

by WYSTAN CURNOW

I write both poetry and criticism, and in my writing the one veers into the territory of the other some of the time, according the occasion, but also the conviction that doing so can help keep both on their toes. More specifically 'Nocturne' is from a group of texts in prose and poetry concerned with the 'studio' as a material, social, and historical structure; in this instance the text takes the form of the poem as a way of setting itself apart from the critical appreciation it takes issue with.

NOCTURNE

This apparent totality, sum total
space of the room, its distinct singularity.
The apparent synchronicity
of the pictures of it, of the same-time
projection of the pictures, their apparent
singularity in time. In reality now.
There are differentiations. Quite fine.
Distinctions to be drawn. There is
Fracture, splitting. There are arrangements.
This proves to be the case. Doubly so. In reality
they are doubly so differentiated. Fractured.
As far as synchronicity and unified
spatial perspective (totality of the room)
as far as those go and it is no small distance
this proves to be the case. Those distances.
Chinks and slits in time and space
opening up, widening out. But as you were.

These differentiations result from *Mapping the Studio 1 (Fat Chance John Cage)*'s having been shot with only the one camera, just the single infra-red camera and using only one-hour length videotapes for the seven sections of the projected studio. The apparent sum total of the pictures of it. One camera, one-hour length tapes, seven sections. Calculation. Forty-two (42) different sequences shot at different times have been edited into the seven (7) sections which have a simultaneous running time of five hours and forty-five minutes (5hrs 45 mins). Apparently picturing from seven (7) different angles a single (1) night in Bruce Nauman's studio, in reality the filming covering a good four (4) months. *But what do you mean 'in reality'?* That it proves to be the case? Something less and something more, something more and less, something is opening here, is unfolding, widening out here, making room.

Doubly so. Room for disagreement. You say the fact. Whereas I say the present projection appears to construct a room before your eyes. The fact that, you say, every single section of the room was filmed on a different night means that, means neither the cat nor the mice appear in the adjacent segment of the studio. At night I should explain the cat and the mice-- plus a good few summer bugs--are the sole living occupants of the studio. When we say adjacent please recall we

refer to projections. When we say apparent, please remember that we refer to video projections. When it is said the cat and the mice are or are not appearing, please remember we speak of what has already been pictured. We have wished by identifying them to make them welcome. Please keep that in mind.

For the present they are here, entering into what we make and will be making of what we see. When we say the studio, please keep in mind we do not refer to the room in which we see the projections. Projection exists as at once record and prediction. You and I are not as one on this. We are in different rooms. Fat chance I fear of us being together on this. The gaps between *us* are widening, disintegration of third persons plural. Do you there, you to whom I write, understand this? Where are you now, where were you then at the time? At that time?

Yes, the filming was staggered, the fact of that is the explanation of other discrepancies the "agentless" (your quotes) re-arrangement of some of the objects in the studio from projection to projection to projection. As if all you had to do was to sort out what is over and done with. But where are we now? In what you assume is our seamless present explaining what you suppose to be our seamless past, by means

of the facts. We the apparently agentless (without representation) viewers? Poor. The fact. The explanation. You say it is the product, the product of Bruce Nauman's activities in his studio during the daytime. You have proof.

You expect us to take your word for it. You know our needs. The artist's living daylight activities. In reality was he? Making art was he? Up to no good was he, leaving behind him his tell-tale differentiations! Meeting deadlines. Taking long-distance calls, doing his e-mail. Short of ideas, worrying about his next work. Doubtless corresponding with the likes of yourself. Reading prose. Well, we want no part of your explanations, for there is nothing that requires you to explain or to solve. At the end of the working day your agent-artist goes home, has dinner, tucks himself up in bed. He needs his sleep. He's done don't you see? This is nothing to do with him. Leave him out of it. For he has left, camera running, his studio to us. We catch sight of, legs and feet of someone going out a door, leaving a left behind black cat unaccepting at first a closing door shutting, unbelieving he's gone. So that we meanwhile, we, third persons once again in the space of the infra-red night, in the time of this other while, in the nights of black cats and mice nights of winking electronics of minor or tremendous shifts in, chinks in, slips or slices of ontology, unconfirmed reports of

the here the there, we I tell you we make room
for ourselves in Bruce Nauman's studio.