

WHITNEY

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Press Release

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WHITNEY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES FIFTH ANNUAL ANNENBERG LECTURE: *BILL VIOLA IN CONVERSATION WITH ADAM WEINBERG*

The Walter Annenberg Annual Lecture

Tuesday, October 27, 2009, 7 pm

NEW YORK, October 7, 2009 – In honor of the late Walter H. Annenberg, philanthropist, patron of the arts, and former ambassador, the Whitney Museum of American Art established the Walter Annenberg Annual Lecture to advance this country's understanding of its art and culture. In this fifth Annenberg Lecture, Bill Viola will speak about his work in a rare New York conversation with Adam D. Weinberg, the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director. For more than thirty-five years Viola has been creating video works and installations—total environments that envelop the viewer in image and sounds—that employ state-of-the-art technologies and are distinguished by their precision and direct simplicity.

Admission is free but registration is required. Register at whitney.org. Seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Support for this lecture is provided, in part, by Jack and Susan Rudin in honor of Beth Rudin DeWoody, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and by the Museum's Education Committee.

About Bill Viola

In a career that began in the early seventies, Bill Viola (b. 1951, USA) has produced architectural video installations, video films, sound environments, electronic music performances, flat panel pieces, as well as works for television broadcast, concerts, opera, and sacred spaces. With the showing of his works in museums and galleries worldwide,

Viola has been instrumental in the establishment of video as a vital form of contemporary art. Focusing on universal human experiences—birth, death, the unlocking of consciousness—Viola’s works draw upon the language of Eastern and Western art, as well as the spiritual traditions of Zen Buddhism, Islamic Sufism, and Christian mysticism, to render “palpable images of the depth of feeling.”

Viola represented the U.S. in the 46th Venice Biennale in 1995, premiering an ensemble of five new installation works titled *Buried Secrets*. He has exhibited in numerous Whitney Biennials since 1975, and in 1997 the Museum organized *Bill Viola: A 25-Year Survey* that included more than thirty-five installations and videotapes and traveled for two years to six museums in the U.S. and Europe. Viola’s work is represented in the Whitney Museum’s collection with *Five Angels for the Millennium* and *The Greeting*.

Viola is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1989. He holds honorary doctorates from Syracuse University (1995), The School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1997), California Institute of the Arts (2000), and Royal College of Art, London (2004) among others, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2000. In 1998 Viola was invited to be a Scholar at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, and in 2009 received the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts, MIT. In 2006 he was honored as Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Government. He was recently named the XXI Catalonia International Prize recipient for 2009. Bill Viola and Kira Perov, his wife and long-time collaborator, live and work in Long Beach, California.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. Founded in 1930, the Museum is regarded as the preeminent collection of American art and includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O’Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney’s signature show, the Biennial, has become the most important survey of the state of contemporary art in America today. First housed on West 8th Street, the Whitney relocated in 1954 to West 54th Street and in 1966 inaugurated its present home at 945 Madison Avenue, designed by Marcel Breuer. The Whitney is currently moving ahead

with plans to build a second facility, designed by Renzo Piano, located in downtown New York at the entrance to the High Line in the Meatpacking District.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art:

Dan Graham: Beyond	Through October 11, 2009
Georgia O'Keeffe: Abstraction	Through January 17, 2010
A Few Frames: Photography and the Contact Sheet	Through January 3, 2010
Steve Wolfe on Paper	September 30, 2009–November 29, 2009
Roni Horn aka Roni Horn	November 6, 2009–January 24, 2010
Alice Guy Blaché: Cinema Pioneer	November 6, 2009–January 24, 2010

The Whitney Museum is located at 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York City. Museum hours are: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. General admission: \$18. Full-time students and visitors ages 19–25 and 62 & over: \$12. Visitors 18 & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission to the Kaufman Astoria Studios Film & Video Gallery only: \$6. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 6–9 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org