



The Guggenheim Museum by Frank Gehry; 1997. Bilbao, Spain

realization concerning the violence of technology, sports, and sexuality in a post-biological age, showing how the body is mapped as pure information, to be located within various networks of authority and domination in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Thus, as the 21st century gets underway, American artists are still working their way through the problems of pluralism and technology as well as the uncertainties of “fixed” social, gendered, or cultural identities. There is an explosion of even more advanced forms of communication as the internet and other digital media become commonplace. There is still also the ambient anxiety associated with the ways in which such technologies will affect our everyday lives. AIDS is still a reality for many Americans. Also, especially after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, American national identity has come under the microscope and has thus increasingly become an issue for American artists. For example, Bill Viola uses digital media for his piece *The Quintet of Remembrance* (2000), which shows three women and two men of different ages and ethnic backgrounds grouped as an intimate and exquisitely colored

Renaissance painting. These people, it could be argued, represent the middle and working classes of the United States at the turn of the 21st century. While the picture seems static, there are imperceptible changes occurring throughout the performance. As the viewer watches these changes, he or she sees a range of emotions, from shock to joy to fear, emerge through the faces and gestures of the group. Each expression thus becomes monumental rather than fleeting or contingent, even though Viola is using a medium which has a limited time frame. The primary appeal of this work thus becomes the entrapment of the viewer as the spectacle painstakingly unfolds. The viewer becomes aware of watching “human emotion” in its performed but surprisingly “raw” state, rather than through the passivity of sitting in a movie theater or at home watching a huge array of images flash across the television screen.

Installation art, photography, painting, sculpture in all its many manifestations and sites, Performance art, Body art, and Video art, although contentious when first introduced into the American art scene, are now accepted as “art”. The last half century has seen a major transformation from the