



Image: Bill Viola, *Observance*, 2002, colour high-definition video on plasma display mounted on wall, 120.7 x 72.4 x 10.2 cm

Media Release

A mirror shines at Samstag

Visitors to the Samstag Museum of Art are in for a very special experience, as our autumn season continues with two new major exhibitions opening on 14 May 2010: *Mirror Mirror: Then and Now*, and *Observance*, by famed American artist, Bill Viola.

Long recognised as one of the world's most influential artists working in film and video, **Bill Viola** creates inspired works of great theatrical power that explore themes of human experience, memory and the mystery of existence. In *Observance* (2002), we are shown a group of people silently sharing an experience of profound emotion: however the scene is presented with such originality and compelling force that, we, the viewers, find ourselves participating as sympathetic 'observers' – and unable to contain our own feelings.

Observance is one of a series of works by Viola comprising *The Passions*, which reference religious art of the 15th and 16th centuries depicting medieval devotion and emotion. *Observance* is based upon Albrecht Dürer's *Four Apostles* (1526), from the Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

The Samstag Museum is delighted to also present *Mirror Mirror: Then and Now*, a major exhibition of iconic works that employ mirrors in their fabrication and concepts, and which curator **Dr Ann Stephen** has thoughtfully drawn from a number of international museum and private collections.

Mirror Mirror presents 29 classic mirror pieces from a spectrum of international movements of the 1960s and 1970s – including pop, kinetic, minimal and conceptual art – by major artists of renown, including Shusaku Arakawa, Art & Language, Ian Burn, Hugo Demarco, Richard Hamilton, Joan Jonas, Julio Le Parc, Yoko Ono, Meret Oppenheim, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Eugenia Raskopoulos, Robert Rauschenberg and Robert Smithson. Alongside, are works by leading Australian contemporary artists: Robyn Backen, Christian Capurro, Peter Cripps, Alex Gawronski, Eugenia Raskopoulos, Jacky Redgate Robert Pulie, and also Samstag alumni Mikala Dwyer and Callum Morton.

'Mirrors have played a compelling role in modern art', says Ann Stephen. 'Artists from Manet to van Eyck and Magritte have always been fascinated with mirrors, but it wasn't until the 1960s that mirrors were used by artists as a material', she says.

On **Saturday 15 May 2010 at 3pm**, exhibition curator Dr Ann Stephen will be in conversation with *Mirror Mirror* artists in the Samstag Museum. A substantial education resource developed for Samstag by leading education consultant, John Neylon, is available on unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum. John Neylon will present a special teachers' professional development forum on Saturday 22 May at 3pm. All students, teachers and interested visitors welcome. Bookings 08 8302 0870 or samstagmuseum@unisa.edu.au.

Mirror Mirror is accompanied by a substantial catalogue, produced through the generous assistance of The Gordon Darling Foundation.

Mirror Mirror: Then and Now has been developed by the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane and the University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney, in association with the Samstag Museum of Art.

Exhibition continues until 16 July 2010. Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 11–5pm, Saturday and Sunday 2–5pm.

For further information about *Mirror Mirror: Then and Now* and *Bill Viola: Observance*, contact Erica Green on 08 8302 0870 or visit unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum