

PROJECT 30

Marina Abramović

2015

Marina Abramović: In Residence

24 June – 5 July 2015

Pier 2/3, Walsh Bay, Sydney

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Belgrade, in the former Yugoslavia, Marina Abramović has pioneered performance as a visual art form since the 1970s and has become one of the most celebrated and iconic artists of our time. The body has always been both subject and medium for Abramović, as she explores her physical and mental limits in works that ritualise the simple actions of everyday life. Abramović has withstood pain, exhaustion and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation.

Abramović 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). In 2010, the Museum of Modern Art in New York held a major retrospective *The Artist is Present*, which attracted over 850,000 visitors. In 2014, *512 hours* at The Serpentine Galleries in London was a huge success and transformed the way people looked at art.

FACTS

- Over the past decades, the artist has refined a series of actions to prepare herself for creative and durational work. She first shared these actions with other artists and performers through workshops and residencies, and in recent works has opened this process to the public.
- Abramović describes her audience as the 'living material' of the work and her prescribed actions direct attention away from the frameworks of modern life to our own inner worlds.
- In Project 30, visitors were quietly greeted by a team of facilitators, who were recruited and trained to work closely with Abramović and to lead audiences through the project.
- Guests were required to leave their phones, bags and watches inside the lockers provided, to undertake warm-up activities and put on noise-cancelling headphones before entering.
- Once inside, visitors were individually taken by the hand and led by one of the project facilitators to take part in the exercises, alone or with others.
- 12 Australian artists lived in residence upstairs from the exhibition and were mentored daily by Abramović and a program of special guests.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Following the success of Marina Abramović's ambitious work *Luminosity*, 1997, in *13 Rooms*, John Kaldor invited the pioneering Serbian performance artist to Sydney for a solo project. Two years later, at the historic Pier 2/3 in the Walsh Bay artistic precinct, *Marina Abramović: In Residence* offered audiences an innovative experience at the forefront of contemporary art.

Abramović is one of the world's pre-eminent performance artists, with a practice spanning four decades. She was awarded the prestigious Golden Lion at the 47th Venice Biennale in 1997 and named one of Time Magazine's one hundred most influential people in 2014.

Abramović studied fine arts in Belgrade, before immigrating to Amsterdam, where she continued to develop her practice. Reflecting her childhood fascination with ritual, Abramović's early *Rhythm* series of performances pushed the limits of physical and emotional endurance. In 1976, Abramović began her decade-long collaboration with German performance artist Ulay, creating some of her most famous works, such as *Relation in Time*, 1977, which saw them sit back to back for sixteen hours, tied together by their ponytails.

In *The Artist is Present*, 2010, her major retrospective at New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Abramović sat opposite 1,545 visitors, with more than 850,000 spectators, in a powerful performance of endurance over twenty weeks.

As Abramović wrote in her artist's statement for *In Residence*, "My relationship to the public is changing. It used to be very simple: the public was sitting in the audience and I was performing in front of them". Now, Abramović proposed, "I will be like a conductor in the exhibition space, but it will be the public who will take the physical and emotional journey... My function in this new kind of performance situation is to show you, through the Abramović Method, what you can do for yourself".

Within view of the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge, Pier 2/3 became a pop-up venue, housing Abramović's extraordinary project, along with a series of public talks and special events, and a live-in artists' residency program. For the duration of the project, twelve Australian artists lived and worked upstairs at the Pier, where they were mentored by Abramović and leading international performance experts, and engaged with the public in the context of a working studio.

The artist described her audience as the "living material" of the work. Across twelve days, an audience of over 31,000 visited the Pier, with many staying for hours at a time, to participate in Abramović's durational and meditative exercises. Abramović and her team were present on-site each day, guiding participants through an experience designed to shift their focus, challenge their preconceptions and change the way they look at art.

Kaldor Public Art
Project 30: *Marina
Abramović, In
Residence*, Pier 2/3,
Walsh Bay, Sydney,
2015

Photo: Pedro Greig



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