

MoMA DEEPENS COMMITMENT TO COLLECTING, PRESERVING, AND EXHIBITING PERFORMANCE ART THROUGH A RANGE OF PIONEERING INITIATIVES

NEWLY NAMED DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA AND PERFORMANCE ART RECOGNIZES THE INFLUENTIAL ROLE OF PERFORMANCE IN CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC PRACTICE

NEW YORK, February 27, 2009—The Museum of Modern Art has increased its focus on performance-based art with a range of pioneering initiatives: a new exhibition series, an ongoing series of workshops for artists and curators, major acquisitions, and a retrospective of the work of performance artist Marina Abramović in 2010. In recognition of the importance of performance art in contemporary artistic practice, the Department of Media has been renamed the Department of Media and Performance Art, a first of its kind. Under the direction of Chief Curator Klaus Biesenbach, the department will maintain its focus on time-based works in a gallery setting, such as moving image installations, sound- and video- based works and will include exhibitions and acquisitions of important works of performance art. Among the department's most recent acquisitions include seminal performance-based works by Francis Alÿs, Paul Chan, Joan Jonas, Tino Sehgal, and others.

Mr. Biesenbach and Jenny Schlenzka, in the newly created position of Assistant Curator for Performance, will organize the Performance Exhibition Series, a two-year series of exhibitions that will bring installations documenting past performances, live re-enactments of historic performances, and original performance pieces to various locations throughout the Museum; and the ongoing Performance Workshops, which bring together internationally renowned artists and curators to work on, discuss, and envision the relationship between art institutions and performance-based art.

In keeping with MoMA's dedication to exhibiting performance art, the Museum will host the first large-scale performance retrospective of Marina Abramović's work, *Marina Abramović: The Artist is Present*, from March 14 to May 31, 2010. The exhibition will incorporate a new live performance by the artist and re-enactments of her past performances by other performers. This exhibition marks the longest duration of time that Abramović has performed one solo piece, and it is also the first time she has allowed others to perform her previous works in the setting of a museum retrospective. A chronological installation of her work will be included in The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery on the sixth floor of the Museum and will show the different modes of representing, documenting, and exhibiting her ephemeral, time-based and media-based works. The exhibition is organized by Mr. Biesenbach.

Museum Director Glenn D. Lowry states: "The Museum is excited to be taking on a leadership role in the acquisition, exhibition, and discussion of performance art. MoMA's history of engagement with time-based art extends back to the 1970s, when the Museum presented live performances by Laurie Anderson, Simone Forti, Stuart Sherman, and others. We are delighted to continue our commitment with these new and experimental initiatives, which included the superb installation by Pipilotti Rist in the Museum."

Mr. Biesenbach states: "In recent years performance art has increasingly become an integral part of the artistic practice and therefore has been shown more and more in international biennales and galleries. The acquisition and conservation of performance-based art by MoMA is vitally important to current and future generations of museum-goers."

The Performance Exhibition Series began on January 21, 2009, with *Performance 1: Tehching Hsieh*, a gallery installation documenting the work of this pioneering performance artist. On view through May 18, the exhibition focuses on Hsieh's earliest performance, *Cage Piece* (1978-79), in which the artist spent one year locked inside a cage constructed in his Hudson Street loft in New York City.

The series continues on March 7 and 8, 2009, with *Performance 2: Simone Forti* and *Performance 3: Trio A* by Yvonne Rainer. Performers will re-enact three of Simone Forti's dance constructions from 1961—*Huddle*, *Platforms*, and *Accompaniments for La Monte's "2 sounds" and La Monte's "2 sounds"*—at noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, and 4:00 p.m. on both days in the Special Exhibitions Gallery on the second floor of the Museum. Yvonne Rainer's *Trio A* (1966) will be performed by dancer Cat Patterson, with artists and non-dancers Jimmy Robert and Ian White, in front of a projection of a historical recording of Rainer's performance included in the exhibition *Here Is Every. Four Decades of Contemporary Art* in the Contemporary Galleries, second floor. That performance will take place at 12:30 and 4:30 p.m. on both days. [Click here for more information.](#)

The Performance Series emerged from the ongoing Performance Workshops, which MoMA launched in March 2008. Participants in these private, invitation-only workshops have regularly included artists such as Marina Abramović, Matthew Barney, Paul Chan, Sharon Hayes, Joan Jonas, Terence Koh, Anthony McCall, Adam Pendleton, and Carolee Schneemann, among many others; and curators from Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Modern, London; The New Museum, New York; Schaulager Museum, Basel; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, among others.

In June of last year, MoMA acquired its first piece of live performance art—Tino Sehgal's *Kiss* (2003), a prescribed, choreographed situation between two dancers that references images from historical paintings of couples embracing. Although MoMA has been collecting performance-based works for over 30 years, the Museum has made some major acquisitions in the last two years, including:

- Francis Alÿs's *Ensayo I (The Rehearsal)* (1999-2004), *Re-enactments* (2001), and *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002)
Ensayo I (The Rehearsal) shows a red Volkswagen bug attempting to ascend a steep hill in Tijuana. The car's attempts are synchronized with the soundtrack of a group of Mexican Danzon musicians rehearsing. MoMA has acquired the video and the accompanying archive, which includes tests, drawings, and the preparations leading up to the performance. For *When Faith Moves Mountains*, Alÿs recruited 500 volunteers outside of Lima, Peru, to each move a shovel full of sand one step at a time from one side of a dune to the other, and together they moved the entire geographical location of the dune by a few inches. *Re-enactments* is a video that features the artist walking in the crowded streets of Mexico City for as long as he could with a gun in his hand, until he is arrested by police.
- Paul Chan's *Waiting for Godot Archives* (2007)
Paul Chan united his impulses towards political activism and evocative installation by mounting special performances of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in still-struggling areas of New Orleans in November 2007. The archive consists of props, ephemera, posters, photographs, and documentation surrounding the project. It comprises the complete material relics from the fleeting performances.
- Dara Friedman's *Musical* (2007-08)
Musical is a 48- minute long orchestration of 60 singing performances. For three weeks in the Fall of 2007, midtown Manhattan was the stage for *Musical*, a series of spontaneous actions orchestrated by the artist. From dawn to dusk, and occasionally even in the middle of the night, office workers, mothers, schoolchildren, taxi drivers, doormen, tourists, divas, and grandparents broke into song, creating unexpected musical events and serendipitous urban moments for all who encounter them. Throughout the course of the project, nearly 100 individual actions took place throughout the day and night.
- Chris Burden's *Deluxe Photo Book 1971-73* (1974)
Deluxe Photo Book 1971-73 comprehensively catalogues the first three years of the artist's performances through photographs and simple, typewritten, explanatory descriptions-the sole records of these seminal early works. Among the book's images are 13 black-and-white pages dedicated to the iconic performance *Shoot* (1971), in which Burden had an assistant shoot him with a rifle in the arm.
- Joan Jonas's *Mirage* (1976-2005)
Mirage is one of Joan Jonas's classic performances of the 1970s, which combined film, video, performance, objects, and drawing. Jonas used all these materials to redefine the parameters of both sculpture and film.

The Museum has also acquired 31 performance-based, uneditioned single-channel video works by artists including Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, Trisha Brown, Gordon Matta-Clark, Lutz Mommartz, Andrei Monastyrski, Bruce Nauman, Carolee Schneemann, Robert Smithson, Hannah Wilke, and others.

In addition to collecting, MoMA has also presented a number of experimental and avant-garde performances since the 1970s, including performances in conjunction with such exhibitions as *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (1990), which included live interventions by

artists Laurie Anderson, Brian Eno, Spalding Gray, Ann Magnuson, Eric Bogosian, and David Cale. In 2002, on the occasion of the Museum's move to temporary quarters in Long Island City, Queens, during its renovation and expansion in Manhattan, MoMA commissioned Francis Alÿs to organize a highly public procession from MoMA's midtown location across the Queensboro Bridge to the new MoMA QNS.

Sponsorship:

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MoMA Monday Nights:

MoMA will remain open until 8:45 p.m. on selected Mondays, giving visitors extended hours to view special exhibitions and the Museum's collection. The evenings will include entertainment and a cash bar. Regular admission applies. The Museum will stay open from 10:30 to 8:45 on the following Mondays: March 9, April 6, May 4, and June 8

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members.
Admission includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs.
Free admission during Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us on the Web at www.moma.org.