

*Ocean Without a Shore*

Many changes after a decisive transformation, caused by the *technical reproduction*, which Walter Benjamin found to be an irrevocable overwhelming social and cultural rearrangement, form folds, marked not only by repetitiveness and a potential for multiplying, but also by multifarious double productive gestures. One of the many impacts of these changes, which finally made the Benjamin's pre-war perspective fully comprehensible sometime in the 1960s, was a reformulation of aesthetics, which had to deal with many problems concerning the relevance of its categories, rooted in Romanticism and in Kant's philosophy. Let us just claim that what is happening in the realm of exhibitions and performances in recent times compels aesthetics to revise repeatedly its basic suppositions and core hypotheses. However, the problems of 'defining the beauty' and the ways of describing the sensual aspect of artistic objects as related to the subliminal dimensions linked to the *Subject*, somehow paradoxically return through the very same media, which made such categories seem almost obsolete. "In the most sophisticated arenas of electronic spectacle, theatrical performance, and multimedia installation, new media artists frequently endorse a paradoxical return to primitivism, mysticism and spiritualism. Particularly in the digitized arena of electronic installation and performance, artists as divergent in form and vision as Nam June Paik, Reeves, Dawson, and Viola have developed artworks that are often described, sometimes by the artists themselves, as soliciting a unifying, spiritualizing aesthetics in contrast to the shifting terrain of politics and identity" (Murray, 2008: p. 50).

The case of Bill Viola's installation at the same *Venice Biennale 2007*, we already mentioned above, illustrates this point well enough. The artist, who in a video on *You Tube*, in which he himself explains his installation in *Chiesa di San Gallo*, confirms Murray's point on both counts: the technological and, let us say, the metaphysical. In the Viola's narration on his own installation *Ocean Without a Shore* a line of explanation concerning the border between life and death, fragility of human life, human condition and mortality interweaves with another line on the technological and other aspects of making the videos, shown on plasma screens and mounted on three altars in the church. Each screen displays a different slow motion movement of human figures starting in black and white, passing through the water 'curtain' and slowly gaining colour. Saying that he "came up with this idea of the notion of the dead coming back to our world – just temporarily" Viola signals his use of a kind of primitive imaginary of the "liv-