

NEON + MAI

PRESS RELEASE
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NEON and the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI) present *As One*
Benaki Museum | Pireos St. Annexe
10 March – 24 April 2016

NEON's programme for 2016 opens with a wide-ranging and substantial collaboration with the Marina Abramović Institute (MAI).

NEON was founded with the aim of broadening the Greek public's access to various forms of contemporary art. To this end, it partners with cultural organisations and institutions in Greece and across the world to realise pioneering projects, presenting Greek and international artists, events and discussions within the very fabric of the city in order to form part of its daily cultural life.

Performance art is an essential element of contemporary culture. MAI serves as the legacy of its greatest exponent, Marina Abramović, and works to promote and present collaborative projects and young artists.

With the *As One* project, these two organisations share the same vision: to promote the art of performance, and to help familiarise and educate the widest possible audience in this form of contemporary art. In addition, the project seeks to bring a new generation of young Greek performance artists to the fore.

Over the course of seven weeks, *As One* will present the *Abramović Method* and an extensive programme of performances, lectures, screenings and workshops, with the participation of 29 artists. This Greek programme, one of the largest to have been dedicated to performance art in Europe, was created by NEON and MAI, and is being realised by the two organisations, together.

Abramović Method

The *Abramović Method* is a series of exercises designed by Marina Abramović to engage the public with participatory experiences. The *Method* draws upon a huge reservoir of the artist's experiences, performances and practice over the last 40 years that is gradually being distilled into a series of exercises that seek to connect us with our own selves, and with those around us. The *Method* is founded upon individual and collective participation, and forms an experiential approach to immaterial art.

Since this process is being continually explored and reshaped by its creator, the specific form of the *Method* to be presented in Athens will be a unique evolution of comparable works presented by the artist across the world over the years.

It is a public, participatory experience designed for large groups of people inside a communal space, where visitors are invited to undertake a series of exercises and watch others do the same.

A core part of the *As One* project, the *Abramović Method* takes place on the ground floor of the Pireos St. Annexe of the Benaki Museum. As visitors enter the *Method*, they are asked to store all their personal belongings inside special lockers: wristwatches, mobile phones and cameras. Under the guidance of the facilitators, trained by Marina Abramović's associate Lynsey Peisinger, visitors perform a series of warm-up exercises designed to stimulate the senses, stretch out the body, and focus the mind on what is to come. This preparation allows participants to centre their attention on being present inside the moment, motionless and connected without obstacles of any kind.

Performances

A total of 29 Greek and international artists are taking part in *As One*. The Greek artists, selected by Marina Abramović and her associates Serge Le Borgne and Paula Garcia following an open call, will present new commissions.

The performance programme includes six long-duration works by six Greek artists, performed for eight hours each day throughout all seven weeks of the project. Another 21 performances by 23 artists (18 Greek and five international) will be presented as interventions lasting between one and six days each.

The participating artists are:

Long-duration performances – Yota Argyropoulou, Virginia Mastrogiannaki, Lambros Pigounis, Nancy Stamatopoulou, Thodoris Trampas and Despina Zacharopoulou.

Performance interventions – Rafael Abdala + Jessica Goes, Yannis Adoniou + Stavros Apostolatos, Thanassis Akokkalidis, Elena Antoniou, Spyros Charalampopoulos, Dimitris Chimonas, Amanda Coogan, Thomas Diafas, Serafita Grigoriadou, Maria Herranz, Giannis Karounis, Marianna Kavallieratos, Alexandros Michail, Kira O'Reilly, Katerina Oikonomou, Nikolaos, Anastasia Papatheodorou, Yiannis Pappas, PASHIAS, Evgenia Tsanana and Christina Vasileiou.

Completing the programme are two re-performances of works by Marina Abramović – “Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful” (1975) and “Cleaning the Mirror” (1995) – by the artists Dimitris Bampilis, Dimitra Billia, Gitsa Konstadoudaki, Martha Pasakopoulou, Eliane Roumie, Vassiliki Spachou and Kalliopi Zervoulakou.

Talks, Workshops and Screenings

The *As One* project includes a parallel programme of talks that aim to educate the public about the history and development of performance art, highlighting interconnected practices such as theatre and dance. A series of workshops with participating and invited artists will help the public better understand the structures and mechanisms employed by performative works digging deep into the ways artists develop their work. The talks and workshops are supplemented by a daily programme of screenings, with short films and features on the work of Marina Abramović, the pieces that influenced her practice, films by our invited speakers, and other materials drawn from the Greek Film Archive.

Marina Abramović will be giving two lectures, one on the history of performance art (on Saturday, 19 March) and one on its future and the role to be played by the every increasing participation of the public (on Wednesday, 23 March), using material from MAI's most recent exhibition in Brazil. She will also be speaking with select artists about their practice at two workshops (on Friday, 11 and Tuesday, 22 March).

Greek National Opera director Alexandros Efklidis and the artist Katerina Oikonomou will give a talk about the relationship between opera and performance practice (on Thursday, 17 March). Anna Stavrakopoulou, a theatre specialist and associate professor of the Theatre Department at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, will be discussing the transition from theatre to the art of performance (on Saturday, 2 April). Syrago Tsiara, director of the Thessaloniki Contemporary Art Centre, will run a workshop on the body's place in performance art (on Friday, 15 April) and will be speaking with the artist Leda Papakonstantinou, one of the first in Greece to make use of performance, during the 1970s and '80s (on Saturday, 16 April). Art theorist Sofia Eliza Bouratsi will be speaking about the aesthetics of the body and its limits in the art of performance (on Tuesday, 19 April), and MAI artistic director Serge Le Borgne will give a talk on immaterial art forms (on Saturday, 19 March).

The ways in which performance can function through the immobility of the body will be explored in a workshop with Eva Lambara and her teacher, the director Annita Capousizi, to show how a body of limited mobility can create unlimited ways of approaching and interpreting the world (on Wednesday, 16 March); a sample of Lambara's work will also be presented.

Major international artists have been invited to talk about their work. Damien Jalet will give a workshop on his practice, while his latest film will be screened (on Thursday, 7 April). Tehching Hsieh, a pioneer of long durational performance who came to prominence in New York in the 1980s, will be talking about his work (on Sunday, 10 April). Jacopo Godani, artistic director and choreographer of the Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company, will also be talking about his work, and giving a workshop for select artists (on Thursday, 21 April).

There will also be workshops with the project's international performance artists Rafael Abdala + Jessica Goes (on Thursday, 14 through Sunday, 17 April), Maria Herranz (on Thursday, 31 March), Amanda Coogan (on Tuesday, 5 April) and Kira O'Reilly (on Sunday, 24 April), as well as with the MAI team (Serge Le Borgne, Paula Garcia and Lynsey Peisinger) with select artists.

"Mutual Wave Machine"

As part of *As One*, the "Mutual Wave Machine" will be installed inside the Benaki Museum. The machine was designed by the renowned neurologist and artist Suzanne Dikker and the artist and software creator Matthias Oostrik, and inspired by Marina Abramović's "Mutual Gaze" performance, which forms part of the *Abramović Method*. The machine was installed by Peter Burr, Diederik Schoorl and Pantelis Diamantidis.

This neuroscience experiment and interactive neurofeedback installation explores and embodies the elusive notion of "being on the same wavelength" with another person through brainwave synchronisation. Enclosed by an intimate capsule and immersed in an audiovisual environment that responds and reflects their shared brain activity, two visitors can directly experience and manipulate their internal efforts to approach or distance themselves from each other.

The "Mutual Wave Machine" will be open to the public for the duration of the project on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 12:00-15:00 and 17:00-20:00, on Fridays from 13:00-16:00 and 19:00-22:00 and on Sundays from 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-18:00.

For more information, please visit neon.org.gr

NEON+MAI: As One

Dates: 10 March – 24 April 2016

Open Day: 10 March 2016, 12.00-20.00

Benaki Museum | Pireos St. Annexe, 138 Pireos St. (on the corner of Andronikou St.), Athens

As One will be hosted throughout the spaces of the Benaki Museum's Pireos St. Annexe. The Museum will be extending its opening hours for the duration of the project.

Opening Hours:

Tuesday – Wednesday – Thursday – Saturday: 12.00 – 20.00

Friday: 12.00 – 22.00

Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00

Monday: closed

Entrance free.

Abramović Method participants must be aged fifteen or over. Entry into the Method ends 45 minutes before the Museum closes.

Note to editors

NEON is a non-profit organisation founded by art collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos in 2013. Taking its name from the Greek word for 'new', NEON is committed to bringing contemporary culture in Greece closer to everyone, and to highlighting the ability that artistic creation has to stimulate, inspire and affect. It also aims to contribute to wider efforts being made to revitalise and revamp both the city of Athens and the daily lives of its citizens, rehabilitating their connection to the city's workings, events and affairs.

NEON does not limit itself to a single setting. It sees the entire city, the very urban fabric, as its home. It is a vibrant and engaging interlocutor with civic and cultural stakeholders, and the broader public.

NEON is realising its mission through the organisation of exhibitions, educational programmes, events and talks, scholarship and grant schemes, and the creation of an international network of collaborations and exchanges. NEON partners with arts bodies and supports the activities of public and private institutions in order to help broaden access to contemporary art. NEON seeks to show that culture is a key tool for growth and development.

To **Marina Abramović Institute (MAI)** explores, supports, and presents performance. MAI encourages collaboration between the arts, science, and the humanities, and partners with venues and artists presenting workshops and collaborative projects.

MAI focuses on education and community outreach, and serves as the legacy of Marina Abramović.

MAI is home to the Abramović Method, a series of exercises designed by Marina Abramović over the course of forty years to explore boundaries of body and mind.

Press Information

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