



MARINA
ABRAMOVIĆ
IN RESIDENCE

EDUCATION KIT

KALDOR
PUBLIC
ART
PROJECTS

30

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Marina Abramović, *512 Hours* 2014. Performance, 512 hours duration, Serpentine Gallery, London.
Photograph: Marco Anelli. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives and Serpentine Gallery, London

PROJECT Nº 30

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ:

IN RESIDENCE

We constantly like to be entertained, to get things from outside. We never take time to get in touch with ourselves ... our inner self.¹

Marina Abramović

Kaldor Public Art Project Nº 30, Marina Abramović: In Residence represents the latest development in the four-decade-long career of pioneering performance artist, Marina Abramović. The Project has been developed specifically for Sydney, and follows the innovative *512 Hours*, presented to widespread acclaim at London's Serpentine Gallery in 2014. Marina Abramović will be present at Pier 2/3 for 12 days, conducting audiences through a series of exercises based on four decades of intensive research and practice.

Throughout the Project, Pier 2/3 becomes a space of reflection and transformation for artists and audiences. The downstairs level of the building contains a series of spaces dedicated to the participatory exercises, while the upstairs level houses the unique Australian Artists' Residency Program. In this 24-hour residency a selection of twelve Australian artists live and work at Pier 2/3, developing their own practice under the mentorship of Abramović and actively engaging with the public through talks, workshops, performances and film screenings.

The study and teaching of meditative and ritual practices have long been central to Marina Abramović's work. The artist has designed a series

of exercises, developed in over three decades of conducting Cleaning the House workshops. Aimed initially at artists and performers, and often taking place in remote locations over several days, these workshops were intended to eliminate distractions, training participants in the concentration, self-control and willpower required to endure the rigours of durational performance.

In Project No 30, Abramović invites a wider audience to give their time and energy, and to participate in this open-ended act of exchange. Each exercise in Pier 2/3 is a way of learning by doing, immersing the mind and body in a single task, becoming acutely aware of minute details in the environment, and exploring physical and psychological limits. Learning becomes a physical and mental transformation. These tasks are simple, but they can be arduous; they are slow, repetitive, even boring. To Abramović, the feeling of boredom is crucial. Passing through countless emotional states – from curiosity to fascination, into boredom and irritation, even to the depths of pain or the discovery of inner bliss – it is up to participants to experience and endure each state, to push beyond, and to explore what happens next.

There is a need, a social need, for environments that allow people to stop, breathe, look away from their screens, and contemplate.²

Marina Abramović

PIER 2/3 HICKSON RD, WALSH BAY, SYDNEY
24 JUNE – 5 JULY 2015

THE EXPERIENCE

As visitors enter Pier 2/3, they are requested to deposit personal belongings, such as watches, phones and cameras, and are provided with noise-cancelling headphones, allowing participation without unnecessary distractions.

SLOW WALK
COUNTING RICE
PLATFORM
LOOKING AT COLOUR
MUTUAL GAZE
BEDS

While each task has specific guidelines, there is no set order or timeframe for the experience. Visitors are free to follow these exercises in any order and for any length of time.

SLOW WALK

Walk as slowly as possible.

Starting with your left leg, complete these actions one at a time:

Lift your foot, stretch your leg forward, touch the ground, move.

Repeat with the right leg.

Lifting, lifting, stretching, stretching, touching, moving.³

Walking is among the most fundamental of human movements - learned in infancy, it soon becomes an automatic process, performed without conscious thought or effort. While some of us stroll for pleasure, the idea of walking for its own sake can seem like a luxury in our busy lives, as we hasten towards our destination.

In the slow walk, we not only walk for the sake of walking, but are required to turn our attention to the process itself. Through the simple technique of slowing our pace, we are made aware of each phase of the process, the motion of each part of the body, and the motion of our bodies through space. Transforming an automatic process into a series of individual movements requires a high level of conscious awareness, triggering activity in the frontal lobes of our brains. Recent research in neuroscience, in fact, indicates that walking is able to stimulate new brain growth. Psychiatrist Dr Norman Doidge cites such a case of neurostimulation, in which a patient gained control of their symptoms by effectively rewiring their brain through the simple act of 'conscious walking'.⁴

Slowing our pace, we establish a steady, meditative rhythm. Walking as a meditative practice has its basis in religious traditions such as the Theravāda branch of Buddhism, in which the swing of each leg through the air, followed by the pressure of each foot on the ground serves to reinforce the connection between the self and the environment.⁵

COUNTING RICE

Separate the rice from the lentils.

Keep tally of each on a piece of paper.⁶



Marina Abramović, *512 Hours* 2014. Performance 512 hours duration, Serpentine Gallery, London. Photograph: Marco Anelli. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives and Serpentine Gallery, London

In this task, we are given a pile of grains, and are required to separate rice from lentils, counting each individual, tiny piece as we move it across the table. As in a mindfulness exercise, the task has a simple, repetitive structure, designed to focus our complete attention on the present moment

Repeating a single action until it becomes a kind of ritual, this exercise draws on philosophical and religious traditions, such as Catholic rosary beads or the japa mantra meditation of Tibetan Buddhism. Forms of repetitive practice can also be found in everyday relaxation techniques, such as counting sheep to fall asleep.

This task cannot be rushed. It is the very slowness, steadiness and repetitiveness of the task that requires focus, sets up a quiet rhythm and makes us aware of details. This task has no definitive outcome or goal - there is no prize for counting the most rice. Indeed, the exercise is not about numbers or even counting, but rather the state it activates.

PLATFORM

In everyday lives, we often find ourselves sharing space with complete strangers. It is perhaps characteristic of urban life that we live in close proximity to others, even as we feel isolated from a genuine sense of community. Our usual reaction may be a defensive one – we shift away, avoid eye contact or stare at our smartphones.

In this exercise, Abramović invites her audience to step up onto a series of large wooden platforms that can be placed together in different configurations. We might find ourselves alone, or in a group of strangers. Without everyday distractions, we are required to focus complete attention on the simple task of standing together and on our communal presence.

With these platforms, Abramović has created not a sculptural object, but a prop or framework for the exercise. While only a small height off the ground, the elevated platforms articulate a separate yet communal space. As we step up, we are conscious of moving from one space to another, committing ourselves to a shared place and a shared task, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and opening ourselves to the potential transfer of energy.

LOOKING AT COLOUR

This task draws from the practice of fixed-gaze meditation, in which we look intently at a single point, such as the full moon or a candle flame. In traditional yoga practices, the cultivation of a steady gaze is said to clear the eyes and mind, filtering out distractions, and improving perception, concentration and self-awareness.

Here, we focus our gaze on a single square of colour. The effect of colour on the human brain has been the subject of countless studies. Since colour is not a material object, but a complex interaction between wavelengths of light and photoreceptors in the eye, it could be argued that colour exists only in the brain.⁷ Though it remains unclear exactly how and why we see colour, research shows that it has powerful effects on our mental and physical function.

Colour has long been a central preoccupation of artists. Early twentieth-century artist Wassily Kandinsky was dedicated to exploring the connection between colour, psychology and spirituality, writing, 'Colour is a power which directly influences the soul.'⁸ More recently, John Baldessari made a playful reference to the effects of colour in *Thirteen Colourful Inside Jobs*, presented

as part of Kaldor Public Art Project 27: *13 Rooms* (2013), in which a painter continuously repainted a single room in different colours.

In this task, the chosen hue will have a distinct impact on the individual experience. We each have favourite colours. We are each aware of the cultural values attached to colour – such as the association of red with energy, passion and action. The primary colours of red, yellow and blue, in particular, may remind us of the childhood joy of mixing paints to create new hues. Countless moods, memories and associations will be distilled through the simple act of stopping and looking at colour.

MUTUAL GAZE

*Sitting on opposite chairs, look at each other. Motionless.*⁹

This exercise requires us to look directly into the eyes of another person, possibly a complete stranger. A simple enough task, it may be harder than it seems. Many of us struggle to meet a direct gaze, through fear of appearing rude, aggressive, vulnerable or even flirtatious.

The idea of the gaze has been much theorised in western art history. In simple terms, as we look at a painting, we occupy the same viewpoint as the artist. The painting thus sets up a relationship between artist, viewer and subject, in which the subject – whether a human figure or a vase of flowers – is defined by 'being looked at'. When we consider historical representations of idealised female bodies by male artists, the relationship becomes more complicated, and fraught with issues of gender politics and power. While the mutual gaze exercise relates to these ongoing debates, it draws equally from ancient Hindu, Buddhist and Sufi traditions and Abramović's fundamental belief in the transfer of energy through the focused gaze.

In Abramović's recent experiment with Dr Suzanne Dikker, *Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze*, the mutual gaze was shown to create moments of neural synchrony between the brainwaves of two participants.¹⁰ Through an extended period of looking directly into the eyes of another, we may find ourselves literally on the same wavelength. The mutual gaze allows us to be completely attentive to the present moment, and to the presence of another. We are both seeing and being seen.

BEDS

Many of us are understandably reluctant to sleep in a public space, for fear of appearing lazy or vulnerable. In an art exhibition, particularly, our expectation is that we should remain alert, constantly processing external stimuli. Finding ourselves in the presence of a sleeping person can be disarmingly intimate. Artworks which bring this intimacy into the public space of the exhibition, such as Sam Taylor-Johnson's *David* (2004), a video portrait of footballer David Beckham, provoke us to question the relationship between our public and private lives.

This exercise invites us to switch off, lie back and embrace the unfamiliar sensations of doing nothing. Reframing our intimate bedtime rituals in a communal space, the exercise allows us to reconsider the rhythms of our minds and bodies. Formal structures of time – our class schedules or appointments, for example – do not always accord with our circadian rhythms or 'body clocks'. The relationship between stimulating activity and rest is one that we often struggle to hold in balance.

While resting might be equated with doing nothing, modern physics tells us that that an immobile particle contains a measurable quantity of 'rest energy'. As we sleep, our brains are also far from inactive, as they perform the vital work of processing and storing information. Throughout her career, Abramović has consistently explored the concept of immateriality and the transfer of energy between artist and audience. In this exercise, she invites us to do nothing but rest and reflect on the very idea of 'nothingness'.

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Marina Abramović, *512 Hours* 2014 performance. 512 hours duration, Serpentine Gallery, London. Photograph: Marco Anelli. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives and Serpentine Gallery, London

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ:

ARTIST'S PRACTICE



Photograph: Rahi Rezvani

*Vulnerability is important. It means we are completely alive and that is an extremely important space. This is for me the space from which my work generates.*¹¹

Marina Abramović

Marina Abramović (born Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, 1946) has pioneered performance as an art form since the 1970s and has become one of the most celebrated and iconic artists of our time. Abramović was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale, and was listed as one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people of 2014. She has presented solo exhibitions at leading institutions around the world and her work has also been included in many large-scale international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale (1976 and 1997) and dOCUMENTA 6, 7 and 9, Kassel, Germany (1977, 1982 and 1992).

She was the subject of *The Artist is Present*, a major retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2010, and a feature-length documentary film about this exhibition, *Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present*, premiered in 2012 at the Sundance Film Festival. In 2011, Abramović was the subject of a major retrospective at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, and participated in visionary director Robert Wilson's

The Life and Death of Marina Abramović, the critically acclaimed re-imagination of Abramović's biography.

Abramović is currently developing MAI (Marina Abramović Institute) as an incubator for education and multidisciplinary collaboration. MAI explores, supports, and presents performance, virtually as well as partnering with venues. MAI encourages collaboration between the arts, science, and the humanities. In 2015, Abramović curated MAI's most ambitious undertaking to date, *Terra Comunal* at SESC Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil, followed by a presentation at Argentina's inaugural Performance Biennale at UNSAM's Centre for Experimental Art, Buenos Aires.

The body has always been both subject and medium for Abramović, exploring her physical and mental limits in works that ritualise the actions of everyday life. Over a career spanning four decades, she has withstood pain, exhaustion and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation.

Her biography reveals a strict upbringing, within a family of Orthodox Church leaders, Partisan soldiers and elite Communist Party officials, who instilled values of heroism, self-sacrifice and discipline. Abramović describes her parents as decorated war heroes who slept with pistols on their bedside tables and argued violently until their eventual divorce. Her mother, in particular – who boasted of never having screamed, even during childbirth – exerted military-style control over the family home. These oft-repeated childhood stories form the basis of a kind of personal mythology for Abramović, whose work consistently blurs the boundaries between her private and public personae.¹²

Abramović began working with performance in the early 1970s, exploring her own bodily limits and her interaction with the audience. In Socialist Yugoslavia, with the Student Cultural Center of Belgrade as a hub of activity, the emerging medium of performance art offered the lure of immediacy, danger and freedom.¹³ Drawing from her militaristic heritage, Abramović's early work revolved around instruction and discipline, and the artist proved uncompromising in her adherence to self-imposed rules, despite the personal risks. As she later admitted, 'I was ready to die for these ideas. I had that kind of strong passion.'¹⁴ In the early *Rhythm* series, 1973–75, she carried out difficult, sometimes violent, actions and gestures that tested the thresholds of her own body and the capabilities and limitations of the audience as a witness.

In *Rhythm 0* (1974), Abramović placed 72 objects on a table - including a rose, a feather, scissors, a gun and a bullet - and instructed the audience to use them on her body as desired. While Abramović



Marina Abramović, *Rhythm 0* 1974. Performance 6 hours duration, Studio Morra, Naples. Courtesy the Marina Abramović Archives

remained motionless, the actions of the audience became increasingly invasive, culminating in one participant pointing the loaded gun at the artist's head. From this experience, Abramović concluded that 'if you leave it up to the audience, they can kill you'.¹⁵ In relinquishing control, Abramović effectively transformed the behaviour of the audience and their collective relationship to the artist into the material for her work.

Rhythm 5 (1974) saw Abramović again risking death, when lying in the centre of a burning five-pointed star - the international symbol of Communism. The artist passed out due to lack of oxygen, and had to be dragged to safety by an audience member. The work recalled acts of martyrdom by self-immolation, which had recently drawn the world's shocked attention to political repression in Vietnam and Czechoslovakia. For Abramović herself, having come so close to death, the experience revealed that her work was above all concerned with the exploration of limits. The *Rhythm* series also points to a preoccupation with time, as actions were repeated with ritualistic intensity, in a test of physical and mental endurance. In this early work, Abramović revealed that it is often danger that makes us aware of the contingent nature of the present moment, as we teeter on the edge between one state of being and another.

Performing these radical works during the evening, Abramović remained subject to her mother's strict 10pm curfew. After a violent attack by her mother,



Marina Abramović and Ulay, *Rest Energy* 1980. Performance, 4 minutes 10 seconds duration, Rosc'80, Dublin. Courtesy the Marina Abramović Archives

who was infuriated by news of her daughter's activities, the 29-year-old Abramović finally fled Belgrade. While in Amsterdam, she met German performance artist Frank Uwe Laysiepen, known as Ulay, and they embarked on an intense 13-year-long personal and artistic partnership. Between 1975 and 1988, the couple collaborated on performance works, often living together in a small van, as they travelled across Europe and internationally. Through acts of repetition and endurance, their shared works negotiated duality and togetherness, gender roles and the polarity of male and female bodies. In *Relation in Space* (58 minutes), performed at the 1976 Venice Biennale, the couple repeatedly walked towards each other, gradually increasing in speed and force as they slammed into each other's naked bodies. *Breathing In, Breathing Out* (19 minutes, 1977) saw the couple locked into a kiss, exchanging breaths until they both passed out from inhaling carbon dioxide. Their relationship of interdependence, while sustaining them, also pushed them to their mental and physical limits. Investigating notions of trust and vulnerability, the couple performed *Rest Energy* (4 minutes, 1980), in which Ulay aimed a bow and arrow at Abramović's heart, with only the weight of their bodies keeping the weapon in tension.

Australia is so much a part of me. It's the beginning of all my best work. You know it was your Australian desert that transformed me? ¹⁶

Marina Abramović



Marina Abramovic (Yugoslavia 30 Nov 1946)
Ulay (Germany 30 Nov 1943).
Gold found by the artists, from the series *Nightsea crossing* 1981-1986. Cibachrome photograph 101 x 102 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales. Purchased 1981. Photo: AGNSW © Marina Abramovic & Ulay, 1981/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney. Photograph: John Lethbridge 21.1.1981.2



Marina Abramovic (Yugoslavia 30 Nov 1946)
Ulay (Germany 30 Nov 1943).
Gold found by the artists, from the series *Nightsea crossing* 1981-1986. Cibachrome photograph 101 x 102 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales. Purchased 1981. Photograph: AGNSW © Marina Abramovic & Ulay, 1981/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney. Photograph: John Lethbridge 21.1.1981.3



Marina Abramovic (Yugoslavia 30 Nov 1946) Ulay (Germany 30 Nov 1943) *Gold found by the artists*, from the series *Nightsea crossing* 1981-1986. Cibachrome photograph. 16 photographs: each 23.5 x 34.5 cm image. Art Gallery of New South Wales. Purchased 1981. Photo: AGNSW © Marina Abramovic & Ulay, 1981/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney. Photograph: John Lethbridge 211.1981.5a-p

These shared works also confronted and challenged the audience's limits. *Imponderabilia* (1977), for example, in which Abramović and Ulay stood naked, facing one another in a single doorway at the entrance to a gallery, required each audience member to negotiate the space between these two naked bodies, choosing to face either the male or female artist. In this way, the audience could not remain neutral or distant, but was drawn into the intimate space of the relationship.

During their partnership, Abramović and Ulay spent a period of several months in Australia - an experience later described by Abramović as a turning point in her practice. Invited by Director Nick Waterlow to appear at the 3rd Biennale of Sydney in 1979, the pair later journeyed across the Western Desert, living in Aboriginal communities throughout the region. What drew Abramović to the nomadic culture of the Western Desert peoples was the powerful tradition of ceremonial practices and the freedom from attachment to material possessions.¹⁷ After spending hours a day in stillness and meditation within the expanse and searing heat of the desert, Abramović described a sense of mental transcendence, a heightening of perception, and a reconnection with her body and with the environment.

From this experience, Abramović and Ulay developed their seminal series *Nightsea Crossing* (1981-86), in which the pair sat opposite each other at a large table, gazing into each other's eyes, in silence and stillness, without breaks, for seven

hours a day. It was first presented as *Gold found by the artists* (1981) over 16 consecutive days at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, followed by performances throughout Europe. In 1983, the work was performed in Amsterdam as *Nightsea Crossing/Conjunction*, in collaboration with Pintupi elder and founding Papunya Tula artist Charlie Tjaruru Tjungurrayi, and Tibetan lama Ngawang Soepa Lueyar. Rather than a single 'event', the performance explores the idea of 'presence' and the possibility of transferring energy through mutual gaze. The *Nightsea Crossing* series would later form the basis of Abramović's most renowned long-duration performance, *The Artist is Present*.

In 1988, Abramović and Ulay undertook their final collaboration and shared feat of endurance, *The Lovers: The Great Wall Walk* (1988). With Abramović commencing at the Yellow Sea, and Ulay at the Gobi Desert, the pair walked towards each other for 90 days along the Great Wall of China, before finally meeting in the middle. The epic 2500km journey, intended to culminate in their marriage, instead marked the end of their decade-long partnership.

Returning to a solo career, Abramović continued to pursue new terrain with performances that explored her biography and the history and mythology of the Balkans. In 1997, she was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale for the controversial *Balkan Baroque*, in which the artist relentlessly scrubbed 2.5 tons of bloodied cattle bones over a period of four days, her pain and exhaustion clearly apparent. Recalling Orthodox Catholic traditions of washing

exhumed bones, and the representations of agony, shame and purification found in Baroque painting, the work resonated powerfully with the recent history of bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia.

Continuing her exploration of the mutual gaze, Abramović presented *The House with the Ocean View* at the Sean Kelly Gallery in 2002. Living and fasting within the gallery for 12 days, sleeping and showering in full view, and silently maintaining eye contact for extended periods, Abramović opened the intimate space of her life to audiences. Taking place in New York in the months after September 11, the work found an audience thirsty for human connection and healing. Describing the unfolding of the work, Abramović stated,

*The relation to the audience is the essence of performance. In my case the need to be completely open and vulnerable, to give everything I can, 100 per cent, is extremely strong... People would come like drunks – instead of a shot of vodka they came for a shot of this connection with the eyes.*¹⁸

The Artist is Present, a major 2010 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, saw Abramović complete her longest performance to date. For 736 hours, she remained silently seated at a table, across from which visitors took up an empty seat, one at a time, to meet the artist's direct gaze. Reflecting her growing concern with immaterial art and the transfer of energy between artist and audience, the work was an unprecedented success. Record crowds flocked to the exhibition, while more than 1500 people took the opportunity to sit with the artist. Australian novelist Heather Rose, writing on her experience of sitting with Abramović on four occasions, described a sense of ritual, and of the artist's harnessing of suffering and endurance for her audiences.¹⁹



Marina Abramović, *Balkan Baroque* 1997. Performance and video installation, Venice Biennale. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives



Marina Abramović, *The Artist is Present* 2010 performance, 736 hours duration. Museum of Modern Art, New York. Photograph: Marco Anelli. Courtesy the Marina Abramović Archives

*The state of mind was essential for me in the moment of performing. That fragile passage between one reality and another, when you take a step towards your own mental and physical construction. In my extensive trips into other cultures, I found different ways of achieving that conditioning... At this particular point in my life, I feel that I can transmit my knowledge.*²⁰

Marina Abramović

The role of the artist in Abramović's work has parallels with ancient traditions, in which the figure of the shaman or mystic performs sacrificial rituals on behalf of others, and is informed by Abramović's decades of travel, research and intensive self-reflection. Sharing and teaching these ideas have always been an extension of the artist's practice, and since 1978, Abramović has developed exercises for students and performers intended to teach endurance, concentration, perception, self-control and the confrontation of mental and physical limits. These exercises now form the basis for works that extend the idea of participation to create a unique, long-duration experience in which the audience becomes both performer and protagonist, observer and observed.

In 2014, Abramović presented *512 Hours* at the Serpentine Galleries, London. Using props to facilitate her engagement with the audience, Abramović remained on the gallery floor, silently guiding audiences through a series of exercises. Documenting their experiences, audiences wrote overwhelmingly of a sense of transformation and reconnection with the present moment.²¹

Marina Abramović: In Residence marks a further progression of this radical new approach to performance. Abramović invites audiences to give their time and energy, to participate in an immaterial act of exchange, and to investigate their own vulnerability and limits. With the artist as 'conductor' in the Project space at Pier 2/3, it is the audience who embarks on their own physical and emotional journey.

My function in this new kind of performance situation is to show you, ... what you can do for yourself. I wanted to make this big change because I understood that actually you can't get any experience by me doing it for you... So I'm completely shifting the paradigm, changing the rules.

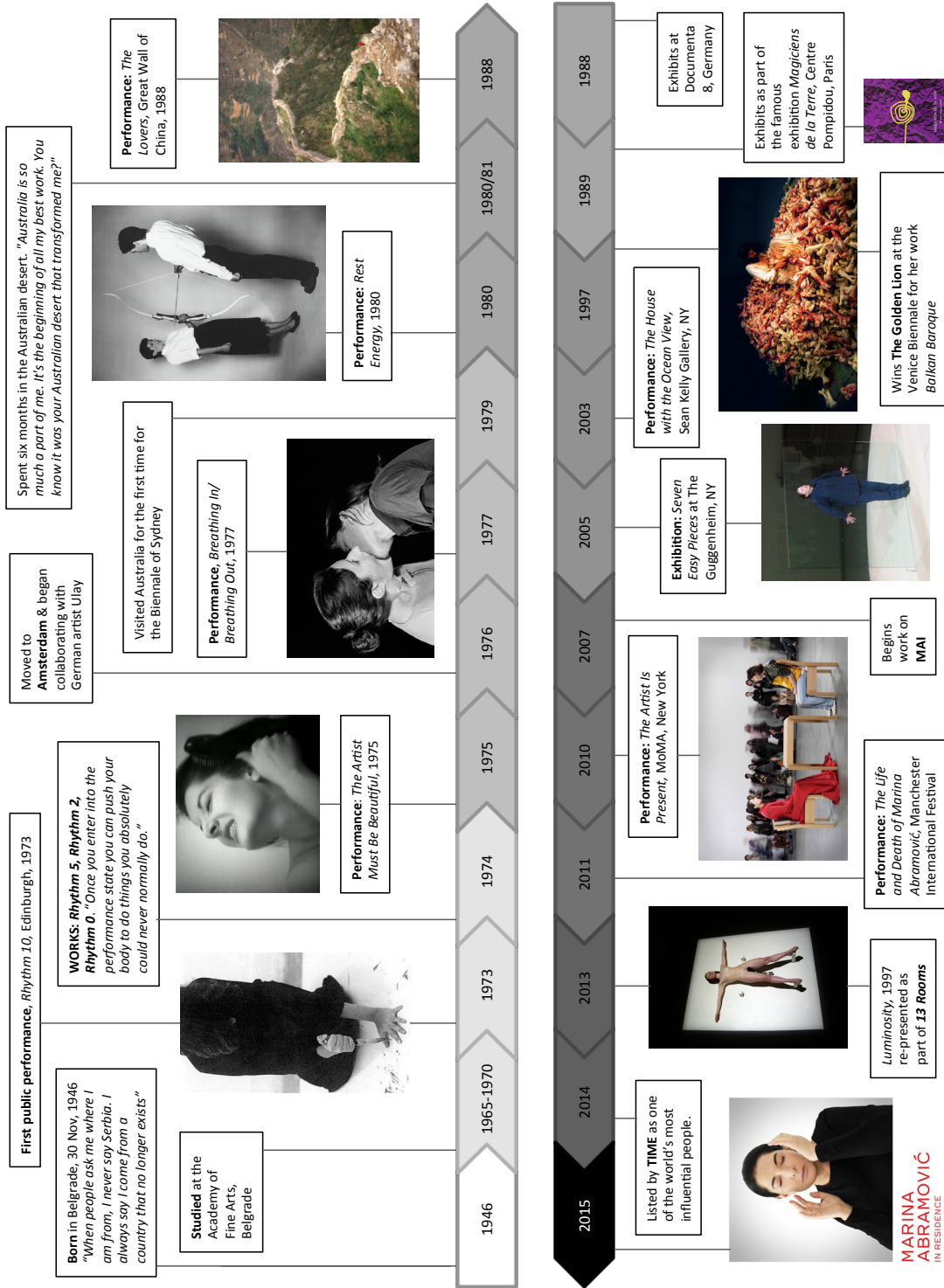
Marina Abramović



Marina Abramović, *512 Hours* 2014. Performance, 512 hours duration, Serpentine Gallery, London. Photograph: Marco Anelli. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives and Serpentine Gallery, London

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MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ: TIMELINE



HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

IMMATERIALITY AND DURATION IN VISUAL ART

*We are living in a difficult period where time is worth more and more because we have less and less of it. Long duration performance has the power to create mental and physical transformation for the performer as well as for the viewer. For this reason, I would like to give the public the possibility to experience and reflect upon emptiness, time, space, luminosity, and void. During this experience, I hope that the observer and the observed will connect with themselves and with the present - the elusive moment of the here and now.*²²

Marina Abramović

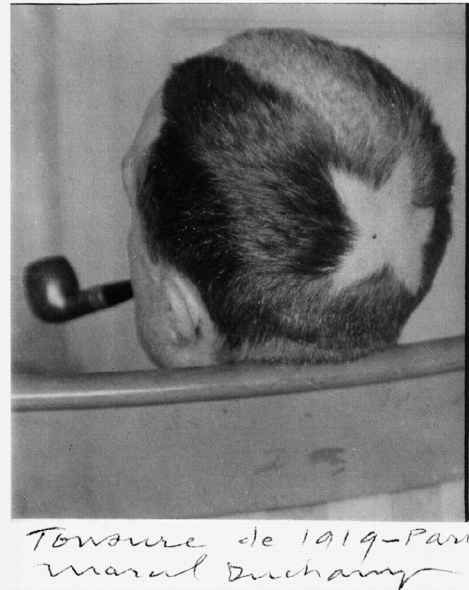
*Form is emptiness.
Emptiness is form.*²³

Buddhist proverb

While the idea of making art without producing any kind of object might seem illogical – or indeed impossible – the question of ‘immateriality’, or the absence of material objects, is a recurrent theme in contemporary artistic practice and theory. In recent decades, we have witnessed a shift away from the production and display of objects towards ideas of process, openness, transformation and participation. ‘Immateriality’ is not a genre or movement in itself – just as there is no specific ‘material art’ – but encompasses practices as diverse as performance, body art, sound, installation, site-specific art, and participatory and community projects, and closely relates to developments in digital and social media, data imaging, neuroscience and psychology.

Broadly speaking, ‘immateriality’ need not be taken literally to mean absolute ‘nothingness’, but represents an ongoing concern among artists and writers to expand the definition of the art ‘object’. Immaterial practices often investigate concepts of space – particularly, the idea that space is not neutral, but is socially produced and charged with historical and cultural meaning. In shifting attention away from the material, and emphasising the immaterial aspects of art, such as the artistic ‘concept’ or ‘action’, we become aware of complex relationships – between artist and audience, between self and environment, between mind and body, between formal structures and individual perceptions of time.

While such discussions are recent, there are historical precursors for these works dating back to ancient times. From shamanistic rituals and icon paintings, to the soaring spires and domes of cathedrals, we have sought to transcend the physical limitations of the material world. Within Eastern and Western religions, there are philosophical traditions of retreat from the material world, often involving long periods of fasting and isolation, in a search for spiritual enlightenment. Throughout the modern era, the ‘avant-garde’ has been characterised by a rejection of conventional material forms, often aiming towards the radical transformation of social relationships.



Marcel Duchamp, *Tonsure* 1919 / 1921. Photograph: Man Ray.
Source: <http://oaj.oxfordjournals.org/content/30/2/289/F1.expansion>

MARCEL DUCHAMP

Marcel Duchamp is often cited as a key figure in the development of conceptual art, in which the artistic concept takes priority over the production of a material object. In the famously controversial *Fountain* (1917), Duchamp submitted a standard men's urinal for exhibition. Its significance lies in expanding our understanding of what an artistic object might be - defining the 'readymade' as art through the process of selection, the context of exhibition in a gallery space, and Duchamp's canny use of photographic documentation. Duchamp also experimented with transforming his body into an artistic object, shaving a star into his hair as a private performance staged for the camera. Adopting different identities, such as R. Mutt and Rose Sélavy, his female alter ego, he blurred the boundaries between art and everyday life.

DADA

Emerging in the wake of World War I in Zurich, before quickly spreading to Berlin and Paris, Dada was defined as an attitude, rather than a specific style or technique. Through wide-ranging practices in literature, music, art and performance, the Dadaists shared a rejection of reason and logic, rebelling against the bourgeois and capitalist ideologies that were seen as the cause of the war. The Cabaret Voltaire nightclub, founded by Tristan Tzara and Hugo Ball, staged controversial performances, during which outraged audiences

often threw items at the performers. In Paris, the Dada Season of 1921 was a series of participatory events, including performances, tours and mock trials, designed to agitate the public. While Dada artists created objects - such as collages and pamphlets, often cheaply produced or incorporating found items - these were considered secondary to the aim of inciting shock and outrage. Representing the immaterial 'spirit' of Dada has proved a challenge for historians and curators. Some decades later, artist Max Ernst described an exhibition on Dada as 'like trying to capture the violence of an explosion by presenting the shrapnel.'²⁴⁵



Tristan Tzara, *Le coeur à gaz* (The Gas Heart) 1923, performance, Théâtre Michel, Paris. Source: <http://les-sources-du-nil.tumblr.com/post/411038354133/scene-from-le-coeur-a-gaz-the-gas-heart-by>

BAUHAUS

Opening in Germany in 1919, the Bauhaus school was renowned for its pioneering interdisciplinary approach to art and design. Incorporating political and spiritual aims, the Bauhaus sought unity between the immaterial world of ideas and the material world of built form. As such, the Bauhaus manifesto (1919) applied theories and techniques across numerous disciplines, from architecture and furniture to film and performance. Along with a strong emphasis on artisanship, the school encouraged experimentations with space, sound, light and colour, as in László Moholy-Nagy's kinetic sculpture *Light-Space Modulator* (1922-1930). The relationship between art and performance was a preoccupation of the school, with significant focus on the staging and costuming of their elaborate parties and theatre evenings. For the Bauhaus, which eventually closed in 1932, these experimental events were a means of working towards the 'total art work'.

It is interesting to note that Marina Abramović has referred to her planned Institute as 'something like a new Bauhaus' in its aim to foster collaborations between art, science, spirituality and technology.²⁵

HAPPENINGS

In the early 1960s, the term 'Happening' was often used to refer to experimental artistic events. Broadly speaking, 'Happenings' of this time were created in response to their environment, involved audience participation, and were extremely difficult to reproduce. Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959) is often cited as the first example of a Happening. Kaprow actively involved the audience as participants, mailing guests in advance of the event with various materials they could use to contribute to the work. Despite calls for clarification, no formal Happening group was ever formed, and no manifesto or collections were published. Artists such as Kaprow, Jean-Jacques Lebel, Adrian Henri, Yoko Ono, Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik were early exponents of the Happening model.

Throughout his brief career, Yves Klein was preoccupied with the idea of the 'void' and the quest for immateriality. In his celebrated monochrome paintings and development of the colour International Klein Blue, he attempted to represent the concept of infinity. Klein also created ephemeral events and performances, such as *The Void* (1958), in which he exhibited an empty gallery space, and *Zones of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility* (1959-62), in which he exchanged empty space throughout Paris for pure gold. His photograph *Leap Into the Void* (1960) depicts the artist hurling himself into the space of an everyday Parisian street. While clearly a 'fake', created by splicing together two separate photographs, the image raises intriguing questions on how we might represent immaterial concepts and live events.

THE SITUATIONIST INTERNATIONAL

Throughout the 1960s, many European artists were exploring questions of immateriality, often inspired by the Situationist International. The Situationists themselves were directly influenced by Dada practices, particularly their excursions and nocturnal strolls. These actions, called *dérives*, served as a means for Situationists to explore the 'psychogeography' of their environments – the impact of urban surroundings on the emotion and behaviour of individuals. The Situationist International largely represented a move away from visual art, advocating the suppression of art objects in favour of 'art as life', a series of actions intended to critique what they perceived as the 'commodification of existence'.²⁶ Despite being made up of writers, political activists and architects, the group was of significant influence in visual and performance art. Situationist International founder Guy Debord's book *The Society of the Spectacle*, remains one of the most recurrent theoretical references in participatory art today.²⁷



Yves Klein, *Leap Into the Void* 1960. Photograph: Harry Shunk and Janos Kender <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/yves-klein-at-the-hirshhorn-it-looks-so-easy-134279678/>



Joseph Beuys, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, 1965. Performance, Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf.

FLUXUS

Fluxus (from the Latin word, meaning ‘to flow’) was an international network of artists, composers and designers which emphasised the importance of process, action, openness and participation. Working through the 1960s and 1970s, at the intersection of different media and disciplines, and with a strong anti-commercial, ‘anti-art’ philosophy, Fluxus artists created works that challenged ideas of artistic convention and professionalism. Many seminal artists, including Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman and Carolee Schneemann were involved with the group. Verbal language, as a way of transmitting ideas without conventional art objects, was a central component of the work of this era, as in Yoko Ono’s written *Instructions for Paintings* (1962). Joseph Beuys, who famously claimed that everyone is an artist, conducted marathon debating sessions at DOCUMENTA 5 (1972), challenging conventional artistic formats, and working towards his idea of ‘social sculpture’.

CONCEPTUAL ART

The 1960s and 1970s saw an explosion of interest in immateriality, as artists throughout the USA, Central America and Europe sought to reject convention, and particularly the status of art as a luxury commodity. In response to social and political upheaval, and the influence of Duchamp, Dada, Fluxus and Happenings, conceptual art emerged as an attempt to emphasise artistic concepts over physical objects. Writer and curator Lucy Lippard was among the first to define conceptual art as ‘work in which the idea is paramount and the material form is secondary, lightweight, ephemeral, cheap, unpretentious and/or “dematerialized”’.²⁸ An artistic position or worldview, rather than a defined movement, conceptualism is associated with such artists as Sol LeWitt, John Baldessari, Lawrence Weiner, Piero Manzoni, Eva Hesse, Joseph Kosuth and the Rosario group. As with Fluxus, many works centred on language and information systems. Some took the form of written instructions intended to result in an object, as in Sol LeWitt’s *Wall Drawings*. In some cases, the question of how – or, indeed, whether – the work materialised was left to the audience, as in Lawrence Weiner’s declaration that ‘The piece need not be built’.²⁹ Lippard identified a distinct yet overlapping concern with ‘art as action’. In these ephemeral works, physical matter was transformed into energy – occasionally through acts of destruction, as in John Baldessari’s 1970 *Cremation Project*, in which he systematically burnt his earlier work of 1953–1966.

The influence of the conceptual artists of the 1960s and 1970s has been profound and far-reaching. Such practices directly inspired the neo-conceptualists, or Young British Artists, of the 1990s and 2000s, in such works as Turner Prize-winning artist Martin Creed’s *Work No. 227: The lights going on and off* (2001), which featured an empty room with a flashing light bulb. It might be argued that most conceptual art is not truly immaterial, as it relies on material support, with many ‘ephemeral’ objects of the era now valued as historical artefacts.³⁰ However, the significance of conceptualism lies in expanding our definition of the art object. As Lippard asserts, ‘Conceptualists indicated that the most exciting “art” might still be buried in social energies not yet recognised as art... These energies are still out there, waiting for artists to plug into them, potential fuel for the expansion of what “art” can mean.’³¹

PARTICIPATORY ART

Such 'social energies' are integral to the creation and development of participatory works - sometimes called 'relational art' or 'social practice'. Curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud coined the term 'relational aesthetics', which he defined as, 'A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.'³² Rather than focusing on a material object, the artist creates a social environment in which people participate in a shared activity. Often requiring the audience to work together as a community, relational art can serve to reconnect people with their surroundings, and with each other.

One of the most elaborate participatory works to demonstrate this idea is Jeremy Deller's *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), in which more than 800 people re-created a historic clash between striking miners and police in South Yorkshire, including strikers and police from the original event. In such works, the artist does not act as the singular creator or 'author', but rather as an intermediary or facilitator for the audience, who are actively involved as collaborators or 'co-authors' of the work.

As participatory work becomes mainstream practice, it raises questions on how we preserve and re-present art. Due to the work's ephemeral nature, most artists and curators rely on material documentation, such as photography and video. One notable exception is Tino Sehgal, who in an attempt to create art without material objects of any kind has famously banned all physical documentation of his work. He constructs interpersonal encounters through dance, voice and movement, often taking place in conventional museum spaces, such as *This is so contemporary* (2005), presented as Kaldor Public Art Project 29 at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2014, and *These associations* at Tate Modern, London, in 2012. Without documentation, there is no artefact which can be conserved in a museum. Relying on interpersonal relationships and verbal transmission, Sehgal's works are effectively structured around the immaterial concepts of time, memory and physical presence.

DURATIONAL ART

From the enduring artefacts of the ancient world to the fleeting encounters of Sehgal's constructed 'situations', all art works exist within a specific relationship to time. Performance, film and video, in particular, are said to occupy a given 'duration', or running time. However, since the 1960s and 1970s, we have seen the emergence of art practices that push the limits of duration - and endurance - to the extreme. By emphasising the passage of time within the work, and the experience of time for the audience, these works effectively use 'duration' as a material, raising questions on how we structure and perceive time, and on the physical limitations of perception and the body.

In his influential writings on duration, French philosopher Henri Bergson noted that 'no two moments are identical in a conscious being'.³³ To Bergson, our experience of time is not linear, but fluid and mobile, and cannot therefore be represented in an immobile image.³⁴

Durational art encompasses a set of practices across live art, performance, film, video, installation and sound. Using duration as a structuring device, from John Cage's *4'33'* (1952, discussed below) to Tehching Hsieh's *One-Year Performance* series (1978 to 1986) and Marina Abramović's *512 Hours* (2014), durational works often focus on a physical activity, undertaken for a fixed time period, frequently suggesting a tension between our formal measurements of time and the unstable rhythms of our bodies.³⁵ Many works are defined by their extreme durations - taking place over several months or even years - such that they cannot be experienced in their entirety by a single viewer or participant. In opposition to our society's increasing demands for instant communication, these works foreground slowness and attentiveness to the present moment.

NOTE DE L'AUTEUR:
Pour se jouer 840 fois de suite ce motif, il sera bon de se préparer au préalable, et dans le plus grand silence, par des immobilités sérieuses.

♣ Très lent



♣ A ce signe il sera d'usage de présenter le thème de la Basse

THÈME



Erik Satie. *Vexations* (c. 1893). Piano sheet. Creative Commons <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode>



Tehching Hsieh *One Year Performance* 1980-1981, New York. Waiting to Punch the Clock. Photograph by: Cheng Weikuong
 © 1981 Tehching Hsieh. Courtesy the artist and Sean Kelly Gallery

In its concern with the structure and representation of time, much durational art draws from musical convention, particularly concepts of time signature, repetition and re-performance. One of the earliest 20th century examples of long-duration work is John Cage's 1963 performance of Erik Satie's piano composition, *Vexations* (1893). Cage is best known for the infamous 4'33" (1952), during which he sat silently at a piano for 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence, thus turning the audience's awareness to the noises in their environment. In the case of *Vexations*, Cage willingly embraced Satie's direction to play the difficult work 840 times in succession. With a running time of around 18 hours, *Vexations* is a marathon event for the relay team of pianists, as well as for the audience. Significantly, the composer suggests that performers physically prepare for the event, through immersion in complete silence and stillness. Committed listeners describe varying stages of endurance, through fascination into bored restlessness, then agony, followed by a state of tranquility - finally resulting in a sense of transformation and reconnection with the everyday world.³⁶

Around the same time, Andy Warhol was experimenting with ideas of duration and perception through film. Presented in 'real time', Warhol's films consist of a single, unmoving camera shot, focused on a single object, such as his sleeping boyfriend in *Sleep* (5hr, 21min, 1963)

and the Empire State Building in *Empire* (7hr, 1964). The notion of 'real time' or 'real duration' - in which the time depicted on screen is the actual time experienced by the viewer - draws attention to the minute shifts in our perception and our relationship to time itself.

In exploring time and duration, many artists have borrowed from film, and particularly the conventions of Hollywood cinema. In *24-Hour Psycho* (1993), Douglas Gordon re-plays Alfred Hitchcock's cult thriller *Psycho* (1960), frame by frame, with some of the most famous sequences in film history, to extend the duration to a total of 24 hours. Similarly, Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010) is a 24-hour video montage, comprising several thousand scenes from existing films. With each scene referring to a specific time of day, through dialogue or the image of a clock, the video is synchronised to 'real time' over a screening period of 24 hours. Danish artist group Superflex pushed filmmaking to its outer limits in *Modern Times Forever* (2011), documenting the slow decay of a building over a total duration of 10 days.

Durational performance is often characterised by testing the physical and psychological limits of artists and audience. In his series of performances, Taiwanese artist Tehching Hsieh imposed strict limitations on his everyday experience of time. During the first of his works entitled *One Year Performance* (1978-79), the artist spent a year

voluntarily locked in a tiny cage. In his second such performance, Hsieh again lived in isolation for twelve months, documenting the passing of each hour by punching a time clock. His final performance took place over 13 years (1986-1999). Such work recalls scientific experiments on chronobiology and the human perception of time. In the 1960s and 1970s, geologist Michael Siffre spent months living in extreme isolation, without indicators of time, in subterranean glaciers and caves. Siffre's experiments in extreme isolation illustrated the existence of the human 'body clock', which operates on a cycle of around 24 hours.

For Marina Abramović, the long duration of a performance work is 'the key to real transformation' for both artists and audiences.³⁷ In the durational performance *The Artist Is Present* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010), as the artist remained motionless in her chair for a total of 736 hours, audiences queued – sometimes through the night - for the opportunity to participate. This extended period of waiting, and the frustrations, conversations and sense of community that ensued, became an integral part of the work. For *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, the distance between audience and performer has been removed. Over twelve consecutive days, for seven hours a day, it is the audience who commits their time and undertakes a test of endurance, through performing the series of slow, repetitive physical tasks. As we expand the duration of everyday actions, each moment takes on individual significance, making us aware of our bodily rhythms and leading us to reconsider the value of time itself.

22. Marina Abramović, *Marina Abramović Institute*, 43
23. Quoted in Klaus Biesenbach, 'Marina Abramović. The Artist Is Present. The Artist Was Present. The Artist Will Be Present,' in *The Artist Is Present*, 19
24. Quoted in Fabio Gygi, 'Shattered Experiences - Recycled Relics: Strategies of representation and the legacy of the Great War' in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory and the First World War*, ed. Nicholas J. Saunders, (Abingdon, OX: Routledge, 2004), 81
25. Marina Abramović, 'Art Basel's Opening Night: Marina Abramović on Practicing Shamanism and Her \$19 Million Bauhaus Project,' *Vanity Fair*, December 3, 2013, accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.vanityfair.com/style/2013/12/marina-abramovic-art-basel>
26. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 81
27. *ibid.*, 11
28. Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1997), vii
29. Quoted in Lippard, *Six Years*, 73
30. Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to Do Things with Art: The Meaning of Art's Performativity*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Michael Turnbull (Zurich and Dijon: JRP/ Ringier and Les Presses du Réel, 2010), 129-130
31. Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years*, xxii
32. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 113
33. Quoted in Leonard Lawlor and Valentine Moulard Leonard, 'Henri Bergson,' *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.) <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2013/entries/bergson/>
34. Edward Scheer, 'Introduction: The end of spatiality or the meaning of duration,' *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts*, 17:5, 2, DOI: 10.1080/13528165.2012.728425
35. *ibid.*
36. Sam Sweet, 'A Dangerous and Evil Piano Piece,' *The New Yorker*, September 9, 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/a-dangerous-and-evil-piano-piece>
37. Marina Abramović in Sean O'Hagan, 'Interview: Marina Abramović,' *The Guardian*, October 3, 2010. Accessed April 20, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/oct/03/interview-marina-abramovic-performance-artist>

PARTICIPATION: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE BODIES

In recent decades, ‘participatory art’ has emerged as a genre, referring to works that draw on the idea of participation as an active, inclusive, and potentially transformative process. Art historian Claire Bishop describes participation as a ‘medium’ in the construction of an artwork, in which the audience are actively involved as collaborators, co-producers and co-authors.³⁸ In participatory art, the artist, audience, and their interactions with one another constitute the material for making the work - as a painter might work with pigment and canvas, so the participatory artist works with the audience.

For Bishop, the rise of participation in art can be seen to occur alongside major social-political uncertainty and change in the twentieth century: the rise of the avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde (1960- 1970s). In its aim to ‘rehumanise a society rendered numb and fragmented by the repressive instrumentality of production’, participatory art was often aligned with left-wing politics.³⁹ Artworks were designed to agitate and provoke the public out of the slumber of daily life and the ‘passive’ role of spectator by encouraging audience intervention directly through performance.

Over the course of four decades, Marina Abramović has tested the limits of audience participation and the relationship between artist and audience. From early, confrontational works such as the *Rhythm* series (1973-1974) to the long-duration performance *The Artist is Present* (2010), she has consistently drawn on her physical presence, her capacity for mental endurance and her autobiographical narratives. It now seems impossible to separate the individual identity of Marina Abramović from her artwork.

Abramović’s personal history within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945 -1992) provides a striking perspective on her approach to participatory performance, and may offer insights into her practice. Her performances might be seen in contrast to the mass public ceremonies and parades that were created as official displays of order, unification and power in socialist Yugoslavia. These large-scale gymnastic performances involved the coming together of students and workers to

form a controlled collective body, in which the individual disappeared and joined the carefully choreographed mass.

According to theatre historian Branislav Jakovljević, Abramović’s interest in performance and the body began in June 1968, when a student revolt took place in Belgrade.⁴⁰ Rather than bodies marching in steady unison, like those of the socialist spectacles, the clash that occurred between students and police involved bodies that were violent and unregimented. This student protest marked a turning point for Belgrade’s alternative art scene and for Abramović, who was a young student at the time. For Abramović and other artists associated with the Belgrade Student Center, performance and body art posed a challenge to the official display of public order by the government. The pushing of social, physical and emotional boundaries exposed artists and audiences to notions of loss and vulnerability.

The socialist parades of the former Yugoslavia did not emphasise individual participation, but sought to unify the crowd into a single mass. As Jakovljević suggests, this process marks the absorption or ‘disappearance’ of the audience - removing distance and judgment and therefore the critical attitude of the uninvolved viewer.⁴¹ The work of Marina Abramović harnesses the presence of both artist and audience – but we participate as conscious, individual beings, not as anonymous members of a collective. Her recent projects draw on four decades of intensive practice and research, creating physical and psychological spaces for the audience, disrupting our habitual patterns of thinking and doing. While we participate alongside others, in projects such as *512 Hours* (Serpentine Gallery, London, 2014) and *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, we are connected, but our identity does not ‘disappear’. The intimacy of her work separates us from the collective, reminding us of our individual presence, engaging us in a participatory experience that is enhanced by the energy of the collective.

38. Claire Bishop, *Participation*, (Cambridge, Mass. And London: MIT Press and Whitechapel Art Gallery, 2006), 10–16.

39. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 11

40. Branislav Jakovljević, ‘Handworks: Yugoslav Gestural Culture and Performance Art’ in *1968 -1989 Political Upheaval and Artistic Change*, ed. Claire Bishop and Marta Dziewańska (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art, 2009), 30 - 49.

41. *Ibid.*, 47

FEMALE PERFORMANCE ARTISTS AND THE BODY

*The first time I actually put my body in front of an audience, I understood this as my media.*⁴²

Marina Abramović



Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece* 1965, Performance, Carnegie Recital Hall, New York. Source: <http://observer.com/2014/12/moma-to-give-yoko-ono-her-first-official-survey-in-2015/>

The human body has been a favoured subject matter in the visual arts since ancient times, often in idealised form and reflecting religious beliefs in divine perfection. However, the idea that artists might use their own body as a material or artistic object is a more recent phenomenon. In the late 20th century, performance and body art emerged as means of directly confronting audiences, blurring the boundaries between private and public, exploring the relationship between mind and body, and often pushing the limits of physical and mental endurance.

For many artists of the era, performance and body art posed a challenge to Cartesian dualism –the philosophical idea that the mind and body are fundamentally separate entities, which had long dominated western art and science. Instead, the body was understood as a site of lived experience, memory and cultural identity. Significantly, for many female artists, the body remains a highly contested site in gender politics, with issues of beauty, sexuality, reproduction, violence and labour now more pressing than ever.

The surge of activity in performance during the 1960s and 1970s coincided with a period of social and political upheaval. Despite the utopian aims of earlier avant-garde movements, female artists still found themselves sidelined within the art world. Performance, as a marginal art form, allowed them to bypass conventional networks of galleries, dealers and curators from which many women felt excluded, and to forge alternative ways of working. In the USA, artists' cooperatives such as the Feminist Art Workers emerged.

Many female artists of the era embraced performance as a direct, unmediated means of communication with the audience. Their works often revealed shared concerns with autobiography, domestic labour, role-playing, masking and disguise, and blurring the boundaries between private and public life. Through exhibiting their personal, subjective, often intimate, experiences, these artists forced the spotlight onto everyday life, highlighting the extent to which the body is shaped by social and political forces. As artist Cheri Gaulke said, 'Performance is not a difficult concept to us. We're onstage every moment of our lives. Acting like women.'⁴³

Artists such as Carolee Schneemann, Yoko Ono and VALIE EXPORT are now considered pioneers of body art in the USA, Asia and Europe. Using their own naked bodies as subject and object of their work, they challenged artistic conventions of the idealised female nude as a symbol of beauty and fertility, and as the passive object of the male gaze. Through reclaiming and taking control of the representation of their bodies, these artists raised questions on the act of looking and of being looked at.

In marked contrast to the work of Yves Klein, who remained fully clothed, while directing nude female models to act as 'living brushes' in his Anthropometry performance paintings of 1960, American artist Carolee Schneemann integrated her own naked body as material in her 'painting-constructions'. Her influential performance *Eye Body* (1963) is considered one of the first examples of body art, in which she established her own body as 'visual territory'.⁴⁴

In Yoko Ono's *Cut Piece*, 1964, the artist knelt on the floor and instructed the audience to cut her clothes until she was naked. Positioning herself as passive object, Ono highlighted how the act of looking becomes an invasive, violent action.

Working in video, performance and 'expanded cinema', VALIE EXPORT staged guerrilla interventions that similarly challenged notions of the male gaze and spectatorship. Her 1969 work *Action Pants: Genital Panic* saw the artist wearing crotchless pants, and interrupting a film screening, as she challenged the male spectators to stop gazing at idealised women onscreen, and to 'look at the real thing'.⁴⁵

More recently, Vanessa Beecroft has drawn on the iconography of film, along with fashion and painting, to explore notions of beauty, desire and spectatorship within consumer culture. In her 1999 work, *VB40* (1999), presented as Kaldor Public Art Project 12 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Beecroft created a performance with a group of identically underwear-clad women, carefully posed as though mannequins or objects in a painting.

Many female artists have used performance to directly confront their audiences, exploring taboo subjects and difficult psychological themes in cathartic, often masochistic, works. The French-



Vanessa Beecroft *VB40*, 1999, performance, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Courtesy the artist / Kaldor Public Art Projects

born artist Gina Pane pushed her body to extremes, in works involving burning, cutting, and even mutilation, as the audience bore witness to her suffering. In *L'Escalade* (1971), Pane climbed a ladder with blades embedded in the rungs. Her work *The Conditioning* was the first of a series of actions entitled *Self-Portrait(s)* (1973), in which Pane lay on a metal bed above lighted candles, enduring intense heat and pain for a period of 30 minutes.

The Cuban-born artist Ana Mendieta, who was forced into exile in the United States at age 12, used her body in performance to reconnect to her cultural and spiritual identity. In her 'earth-body' works, such as the *Siluetas* Series (1973-1980), she created sacred, dream-like rituals, often involving blood, which she valued for its healing and cleansing powers, and directly inscribing her physical presence onto the environment.

Australian artist Jill Orr similarly explores the relationship of interdependence between body, identity and landscape, through unsettling performances and installations. In her 1981 work, *Headed South*, she performed naked to the waist, bound by her feet, and suspended upside-down, counter-balanced by a bag of earth. Orr rose to prominence during the 1970s, as performance art gained momentum in Australia, with venues such as La Mama in Melbourne and the Yellow House in Sydney offering vital support and recognition.

While Marina Abramović does not classify herself as a feminist artist or a political artist, she is widely recognised as a pioneer of performance art, particularly in the use of her body as both subject and medium. Over four decades, she has explored the uneasy relationships between mind and body, between observing and being observed, between power and vulnerability, as she subjects her own, often naked, body to strict, self-imposed tasks. In her landmark exhibition, *Seven Easy Pieces*, at the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2005), Abramović re-staged seven works by influential and controversial performance artists, including Gina Pane's *The Conditioning*, VALIE EXPORT's *Action Pants: Genital Panic* and her own *Lips of Thomas* (1975). Through re-presenting these works, Abramović has asserted their significance in the history of performance and body art, and brought them to light for new audiences.

42. Marina Abramović. *Marina Abramović: Early Years*. Marina Abramović Institute. <https://vimeo.com/72379601>

43. Quoted in RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance: Live Art Since the 60s* (London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 129

44. Carolee Schneemann, quoted in Amelia Jones, *Body art / performing the subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 2

45. Quoted in Christine Ross, 'The Paradoxical Bodies of Contemporary Art' in *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945* ed. Amelia Jones (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 393



Gina Pane, *The Conditioning, First Action of Self-Portrait(s)* 1975. Performed by Marina Abramović in *Seven Easy Pieces* 2005, 7 hours duration, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives

THE MIND: NEUROSCIENCE AND MEDITATION



Marina Abramović with Suzanne Dikker and Matthias Oostrik, *Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze* 2011, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow. Photograph: Maxim Lubimov. Courtesy the Marina Abramović archives

*What is important is less what you do than the state of mind you do it in...you have to empty the body to the point where you can be really connected with the fields of energy around you. I think that men and women in our western culture are completely disconnected from that energy and in my new work I want to make this connection possible.*⁴⁶

Marina Abramović

A large percentage of over 1500 visitors who sat opposite Marina Abramović during *The Artist is Present* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010) were visibly shaken by the experience, with many shedding tears. What might be the reason for such an overwhelming emotional response? Was Abramović tapping into reserves of unseen energy, and able to connect to her audience through mutual gaze alone? Can this energy transfer be demonstrated and understood? Is it possible to create new mental connections through our experiences and social interactions? How might collaborations between art, science and spirituality help further our understanding?

In an attempt to explore such questions, Abramović collaborated with Dr Suzanne Dikker on the crowd-sourcing neuroscience experiment *Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze* (2012). Taking place at museums in New York, Moscow and Amsterdam, the experiment involved participants engaging in mutual gaze while wearing electroencephalogram (EEG) headsets, providing a real-time display

of electrical brain activity, or brainwaves, and highlighting moments of correlation or synchrony between the two brains. Results indicated that engaging in mutual gaze for extended periods did, in fact, lead to greater synchrony between brainwaves of the two participants.⁴⁷ The energy transfer of the mutual gaze was made visible. Though the study did not reveal specific causes for the changes in brain activity, this collaboration opens intriguing questions on social interaction, feelings of empathy and trust, and the relationship between mind and body.

The human brain is an incredibly complex system, and recent advances in imaging technology (such as EEG) and in the expanding field of neuroscience have allowed us to visualise and understand it as never before. We now see it as dynamic and mobile, in a constant process of growth and change. Each brain contains billions of neurons, or nerve cells, which communicate with each other by firing chemical or electrical signals across connective structures called synapses. From birth until our late teens, we are geared for learning new skills and storing new information, with our brains speedily building and modifying synaptic connections. As we reach adulthood the brain becomes more concerned with efficiency and starts trimming off or 'pruning' underused neurons. According to systems and neural complexity specialist Dr Fiona Kerr, 'We can alter the rate and shape of both growth and pruning through what we do and how we interact. Even more amazingly, we can directly alter the shape and size of other people's brains. And once we realise and understand this, we become aware of the profound effect we can have both on ourselves and others.'⁴⁸

To Kerr, a key role is played by mirror neurons, thought to be associated with empathy, trust, and the integration of task, reason and emotion. Most significantly, they are activated through face-to-face interaction, with one particular kind of mirror neuron dedicated to picking up cues of smiles and laughter.⁴⁹ When we forego face-to-face contact, and rely on communicating through SMS and social media, is it possible that we impair the development of empathy and trust? While the role of mirror neurons remains subject to debate, this idea of neuroplasticity - or the pliability and

changeability of our brains - suggests that we can effectively rewire our patterns of thinking.

Another key may lie in the default-mode network of the brain, a network of brain regions that is most active when we are least focused on a task, as in daydreaming, ruminating on the past or future, or speculating on other people's attitudes - in other words, functioning on 'auto-pilot'. While the ability for abstract thought is fundamental to the experience of being human - enabling us to plan and reflect - the tendency to dwell on future possibilities and past mistakes is associated with feelings of anxiety and stress.⁵⁰ Recent research has, in fact, linked depression to a hyperactive default-mode network. However, in a study on experienced meditators, fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imagery) scans showed a significant decrease in activity in their default-mode network.⁵¹ There is also evidence that shutting down the default-mode network can activate other brain regions, bringing forth ordinarily hidden contents, such as strong desires, fears and memories.⁵² So while meditating may unearth suppressed feelings, sending us into torrents of tears, it may also help to improve concentration and attentiveness to tasks.

There is no denying that the contemporary world is taxing on our minds and bodies, as we attempt to keep pace in a frenzy of multi-tasking. Neuroscientist Daniel J. Levitin suggests that multi-tasking is entirely detrimental to the goal of staying 'on task', quickly burning oxygenated glucose, releasing quantities of the stress hormone cortisol and the 'fight or flight' hormone adrenaline, leading to overstimulation, fatigue and loss of concentration. Worse still, multi-tasking generates a little burst of dopamine, the 'reward' hormone, effectively sending us into an addiction feedback loop.⁵³

In *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, we are required to surrender all phones, mobile devices and watches. Putting aside the distractions of multi-tasking, we are asked to focus on each of the simple, repetitive tasks, based on mindfulness and meditative practices. Mindfulness means simply that - being mindful and turning our complete attention to the present moment, experiencing each passing thought or physical sensation without judgment. In traditional Buddhist

practices, mindfulness marks a step on the path to enlightenment, towards accepting the fleeting nature of the self and the material world. This poses a challenge to the idea of Cartesian dualism that has long underpinned western philosophy and science - in which the conscious self, associated with the 'mind', 'spirit' or 'soul', is disconnected from the physical world. Adopted in the 1970s in the clinical treatment of psychological disorders, mindfulness has recently come to widespread attention as an everyday practice, and a potential antidote to the damaging effects of sensory overload.

Over four decades, Marina Abramović has drawn on her extensive research into spiritual traditions, exploring her own mental and physical limits, and the transfer of energy between artist and audience. Her recent collaborations, such as *Measuring the Magic of Mutual Gaze*, have provided insight into the workings of the brain, and into the effects of artistic and spiritual practices. However, rather than using science to offer definitive 'proof' for the claims of art or spirituality, Abramović believes that multidisciplinary collaborations provide unique opportunities to explore complex questions and educate the public. The Marina Abramović Institute offers a platform for collaboration between art, science and spirituality, in which each discipline can challenge the assumptions of the others.

Marina Abramović: In Residence is one iteration in this ongoing process of investigation. It provides a space for meditation, exploration and reflection, an opportunity to learn through experience and observation. As Suzanne Dikker says, this process is not about providing definitive answers, but about finding the most exciting questions to ask.⁵⁴

46. Quoted in Heather Rose, 'Sitting with Marina', 473
47. Dikker, 'On the Same Wavelength' and Alison Irvine, 'Performing Science: The Science of Performance Art.' *Imagine Science Films*, June 18, 2014. <http://imaginesciencefilms.org/performing-science-the-science-of-performance-art/> (accessed May 6, 2015)
48. Fiona Kerr, 'Neurogenesis, Leadership and Rewiring Your Own Brain,' *ABC Radio National*, March 30, 2015. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/ockhamsrazor/rewiring-your-own-brain/6358410>
49. *ibid.*
50. Matthew A. Killingsworth and Daniel T. Gilbert, 'A wandering mind is an unhappy mind', *Science*, vol 330, no 6006, 12 November 2010, p 932
51. Michael Pollan, 'The Trip Treatment,' *The New Yorker*, February 9, 2015. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/02/09/trip-treatment>
52. *ibid.*
53. Daniel J. Levitin, 'Why the modern world is bad for your brain,' *The Guardian*, January 18, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2015/jan/18/modern-world-bad-for-brain-daniel-j-levitin-organized-mind-information-overload>
54. Dikker, 'On the Same Wavelength'

AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Integral to the development of Marina Abramović: In Residence is the unique Residency Program for Australian artists, taking place on the upstairs level of Pier 2/3. For the duration of the Project, Abramović mentors twelve Australian artists, as they live on-site, developing their own practice, and actively engaging with the public.

The participants have been personally chosen by Marina Abramović from an initial selection of 65 artists recommended by Kaldor Public Art Projects. The Residency Artists form a diverse group drawn from wide-ranging fields of performance such as visual arts, experimental theatre, dance, choreography and digital media. Each artist has experimented with long-duration performance, intensive physical practice, improvisation or public participation - challenging and pushing the boundaries of performance contexts and traditions.

The twelve artists live and work in a dynamic studio environment designed by Harry Seidler and Associates Architects – a series of purpose-built spaces that facilitate the development and presentation of the artistic process, and encourage interaction among the artists and with the public. Each day the Residents spend time exploring the Abramović Method, and develop their own practice by working with Abramović and Lynsey Peisinger, a renowned performer, choreographer and Abramović Method facilitator.

The Residency Program features an exciting series of talks and events, involving the public and offering a unique view into the processes and practices of the residency artists. The residents participate in talks, workshops, panel discussions and performances extending the knowledge gained from their time spent with Abramović to the public. The Residents also have opportunities to meet with leading Australian academics, curators, writers, artists and performance practitioners as part of a professional development series.

Kaldor Public Art Projects is hosting an extensive online presence throughout the Residency, representing each artist's experience in the program, continuing conversations after hours and bringing the Project to new audiences. This online



Photograph © 2014 Marco Anelli/Serpentine Galleries

documentation, including videos and transcripts of public programs events, and contributions from each resident in the form of essays, photographs, videos and sketches, will serve as rich archival resource for the Residency Program.

The unique experimental Artist Residency Program is the result of extensive research and development by Kaldor Public Art Projects Curator Emma Pike in collaboration with New York-based, Australian curator, Sophie O'Brien (Curator, *512 Hours*, Serpentine Gallery, London, 2014). It represents an invaluable opportunity for these twelve Australian artists to be mentored by one of the world's most renowned performance artists and teachers, Marina Abramović. Expanding upon Abramović's longstanding exploration of the roles of artist and audience, the program aims to foster collaboration, conversation and debate, and has the potential to create a lasting impact on the wider Australian arts community.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

NATALIE ABBOTT creates sensorial performance experiences. Her work is centred on the idea that everything is choreography, including light, sound, movement and design. Natalie has recently toured throughout Europe, Asia and America, and worked with independent choreographers and artists in Melbourne, the UK and New York. Natalie collaborates with the Deep Soulful Sweats (fantasy light yoga project) at Chunky Move, which appeared at Next Wave Festival, 2014. She recently spoke alongside Stelarc at the Festival of Live Art in Melbourne.



Natalie Abbott, *MAXIMUM*, 2014. Photograph: Courtesy the artist

FRANCES BARRETT is a Sydney-based artist whose practice explores performance through symbolic and direct action. Barrett's work is informed by queer and feminist methodologies and recent projects have taken the form of body-based live actions, endurance performance and sonic experimentation. Barrett is part of the performance and video collective Brown Council, whose work interrogates modes of collaboration, female collectivity and feminist art practices. From 2009-13 Barrett was Co-Director of Serial Space. In 2014, she presented work in Sydney at Performance Space, SafARI, Tiny Stadiums Festival and Alaska. In 2015 she will perform work at 4A Contemporary Centre for Asian Art (Sydney) and Australian Experimental Art Foundation (Adelaide). She is currently Curator of Contemporary Performance at Campbelltown Arts Centre and host of FBI Radio arts show, Canvas.



Frances Barrett, *The 12-Hour Revolution*. Performance, 12hr duration, Sydney Guild, Sydney. Photograph: Alex Wissler

CLARK BEAUMONT is the Brisbane-based collaborative duo Nicole Beaumont and Sarah Clark. Through live and mediated performance works they investigate ideas around identity, female subjectivity, intimacy and interpersonal relationships. Clark Beaumont are the subjects for their work and their collaboration means exploring the social and physical dynamics of working together to create artwork. Clark Beaumont formed in 2010 while completing their Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Queensland University of Technology. In 2013, the duo was selected as the 13th addition to Kaldor Public Art Project 27: *13 Rooms*. In 2014, Clark Beaumont held their first solo exhibition at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery. Awarded the Melville Haysom Memorial Art Scholarship by QAGOMA in 2014, they will exhibit later this year in GOMA Q: Queensland Contemporary Art.



Clark Beaumont, *Coexisting* 2013. Performed for Kaldor Public Art Project 27: *13 Rooms*, Pier 2/3, Sydney. Photograph: Jamie North

LOTTIE CONSALVO is a multidisciplinary artist working across performance, video, photography and installation. Created from fragments of the everyday and fractures from significant life events, her work deals with tragedy and longing. In long-duration and endurance-based performances, Consalvo endures discomfort physically and psychologically. She re-lives past events whereby the audience witnesses her undergoing a psychological change in real time. In recent live performances at Alaska Projects, Tiny Stadiums Live Art Festival, The Lock-Up and Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, Lottie's works positioned her in seemingly comfortable domestic environments, often slumped and in discomfort. Consalvo also makes 'life performances', such as *Compartmentalise* 2013-2014, a year-long performance where the artist lived with minimal possessions in an attempt to gain psychological control after a significant life shift.



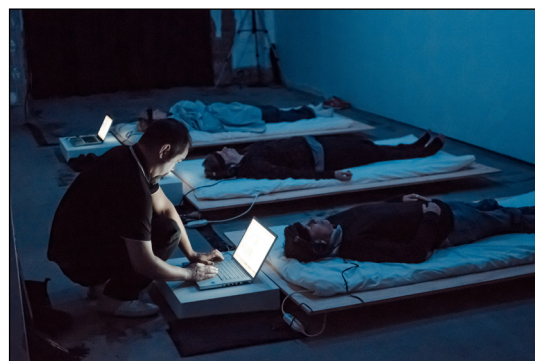
Lottie Consalvo, *I mouthed I love you* 2014.
Photograph: courtesy the artist.

NICOLA GUNN is a performance maker who uses a multi-disciplinary approach to explore modes of performance and post-modern types of metafiction, through works that display the idea of 'truth in fiction' and 'fiction in truth.' Her work aims to be open-ended, using non-linear narratives and the juxtaposition of genres and artforms to show continual slippages of self. Gunn's practice is committed to institutional critique and social engagement. She critically reflects on the role of performance to examine power relations in organisations and to consider the relevance and social function of art itself. Gunn's work has been presented at the Melbourne Festival, Brisbane Festival, Melbourne Theatre Company NEON Festival, Dublin Theatre Festival, Festival de Keuze (Rotterdam), Vitalstatistix, Theatre Works, and with choreographer Jo Lloyd at the NGV, Gertrude Contemporary and West Space. In 2013 Gunn was the recipient of an Australia Council Creative Australia Fellowship.



Nicola Gunn, *Piece for Person and Ghetto Blaster*.
Photograph: Sarah Walker

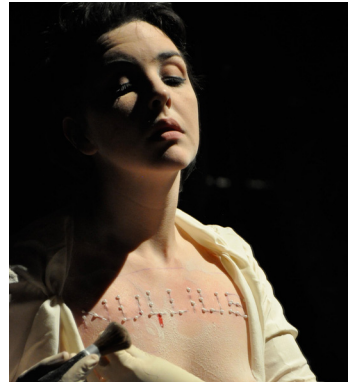
GEORGE POONKHIN KHUT works across the fields of electronic and participatory art, interaction design and health. For the past 12 years he has been working with biofeedback technologies, creating intimate artworks that re-frame our experiences and representations of embodiment, presentness and body-mind interactions. Khut's work challenges popular assumptions about the adverse impact of digital technologies on the body and our ability to pay attention, instead using technology to focus our attention into our body - and the bodies of others - and the psycho-physiological dimensions of our being. In 2012 Khut was awarded the Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art National New Media Art Award for *Distillery: Waveforming*, an interactive work developed as part of his residency at the Children's Hospital at Westmead (Sydney). Khut has presented works at FACT (Liverpool, UK, 2015), ISEA2013 (Sydney), MoCA Taipei (Taiwan, 2012), Biennale of Electronic Arts Perth (2007) and In Between Time Festival (Bristol, UK, 2006).



George Poonkhin Khut and James Brown. *AlphaLab/ThetaLab* 2013.
Creative neurofeedback participatory event. Photograph: James P Brown

SARAH-JANE NORMAN is a cross-disciplinary artist and writer. Sarah's practice is grounded in performance and her core interest is the body - as a spectacle of truth and a theatre of fantasy, a siphon of personal and collective memory, an organism with which we are infinitely familiar and eternally estranged, a site which is equally loaded and empty of meaning, where histories, narratives, desires and discourses converge and collapse. Much of her work is durational site-based and she incorporates elements of risk, endurance or duress. The works shift in scale from large public installations to discreet works for single audience members. Her work is participatory, where the audience is given a direct offering, invitation or critical choice upon which they are compelled to act.

An alumna of Sydney's PACT Centre for Emerging Artists, Norman began her career as an ensemble performer in scripted and devised theatre. Her trajectory has been informed by numerous practices, methodologies and disciplines including Suzuki Method, Feldenkrais, Bodyweather and Butoh. She has performed and trained with Guillermo Gomez Peña and his company, La Pocha Nostra. She holds a degree in Writing and Cultural Studies from the University of Technology, Sydney, and studied Visual Art at Dartington College, Devon, and Jewellery and Silversmithing at Central St Martin's School of Art and Design. An Indigenous Australian of Wiradjuri and European heritage, Norman grew up in Sydney and Regional NSW and currently divides her time between Berlin and Regional NSW.



Sarah-Jane Norman, *Corpus Nullius/Blood Country, Unsettling Suite* 2013. Photograph: courtesy the artist

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON is an Australian born, London-based photographic, conceptual and performance artist whose work explores notions of identity, cultural hybridity and history. Formally trained as a sculptor, Thompson's work is focused on the performative exploration of identity, sexuality, gender, race, ritual and memory. In his performances and photographic works he inhabits a range of personas achieved through handcrafted costumes and carefully orchestrated poses and backdrops and is known for his evocative photographic self portraits and video works. In 2010 Thompson was awarded the inaugural Charlie Perkins Scholarship and became the first Aboriginal Australian admitted into the University of Oxford in its 900-year history. He holds a Doctorate of Philosophy (Fine Art), Trinity College, University of Oxford, Master of Theatre, Amsterdam School of Arts, The Netherlands, Master of Fine Art (Sculpture), RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia and a Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Southern Queensland.



Christian Thompson, *Tree of Knowledge* 2013. Art Gallery of NSW. Photograph: Courtesy the artist

SARAH RODIGARI creates performances that address economies of exchange pertaining to socio-political engagement, shared authorship and new institutional critique. Working at the intersections of theatre, visual art and social practice, her method is responsive and context-specific. Recent projects take the form of lecture, text, video, collaboration and curation. Rodigari has presented work at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Melbourne International Arts Festival, South Project (Indonesia), PACT Zollverein (Germany), Centre for Contemporary Art Glasgow, The National Review of Live Art (UK), Anti-Contemporary Arts Festival (Finland) and SOMA (Mexico City). Rodigari is a founding member of the collective Field Theory; who make and support art projects that cross disciplines, shift contexts and seek new strategies for intervening in the public sphere. Sarah is a PhD candidate in Creative Art at the University of Wollongong.



Sarah Rodigari. Photograph: courtesy the artist

Sarah Rodigari defines her expectations for the Australian Artists' Residency program, and how it might impact on her artistic practice.

I work across media to create live performances and events that use duration and humour to investigate the relationship between audience and artist and site. Being of Eastern European descent, as well as having a body-based practice, I feel that working with Marina Abramović will be a homecoming of sorts. It will allow me to strengthen and consolidate my practice with an artist with whom I feel a artistic and cultural affinity. During this process, by only using my body (no props), I hope that my physical and psychological limits will be tested, opening up new ways of seeing my practice and engaging with an audience in the live moment. Through this experience, I am interested in how I might expand my practice so that it allows more space for dialogue, exchange, interpretation, as well as a transformative collective experience.

ZIN is the artist partnership of Harriet Gillies and Roslyn Helper. Formed in 2011, zin's work focuses on the power of experience by combining immersive, visceral and hybrid-art elements. Through their work they are interested in developing methodologies and concepts that deal with the public sphere, immaterial performance modes, large-scale execution, site specificity, audience immersion and activation. zin continuously redefine the audience-artist relationship by creating generative environments that encourage new ways of thinking and interacting. zin have presented work at PACT (2015), Firstdraft (2015), Sydney Festival's Parramatta Opening Night Party (2014), Festival of Live Art in Melbourne (2014), Underbelly Arts Lab and Festival (2013), City of Darwin's National Youth Week Festival (2013) and Tiny Stadiums Festival (2013). zin received a JUMP mentorship grant from the Australia Council in 2013 and have participated in residencies and programs across Australia. Gillies holds a Graduate Diploma of Performing Arts (Directing), NIDA, and Helper has a Masters in Arts Politics, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University.



zin, *The OAFFICE* 2013. The Cube, Oxford Arts Factory, Photograph: Courtesy the artist

THE VENUE: PIER 2/3

WALSH BAY

Because *Marina Abramović: In Residence* required a space where audiences could put aside everyday distractions and focus on a series of participatory exercises, the selection of the venue was a critical step in planning the Project. The venue needed to be adaptable, accommodating a range of exercises, as well as space for artists to comfortably live, work and interact with the public. With its large, open interior spaces, Pier 2/3 in Walsh Bay was identified as the perfect venue. The last remaining undeveloped wharf in the precinct, Pier 2/3 is located on the city's edge, with close ties to the natural environment and history of Sydney Harbour.

In April 2013, Kaldor Public Art Projects presented the landmark Project 27: *13 Rooms* in this atmospheric space. For *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, we have worked in collaboration with the artist and once again partnered with Seidler & Associates Architects to create an innovative interior architecture especially for the Project, now spanning two levels.

Pier 2/3 has a long history of maritime activities, and was once home to berthing and cargo-handling operations. At the time of building in 1901, the ironbark wharves were feats of advanced

engineering, and formed part of a major renovation of the waterfront area, aimed at addressing the spread of bubonic plague in Sydney. Following a lively period of industrial use, the piers fell into disrepair in the 1970s. Sydney Theatre Company moved into Pier 4/5 in 1984, sparking a transformation of the area. Pier 2/3 was first used by the Biennale of Sydney in 1986, and has since hosted arts and cultural events, providing a unique space for artists, musicians, dancers, writers and the public to share ideas and experiences in one of Sydney's most picturesque harbour locations.

More than a hundred years after their construction, the piers survive as a testament to Sydney's dynamic development and history, and Kaldor Public Art Projects is excited to once again work in this heritage space. The large warehouse provides the ideal home for *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, offering both a flexible exhibition space and public engagement program spaces, including the 12-day live-in Artists' Residency.



Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, Sydney. Photograph: Jamie North

IN THE CLASSROOM

These questions and activities based on Project Nº 30 Marina Abramović: In Residence can be incorporated into lessons to guide student learning and encounters with performance art. Organised in themes such as Artist Practice, Time, Space, The Body as Medium, Performance, Documentation and Re-performance, emanating from Marina Abramović's practice and issues surrounding Performance Art, they are intended to trigger ideas, debates, extended research and the creation of artworks.

ARTIST PRACTICE

In 2014, before the opening of *512 Hours* at the Serpentine Gallery, London, Marina Abramović reflected:

Recently I discovered an old TV interview from 1989 when I was asked what art in the twenty-first century would be like. I said: 'Art without objects that would directly use energy.' Now, 25 years later, I finally have the courage to do it... I'm trying to see if it's possible to remove structure and instructions and create things out of pure energy... When I remove everything, what is left? The present is left, and in the present a lot of things can happen. It will be different every day.

Marina Abramović, interviewed by Freire Barnes, 'I see the artist as a servant'. *TimeOut London*. 9 June 2014

■ While Marina Abramović's earlier work often relied on the use of objects, recent work is marked by her shift towards an immaterial practice (see the section on 'immaterial art' in this Education Kit).

Look closely at key works such as *Rhythm 0* (1974), *Rhythm 5* (1974) and *Balkan Baroque* (1997). List the objects that are used in the artworks, and document your responses to the following questions:

- How would these objects normally be used? What would they traditionally be associated with?
- How has the status or meaning of the object changed in the context of the performance?
- Has the object become an artwork?
- What other elements can be artistic 'materials'?
- What are the 'materials' in Marina Abramović's recent performances?

TIME

When the public come in they have to leave their watches, their telephones, computers, iPhones, blackberries in the lockers. And they're arriving into the space with nothing I'm there for them. They're my living material, and I'm their living material. And from this nothing, something may or may not happen. It's the journey, it's the experiment.

Marina Abramović, *512 Hours*

- How do watches, iPhones and computers affect our perception of time?
- How might participants feel leaving behind these possessions?
- Without time and connections to the outside world, how might participants experience the exhibition?

■ Recent studies suggest people spend approximately 20 seconds in front of artworks in galleries and museums. If you visited Project 30 *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, think about your experience of spending time in the space.

- How did you make use of your time there?
- Did you spend more time in one particular exercise?
- Was your perception of the time spent different to the actual time?

■ Create a timeline, depicting the overall time that you spent in the space. On your timeline, list all the changes that you noticed, no matter how small. Did you become more aware of different senses, such as touch or smell? Did you begin to notice different elements, such as the architecture, other people or the weather? Include the different moods or emotional states that you felt over time.

■ Durational artworks are marked by their relationship with time, often pushing the time and action to extremes of endurance.

Research your own examples from everyday life, art-related and performance experiences to add to the list below, and create a visual representation charting these various durations:

90 minutes - the average running time of a movie

4 hours – Sydney to Perth

7 hours - Average school day

736 hours - Marina Abramović *The Artist is Present*, 2010

1 year - Tehching Hsieh, *One Year Performance (Time Clock Piece)*, 1980-81

3 days - Joseph Beuys, *I like America and America likes me*, 1974

7 days - John Lennon and Yoko Ono, *Bed Peace*, 1969

639 years (ongoing) - John Cage, *Organ 2/ASLSP (As Slow as Possible)*, 1987

24 hours - Douglas Gordon, *24 Hour Psycho*, 1993

50 years - Tahina Palm Tree

Endless - Crystal Formation

2 months and 6 months - Michel Siffre, *Effects of Extreme Isolation on the Human and His Sleep Cycle* (experiment), 1962

62 years to date - Henrietta Lacks, *Immortal Human Cells*, 1951 – ongoing

84 years to date - Professor John Mainstone, *The Pitch Drop Experiment*, 1927 – present

2 minutes - Time taken to brush teeth

SPACE

Performance is a mental and physical construction that I step into, in front of an audience, in a specific time and place. And then the performance actually happens; it's based on energy values. It is very important that a public is present; I couldn't do it privately; that wouldn't be performance.

Marina Abramović in Abramović *The Artist is Present*

■ Create a table with three columns, with the headings “audience”, “space”, and “artist”.

Based on Marina Abramović’s definition of performance, her earlier works or any examples of performance you’ve studied or seen (including theatre and dance):

- Write an explanation of each of these categories, and list the role each plays within a performance artwork.
- In a group, discuss your responses and compare the role of each in Project 30 *Marina Abramović: In Residence*.
- As a group, devise and document your own ‘everyday’ performance with these themes/elements in mind.

■ Some of the exercises in *Marina Abramović: In Residence* bring private, intimate activities, such as sleeping or gazing into another person’s eyes, into the public space of Pier 2/3. Others, such as the platforms exercise, ask us to share space with strangers.

Think of an example of a familiar public space, such as a museum, shopping centre or park, and discuss:

- What kinds of activity or behaviour are expected in this space?
- What kinds of activity or behaviour are unexpected, or even prohibited?
- How are those expectations defined or reinforced?
- How might conflicts arise over different uses or understandings of the space?

■ Choose an example of an event or practice that makes use of public space, such as architecture, graffiti/ street art, busking, parkour, celebratory parades, political demonstrations, playground equipment design, urban community farms, fitness ‘boot camps’, or an example of your choosing.

- Is this event or practice an unexpected or challenging use of public space?
- What is the “object” of this event or practice (what exactly is being created or transformed)?
- How does this practice relate to the body, and the movement of the body through space?
- Is it an individual or communal activity, and how does one body relate to other bodies in the space?

THE BODY AS MEDIUM

In performance my body is object and subject.

Marina Abramović, Marina Abramović: The Audience/Artist Relationship, www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/96/575

■ In relation to the quote above, discuss how Abramović pushes the mental and physical limitations of the human body in her practice.

In your response consider:

- The difference between object and subject in an artwork
- How the body can be both subject and object in Marina Abramović’s work with reference to *The Artist is Present*
- The status of the body in Project N° 30 *Marina Abramović: In Residence*

PERFORMANCE vs ACTING

GUILDENSTERN: Well ... aren’t you going to change into your costume?

PLAYER: I never change out of it, sir.

GUILDENSTERN: Always in character.

PLAYER: That’s it.

GUILDENSTERN: Aren’t you going to - come on?

PLAYER: I am on.

GUILDENSTERN: But if you are on, you can’t come on. Can you?

PLAYER: I start on.

Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. (1967). p25

■ In small groups of 2-3, discuss the differences and similarities between performance art and theatre. Examine works by artists such as Marina Abramović, Gilbert and George, Joseph Beuys and Yves Klein identifying the content, context, intention and the active or passive role of the audience in each. List five characteristics of each artist’s work in a Venn diagram, placing similarities in the centre and differences on the outside. Share and compare your responses with the rest of the class.

DOCUMENTATION AND RE-PERFORMANCE

■ Performance art is an ephemeral medium that can generally only be experienced in person, although photography and digital recordings have assisted in documenting the performances. Re-performance is another way of activating and re-energising past performances such as Marina Abramović’s presentation of *Seven Easy Pieces*, at the Guggenheim Museum in 2005, the performances of *13 Rooms* (Kaldor Public Art Projects, Pier 2/3), and Australian artists such as Mike Parr.

I think it is very important to re-perform the pieces, even with all this danger that it becomes somebody else’s piece. But still you have to refer to the original source and you can make your own version. If today you can re-perform, you know, Bach and make techno Bach out of it, why can’t you re-perform the performance?

Marina Abramović, ‘Documenting performance’. Museum of Modern Art. Video interview 2010. http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/marinaabramovic/marina_document.html

- Are the photographs taken of the performance a work of art themselves or solely documentation?
- What are the differences between documentation and re-performance?
- Is one more “authentic” or more valuable than the other?
- What are the differences between re-exhibiting traditional art objects for different galleries/exhibitions versus performative/time-based pieces?
- Compare and contrast a work that has been re-performed – what is the purpose of re-performing? Did the context/meaning of the work change? How?

■ In pairs, choose a simple everyday action.

Perform this activity as quietly and slowly as possible, with complete focus.

Repeat 10 times.

What happens when you act out the activity in this manner? Write down your reflections considering these elements:

- What was the effect of repetition?
- Did your movements become rhythmical? Was it different each time?
- What did you notice about moving more slowly?
- What was the impact on your body? Did you experience fatigue? Boredom? Elation? Heightened senses? More acute awareness of your breathing?

Once complete, create a set of instructions for other/s to perform.

Once the action has been re-performed, discuss its impact.

- Is it the same as the original, or different?
- Does it have the same effect?

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For further information on Project N° 30, *Marina Abramović: In Residence*, see the exhibition catalogue and the Kaldor Public Art Projects website. The catalogue includes essays by Talia Linz, Hetti Perkins, David Jaffe and Sophie O'Brien. The website hosts a specially produced online documentary series about the Project, featuring interviews with John Kaldor, Marina Abramović and participants from the Australian Artists' Residency Program.

www.kaldorartprojects.org.au/projects/marina-abramovic
[#marinainresidence](https://twitter.com/marinainresidence).

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**MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ: IN RESIDENCE
MARKS THE 30TH KALDOR PUBLIC ART
PROJECT IN AUSTRALIA AND THE 46TH
YEAR SINCE OUR FOUNDING PROJECT.**

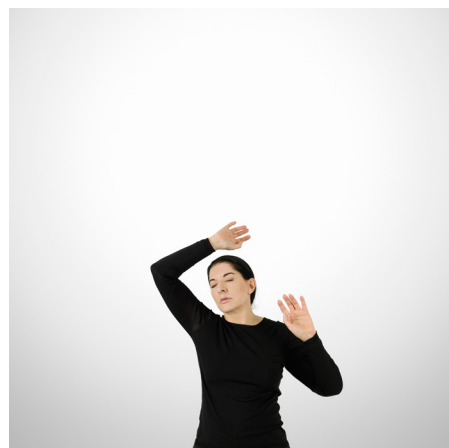
Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *Wrapped Coast* transformed 2.5 kilometres of Sydney's coastline in 1969. It was the first large-scale environmental work presented anywhere in the world and the first time an international contemporary artist had created a major new work in Australia. What was then John Kaldor Projects became a pioneering organisation, dedicated to taking art outside museum walls and transforming public spaces with innovative projects.

Over the years, our temporary projects have had a lasting impact on the cultural landscape and have changed the way the Australian public sees and experiences the art of today. Indelible projects such as Jeff Koons's *Puppy*, John Baldessari's *Your Name in Lights* and the recent *13 Rooms* exhibition also resulted in important new presentations overseas.

For over four decades we have worked with some of the world's most esteemed international artists: Gilbert & George, Charlotte Moorman & Nam June Paik, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Ugo Rondinone, Gregor Schneider, Bill Viola, Urs Fischer, Michael Landy, Thomas Demand, Roman Ondák, Tino Sehgal and Marina Abramović, amongst others.

Today we continue to commission groundbreaking new works, from both overseas and Australian artists. Our projects explore the shifting boundaries between artforms, artists and audiences, and generate innovation through new creative formats for discussion and debate.

Kaldor Public Art Projects is passionate about the importance of art education to a creative culture. We pioneer new ways to connect with diverse audiences through dynamic, accessible programs, innovative resources, and tailored opportunities for students of all ages and backgrounds. Exciting new models of participation and engagement with contemporary art, such as the *MOVE* series of classroom resources, have been developed in partnership with the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities. *MOVE: Video art in schools* is an invaluable teaching and learning package designed to support the creative arts curriculum in secondary schools. *MOVE Primary: Art in Motion* is a free, comprehensive online resource which can be accessed from the Kaldor Public Art Projects website.



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