

RADICAL, UNCOMPROMISING, CONTROVERSIAL MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ: A HALF-CENTURY OF WORK

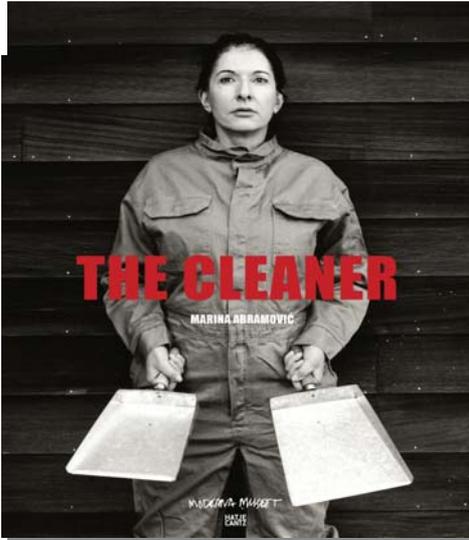
She injured her fingers with a knife, ended a relationship as part of a performance, and scrubbed cattle bones clean: Marina Abramović is considered the most important performance artist of our time. For five decades she's used her body to explore the boundaries of art. Her uncompromising self-surrender is the subject of both critique and praise. *Marina Abramović | The Cleaner* is now the artist's first large retrospective in Europe.

Berlin, February 9, 2017 – “First of all, to see long durational pieces of art, the public has to be prepared. A certain kind of conditioning is required. One needs to learn how to concentrate,” Marina Abramović says, explaining how to approach performances. Without her, this form of art would never have achieved the attention that it receives outside of museums and art schools. Abramović's work has even entered pop culture—for example, her piece *The House with the Ocean View* was reenacted in the popular American television series *Sex and the City*. Abramović has not only conquered a place for herself in contemporary art, she has mastered her medium and continues to develop it.

Born in Belgrad in 1949, this artist produces work that raises existential questions about life and death. Her own body has always served as a starting point for her performances. Rarely has physical and spiritual pain been so penetratingly researched as it has in Abramović's work. For her, pain is “the door of secrets,” which is why, in her very first performance, she stabbed the flesh in between her widespread fingers with various knives. In this piece, *Rhythm 10*, every time she hit one of her fingers, the then-twenty-six-year-old switched knives. For *The Lovers* Abramović and her partner at the time, Ulay, walked for ninety days toward each other, starting from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China. The point where they met in the middle marked the end of their more than ten-year-long relationship. About a decade later, at the Venice Biennial, she spent four days scrubbing long-decayed cattle bones in her piece *Balkan Baroque*, symbolizing the bloody conflict in the Balkans. For this she was awarded the Golden Lion.

The Cleaner is now the first extensive monograph dealing with her work. It gathers together Abramović's pieces from more than half-a-century. Besides the unparalleled performative oeuvre, *The Cleaner* also features less well-known works, including paintings, photographs, and installations. Her early works are, for example, devoted to such manically repeated series of themes such as auto accidents and clouds.

In addition to essays by the three curators Tine Colstrup, Lena Essling, and Adrian Heathfield, *The Cleaner* contains pieces by Bojana Pejic and Devin Zuber that define the position of Abramović's art in a historical, political context. The book is being published in conjunction with the eponymous retrospective at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, which will be on display from February 18. The show will also travel to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebæk and the Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn.



**MARINA ABRAMOVIC
THE CLEANER**

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Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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