

Press Release

**European Premiere of
Marina Abramović *The Artist is Present*
at the 62nd Berlin International Film Festival**



The documentary *Marina Abramović The Artist is Present*, directed by Matthew Akers and co-produced by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, offers an exclusive behind-the-scenes portrait of Marina Abramović, one of most compelling and challenging artists of our time, a founder of the performance art movement and radical female performer since the 1970s. The narrative spine of the film is the mounting of the eponymous retrospective and its three-month exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, in 2010. The show's centerpiece consisted of a new and engaging simple performance: for the entire three months from March to May during the opening hours of the museum, Marina Abramović would be present to perform her new endurance piece. Members of the vast audience of 700.000 visitors to the show were invited to join the artist, one at a time, at the opposite end of a table. Without talking, touching, any overt communication or movement, visitor and artist engaged in an "energy dialogue", characterized by its stunning ascetic simplicity and at the same time putting the performer under an unimaginable physical and psychological strain.

The documentary combines footage of this silent, monumental performance with extensive and intimate interviews with the artist and insights into Marina Abramović's life in New York, as well as interweaving archival film material from the past 30 years. The artist's friends and colleagues, including Klaus Biesenbach, curator of MoMA, art critic Arthur Danto and Marina Abramović's early partner and long-time creative collaborator Ulay speak about her, her work and significance for the establishment of performance as a legitimate and radical form of art.

Elevating traditional documentary techniques with an intensity and atmosphere befitting its subject, *Marina Abramović The Artist is Present* is by no means a typical "art film." With total access granted by Abramović and The Museum of Modern Art, *Marina Abramović The Artist is Present* is instead

a mesmerizing cinematic journey inside the world of radical performance, and an intimate portrait of an astonishingly magnetic, intriguing woman who draws no distinction between life and art.

World premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, the film will now be premiered at the 62. Berlin International Film Festival.

Marina Abramović was born in 1946 in Belgrade. Marina Abramović has presented her work with performances, sound, photography, video, sculpture and *Transitory Objects for Human and Non Human Use* in solo exhibitions at major institutions in the U.S. and Europe. Her work has also been included in many large-scale international exhibitions including the Venice Biennale (1976 and 1997) and documenta VI, VII and IX, Kassel, (1977, 1982 and 1992). She was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale for her extraordinary video installation/performance piece *Balkan Baroque*, and in 2003 received the Bessie for *The House with the Ocean View*, a 12-day performance at Sean Kelly Gallery, New York. She was the subject of a major retrospective at MoMA, *The Artist is Present*, in 2010 which was decisive for the same-titled film. She lives and works in New York.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

Founded in Vienna in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary is committed to supporting the production of contemporary art and is actively involved in commissioning and disseminating unconventional projects that defy traditional disciplinary categorizations. T-B A21 sustains a far-reaching regional and international orientation and explores modes of presentation that are intended to broaden the viewers' perception. After *The Sun Behind the Clouds: Tibet's Struggle for Freedom* (2009) by Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin, *Marina Abramović The Artist is Present* (2012) by Matthew Akers is the second film Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary is co-producing.

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ THE ARTIST IS PRESENT

2012, USA, 105 Min., HBO Documentary Films

A **Show of Force** Production

Directed by Matthew Akers

Produced by Jeff Dupre und Maro Chermayeff

Co-produced by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

Director of Photography Matthew Akers

Co-Directed by Jeff Dupre

Edited by E. Donna Shepherd

Co-Edited by Jim Hession

Original Music by Nathan Halpern

For HBO, Executive Producer Sheila Nevins

Senior Producer Nancy Abraham

For Dakota Group Ltd, Executive Producers Stanley Buchthal, Maja Hoffmann & David Koh

62nd INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL BERLIN

February 09 –19, 2012

EUROPEAN PREMIERE

February 11, 2012, 05:00 pm: Cinema International, Karl-Marx Allee 33, 10178 Berlin

FURTHER SCREENINGS

February 12, 2012, 12:00 am: CineStar 7; Potsdamer Strasse 4, 10785 Berlin

February 18, 2012, 05:00 pm: Cine Star 7, Potsdamer Strasse 4, 10785 Berlin

February 19, 2012, 02.30 pm: Colosseum 1, Schönhauser Allee 123, 10437 Berlin

ACCREDITATION

www.berlinale.de

MORE ABOUT THE FILM

www.marinafilm.com

INFORMATION

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VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP

As one of the leading insurance groups in Central and Eastern Europe, the **Vienna Insurance Group** and its main shareholder clearly perceive its social responsibilities and have been reliable sponsoring partners for Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and other cultural projects for many years. Numerous museums and galleries have insured their collections with Vienna Insurance Group. The main objective for cooperating with cultural institutions is to promote the international exchange in the field of arts and culture.

Photocredits

Marina Abramović

The Artist is Present

HBO Documentary Films 2012,

USA, 105 Min.

Directed by Matthew Akers

Filmstill

Co-produced by T-B A21

Photo: Jeff Dupre

Marina Abramović

The Artist is Present

HBO Documentary Films 2012,

USA, 105 Min.

Directed by Matthew Akers

Filmstill

Co-produced by T-B A21

Photo: David Smoler

Marina Abramović

The Artist is Present

HBO Documentary Films 2012,

USA, 105 Min.

Directed by Matthew Akers

Filmstill

Co-produced by T-B A21

Photo: Ulay