

House Divided 1983

Bruce Nauman (American, b. 1941)

cast concrete

Commissioned by the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park, G.S.U. Foundation

Collection of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park
1983.02

Born in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1941, Bruce Nauman attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison and the University of California, Davis, receiving his MFA in 1966. **House Divided** is his first large outdoor artwork. The piece is an enigmatic, yet ultimately illustrative, example of the way he works.

Nauman draws on his roots for the *form* of this sculpture, a large white building typical of Midwestern farming sheds. Yet inside, the structure has been divided in half, diagonally. The carefully considered placement of three entries creates an uncomfortable space with no corners. Fully half of the structure has been rendered useless. The very private artist, who lives with his wife on a remote ranch in New Mexico, has observed that sometimes sculptures are

created that appear to have a function, but when examined, don't. Ultimately, the object's function is for the viewer to ponder.

When visiting the campus in 1983, Nauman said he, “. . . *wanted to make some kind of art statement, and social statement – at the same time not be overbearing, to force people into something they don't want to have to do with.*”

By associating the piece through its title with Abraham Lincoln's **House Divided** speech, the artist forces a consideration of the significance of this unassuming work on a new level. In the end, Nauman challenges the passerby to address their curiosity, visit his **House Divided**, and confront their expectations of where architecture ends and sculpture begins.