

Powerful Images of Fundamental Human Experience

Bill Viola (b. 1951 in New York) is generally recognized as one of the major international representatives of video art. Jointly with the Community of the Cathedral of Berne, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting the first solo exhibition to take place in Switzerland of this exceptional artist since his show here in 1993 at the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne. While the Cathedral of Berne showcases the artist's more recent videos addressing spiritual content, the Kunstmuseum Bern is mounting early works by the artist from its collection with a focus on theoretical questions related to perception and video art.

For over 30 years, Bill Viola has been creating video installations, sound environments, electronic music performances and TV productions. He made a major contribution toward establishing video as a key medium of contemporary art, expanding its scope as regards technology, content and historical context.

A shift to spiritual issues

Viola's video installations immerse their viewers totally in worlds of images and sound. Using the most-advanced technology, this artist strives for perfection in precision and in the power of his imagery. Since the 1990s, Viola's art has increasingly turned to examining universal human experience and spiritual questions. He explores the fundamental experiences of our existence such as birth, remembrance, death and awakening consciousness. In the 1970s, Viola pursued an interdisciplinary degree in the visual arts and in electronic music in Experimental Studios at the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Syracuse University in New York. He visited courses on Eastern philosophy, perceptual theories, physics, electronics, religion and mysticism—subjects that still influence his work today. The people in his artworks are faced with similar existential issues regardless of their cultural, historical or religious backgrounds.

An overview of the rich oeuvre of a conjuror of imagery

The Kunstmuseum Bern already purchased works by Bill Viola in the 1990s and thereby early established this pioneer of video art in its collection. The four artworks chosen for the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum—with one to two video projections per room distributed throughout building—reveal Bill Viola's investigations of the phenomena of sense perception and how they are involved in human processes of self-awareness. The Cathedral of Berne features five recent works by this veritable conjuror of images, addressing subjects such as cleansing and purification, transformation, suffering and commiseration. The sum of both exhibition sites gives a rounded view of both Bill Viola's stylistic development as well as the shift in the focus of his content, while offering an overview of the comprehensive oeuvre of this outstanding American artist.

Tradition and the present in a powerful dialogue

With his video art, Viola takes his place in a long tradition of figural representation and existential subject matter in art. Bill Viola's lyrical video screenings partake in a dialogue with the representation of the Christian subject matter of suffering and the Passion in the glass-window painting and sculptures of the awe-inspiring surroundings of the Cathedral of Berne. Much of the older art is very hard for many of us to comprehend today. The exhibition title *Passions* refers not only to the time of the Passiontide, when the exhibition will be opening its doors to the public, but also to the Passion as the prototypical Christian experience and the fact that above all humanity finds its expression in dealing with suffering and misfortune. But Viola does not just tackle purely Christian themes. He equally addresses worldly experiences and occurrences, giving us a deeper insight into life and humanity in the juxtaposition with traditional Christian art—and within the religious context of the Cathedral of Berne. Viola thus makes tradition comprehensible again to the contemporary viewing public, breathing fresh life into it with his new narratives.

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The Exhibition

An exhibition by **Kunstmuseum Bern** in collaboration with
the **Community of the Cathedral of Berne**

Duration: 12.4. – 20.7.2014

Opening: Friday, April 11, 2014, 8:30 PM Speeches at the Cathedral of Bern / 7:30 PM Aperitif at the
Kunstmuseum Bern

Curators: Kathleen Bühler, Martin Brauen

Entrance fee: CHF 14.00 / red. CHF 10.00 at the Kunstmuseum Bern (incl. publication), free entry at
the Cathedral of Berne, publication CHF 7.00

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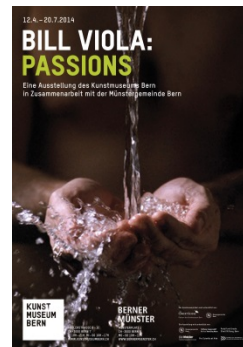
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The Publication



Bill Viola: Passions
Exhibition guide for the
Kunstmuseum Bern and the
Cathedral of Berne. Published
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Kathleen Bühler and Bill Viola.
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The Poster



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CHF 20.00

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Special Events

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN

Vortrag von Bill Viola und Kira Perov zu aktuellen Werken (in Englisch): Samstag, 12. April, 14h, Kino Kunstmuseum, Eintritt CHF 10.00, Reservierung empfohlen, Kino T + 41 31 328 09 99

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 11h: 13. April, 25. Mai, 6.* / 20. Juli, anschliessend auch Führung im Berner Münster, * in Begleitung von Peter Aerschmann (Videokünstler, Bern)

Öffentliche Führungen: Dienstag, 19h: 29. April, 13. Mai, 10.* / 24. Juni, * mit Kathleen Bühler (Kuratorin)

BERNER MÜNSTER

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 13h: 13. April, 25. Mai, 6.* / 20. Juli, vorgängig jeweils Führung im Kunstmuseum Bern, * in Begleitung von Peter Aerschmann (Videokünstler, Bern), CHF 15.00

Öffentliche Führung mit Martin Brauen (Kurator, Ethnologe): Freitag, 4. Juli, 18h30 Anmeldung: T + 41 31 312 04 62, infostelle@bernermuenster.ch, CHF 15.00

In der Karwoche: Wort und Klang über Mittag: «Kreuzwege mit Bill Viola» mit Pfrn. Maja Zimmermann, Pfr. Beat Allemann, Daniel Glaus (Orgel): jeweils 12h30–13h: Montag, 14. April/Dienstag, 15. April/Mittwoch, 16. April

In der Karwoche: Einführung in Bill Violas Werk durch Martin Brauen (Kurator, Ethnologe): Gründonnerstag, 17. April, 19h, anschliessend Liturgische Abendmahlsfeier «Unfassbar» mit Daniel Glaus (Orgel), Pfrn. Maja Zimmermann

In der Karwoche: «Hoffnungsschmerz» mit Oliver Dähler (Choreographie), Dominique Carditto, Pamela Monreale und Alessandroschiattarella (Tanz), Daniel Glaus (Orgel), Pfr. Beat Allemann: Osternachtfeier, Samstag, 19. April, 22h–23h

«Grosser Atem – Bill Violas Menschen- und Gottesbilder»: Vortrag von Dr. Johannes Stückelberger (Kunsthistoriker), mit Improvisationen an der winddynamischen Orgel von Daniel Glaus: Donnerstag, 8. Mai, 19h30, Eintritt frei, Kollekte

Kunst und Religion im Dialog: Sonntag, 1. Juni, 15h–16h Kathleen Bühler (Kuratorin) im Dialog mit Pfr. Beat Allemann, Anmeldung: T + 41 31 312 04 62, infostelle@bernermuenster.ch, CHF 15.00, Treffpunkt bei der Kasse

Vesper (liturgische Feier), mit anschliessender Werkbetrachtung: Samstag, 17h30: 17. Mai, 21. Juni, 5. Juli

KINO KUNSTMUSEUM

Bill Viola: The Eye of the Heart: Dokumentarfilm über und mit Bill Viola Regie, Drehbuch: Mark Kidel GB / Frankreich 2003, 59 Min., E/f, Farbe: Montag, 14. April, 18h30: mit Einführung von Kathleen Bühler (Kuratorin) und Sonntag, 20./ 27. April, 4. Mai, 1. Juni, jeweils 11h30

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