

BILL VIOLA

**FRUSTRATED
ACTIONS
AND FUTILE
GESTURES**

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 20th century and seamlessly flowing into this century, innumerable thinkers have researched and written about the chasm that might have created the phenomenon of modern art in the Western world. The moment of specific intrigue is that in which mimesis, figuration and codified allegory shifted into a formal language of abstraction, the utilisation of freely juxtaposed images and concepts, and the physical and material employment of objects or tangible aspects from our real, everyday lives. The roles of the democratisation of literacy, the invention of photography and cinematography, the advent of psychoanalysis and the spread of globalisation have often been cited as influencers, and in their own ways, each played a part.

But what effect has past figurative art had on modes of the contemporary art expression of today? Historically, in a time when very few people could read, and indeed, when there was no means of mass communication, it played the role of conveying the foundations of religious doctrine. Within the context of Christianity specifically, the developing historical stories informing the religion — the deeds of the saints, the martyrs' sacrifices, the glory of God's power and its self-justification — and the accompanying rhetoric was conveyed through images which constructed a readable narration.

However, further to this, it also assumed the role of reiterating the universality of the human experience and ordeal; the joys and sorrows, spirit and flesh, beginning and end, for every man, woman and child. Transcending narrative and contingency, this art pointed directly towards the universal, mirroring our lives in the deepest way, reflecting the common and pitiless denominator underpinning existence. In medieval frescoes, Renaissance paintings, Nativity scenes, Mother and Child compositions, the extraordinariness of conscious and questioning life, of suffering, is coagulated; the wonder of birth, the continuation of life and of the species, the legacy transferred from mother to son, are all expressed; images of crucifixion, martyrdom, entombment, make manifest the inevitability of death and the caducity of the body.

In many respects, an artist like Bill Viola is a revolutionary figure within the context of contemporary visual art, and indeed, he continues this remarkable tradition of exploring and extrapolating universal truths. The artist is interested in clear, profound and moving narratives, and pioneered the use of one of the most sophisticated and advanced technological means of conveying the human experience — the video camera. The momentum, drive and visual resonance of Viola's moving images belong to the great and long tradition of Western visual art — perhaps even more so than to the contemporary pace and direction of video art and cinema. They speak the language of the elements; of the cycles of nature, of the imponderable and the revealed, of the magnitude and frailty of mankind, of its genesis towards goodness or cruelty.

With this new exhibition, **Frustrated Actions and Futile Gestures**, Blain|Southern is proud to present the artist's most recent works. In one, **Walking on the Edge** (2012), a father and a son stride together in an indefinite, almost ancestral and archetypal landscape, slowly separating to proceed in opposite directions. In another, **Ancestors** (2012), a mother and son make a journey through testing terrain; battling against the elemental forces of nature as they are consumed by a dust cloud. But together their fortitude prevails and they are able to continue on their path with a renewed sense of their own strength through their unique bond.

In another remarkable work, **Angel at the Door** (2013), a man is depicted in his home reading a book. The peace of his evening is disrupted by a noise outside that begins to get louder and more threatening. The protagonist gathers himself and opens the door to face the intruder. A wall of glass shatters and a mirror image of himself is revealed. There is no intruder, but his inner self that he must face for the first time.

Glass is visible precisely because of its invisibility. It enables us to remain separate and protected, while being able to gaze through its transparency, seeing that which lies beyond. Viola's glass wreckage leaves the self unprotected, but ultimately, liberated and able to reclaim integrity. This symbolism is akin to the poetic experience that the viewer has when in front of any Viola work; his screens or 'surfaces' appear breakable, fluid or dissolvable, so that we might become enveloped by the scene that plays out before us, emphasising a metaphoric sense of continuation between our lives, realities, and the universal narratives that surround us.

There are a great many people that Harry Blain, Graham Southern and myself are indebted to who have assisted in the preparation of this exhibition and the accompanying publication which has been produced by Inventory Studio.

Jess Fletcher who has overseen the coordination of the exhibition and the catalogue, on behalf of Blain|Southern, with perseverance and vigour, and McLean Fahnstock at the Bill Viola Studio for her steadfast support and catalogue coordination. Bobby Jablonski, Director of the Bill Viola Studio and Deklan Kilfeather, Head Technician at Blain|Southern for their technical expertise and for all their efforts in the installation planning and supervision. Benjamin Lein for the complex coding of all the playback systems.

Of course, we are extremely grateful to Bill Viola and Kira Perov, without whom none of this would have been possible. We cannot thank them enough for their extraordinary knowledge, generosity, guidance and friendship.

WORKS

Bill Viola text, Kira Perov images

MIRAGE SERIES

Ancestors, The Encounter, Walking on the Edge, and **Inner Passage** are part of a body of work created in the summer and early fall of 2012. These works explore the layers of reality and illusion in the physical world, as well as the dimensions between and beyond it. The focus is on the place of human beings in the natural order, both physically and metaphysically.

ANCESTORS

2012

155.5 x 92.5 x 12.7 cm

(61.2 x 36.4 x 5 in)







Ancestors depicts a journey on foot across the desert made by a mother and her son in the heat of summer. In the course of traversing this vast and dangerous environment, a profound transformation occurs when the landscape swallows them in a dust storm and they emerge, finding companionship, strength, determination and clarity.

THE ENCOUNTER

2012

92.5 x 155.5 x 12.7 cm

(36.4 x 61.2 x 5 in)













Two women are taking separate journeys at opposite ends of their lives. At the intersection of their meeting, during a brief encounter, life bonds are strengthened and the mystery containing the knowledge is quietly passed on from the elder to the younger.

WALKING ON THE EDGE

2012

92.5 x 155.5 x 12.7 cm

(36.4 x 61.2 x 5 in)













Walking on the Edge represents the inevitable separation of father and son as they take separate paths in their life's journey.

Two men arrive in the desert under a turbulent sky. They appear at the far extremes of the frame and walk toward us on a trajectory that takes them closer to each other, until they are walking side by side. Eventually they cross paths and begin to separate. The gap between them widens until they leave the outer edges of the frame.

INNER PASSAGE

2013

(homage to Richard Long)

155.5 x 92.5 x 12.7 cm

(61.2 x 36.4 x 5 in)









Inner Passage chronicles a brief moment in one man's solitary journey into the Mojave Desert of Southern California. It is an inner as well as an outer journey. In this landscape, the physical body confronts extremes of endurance in the form of scorching heat, numbing cold, blinding light, impenetrable darkness, infinite distance and forced confinement. It is also where the metaphysical extremes of loneliness, isolation, stress, anxiety and fear meet the forces of overwhelming beauty, mystery, wonder and ecstasy. Between these two states lies the present moment, with all its uncertainty and promise.

A man appears as a faint dot on the distant desert floor, and proceeds to move in a straight line toward us. As he gets closer he walks directly into the camera, blacking out the image. The screen goes dark, but it soon comes to life in an intense, jumbled cascade of images and fragmented sounds, that builds in intensity and frequency. When these begin to fade, a solitary light illuminates the path and the man finally emerges from the darkness into the light. He walks away and out onto the desert floor once more, eventually disappearing into the far distance.

(Inner Passage is an homage to British artist Richard Long)

FRUSTRATED ACTIONS SERIES

The **Frustrated Actions series** sprang from random encounters watching people go about their business in everyday life. Not being locked into a steady job allowed me to become a detached observer from time to time, and I began to notice the “negative space” accruing all around me. Patterns developed as I witnessed the same people doing the same things over and over again — having breakfast at the same coffee shop, taking the same train at the same time, arriving at the same office, doing the same job, going home to the same house, washing the same dishes, and then starting all over again. I recalled the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus, who was punished for a crime against the Gods by being condemned to an eternity at hard labour. His task was to carry a great boulder up to the top of a hill, only to see it roll back down — over and over again. Ultimately, Sisyphus’ punishment is his consciousness itself — to be aware while constantly repeating the same meaningless action. His legacy is, among other things, the 9 to 5 work schedule.

CHAPEL OF FRUSTRATED ACTIONS AND FUTILE GESTURES

2013

183 x 306 x 9 cm

(35 x 120.5 x 3.5 in)













Chapel of Frustrated Actions and Futile Gestures

is a complex arrangement of nine individual plasma screens positioned in three horizontal rows with nine channels of sound. Each panel depicts a person or couple perpetually repeating an activity in a weary but steady rhythm, pausing at the end of each cycle, before the inevitable repetition of that action. The video is looped so there appears to be no end to the cycles. Every action is repeated in ritualistic fashion, gradually and purposefully, rendering each futile endeavour all the more poignant.

Man Shoveling Gravel, Two Women Gifting, Man Pulling Cart;
Couple Slapping, Pouring Water, Woman Moving Belongings;
Man at Door, Two Men in Boat, Man Digging Hole.

MAN WITH HIS SOUL

2013

74 x 86 x 3 cm
(29 x 34 x 1.5 in)













“There is something you have forgotten....”

— Rumi

Panel 1-Colour

A man takes a seat in an empty room. The room is barren except for a single chair. He looks around, not knowing what to expect. He feels uncomfortable and out of place. He fusses with his clothes, combs his hair, checks his watch, refers to some notes, and often looks off to the side of the room. At times he is anxious, impatient, focused, stressed, bored, apprehensive, weary, and confused. Time drags on. He presumes that something or someone is missing, or has yet to arrive. He waits, but no one appears.

Panel 2-Black and White

The man’s soul takes a seat in an empty room. He quickly looks around and begins to absorb everything in reach — the clear light in the window, the bad chair, the perfect flower arrangement, and the stain on the carpet. He turns inward to feel the emotional state of the room, and the people who have moved through it— their joys, sorrows, fears, regrets, and achievements. He senses their presence and imagines those yet to come. Friends and family come to mind, including the dead. He feels the awkward space of the room, and the nameless multitudes just outside its walls. He thinks of a poem, and remembers crying as a child.

ANGEL AT THE DOOR

2013

215.9 x 383.5 cm

(85 x 151 in)













Angel at the Door describes an attempt to prevent the soul from entering the private quarters of the house, the individual's personal inner sanctum.

It has been said that "a man's home is his castle", as if a well-guarded fortress is everything one needs to be safe and comfortable in this life. However, in today's digital age it is far more important, and necessary, to open all the locks on the doors and windows to let the light and energy come flooding into the room. We urgently need to reconnect the pathways between head and heart, between logic and intuition, so that we can utilize all of our faculties in concert with each other instead of fragmenting and compartmentalising them.

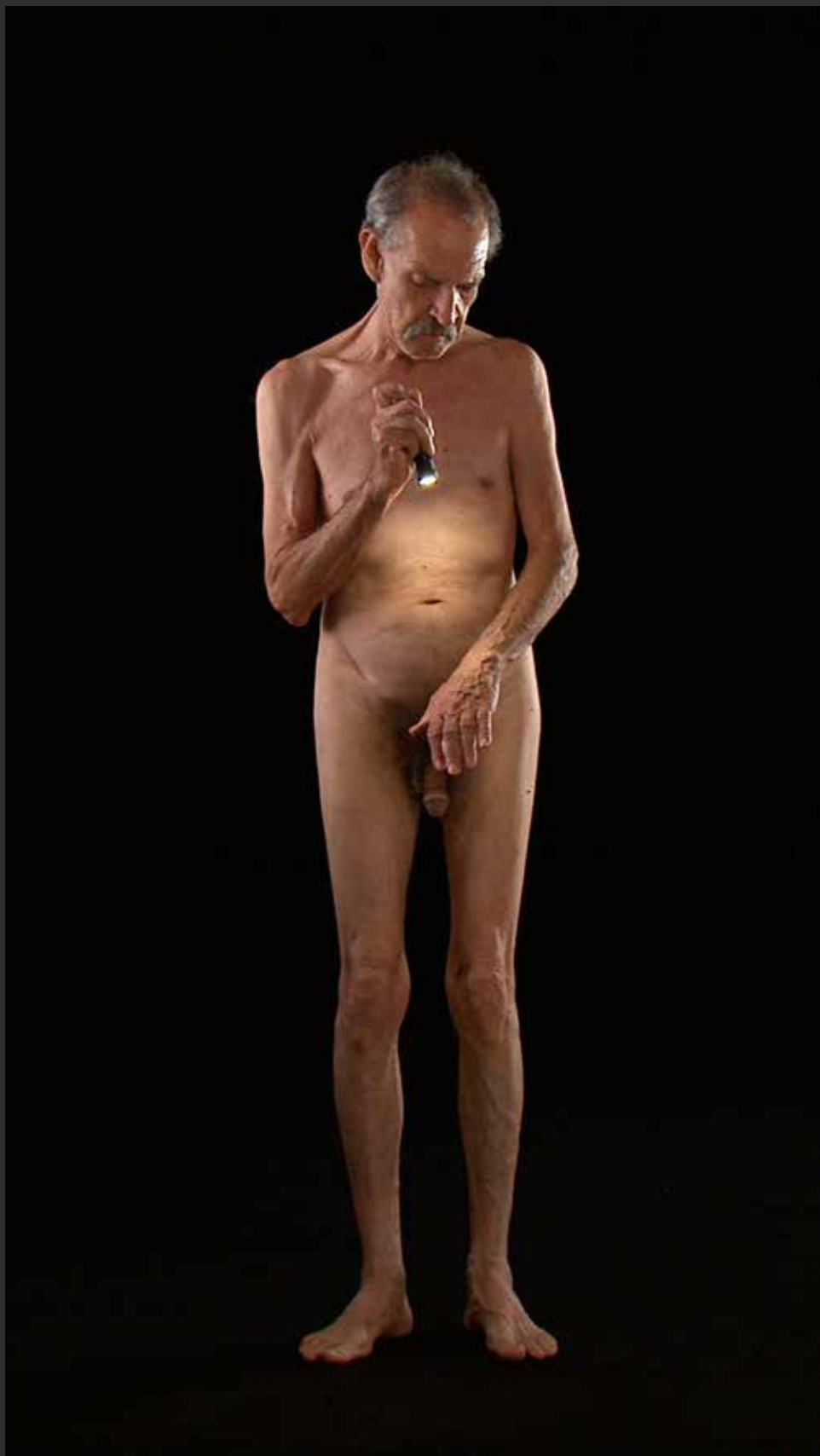
A man is seen at home alone in the evening reading a book. He is constantly interrupted by noises and disturbances just outside his door. The situation escalates. Sounds of pounding and scuffling get louder until he fears for his safety. He finally gathers his courage and opens the door. A figure walks out of the darkness and stands before him. The wall between them shatters and the man faces his self-image, his inner self, for the first time.

MAN SEARCHING FOR IMMORTALITY/ WOMAN SEARCHING FOR ETERNITY

2013

228 x 346 x 25.4 cm

(90 x 136 x 10 in)













“Whatever is not stone is light”

— Octavio Paz

Two seven-foot high slabs of black granite lean side by side against the wall in a dark room.

Two naked human figures, a man and a woman, appear to emerge from the stone and walk toward us. They arrive looking directly into our eyes with clarity and awareness. Slowly, each turns on a small light and begins a familiar daily ritual, carefully searching his or her body for evidence of disease or corruption. This is done methodically and meticulously, for they are searching for death. When they are finished, they each turn off their light, thankful for life. Standing very still, they gradually dissolve back into the stone from where they came.

WATER PORTRAITS SERIES

The Water Portraits series is a continuation of a lifelong exploration of the element of water, the substance that is life itself. Water represents change, the passage of time (ever flowing), eternity, and is a metaphor for the unborn, for birth and rebirth, baptism, and reflection. Water is a powerful force that can never be contained. **The Water Portraits** are unsettling — water is not a natural environment for humans, but yet here are dreamers who seem to be content in this watery world that gently rocks them, dreamers who mysteriously seem to exist without the aid of breath.

THE DREAMERS:
GLEB
REBEKAH
MARK
MADISON
SHARON
CHRISTIAN
KATHERINE

2013

Room Dimensions: 6.5 x 6.5 x 3.5 m
(21.3 x 21.3 x 11.5 ft)

















The Dreamers is a room-sized installation containing seven large plasma screens that depict seven individuals submerged underwater at the bottom of a streambed. Their eyes are closed and they appear to be at peace. Water ripples across their bodies, subtly animating their movements. The sound of running water permeates the space as dreams filter through the room.

LIST OF WORKS

Dimensions are in centimeters followed by inches. Height precedes width precedes depth.

Mirage series:

Ancestors, 2012

Colour High-Definition video on plasma display mounted vertically on wall
155.5 x 92.5 x 12.7 cm (61.2 x 36.4 x 5 in)
21:41 minutes
Performers: Kwesi Dei, Sharon Ferguson

The Encounter, 2012

Colour High-Definition video on plasma display mounted on wall
92.5 x 155.5 x 12.7 cm (36.4 x 61.2 x 5 in)
19:19 minutes
Performers: Genevieve Anderson, Joan Chodorow

Walking on the Edge, 2012

Colour High-Definition video on plasma display mounted on wall
92.5 x 155.5 x 12.7 cm (36.4 x 61.2 x 5 in)
12:33 minutes
Performers: Kwesi Dei, Darrow Igus

Inner Passage, 2013

(homage to Richard Long)
Colour High-Definition video on plasma display mounted vertically on wall, stereo sound
155.5 x 92.5 x 12.7 cm (61.2 x 36.4 x 5 in)
17:00 minutes
Performer: Blake Viola

Frustrated Actions series:

**Chapel of Frustrated Actions
and Futile Gestures, 2013**

Video/Sound Installation

Nine channels of colour High-Definition video
on a 3 x 3 grid of plasma displays; nine
channels mono sound

183 x 306 x 9 cm (35 x 120.5 x 3.5 in)

Continuously running

Performers: Tomas Arceo, John Brunold,
Cathy Chang, John Fleck, Joanne Lindquist,
Tim Ottman, Kira Perov, Valerie Spencer,
Ivan Villa, Bill Viola, Blake Viola

Man with His Soul, 2013

Colour High-Definition video diptych on LCD
panels mounted vertically on wall

74 x 86 x 3 cm (29 x 34 x 1.5 in)

8:17 minutes

Performer: Richard Neil

Angel at the Door, 2013

Colour High-Definition video large projection
on wall; stereo sound

215.9 x 383.5 cm (85 x 151 in)

13:29 minutes

Performers: Carl Henly, Gerald Monroe

**Man Searching for Immortality/Woman
Searching for Eternity, 2013**

Colour High-Definition video diptych projected
on large vertical slabs of black granite leaning
on wall

228 x 346 x 25.4 cm (90 x 136 x 10 in)

18:54 minutes

Performers: Luis Accinelli, Penelope Safranek

Water Portraits series:

The Dreamers, 2013

Video/Sound Installation

Seven channels of colour High-Definition
video on seven plasma displays mounted
vertically on wall in darkened room;

four channels stereo sound

Room Dimensions: 6.5 x 6.5 x 3.5 m

(21.3 x 21.3 x 11.5 ft)

Continuously running

Performers: Gleb Kaminer, Rebekah Rife,
Mark Ofugi, Madison Corn, Sharon Ferguson,
Christian Vincent, Katherine McKalip

Seven individual works from **The Dreamers**,
all dated 2013

Gleb

Rebekah

Mark

Madison

Sharon

Christian

Katherine

Colour High-Definition video on LCD panel
mounted vertically on wall; stereo sound

92 x 53.6 x 3 cm (36.2 x 21 x 1.2 in)

Continuously running

BIOGRAPHY

Bill Viola is a seminal figure in the field of video art. His works have received international recognition in major museums and galleries and are included in distinguished public and private collections worldwide. For over forty years he has created architectural video installations, video films, sound environments, electronic music performances, as well as works for concerts, opera, and sacred spaces. Wide-ranging in his scope of ideas and aided by his virtuosic control of technology, Viola explores video's temporal and optical systems to metaphorically examine modes of perception and cognition, and ultimately chart a symbolic quest for the self.

Graduating from Syracuse University (NY) in 1973 at a time when all art forms were experiencing seismic shifts and when the Fluxus movement was still in full swing, Viola was fortunate to work first hand with composer/musician David Tudor, and media artists Nam June Paik and Peter Campus. The medium of video had become an essential part of these new experimental forms, and Viola, one of its pioneers.

Viola and his wife Kira Perov have travelled extensively to record and collect a vast range of images, from the dry deserts of Tunisia, to the mountains and volcanoes of the west coast of the US, to Dharamsala, India, to visit the Dalai Lama. They studied Zen Buddhism in Japan where they lived for eighteen months in the early 1980s and journeyed to remote areas of the main island of Honshu for a project when Viola was artist in residence at the Sony Corporation of Japan. They spent five months in the southwest deserts of the USA exploring archeological sites and its vast geological formations, and flew to the island of Fiji to record a Hindu fire-walking ceremony.

Viola represented the US at the Venice Biennale in 1995 and other key solo exhibitions include; **Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey** at The Whitney Museum of American Art (1997) and **The Passions** at the J.Paul Getty Museum (2003). His exhibition, **Hatsu-Yume (First Dream)** drew over 340,000 visitors to the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo in 2006. In 2004 Viola created a four-hour long video for Peter Sellars' production of Wagner's **Tristan und Isolde** that has had many performances in the US, Canada, Europe and Japan. Viola has received numerous awards for his achievements, including the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (1989), XXI Catalonia International Prize (2009), and the Praemium Imperiale from the Japan Art Association (2011).

Australian-born Kira Perov is executive director of Bill Viola Studio. She has worked closely with Viola since 1978, managing, creatively guiding and assisting with the production of all of his videotapes and installations. With her knowledge of photography, she has also documented their working process on location and in the studio and amassed a large archive of images from their experiences together, as well as images of the videotapes and installations. She edits all Bill Viola publications and organizes and coordinates exhibitions of the work worldwide.



EXHIBITIONS

Solo Exhibitions (Selected)

2013

Bill Viola: Ascension, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, USA

2012

Bill Viola: The Raft, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, USA

Bill Viola: Unspoken, James Cohan Gallery, Shanghai, China

Bill Viola: Submerged-Spaces, Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, UK

Bill Viola: Reflections, Villa di Panza, Varese, Italy

Bill Viola: Water, Nordic Watercolour Museum, Skarhamn, Sweden

Bill Viola: Liber Insularum, Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Miami, USA

2011

Bill Viola: Quintet of the Unseen, Blain|Southern, London, UK

Bill Viola: Liber Insularum, Sala de Arte Contemporaneo del Gobierno de Canarias, Tenerife, Spain

Bill Viola: Transformations, Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo, Japan

Amore e Morte, Gucci Museum, Florence, Italy

Ocean Without a Shore, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), Philadelphia, USA

2010

Bill Viola per Capodimonte, The Museo di Capodimonte of Naples, Naples, Italy

Bill Viola: The Quintet of the Astonished, Urban Video Project, Syracuse University, Syracuse, USA

Bill Viola: Visitation, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, USA

Emergence: Bill Viola at the Accademia Gallery, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy

Bill Viola: Figurative Works, Museo Picasso Málaga, Spain

Bill Viola: Fire Woman and Tristan's Ascension, Presented by Kaldor Public Art Projects in association with the Melbourne International Arts Festival; St. Carthage's Church, Melbourne, Australia

Bill Viola: The Raft, Presented by ACMI for the Melbourne International Arts Festival in association with Kaldor Public Art Projects, Melbourne, Australia

2009

Bill Viola: Bodies of Light, James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA

Bill Viola: The Intimate Work, De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, Netherlands

Bill Viola: Being Time, The Pier Arts Center, Stromness, UK

Bill Viola: Installations and Screenings, ("Screenings," part of Forum Expanded, 59th Berlinale), Haunch of Venison, Berlin, Germany

2008

Bill Viola: Visioni Interiori, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy

Bill Viola: Ocean Without a Shore, (installation), National Gallery Victoria, Melbourne, Australia

Bill Viola: Transfigurations, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea

Bill Viola: Ocean Without a Shore, (installation), National Museum of Contemporary Art, Gwacheon, Korea

Bill Viola: The Tristan Project, (installation exhibition), Art Gallery of New South Wales and St. Saviour's Church, Sydney, Australia

2007

Bill Viola: Ocean Without a Shore, (installation) Chiesa di San Gallo, Collateral Event, 52nd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy

Bill Viola, The Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Poland

Bill Viola: Works from the Tristan Project, James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA

Bill Viola: Las Horas Invisibles, Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada, Palacio de Carlos V, La Alhambra, Granada, Spain

2006

Bill Viola: Hatsu-Yume (First Dream), Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Travels to Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan

Bill Viola-Video, 2006 Recipient of the NORD/LB Art Prize, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen, Germany
LOVE/DEATH The Tristan Project, Haunch of Venison (two venues), London, UK

2005

Bill Viola, James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA
Tristan und Isolde, premiere of fully staged Peter Sellars' production, with four hour video, conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen, l'Opéra National de Paris, Paris, France
Bill Viola Visions, ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark

2004

The Tristan Project, premiere, four hour video for Peter Sellars' new production, Tristan und Isolde (concert version), Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles Philharmonic, conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen. New York premiere, Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (2007), Los Angeles Philharmonic, conductor Esa Pekka Salonen; Gergiev Festival, De Doelen Concert Hall, Rotterdam, conductor Valery Gergiev; White Nights Festival (2008), Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall, St Petersburg, conductor Valery Gergiev
Bill Viola: Temporality and Transcendence, Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao, Spain

2003

Bill Viola: Five Angels for the Millennium, Ruhrtriennale, Gasometer, Oberhausen, Germany
Bill Viola, Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea
Bill Viola: The Passions, The J. Paul Getty

Museum, Los Angeles. Travels to The National Gallery, London; Fundación "la Caixa," Madrid, (2005); National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

2002

Bill Viola: Going Forth By Day, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, Germany

2001

Bill Viola: Five Angels for the Millennium, Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, UK

2000

Bill Viola: The Greeting, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Église Saint-Eustache, Paris, France
Bill Viola: New Work, James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA
The World of Appearances, Helaba Main Tower, Frankfurt (permanent installation), Germany

1997

Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey, organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Travels to Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1998); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (1999); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (1999-2000).

Bill Viola: Fire, Water, Breath, Guggenheim Museum (SoHo), New York, USA

1996

Bill Viola: Trilogy: Fire, Water, Breath, Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Paris, France
Bill Viola: The Messenger, Durham Cathedral, Visual Arts UK 1996, Durham, UK. Travels to South London Gallery, London; Video Positiva-Moviola, Liverpool; The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Oriel Mostyn, Gwynedd; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin (1997)

Bill Viola: New Work, Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, USA

1995

Buried Secrets, United States Pavilion, 46th Venice Biennale. Travels to Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover; Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe (1996)

1994

Bill Viola: Território do Invisível/Site of the Unseen, Centro Cultural/Banco do Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Déserts (A film created for the music composition *Déserts* by Edgard Varèse), a collaboration with the Ensemble Modern, conductor Peter Eötvös, Wien Modern, Konzerthaus, Vienna, (premiere). Other performances: Konzerthaus, Karlsruhe (1995); Muffathalle, Munich; Palazzetto dello Sport, Venice; Hallein/Perner-Insel, Salzburg; Alte Oper, Frankfurt; Konzerthaus, Berlin; Concertgebouw, Amsterdam; Royal Festival Hall, London (1996); Globe Arena, Stockholm; Auditorio RAI, Turin; Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris (performances with other orchestras continue to the present)

Bill Viola: Stations, American Center inaugural opening, Paris, France

1992

Bill Viola. Unseen Images, Stadtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf. Travels to Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1993); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv (1994)

Bill Viola: Two Installations, Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, UK

Bill Viola, Donald Young Gallery, Seattle, USA

Bill Viola: Nantes Triptych, Chappelle de l'Oratoire, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France

1990

Bill Viola: The Sleep of Reason, Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas, France

1989

Bill Viola, Fukui Prefectural Museum of Art, part of The 3rd Fukui International Video Biennale, Fukui City, Japan

1988

Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, USA

1987

Bill Viola: Installations and Videotapes, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

1985

Bill Viola, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Summer 1985, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA

1983

Bill Viola, ARC, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France

1979

Projects: Bill Viola, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

1974

Bill Viola: Video and Sound Installations, The Kitchen Center, New York, USA

1973

New Video Work, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, USA

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books, Monographs, Catalogues (Selected)

2012

Nordal, Bera, ed. **Bill Viola: Water** (exh. cat.). Text by Joanna Persman. The Nordic Watercolour Museum: Skärhamn, Sweden. In Swedish and English.

Bernardini, Anna, ed. **Bill Viola: Reflections** (exh. cat.). Texts by Maria Rosa Sossai and Salvatore Settis. Silvana Editoriale: Milan. In Italian and English.

2011

Ferrari, Luigi, ed. **Bill Viola: 10 opere video single chanel 1976-1994** (exh. cat.). Texts by Bruno Cagli, Paolo Fabbri, David A. Ross. Pesaro: Galleria di Franca Mancini. Ravenna: Danilo Montanari Editore. In Italian and English.

2010

Bill Viola per Capodimonte (exh. cat.). Texts by Maria Gloria Conti Bicocchi, Angela Tecce, Maria Utili, Valentina Valentini, Bill Viola. Naples: Museo di Capodimonte. In Italian.

Thierry Kuntzel — Bill Viola: Deux Éternités Proches / Two Close Eternities (exh. cat.).

Texts by Raymond Bellour, Anne-Marie Duguet, Kathy Rae Huffman, Barbara London, Paul-Emmanuel Odin, Bill Viola. Tourcoing: Le Fresnoy, Studio national des arts contemporains. In French and English.

2009

Perov, Kira, ed. **Bill Viola: Bodies of Light** (exh. cat.). Texts by James Cohan and Bill Viola. New York: James Cohan Gallery.

2008

Perov, Kira, ed. **Bill Viola: Visioni interiori** (exh. cat.). Texts by Maria Gloria Conti Bicocchi, Kira Perov, Salvatore Settis, Valentina Valentini and Bill Viola. Rome: Palazzo delle Esposizioni, and Florence: Giunti Arte Mostre Musei. In Italian.

Bill Viola: Transfigurations (exh. cat.). Texts by Kelly Sidley and Bill Viola. Seoul: Kukje Gallery. In English and Korean.

2007

Bill Viola: Las Horas Invisibles (exh. cat.). Texts by David Ross, Bill Viola and John Walsh. Seville: Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura. In Spanish.

Brewinska, Maria, ed. **Bill Viola** (exh. cat.). Texts by Maria Brewinska, Benjamin Cope, Minoru Hatanaka, Jaroslaw Lubiak and Bill Viola. Warsaw: Zacheta National Gallery of Art. In Polish and English.

2006

Bill Viola: Night Journey (exh. cat.). Texts by Bill Viola and Piedad Solans. Pollença, Majorca: Ajuntament de Pollença. In Catalan, Castilian and English.

Bill Viola: Love/Death: The Tristan Project (exh. cat.). Texts by Simon Grant and Bill Viola. London: Haunch of Venison.

Elliott, David and Akio Obigane, eds. **Bill Viola: Hatsu-Yume (First Dream)** (exh. cat.). Texts by David Elliott, David A. Ross, Bill Viola, John Walsh; interview with the artist and Kira Perov by Akio Obigane. Tokyo: Mori Art Museum and Tankosha Publishing Co., Ltd. In Japanese and English.

2005

Krogh, Anna and Jens Erik Sorensen, eds. **Bill Viola: Visions** (exh. cat.). Denmark: ARos Aarhus Kunstmuseum. In Danish and English.

Fargier, Jean-Paul. **The Reflecting Pool de Bill Viola**. Crisnée: Éditions Yellow Now. In French. Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 2009. In Italian.

2004

Tristan und Isolde (program, 2004-2005 season). Texts by Oswald Georg Bauer, Vincent Borel, Vaclav Jamek, Kira Perov, Timothée Picard, Peter Sellars, Makis Solomos, Nicolas Southon, Bill Viola. Paris: Opéra National de Paris. In French, English, German.

Townsend, Chris, ed. **The Art of Bill Viola**. Texts by Rhys Davies, Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield, Cynthia Freeland, Antonio Geusa, Elizabeth Ten Grotenhuis, David Jasper, David Morgan, Otto Neumaier, Chris Townsend and Jean Wainwright. London: Thames & Hudson. Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2005. In Italian.

2003

Walsh, John, ed. **The Passions** (exh.cat.). Texts by Hans Belting, Kira Perov, Peter Sellars, Bill Viola and John Walsh. Los Angeles; The J. Paul Getty Museum in association with The National Gallery, London. Madrid: Fundación "la Caixa," 2004. Spanish edition titled **Bill Viola: Las Pasiones**.

2002

Bill Viola: Going Forth By Day (exh. cat.). Interview with the artist by John G. Hanhardt. Berlin: Deutsche Bank; New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. In English and German.

2000

Stations: Bill Viola (exh. cat.). Introduction by Götz Adriani; texts by Reto Krüger, Ralph Melcher, Bill Viola, and Dörte Zbikowski. Karlsruhe, Germany: Museum für Neue Kunst/ ZKM, 2000. In German.

1997

Bill Viola: A Twenty-Five-Year Survey (exh. cat.). Texts by Lewis Hyde, Kira Perov, David A. Ross, and Bill Viola. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art; Paris: Flammarion. Stuttgart: Cantz, 1999. In German.

1996

Sparrow, Felicity, ed. **Bill Viola: The Messenger** (exh. cat.). Texts by David Jasper and Stuart Morgan. Durham: Chaplaincy to the Arts and Recreation in Northeast England, 1996.

1995

Zeitlin, Marilyn A., ed. **Bill Viola: Buried Secrets/Segreti sepolti** (exh. cat.). Texts by Bill Viola and Marilyn Zeitlin. Tempe: Arizona State University Art Museum. In English and Italian. Reprinted and expanded as **Bill Viola: Buried Secrets/Vergrabene Geheimnisse**. Texts by Carl Haenlein, Susie Kalil, Bill Viola, and Marilyn Zeitlin. Hannover, Germany: Kestner-Gesellschaft, In German and English.

Bill Viola, Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973-1994. Edited by Robert Violette with Bill Viola. Cambridge: MIT Press; London: Thames and Hudson; Anthony d'Offay Gallery.

1994

Pühringer, Alexander, ed. **Bill Viola** (exh. cat.). Texts by Freidemann Malsch, Celia Montolió, Otto Neumaier, and Bill Viola; interview with the artist by Otto Neumaier and Alexander Pühringer. Salzburg: Salzburger Kunstverein. In English and German.

Yapelli, Tina with Toby Kamps. **Bill Viola: Images and Spaces** (exh. cat.). Texts by Tina Yapelli and Bill Viola. Madison: Madison Art Center.

1993

Valentini, Valentina, ed. **Bill Viola: Vedere con la mente e con il cuore**. Texts by Valentina Valentini and Bill Viola; interviews with the artist by Jörg Zutter, and interview with David A. Ross by Gianfranco Mantegna. Rome: Gangemi Editore. In Italian.

Bélisle, Josée, ed. **Bill Viola** (exh. cat.). Texts by Josée Bélisle and Bill Viola. Montreal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1993. In English and French.

1992

Syring, Marie Luise, ed. **Bill Viola: Unseen Images/Nie gesehene Bilder/Images jamais vues** (exh. cat.). Texts by Rolf Lauter and Marie Luise Syring; interview with the artist by Jörg Zutter. Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In English, French, and German. Reprinted and expanded for Spanish edition as **Bill Viola: Más allá de la mirada (imágenes no vistas)**. Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía.

Feldman, Melissa and H. Ashley Kistler, eds. **Bill Viola: Slowly Turning Narrative** (exh. cat.). Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art; Richmond: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1992.

1990

Loisy, Jean de, ed. **Bill Viola: The Sleep of Reason** (exh. cat.). Jouy-en-Josas, France: Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, 1990. In French.

1988

Zeitlin, Marilyn A., ed. **Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade** (exh. cat.). Texts by Deirdre Boyle, Kathy Rae Huffman, Christopher Knight, Michael Nash, Joan Seeman Robinson, Gene Youngblood, and Marilyn A. Zeitlin. Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum.

1987

London, Barbara, ed. **Bill Viola: Installations and Videotapes** (exh. cat.). Texts by J. Hoberman, Donald Kuspit, Barbara London, and Bill Viola. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Hanhardt, John G. **Cartografando il visibile: l'arte di Bill Viola**. In Valentina Valentini, ed., *Ritratti*: Greenaway, Martinis, Pirri, Viola. Taormina, Italy: De Luca, 1987. In Italian.

1985

Bill Viola: Statements by the Artist in Summer 1985 (exh. cat.). Introduction by Julia Brown. Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art.

1983

Bill Viola (exh. cat.). Texts by Anne-Marie Duguet, John G. Hanhardt, Kathy Rae Huffman, Suzanne Page, and Bill Viola; interview with the artist by Deirdre Boyle. Paris: Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris. In English and French.

PRODUCTION

Kira Perov

From July 2012 until April 2013 we created three series of works: out on location on El Mirage Dry Lakebed (Mirage series); in our studio (Water Portraits series); and studio and Long Beach and Los Angeles locations (Frustrated Actions series). Bringing together our production team of core Bill Viola Studio members was imperative and we assembled a wonderful crew. We are particularly grateful for the extraordinary efforts of long time collaborators Harry Dawson, our director of photography of twenty years, Genevieve Anderson our producer, David Max, production designer, Alex MacInnis, technical advisor, David Norbury, stylist, Brian Pete, on-line editor and Mikael Sandgren, sound designer. Our very talented performers are included in the List of Works.



Director: Bill Viola
Executive producer: Kira Perov
Producer: Genevieve Anderson
Production manager: Karen Hernandez
Production coordinator: Marisol Romero
Assistant director: Nick Conroy
2nd Assistant director: Travis Knight
Director of photography: Harry Dawson
Camera assistants: Brian Garbellini, Hunter Kerhart
Technical director: Alex MacInnis
Digital intermediate technician: Dan Zimbaldi
Key grip: John Brunold
Best boys: Fernando Ortiz, Paul Salmi
Gaffers: Jake Sarfaty, Vincent Wren
Rigger: Tony Vandernecker
Special effects coordinator: Giuliano Fiumani
Production designer: David Max
Scenics: Ian Stoker-Long, Mike Bartak
Wardrobe stylists: David Norbury, Eric Luken, Kira Perov
Script supervisor: Megyn Cawley
Location scout and manager: Maurice Chauvet
Lead production assistants: Nick Iway, Blake Viola
Production assistants: Scott Reese, Kate Sutton, Steve Lavato, Tomás Arceo
On-line editor: Brian Pete
Sound recordist: Alex MacInnis
Sound designer: Mikael Sandgren
Playback systems: Benjamin Lein





Frustrated Actions series

Bill's notebooks from 2002 contain the first ideas for the Frustrated Actions series. During this period of time, pages and pages of two to three sentence entries were made listing many possibilities, ideas for pieces that would take 10 years before they were produced. It was a relief to be working in our studio again, no elements of nature to battle with, no travel and hotel arrangements to make, just a small crew and a few performers. And recording audio was an element that was back in the mix. Some of these works did take us outdoors again, but at least we were closer to home. We could use a range of cameras from the high-end Epic Red, to our lowly, but dearly loved "Grainy Cam," an old infrared bank surveillance camera, to create a diverse look with a varied palette.



Mirage series

The Mirage series was recorded at El Mirage, a dry lake two hours drive from Los Angeles. We went into production in July 2012 during the hottest time in the Mojave desert, and continued in October when the nights were cooler, but the hot days still produced mirages. This six mile long flat dry lakebed, at an elevation of 2,800 feet with the Shadow Mountains in the distance, provided an ideal location to observe and record mirages, using lenses that range from 400-1200 mm. Enlarging the distortion of the heat waves served to create a mysterious setting for the recordings. In this arid and mostly hostile location, the immense landscape becomes the central protagonist, the humans, tiny travellers traversing this vast environment, powerless against the strong winds, the sand storms, the dryness and heat. A team of thirty people had to be housed and fed, transported to the site each day, and cared for regarding their health and safety needs.



Water Portraits series

The idea for the Water Portraits was born in 2004 while we were working on the video for the Peter Sellars production of *Tristan und Isolde* by Richard Wagner. We built a six-foot-long Plexiglas tank, clear on all sides, to record one of the under water scenes. At that time we tested placing pebbles under the tank to resemble a streambed with a person floating in the tank with closed eyes. Bill decided that at some point we should do a piece with underwater portraits of people “sleeping”. The work was finally produced eight years later in November 2012. Luckily we had stored the tank. We assembled a diverse group of performers of different ages, gender and race who bravely endured many takes with fortitude and serenity.

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Studio director: Bobby Jablonski
Playback systems: Benjamin Lein
Technical advisor: Tom Piglin
Technical assistance: Astra Price
Curatorial assistant: McLean Fahnestock
Curatorial assistant: Christen Sperry-Garcia
Financial manager: Marie Corboy
Studio assistant: John Sarmiento

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Head technician: Deklan Kilfeather
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Cover image: Chapel of Frustrated Actions
and Futile Gestures, 2013 (detail)