

Alessandro Nova

## FOREWORD

It is a great pleasure to introduce this volume on *The Announcement: Annunciations and Beyond*, which has been expertly supervised by Hana Gründler and Itay Sapir. In their introduction they illustrate the main lines of the *Fragestellung* that will be addressed in this book. For my part, I was convinced from the very beginning that to investigate representations of the Annunciation in all its implications was not enough. We are not interested in re-writing the history of a well-known iconography, but in investigating what the French call a *dispositif*: therefore, the mechanism of the Announcement more than the Annunciation, even if the great majority of the articles deals indeed with the Annunciation.

I myself would have liked, instead, to write about the Visitation (fig. 1). Above all in its modern “re-incarnation”, so to speak. In my monograph *The Book of the Wind*, published in English in 2011, I have analyzed from another perspective Bill Viola’s celebrated *The Greeting* (part of the series *Buried Secrets* shown at the Venice Biennale in 1995).<sup>1</sup> Yet the main point of that installation – a felt homage to Jacopo Pontormo’s *Visitation* in Carmignano – was the sudden moment of the *peripeteia*, the moment in which one of the women whispers in the ear of her friend and we do not hear her words. The whisper, the sudden (perhaps supernatural?) sound, the movement of the clothes caused by the blowing wind, the change of the light conditions – all this gives cleverly expression to the phenomenon of the Announcement, which is also a prophecy. Unfortunately, this project has been jeopardized by too many other duties, but I hope that these few words can reveal how closely my thoughts are linked to the main goal of this volume, that is to investigate the idea of announcing and announcement – and not only the Annunciation *stricto sensu* – from a broad transhistorical and interdisciplinary perspective.

1 Alessandro Nova, *The Book of the Wind. The Representation of the Invisible*, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2011.



1 Bill Viola, *The Greeting* (video and sound installation), 1995 (Performers: Angela Black, Suzanne Peters, Bonnie Snyder; Photo: Kira Perov)

More than fifteen years ago, I had the great privilege to spend three months at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales* in Paris, following the invitation of Georges Didi-Huberman and of Daniel Arasse. We had a few (for me) memorable conversations in a small *café* near the School, but Daniel was already ill and could not move at ease. I think that all of you have read his magnificent book on the *Annunciation*, and I would like to dedicate this foreword to his beloved memory.