

Marina Abramovi? to return to Australia for the first time in 17 years

Marina Abramovi? is no stranger to Australia. The legendary artist spent between October 1980 and March 1981 with the Pitjantjatjara and Pintupi people of the Western Desert, and has expressed that the time was a seminal point in her life that sustained a significant impact on her works.

“I had a profound experience in the country,” she says. “I’ve visited Australia many times since 1979 to study Aboriginal culture. I participated in artist residencies and the Sydney Biennale.”

But her return isn’t just significant because it’s her first time exhibiting here in nearly two decades. The project marks the first collaboration between two of Australia’s most (in)famous patrons of the arts, and predictably, it’s an astonishing one. David Walsh of Hobart’s Museum of Old and New Art and John Kaldor of Kaldor Public Art Projects have united to create a series of exhibitions and events comprising both a retrospective and a personal encounter with the artist’s method itself.

At MONA, *Private Archaeology* will provide a personal encounter with Abramovi?’s work, conceived by the gallery’s senior curators Nicole Durling and Olivier Varenne. It will trace each decade of her art, from her pioneering work of the 1970s to the increasingly immersive and interactive works of the present day.

A solo exhibition by the artist will follow at the gallery, and at Walsh Bay in Sydney, *Marina Abramovi?: In Residence* will involve visitors in a series of exercises from the Abramovi? Method.

“Marina Abramovi? seems to operate for all us. Her sins, her excesses, her minimalist, egocentric actions define the boundaries of what it is to be human,” says Walsh. “I would do the stuff she does if I had the balls. And the brains. And the desperation to understand. I’d rather be represented by a sinner than a saint.”

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