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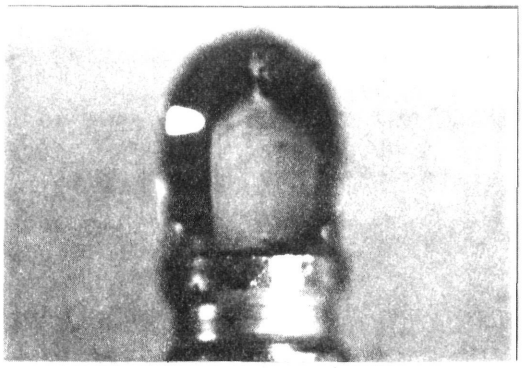
The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

PROJECTS: BILL VIOLA



A video-sound installation by Bill Viola, He Weeps for You, is currently on view at The Museum of Modern Art through April 24 in Gallery 16 on the Museum's second floor. Directed by Barbara London, this exhibition is part of PROJECTS, the ongoing program begun in 1974 to explore new directions in contemporary art.

He Weeps for You "involves the idea of a tuned space, where everything in a room is locked into a single cadence...A copper pipe runs down from the gallery ceiling, terminating in a small valve where a single drop of water is emerging, dripping very slowly and regularly. A video camera, with a special close-up lens, is focused on this drop. The camera is connected to a video projector, which displays the swelling drop of water

of water on a large screen. The drop grows in size, very slowly, until it fills the screen. Suddenly, it falls out of the picture and a low, resonant 'boom' is heard as it lands on an amplified drum. Then, in an endless cycle, a new drop begins to emerge and again fill the screen."

The artist sees this work as having two different levels. First, there is the magnification of the simple phenomenon, amplified both visually and acoustically until it commands the space. Second, the drop of water acts as a lens, which is integrated with the video camera lens optical system. "The image of the space and persons contained inside it can be seen within the drop, as it swells to fill the screen, then falls out of the picture to crash down onto the amplified surface below. The closer a person gets to the video camera and waterpipe, the larger and more distinct their image becomes within the drop."

Born in Flushing, New York in 1951, Bill Viola began working with video as an undergraduate at Syracuse University, where he received his B.F.A. in 1973. After he organized and taught the first video art courses at Syracuse University, from 1974-76 he was technical director of Art/Tapes/22, formerly a video production center in Florence. He has been artist-in-residence at the WNET/Channel 13 TV Lab in 1976, 1977, and 1979. Bill Viola developed the ideas for He Weeps for You during a residency at the Synapse Video Center in Syracuse in Spring 1976. The work was first exhibited at the Kitchen in New York in January 1977, and then six months later at "Documenta 6" in Kassel, West Germany.

This exhibition is made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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For further information, please contact Luisa Kreisberg, Director (212) 956-2648 or Bruce Wolmer (212) 956-7298, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019.