009 at 17:00 in the Giardini della Biennale. The ceremony took place just steps away from the neoclassical U.S. Pavilion, where Nauman’s major neon work *Vices and Virtues* dramatically illuminates the entire exterior. Among those in attendance were **Giorgio Napolitano**, President of the Italian Republic; **Massimo Cacciari**, Mayor of Venice; **Francesco Maria Giro**, Italian Undersecretary of Culture; and **Daniel Birnbaum**, Director of the 53rd International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The selection was made by an international jury proposed by Daniel Birnbaum and approved by the Board of the Biennale. Chaired by **Angela Vettese** (Italy), the jury included **Jack Bankowsky** (USA), **Homi K. Bhabha** (India), **Sarat Maharaj** (South-Africa), and **Julia Voss** (Germany).

Commissioner Basualdo, who accepted the Golden Lion on behalf of the U.S. representation, thanked Bruce Nauman; Michael Taylor, his Co-Commissioner; Erica Battle, the Project Curatorial Assistant, all of whom joined him on stage, as well as the entire Museum staff and its Board of Trustees.

Said Basualdo following the ceremony: “We at the Philadelphia Museum of Art are extremely grateful for the enormous support this project has received all along the way, beginning with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, as well as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Henry Luce Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and so many donors and lenders to the exhibition. We are also so grateful to the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the Università Iuav and the Università Ca’ Foscari. Most of all, it

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has been an amazing honor to work closely with one of the great artists of our time, Bruce Nauman. We hope that this project will help establish a lasting and expanding relationship between the U.S. Pavilion and the educational institutions of the city of Venice."

Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens presents a thematic survey comprising four decades of the artist's innovative and provocative work and is featured at three exhibition sites throughout the city of Venice: the United States Pavilion at the Giardini della Biennale, Università luav di Venezia at Tolentini, and the Exhibition Spaces at Università Ca' Foscari. The exhibition is structured around the notion of topology—a field in mathematics that examines the continuity of space amid changing conditions—which is used to understand the artist's work as well as the context in which it will be displayed. On view are more than 30 works lent from public and private collections in the United States and Europe, some of which the artist has adapted and redeveloped specifically for Venice, working in direct response to the spatial context of the sites. The exhibition also includes two new sound-based works, *Days* and *Giorni*, the latter created by Nauman working in collaboration with students at each university. These two works will travel to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, to make their U.S. premiere from November 21, 2009 – April 4, 2010.

VENUES

The Philadelphia Museum of Art pursued its partnerships with Università luav di Venezia and Università Ca' Foscari, two of Venice's premier academic institutions, in part to enable thousands of Venetian students to engage fully with Nauman's work, while at the same time encouraging Biennale visitors to explore the urban fabric of Venice beyond the Giardini. At the Università luav di Venezia, Nauman's works are installed in the school's main building, located in the cloisters of the former Tolentini convent near Piazzale Roma. *Topological Gardens* also occupies the exhibition spaces of Ca' Foscari, two floors of a 15th-century Gothic palace, prominently situated on the Grand Canal. In the Giardini, Nauman's works across various mediums fill the neoclassical building of the U.S. Pavilion, emphasizing its architectural volume and features.

United States Pavilion (Giardini della Biennale)

Vaporetto Stops: Giardini 1, 2, 8, 41, 42, 51, 52, 61, 62

Sunday, June 7 – Sunday, November 22, 2009

10:00-18:00

The Giardini will be closed Mondays (with the exception of June 8) while the Arsenale will be closed on Tuesdays (with the exception of June 9).

Università luav di Venezia at Tolentini (Santa Croce 191)

Vaporetto Stops: Ferrovia 1, 2, 41, 42, 51, 52 / Piazzale Roma 1, 2, 41, 42, 51, 52, 61, DM

Sunday, June 7 – Sunday, October 18, 2009

10:00-18:00

Monday through Saturday; closed Sunday

Exhibition Spaces at Università Ca' Foscari (Calle Foscari 3334)

Vaporetto Stops: S. Toma 1, 2 / Ca'Rezzonico: 1

Sunday, June 7 – Sunday, October 18, 2009

10:00-18:00

Wednesday through Monday; closed Tuesday

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COMMISSIONING INSTITUTION

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is among the largest art museums in the United States, showcasing more than 2,000 years of exceptional human creativity in masterpieces of painting, sculpture, works on paper, decorative arts, and architectural settings from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. The Museum offers a wide variety of enriching activities, including programs for children and families, lectures, concerts, and films.

In June 2007, the Museum acquired one of the most important early neon works by Nauman, *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths (Window or Wall Sign)*, 1967, which is included in the exhibition.

ARTIST

Bruce Nauman (b. 1941, Fort Wayne, Indiana) is regarded as one of the most innovative artists of his generation and is often cited as a catalyst for the recent shift in much international artistic practice toward conceptual and performative uses of language and the body. In work encompassing video, installation, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, photography, and neon, Nauman engages mundane situations and interpersonal communication, only to subvert them through paradoxical visual and linguistic manipulation.

To mark the occasion of this multi-faceted collaboration, the Università luav di Venezia is presenting Nauman with a **Laurea Honoris Causa**, an honorary PhD, which will be presented to the artist on June 8 at 17:00 at Ca' Tron (Santa Croce 1957).

SPONSORS

Bruce Nauman: Topological Gardens, the official U.S. representation at the 53rd International Art Exhibition--La Biennale di Venezia, is organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and presented in collaboration with the Università luav di Venezia and the Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia, with the support of the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice.

Major support for the U.S. exhibition is provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Henry Luce Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

Additional funding is generously provided by Agnes Gund, Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann, Sperone Westwater Gallery, and many other Friends of Bruce Nauman, including the Donald Young Gallery, Chicago, and Dr. Friedrich Christian Flick; Barbara B. and Theodore R. Aronson, The Broad Art Foundation, Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Leary, Carlos and Rosa de la Cruz, Jaimie and David Field, Gemini G.E.L., Glenstone, the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund, Jeanne and Michael Klein, Jill and Peter Kraus, Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann, Palazzo Grassi, Emily Rauh Pulitzer, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, the Sender Collection, Peter and Mari Shaw, and Sotheby's, with an in-kind contribution from Codess Cultura. Additional support was provided by Clarissa and Edgar Bronfman, Jr., Borja Coca, Dorothee Fischer/Konrad Fischer Galerie, Marion Stroud Swingle, Selma and Joseph Vandermolen, and Robin Wright and Ian Reeves.

The accompanying catalogue has been made possible by Isabel and Agustín Coppel. The exhibition At Ca'Foscari is sponsored by FriulAdria - Crédit Agricole.

Credits as of May 12, 2009.

Please visit www.naumaninvenice.org for additional information.

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Media Contact:

For further information, please contact:

Kellie Honeycutt or Antoine Vigne

Blue Medium, Inc.

T: +1 (212) 675-1800

E: kellie@bluemedium.com

Norman Keyes or Elisabeth Flynn

Philadelphia Museum of Art

T: +1 (215) 684-7862 / +1 (215) 684-7364

E: nkeyes@philamuseum.org / eflynn@philamuseum.org