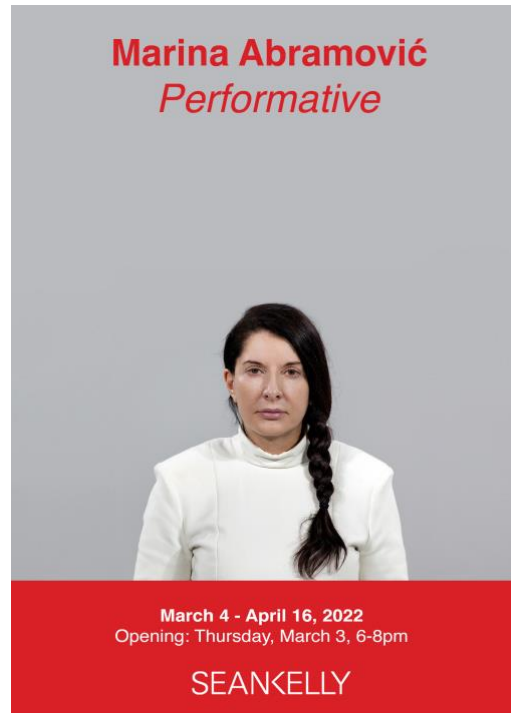


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Marina Abramović

Performative

March 4 – April 16, 2022

Opening reception: Thursday, March 3, 6-8pm

Sean Kelly Gallery is delighted to announce *Performative*, Marina Abramović's ninth solo exhibition at the gallery. Presenting four distinct turning points in Abramović's five-decade career, the exhibition chronicles both the development of her oeuvre and how it has influenced performance art globally. The earliest work in the exhibition, in the main gallery, will feature Abramović's iconic early performance, *Rhythm 10*, 1973. Also in the main gallery will be Abramović's acclaimed 2010 MoMA performance, *The Artist is Present*, represented by a video installation. The front gallery will include a selection of Abramović's "transitory objects," which visitors to the exhibition can use. A screening of Abramović's film *Seven Deaths*, will be in the lower gallery. Presented together, these different bodies of work demonstrate how Abramović has shaped the trajectory of performance art over the last five decades and changed the public's perception of and interaction with this art form. The artist will be present at the gallery on Thursday, March 3, 6-8pm.

From the beginning of her career in Belgrade in the early 1970s, Marina Abramović has pioneered performance as a visual art form. It was at this time that she created some of the most important early works in her practice, including *Rhythm 10*, 1973. Installed on the North wall of the main gallery, the piece documents the performance in which Abramović splayed her left hand on a large scroll of white paper and began to

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rhythmically stab the spaces between her fingers with a knife at increasing speed until she cut herself, paused, picked up a new knife and resumed the performance. Accompanying the images will be the sound recording of the performance. One of her first performance works, *Rhythm 10*, marked a pivotal moment when Abramović first began to consider herself a performance artist. She states, "This was the first time that I understood [the] energy of the audience, and how actually this energy, I could take and transmit it into my own and give it back. And it was the first time that I didn't feel pain or any kind of discomfort doing it, that I understood that in performance, my body is object and subject, and I can push the limits in front of the public as far as I can, much more than if I would do in my own private life." These first early solo performances pushed the boundaries of self-discovery, both for herself and her audience. They tested the limits of physical endurance, exploring ritual, gesture, even pain, to interrogate the parameters of art and challenge the fundamental relationship between performer and audience.

Originally presented in 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, *The Artist Is Present* was inspired by Abramović's belief that extending the length of a performance beyond expectations serves to alter our perception of time and foster a deeper engagement with the experience. For a total of 716 and a half hours, eight hours a day, over nearly three months, Abramović sat silently at a wooden table across from an empty chair, as visitors to the museum were invited to take turns sitting across from her. Installed in the main gallery will be six film projections documenting, in real time, the performance at MoMA. On the left wall are the faces of each of the individuals who took a seat opposite Abramović, while the right wall shows the artist's face. The back wall features a monitor showing Abramović and visitors seated at the table together.

In 1988, after completing one of her more grueling durational performances in which she walked nearly 3,000 kilometers from one end of the Great Wall of China to its center point, Abramović began to create what she refers to as "transitory objects." In these works, the artist incorporated natural materials into interactive objects to transmit the various energy levels of different minerals. Four chairs, utilizing different materials and three quartz "pillows" the public can interact with will be installed in the front gallery. The public is invited to use these objects to become the performer and thus complete the pieces. Such works marked the first time the artist invited the public to participate in her practice directly. Abramović states, "All the transitory objects have one thing in common: they do not exist on their own; the public must interact with them. Some objects are there to empty the viewer, some to give energy, and some to make a mental departure possible."

For its New York premiere, the film of Abramović's 2020 operatic production the *Seven Deaths*, will be presented in the lower gallery. This one-hour, one-minute, and thirty-second performance was a continuation of the artist's lifelong meditation on the female body as a source of both power and pain. In it, Abramović turns her focus to renowned opera singer Maria Callas, whose stunning soprano voice captivated audiences around the world in the mid-20th century. Through a mixture of narrative opera and film, Abramović recreates seven iconic death scenes from the American-born, Greek singer's most important roles—in *La Traviata*, *Tosca*, *Otello*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Carmen*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *Norma*—followed by an interpretive recreation of Callas' own death performed onstage by Abramović herself.

Marina Abramović was one of the first performance artists to become formally accepted by the institutional museum world, with major solo shows throughout Europe and the US

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for almost 50 years. In 2010, Abramović was the first performance artist to be the subject of a solo exhibition at MoMA, and in 2023, Abramović will be the first woman to have a solo exhibition across the entire Main Galleries at the Royal Academy, London. Abramović's first European retrospective *The Cleaner* was presented at Moderna Museet in Stockholm, Sweden in 2017, followed by presentations at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Copenhagen, Denmark, 2107, Henie Onstad, Sandvika, Norway, 2017, Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn, Germany, 2018, Centre of Contemporary Art, Torón, 2019, and Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Serbia, 2019. Her work has also been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions including the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, Istanbul, Turkey; the Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece; SESC, Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil; the Serpentine Gallery, London, UK; the Contemporary Art Museum, Kumamoto, Japan; the Contemporary Art Center, Malaga, Spain; the Park Avenue Armory, New York; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria; Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy; the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, Russia; the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Guggenheim Museum, New York. Abramović has participated in many large-scale international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale in 1976 and 1997, for which she was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist, and Documenta VI, VII and IX, Kassel, Germany in 1977, 1982, and 1992. Abramović has received numerous awards, most recently, the Princess of Asturias Award for the Arts, 2021. She also received the Globart Award in Vienna, 2018; the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres Officier for work in *Bohéro*, Paris, 2013; and the Austrian Decoration of Honor for Science and Art in Vienna, 2008, amongst others.

For additional information on Marina Abramović, please visit, skny.com

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Image caption: Marina Abramović, *The Artist is Present*, Performance, 3 months, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, 2010, Ph: Marco Anelli, Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives