

SEAN KELLY

“Marina Abramovic at ABHK,” *Hong Kong Tatler*, March 2016.

HONG KONG TATLER

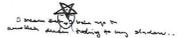
MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

Performance artist Marina Abramović has had her clothes torn off, a gun pointed at her head and even helped her partner aim an arrow at her heart, incidents she famously achieved before 10pm so as not to break her mother's curfew. The Serbian-born artist, who sometimes refers to herself as the “grandmother of performance art,” has been using her body as a medium since the early 1970s, creating artworks that provoke, confront and subvert. The daughter of two of Yugoslavia's most famous wartime partisans, Abramović taps into an aesthetic of pain, a place where suffering speaks to bigger and more important truths. While her early works involved stabbing her fingers or carving a five-pointed star into her stomach with a razor blade, her later works show that pain can come in many forms. From the tedium of counting grains of rice to the excoriating truth that comes from simply staring into strangers' eyes, Abramović's work attempts to drive deeply into a transcendental space. When in 1988 she split with Ulay, her lover since 1976, they decided to mark the end of their relationship with a piece called *The Lovers*, in which they each walked 2,500 kilometres from opposite ends of the Great Wall of China before embracing and parting for the last time. “As every relationship comes to an end, ours went too,” Abramović told an audience recently. “We didn't make phone calls like normal human beings do and say, you know, ‘This is over.’ We walked the Great Wall of China to say goodbye. I started at the Yellow Sea and he started from the Gobi Desert. We walked, each of us, three months, two-and-a-half thousand kilometres. It was the mountains; it was difficult; it was climbing; it was ruins... We succeeded to meet in the middle to say goodbye. And then our relationship stopped. And now, it completely changed how I see the public.” Photographs from the journey, complete with the artist's sketches, will be presented at Art Basel by New York's Sean Kelly Gallery.

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

The Lovers

(Clockwise from top: *Seated Figure*; *Ladderman*; *Starhead*), 1988
Colour photographs with unique drawings on lower margin
Each 65cm x 60cm



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