

## MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

Exhibition opening: May 18th, 2022 h 11.00  
Lia Rumma Gallery | Via Vannella Gaetani 12 | NAPLES  
Gallery opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 15.30-19.00

On May 18<sup>th</sup> 2022, the Lia Rumma Gallery in Naples will present the new solo exhibition by Marina Abramović, marking the artist's return to the city.

The exhibition coincides with the tour of the first Opera written, directed and performed by the Serbian artist, titled *7 Deaths of Maria Callas*, which will be premiered in Italy at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples (13th-15th May 2022).

Seven tragic heroines of the Opera, made immortal by the divine interpretation of Maria Callas, come to life in the body and movements of Marina Abramović: Tosca, Carmen, Violetta (*La Traviata*), Cho Cho-San (*Madama Butterfly*), Lucia (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Norman and Desdemona (*Otello*).

The queen of performance art embodies the queen of the Opera in a comprehensive work, resulting in a face-to-face between two great artists. "For 25 years I have wanted to create a work dedicated to the life and art of Maria Callas. I read all the biographies about her, listened to her amazing voice and watched the tapes of her performances. Like me, she was a Sagittarius, I have always been fascinated by her personality, her life, and her death. Like so many of the characters she played on the stage, she died of love. She died of a broken heart" (Marina Abramović, *7 Deaths of Maria Callas*, Damiani Editore).

In the gallery space the drama of the seven deaths is relived through the video installation *Seven Deaths*, taken from the Opera of the same name.

"Women suffer eternally for love and eternally die in so many ways. It is a theme that, to me as a woman, is very dear. My work is very 'emotional', it touches love, death, pain, suffering, loss, betrayal: themes of which art is made", continues Abramović. This is the *leitmotiv* that underlies the other works in the exhibition: *Artist Portrait with a Candle (B)*, 2012; *Holding the Skeleton*, 2008/2016; the diptych *Portrait with Skull (Eyes Closed)*, 2019; and, finally, the most recent *The Jump*, 2022, in which Abramović interprets the role of Tosca in the final move of the last act, set here in an urban contemporary context.

On several occasions, the artist has used the skeleton as her travel companion, or other elements such as the skull or the candle, to exorcise her own mortality, giving life to many 'memento mori' that seem to evoke 17<sup>th</sup> century *vanitas* enriched by a cruel game between Eros and Thanatos.

One of the rooms in the gallery is home to the installation *Black Dragon* (1990), made up of quartz crystals mounted on the wall that invite the public to interact with them, and to feel the energy they emanate. They are Abramović's 'transitory objects': not simply sculptures to look at, but "performative" objects capable of triggering an exchange of energy between the work, the artist and the public, who is therefore invited to take an active part in the show.

**Marina Abramović** was born in Belgrade in 1946 and trained at the academies of her hometown and in Zagreb. Since the beginning of her career, Marina Abramović has been a pioneer of performance art, creating some of the most important works of this form of art. Exploring her physical and mental limits, she endured pain, exhaustion and danger, in a quest for emotional and spiritual transformation.

The professional and sentimental union between Abramović and Uwe Laysiepen, better known as Ulay, dates back to the mid-1970s. During the more than ten-year collaboration, the two artists have given life to unforgettable performances, true milestones, focused on the themes of suffering, viewed as a necessary cathartic path (*Relation in movement*, Venice Biennale, 1976), or of love, retraced through a series of photographic shots that portray the couple in theatrical poses (*Anima mundi* and *Modus vivendi* etc.). The last project created with Ulay was *The Great Wall*, after which Abramović continued her research by investigating, through sculpture, the energy of natural elements such as stones and metals, the so-called 'transitory objects'.

In 1997, at the 47th Venice Biennale, Marina Abramović was awarded the Golden Lion for her work *Balkan Baroque*, a crude denunciation of the horrors perpetrated during the war in the Balkans. After many decades of activity, in 2010 Abramović had her first major retrospective in the Usa and, in the same year, she performed for over 700 hours in *The Artist is Present* at the MOMA in New York, an engaging performance in which the artist, with her mere presence, becomes art.

The artist also founded the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI), a platform for immaterial and long-lasting work, meant to create new possibilities for collaboration between thinkers from all fields. Her most recent publication is *Walk Through Walls: A Memoir*, published by Crown Archetype in 2016.

The retrospective dedicated to the artist, titled *The Cleaner*, was inaugurated at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 2017 and was hosted in seven other European locations, and then concluded, in 2019, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade. On March 30, the solo exhibition *Memory of Being* was opened at the Kaunas Picture Gallery, on the occasion of the European capital of culture 2022.

In 2023 Marina Abramović will present the solo exhibition *After Life* at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. She will be the first woman in the institution's 250-year history to occupy the entire gallery space with her work.



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