

## Marina Abramović: *White Space*

17 September – 1 November 2014  
27 Bell Street, London

Taking its title from an early, immersive sound environment, *White Space* presents a range of historic works by Marina Abramović, most of which have never been exhibited before. Featuring two important sound pieces, previously unseen video documentation of seminal performances and a number of newly discovered photographs, all dating from 1971-1975, the exhibition reveals the artist's first forays into a performance-based practice dealing with time and the immaterial, themes which have again become central to her current work.

First realised in 1972 at The Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade, *White Space* was a room lined with white paper containing a tape recording of the artist repeating the phrase "I love you". Visitors were instructed to "Enter the space. Listen." Never since recreated, this work forms the centrepiece of this display of rare, formative Abramović works, which nevertheless relate thematically to her recent decision to strip down her practice to its essence and empty out the Serpentine Gallery for her long-duration performance there, entitled *512 Hours*. A second audio work installed in its own environment, *The Tree* (1971) can be heard just outside the gallery, in its central courtyard, where a number of speakers blare out an artificially amplified repetition of birds chirping, the insistent recording perhaps referring to the recorded pronouncements of Josip Broz 'Tito', Yugoslavia's revolutionary socialist leader of the time, whom Abramović's parents fought with and eventually served under, as military officers in the Communist government.

Consisting of a series of 28 photographic works partially obscured by white correction fluid, also played on an accompanying slide projection, *Freeing the Horizon* (1973) represents Abramović's enigmatic and systematic erasure of a number of important buildings from the Belgrade skyline, many of which, coincidentally, the artist later discovered were physically obliterated by the NATO bombings of 1999 as part of the Kosovo War. Three other later works from this series will be presented in new formats: *Freeing the Memory* is a film projection with sound, depicting Abramović's attempt to recall every Serbian word she can, in a continuous stream of language, for over an hour. *Freeing the Voice* sees her lying prone on a white mattress with her head tilted back, screaming until she loses her voice, while *Freeing the Body* (all 1975) follows another of her own tightly-scripted scenarios: "I move to the rhythm of the black African drummer. I move until I am completely exhausted. I fall."

Also on show in her second solo exhibition with the gallery is a newly remastered and previously unseen film version of *Rhythm 5* (1974), which was captured by the artist's brother, Velmir Abramović. As the artist lays on the floor, in the middle of a burning five-point star (the symbol of Yugoslav Partisans), she loses consciousness due to a lack of oxygen resulting from the fire and has to be rescued by concerned onlookers. Then, as now, Abramović reveals, through her performative works and experiential situations, how heightened states of being and awareness can be achieved simply through the conjunction of her body, her voice and her presence in a space – or, conversely, through the absence of all of the above.

52–54 Bell Street  
London NW1 5DA

T +44 (0)20 7724 2739

Via Zenale, 3  
20123 Milan  
Italy

241 Eldridge Street  
10002 New York  
USA

[lissongallery.com](http://lissongallery.com)

# LISSON GALLERY

## About the artist

Since the beginning of her career in Belgrade during the early 1970s, Marina Abramović has pioneered performance as a visual art form. Her early *Rhythm* performances married concept with physicality, endurance with empathy, complicity with loss of control, passivity with danger. They pushed the boundaries of self-discovery, both of herself and her audience. They also marked her first engagements with time, stillness, energy and the resulting heightened consciousness generated by long durational performance. The body has always been both her subject and medium. Exploring her physical and mental limits in works that ritualise the simple actions of everyday life, she has withstood pain, exhaustion and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. From 1975-88, Abramović and Ulay performed together, dealing with relations of duality. She returned to solo performances in 1989 and for *The Artist Is Present* (2010) sat for eight hours per day over three months, engaged in silent eye contact with hundreds of strangers.

Marina Abramović was one of the first performance artists to become formally accepted by the institutional museum world. Her international solo shows include the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1985; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1990; Neue National Galerie, Berlin, 1993, and the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 1995. She has also participated in many large-scale international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale (1976 and 1997) and Documenta VI, VII and IX, Kassel (1977, 1982 and 1992). Major performances include *Seven Easy Pieces* at the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2005); *The Artist Is Present* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010) and *512 Hours* at the Serpentine Galleries (2014). Marina Abramović is establishing the MAI (Marina Abramović Institute) to support the future exploration and promotion of performance art.

## About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, it pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Sol LeWitt and Richard Long, as well as those of significant British sculptors from Anish Kapoor and Tony Cragg to a younger generation, led by Ryan Gander and Haroon Mirza. Lisson Gallery represents 45 of the most innovative and exciting artists working today, including Allora and Calzadilla, Ai Weiwei, Gerard Byrne, Tatsuo Miyajima, Rashid Rana, Pedro Reyes and Santiago Sierra. In addition to its two exhibition spaces in London, one in Milan and a fourth gallery to open under the High Line in New York in early 2015, the *Lisson Presents* programme also extends a legacy of curatorial innovation beyond the galleries, working with institutions and artists to present new initiatives around the world.

## Exhibition Facts

**Opening Hours:** Monday-Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 11am-5pm

**Location:** 52 Bell Street, London, NW1 5DA

**Tel:** + 44(0)20 7724 2739

**Website:** <http://www.lissongallery.com>

## For press information and images please contact:

Gair Burton or Diana Babei at Rhiannon Pickles PR

Tel: +44 (0)7402 784 470

Email: [gair@picklespr.com](mailto:gair@picklespr.com), [diana@picklespr.com](mailto:diana@picklespr.com)

52-54 Bell Street  
London NW1 5DA

T +44 (0)20 7724 2739

Via Zenale, 3  
20123 Milan  
Italy

241 Eldridge Street  
10002 New York  
USA

[lissongallery.com](http://lissongallery.com)