

MoMA PRESENTS THE FIRST LARGE-SCALE U.S. PERFORMANCE RETROSPECTIVE OF MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ'S WORK

Exhibition Features World Premiere of New Solo Work Performed By Abramović and Live "Reperformances" of Historical Pieces by Performers Selected for This Exhibition

Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present

March 14–May 31, 2010

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor, and The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium, second floor

NEW YORK, March 6, 2010— The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present***, the first large-scale American museum retrospective of the artist's groundbreaking performance work, from March 14 to May 31, 2010. Internationally recognized as a pioneer and key figure in performance art, Marina Abramović (Yugoslav, b. 1946) uses her own body as subject, object, and medium, exploring the physical and mental limits of her being. The exhibition traces Abramović's prolific career with approximately 50 works spanning over four decades of interventions and sound pieces, video works, installations, photography, solo performances, and collaborative performances. Also included are the world premiere of a new work to be performed by Abramović herself and "reperformances" of influential historical pieces by performers selected especially for this exhibition. The live reperformances are included in a chronological installation of the artist's work reflecting the different modes of representing, documenting, and exhibiting her ephemeral time- and media-based works. *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present* is organized by Klaus Biesenbach, Director, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, and Chief Curator at Large, The Museum of Modern Art.

Abramović, best known for her durational works, has created a new work for this performance retrospective—*The Artist Is Present* (2010)—that she will perform daily throughout the run of the exhibition, for a total of over 700 hours. For her longest solo piece to date, Abramović will sit in silence at a table in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium during public hours, passively inviting visitors to take the seat across from her for as long as they choose within the timeframe of the Museum's hours of operation. Although she will not respond, participation by Museum visitors completes the piece and allows them to have a personal experience with the artist and the artwork.

The historical exhibition in the Museum's sixth-floor galleries will feature live reperformances of five landmark Abramović performance pieces, alongside video and photographic documentation of the original performances, incorporated within a chronological presentation of the artist's career. The works are *Imponderabilia* (1977/2010), in which two nude performers stand opposite each other in a doorway, so that visitors who wish to pass must move through the gap between the two, deciding to face him or her; *Relation in Time* (1977/2010), in which two performers sit quietly, connected to each other by their long hair, which is tied together; *Point of*

Contact (1980/2010), in which two performers stand face to face with arms bent, just barely touching the tip of each other's index fingers; *Nude with Skeleton* (2002–05/2010), in which a nude performer lies beneath a skeleton, animating it with the motions of his or her breathing; and *Luminosity* (1997/2010), in which a nude performer, suspended high upon a wall and immersed in light, gives the appearance of floating before the wall. *Imponderabilia*, *Relation in Time*, and *Point of Contact* were originally created and performed by Abramović and the artist Ulay (Uwe Laysiepen, German, b. 1943), her partner from 1975 to 1988. A group of 39 performers chosen by Abramović will reperform these pieces continuously in shifts throughout public hours in the sixth floor galleries.

These reperformances will take place alongside video and photographic documentation of the original performances, and they will be incorporated within the chronological presentation of the artist's career on the sixth floor, broken up into four sections. These sections feature photographs, video, sound recordings, and, in some cases, the original objects used in the performances.

The first section focuses on solo performances created when she was based in Belgrade (1969–75). For the performance *Rhythm 0* (1974), Abramović placed on a table 72 objects that people were allowed to use in any way that they chose. Among them were scissors, a knife, a whip, a gun, and a single bullet. For six hours the artist allowed the audience members to manipulate her body and actions. By the end of the performance all of her clothes were sliced off, she had been cut, painted, cleaned, decorated, crowned with thorns, and had the loaded gun pressed against her head. A table with examples of these objects, as well as a 35mm slide projection showing photographs of the original performance, is included in the exhibition.

The next section features her collaborations with Ulay. Works include *Rest Energy* (1980), in which Ulay held a bow taut with its arrow pointed directly at Abramović's heart, and *Nightsea Crossing* (1981–87), a series of 22 performances that featured Abramović and Ulay sitting motionless at either end of a rectangular table facing each other, completely silent. The exhibition includes video of the original performance of *Rest Energy* and images of the *Nightsea Crossing* performances.

The third section focuses on the years 1995 to 2005, when Abramović embarked on a new chapter of solo works about being alone and about dealing with her cultural, ideological, and spiritual origins in the Balkans, her family background, and feelings of shame and suffering amidst the atrocities that affected her home country in the 1990s. The installation *Balkan Baroque* (1997), for which she won the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale, consists of a three-channel projection portraying life-size images of her mother, herself, and her father, 6,000 lbs. of cow bones, and copper vessels filled with black water. The original presentation featured a performance by Abramović, who sat for six hours a day for four days and scrubbed the remaining meat off of the bones, evoking the pain and suffering of war.

The final section consists of works from her recent career based in New York, where she has been based since 2001. In the *The House with the Ocean View* (2002), the artist lived in the

Sean Kelly Gallery in New York for 12 days in a cross-sectioned structure of rooms. The exhibition includes a three-channel video projection of the performance, in addition to a sound piece in which Abramović narrates her every action during that 12-day period. *Seven Easy Pieces*, presented in 2005 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, presented Abramović as an agent of the history of performance art. For each night of the seven-night program, she selected a different seminal work of performance art from the 1960s and 1970s. The project was premised on the fact that little documentation exists for most performances from this critical early period. *Seven Easy Pieces* examined the possibility of repeating and preserving an art form that is, by nature, ephemeral. The exhibition includes a seven-channel video installation of the performances.

SPONSORSHIP:

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Additional generous funding is provided by Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann, Agnes Gund, Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis, Donald R. Mullen, Jr., Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, Sue and Edward Wachenheim III, David Teiger, and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLICATION:

This book project and audio CD spans more than four decades of Abramović's early interventions and sound pieces, video works, installations, photographs, and solo performances, as well as collaborative performances with Ulay. An audio recording by Abramović guides the reader through the publication, and essays by Klaus Biesenbach, Arthur C. Danto, Chrissie Iles, Nancy Spector, and Jovana Stokić examine the artist's concepts of time, duration, performance, and reperformance. Hardcover with audio CD. 9.5 x 12 in.; 224 pp.; 375 ill. Available in March 2010. Price: \$50.

P.S.1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER INSTALLATION:

On the occasion of the MoMA retrospective, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center will reinstall Marina Abramović's *Chair for Man and His Spirit*. Abramović created the work especially for P.S.1 on the occasion of their 1997 reopening. According to the artist, she felt that when you have a new house it is important to have furniture for the spirits. The spirit chair is positioned three stories above the human chair at ground level; visitors are invited to sit in the human chair. The artist explains that this work is part of a "series of transitory objects built with the idea that the audience could actively take part." Abramović does not "consider these works as sculptures, but as transitory objects to trigger physical or mental experiences among the public through direct interaction." *Chair for Man and His Spirit* will be installed in P.S.1's courtyard, from February 27 to May 10, 2010.

PUBLIC PROGRAM:

Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present: The Legacy of Performance

June 2, 6:30 p.m., The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 2

Marina Abramović and the "reperformers" discuss the experience of participating in the exhibition. Moderated by Klaus Biesenbach.

Tickets (\$10; members \$8; students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$5) can be purchased at the lobby information desk, the film desk, or online at www.moma.org/thinkmodern.

MoMA AUDIO:

An audio program featuring commentary by Marina Abramović will be available at the Museum free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg; on MoMAWiFi at www.moma.org/momawifi; and as a podcast on www.moma.org/audio and iTunes. MoMA Audio is a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art and Acoustiguide, Inc. Available in English only starting March 14.

VIDEO:

Clips will be posted to MoMA's YouTube Channel and on MoMA.org. Please visit:

YouTube: www.youtube.com/MoMAvideos

MoMA.org Multimedia page: www.moma.org/multimedia

No. 14

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at www.moma.org/press.

Public Information:

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Flickr: www.flickr.com/groups/themuseumofmodernart/

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)