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It's Art: Marina Abramovic Counts Grains of Rice

Every now and then, The Creators Project comes across an artwork that surprises and delights us—every bit as much as it totally confuses us and otherwise has us begging for answers. This is art that defies conventions, challenges sensibilities, and breaks the walls down between around both critique and understanding. You might like it—you might not "get it." But we do. Turn on, take a deep breath, and just remember: It's art!



Still from the Guardian's Have you got what it takes to follow the Abramović method?

On Tuesday, famed performance artist Marina Abramovic asked guests of Design Miami to count individual grains of rice, for six hours, at geometric rice-counting desks custom-designed for the Marina Abramovic Institute by star architect Daniel Libeskind.

Known as Counting the Rice, it's an exercise that originally debuted in Abramovic's Cleaning the House workshop. Says the project's previous hosts, its purpose is to "develop the participants' endurance, concentration, perception, self-control and willpower" and "allow the public to stretch their physical and mental limits."

"Technology is great but it's also a dangerous thing," Marina Abramovic explained to the Miami Herald. "We have to learn how we can gain free time back for ourselves. The only way to emerge is with some long durational activities, such as Counting the Rice." According to The Observer, Abramovic also added, "You might think it's crazy to sit at a fair and count rice, but this is exactly what you have to do to reclaim time. If you can't count the rice for three hours, you can't do anything good in life."



Participant Lauren Pellerano Gomez counts grains of rice at a custom rice-counting desk designed by starchitect Daniel Libeskind. Photo: Emily Michot / Miami Herald Staff



One of the custom rice-counting desks, designed by Libeskind and produced by Moroso. Photo by Gianni Antoniali.