

#M0054492NC

T2107

NC 0021181 8



The National College of Art and Design

Faculty of Fine Art (Printmaking)

**“The Masochistic Rhythms
of
Marina Abramovic: 1973-1974”**

by Shauna Bailey

Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art/Design and
Complementary Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of B. A. in Fine
Art and Art History, 1998.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the assistance, guidance and support of
Elaine Sisson in the preparation and writing of this thesis.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60637

CONTENTS

Title Page		
Acknowledgements		1
Contents		2
List of Plates		3
Chapter 1	"Introduction"	4-12
Chapter 2	"<i>Rhythm 0</i> The Role Reversal"	13-27
Chapter 3	"<i>Rhythm 10 & Rhythm 5</i> Repetition & Purification"	28-40
Chapter 4	"<i>Rhythm 2 & Rhythm 4</i> Medication & Air Pressure"	41-53
Chapter 5	"Conclusion"	54-59
Appendix		60-65
Bibliography		66-69

270514121

LIST OF PLATES

		PAGE
PLATE 1(a) & (b)	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	15
PLATE 2	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	15
PLATE 3	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	17
PLATE 4	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	17
PLATE 5	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	18
PLATE 6	<i>RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	18
PLATE 7	<i>RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.</i>	30
PLATE 8 (a) & (b)	<i>RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.</i>	30
PLATE 9	<i>RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.</i>	31
PLATE 10 (a), (b) & (c)	<i>RHYTHM 5, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	35
PLATE 11 (a) & (b)	<i>RHYTHM 5, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	36
PLATE 12	<i>RHYTHM 2, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	43
PLATE 13 (a) & (b)	<i>RHYTHM 2, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	44
PLATE 14 (a) & (b)	<i>RHYTHM 4, 1974. PERFORMANCE.</i>	48

LETTER

1944

Dear Mr. [Name]

I am very pleased to hear from you.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

I am sure you will find the enclosed of interest.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1971

SECTION

It is surprising that although Marina Abramovic is a well documented artist there is little if no documentation referring to the masochistic elements in her work, especially that of the period 1973-1975. Within this period, the artist performed five pieces which form the *Rhythm* series. Each performance involved the artist enduring varying levels of self-inflicted injury to create the work. Critics writing on the subject, however, seem to be more concerned with how the work tested "the limits of human knowledge and endurance" (Martin 1995-'96, p. 86). Doris von Drathen refers to the work of this series in terms of Abramovic's grappling "with the limits of her physical and mental consciousness,...[and a concern] with opening up, ... areas of perception which lie outside of rational conventions" (von Drathen 1995, p. 225). The inherently complicated subjects of masochism and sadism have been avoided at all costs.

Between feminist writers there seems to have been an unsaid agreement to avoid these problematic issues of self-inflicted injury. Feminist structuralists' analysis of work like Abramovic's tended to take the female body off the art agenda because of the problems associated with the male gaze and the reinscription of hierarchical structures and norms. They saw actions of artists such as Abramovic as strengthening the positions of sadist/masochist, object/subject. Theresa Brennan, a Freudian theorist, also noted that feminist commentators discussing aspects in the work such as death drive and melancholia seem to avoid the heart of the matter: masochism. Brennan sees this kind of debate as "utopian", (Brennan 1992, p. 75).

However, references are made to opposing active and passive forces which are at work within these performances. Thomas Mc Evilly, in his essay, "The Serpent in the Stone", discusses the work in terms of a "tense intersection of Apollo and Dionysus" which never allows one ascendancy over the other. He sees it as an embodying of an "inner dualism", in which the artist acts as the "sacrificer and

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work. It is followed by a detailed account of the various projects and the results achieved. The report concludes with a summary of the work done and the plans for the future.

The second part of the report deals with the financial aspects of the work. It gives a detailed account of the income and expenditure of the organization and shows how the funds have been used. It also includes a statement of the assets and liabilities of the organization.

The third part of the report deals with the administrative aspects of the work. It gives a detailed account of the organization's structure and the work of the various departments. It also includes a statement of the personnel of the organization.

the sacrificed”(Mc Evilly 1995, p. 50). RoseLee Goldberg succinctly describes the work as “passive aggression” (Goldberg 1995, p. 11). These roles of active and passive which Abramovic occupies are integral to the sadism/masochism dichotomy, yet, the words sadism and masochism are never mentioned.

Throughout my research on Marina Abramovic and the *Rhythm* series itself I have encountered but one single reference of masochism in relation to this artist’s work. Unusually, it appeared in a book on Australian performance art, Body and Self Performance Art in Australia 1969-1992. The author, Anne Marsh, does not further elaborate on her statement that “Abramovic’s solo work of the 1970s was clearly masochistic” (Marsh 1993, p. 98). However, it is the subject of this very statement that forms the main impetus of this thesis.

This thesis is concerned with the way in which Abramovic, through her self-inflicted injury, takes on the passive and active roles of the Freudian dichotomies of sadist/masochist, masculine/feminine, aggressive/submissive, subject/object, seer/seen. An investigation of the ways in which these oppositions reinforce the sadist/masochist positions occupied by either Abramovic or the audience is conducted. Abramovic’s performances are discussed within a framework of masochism, sadism, narcissism, exhibitionism, voyeurism and how these inter-link to form these extremely disturbing and problematic works.

Each performance contains the word *Rhythm* in its title and is differentiated from the others by a number. These numbers bear no relation to the chronological order of the work. This apparent lack of concern with orders and numerical sequences is reflected in the way in which the work is discussed. The performances are not discussed in the order in which they occurred.

Chapter 2 is solely concerned with *Rhythm 0*. It is the final performance in the *Rhythm* series and forms a synthesis of all the themes mentioned above. For this

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

reason it is the first to be discussed. This performance took place in Naples 1975 at a well known gallery. Abramovic presented to the audience a table with various instruments of provocation. She proceeded to take a passive stance beside this table and invited them to use them on her in whatever way they desired. "I am the Object", she stated. The performance lasted 6 hours and in this time the audience obeyed Abramovic's wishes. The various responses of the audience to the artist's invitation will be discussed together with an investigation of the dichotomies listed above.

Rhythm 10 and *Rhythm 5* are discussed together in Chapter 3 as there is a common emphasis on elements of the masquerade of femininity. *Rhythm 10* was carefully set up by the artist. In contrast to *Rhythm 0*, *Rhythm 10* was controlled solely by the artist. The audience played no direct role other than that of voyeur. On the floor of the gallery were two tape recorders and twenty knives. Abramovic spread her left hand on the wooden floor and with her right hand wielding a knife stabbed in between her fingers. Each time she cut herself she changed the knife. The rhythmic sound created by the the knife was taped and replayed in the second part of the performance. The artist simulated the first rhythm by repeating it exactly in conjunction with the recording. This in turn was recorded and left to play out as the artist left the space. The roles of active/passive, master of pain and will are of chief importance to this performance.

Rhythm 5 consisted of a large star shape set out on the floor which was filled with wood shavings that were soaked in petrol and then set alight. Abramovic proceeded to cut her fingernails, toe nails and clumps of her hair and tossed these at each end of the burning star. After this she entered the star shape and lay down in its centre. Here she passed out and a member of the audience intervened and stopped the performance. Symbolism and ritual are of particular significance to *Rhythm 5*.

The content of Chapter 4 is the remaining *Rhythm 2* and *Rhythm 4*. These are placed together as they both involved the artist who now no longer needed or desired the audience's interruptions. In *Rhythm 2* Abramovic ingested the active element of the performance *into* her body, forcing it into a perilous situation and merging art and life in one action. The artist took psychoactive medications used in the treatment of acute catatonia and schizophrenia in front of the audience. This brought on various violent reactions which ended when the medication wore off.

Rhythm 4 involved an increased distance between the artist and audience by using two separate spaces. The audience viewed the artist and her actions through a video monitor. In a separate space the artist was naked and knelt in front of an air blower. When this blower was switched on the artist's face hovered over the strong air flow. Abramovic lost consciousness due to the extreme pressure of the air. However, the audience remained unaware of this as Abramovic had carefully framed the scene with the monitor in such a way as to deprive them of this knowledge.

Freud developed the theme of masochism as the return of sadism against the self (Freud, 1915). In his paper, 'The economic problem of masochism' (1924), Freud identifies three types of psychical masochism: primary erotogenic, moral, and feminine. Primary erotogenic masochism is meant to underlie both feminine and moral masochism. Teresa Brennan, in her book The Interpretation of the Flesh, believes that it is 'pure death-drive' turned in against the self. It is the death drive that features in all three forms of masochism and is the important link to the work. Freud readily described 'moral masochism' as the need for punishment, the feeling of guilt, the fear of failure and a response to the superego. This is the masochism that is most at work in these performances, in particular *Rhythm 0*, where the artist seeks the punishment of the audience. It is

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The second part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development.

The third part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development. The fourth part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development.

The fifth part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development. The sixth part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development.

The seventh part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development. The eighth part of the report deals with the specific details of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough study of the country's development.

also one most obviously tied to the every day world. Kathy O' Dell links this to Theodore Reik's writings where his 'social masochism' is described loosely as "all those things we do to ourselves out of guilt of really wanting to do it to someone else, [and] done in the name of maintaining a stable environment"(O'Dell 1988, p. 96).

Freud notes that masochism is a 'truly feminine' trait:

"The suppression of women's aggressiveness, which is prescribed for them constitutionally and imposed on them socially, favours the development of powerful masochistic impulses, which succeed, as we know, in binding erotically the destructive trends which have been diverted inwards. Thus masochism, as people say, is truly feminine" (quoted by Brennan 1992, p.8).

The central difficulty of Freudian thought is the accusation of biological determinism which counters that social roles are dictated by nature rather than nurture; "men's and women's social roles themselves were grounded in nature, by virtue of the dictates of their bodies" (Martin 1997, p. 18). Helene Deutsch attributes this to the genetic factor of the biological nature of the female that inevitably leads the woman to adopt the "masochistic conception of the female role".(Horney 1935, p. 215). Emily Martin quotes Walter Bagehot in saying that the "attempt to alter the present relations of the sexes....is a struggle against nature"(Martin 1997, p. 18). In this theory women are naturally masochistic. During *Rhythm 0* Abramovic succeeds in presenting herself as a naturally masochistic female and embodies this 'truly feminine trait'. She accepts the audience's aggressive actions with total submission.

Within a Freudian discussion of masochism the theory of drives plays a fundamental role. Freud lists seven component drives: the oral drive, the anal-sadistic, the phallic drive, the drive for cruelty, the scopophilic drive, and the drive for mastery. Many of these drives inter-link/overlap and are at play in Abramovic's work. This interlocking network of drives consists of the

following: mastery, cruelty, knowledge, death, voyeurism/exhibitionism, sadism and narcissism.

The drive for mastery is of great importance as it appears to be pivotal in relation to the dichotomies of active/passive, masculine/feminine, masochism/sadism. Freud sees these dichotomies as the contrasts “which lie behind ... the universal characteristics of sexual life” (Freud, 1905 quoted in Brennan, p.152). This drive is a moving action force and is in play in each of the performances. It is especially present in Abramovic’s desire to master the limitations of her physical and mental body and its limitations.

The drive for cruelty is only mentioned in passing by Freud. However, he does refer to the “impulse of cruelty” saying that it arises within the drive for mastery (Brennan, P. 154). This is clearly linked to the artist’s desire to place herself in cruel and painful situations.

The drive for knowledge is intimately connected with sexual life since it is possibly aroused by sexual questions in early childhood. To illustrate how Freud sees this drive having links with that of mastery and scopophilia, Brennan quotes him:

Its activity corresponds on the one hand to a sublimated manner of obtaining mastery, while on the other hand it makes use of the energy of scopophilia. (Brennan, p.154).

This plays a significant role in each performance in various ways. In *Rhythm 0*, the artist gains knowledge of the audience’s innermost desires and aggressions. In *Rhythm 2* she gains the knowledge of how psychoactive medications affect her mind and physical body. In all the performances she gains the knowledge of how far she can take her body in a given situation.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the international situation of the country.

The death drive is of great importance to masochism, and is the main drive at work within narcissism and forms part of the ego drive. Freud found connections to narcissism and the death drive in its desire to resist change and to achieve the wholeness and stability found in death and the moment before birth. Stability is also achieved in this state before birth which takes the form of the infant-mother dyad. This drive is present in all of the performances as Abramovic is aware to some extent of the peril in which she is placing her body.

Another element of narcissism in play here is the desire for attention, to be the object of the gaze. Abramovic stated that without the audience this type of work would not have taken place. This need to be loved creates an individual who will do as others please in order to retain this love (Horney 1935, p. 214). This has connections to masochism and its submissive nature. The individual needs a strong sense of selfhood and to confirm that he/she exists and is of importance. The pain endured through masochism also serves to prove to the individual that he/she exists, can feel.

“Voyeurism and exhibitionism are the active and passive forms of scopophilia, The drive to look”(Grosz 1992, p. 447). They are related to the vicissitudes of attention and are prominent in (masculine) obsessional neurosis. These drives involve other people and objects external to the subject. Abramovic always places herself in a position that demands attention. She also relies on an external object or force to complete the work, whether it takes the form of the audience (*Rhythm 0*), an object such as the knife (*Rhythm 10*) or psychoactive medication (*Rhythm 2*). Voyeurism/exhibitionism have direct links to the desire for mastery and knowledge. The desire to master the object and possess the power of the gaze. The mastery is also linked to the desire to possess privileged knowledge of the object.

The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methodology used in the study. This includes a discussion of the data sources, the sampling method, and the statistical techniques used to analyze the data. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study. This includes a comparison of the results with the objectives of the study and a discussion of the implications of the findings. The final part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methodology used in the study. This includes a discussion of the data sources, the sampling method, and the statistical techniques used to analyze the data. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study. This includes a comparison of the results with the objectives of the study and a discussion of the implications of the findings. The final part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methodology used in the study. This includes a discussion of the data sources, the sampling method, and the statistical techniques used to analyze the data. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study. This includes a comparison of the results with the objectives of the study and a discussion of the implications of the findings. The final part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

These drives of mastery, cruelty, knowledge, death, voyeurism/exhibitionism, sadism and narcissism are manifest in Abramovic's work. They all play a part, interlinked and overlapping, in the structure and mechanism of masochism. This thesis examines the centrality of these elements to her work.

CHAPTER 2

RHYTHM 0 **THE ROLE REVERSAL**



CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER 3
THE ROLE REVERSAL



Although *Rhythm 0* occurs last in the cycle of Abramovic's, it is necessary to begin the discussion here as it encompasses most, if not all, of the ideas with which this thesis is concerned. The performance is an especially intense instance of the themes of master/slave, sadism/masochism, active/passive, agent/victim, exhibitionist/voyeur. *Rhythm 0* (1974), involved Abramovic's performance at the Studio Mona Gallery, Naples with a random group of people creating the audience. The artist presents herself along with the statement - "I am the object" - and an assortment of objects. These objects were various, ranging from weapons or instruments of torture (knives, loaded guns, blade and pins) to objects which were soft and harmless (feather, band aid, honey and cotton). This deliberate diversity illustrated the artist's effort to supply objects for every desire that the audience may possess, "objects for pain and pleasure" (Iles 1988, p. 17). The gallery director announced that the artist would remain in this fashion, completely passive, for six hours (8pm-2am), during which time the visitors could do whatever they wished with/to her.

It is difficult to gain an accurate idea of the proceedings as it is unclear what has been edited from or evaded capture by the photographic documentation of *Rhythm 0*. The chronology of the events which have been documented is also uncertain.

Looking at these photographs one observes that Abramovic was always in the centre with the audience surrounding her and one can sense the tension, the menace looming. The performance began as the audience approached the table which was laden with objects. They examined the items on offer. It is notable that the male members of the audience were the first to approach. Individuals came forward at different times during the 6 hour performance, some taking longer to build up the courage to overcome inhibitions of performing innermost desires in front of a room of strangers. They observed others who had made the

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

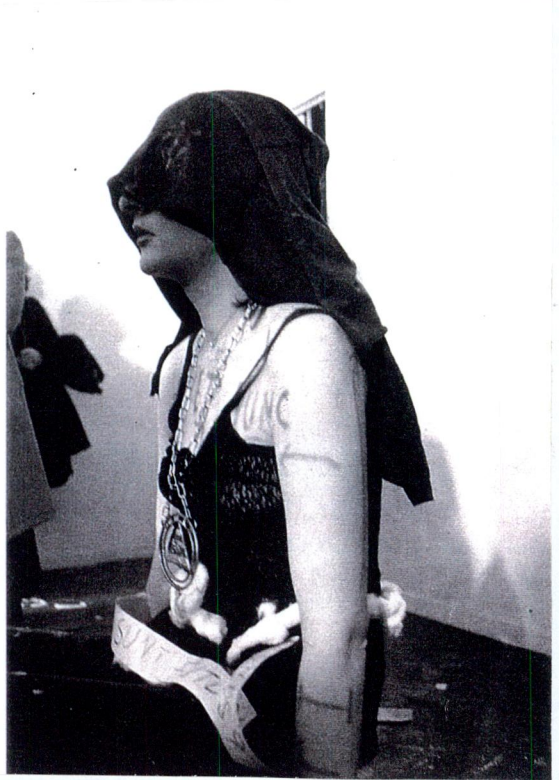
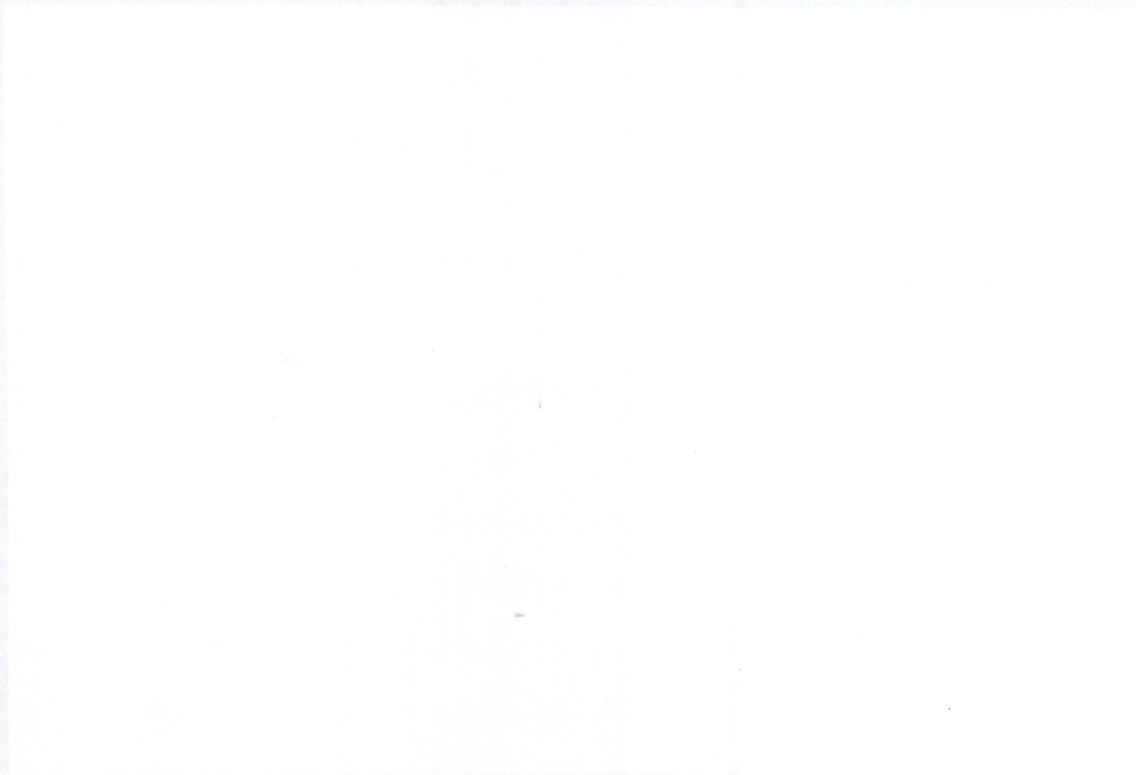


PLATE 1(a) & (b) *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



PLATE 2 *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



first move and then decided, "Yes. The situation is real, I can act on this woman, subject her to whatever I desire".

The audience's first actions on the artist began as harmlessly with them gently approaching her and testing the situation. One of the first men at the table inspecting the objects gave Abramovic a cigarette and lit it for her. Another wrapped the scarf lightly around her neck. They seemed to be holding her at arms length, - with each action executed with an outstretched arm. In plate 2 Abramovic was already holding the gun to her neck. They were already testing the limits to which Abramovic would go. It is unclear if the gun was loaded at this stage.

Throughout the performance the audience inscribed various words on the artist. An example of this can also be seen in plate 2 where 'END' has been written upon her forehead. Is it a premonition of what might be the outcome of this performance? Around her neck a sign, written by a member of the audience, reading 'VILE' would be hung. A certain sense of ridicule was creeping into the work. The thorny rose had been placed in her hand. Tears seemed to be filling her eyes. Again the artist was subjected to a ridiculing experience when a drink was poured over her head (plate 1(a)). Her clothing was gradually being removed and with more flesh bare the audience had more room to mark her skin in whatever way they desired. The discarded clothing was then placed over her head covering her eyes (plate 1(b)). A small man who had been visible in background early in the performance had come forward (plate 3). He tore away Abramovic's final line of defence, her clothes and stared at her chest. She still grasped the rose in her hand. The same man proceeded to pull the artist's face down to his level and kissed her on the cheek. All the while men surrounded the artist.

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's annual message to Congress, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the legislative branch.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the Secretary's annual report to the President, which is a key part of the executive branch's communication with the President.

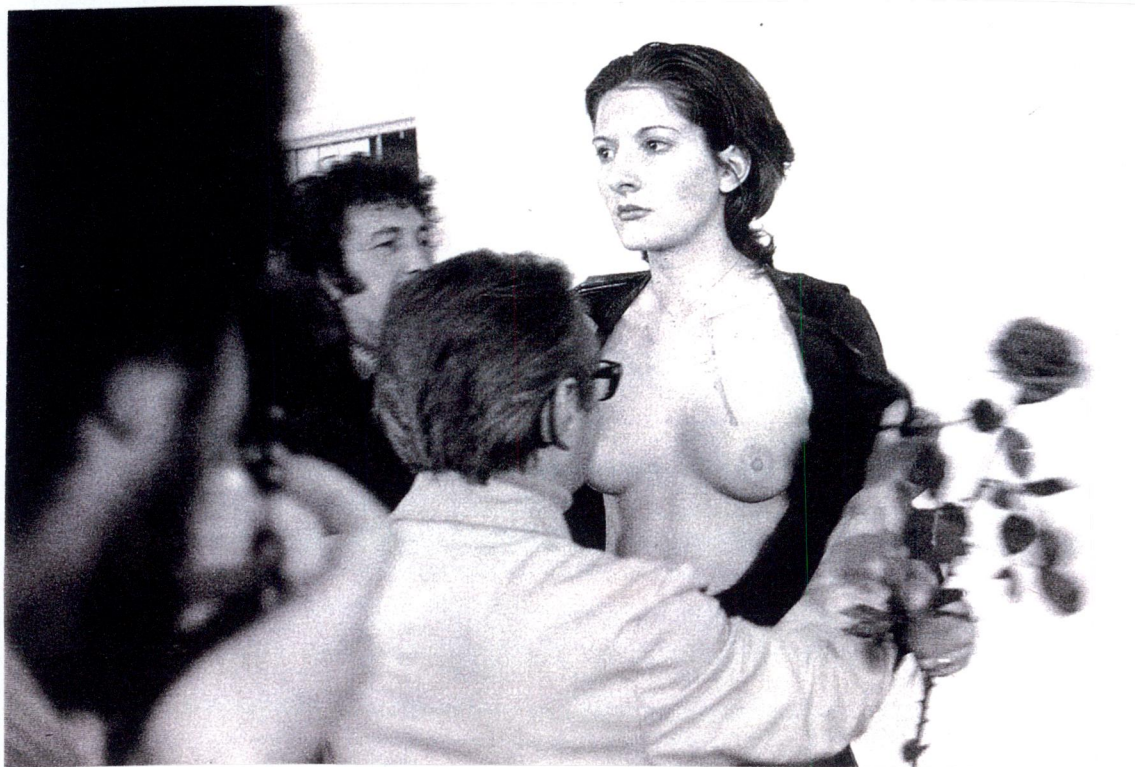


PLATE 3 *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



PLATE 4 *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



PLATE 5 *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



PLATE 6 *RHYTHM 0, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



In plate 4 men loom in the foreground, watching. Abramovic was there for their pleasure and viewing. The one woman who is clearly visible in the photograph has her back turned to the object of their attention, presumably, Abramovic.

In plate 5, the onlookers in the audience appear to be more interested in the proceedings as they become increasingly active and aggressive. People were even standing in the alcove of the window to get a better view of the performance. One woman actively intervened in the performance and these aggressive incidents. In a caring gesture she wiped the tears which had been forming in Abramovic's staring eyes. Significantly, she was the only woman who took an active role in the performance. The other female members of the audience remained remarkably passive and disengaged in the background. It was the male sector who are continually active and reaped the rewards of the situation.

All the while, the Polaroid camera had been used by various members of the audience, and the photographs taken are presented to the artist during the performance. Abramovic was visibly upset as she held up the photographs for the audience to see. Yet again they gained knowledge of her in a way that she may never possess.

In the final illustration, Abramovic stood almost alone (plate 6). The audience surrounded her in a dark looming mass and many people wielding their own cameras captured the moment on film. On the wall there were images of the artist's previous performances, here *Rhythm 2*, in which Abramovic subjected herself to painful situations in a deliberate fashion. It is possible that these images might have affected the atmosphere of the audience and the type of actions that they subjected Abramovic to. To what extent might they have incited some of the audience's violent reactions? About the artist's feet lay the discarded implements of provocation used to express these reactions.

It is uncertain how long this moment was before the incident that brought the performance to an abrupt, but necessary, end. After six hours of intense passivity on Abramovic's part and active aggression on that of the participants, a member of the audience ended the performance by removing the pistol that was held to Abramovic's temple. This action stopped the artist from doing what she was told - to pull the trigger. This moment, which threatened a merging of art and life, demanded a consideration of the consequences of this action and the reality that would result.

Rhythm 0 is concerned with related oppositions of passivity/activity, vulnerability/aggression, and more significantly forms of masochism and sadism. Throughout his writing on masochism Freud emphasised its dependency on sadism, or the notion that masochistic urges could not be realised without the presence of a sadist. *Rhythm 0* illustrates this very need. Abramovic depended on the audience's direct and physical interaction to complete the work. She oscillates between these metaphysical bipolar opposites. The artist may have been the victim but she was also the active agent of the situation. She had chosen quite deliberately to place herself in this situation and has promised to take on full responsibility for the audience's actions.

Abramovic actively presents her body as chief artistic material and in doing so attacks the traditions of representation which attempt to strengthen the assigned positions of male and female. By introducing the issue of masochism to the performance level and providing the audience members with the opportunity to display their sometimes sadistic desires she triggers a questioning of the structure of masochism by rendering the invisible visible.

Marsh observes that these assaults on patriarchy are not always communicated to the audience. Abramovic's resistance took the form of compliance and so the

idea of the masculine as master was still in place: "master of discourse, master of ceremonies and further master of pain" (Marsh 1993, p. 99). Abramovic is seen to hold a masculine position when she is in power.

This may be the case but some might consider the exaggerated masochistic nature of the performance as an effective way to burlesque the construction of femininity. This has been pointed to by Tania Modleski, who, drawing on the work of Theodore Reik, suggests that the display of passivity and dependence in female masochism critiques the position of women in patriarchy by dramatically displaying their humiliation and degradation (Modleski 1988, p. 67-68). Abramovic in her determined submissiveness, through circumstances which grow increasingly perilous as they unfold, can be seen as such. It is an active exaggeration of this compliance and thus becomes a form of resistance.

Although Abramovic may be considered to be occupying both positions of active agent and submissive victim, this belief is somewhat undermined by the means employed by the artist. Chance plays a huge part in the performance. "There are seventy two objects on the table that can be used on me as desired. I am the object"(Goldberg 1995, p. 11). The audience's reaction to Abramovic's invitation to participate places her more solidly in the role of masochistic woman. The selection of seventy two objects, presented to the audience, failed in its attempt to define the parameters of the performance.

The atmosphere of the performance began as friendly and benign but this soon changed to one of increasing aggression and malignancy. Her only line of defence, her clothing, was cut from her with a razor blade. Her own skin was cut thereafter, someone drank the blood from her wounds and various minor sexual assaults were carried out upon her body. The sequence of illustrations present some examples, if a somewhat toned down and edited version of the events, of this aggression. The audience's response was extreme. As a result, "two men

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

3. The third part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the results of the work during the year and the progress of the work during the year.

stabbed her in the throat. Then tried to put a gun in her mouth and make her pull the trigger” (Kontova 1978, p. 43). Iles quotes her in reference to this particular incident saying that he “wanted me to push the trigger slowly. He thought that I would resist, but I was so crazy I would not, I couldn’t, it was part of the performance. Then somebody else took the pistol and threw it away.... I didn’t offer any resistance” (Iles 1988, p. 17).

Here we see how seriously Abramovic adopted the role of masochist whose survival was at the disposal of the sadist, the audience. This woman, Marina Abramovic was real, alive and present. It was the intervention of a member of the audience who stopped the performance. As already discussed other members intervened, wiping away tears, protecting Abramovic from the violence. Why did these interventions occur? Was it due to guilt or a sense of morality? Did this unbridled aggression eventually shock some individuals of the audience into the realisation that this performance could have fatal consequences?

Challenges are made to the hierarchical structures of art by making all the participants responsible for the work. It was their interaction that created the work. This idea and its consequences are central to the work. Here the audience was totally involved and little, if no, distancing occurs. Sally Townsend, in an editorial for Women’s Art Magazine, discusses this unruliness and its resistance to tidy definitions in terms of “vitality and strength”(Townsend 1994, p.5). Blurring and otherwise problematising the boundaries between art and life is one of the generating motifs of all performance art. Abramovic enacts this ‘blurring’ in all of the performances in the *Rhythm* series.

The artist usually denies criticisms which claim links to masochism in her work, “They called us masochists, and said we were crazy for cutting ourselves. But I never saw it that way”, yet she seems to admit to a certain element in *Rhythm 0* (Kuijken 1993, p. 30-31). In an interview with Chrissie Iles, Abramovic makes

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

reference to these criticisms and claims that they are invalid as during most of the performances she controls how far the performance goes. However, she then goes on to admit “a complete surrender to the audience” during *Rhythm 0*. “There is no limit: you absolutely don’t know. It is the most dangerous work I’ve ever done” (Iles 1988, p. 17).

Kathy O’Dell makes reference to masochism in the form of the everyday denials of the body. Abramovic also makes reference to her work in these terms. In an interview with Kuijken, Abramovic is quoted as saying that “... denying the body [was] very important to me. I went quite a way towards destroying my own body in that period through my denial of it” (Kuijken 1993, p. 28). The actions carried out as a result of this performance broke through the anaesthetisation of her audiences, pushing them to think about violence contained in everyday imagery that numbed them in the first place and in which we all take part. Perhaps it will provoke the question that O’Dell puts forward. “How often do we use our silent partner status as an excuse not to intervene when we experience violence on the street or in our households?” (O’Dell 1988, p. 97).

The significance of *Rhythm 0* in relation to the gaze is the way in which Abramovic oscillates between the position of exhibitionist, the looked-at, and the voyeur, the owner of the look. The audience also participates in this oscillation. Its members are engaged in a complex power relationship of complicity or refusal to comply with Abramovic’s request.

At base, all performance artists automatically confound the codification of the viewed entity as passive object via the active presentation of their body as artistic material. This particular performance relies heavily on the gaze as Abramovic remains silent and passive. Abramovic is reduced to a physical object who is at the disposal of her audience. She is violated by its abusive, violent actions and

responses but she is also violated by its gaze. Abramovic is absorbed by the powerful other, the audience, who adopt the role of voyeur. She is still, quite traditionally, the object of the audience's gaze. This performing as object is promoted by masochism's suspense factor. The suspense factor becomes a form of provocation, however, which turns the tables in the audience's direction. The audience also watches those who participate in the performance inflicting pain upon the artist, which heightens the meaning of the performance. Those who participate gain from the work. Afterwards they realise what they have done, realise their capabilities and see themselves holding a gun to her head, cutting off her clothes, stripping her bare, kissing her breasts, making her cry.

The relationship between the viewer and the artist is direct and physical and one in which this form of exchange is necessary to complete the work. How long does one remain a silent partner in this contract? This observation of interaction allows an insight into repressed desires and fantasies. Within *Rhythm 0*, Abramovic's passive body becomes a kind of fetish object, on to which desire, hatred and fear are projected. Abramovic is almost like a ready-made object operating as a mirror on to which the audience projects itself. In this projection the audience becomes object as well as subject. Abramovic observes the audience perform inner fantasies but is also engaged in self-observation. Within the gaze many contradictions and ironies occur. Bojana Pejic, in her essay on Abramovic's work as "Being-in-the-Body", makes reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's belief that, "The enigma is that [the] body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which can look at all things can look at itself" (Pejic 1993, p. 27).

Another aspect of the gaze comes into play with the use of the Polaroid camera by many of the participants during the performance. Herman Rapaport, in "Disarticulations: Between the Sign and the Gaze" makes reference to the power of the camera (Rapaport 1994, p. 167). The taking of the photo also has the power to articulate someone's desire, their desire to capture someone or a

moment in time and symbolically possess it. It also serves to illustrate the power of 'framing' which is inherent to the gaze. "To photograph someone is to violate them", Susan Sontag writes. "By seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they never can have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed"(Sontag 1978, p.11). Abramovic is further victimised by the photographing of her during *Rhythm 0* while she displays her passivity. She is then presented with these images of herself and is made hold them up for all to see. The idea of seeing one is active - but seeing oneself in a photograph or mirror is passive as it presupposes being seen.

Through her exaggerated passivity Abramovic "disrupts our habits of thought and strains our understanding" and renders what is invisible, visible, pushes it out into the harsh light of day (Gablik 1984, p. 37). She adopts the role of what Suzi Gablik refers to as an "anxious object,...[which], is instantly recognisable by its subversive tendencies" which paradoxically consists of her obvious compliance (Gablik 1984, p. 37). Women are placed within patriarchal myths as silent and absent. Although Abramovic is indeed very silent throughout the performance (and all those of the *Rhythm* series) she is not absent but is very present. She challenges these myths as she demands attention through her actions or lack of action (passivity) and how they are necessarily acted out in public.

Rhythm 0 also introduces through its 'performing' of masochistic private acts for the audience, the implications of the female spectator/member of the audience. Does the female automatically adopt a masculine position or is it one of more complexity? E. Ann Kaplan asserts that the repeated masochistic scenarios effectively immobilise the female viewer (Kaplan 1983, p. 23). The female spectator is refused a position of power as she is given only a powerless, victimised figure who is far from perfect and who only serves to reinforce the basic sense of worthlessness that already exists. Mignon Nixon, maintains that through the display of the objectified gaze and the masochistic female the female

members of the audience are allowed a form of resistance. Abramovic's performance, *Rhythm 0*, becomes a vehicle of intervention for female viewers as the artist's masochistic display is subversive by making visible the objectification of the masculine voyeur/fetishist paradigm (Nixon 1992, p. 67). However, if Abramovic's framework is a space of oscillation, a space in which identification and resistance are literally inscribed within one another then the viewers must identify with all if not some of the performance in order to recognise and then resist the power of the gaze.

The film theorist Laura Mulvey has shown that our empathetic identification with performer is constantly shifting (Mulvey, 1985). This further problematises the question of who possesses the gaze and where our identifications lie. Some see that Abramovic's focus on the self prioritises experiential difference and thus reinforces the binary oppositional structure of Western metaphysics. It is argued by feminists that many of these types of work effectively reinscribe a conventional place for women. However, Marina Abramovic significantly 'performs' as an object. She renders the myths of woman's passivity, which are woven into the very concept of femininity, absurd by 'making' her body passive. As is common to all the performances within this series, she attributes to her body the role of passive object, a factor that is exposed to some active element. In *Rhythm 0*, this element takes the form of the audience.

How did the situation enacted in *Rhythm 0* ever arise? What else might be at work? Is this woman sane? Karen Horney's essay, "The Neurotic Need for Love", suggests that neurotics have anything but a good relationship with themselves. "They treat themselves as their own worst enemy and usually have outright contempt for themselves. They need to be loved in order to feel tolerably secure" (Horney 1935, p. 254). Freud has equated this fear of the loss of love to femininity. In Abramovic's insistent offering of the self and deliberate

wish to be absorbed and fused with the powerful other, she enacts this trait of femininity and puts it on view.

There are also apparent links between her near fatal episode and the death drive. This interrelates with the drive for knowledge and a narcissistic drive which strives to regain the wholeness of pre-birth through death. The drive for mastery is also in play although Abramovic has adopted a passive role. She strives to master her body through self control and will even if it means shooting herself. Her blatant wish was to control her will and fear of mortality. This is also true of *Rhythm 10*. In contrast to *Rhythm 0* the roles of sadist and masochist are simultaneously occupied by Abramovic during *Rhythm 10*. Chance, which played a significant role in *Rhythm 0* does not figure in this performance. Abramovic is in complete control. The pain that she strives to master is inflicted by a selection of knives. The audience has no real participatory role in *Rhythm 10*, only that of voyeur.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methods used.

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results obtained.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

5. The fifth part of the report is a summary of the main points.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of the authors' names and addresses.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of the titles of the papers presented.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of the names of the speakers.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of the names of the organizers.

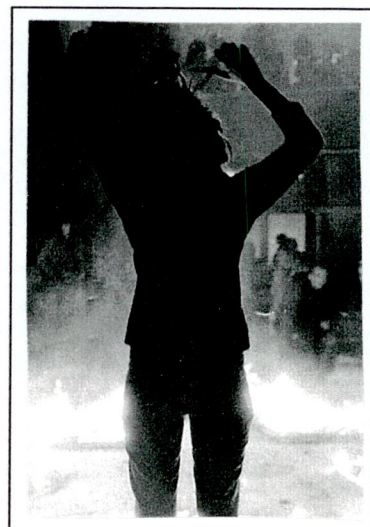
10. The tenth part of the report is a list of the names of the sponsors.

11. The eleventh part of the report is a list of the names of the participants.

12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of the names of the observers.

CHAPTER 3

RHYTHM 10 & RHYTHM 5 **REPETITION & PURIFICATION**



CHAPTER 1

THEORY OF THE EARTH
AND ITS HISTORY

The illustrations which accompany the description of this performance create a visual chronology of *Rhythm 10* and how it appeared to the audience who were present. Abramovic began on her knees, with head bent in front of the array of knives. She had chosen these to take on the role of active external force inflicting the pain. The space was carefully considered by the artist with a white sheet laid out on the wooden floor, tape recorders and microphones set out at either end of the twenty knives (plate 7). To her right a small glass bottle stood on its own. It was a bottle of nail varnish and held great significance in the performance. Abramovic proceeded to paint the nails of her left hand with the polish and spread this hand out flat with its fingers apart. Her right hand reached to the selection of knives and chose one. The *Rhythm* began with the stabbing action of the knife between the spaces of her splayed fingers (plate 8 (a) & (b)). With each cut of the blade the artist selected another knife and continued stabbing until all the knives had played their role and she had been stabbed twenty times. The recording of the first rhythm was rewound and played back. The performance continued with careful concentration as Abramovic relived the trauma of the first series of stabbings exactly.

The second rhythm had also been recorded and was left playing in the empty space at the end of the performance. Blood streaked the floor amid the used and discarded pile of knives (plate 9).

This performance "obsessively probes the parameters of the material: of the body, of fear and of pain"(Warr 1995, p. 13). As Tracey Warr states, Abramovic longs to conquer pain and fear through her use of her own body. This decided and deliberate use of the body borders, paradoxically, on compulsion. She sets up tension between abandonment and lack of control in the quickening stabbing action of the first rhythm and the precision and concentration/cathexis of the second rhythm. This precision was witnessed by the audience when Abramovic replayed the recording of the first rhythm and then repeated the exercise trying to



PLATE 7 *RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.*

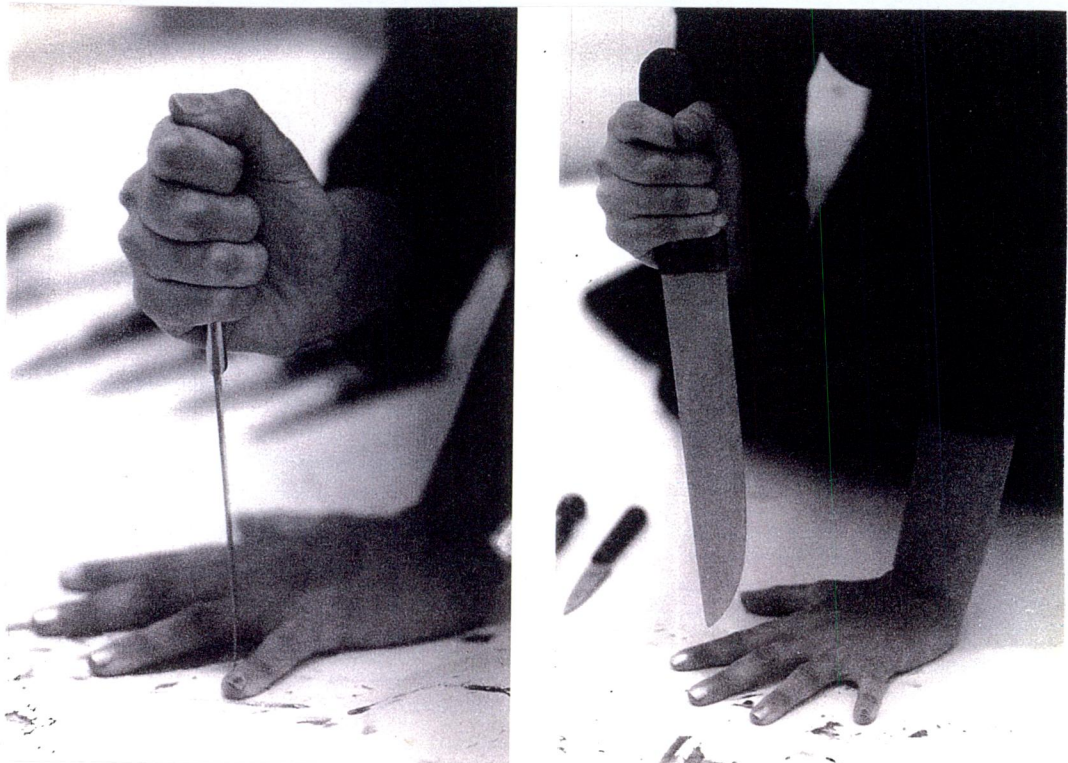


PLATE 8 (a) & (b) *RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.*





PLATE 9 *RHYTHM 10, 1973. PERFORMANCE.*

cut herself in exactly the same place, at precisely the same moment and with the same knife. In this action she addresses the temporality of her body and the recipient's presence at the production of the work. She questions this with the taping of the rhythm and its replay. There occurs a repetition of the past in the present. The mistakes made in the past rhythm played a pivotal role in the performance. After the twenty repetitions, with every cut redoubled, the piece was over.

What is particularly significant about this piece is the way in which Abramovic succeeds in occupying the active role of agent and that of passive victim. There is a specially charged interplay of will and submissiveness. The first cuts are accidental, but then this random action becomes what McEvelley refers to as "law, ... the universal." (McEvelley 1995, p. 45). This "universal" then has to be reproduced. The artist/self-mutilator is both submissive to the earlier order and willful in her insistence on pursuing this method. The action of both hands embodies the Freudian dichotomy of sadist/masochist.

The embodiment of this dichotomy creates a circular/cyclical type of movement to the piece. Sadism consists of a massive gesture toward self-preservation with the deliberate outward projection of the death-drive or masochism. This outward projection takes the form of Abramovic's right arm. However, her right arm inflicts the injury and pain experienced during the performance so the death-drive is then directed inward. Abramovic is both sadist and masochist. A master/slave, sadist/masochist relationship is established between her mind and her body. *Rhythm 10* is a literal demonstration of this.

Clare McDonald looks at how "[t]he attention to marking the body's margin of skin as the site where representation becomes experience and where the inside and the outside of the body meet, ... literally cutting across boundaries and opening up new configurations" and addresses gender and representation

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...
...the ... of the ...

(McDonald 1994, p. 13). The mythological female position is submissive and that of the male active/aggressive. The female is never permitted to hold an aggressive position. Yet Abramovic challenges this through her self-inflicted injury. She is the active agent of her own pain. Her self-mutilation also serves to complicate the traditional forms of representation. She is no longer the beautiful passive female presented for male consumption and to satisfy male desires. She complicates the male's access to his pleasure in viewing her by refusing to fulfill this prescribed role.

However, it may also consist of a double-edged blade which cuts both ways. Through her resistance Abramovic may also reinscribe the old traditions. She is still the victim even though she may be the agent of the pain. She still manages to occupy a masochistic position whether she likes it or not. She is the art work and is still the object of our gaze.

Rhythm 10 is the type of performance considered by many to be a form of liberation which was sought through an obsessive and cathartic action. This action could be seen as an attempt to liberate a repressed psyche entrapped within a codified body. Female aggression, which is suppressed by Western ideals, is performed here in an exaggerated form. This exaggeration serves to highlight this suppression. The emergence of so-called "transgressive art" during the 1970s considered work such as Abramovic's to be a viable and necessary disavowal of the rational and civilised order that repressed the instinctual and codified the individual.

Gary Watson, in his discussion, "Performance Art's Untapped Potential", argues that during this type of cathartic action "psychic wounds and divisions are being exhibited in order to be healed or made whole"(Watson 1989, p. 42). They can be seen as 'treatments'. The key to this treatment is repetition.

[The page contains extremely faint, illegible text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is organized into several paragraphs, but the specific content cannot be discerned.]

The compulsiveness of repetition is unlocked in Freud's famous story of the *fort-da* game, in which the child's desire for mastery is accomplished through a strategy that is simultaneously sadistic and masochistic. Abramovic remembers playing the dangerous repetitions of *Rhythm 10* as a game in her childhood. The repetition is a process of mastery. The need to accomplish mastery and control originates in a trauma. Traumas mark moments when the state of constancy cannot be achieved and the ego's defences break down. This results in a compulsion to return mentally to the situation in which the trauma occurred. The repeated recreation of the traumatic experience is an endeavour to master it. This notion of repetition forms the crux of Freud's argument. In an attempt to differentiate the repetition enacted in the *fort-da* game of his grandson and the compulsive repetition of traumatised patients, Freud sees the former as a process of mastery with repetition yielding a sense of identity. This need to attain a sense of identity is an essential element of narcissism. Abramovic's repetitions are extremely painful. Freud notes that pain is at the threshold of the ego and that breaking through this barrier, 'mastering' pain, is proof that 'I' exist and have control over the fragmented body. The repetition of the painful experience is an attempt to make the ego and body whole again.

The *Rhythm 5* performance was structured around a large blazing star which took up the gallery floor space. The flames jumped from the pentacle in anticipation of her arrival. The wood shavings, contained within the star, were soaked in 100 litres of petrol and so the space must have been filled with the stench of its fumes.

Plate 10 (a) shows the ritual's beginning, with Abramovic grasping and cutting lumps of her hair. She tossed these into the point of the star that was in front of her. A flame leapt up from the burning hair. Abramovic continued what seemed to be a purification exercise and cut her finger nails (plate 10 (b)). These had been painted with a deep red nail polish. She then got down on the floor to cut

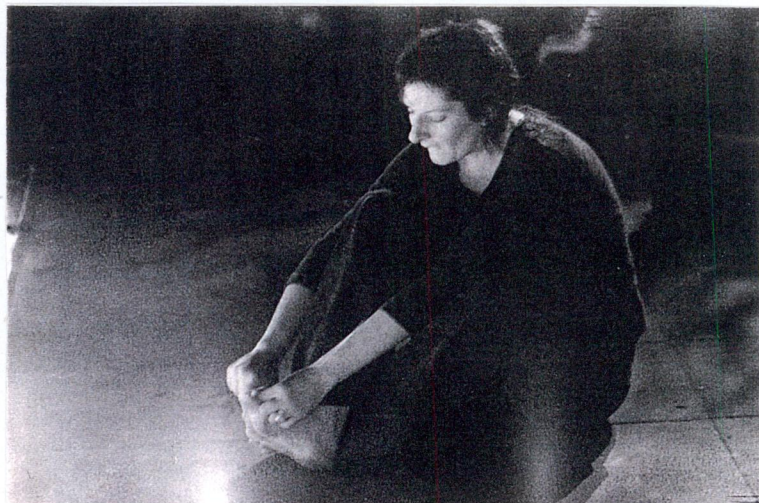


PLATE 10 (a), (b) & (c) *RHYTHM 5, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*

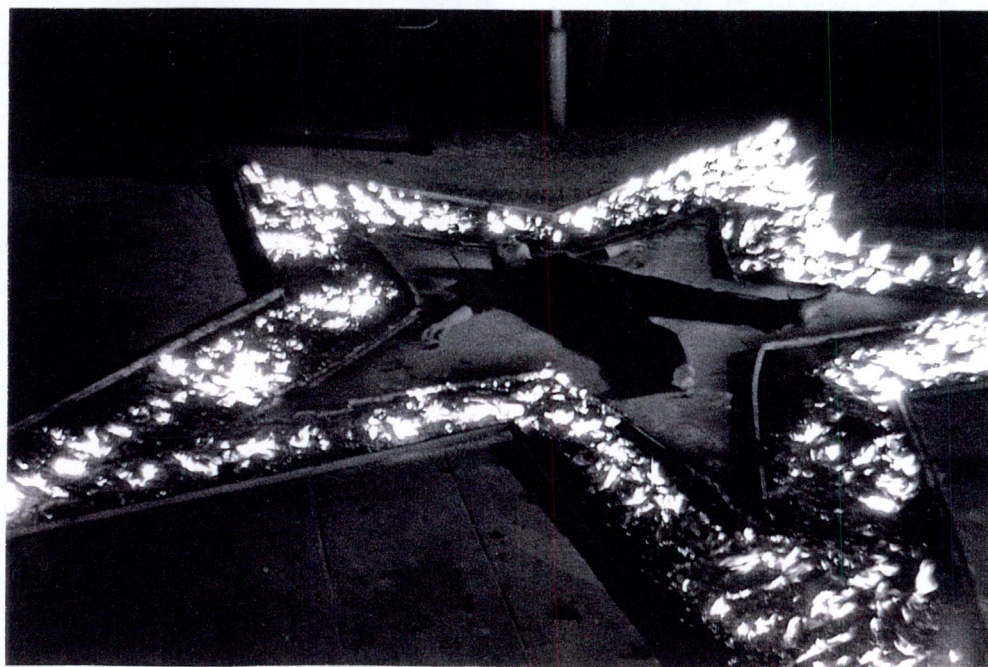


PLATE 11 (a) & (b) *RHYTHM 5*, 1974. *PERFORMANCE*.

her toe nails (plate 10 (c)). These clippings were also tossed into the flames. In Plate 9 (a), the artist entered the space in the centre of the burning star. She stood upright with her arms and legs out stretched, creating with her body a form resembling that of the star itself. A similar position was held when the artist lay down in the space, her limbs following the points of the star (plate 9 (b)). The performance ended when a member of the audience noticed that although the flames were lapping over Abramovic's legs she did not respond. He interrupted the performance and carried her from danger.

Rhythm 5 is a highly ritualistic performance in which several layers of meaning are placed over each other. The five pointed star can be read as 'life' or 'health' when linked to Mother Earth or as 'microcosm' when linked to Man. Bojana Pejic notes that there may also be a political context, which is that the red star is the official state emblem of the communist state (Yugoslavia) in which Abramovic was born and in which the work was realised (Pejic 1993, p. 30). Abramovic has made use of this red star in a later performance, *The Lips of Thomas* (1975), where she incised the star shape onto her stomach with a razor blade. The red of this star is the red of her own blood.

David Elliott, in his "Balkan Baroque", maintains that "fire like pain, decay and choice, [is] a threshold through which matter [has] to pass in order to change"(Elliott 1995, p. 62). Fire possesses a "romantic and intransigent" quality which when it occurred in *Rhythm 5* cleansed, transformed but also destroyed.

The cutting of nails and hair can be seen as a symbol of purification and also ritual. By throwing these 'cut-offs' into the burning arms of the star Abramovic manages to purify herself further when they are destroyed. She then enters the star herself and lays down amid the pentacle of red fire (plate 10 (b)).



It is when Abramovic lies down amid the flames that the performance takes on an element of danger. Up until this the performance had been planned and executed with control and precision. Now, however, an element of uncertainty appears. She had not recognised the severity of the fire which soon starved her of the oxygen while lying in the centre of the star. The artist loses consciousness. The audience was unaware of this until one of its members noticed when the flames began to lap across her leg that she did not move. He carried her out of the star where she regained consciousness. Abramovic was confronted with the limits of her body which resulted in the performance being interrupted. After this performance Abramovic began to ask herself how she might bring her body to and past its limits and not allow the audience to intervene and interrupt the work.

Common to *Rhythm 10* and *Rhythm 5* is the ritual of femininity with its element of masquerade and the decoration of the body which are left predominantly to the female in our Western culture. Femininity requires a kind of performativity and this forms a crucial link to this type of performance. Here Abramovic used this element of ritualised decoration yet always links it to self-injury. Before *Rhythm 10* began she applied nail varnish to the finger nails of the left hand. The nail varnish and its intrinsic links to femininity further situate the left hand in the position of female and masochist. Hair is also considered to be a symbol of femininity. The cutting of her hair was as an act of punishment and sacrifice. These elements could be representative of a fetish which are cut and then burned at the points of the star.

Through the powerful attack on her own body, she highlighted the vulnerability that can be entailed in conforming to conditions of masquerade. Abramovic lays out these conformities which form our everyday rituals/masochism bare. Pejic speaks of Abramovic's lack of speech during the performances as "being-in-her-own-body", a state without language (Pejic 1993, p. 26). By rejecting language in her artistic practice Abramovic puts herself 'outside the law'. To use the

language of the body as a new language is to perform the unmaking of femininity. Yet through this Abramovic is reinscribing old traditions of woman as natural, possessing only a physical body and man as intellectual and creator of culture. The paradox of collusion through resistance and vice versa becomes manifest yet again.

All of Abramovic's solo performances have the tendency to be narcissistic. Within a psychoanalytical interpretation of narcissism the individual is not a unified whole, but a fragmented subject. The artist represents this fragmented subject for the audience, often underlining self-hatred by inflicting pain on the body. She renders this narcissistic love-hate relationship visible. Body work involving self-inflicted pain is successful in focusing on the narcissistic relationship which forms the 'I' of the ego. The split in the subject, formed at the mirror stage, sets up an aggressive tension within the psyche between I and the other. This type of aggressive tension is manifested as the left hand becomes the victim of the right bearing the knife which embodies the subject's aggressive response. This split/fragmentation of the individual creates a need to regain the wholeness experienced before birth. This state before birth can be equated with death and so explains the presence of the death drive in narcissism. Both states involve the fixedness of oblivion/nothing. By reaching a state of unconsciousness during *Rhythm 5* Abramovic is one step nearer to death and its stability and wholeness.

In her ability to withstand the indiscriminate stabbing of her flesh, close brushes with fire and her eventual unconsciousness she presents herself to us as the heroic artist. She can not only endure any amount of pain but has the strength of will to inflict it upon herself.

The audience formed an integral part of the performance for Abramovic as with all other performance art. For the exhibitionistic quality of the performances to

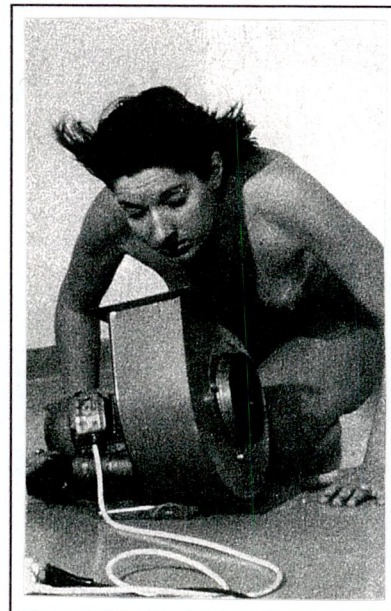
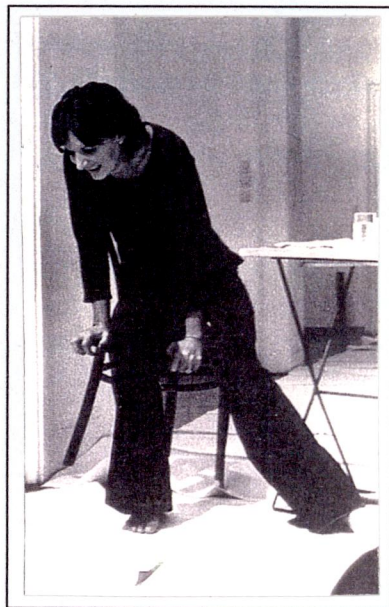
exist there must be the presence of a voyeur. In *Rhythm 10* and *Rhythm 5* the audience occupied this position. They satisfy the scopophilic and narcissistic need to receive the utmost attention. Kuijken quotes Abramovic's reference to importance of the audience to her work. "The energy you receive from the public is extremely important. I feel it very strongly and I absorb it, transform it and give it back to them"(Kuijken 1993, p. 29). She refers to this interaction as a 'bridge' of satisfaction which spans the gap between viewer and artist and is achieved after he/she has overcome the initial impact of her brutal self-punishment.

What is most interesting about the relationship between the performer and viewer is the implications it has on the conventional viewing positions held by the male and female in Western culture. Abramovic's performances refuse to present the viewer with the traditional submissive female object.

If the viewer takes a 'masculine' sadistic position, the gaze is no longer pleased by the passive perfection of the object but tormented by its self-shattering. The gaze is deprived of its mastery. However, the object of the gaze also experiences pain as loss is imposed upon the self in order to punish the other, the gazer. A double displacement is created which not only disturbs the security of the conventional viewing positions but sets up a different scene by reframing 'looking' as loss, or as masochism. The loss is a loss of position. Thus the bearer of the gaze is subjected to the pain of viewing the fragmented object and placed in a masochistic position. Abramovic subverts the masochistic positioning of the female subject by refusing sadistic possession as she too holds the sadistic role. However, Kaja Silvermann, in her writings on masochism and subjectivity, questions the potential for resistance within female masochism as it, "represents such a logical extension of those desires that are assumed to be 'natural' for the female subject"(Silvermann 1988, p.59).

CHAPTER 4

RHYTHM 2 & RHYTHM 4 **MEDICATION & AIR PRESSURE**



CHAPTER 1

HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY
MEDICATION & AIR PRESSURE



In *Rhythm 2* and *Rhythm 4*, Marina Abramovic again aggressively subjected herself to ordeals which involved her assuming a stance of complete passivity. One important link exists between the two performances and for this reason they are to be discussed together. This link occurs as a direct result of the previous performance, *Rhythm 5*, in which the audience interrupted and brought the work to an end. Abramovic began to concern herself with this problem of interruption. How she solves this problem and its implications will be examined later on in the chapter.

The common characteristics of all five performances are still present: the artist actively presents her body as the chief artistic material and insistently attributes to her body the role of passive factor that is exposed to some active element. In *Rhythm 2* the medication is the active element. She repeatedly manages to occupy both roles of sadist and masochist simultaneously and challenges the dichotomies of masculine/feminine and active/passive. The question of narcissism, the gaze and the temporality of the work are also manifest in the work.

In *Rhythm 2* the space was occupied by Abramovic, a simple table and chair, a radio, the bottles of psychoactive medication and a glass of water to aid the consumption of this treatment (plate 12). Here, Abramovic ingested the first medication which is used in the treatment of acute catatonia. The audience and Abramovic awaited the consequences of her actions. Abramovic began to experience violent convulsions. Her muscles and limbs aggressively contracted and her face was pained and contorted. In the climax of this adverse reaction even the artist's toes contracted in response to this foreign and potentially fatal substance (plate 13(a)).

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...



PLATE 12 *RHYTHM 2, 1974. PERFORMANCE.*



PLATE 13 (a) & (b) *RHYTHM 2*, 1974. PERFORMANCE.

After these effects had worn off the artist switched on the radio. A station playing Slavic folksongs was randomly found and left playing for the audience as Abramovic prepared for the next ingestion.

As before, the artist consumed the medication. On this occasion, however, it was one which is used in the treatment of acute schizophrenics. In extreme contrast to the effects experienced at the hands of the first medication, Abramovic became subdued, vulnerable and isolated. She became uncertain of her identity and the cause of the situation that she was suffering (plate 13 (b)).

This performance literally demonstrates sadistic urges turned inwards by Abramovic's ingestion of the harmful medication. The medication is directed inwards with the artist's own hands (plate 12) and places her mind and physical body in a dangerous and unpredictable state. Body art which involves self-inflicted pain is often referred to as 'treatments' yet here ironically the traditional form of treatment is that which causes the pain and creates the subject in need of treatment.

Abramovic took medicine for two states: catatonia and schizophrenia. Catatonia pertains to the abnormal postural qualities seen in schizophrenics, some of whom preserve the same state for prolonged periods of time. While catatonic the person remains in a trance-like state, is immobile, alienated and completely passive. This state of passivity could be equated with the role of the female in Western culture. The female is denied the possibility of displaying any kind of outward aggression. Her submissiveness is one of the myths woven into the very concept of femininity. The male is awarded the active/aggressive role. Women, in conforming to the role set out for them by society, are forced to repress any form of aggression. The effects of the medication on Abramovic's body produces aggressive behaviour. She is no longer submissive. However, while resisting this, she still manages to reinscribe old traditions as she is unable to

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the international situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population.

control these aggressive physical outbursts and is therefore closer to the hysterical female.

Hysteria is closely linked to femininity by Freud. There are three forms but it is hypnoid hysteria that holds certain similarities to a catatonic state. Hypno itself is derived from the Greek word *hypnos* which means to sleep. Hypnoid hysteria produces a paralysing effect in which the female cannot act out an idea or is unable to discharge any emotion. It involves an active suppression of these. Here lies the similarities to catatonia.

Suppression and repression are fundamental elements of femininity. Through the ingestion of medication to counteract this patients are forced to change the position of their bodies. Because Abramovic did not suffer from the disease the medication has an extreme effect. Her muscles were forced into convulsions and she was no longer in control of her physical self. Hysteria is recognised as an affliction of the nervous system characterised by excitability and lack of emotional control. Abramovic performed as a hysterical woman. She renders this stereotype visible for the audience to see. Guilt and exaggerated scruples of conscience are characteristics of the hysteric. Abramovic, in her compulsive self-injury displays the aspect of guilt which is fundamental to moral masochism and therefore, presents herself as the hysterical female.

Before the second part of the performance Abramovic turned on the radio to a random station and the audience listened to this music while waiting for her to continue. What was the relevance of this action and what might have occurred as a result? The artist has stated herself that the selection of the station was a "random" one, but why have any music at all? Its function could possibly have been the creation of an absurd tension between the weighty nature of the artist's self-inflicted injury, the dangerous situation which has just ended, and the one which is about to begin. This 'interval' holds close links to the theatre and its use

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the methods used in the study.

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion and a list of references.

of music to occupy the audience's attentions while the second part is being prepared to be staged. As the theatre audience, the viewers of the *Rhythm 2* must wait to see what the 'Second Act' will bring.

Facing the audience, Abramovic took the second medication and thus the final part of the performance commences. This medication is used in hospitals for patients who suffer from acute schizophrenia. Yet again, Abramovic placed her body and mind in a dangerous and unknown territory.

Although catatonia is a state from which schizophrenics suffer, schizophrenia usually takes on a state of multiplicity. It is a mental disorder popularly known as 'split personality' which is characterised by asocial behaviour, introversion and loss of touch with one's environment. Within schizophrenia the subject is split/fragmented and in crisis. In an analysis of schizophrenia and its problematic ego structure, one recognises the fundamental aggression inherent in the internal relationship. Abramovic's focus on schizophrenia underlines the crisis of the Western subject and points to the downfall of humanist concepts of power and control by presenting a fragmented psyche to the audience.

The 'split personality' which characterises schizophrenia has links with narcissism. Within psychoanalysis the narcissistic subject is not a unified whole but fragmented. The subject also lacks a strong sense of selfhood. The medication that Abramovic ingested is given to patients who suffer from these symptoms but who also exhibit violent behaviour. The medication has a calming effect. It is symbolic of the need to have control over the fragmented body. As a result of taking the first medication, Abramovic experiences violent and uncontrollable convulsions. She brought about this alteration in her self, this lack of control. She created the patient who needs to be subdued. However, as the artist did not actually suffer from schizophrenia, the medication caused her to lose consciousness and all sense of selfhood. She was as a schizophrenic, had no

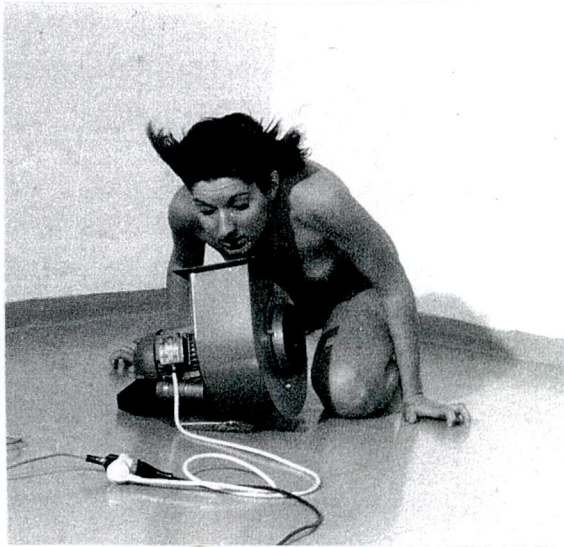


PLATE 14 (a) & (b) *RHYTHM 4*, 1974. PERFORMANCE.



sense of reality and was highly disorientated. She presents the audience with a split subject, a subject in crisis.

Freud notes that masculinity is 'ego-syntonic' (meaning whole or complete) which he believes that femininity is not (Brennan 1992, p. 82). He equates masculinity with harmony and femininity with discord. Therefore, femininity can be equated with the schizophrenic state. The lack of control involved within these states suggests a certain level of hysteria, which is also closely linked by Freud to femininity. The medication that Abramovic takes is meant to subdue these feelings. It is representative of how the female and femininity is predominantly subdued in Western patriarchal culture.

As in many of Abramovic's pieces, an aggressive tension exists within the performance. This tension is manifested in the artist's sense of self and the effects of the medication that she takes which violently alters this. There is also a certain tension between these effects. With the first medication the result is aggressive, violent and uncontrollable. In complete comparison the second medication creates a completely passive individual who has little sense of reality or self and appears to be extremely vulnerable (13 (b)).

Rhythm 4 was performed in two separate spaces. In one space, a naked Abramovic took position before an air blower. When it was switched on, she placed her face directly above the air flow. Due to the extremity of the air's pressure the artist soon lost consciousness (plate 14(a)). However, the representation seen in Plate 14 (b) is the actual image that was conveyed to the viewers. They watched Abramovic performing in a separate space through a video monitor. They remained unaware of the actual events throughout the performance.

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

The first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

An experimentation of the body in and out of consciousness is the main concern of *Rhythm 4*. It is also a demonstration of Abramovic's desire to deprive the audience of the possibility of intervention. However, what I feel is most significant about the piece is the way in which for the first time in the series Abramovic placed the audience in a separate space altogether. She created a distance between the viewed and the viewer.

Sontag's claim that "[t]o photograph someone is to violate them" holds true in this instance as the audience view the artist's performance through a video monitor (Sontag 1978, p. 11). The audience in their viewing of the monitor occupy a position that Abramovic cannot. They have a knowledge of her that she can never have. In this way they hold a position of power. However, Abramovic had chosen where the camera's focus will lie and therefore possesses a certain amount of power. As Rapaport has noted, the articulation of someone's desire is made possible by the distance between camera and power, scene and photographic place (Rapaport 1994, p. 164-165). Abramovic manages to deprive the viewer of this power as she remains in control of what is viewed even if she cannot see the image herself. However, she still reinscribes the position of objectified female who is viewed by the owner of the gaze.

Abramovic maintains the power of 'framing' and in doing so the audience remain unaware of the artist's exact state of being. This is in strong contrast to the other performances in which the audience are in no doubt as to what is happening to the artist. As a result of the way in which Abramovic 'frames' herself, the image of her unconscious state creates the illusion that the artist is under water (plate 14 (b)). The hard reality of what the artist is enduring is no longer present in the image viewed by the audience.

Unlike the other *Rhythm* sequences *Rhythm 2* and *Rhythm 4* are connected in the way the audience is distanced - by the medication and the use of space and video

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

monitor. Abramovic created a physical distancing in *Rhythm 4* by staging the performance in a separate room from the audience. This displacement of the audience resisted the possibility of interruption. The video monitor was used to create an illusion. An edited image was related to the viewers and so in their ignorance of the exact situation they were unable to intervene. This is in extreme contrast to *Rhythm 0* in which the audience is not only fully aware of the artist's condition but is the active agent of all that she experiences. The situation wherein both viewer and artist became significant to each other in a most bodily manner is no longer in place. The artist was isolated and isolates the audience. The notion of real time and space was no longer crucial to the action. The audience was unaware of the reality of Abramovic's situation.

In *Rhythm 2*, the audience was in full knowledge of what the artist is doing. A distancing did occur, however, in the uncertainty of the effects that the medication would have on the body and mind of Abramovic. This distancing was further achieved by the denial of intervention as the medication had been ingested and the outcome could not be reversed. The audience must watch the painful and distressing effects with the knowledge that there was absolutely nothing that they could do about it.

Abramovic may succeed in using her body without any interruptions, but, at what expense? The performance resists the challenges that can be made to the hierarchical structure of art by making the participants responsible for the work. The structures of masochism and its relationship to sadism is not communicated to the audience. Although this is not made as blatantly aware to the audience as before Abramovic still occupies the role of sadist and masochist simultaneously.

A charged interplay of will and submissiveness still exists during the performances. Abramovic is aware of the dangerous situations that she is forcing her body and mind to endure and yet she is the active agent of these situations

and now is determined to avoid the possibility of any interventions that might stop the pain and danger. She presents herself as a heroic artist who can conquer fear, pain, interruption and her body in and out of consciousness (plate 14 (a)). This, however, may not always be communicated to the audience. Abramovic is seen to be occupying a masculine and feminine position and so the mythological roles are still firmly in place. The idea of the masculine as master, master of discourse, master of ceremonies and further master of pain remains in place.

The artist as hero is linked to the artist as narcissistic subject. *Rhythm 2* suggests a split ego and the lack of wholeness and stability of narcissism. *Rhythm 4* is also grounded in narcissism because of its illustration of the death drive and the state of the unconscious artist who is one step closer to the wholeness and stability of death. Abramovic's longing to use her body successfully in and out of consciousness is illustrative of the massive gesture towards self-preservation in an effort to conquer or at least control death. Herein lies the links to the drive for mastery - here of the self - and control.

Abramovic also reveals her narcissistic need to be watched and to exhibit in order to gain a stronger sense of selfhood. Elliott quotes her saying of her earliest performances, "What I was interested in was the experiencing of the limits of the human body and mind. I wanted to experience these limits together with the public. I could never do this alone. I always need the public to look at me.... You can get an enormous amount of energy from the public to cross your physical and mental limits" (Elliott 1995, p. 63). This links directly to Abramovic's desire to occupy the role of passive object of the gaze. Within this collusion she manages to resist and challenge these roles by rendering them visible to the anaesthetised public. This manipulation of roles is present in both the performances, but holds more significance in *Rhythm 4*.

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the

3. The third part of the report is a discussion of the results.

4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion.

5. The fifth part of the report is a list of references.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of figures.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of tables.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of appendices.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of footnotes.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of symbols.

11. The eleventh part of the report is a list of abbreviations.

12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of acronyms.

13. The thirteenth part of the report is a list of definitions.

14. The fourteenth part of the report is a list of terms.

15. The fifteenth part of the report is a list of units.

16. The sixteenth part of the report is a list of formulas.

17. The seventeenth part of the report is a list of equations.

18. The eighteenth part of the report is a list of diagrams.

19. The nineteenth part of the report is a list of figures.

20. The twentieth part of the report is a list of tables.

21. The twenty-first part of the report is a list of appendices.

22. The twenty-second part of the report is a list of footnotes.

23. The twenty-third part of the report is a list of symbols.

24. The twenty-fourth part of the report is a list of abbreviations.

25. The twenty-fifth part of the report is a list of acronyms.

26. The twenty-sixth part of the report is a list of definitions.

27. The twenty-seventh part of the report is a list of terms.

28. The twenty-eighth part of the report is a list of units.

29. The twenty-ninth part of the report is a list of formulas.

30. The thirtieth part of the report is a list of equations.

31. The thirty-first part of the report is a list of diagrams.

32. The thirty-second part of the report is a list of figures.

33. The thirty-third part of the report is a list of tables.

34. The thirty-fourth part of the report is a list of appendices.

35. The thirty-fifth part of the report is a list of footnotes.

Through the distance created by the artist's use of the video monitor the role of audience as voyeur of a private act is highlighted. The monitor's role is that of a 'peep-hole' through which the voyeur gains access to the object viewed. This small opening reveals the enclosed privacy of an interior room. Within this room the artist creates a private theatre within the gallery space. The audience are placed outside as others looking into Abramovic's private space. However, Abramovic carefully chooses what the camera is focused upon and therefore the image that the audience receives through the monitor. She is naked, but in her careful framing of her face she does not permit the audience to view too much. The careful control which she exhibits in this editing of the whole image for the audience consumption could serve to reassess the relationship between the artist and her audience. She 'frames' the gaze of the audience in a way that stresses their voyeurism. Abramovic is in control of their gaze.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to open up the discourse of masochism in relation to Marina Abramovic's solo work of 1973-1974, the *Rhythm* series. While researching the work I came across what seemed to be an almost deliberate avoidance of the term masochism. Although certain elements of the Freudian dichotomy, sadism/masochism, were hinted at in discussions of the work concerning the related oppositions of active/passive, masculine/feminine, aggressive/submissive, masochism itself was never fully addressed. The difficulty of this problematic work is informed by the fact that the performances were clearly masochistic and my reading of the work is informed by psychoanalytical theorists such as Freud, Lacan and feminist theorists who follow them. I felt this a necessary ground to work from as much of what Abramovic's work served to highlight and question were the very conditions and norms that Western patriarchal society has mapped out for women and traditional/conservative discourses on psychoanalysis has functioned to consolidate.

An analysis of the five performances that the *Rhythm* series consists of, took place in chapters 2, 3 and 4. *Rhythm 0*, discussed in chapter 2, formed a synthesis of all the themes that were to be investigated through the work. The performance was a very intense instance in which the themes of sadist/masochist, master/slave, active/passive, masculine/feminine, agent/victim, voyeur/exhibitionist were reenacted for all to see. What is most significant about this performance is the way in which the roles are reversed. The audience takes on the very active role of the projection of any fantasies that they might possess onto the willing artist. Abramovic may have remained passive and submissive in a strong willed fashion but it was the actions and reactions of the audience that created the performance. They were made responsible for the work although the artist had accepted all responsibility at the beginning of the piece. This became apparent the following day when the phone started to ring the gallery with apologies and disbelief at how they (the audience) had reacted.

Rhythm 10 was a particularly willful display of self-inflicted injury. At the end of the performance the floor was smeared with the artist's own blood and the knives, the active element that she used to inflict this self-mutilation, lay about the floor, abandoned. *Rhythm 5* is a clear demonstration of the ritualistic element to the performances and is also the first piece where the audience intervened to stop the performance. After this incident Abramovic concerned the work with ways in which she could stop this interruption from happening. This led to works such as *Rhythm 2* and *4* where the artist deprived the audience of interaction. The psychoactive medication taken by the artist in *Rhythm 2* placed her in a violent and unpredictable state. She no longer had the option of the audience's intervention to help her if the proceedings had become life threatening. The unconscious state that Abramovic achieved in *Rhythm 4* occurred in a totally separate room from the audience. She was alone in the room with the blower and succeeds in remaining unconscious for 3 minutes without the audience realising. Who stopped the performance? Did she just come to? Or was there someone waiting outside to intervene after a certain time span had lapsed? One might add the question, "How did the gallery allow these proceedings in terms of the insurance? On more than one occasion the performances could have had potentially fatal consequences.

Although *Rhythm 0* is a participatory work, it is much removed from the participatory work of other performance artists, pioneered by Allan Kaprow in the form of demonstrations. This work consisted of a decentred nature in which the artist's incomplete control is no longer the main concern. Within *Rhythm 0* Abramovic's lack of control is of similar importance, but she was still the centre of the audience's attention, the centre of the documentation. The camera was always focused on her and what she experienced at the hands of the audience.

The analysis of the performances has raised the question of narcissism. Abramovic's apparent desire to be the centre of attention places the work solidly

1

The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's economic development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's economic development.

The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's social development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's social development.

The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's political development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's political development.

The fifth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's cultural development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's cultural development.

The sixth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's environmental development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's environmental development.

The seventh part of the report deals with the international situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's international development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's international development.

The eighth part of the report deals with the future of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the country's future development. The author has done a great deal of research and has gathered a wealth of material. The report is well written and is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's future development.

in this arena. While looking at this aspect of her performances I could not fail to notice that the artist is a particularly attractive woman. What if she was what this society would class as an ugly, fat repulsive female? How would this affect the consumption of her image? Would she still so willingly place herself on display and at the disposal of a room full of strangers? How would the fear of rejection affect the work? Would all of her work concern itself with the representation of her own image in various scenarios? Would such work take place at all as a result?

Some effort has been made through this thesis to consider the role of the audience in these performances. But did the audience need to be there? What would happen if no one turned up to witness the work? If the audience had rejected Abramovic's invitation in *Rhythm 0*, laughed, turned around and went home would Abramovic have packed up and gone home too?

Abramovic has already made reference to the importance of the audience, the voyeur, to her work. She says of this, "I wanted to experience... together with the public. I could never do this alone. I always need the public to look at me..." (Elliott, 1995, p. 63). There is a theatrical element to the work, as it demands an audience to complete the circle of energy which it needs to exist as art. "Without an audience or viewer, there is no engine to drive the machine" (Elliott, 1995, p. 63). In relation to this Abramovic herself has said that the energy received from the public is very important and necessary. She absorbs it, transforms it and gives it back to them (Kuijken, 1993, p. 29). Certain elements of this energy is not accessible for the viewer, such as the levels of pain that Abramovic endures. In this she is very isolated from her audience. They are denied access. Her pain is a very personal experience.

Will there always be an audience who wants to view such work? Dawes, in his analysis of "The Spectacle of the Body", draws attention to the large crowds that

drew to witness the “official retribution on renegade bodies” in state sanctioned executions in many countries and how “[o]fficial public violence, as in war, ...” was accepted in a very different light to self inflicted pain. Will this morbid fascination, that forms part of our make-up as human beings, an intense curiosity, always ensure that there is an audience present to allow such work take place? It is the very nature of human impulses, the seduction of the voyeuristic gaze and a fascination with horror that will provide this audience.

“Abramovic’s solo performances, wild, sometimes desperate, always frightening to the audience ...”, are suggested by some to create a certain amount of pleasure for the viewer (Goldberg, 1995, p. 11). Tim Martin believes that she “sometimes succeeds in realising for the audience a remarkable charge of pleasure” (Martin, 1995-’96, p. 87). I believe that work such as this cannot avoid the creation of an enormous amount of energy for the audience, however, whether or not it is a pleasurable energy is down to the individual’s experience.

Marina Abramovic’s *Rhythm* series is deliberately and willfully painful to watch. She and other performance artists of the 1970s found that this gave the work and their beliefs an undeniable authenticity. The pain and the scarring authenticated the experience for both the artist and the viewer. Those who are in pain will tell you that they have the right to be taken seriously, or do they rather project a pathological subject in crisis?

“Will we always be willing to take the time to explain acts of masochism witnessed in our daily lives or in the annals of art history - or - do they scream so loudly for explanation, so hysterically, that they function like the paradigm of the hysteric herself, as Catherine Clement has portrayed her: resistant to restrictive institutions, but so frightening or off-putting that we just want her out of the house?” (Cixous 1986, p. 5).

Perhaps it would be easier to do this, to put “her out of the house”. Marina Abramovic’s work *is* deeply problematic and difficult to critique. For this very

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...
...the ... of ...

reason it is incumbent upon us, as consumers and viewers of her work, to try to investigate what the artist has tried and succeeded to achieve with the *Rhythms*' narratives and performances.

APPENDIX

INDEX

RHYTHM 10

Preparation of performance

I place a white sheet of paper on the floor.

I place twenty knives of different dimensions and forms on the paper.

I place two tape recorders with microphones on the floor.

Performance

I turn on the first tape recorder.

I take the first knife and stab in between the fingers of my left hand as fast as possible.

Everytime I cut myself, I change the knife.

When I have used all of the knives, (all the rhythms), I rewind the tape recorder.

I listen to the recording of the first part of the performance.

I concentrate.

I repeat the first part of the performance.

I take the knife in the same order, follow the same rhythm, and cut myself in the same place.

In this performance the mistakes of the time past and the time present are synchronized.

I rewind the second tape recorder and listen to the double rhythm of the knives.

I leave.

Duration: 1 hour
1973
Contemporanea
Villa Borghese
Rome

(See Meschede 1993, p. 40)

RHYTHM 5

I construct a five point star (construction is made of wood and wood shavings soaked in 100 liters of petrol).

I light the star.

I walk around the star.

I cut my hair and throw the bushes into each end of the star.

I cut my finger nails and throw them into each end of the star.

I cut my toe nails and throw them into each end of the star.

I empty the empty space in the star and lay down.

Duration: 1 1/2 hours
1974
Student Culture Center
Belgrade.

(See Meschede 1993, p. 48).

RHYTHM 2

I use my body for an experiment.

I take the medication used
in hospitals for the
treatment of acute
catatonia and
schizophrenia, and put my
body into an
unpredictable state.

Performance
First part

Facing the audience, I take the first medication.

This medication is given to patients who suffer from acute catatonia to
force them to change the position of their bodies.

Shortly after taking the medication, my muscles begin to violently
contract, until completely losing control.

Break

I turn the radio on to random station.

While preparing for the second part, the audience listens to Slavic
folksongs playing from the radio.

Second part

Facing the audience, I take the second medicine.

This medication is given to schizophrenic patients with violent behaviour
disorders to calm them down.

Shortly after taking the medication, I first feel cold and then completely
lose consciousness forgetting who and where I am.

The performance finishes when the medication loses its effect.

Duration: 7 hours
1974
Gallery of Contemporary Art
Zagreb

(Meschede 1993, p. 56).

1972

1. The first part of the report is a general introduction to the project. It describes the objectives of the study and the methods used to collect and analyze the data. The introduction also provides a brief overview of the results of the study.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed description of the data collection process. It describes the procedures used to collect the data and the methods used to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data.

3. The third part of the report is a detailed description of the data analysis process. It describes the methods used to analyze the data and the results of the analysis.

4. The fourth part of the report is a discussion of the results of the study. It discusses the findings of the study and their implications for the field of research.

5. The fifth part of the report is a conclusion. It summarizes the findings of the study and provides recommendations for future research.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of references. It lists the sources of information used in the study.

7. The seventh part of the report is an appendix. It contains additional information that is not included in the main body of the report.

8. The eighth part of the report is a glossary. It defines the terms used in the report.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of figures. It lists the figures included in the report.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of tables. It lists the tables included in the report.

11. The eleventh part of the report is a list of abbreviations. It lists the abbreviations used in the report.

12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of symbols. It lists the symbols used in the report.

13. The thirteenth part of the report is a list of acronyms. It lists the acronyms used in the report.

14. The fourteenth part of the report is a list of footnotes. It lists the footnotes included in the report.

15. The fifteenth part of the report is a list of appendices. It lists the appendices included in the report.

16. The sixteenth part of the report is a list of references. It lists the sources of information used in the study.

17. The seventeenth part of the report is a list of figures. It lists the figures included in the report.

18. The eighteenth part of the report is a list of tables. It lists the tables included in the report.

RHYTHM 4

Performance takes part in
two spaces

I am in the first space
with an air blower
which blows with great
intensity and enormous
pressure.

In the second space the
audience follows the
performance on a video
monitor.

Performance

I slowly approach the air blower, taking in as much air as possible.

Just above the opening of the blower I lose consciousness because of the
extreme pressure.

But this does interrupt the performance.

After falling over sideways with the blower, it continues to change and
move my face.

The audience looking at the monitor has the impression of me being
under water.

The video is only focused on my face without showing the blower.

The moment I lose my consciousness the performance lasts 3 more
minutes, during which the audience is unaware of my state of being.
In the performance I succeed in using my body in and out of
consciousness without any interruptions.

Duration: 45 minutes
1974
Diagramma Gallery
Milan.

(Meschede 1993, p. 64)

RHYTHM 0

Instructions

There are 72 objects on the table that one can use on me as desired.

I am the object.

During this period I take full responsibility.

Duration: 6 hours (8pm - 2am)

1974

Studio Mona Gallery

Naples

List of 72 Objects.

gun	candle	white paint	bread	medal
bullet	water	scissors	wine	coat
blue paint	scarf	leather strings	honey	shoes
comb	mirror	rosemary branch	salt	chair
bell	drinking glass	hat	sugar	pen
whip	Polaroid camera	handkerchief	soap	wire
lipstick	feather	sheet of white paper	cake	yarn
pocket knife	chains	kitchen knife	metal pipe	book
fork	nails	olive oil	scalpel	sulphur
perfume	needle	saw	metal spear	grapes
spoon	safety pin	piece of wood	bell	ax
cotton	hair pin	hammer	dish	apple
flowers	brush	stick	flute	
matches	bandage	bone of lamb	band aid	
rose	red paint	newspaper	alcohol	

(Meschede 1993, p. 69-70)

REPORT

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE UNION

FOR THE YEAR 1900

REPORT

OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

FOR THE YEAR 1900

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

AND

OF THE

LANDS BELONGING TO THE STATE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benjamin, Jessica. "Master and Slave" in The Bonds of Love, Pantheon Books, New York, 1988: 51-84.
- Brennan, Theresa. The Interpretation of the Flesh, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Bronfen, Elizabeth. "Death Drive (Freud)" from Wright, Elizabeth(ed.), Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary. Oxford/Cambridge, Blackwell, 1992: 52-57.
- Cixous, Helene. "Introduction" in Clement, Catherine and Helene Cixous. The Newly Born Woman. Minneapolis, 1986: p.5.
- Dawes, Mark. "Spectacle of the Body", in Circa. No. 74, 1995: 26-29.
- Dobash, R. Emerson; Russel P Dobash; Philip Schlesinger; C. Kay Weave. "Women Viewing Violence" in Women Viewing Violence. London, BFI Publishing, 1992: 168-169.
- Elliott, David. "Balkan Baroque", in Iles, Chrissie (ed.) Marina Abramovic. Objects, Performance, Video, Sound. Oxford, Museum of Modern Art, 1995: 55-73.
- Gablik, Suzi. "Anxious Objects: Modes of Cultural Resistance" in Has Modernism Failed? New York, Thames and Hudson, 1984: 36-54.
- Goldberg, RoseLee. "Here and Now" in Iles, Chrissie (ed.) Marina Abramovic. Objects, Performance, Video, Sound. Oxford, Museum of Modern Art, 1995: 11-19.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "Voyeurism/Ehibitionism/The Gaze", from Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary. (ed.) Wright, Elizabeth, Blackwell, Oxford/Cambridge, 1992: 447-450.
- Horney, Karen. "The Problem of Feminine Masochism" in Feminine Psychology. 1935: 214-233.
- . "The Neurotic Need for Love" in Feminine Psychology. 1935: 214-233.
- Iles, Chrissie. "Taking A Line for A Walk" from Performance. no. 53, April/May, 1988: 14-19.
- . "Cleaning the Mirror" from Iles, Chrissie (ed.) Marina Abramovic. Objects, Performance, Video, Sound. Oxford, Museum of Modern Art, 1995: 21-41.

Kaplan, E. Ann. "Is the Gaze Male?" in Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera. New York, Methuen, 1983.

Kuijken, Ilse. "Marina Abramovic. Here and Now. Art is to Serve". in Arte Factum. March/April/May, 1993, Vol.47: 28-31.

Marsh, Anne. Body and Self. Performance Art in Australia 1969-1992. Oxford University Press, Australia, 1993.

Martin, Emily. "Medical Metaphors of Women's Bodies" from Writing on the Body. (ed.s) Conboy, Katie. Nadia Medina. Sarah Stanbury. Columbia University Press, New York, 1997: p.18.

Martin, Tom. "Marina Abramovic" in Third Text. No. 33, Winter, 1995-1996: 85-92.

McEvelley, Thomas. "The serpent in the stone" from Iles, Chrissie (ed.), Marina Abramovic. Objects, Performance, Video, Sound. Oxford, Museum of Modern Art, 1995: 45-73.

Modleski, Tanja. "Hitchcock, Feminism and the Patriarchal Unconscious" from The Women Who Knew Too Much. New York/London, Methuen, 1988: 1-15.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" from Film Theory and Criticism. Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (ed.s), Oxford University Press, Oxford/London, 1985.

Nixon, Mignon. "You Thrive on Mistaken Identity" in October, Vol. no. 6, Spring, 1992: 58-81.

O'Dell, Kathy. "The Performance Artist as Masochistic Woman" in Arts Magazine. Vol. 62, Summer, 1988: 96-98.

Pejic, Bojana. "Being-in-the-Body" from Meschede, Friedrich (ed.), Marina Abramovic. Stuttgart, Edition Cantz, 1993: 25-38.

Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie. "Narcissism" from Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary. (ed.) Wright, Elizabeth, Blackwell, Oxford/Cambridge, 1992: 271-274.

--- "Masochism" from Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary. (ed.) Wright, Elizabeth, Blackwell, Oxford/Cambridge, 1992: 239-242.

Rapaport, Hermann. "Disarticulations: Between the Sign and the Gaze", from Between the Sign and the Gaze. Cornell University Press, Ithaca/London, 1994: 150-183.

Silvermann, Kaja. "Masochism and Subjectivity", in Framework. No. 12, 1979: 2-9.

---. "Masochism and Male Subjectivity", in Camera Obscura. No. 17, May, 1988: 31-66.

Sontag, Susan. On Photography. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1978.

Townsend, Sally. "Editorial" in Women's Art Magazine. No. 61, Nov/Dec, 1994: 5.

Warr, Tracey. "To Rupture is to Find", in Women's Art Magazine. No. 64, May/June, 1995: 11-13.

Watson, Gary. "Performance Art's Untapped Potential" in Art International. Vol. 17, Summer, 1989: 40-44.

1. The first part of the report is a summary of the work done during the year.

2. The second part is a detailed account of the work done during the year.

3. The third part is a summary of the work done during the year.

4. The fourth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

5. The fifth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

6. The sixth part is a summary of the work done during the year.

7. The seventh part is a summary of the work done during the year.

