The Review of Marina Abramovic’s Art: Part 2

Here is the second part of our review of Marina Abramovic’s performances.

# The Performance As a Metaphor by Marina Abramovic: Part 2

In the second part of our [review essay](https://writemypaper.io/essay-help), we interpret the most famous performance “Rhythm 0” by Marina Abramovic as well as draw a parallel between it and the Lars von Trier’s film. Furthermore, both the joint artworks and the legendary connection between two artists Marina Abramovic and Ulay are described.

##  ‘Rhythm 0’: The Boundaries of Freedom

<alt> Gallery

Particular attention will be dedicated to [the performance "Rhythm 0"](https://www.widewalls.ch/marina-abramovic-art/). There Marina, having placed twenty items (scissors, flower, rope, weapons, markers) on the table, is standing in one place in the gallery for six hours and allows visitors to do with her everything they wish. At first, the audience kissed her, hugged her, gave her a flower in her hand, then she began to paint, [cover it with a rope,](https://writemypaper.io/blog/violence) undress, and control her arms. When she turned herself back in six hours, she noticed that people who had been using her with brutal manipulations of the show went to the exit and avoided visual contact with her. This experiment and its consequences have shown that the facet between the perception of the subject and the object in the minds of a person and a group of people is very thin – when a person becomes defenseless and depends on the actions of the environment, the environment will certainly use it to satisfy the dangers of their own freedom, even if this freedom violates the freedom of another subject who has agreed to the role of the object.

## ‘Rhythm 0’ and ‘Dogville’: The Problem of the Self-Sacrifice

Thus, experimenting with gallery visitors from the real life, Marina Abramovic created, on the one hand, a metaphor: "while you allow them to do with you whatever they want – they do whatever they want" or "you are the victim while you want to be a victim", which can be applied to the rights-limited groups of society (such as women or dark-skinned Americans in the United States) and, more broadly, as a concept of freedom, inherent in any situation where a person sets himself free from the others. This concept of freedom, which is born as a result of the performance "Rhythm 0", is clearly perceptible in the film by Lars von Trier "Dogville." There, the main heroine Grace, after getting in a small village, allows people to use herself as a service-woman for all the peasants if they hide her from the mafia. As a result – she becomes both the object and victim of the "mysterious desires" of the small members of the rural society. Nevertheless, unlike the performance by Abramovic, Lars von Trier absolutizes this concept, claiming the impossibility of empathy.

## “Relation in Time”: Two Knots, Two Humans

In the aforementioned performance, Marina, through experimenting with her own body, tried to grasp the phenomenon of human freedom, in some performances that she gave with the German artist Ulay, the presentation was a materialized time metaphor. In performance, the artists, sitting back to the back, tied the hair to a joint knot and sat for six or seven hours. During this time, the tight knot almost unfurled, leaving the hair of the artists different. The concept of this statement is the connection or the relationship between man and woman. It is possible, however, to interpret this more universally as any connection at all. “Relation in time” submits the fact that there are no eternal connections because everything, sooner or later, gets divorced, broken or just disconnected.

## “The Lovers”: Symbolism Becomes the Real-Life Story

This performance was quite symbolic for the life of the artists themselves: the long relationship between Ulay and Marina also broke up. It snatched by their latest joint performance "The Lovers," during which they traveled to each other alongside The Great Wall of China for three months. It simply symbolized a long way of lovers to each other. Those are Marina’s and Ulay's relationships and joint artistic activity that seem to be the embodiment of this tension of Spender from the Bradbury novel "The Third Expedition" in Martian culture, where the life and the art are closely interwoven with unity in which art is life as life is art.

Summing up what Marina Abramovich performs, we can claim that this is the art of artist's self-cognition through their own body and interaction with the outer space. This is the art of a materialized time-space metaphor, which is different from the cinematic one that is spontaneous and unplanned, is more minimalistic, more universal, more open to interpretations, and also is the art of creating a concept by means of a time-space experiment with reality, the task of which is to identify oneself as a person, a human being, a member of a society, that is dialogic and able to produce amazing intersemiotic relationships.