

Ulay & Marina Abramović

Modus Vivendi

19.10.1980, Bangkok THAI, Sydney AUS, Alice Springs AUS, Amata AUS, Indulkana AUS, Ernabella AUS, Alice Springs AUS, Papunya AUS, Haast Bluff AUS, Palm Valley AUS, Alice Springs AUS, Wallara Ranch AUS, Penny Springs AUS, Kings Canyon AUS, Curton Springs AUS, Ayers Rock AUS, The Olgas AUS, Docker River AUS, Giles AUS, Warburton AUS, Gibson Desert AUS, Sandy Desert AUS, Great Victorian Desert AUS, Cosmo Newberry AUS, Laverton AUS, Leonora AUS, Wiluna AUS, Neds Creek AUS, Kumarina AUS, Cue AUS, Perth AUS, Armadale AUS, Rottnest Island AUS, Perth AUS, Adelaide AUS, Alice Springs AUS, Melbourne AUS, Wilson Prometory AUS, Gibsland AUS, Melbourne AUS, Hobart TAS, Lounceston TAS, Hobart TAS, Strasgordon TAS, New Norfolk TAS, Hobart TAS, Melbourne AUS, Sydney AUS, New Castle AUS, Canberra AUS, Sydney AUS, Christchurch NZ, Hokatika NZ, Wakefield NZ, Lower Wongapika NZ, Nelson NZ, Christchurch NZ, Sydney AUS, Perth AUS, Sydney AUS, Bangkok THAI, Amsterdam NL, Eindhoven NL, Essen BRD, Düsseldorf BRD, Cologne BRD, Bonn BRD, Üdersdorf BRD, Neuwied BRD, Amsterdam NL, New Delhi IND, Bodhgaya IND, Benares IND, New Delhi IND, Amsterdam NL, Marl BRD, Düsseldorf BRD, Berlin BRD, Cologne BRD, Amsterdam NL, Chicago USA, Toronto CAN, New York USA, Amsterdam NL, Kassel BRD, Amsterdam NL, Kassel BRD, Amsterdam NL, Agadir MA, Tiznit MA, Sidi Ifni MA, Goulemim MA, Agadir MA, Amsterdam NL, Kassel BRD, Amsterdam NL, Frankfurt BRD, Wiesbaden BRD,

Tentoonstellingsdorier (1985)

HIBLIOTHEEK TEDELTIK VAN ARBEMUSEUS EINOHOVEN

Modus Vivendi

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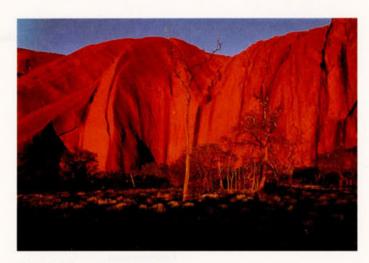
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Uluru 'Ngaltawaddi', Central Australian Desert, 1980

Their work is like a singing voice, a very slow air.

A timbre and melody. A gentleness of touch. The works are monumental and intimate, like the human face.

They are humane. They have a humble respect for the earth and the life of man. They are straightforward.

They do not fuss.

R.H.F.

Thomas McEvilley Ethics, Esthethics, and Relation in the work of

Marina Abramović and Ulay

When Ludwig Wittgenstein wrote that esthetics and ethics are the same thing he was probably acting in the way that Ulay describes by saying 'We do not necessarily understand what we know.' It was characteristic of Wittgenstein to create formulations that would become basic to later generations though their meaning in his own day may have been opaque and mysterious. For two decades or more now it has been widely felt that esthetics and ethics—art and life—are to a degree meaningless without each other. The point is that in a sense each is the defining characteristic of the other. Art that lacks real connection with life is dead, or, as the phrase has it, merely academic. Life, on the other hand, that does not somehow partake of the motivation that the word art connotes may be seen as less than human.

This doctrine went totally contrary to the Kantian tradition which underlay modern formalism and which held that the concerns of esthetics are irremediably separate from those of cognition on the one hand and ethics on the other. It found its realization first in existentialist or action painting, then, more fully and perfectly, in performance art. Performance art of course has its own variety of formalisms; still, it is always and necessarily bound up with the real space and time of embodied life and the real action and striving of a concrete self in relation to the world. The life-art project is its foundation and its essence.

In the work of Marina Abramović and Ulay the issue of ethics, as they have remarked, long ago took the place of the issue of esthetics. This is not to say their work lacks esthetic sophistication. Their video-tape of 1983, 'City of Angels', for example, finds them investigating the relationship between painterly types of image and surface on the one hand and, on the other, photographic-sculptural three-dimensional presence. Yet the essentially formalist inspection of an interface between two or more art media is not the primary purpose of this work which tries to unify space – East and West – and time – past and present – in an essentially humane transcultural iconography. It is as if the esthetic orientation of their work has become second nature, and since that point the only worthwhile thing to do with it has been to investigate the ethics of its use.

This ethical focus can be seen as the necessary content of the formal situation that is their collaboration; the collaboration, that is, mandates an essentially ethical emphasis. Their artwork since beginning to work together in 1976 has both derived from and spoken about the act of collaboration; the collaboration, in turn, derives from and is about the artwork. Their work together has been and still is what they have called 'relation work' - work which both lives off of and feeds into the investigation of relationship between two humans as they try to relate simultaneously to one another and to the world around them. The works specifically called 'Relation Works' were mostly small highly focused performances in which each of them was thrown back both on his or her own patience and endurance and on the supportive partnership with which they faced the world together. In one of these works, for example, they sat back to back in an art gallery for eighteen hours, with their long hair braided together between them. If either of them fell the other would be brought down also; if either of them endured, the other would endure also - and this in full view of a world that was outside of and not always friendly to their partnership and the determined ordeals which they underwent as both tests and expressions of it.

The term 'relation works' referred explicitly to performance pieces of 1976-1979. But even the more recent work in video and in life-sized Polaroids remains essentially relation work; he brings his insight and she brings hers, and the essence of the work is that these relate to one another in a mutually constitutive way: neither viewpoint could exist without the other, which has shaped it as both action and reaction. They have described the early work, based on endurance and ordeal, as the activity of warriors. These pieces often gave the inaccurate impression of being aggressive and competitive in spirit, as in the piece where they hit each other alternately until one of them stopped. Works of the next period such as 'Nightsea Crossing', in which they sit motionless opposite one another for seven hours a day for a total of ninety (non-consecutive) days, are more imitations of the activity of saints than of warriors: each artist backgrounds individual expression to a degree where aggression and competition can only be imagined in a really passive way. Currently, the relation work unfolds as an allegorical activity of lovers, both lovers of each other and of the surrounding world. In terms of the world at large, this work is characterised by more openness, more investigation of other cultures and of our ability to receive from them. In terms of their collaboration, it is based on the desire to express what they have called the 'impossibility of escaping one another.' Granted a belief in reincarnation - to which both are inclined - each represents the other's karmic account in its inescapability and its essentially creative torment - creative in that it forces solutions, advances and sublimations.

The present exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum foregrounds the question of formal means in its division into performance, video, and Polaroid. But the formal distinction is not ultimate; these formal means themselves express the contents of instantaneity, immediacy, and simple wholeness, the content of being lifesize, of expressing the basic ratio of embodied experience, the ratio one to one, which is the pure performative non-illusionistic ratio, the ratio which is ethics, the ratio of pure factuality or self-sameness.

A formal element which permeates all three categories and leads inward toward the center of the work in inner consciousness is the tableaux vivante style. The video tape 'City of Angels', for example, is made up primarily of five more or less static images, each showing motionless humans arranged against a background of the ruins of the temple complex of Ayutaya in Thailand. The point to emphasize is that these five images are not stills. Each has one moving element in it, such as a dress blowing in the wind, that embodies the passage of time and focuses the relation of change and changelessness. An actual material of the work is living immobility, as in the performance 'Positive Zero', 1983, in which the two artists and a number of collaborators assumed and held a series of motionless tableaux on the stage while musicians playing in the background embodied the flow of time. Living immobility is also the essential material of the ninety day performance 'Nightsea Crossing' and of quite a number of the early Relation Works. It is a material that has not yet been clearly defined in the literature on performance art. The British performance artists Gilbert and George, for example, called themselves living sculptures when performing pieces involving immobility. The designation as sculpture tends to distract attention from the fact of ongoing consciousness within the immobile presence; Ulay and Marina, on the other hand, use immobility so as to direct attention to the fact that consciousness is working away inside while outside the body seems to become part of the architecture. For the immobility of Marina and Ulay, in another of their studied interfaces of media, locates itself in one sense between sculpture and architecture, especially in 'Nightsea Crossing', where their sculpturesque presence is directly related to the project of enlivening chosen architectural spaces - yet enlivening them passively or backhandedly, with more submission to them than aggression upon them.

The most recent performance work is called 'Modus Vivendi', 'Way of Living'. In it the fact that the essential content of the work is consciousness comes clearly to the surface for the first time. At the same time, the focus of the work overall exhibits a shift away from sameness to difference. In earlier relational performances the roles of the two artists were often complementary in some simple way-sitting back to back, hitting one another alternatively, running away from one another into walls, running around a

room and colliding with one another, breathing each other's breath, producing a continuous sound together, standing facing one another in a doorway, and so on. But the Relation Work to which 'Modus vivendi' shows the strongest similarity is not of this type; it is 'Go . . . stop . . . Back . . . stop', 1979, in which Marina sat in a large open space removing bits of swansdown from a pillow and counting them aloud while Ulay moved about the space directed by a tape recording of his own voice randomly ordering 'go ... stop . . . back . . . stop' and so on. For 'Modus Vivendi' each conceived his or her role. Marina, dressed in a green gown that flows away from her across the floor, stands immobile behind a stage property tree while Ulay moves with extreme slowness across the stage and, after performing certain actions, back to his original position. As he moves, Ulay manifests the presence of consciousness working inside him from moment to moment by a type of elementary verbalizing of present awareness used in the Burmese style of vipassana meditation. He is not directed by a tape recording of his own voice but, reversing the order, speaks aloud to the audience each elementary act he is performing: 'Hearing, hearing; moving, moving; touching, touching,' and so on. He represents inner life as flowing consciousness and she represents it as motionless attentive presence. They are, as it were, the two aspects of the mind that are involved in self-awareness, the flow of thoughts and the awareness of the flow from a fixed point of view which seems not to flow but to observe. At the end, Marina's quick gesture is cut off by darkness. 'Modus Vivendi', while still relation work, is more involved with difference than with sameness, as are the lifesize Polaroid self-photographs of 1985 in which she presents archetypes of femaleness, he of maleness, without collusion as to their complementarity. (These works are more interesting together than apart.)

After extremely solipsistic beginnings as individual artists, Marina and Ulay worked through the symbiotic relation works to more open outgoing relation works and finally to an attempt to enclose the world within the embrace of their relation work without enforcing a personal trip on it from outside. The two recent video tapes, one located in a modern village near a temple ruin in Sicily (Terra degli dea madre', 1984), the other in a modern village near a temple ruin in Thailand ('City of Angels', 1983) encapsulate the past and present of East and West. These video tapes are the first steps of a project to make five tapes, one on each of the world's continents, using pictorial esthetic means to inspect gender relations in each place. This is not anthropology; it is tourism become a medium of art. The ancient sacred sites are approached as in a pilgrimage, yet a pilgrimage which will result in their making something new as a gift to the site and an expansion of themselves from it. In the performance works 'Positive Zero', 1983, and 'Nightsea Crossing/Conjunction', 1983, Tibetan lamas and Australian aborigines



Still from Modus Vivendi, Saskia Theater, Arnhem, July 1985

functioned as an ethical-esthetic material, or as a set of found sculptures. This is the opposite of exploitation; it focuses the fact that the world's cultures are art forms in relation to one another, and specifically that people in different cultural molds may be regarded from an outside point of view as found art objects of great complexity and profundity. The life-art project, rooted in individual self-consciousness and nourished through personal relationship, has been expanded to a global and transcultural embrace.

I

Journey

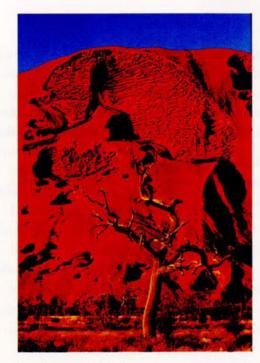
Kurintji kitnara
painting pole, vertical
moonmans cross and crescents
painting crescents
in his camp he painted crescents to the cross.
putting down, digging hole for his hand
moonmans hairstring onto cross
man are coming women waiting
I moonman sit in camp, look at cross.
Cross erected.
Erected cross distruct the womens mind
blood letting, painting dancers
moonmans blood drips in shield, womens painting for him
solo dancing
in his camp, he danced in front of upright cross

Pintubi Song

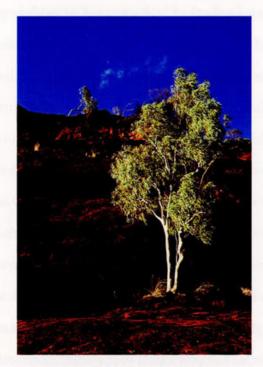
milpa witingka nyinanya wilpa tjantjungkin nyinanya parral parral nyanyu karri tjina larrantaya karriya tiwurrku tiwurrkuya kanapilgirpa tiwurru tinparr timparrpakaum

clear-eyed sits, looks over country looks over immense plains, faint tracks, foreign object in eagles eye

Pintubi Song



Uluru 'Ngoru' the brain, Central Australian Desert, 1980



Young snake woman dancing for her lover, Central Australian Desert, 1980

From the north-western reaches of the Central Desert following the direction west, south-west, into the Great Sandy Desert, down to the Gibson Desert. It must be the end of December; following the sun's orbit. We had just left the Pintubi tribe who we lived with. For some weeks they had accepted us as their guests, allowing us to share their daily life; hunting and gathering food with them, exchanging dreams and stories. All looks red, the sand, the dust, all moves with us. Even our clothes and skin are covered in red. For weeks now we have been continuously exposed to temperatures never falling below the temperature of our bodies. • We drink hot water, as much as we can allow for the journey's ration. The days are long, time swells with heat. The desert is an ocean, so is the mind, in motion. There is no shelter provided by nature. We improvise day by day. • We move by night, but it is still hot. The desert becomes a frozen lake. The moon's silver light is so bright we could read a book. In early morning at dawn, before the sun throws it's first patches of burning light on us, one of us would take some water from the canteen and pour it carefully into the open hands of the other to refresh the face. The other holding their hands under the face to catch what washes off. A fire is lit, beating back against the sun. One fire in the morning, one in the evening; just large enough to brew tea. The fire is as important as shelter. At night all looks closer. We move on, drawn by magnetic forces to a rock formation. Somewhere between the rocks the sound of dripping water. Here we camp beside a tree, the only one. We make a fire, imagination running ahead of time, already searching the next morning for the spring. We gaze silently into the fire, reading old stories, news and predictions in its motion. In the first light of the next day we looked for the source of water. We

discovered a pool embedded in a giant rock with fresh, clear water; deep enough to take a swim. • We were active for the first time in weeks. Everything felt different; the soil, the air, rocks, different colors, different smells. For the first time we wanted solid food. A bird came down to our campsite. An eagle of majestic size landed just opposite the fire. Instead of a tree, or rocks and distance, choosing the intruders and their fire? He posed in front of us in a monumental fashion. We froze, unable to swallow, overcome by the mystery of that presence. The bird did not move. The sun left the night behind. The fire died. The eagle was absorbed into the environment. I had many questions, but no answers. • We agreed to move. Carefully we reached for the canvas sheet spread on the ground and stretching our bodies not taking our eyes off the bird. He remained guardian of the night. I remember concentrating on the brink, that 'x' moment between awake and sleep, all not to miss his departure. • When I opened my eyes again, I saw him still sitting there, unchanged. For some reason, I didn't know what, I got up, convinced that I had to touch this object of mystery. Slowly, but determined, I approached the creature, near enough to reach for him. Just before my hand touched him, I realized the eagle was dead. It must have been four months later. We arrived at the end of our journey in a small town called Alice Springs. Members of different Aboriginal tribes would frequently pass through here. We met some men we knew from the Pintubi; exchanging stories of the journey. I mentioned the eagle who came to die. They seemed amused; then one of them said, 'You are Tjungarrayi, dying eagle. You took his name, so he came to die.'



Collecting firewood, Gibson Desert, Central Australia, 1981



Watuma Tarruru Tjungarrayi, Amsterdam, 1983



Drawings by Watuma illustrating: dream sites and map of camp with elderst, lying under Mulga tree



4/5/83

Dear Yulay, Lowise you getting on? I'm Lappy to ask you how long before you come again! You tell me after must be two months sometimes when you feel like it you can come. You two men, Andrew + you, you tell me Hat when you two can come to here. Say, how many recks you can live Lare. I can carry you round when you sout, carry you round when you sout, for every rock tole. Show iem every rock tole. Show iem every rock tole, let you know way every rockhole, let you know the right places. Very good man you, I love you, say thank - you.

Letter dictated by Watuma received after his visit to Amsterdam, sent from Kintore Ranges, Central Australian Desert P.S. How is that old man, that his day?



Aboriginal attending ceremony, Central Australia, 1944



Pintubi preparing canvas for earthpainting, Hassebluff, Central Australia, 1980



Women guarding the village well from thieves, Holi ceremony, Thar Desert, 1984



Radjastani woman using her healing powers, Khuri, Thar Desert, 1984



Standing hand in hand with Radjastani camel drivers, Thar Desert, 1984

II.

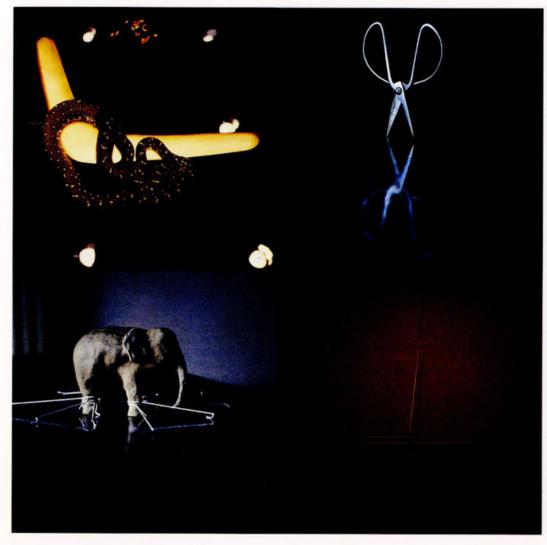
Nightsea Crossing

Presence.

Being present, over long stretches of time,
Till presence rises and falls, from
Material to immaterial, from
Form to formless, from
Instrumental to mental, from
Time to timeless.

Earth, isn't this what you want An invisible rearising in us? Is it not your dream To be one day invisible? Earth! Invisible! What is your urgent command If not transformation?

Rainer Maria Rilke



Objects used in Nightsea Crossing performances



Kunstakademie (organised by Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf), March 1982, 3 days



Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, March 1982, 3 days

[35]



Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, April 1982, 12 days

'You don't need to leave your room.
Remain sitting at your table and listen.
Don't even listen, simply wait.
Don't even wait.
Be quiet, still and solitary.
The world will freely offer itself to you.
To be unmasked, it has no choice.
It will roll in ecstasy at your feet.'

Franz Kafka



documenta 7/Orangerie, Kassel, June/August/September, 1982, 21 days



ARS 83/The Museum of the Atheneum, Helsinki, October 1983, 2 days

Nothing is more real than nothing.

Democritus



Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, April 1984, 4 days



Galerie Media, Furkapass, Furka, Switzerland, September 1984, 1 day

In 'Ohio Impromptu' the subject of the drama sits at a table while his double sits opposite reading to him from a book that tells the story of a man sitting at a table opposite his double who reads to him from a book. The story he reads, however, reports that the reader is making his last call, suggesting that this reading is the final one. The only identity the old man has is the one sustained by the text that the other man reads; when that reading ends, of course, his presence dissolves.

Charles R. Lyons from 'Samuel Beckett'



Forum, Middelburg, Nightsea Crossing 'The Observer' with Rémy Zaugg, October 1984, 1 day

Object, feeling, thought, Sensations, turn to mental notes.



Tableaux 'Nightsea Crossing', 1984. Chronological sequence of our clothes for our performance of Nightsea Crossing

The observer

Marina and Uwe invited me to join them for their performance of 'Nightsea Crossing'. They suggested I act as observer. What could be easier than acting as observer? You don't need to be an actor in order to observe. Anyone at all could play that part. Doesn't one look everywhere all the time? Despite oneself? Isn't it the destiny of anyone who has eyes? To observe, all you need is to be present. That's the only condition you have to satisfy provided you can just keep quiet. The easy, carefree unavoidable act of seeing does not leave any fateful material trace of the observer or what he observes. Nothing certifiable or countable derives from this activity; nothing that can be discussed, nothing remarkable survives. It is an act which adds nothing to the congestion in the world, not even the tiniest trace, however ephemeral. These arguments were advanced to tempt me and I yielded to temptation. I accepted the role offered me. I would be an observer. I would observe. As I observe a ray of sunshine on the bare wooden floor of my studio. On the appointed day I set off for the seaside of Holland, at Middelburg, because it was in that town that the performance to be observed was to take place. On the fourteenth of October, I noted.

A man and a woman, Ulay and Marina Abramović, are seated, each on a chair, at opposite ends of an elongated table, facing each other, motionless, rigid, petrified. They are. They are doing nothing. Or rather they are doing their utmost to do nothing. So as to be. For seven hours on end. To experience the daily presence of a Work placed on a pedestal or hanging from a nail in the museum.

The observer has a small table, facing the two characters, the two chairs and the longer table, all of which, viewed en bloc, are seen by him in profile. The observer observes. What does he observe? A work which purports to be an inert and inanimate thing which he is free to observe quietly, as one observes a ray of sunshine on a floor. A double statue which, at the end of the day, will leave its pedestal and return to the surging mass formed by the common run of mankind. Observing would thus be act without any material consequence, as the observer had foreseen, and that all the more

surely since the very object of his observation would disappear at the end of the day. But the work observed is not a marble or bronze object, nor a 'natura morta', a dead life, a corpse embalmed in the painter's oils or moulded in funerary wax.

The work is not a dead life but a still life. It is a silent life. A life with silence. The work, with the two characters practising their wiles under the mask of inertia borrowed from the table and chairs, has a consciousness, a consciousness similar to that to the observer. That consciousness, unusual and unexpected in a work of art, surprises. It constrains. The consciousness of the observer clashes with the consciousness of the work. It is reflected in it. Through it, in it, it acquires consciousness of what it, itself, is, as it acquires consciousness of the consciousness of the work, whose conscious presence is obsessive. The observer sees in the consciousness of the work not only a



Still from video 'The Observer' by Rémy Zaugg,

reflection of his own consciousness but also the reflection of the consciousness of the spectators present behind him, whom he hears and who he knows are observing what he, the exposed observer, is observing. Consciousnesses surround him. Exposing him. Competing, interfering, troubling, constraining, projective consciousnesses. He is doubly exposed: in front, to the work; behind, to the spectators. In fact, he is exposed not doubly but trebly. Because he is also exposed to himself since his reflexive double has amalgamated with the consciousness of the spectators, in order perhaps to escape from his exposure or to evaluate the consciousnesses observing him, to know and master his situation and to go beyond it in order to be able to observe in total

sovereignty. His reflexive double has left the observer. It has rejoined the spectators and assimilated to them. Seated, the observer imagines his double standing behind him, busy observing. With the other observers, in a protective solitary anonymity, the observer standing at the periphery observes the exposed observer seated at the centre. He observes himself being observed. Privately, he observes himself being observed. He would also like to be able to observe what himself, seated in front of him, is busy observing. But he cannot. Because immediacy is not there. Between the work to be observed and him, the observer in the background, a ridiculous actor has interposed himself, alienating the originating and original work by claiming to observe for himself and for the others.



Still from video 'The Observer' by Rémy Zaugg, 1984

I have commented on my experiment on the theatre stage in a concise, lapidary video. The camera is the site of the reflextive observation of the exposed actor. The dark back of the mediating observer's head occupies almost the entire screen. Above this head, on either side, bright and coloured, two small characters, seated and motionless, disappear from time to time in the drifting and billowing white smoke from a cigarette. If the head did not move slightly and if it were not smoking, the video tape would be nothing more than a fixed image filmed over the time it takes to smoke a cigarette.

Rémy Zaugg

III.

Modus Vivendi

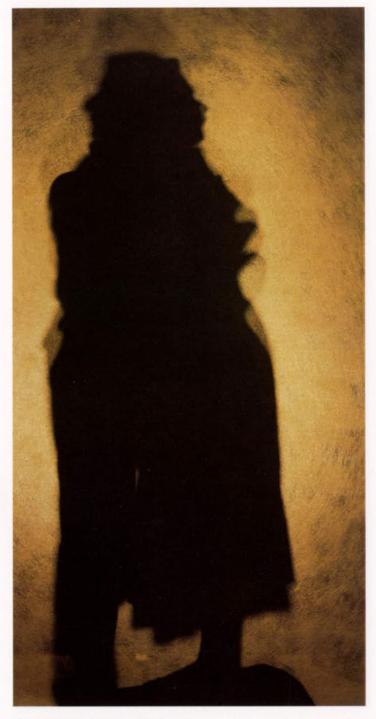
The best I know,
I ought to apply, apply, apply.
Become a tree,
Twice animal
three times man;
Warrior, saint and lover



Modus Vivendi, 1984, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1984, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1984, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1984, color polaroid



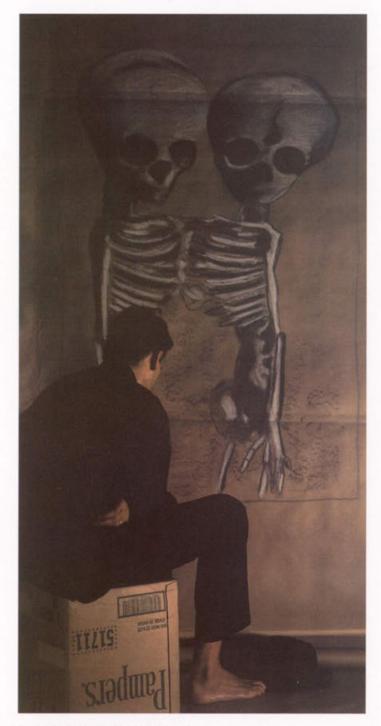
Modus Vivendi, 1985, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1985, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1985, color polaroid



Modus Vivendi, 1985, color polaroid

Empty space.
Embedded objects:
Shape of wind
without sails.
Transitory navigation
celestial coordinates:
All is motion
I'm the frame.
Floating reference curved lines.
Beheaded hands
unable holding.
Gifts in clay
The ankers weight;
Falls from gravity;
I'm the worker in a field.

IV.

Anima Mundi



Anima Mundi, Bangkok, 1983



Anima Mundi, Bangkok, 1983



Anima Mundi: Lying, Amsterdam, 1983



Anima Mundi: Sitting, Amsterdam, 1983



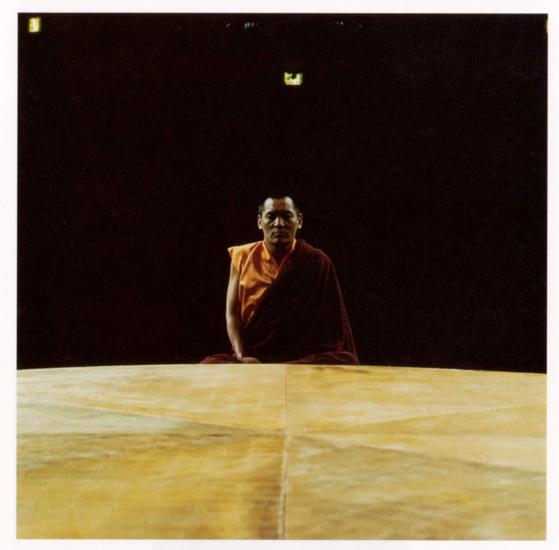
Anima Mundi: Standing, Melbourne, 1981

V.

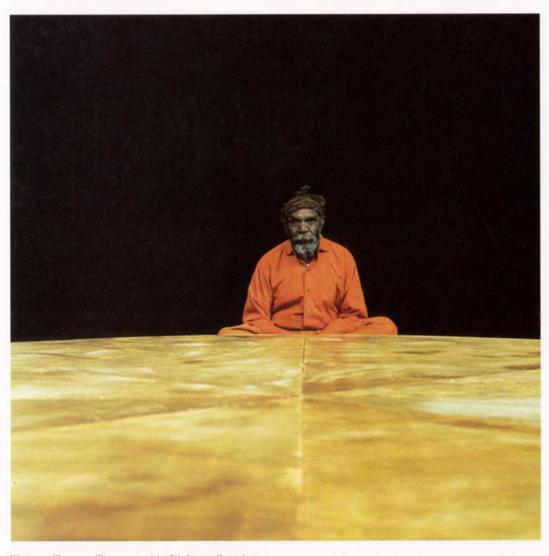
Conjunction



Tibethan Lama's and Australian Aborigines; first meeting for the music theatre Positive Zero, Theater Carré, Amsterdam, 1983



Ngawang Soepa Lueyar in Nightsea Crossing performance, Sonesta, Amsterdam, 1983



Watuma Tarruru Tjungarrayi in Nightsea Crossing performance, Sonesta, Amsterdam, 1983



Ulay in Nightsea Crossing performance, Sonesta, Amsterdam, 1983



Marina in Nightsea Crossing performance, Sonesta, Amsterdam, 1983

Emptiness, the two truths

excerpts from 'An Interview with the Dalai Lama'*

Could you describe the two truths: ultimate and conventional; what they are, and how they work?

This is important. Take the table as an example. If one searches for the object designated – the table itself – it can't be found. If one divides up the parts of the table in terms of directions or divides up its qualities or substances, then one can't find a whole which is the table. Indeed, to our minds there is a distinction between whole and parts such that when they appear to us, there seems to be a whole separate from parts – parts separate from whole. In reality, however, there isn't.

Now, when one searches in this way, one will not find the table. This non-finding, though, does not mean that the table doesn't exist. We're using it right? But if we search for it, we can't find it. So there are two types of modes of being of the table. One is the positioning of the table by a mind which doesn't analyze and is just involved in the conventionality. That sort of table is found by that sort of mind. However, if you take the table as the object, if you are not satisfied with just this which you put your hand on but search to discover what it actually is among the parts – whether this is it or that is it – then there isn't anything that can be found to be it.

Why is there this non-finding of the table? It's because the table is something that is such that if analytically sought, it can't be found. Now what does the mind searching to find the table among its parts discover? It finds just that non-finding of the table. This non-finding itself is the quality of the table; its substratum or base. This non-finding is the final nature of the table. Something more subtle does not exist. Thus, this is the ultimate or final mode of establishment of the table. Now, this mode of being is sought with respect to the table as the base or substratum. Therefore, this non-finding is the actual mode of being of the table. Thus, with respect to the one basis, the table, there are two natures: one that is found by a non-analytical mind and one that is found by the analytical mind. With respect to one base, then, there is an object found by a consciousness distinguishing the ultimate

and an object found by a consciousness distinguishing the conventional. Thus it is said: 'Form is emptiness. Emptiness is form.' Now these two are mutually exclusive. The two truths are one entity but are mutually exclusive.

How?

With respect to a phenomenon, that which is its ultimate truth is not its conventional truth and visa versa.

So, it's incorrect to say that they are mutually definitive?

The one doesn't define the other. Still, if you take the ultimate reality or emptiness of the table as the substratum and search to see if it can be found; then it becomes a conventional truth in terms of itself as the substratum. In relation to the table, its emptiness is an ultimate truth, but in relation to its own reality, i.e. the reality of the reality, it's a conventional truth. It's contradictory for something to be its own mode of being. Therefore, the reality of something, its not its own reality. This is because when reality is sought, when the nature of things is sought, it can't be found either.

When emptiness first appears to the mind, what is it like?

Even though the word, dharmata (ultimate nature of phenomena), doesn't have any negative particle in it, when that – the nature or reality of phenomena – appears to the mind, it must appear through the root of a negation. It is important to make this distinction. Is it that when inherent existence is sought, it is not found because it doesn't exist, or even though it exists, it isn't found because it can't be found under analysis? It is the former. When you look at how things appear to your mind, they appear as if they were such that they could be found upon analysis. Therefore if things did exist in the way they appear to our minds, when you examine them they should become clearer and clearer. The fact that they do not, is a sign that they don't exist in the way they appear to.

In sum, though they appear to inherently exist, they don't exist in that way. Now, in your mind, you initially have a sense that the object doesn't exist in the way it appears to. When you get used to this thought, accustomed to it, you eventually gain ascertainment that the object does not exist at all in the way it appears. At that time, your own sense of appearance is an experience of vacuity, which is simply the absence of inherent existence. At the beginning of this process, the object – this thing which is empty – might still appear. In an easy way, if one goes to a cinema, you might differentiate two different times while watching the movie. In both cases pictures would appear to your eye consciousness, but in the first instance one would just observe them, while in the latter you would be thinking strongly that this doesn't exist as a fact.

If you strongly develop and maintain the thought that this doesn't exist – if you concentrate on its non-existence – then in time the appearance itself will begin to vanish. This is because the immediately preceding condition of the eye consciousness will begin to deteriorate. Therefore, when you initially ascertain emptiness, just a mere negative or absence of the object of negation – inherent existence – is ascertained. Even if at the beginning the object still appears; in time, with concentration just on emptiness, it will disappear. Then due to observing the emptiness of the object, when the object reappears, the thought that it doesn't exist in the way that it seems to, is induced.

This is called the illusory-like appearance. At this point you are able to control your afflictive emotions. These faulty consciousnesses can in no way be produced without the assistance of the conception of inherent existence. Even though for beginners there are cases when the conception of inherent existence acts as an assistor to a virtuous consciousness, in general, it is not necessary that such a consciousness have assistance from the misconception of the nature of existence. Therefore, a consciousness realizing that objects do not exist in their own right serves to obstruct the generation of afflictions whereas it doesn't serve to obstruct a virtuous consciousness.

At the moment emptiness is understood - When the object vanishes - what does it feel like? I'll just give a conventional example. For instance, the reflection of a face is empty of being a face, but its emptiness of being a face is not its reality; its emptiness of inherent existence is. When from the very depths the mind realizes the absence of this kind of existence of the object, at that point no other consciousness is being generated. Not even the thought, 'this is emptiness.' If you did think, 'this is emptiness,' then emptiness would be distant. It would be like an object under observation. It would not have arrived at being the actual object of apprehension by the consciousness.

^{*}published by John F. Avedon, N.Y. 1979.



Australian Aborigines playing the didjeridoo in Positive Zero, Theater Carré, Amsterdam, 1983



Tibetan Lama's chanting in Positive Zero, Theater Carré, Amsterdam, 1983

Few birds fly, Others move in succession, Falling and rising in panic.

VI.

Continents



Still from City of Angels, Ayuthaya, 1983

'City of Angels' consists of five almost static images with an introduction and a coda. During the introduction the camera pans slowly from a



Still from City of Angels, Ayuthaya, 1983

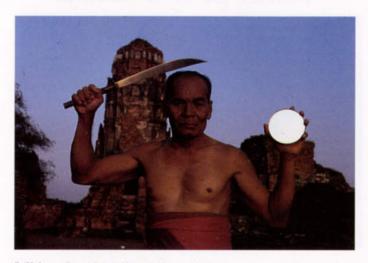
fixed point over a number of people lying on a green lawn. This is followed by five images involving motionless figures against a background of ruins, the remains of the Ayuthaya temple complex in Bangkok. Each individual image is structured like a painting, with a tension between two and three-dimensionality similar to that in paintings. The colours are saturated reds, blues, yellows and greens. Each image possesses a glowing intensity due on the one hand to the translation of the brilliance of sunrises and sunsets into electronic colours, and on the other hand to the perceptibly controlled movement. Unlike the frozen movement familiar to us from the paintings of, say, Nicolas Poussin, this motionlessness can be experienced in real time. And to dispel any brief doubts there may be as to that reality, each image contains something that makes time visible: a dress blowing about, a bird flying past or a changing reflection in a mirror. In the five compositions we encounter something that



Still from City of Angels, Ayuthaya, 1983

there has been in painting for hundreds of years and still is today, albeit in a less compelling fashion: symbiolic items. The tape ends with a total shot of all the people on the lawn from the introduction, who turn out to be the participants in the five compositions. The method Marina Abramović and Ulay used in making this tape is similar to the way they create their performances. On the one hand they prepare everything down to the tiniest

detail (time, place, action, light, costumes, people); on the other hand they totally eschew rehearsals, tryouts, repetition, corrections, complicated montage. In the same way that the spectator can experience their performance as intensified reality, he can experience a preserved piece of reality in their tape. From the moment the camera rolls, everything is left to chance. Marina Abramović and Ulay exploit one of the essential properties of video in a manner completely in keeping with their own work.



Still from City of Angels, Ayuthaya, 1983

excerpt from: Dorine Mignot: 'Video Art in Rembrandt's Country', in

Dutch Art + Architecture Today, June 1984.

'Terra Degli Dea Madre' is taped on Sicily. Their video work has not broken with their performance past. On the contrary, the



Stills from Terra degli Dea Madre, Trapani/Selinunte, 1984

developmental line just carries on in the medium so well suited to it. Whereas their early performances put physical limits to the test, meditation and concentration are far more significant in their more recent work. Their frequent travels have brought them into contact with ancient cultures like the ones of Tibet and the Australian aborigines. Time seems to stand still in such cultures, only nature moves. Affinity with cultures like this

may be expressed by sitting at a long table for the long duration of a performance ('Nightsea Crossing'); this kind of timeless, silent meditation can also be 'put onto words' by means of a durative medium such as video. Interest in timeless cultures is supplemented by an interest in classical – in the sense of timedefying – architecture and sculpture as in this video installation. Their tapes are consequently characterised by extremely aesthetic, long-sustained or tracing images in which – in an architectonic context – the action appears to



Still from Terra degli Dea Madre, Trapani/Selinunte, 1984

be petrified. Accompanied by a kind of shimmering, authentic sound, the images compel the viewer to assume a concentrated, almost mediative attitude.

excerpt from:

Rob Perree: 'Image in the sun', Dutch Video Art in the 80's, The Hague 1985.



Installation view, Terra degli Dea Madre, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1984

These things that live on departure understand when you praise them, they look for rescue through something in us, the most fleeting of all want us to change them entirely, within our invisible hearts, into - oh, endlessly - into ourselves! Whoever we are.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Reference Material

Performances

1976

Relation in space

Venice Biennale, Giudecca-Venezia, July.

Talking about similarity

Singel 64, Amsterdam, November.

1977

Interruption in space

Kunstakademie Düsseldorf/Klasse Rinke, January.

Breathing in/Breathing out (first part)

April Meeting, Studenski Kulturni Centar, Belgrade, April.

Imponderabilia

Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, June.

Expansion in space

documenta 6, Kassel, June.

Relation in movement

10e Biennale de Paris, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris, September.

Relation in time

Studio G7, Bologna, October.

Light/Dark

Internationaler Kunst Messe, Cologne, October.

Breathing out/Breathing in (second part)

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, November.

Balance proof

Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva, December.

1978

AAA-AAA

RTB, Liège, February.

Incision

Galerie H-Humanic, Graz, April.

Kaiserschnitt

Performance Festival Wien (Wiener Reitinstitut), April.

European Series One, Brooklyn Museum, New York,

Relation/Work

Extract Two, Theater aan de Rijn, Arnhem, September.

Relation/Work

Palazzo dei Diamanti, Ferrara, October.

Relation/Work

Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, November.

Three

Harlekin Art, Wiesbaden, November.

1979

The Brink

3rd Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South

Wales, Sydney, April.

Go-Stop-Back... /1.2.3. ...

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, May.

Communist body - Capitalist body

Zoutkeetsgracht 116, Amsterdam, November.

1980

Rest energy

ROSC, Dublin.

1981

Gold found by the artists

The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

No tango

Sculpture Triennale, Melbourne, April.

Nightsea Crossing

The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, June.

(16 days, colours: black and red).

ANZART, The Artcenter, Christchurch, New Zeeland, August.

6 WF.

The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, September.

Nightsea Crossing

Skulpturenmuseum, Marl, BRD, March

(1 day, colours: blue and red).

[90]

Nightsea Crossing

Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf, March

(3 days, colours: green and red).

Nightsea Crossing

Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, March

(3 days, colours: dark violet and light violet).

Nightsea Crossing

Kölnischer Kunstverein/Moltkerein, Cologne, April

(5 days, colours: maron and orange).

Nightsea Crossing

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, April

(12 days, colours: dark violet and green).

Nightsea Crossing

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, May

(5 days, colours: yellow and light violet).

Nightsea Crossing

A Space/Townhall, Toronto, May

(1 day, colours: yellow and blue).

Nightsea Crossing

documenta 7, Kassel, June

(7 days, colours: red and blue).

Nightsea Crossing

documenta 7, Kassel, August

(7 days, colours: dark violet and orange).

Nightsea Crossing

documenta Kassel 7, Kassel, September

(7 days, colours: yellow and green).

Nightsea Crossing

with Watuma Taruru Tjungarrayi and Ngawang Soepa Lueyar. Sonesta Koepelzaal/Museum Fodor,

Amsterdam, April

(4 days, colours: maron, ochre red, red, orange).

Positive Zero

with 10 performers, 6 Tibetan Lamas and 2 Australian Aborigines for live music

Holland Festival, Theater Carré, Amsterdam

Holland Festival, Muziekeentrum Vredenburg, Utrecht, Holland Festival, De Doelen, Rotterdam, June.

Modus Vivendi

Progetto Genazzano/Zattera di Babele, Genazzano, Italy, September.

Nightsea Crossing

ARS 83, The Museum of the Ateneum, Helsinki,

(2 days, colours: yellow and white).

1984

Positive Zero

La Zattera di Babele, Stadsschouwburg Eindhoven, 1984, February.

Nightsea Crossing

Museum voor Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, March-April

(4 days, colours: red and blue). Nightsea Crossing

Galerie/Edition Media, Furkapass, Furka, Switzerland, September

(I day, colours: white and green).

Nightsea Crossing

Städtisches Kunstmuseum, Bonn, September

(1 day, colours: white and blue).

Nightsea Crossing

Forum, Middelburg, The Netherlands, October

(I day, colours: dark violet and blue).

1985

Modus Vivendi

Kunstmuseum Bern/Stadttheater Bern, May.

Nightsea Crossing

Dialogo, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, June

(2 days, colours: black and green).

Modus Vivendi

Arnhem, Saskia theater.

Films

1976

Relation in space

realised by RAI, Roma, Alfredo di Lauri

16 mm, colour/sound, 45 min. (Venice, July).

1977

Imponderabilia

realized by Diffusione Arte Cinomatografia, Rome, Lisa

Carbone 16 mm, colour/sound, 45 min.

Relation in movement

realized by Marina Abramović and Ulay

filmed by Hartmut Kowalke

16 mm, colour/sound, 16 hours (Paris, September).

Breathing out/Breathing in (second part).

realized by Ulay and Marina Abramović

filmed by Maarten Rens and Louis B. van Gasteren

16 mm, colour/sound, 22 min. (Amsterdam, November).

1978

Light/Dark

realized by Marina Abramović and Ulay filmed by Maarten Rens and Louis B. van Gasteren 16 mm, colour/sound, 15 min.

AAA-AAA

realized by Ulay and Marina Abramović filmed by Maarten Rens and Louis B. van Gasteren 16 mm, colour/sound, 24 min. (Amsterdam, March). Incision

realized by Galerie H-Humanic, Graz

filmed by Cinedoc, Graz

16 mm, colour/sound, 30 min. (Graz, April).

Three

realized by Harlekin Art, Wiesbaden filmed by Gabor Bagyoni 16 mm, colour/sound, 12 min. (Wiesbaden, November).

1979

Communist Body – Capitalist Body realized by Marina Abramović and Ulay filmed by Tomislav Gotovac

16 mm, colour/sound, 44 min. (Amsterdam, November).

1980

That Self

realized by Ulay and Marina Abramović filmed by Ruud Monster, sound Ali Wiering 16 mm, colour/sound, 40 min. (Amsterdam, Jan.-Aug.).

Video-tapes

1976

Relation in Space

black and white, sound, 60 min.

Sony U-matie

realized by Galleria dell Cavalino, Venice (Venice, July).

Talking about similarity

black and white, sound, 40 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Ulay and Marina Abramović, Amsterdam (Amsterdam, November).

1977

Interruption in space

black and white, sound, 45 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Klaus Rinke and Ursula Wevers, Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf, January). Imponderabilia

black and white, sound, 60 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderne, Bologna (Bologna, June).

Expansion in space

colour, sound, 32 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Marina Abramović and Ulay, Kassel (Kassel, June).

Relation in time

black and white, sound, 2 tapes of 60 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Studio G7, Bologna (Bologna, October).

Light/Dark

colour, sound, 22 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by PAP, Munich (Cologne, October).

Breathing in/Breathing out (first part).

black and white, sound, 22 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Video Heads, Jack More, Belgrade

(Belgrade, April).

Balance proof

black and white, sound, 28 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Galerie Marika Malcorda, Geneva (Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, December).

1978

AAA-AAA

colour, sound, 16 min

Sony U-matic

realized by RTB tv, Liège (Liège, February).

Incision

colour, sound, 40 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Galerie H-Humanic, Horst Gerhard Haberl, Graz (Graz, April).

Kaiserschnitt

colour, sound, 35 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Galerie Krinzinger, Horst Gerhard Haberl, Modern Art Gallery, Vienna (Vienna, April).

Charged space

colour, sound, 24 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn NY

(New York, May).

Relation/Work

black and white, sound, 60 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Jan Brand and ICC, Antwerp (Arnhem,

September).

Relation/Work

black and white, sound, 90 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Palazzo del Diamanti, Ferrara (Ferrara, October).

Relation/Work

black and white, sound, 45 min.

Sony U-matic

realized by Zika Dacić, Tübingen (Karlsruhe,

November).

1982

Crazed elephant

U-matic, colour, sound, 12 min.

realized by Ulay & Marina Abramović (Amsterdam, february).

1983

City of angels

BVU colour, sound, 20 min.

realized by Ulay & Marina Abramović (Amsterdam, February).

Anima Mundi

BVU colour, sound, 8 min.

realized by Continental Video, Antwerp

Positive Zero

BVU colour, sound, 22 min.

realized by Continental Video, Antwerp (Amsterdam, April).

1984

The world is my country

BVU colour, sound, 4 min.

realized by Continental Video, Antwerp (Sicily, April).

Terra degli Dei Madre

BVU colour, sound, 20 min.

realized by Continental Video, Antwerp (Sicily, April).

1985

Modus Vivendi

BVU colour, sound, 25 min.

realized by Continental Video, Antwerp (Arnhem, July).

Publications

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Ulay/Marina Abramović

Three performances

Innsbruck, Galerie Krinzinger/Graz, Galerie H-

Humanic, 1978. 50 p.

text: excerpts of dialogue between Heidi Grundman,

Ulay and Marina Abramović.

Ulay/Marina Abramović

Marina Abramović/Ulay

30 November/30 November.

Wiesbaden, Harlekin Art, 1979. 50 p.

text Ulay and Marina Abramović.

Ulay/Marina Abramović

Marina Abramović/Ulay

Two performances and Detour

Adelaide, South Australia, The Experimental Art

Foundation, 1979, 50 p.

text: Marina Abramović and Ulay.

Marina Abramović/Ulay

Ulay/Marina Abramović

Relation Work and Detour

Amsterdam, Idea Books, 1980. 236 p. Charly Taruru Tjungarrayi/Ngawang Soepa Lueyar/Ulay/

Marina Abramović.

Nightsea Crossing

Amsterdam, Museum Fodor, 1983. 12 p.

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Ambiente/participazione/strutture culturali. Venice, Biennale.

1977

La performance oggi;

settimana internazionale della performance. Bologna,

Galleria comunale d'arte moderna.

documenta 6 Kassel Kassel, Documenta.

Xe Biennale de Paris

Paris, Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris,

Internationale Kunstmesse

Cologne, Messegelände.

1978

Ulay/Marina Abramović

Installation one

Amsterdam, De Appel.

Internationales Performance Festival

Vienna, österreichischer Kunstverein.

European Series One

New York, Brooklyn Museum.

1979

Ulay/Marina Abramović

On the way (installation).

London, Riverside Studio/Audio Arts.

Ulay/Marina Abramović.

Installation two

Wiesbaden, Harlekin Art.

Trigon '79/Masculin-feminin;

Steirische Herbst '79.

Graz, Künstlerhaus/Neue Galerie.

European dialogue;

III Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Photographie als Kunst 1879-1979/Kunst als

Photographie 1949-1979. Vienna, Museum des XX. Jahrhunderts.

1980

Rose'80;

the poetry of vision; an international exhibition of modern art and chinese painting.

Dublin, School of Architecture/University College/ National Gallery of Ireland.

1981

XVI Bienal de Sao Paulo.

Sao Paulo, Bienal.

Artists' photographs

Oakland, Crown Point Press Gallery.

Instant fotografie

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum.

(touring exhibition).

1982

Ulay/Marina Abramović.

Luther.(installation).

Bremerhaven, Kabinett für Aktuelle Kunst.

Momentbild:

Künstlerphotographie.

Hanover, Kestner Gesellschaft.

Videokunst in Deutschland 1963-1982

Cologne, Kölnischer Kunstverein, touring exhibition 1982-1983 with installation 'Crazed Elephant'. Contemporary art from the Netherlands

Chicago, Museum of Contemporary art, (touring exhibition 1982-1983).

documenta 7 Kassel

Kassel, Documenta.

lle Festival international du Nouveau Cinema Montreal

1982

Montréal/Québec.

Vision in disbelief;

the Fourth Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, The Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Live to air/Artists' sound works

London, Tate Gallery.

'60-'80;

attitudes, concepts, images; een keuze uit twintig jaar

beeldende kunst.

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum.

1983

ARS 83.

Helsinki, The Art Museum of the Ateneum.

Examples of the mental and spiritual spaces/works.

Belgrade, Galerija Studentskog kulturnog Centra.

De goddelijke komedie

Rotterdam, Rotterdamse Kunststichting/'t Venster.

The second link;

viewpoints on video in the eighties.

Banff, Walter Philips Gallery, (touring exhibition).

Video C.D. 83

Ljubljana, Cankarjev Dom.

The second link;

visies op video in de jaren '80.

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum.

1984

La Zattera di Babele/Eindhoven;

een carrousel van beeld, muziek, woord en theater.

Eindhoven, Stadsschouwburg/Stedelijk Van

Abbemuseum. (Positive Zero, a sound installation).

Biennale di Venezia

Venice, Biennale. (The world is my country,

video installation).

Content;

a contemporary focus 1974-1984. Washington,

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

2e Manifestation internationale de vidéo

Montbéliard, Centre d'action culturelle.

1984. Im toten Winkel

Hamburg, Kunstverein/Kunsthaus.

The luminous image/Het lumineuze beeld Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum. (Terra degli dea madre-installation).

National video festival:

presented by the American Film Institute.

Los Angeles, AFI campus.

Symbol Tier

Innsbruck, Galerie Krinzinger

(touring exhibition).

Ulay/Marina Abramović.

You see what you feel/I see

Amsterdam, Time Based Arts.

(video installation).

Video: a retrospective 1974-1984

Long Beach, Long Beach Museum of art.

14. Internationales Forum des Jungen Films Berlin 1984;

Perspektiven, Video & Super 8.

Berlin.

Von hier aus;

zwei Monate neue Deutsche Kunst in Düsseldorf.

Düsseldorf, Messegelände.

1985

Image on the run;

Dutch video art of the 80's.

New York, The Kitchen.

(touring exhibition).

By the river 3/Varrella virran 3;

international photography today.

Pori, Finland, The Pori Art Museum. Alles und noch viel mehr;

das poetische ABC;

Bern, Kunsthalle/Kunstmuseum.

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