



Shutter: close to the close

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Marina Abramović Institute (MAI) presents and supports performance art at a global scale. Through an artist-driven process, the institute maintains both a multidisciplinary approach to performance and a focus on long-duration work.

In 2023, MAI opened its space in Karyes, Greece, to support creative processes around performance art and generate collaborative thinking. The institute hosts Cleaning the House, a workshop developed by Abramović to reset the body and help understand one's physical or mental limits. The workshops are open to public participants coming from any discipline.

Globally, the institute creates communal participatory projects that critically engage with time, place, and human experiences. MAI has presented major performance projects in Sao Paulo (2015), Athens (2016), Kyiv (2017), Bangkok (2018), Istanbul (2020) and Amsterdam (2022).

Marina Abramović Institute is: Marina Abramović, Thanos Argyropoulos, Serge Le Borgne, Paula Garcia, and Billy Zhao.

close to the close

Sandra Johnston

Queen Elizabeth Hall Backstage

close to the close will unfold across the five-day duration through a series of related and repeatable actions that gradually unfix and reform into new configurations. Johnston's practice is site-responsive, whereby the history, architecture and ambience of the context informs an itinerant approach of gathering and reacting to found materials – including human gestures, through intimate actions of displacement. Materials will include fragments of debris from the local environs, alongside archival artefacts, and personal items imbued with specific memories. This act of processing seemingly disparate elements by giving close attention to each separate part, offers a situation for reflecting upon aspects of social and structural interdependencies.

Sandra Johnston has been active internationally since 1992 as an artist, researcher and educator working predominantly through performance art, video installations and writing. Johnston's practice is rooted in processes of improvisation. Typically, her actions involve a sparsity of materials and a precise attentiveness to the particularity of context. Artworks often fuse fragments of historical archival material into intricate relationships with performed gestures, which enable a speculative juncture around narratives of trauma, memory, and implication. Additionally, Johnston has been committed long-term to engaging with the fragile genealogies and sustainability of grass-roots creative networks.

Dokimi/Essay/Essai

Despina Zacharopoulou

Queen Elizabeth Hall Backstage

Dokimi/Essay/Essai continues Despina Zacharopoulou's ongoing research on performance art as a form of inhabited philosophy, and on philosophy as embodied praxis and method. The artist invites the audience to enter the performance space one person at a time, after they sign a contract where they declare in advance and in writing how much time they wish to stay inside the performance space. The artist's main goal is to investigate the conditions within which one can philosophise. These conditions are not predefined in any way but emerge during the performer-audience encounter.

The work's title *Dokimi/Essay/Essai* comes to express this very dimension of the project as an experiment, a test, an exercise, an attempt but also an examination, in the way that Foucault, using the term 'essai', attempted to express the possibility of change via the thinking that takes place within parrhēsiastic games.

Despina Zacharopoulou is a Greek performance artist and academic, currently working between London and Athens. Her practice investigates performance as surface and event of parrhēsia, aiming at reconstituting philosophy as embodied practice. Zacharopoulou completed a practice-led PhD in Philosophy & Fine Art (Performance) at the Royal College of Art (Onassis Foundation Scholar), where she also leads the Contemporary Art Summer School short course. In 2021 she was awarded the Stavros Niarchos Foundation ARTWORKS Fellowship. Her work has been presented worldwide at events of global impact. This is the third time that she is performing for the Marina Abramović Institute.

Nobody (2023)

Carlos Martiel

Queen Elizabeth Hall

This work refers to the historical oppression, racism, and systemic violence suffered by certain populations of the former British colonies, outside and within the United Kingdom.

Carlos Martiel was born in 1989 in Havana, Cuba, and lives and works in New York City. He graduated in 2009 from the National Academy of Fine Arts 'San Alejandro' in Havana. Between 2008 and 2010, he studied in the Cátedra Arte de Conducta, directed by Tania Bruguera. Martiel's works have been included in 57th Venice Biennale, Italy. He has had performances at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, The Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art and El Museo del Barrio in NYC, The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH). He has received several awards, including Grants to Artists from Foundation for Contemporary Arts in NYC.

9 – Noise Body series

Paula Garcia

Queen Elizabeth Hall Backstage

#9 Noise Body is part of a series of performances in which Paula Garcia covers her body with neodymium magnets, while collaborators cover these magnets with industrial pieces of iron until her body disappears under this rubbish. The concept of 'Body Noise' represents a body that is defined by the sum of three factors: precariousness, uncertainty and risk. Magnets are elements that serve to discuss the concept of forces. Not just the invisible subjective type, but also the more evident type of social forces that work to consolidate a system of power that ends up shaping things like bodies, feelings, subjectivities and truths. In these performances, she tries to show disassembled bodies, collapsing. Ultimately, what Garcia proposes in her actions is a performative use of her body as a material support in which forms of conflict are inscribed.

Paula Garcia is an artist and PhD researcher at PUC in São Paulo. Her research and artistic experiences focus on performance. She has worked as an artist, independent curator and curator for MAI since 2012. Artistic production came first and her curatorial practice began in 2010, when she began research looking at the production of performance projects, based on the artist's driven process. The focus of these artistic and curatorial projects is on the urgency of producing an aesthetic discourse, which departs from our subjectivity so that we can discuss the present moment, in order to build new ideas of the world.

Because the knees bend

Paul Setúbal

Queen Elizabeth Hall Backstage

The artist is in a corridor made of white walls, a public access passage that connects visitors to other performances. With his face and body completely covered by black clothing, the artist constantly manipulates a rubber police baton and manoeuvres the object in space. Upon entering the corridor, the public observes the artist exhaustively handling and attacking the white walls, marking them due to the violence of the blows.

Paul Setúbal, born in Goiás, Brazil (1987). PhD in Art and Visual Culture, lives and works in São Paulo. The body is a dimension constantly explored in Setúbal's production, considered as an important social and geographical support of discussions that permeate situations of conflict, either as a way of experiencing and testing its physical limits, or as a way of translating relations of power. His research is based on different types of media, addressing the problems and symbolologies of the body in contemporary society, its use, control, violence, resistance, abuse and power relationships. He presents his work in several countries and is currently developing projects with art galleries and institutions in the United Kingdom, Europe and Latin America.

Water in a Heatwave

Miles Greenberg

Queen Elizabeth Hall

Water in a Heatwave is a durational piece for between four and 12 performers. In pairs, the performers clash their bodies into each other atop a series of pedestals, creating numerous tensions within the space.

Miles Greenberg (born in Montreal in 1997) is a New York-based performance artist and sculptor. His work consists of large-scale, sensorially immersive and often site-specific environments revolving around the physical body in space. These installations are activated with often extremely demanding durational performances that treat the body as sculptural material and are then captured in real time before the audience to generate later video works and sculptures. At age 17, Greenberg abandoned formal education, throwing himself into four years of independent research on movement and architecture, which spanned a number of residencies in Paris, Beijing and New York. He has worked under the mentorship of Édouard Lock, Robert Wilson and Marina Abramović. The result of a rigorous, ritualistic methodology, Greenberg's work follows self-contained, nonlinear systems of logic that are best understood in relation to one another.

Tiresias

Cassils

Purcell Room

Wed 4 – Fri 6 Oct only

Tiresias is a durational performance in which Cassils melts a neoclassical Greek male ice sculpture with pure body heat. The mythological figure of Tiresias, known as the blind prophet of Thebes, was transformed from a man into a woman for seven years. Cassils recasts the myth of Tiresias as a story of endurance and transformation, performing the resolve required to persist at the point of contact between masculine and feminine.

For this takeover, Cassils premieres a three-day expanded version of *Tiresias* by melting different sculptures inspired by sculptures found in the Victoria and Albert Museum. On the first day, Cassils melts Ivan Meštrović's *Torso of Banovic Strahinja* (1908), on the second day Alphonse Legros' *Torso* (1890), and on the third day, a block of ice, letting the negative shape of their body create a new form. This iteration has special significance as it marks Cassils' last live performance before they undergo gender-affirming surgery.

Cassils is a transgender artist who makes their own body the material and protagonist of their performances. Cassils' art contemplates the history(s) of LGBTQI+ violence, representation, struggle and survival. For Cassils, performance is a form of social sculpture: drawing from the idea that bodies are formed in relation to forces of power and social expectations, Cassils' work investigates historical contexts to examine the present moment. Cassils has had recent solo exhibitions at HOME Manchester, Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, NYC, Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, Bemis Center, Omaha and MU Eindhoven, Netherlands. They are the recipient of the National Creation Fund, a 2020 Fleck Residency from the Banff Center for the Arts, a Princeton Lewis Artist Fellowship finalist, a Villa Bellagio Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, a United States Artist Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Creative Capital Award. Cassils is an Associate Professor in Visual Studies at the University of Toronto.

Goodnight Daisies

Carla Adra

Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer/Roaming

Goodnight Daisies invites viewers into a chorus of shared vulnerability and quiet strength. Carla Adra and six identical performers wear daisy-themed pyjamas and make-up, evoking a disturbance between the innocence of childhood and the traumas of the stories told.

The Goodnight Daisies become vectors of empathy, sharing stories gathered from 200 strangers. These stories encompass personal struggles, injustices, family tribulations and traumas.' As night falls and the world goes silent, the Goodnight Daisies serenade the audience with these stories. Their synchronised voices weave a harmonious tapestry of shared experiences, like secrets whispered before sleep.

Goodnight Daisies explores not only the theme of shared experiences, but also identity and its fluidity. The performers transcend their personalities to become receptacles for the stories of others, demonstrating that one body can house multiple voices and identities.

* The stories were recorded during the performance *The Employee of the Office of Tears* by Carla Adra during *No Intermission*, curated by Marina Abramović Institute at Amsterdam's Théâtre Royal Carré in 2022.

Carla Adra (lives and works in Paris) is a French artist. Her work (performances, installations, videos, drawings, writings, etc.) is rooted in the everyday context and refers to the notion of intimacy. Speaking of others through herself, her work examines the erasure or disappearance of self behind the stories, desires or feelings of those whose words she listens to and endorses, with particular care, as the tangible material of her projects. Adra's work has been exhibited at institutions including Palais de Tokyo (Paris), 15th Biennale de Lyon, CAPC (Bordeaux). She is represented by Galerie Valeria Cetraro (Paris).

'Are you hungry?'

Aleksandar Timotic

Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer/Purcell Room

I grew up in Serbia, in the Balkans area of south-eastern Europe. One of the first associations related to the Balkans is 'very emotional people.'

Yes, we are very loud, very expressive, but when it comes to love? It is considered a weakness. It is very difficult for us to show our innermost emotions. One of the biggest expressions of love for Balkan people is to ask someone: 'Are you hungry?' This is one of the reasons why our traditional songs carry so much tragedy and are full of tales of self-destructive love.

Aleksandar Timotic (born 1992) is an opera singer and performer. He was born in Serbia, where he started his music education, completing his studies at Folkwang University in Essen, Germany, where he studied performance art under Marina Abramović and Billy Zhao. During his time in Germany, Timotic also performed as a singer in theatres including Theater Lübeck and Bayerische Staatsoper. He loves to use different forms of art to communicate to the public. In 2023 he performed *Are you Hungry?* in Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany.

I first encountered Marina Abramović's performance work over two decades ago (admittedly late to the party given her body of work over the last 50 years) and it left an indelible impression on me. The combination of stillness, endurance, jeopardy, charisma and her profound presence seemed to make time move with a stranger, slower rhythm. It created a space between the artist and her audience that enabled an intense understanding of what it meant to be alive in that very moment.

So, it's thrilling for all of us at the Southbank Centre to invite Marina and the 11 international artists of the Marina Abramović Institute to take over and transform the entirety of the Queen Elizabeth Hall complex: auditoria, foyers, green rooms, dressing rooms and loading docks. Each of their extraordinary durational performance works will push them to the limits of physical and mental endurance.

I know that for Marina these projects with cohorts of next-generation international artists are as important and vital as anything she's ever created. They are the legacy of a breathtaking 50-year career, where her nurturing, her encouragement and her tutelage of artists is securing an exciting future for performance across the world. Bringing Marina's remarkable practice to the widest possible audience is vital to the Southbank Centre, too: in working with the leading artistic innovators of our time, we strive to be an engine of creativity and to support artistic practice that will define our culture over the coming decades.

So breathe deeply, move slowly and have surprising and wonderful encounters in the hours ahead ...

Mark Ball

Artistic Director, Southbank Centre

Our Glorious Past Our Glorious Present Our Glorious Future: Our Glorious Spring

Collective Absentia

Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer

Our Glorious Past Our Glorious Present Our Glorious Future is an ongoing performance series by Collective Absentia. Conceived and developed around 2011, it mainly involves a series of durational works performed at different sites inside and outside Myanmar.

Our Glorious Past Our Glorious Present Our Glorious Future: Our Glorious Spring is a durational performance that aims to meditate on the agency and potency of non-violence actions as a form of resistance. The performance attempts to explore the history of political violence in Burma/Myanmar from its pre-colonial time to the present day without replicating and/or glorifying any form of explicit violent actions committed by both the oppressors and the oppressed, or that portrayed in the media or by the art community.

This performance is dedicated to the ungrivable deaths due to the ongoing political violence in Burma/Myanmar since 1948.

Collective Absentia is a group of artists and researchers exploring the functions of arts and cultural practices in the Global South. The collective is currently working on a research project to study the issues around the culture of political violence in Southeast Asia and how they have been represented in contemporary art practices. This performance is part of the research with a special focus on Myanmar.

A Key

Yiannis Pappas

Queen Elizabeth Hall Foyer

This work addresses the issue of confinement as a multifaceted challenge encompassing personal, political, economic, and religious conflicts, as well as social exclusion and exploitation. The title *A Key* serves as a homophone of the Greek word 'κλει' (pronounced 'eki', meaning 'there'), encapsulating both a preoccupation with seeking an escape and an imposition of subjugation.

Yiannis Pappas concentrates on self-imposed states of bodily art space-confinement for a duration of five days. Progressing through a sequence of six 'cells', his sole means of escape is a key, which he wields to breach the walls. The final confinement cell only unlocks when a visitor retrieves the key from his hands and inserts it into the lock.

Yiannis Pappas is a visual and performance artist who completed his education in sculpture and photography in Athens and Berlin. He received recognition from the Academy of Athens and subsequently pursued an MFA in 'space strategies', with a focus on performance and anthropology. His commitment to interdisciplinary art practices has garnered him notable achievements, including the Berlin 2021 Research Stipend. Central to his artistic exploration is a critical examination of space as both a physical and symbolic platform for creative expression. Pappas' work has been featured in prestigious exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale of Architecture, Athens Biennale, and the first Bangkok Art Biennale, among others. Born and raised on Patmos island, he has established his artistic base in Berlin, consistently presenting his captivating creations on a global scale.

SOON THE BAWK CHEMISTRE

Marina Abramović Institute Takeover

In the nooks and crannies of an ordinary day strange realities hide themselves.

In the corners and alcoves of the mind odd visions play their games.

And in this concrete maze artists go to work.

Queen Elizabeth Hall

WED 4 – SUN 8 OCT