WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3:
DESCRIPTION AS INTERPRETATION / THE CHALLENGE OF AN EXPERIENTIAL WORK
BRUCE NAUMAN’S LIVE-TAPED PERFORMANCE CORRIDOR 1968

This assignment asks you to engage the challenges implicit in interpreting a work of art that is both opaque and experiential in nature. To be specific, this essay requires that you effectively describe and interpret Bruce Nauman’s Live Performance Corridor to a reader who doesn’t know the work, bearing in mind that the subject of Nauman’s installation is inevitably bound up with the spectator’s physical experience of the piece – a phenomenon that, unfortunately, you will have to imagine with the help of this website: http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/live-taped-video-corridor/

Here are some questions to get you started. They are meant to prompt your thoughts and push your interpretation. They should NOT be used as a structure for your paper.

1. What is the nature of “seeing” this work? In order to “see” it what does one have to do? And, in what ways does the “doing” inform the “seeing”?

2. Taken literally, what is the subject of the work? Or, put otherwise, when one sees this work, what does one see?

3. How do Nauman’s formal choices inform the content of the piece – i.e. how tall, how long, how wide, how many, in what relation to one another, etc?

4. And what about the two monitors at the corridor’s end? How are we to understand their relationship to one another? Why have them both instead of just the top or the bottom? How is our experience of them informed by their placement?

5. To what category does this work belong – performance, video, sculpture? Are any of these categories an adequate home for the work?
6. Are there aspects of this work that ARE traditional? Are there ways in which the experience of this work is like the experience of other, more traditional art objects? Think, for example, of Raphael’s *School of Athens*…

Draft Due: 4 November
Draft Returned: 11 November
Final Due: 18 November