

SEANKELLY



Marina Abramović *Early Works*

FEBRUARY 10 – MARCH 17, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION: FEBRUARY 10, 2018, 6 – 8PM

Sean Kelly is delighted to present Marina Abramović *Early Works*, an exhibition featuring twelve historical performance editions, first issued by the gallery in 1994, that document Abramović's early performances (1973-1975). They will be presented with screenings of five of the artist's earliest films (1975-1977). The exhibition of these rarely seen works, most of which are now in museums, celebrates the pioneering legacy of Abramović, who is internationally recognized as the most significant figure in the history of performance art; it also acknowledges the three-decade professional collaboration between Marina Abramović and Sean Kelly. This will be the artist's ninth solo exhibition with the gallery; there will be an opening reception on February 10, 2018.

The performances documented in these early editions represent the nucleus of the canon Abramović has expanded upon and explored in her practice over the ensuing forty-plus years. At the time Abramović carried out these actions in galleries and art festivals throughout Europe, before very limited audiences, she was a young artist teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts in Serbia. These first solo performances 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.

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Each edition is comprised of black and white photographs accompanied by text panels that provide a narrative of the event depicted. Issued in 1994 in editions of 16, these works were the result of years of extensive dialogue between Abramović and Kelly to both preserve and conserve the original negatives that Abramović had carried around for years in a backpack whilst living out of a van and which were rapidly degrading. Abramović and Kelly worked carefully to choose a key image for each work, aware that once disseminated to a wider public, their selection would become the iconic representation of these historic, yet transient actions.

Also on view are longer format films that document performances in which Abramović, both in solo works and works in collaboration with Ulay, challenged the boundaries of her strength, endurance and mental strength. In *Freeing the Body*, 1975, for instance, the artist—nude with her head shrouded in a black cloth—dances to the rhythm of an African Drummer over a period of eight hours, her energy visibly draining until she collapses to the floor. In these earliest manifestations and in all her ensuing performances, Abramović has traversed the limits of consciousness through extreme ritualistic acts. Marina Abramović *Early Works* offers a concise and compelling survey of some of these first audacious actions, which have in turn become among the most essential and influential in the annals of the history of performance art.

Abramović has participated in large-scale international exhibitions including Documenta VI, VII and IX in Kassel, Germany and the Venice Biennale in 1976 and 1997, for which she was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist. She also received the New Media Bessie award in 2003 for *The House with the Ocean View* and the AICA-USA award for Best Exhibition of Time Based Art in 2007 for her performance, *Seven Easy Pieces* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Major retrospectives of her work have appeared at The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010) and at the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in Moscow, Russia (2011). She is currently the subject of a retrospective at the Henie Onstad, Sandvika, Norway, which premiered at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2017) before traveling to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark (2017).

For additional information on Marina Abramović please visit skny.com

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Image credit: Marina Abramović, *Freeing the Voice*, 1975; publ. 1994, black and white photograph with letter press text panel, framed: 29 3/4 x 39 1/2 inches, text framed: 10 1/4 x 7 1/4 inches edition of 16 © Marina Abramović Courtesy: the Marina Abramović Archives and Sean Kelly, New York