



# Bill Viola

## THE INVISIBLE HOURS

Bill Viola (New York, 1951), is considered, together with such as Nam June Paik or Gary Hill, as one of the pioneers of video-art and has helped establish video as one of the most important trends in contemporary art by pushing back the technological frontiers and through his work's content and historic scope.

Viola's work shows a unique sensitivity in the treatment of the moving image, analysing the principles of human perception and states of consciousness through the creation of videographic single-channel tapes and installations. He does so by recreating everyday images, exploring feelings, appealing to memory and applying his considerable knowledge of philosophy.

From the outset, Viola's interest has been in seizing reality beyond the perception of the human eye. His work is based on the impressions he gets while strolling, observing the images of the real world that he later captures and transforms, impregnating them with more profound meaning. As explained in his text "The Nature of Images", included in the catalogue of the exhibition, Bill Viola is not concerned with the image based on the material world, but rather with the image as artefact, result or track, the image even determined by some inner experimentation. He says, "I'm interested in the image of that inner state and as such must be considered completely accurate and realistic. This is an approach to images from an entirely opposite direction – from within rather than

without. Therefore "eye" images are not important and can be misleading."

Since the late 1970's, Viola's videos and installations approach experience and human emotions often through everyday images altered by the artist. This transformation of the ordinary world occurs under the gaze of the spectator, whom he makes a participant in a sensory experience. In the 1980's, he broadened his scope to include direct references to the history of art and the writings of Judaeo-Christian, Muslim and Oriental Asian poets and mystics. Since then, his work has constantly grown in scale. His video-installations became more complex, without abandoning the precision and simplicity of his earlier pieces.

Since the year 2000, Viola also makes use of the plasma screen to investigate questions concerning the basic mechanisms of perception, introspective process, psychology, complementary technological systems, psychophysics and learning. Video is for him a tool similar to pencil and paper. Thus, the pieces of this latest period are conceived as a pictorial work and even look like one: they are hung on a wall and are silent, still or almost motionless, while simultaneously offering direct, intimate encounters. This move towards the pictorial tradition, the precision of his creative process and his ambitious management of art have led international critics to compare him with painters like Rubens.

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**Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada** Palacio de Carlos V. La Alhambra  
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With the collaboration of the **PATRONATO DE LA ALHAMBRA**

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