

BILL VIOLA

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Bill Viola

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Bill Viola (b.1951) is internationally recognized as one of today's leading artists. He has been instrumental in the establishment of video as a vital form of contemporary art, and in so doing has helped to greatly expand its scope in terms of technology, content, and historical reach. For 40 years he has created videotapes, architectural video installations, sound environments, electronic music performances, flat panel video pieces, and works for television broadcast. Viola's video installations—total environments that envelop the viewer in image and sound—employ state-of-the-art technologies and are distinguished by their precision and direct simplicity. They are shown in museums and galleries worldwide and are found in many distinguished collections. His single channel videotapes have been widely broadcast and presented cinematically, while his writings have been extensively published, and translated for international readers. Viola uses video to explore the phenomena of sense perception as an avenue to self-knowledge. His works focus on universal human experiences—birth, death, the unfolding of consciousness—and have roots in both Eastern and Western art as well as spiritual traditions, including Zen Buddhism, Islamic Sufism, and Christian mysticism. Using the inner language of subjective thoughts and collective memories, his videos communicate to a wide audience, allowing viewers to experience the work directly, and in their own personal way.

Bill Viola received his BFA in Experimental Studios from Syracuse University in 1973 where he studied visual art with Jack Nelson and electronic music with Franklin Morris. During the 1970s he lived for 18 months in Florence, Italy, as technical director of production for Art/Tapes/22, one of the first video art studios in Europe, and then traveled widely to study and record traditional performing arts in the Solomon Islands, Java, Bali, and Japan. Viola was invited to be artist-in-residence at the WNET Channel 13 Television Laboratory in New York from 1976-1980 where he created a series of works, many of which were premiered on television. In 1977 Viola was invited to show his videotapes at La Trobe University (Melbourne, Australia) by cultural arts director Kira Perov who, a year later, joined him in New York where they married and began a lifelong collaboration working and traveling together.



Kira Perov

In 1979 Viola and Perov traveled to the Sahara desert, Tunisia to record mirages. The following year Viola was awarded a U.S./Japan Creative Artist Fellowship and they lived in Japan for a year and a half where they studied Zen Buddhism with Master Daien Tanaka, and Viola became the first artist-in-residence at Sony Corporation's Atsugi research laboratories. Viola and Perov returned to the U. S. at the end of 1981 and settled in Long Beach, California, initiating projects to create art works based on medical imaging technologies of the human body at a local hospital, animal consciousness at the San Diego Zoo, and fire walking rituals among the Hindu communities in Fiji. In 1987 they traveled for five months throughout the American Southwest photographing Native American rock art sites, and recording nocturnal desert landscapes with a series of specialized video cameras. More recently, at the end of 2005, they journeyed with their two sons to Dharamsala, India to record a prayer blessing with the Dalai Lama.

Music has always been an important part of Viola's life and work. From 1973-1980 he performed with avant-garde composer David Tudor as a member of his Rainforest ensemble, later called Composers Inside Electronics. Viola has also created videos to accompany music compositions including 20th century composer Edgard Varèse' Déserts in 1994 with the Ensemble Modern, and, in 2000, a three-song video suite for the rock group Nine Inch Nails' world tour. In 2004 Viola began collaborating with director Peter Sellars and conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen to create a new production of Richard Wagner's opera, Tristan und Isolde, which was presented in project form by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in December 2004, and later at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York (2007). The complete opera received its world premiere at the Opéra National de Paris, Bastille in April 2005.

Since the early 1970s Viola's video art works have been seen all over the world. Exhibitions include Bill Viola: Installations and Videotapes, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1987; Bill Viola: Unseen Images, seven installations toured six venues in Europe, 1992-1994, organized by the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and Kira Perov. Viola represented the U.S. at the 46th Venice Biennale in 1995 with Buried Secrets, a series of five new installation works. In 1997 the Whitney Museum of American Art organized Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey that included over 35 installations and videotapes and traveled for two years to six museums in the United States and Europe. In 2002 Viola completed his most ambitious project, Going Forth By Day, a five part projected digital "fresco" cycle, his first work in High-Definition

video, commissioned by the Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin and the Guggenheim Museum, New York. Bill Viola: The Passions, a new series inspired by late medieval and early Renaissance art, was exhibited at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles in 2003 then traveled to the National Gallery, London, the Fundación “La Caixa” in Madrid and the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. One of the largest exhibitions of Viola’s installations to date, Bill Viola: Hatsu-Yume (First Dream) (2006-2007), drew over 340,000 visitors to the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo. In 2007 nine installations were shown at the Zahenta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw; and Ocean Without a shore was created for the 15th century Church of San Gallo during the Venice Biennale. In 2008 Bill Viola: Visioni interiori, a survey exhibition organized by Kira Perov, was presented in Rome at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni. In 2014, twenty works were shown at the Grand Palais, Paris, in his largest survey exhibition to date, and a few months later, part one of the St. Paul’s commission was installed in the London cathedral, *Martyrs (Earth, Air, Fire, Water)*.

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).

KIRA PEROV

Kira Perov is executive director of Bill Viola Studio. She has worked closely with Bill Viola, her husband and partner since 1979, managing, creatively guiding and assisting with the production of all of his videotapes and installations, and photographing the process. She edits all Bill Viola publications, selecting materials from her extensive archive and collaborating with museum professionals and designers. Perov also curates, organizes and coordinates exhibitions of the work worldwide.

Kira Perov earned her Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in languages and literature from Melbourne University, Australia in 1973, and traveled extensively throughout Europe and the South Pacific, including Papua/New Guinea. In 1974 she was awarded a fellowship by the Bulgarian/Australian Friendship Commission to study the language and culture of Bulgaria, where she lived for six months before returning to Australia. When she invited Viola to Melbourne in 1977, Perov was director of cultural activities at La Trobe University, curating exhibitions and producing concerts. Recent publications include *Bill Viola: Visioni interiori*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2008); *Bill Viola* (co-edited with Jérôme Neutres), Musée National, Grand Palais (2014). Her photographs, including those documenting Viola’s work, have been widely

published.

CAREER

Captain of the "TV Squad," 5th grade, P.S. 20, Queens, New York, 1960

Independent artist since 1973

Artist-in-residence, WNET Thirteen Television Laboratory, New York, 1976-81

Lived in Japan on cultural exchange fellowship. Studied with Zen priest/painter Daien Tanaka, 1980-81

Artist-in-residence at Sony Corporation's Atsugi Laboratories, 1981

Instructor, Advanced Video, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California, 1983

Represented the United States at the 46th Venice Biennale in the US Pavilion, 1995

Getty Scholar-in-residence at The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, Los Angeles, 1998

Elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences, United States, 2000

Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, France, 2006

Ocean Without a Shore created for the 56th Venice Biennale at the 15th century church of San Gallo, 2007

Self Portrait, Submerged created for the self portrait collection in the Vasari Corridor, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, 2013

Martyrs (Earth, Air, Fire, Water) created for St. Paul's Cathedral, London, 2014

AWARDS

1984 Polaroid Video Art Award for outstanding achievement, USA

1987 Maya Deren Award, American Film Institute, USA

1989 John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Award, USA

1993 Skowhegan Medal (Video Installation), USA

1993 Medienkunstpreis, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, and Siemens Kulturprogramm, Germany

2003 Cultural Leadership Award, American Federal of Arts, USA

2006 NORD/LB Art Prize, Bremen, Germany

2009 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts, MIT, Cambridge, MA

2009 Catalonia International Prize, Barcelona, Spain

2011 Arents Award for Distinguished Alumni, Syracuse University, New York

2011 Praemium Imperiale, the Japan Art Association, Tokyo

2013 National Artist Award, Anderson Ranch, Snowmass Village, CO

2013 Aurora Award, Aurora Picture Show, Houston, TX

HONORARY DEGREES

1995 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Syracuse University, New York, USA

1997 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois, USA

1998 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California, USA

1999 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

2000 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California, USA

2000 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, University of Sunderland, Sunderland, England

2004 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Royal College of Art, London, England

2005 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois, USA

2006 Degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, California, USA

2011 Doctorate Honoris Causa, University of Liege, Belgium

SELECTED ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

1973 "New Video Work," Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York

1974 "Bill Viola: Video and Sound Installations," The Kitchen Center, New York

1979 "Projects: Bill Viola," The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1983 "Bill Viola," ARC, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France

1985 "Summer 1985," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

1985 "Bill Viola," Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden

1987 "Bill Viola: Installations and Videotapes," The Museum of Modern Art, New York

1988 "Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade," Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas

1989 "Bill Viola," Fukui Prefectural Museum of Art, Fukui City, Japan, part of The 3rd Fukui International Video Biennale.

1990 "Bill Viola: The Sleep of Reason," Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Jouy-en-Josas, France

1992 "Bill Viola: Nantes Triptych," Chappelle de l'Oratoire, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France

1992 "Bill Viola," Donald Young Gallery, Seattle, Washington (five installations)

1992 "Bill Viola: Two Installations," Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, England

1992 "Bill Viola. Unseen Images," Stadtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany. Travels to: Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (1993); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (1993); Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland (1993); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, England (1993), Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel (1994)

1994 "Bill Viola: Stations," American Center inaugural opening, Paris, France

1994 "Bill Viola: Território do Invisível/Site of the Unseen," Centro Cultural/Banco do Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

1995 "Buried Secrets," United States Pavilion, 46th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. Travels to Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hannover, Germany (1995); Arizona State University Art Museum (1996)

1996 "Bill Viola: New Work," Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia (installation)

1996 "Bill Viola: The Messenger," Durham Cathedral, Visual Arts UK 1996, Durham, England. Travels to South London Gallery, London, England (1996); Video Positiva-Moviola, Liverpool, England; The Fruitmarket

Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland; Oriol Mostyn, Gwynedd, Wales; The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland (1997)

1996 "Bill Viola: Trilogy: Fire, Water, Breath," Chapelle Saint-Louise de la Salpêtrière, Festival d'Automne, Paris

1997 "Bill Viola: Fire, Water, Breath," Guggenheim Museum (SoHo), New York

1997 "Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey" organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art. Travels to Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1998); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1998); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany (1999); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California (1999); Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois (1999-2000)

2000 "The World of Appearances," Helaba Main Tower, Frankfurt, Germany (permanent installation)

2000 "Bill Viola: New Work," James Cohan Gallery, New York

2001 "Bill Viola: Five Angels for the Millennium," Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London

2002 "Bill Viola: Going Forth By Day," Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin

2003 "Bill Viola: The Passions," Getty Museum, Los Angeles

2003 "Bill Viola," Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2003 "Bill Viola: Five Angels for the Millennium," Ruhrtriennale, Gasometer, Oberhausen, Germany

2003 "Bill Viola: The Passions," National Gallery, London

2004 "Bill Viola: Temporality and Transcendence," Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain

2005 "Bill Viola: The Passions," Fundación "la Caixa," Madrid, Spain; and National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

2005 "Bill Viola Visions," ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Aarhus, Denmark

2005 "Bill Viola," James Cohan Gallery, New York, USA

2005 "Tristan und Isolde," fully staged opera premiere at the Opéra National de Paris, France

2006 "Bill Viola – Video", 2006 Recipient of the NORD/LB Art Prize, Kunsthalle Bremen, Bremen, Germany

2006 "LOVE/DEATH The Tristan Project,"
Haunch of Venison, and St. Olave's College
(two venues), London, UK

2006 "Bill Viola: Hatsu-Yume (First Dream),"
Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan

2007 "Bill Viola: Las Horas Invisibles," Museo
de Bellas Artes de Granada, Palacio de Carlos
V (Alhambra), Spain

2007 "Bill Viola," Zacheta National Gallery of
Art, Warsaw, Poland

2007 "Ocean Without a Shore," Church of San
Gallo, Venice, Italy

2008 "Bill Viola: The Tristan Project," Art
Gallery of New South Wales, and St Saviour's
Church, Sydney, Australia

2008 "Bill Viola: Transfigurations." Kukje
Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2008 "Ocean Without a Shore," National
Gallery of Victoria, Australia

2008 "Bill Viola: Visioni interiori," Palazzo delle
Esposizioni, Rome, Italy

2009 "Bill Viola: Bodies of Light," James
Cohan Gallery, New York, New York, USA

2009 "Bill Viola: The Intimate Work," De Pont
Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg,
Netherlands

2009 "Bill Viola: Being Time," The Pier Arts
Center, Stromness, Orkney, Scotland, UK

2009 "Bill Viola: Installations and Screenings"
(Screenings part of Forum Expanded, 59th
Berlinale), Haunch of Venison, Berlin,
Germany

2010 "Bill Viola per Capodimonte," The Museo
di Capodimonte of Naples, Naples, Italy

2010 "Bill Viola: The Quintet of the
Astonished," Urban Video Project, Syracuse
University, Syracuse, New York, USA

2010 "Emergence: Bill Viola at the Accademia
Gallery," Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence,
Italy

2010 "Bill Viola: Figurative Works," Museo
Picasso Málaga, Spain

2010 "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

2010 "Bill Viola: The Raft," Presented by ACMI

for the Melbourne International Arts Festival in association with Kaldor Public Art Projects, Melbourne, Australia

2011 "Bill Viola: Quintet of the Unseen," Blain|Southern, London, UK

2011 "Bill Viola: Liber Insularum," Sala de Arte Contemporaneo del Gobierno de Canarias, Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

2011 "Bill Viola: Transformations," Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo, Japan

2011 "Amore e Morte," Gucci Museum, Florence, Italy

2011 "Ocean Without a Shore," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

2012 "Bill Viola: The Raft," Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri, USA

2012 "Bill Viola: Unspoken," James Cohan Gallery, Shanghai, China

2012 "Bill Viola: Submerged-Spaces," Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich, UK

2012 "Bill Viola: Reflections," Villa di Panza, Varese, Italy

2012 "Bill Viola: Water," Nordic Watercolor Museum, Skarhamn, Sweden

2012 "Bill Viola: Liber Insularum," Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, Florida, USA

2013 "Bill Viola: Ascension," Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut, USA

2013 "Frustrated Actions and Futile Gestures," Blain|Southern, London, UK

2013 "Bill Viola: The Return," Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

2013 "Point of Departure," Parque de La Memoria, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2014 "Tristan und Isolde," Teatro Real, Madrid, Spain

2014 "Bill Viola: In Dialogue," Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando Madrid, Spain

2014 "Bill Viola," Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, France

2014 "Revival of Tristan at La Bastille," Opera Bastille, Paris, France

2014 "Bill Viola: Passions," Cathedral of Berne & Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland

2014 "Martyrs (Earth, Air, Fire, Water)," (Permanent), St. Paul's Cathedral, London, UK

2014 "Bill Viola: Transformation," Faurschou Foundation, Beijing, China

2015 "Bill Viola: Selected Works," Art Gallery of South Australia, St. Peter's Cathedral, and Queen's Theatre, organized by Adelaide Festival of Arts, Adelaide, Australia

2015 "Masterpiece 2015: Bill Viola," De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2015 "Bill Viola," Kukje Gallery, Seoul, Korea

2015 "Bill Viola," Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, UK