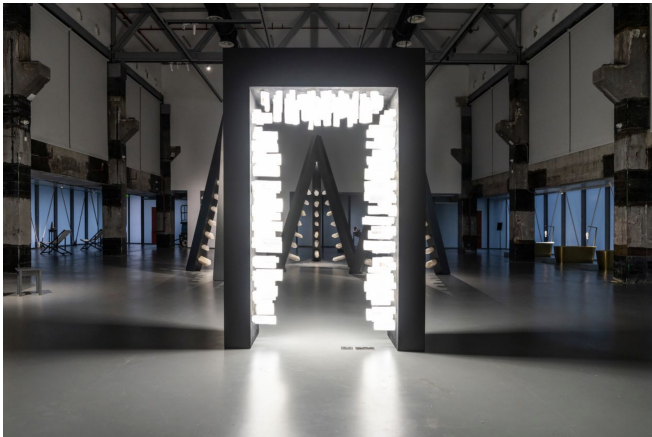


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2025

**MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ MAKES HISTORY WITH TRANSFORMING ENERGY—
THE FIRST-EVER EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO A LIVING WOMAN ARTIST AT THE
GALLERIE DELL'ACCADEMIA DI VENEZIA**



“Transforming Energy” by Marina Abramović at Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai; Credit: Yu Jieyu

Opening May 6, 2026 - Celebrating the Artist’s 80th Birthday

High-resolution images available for download: [HERE](#)

Venice, IT — Internationally acclaimed artist **Marina Abramović** will make history in 2026 as the first living woman artist to be honored with a major exhibition at the **Gallerie dell’Accademia** in Venice. *Marina Abramović: Transforming Energy*, presented during the 61st Venice Biennale Arte, will open on May 6, 2026 and run until October 19, 2026. The exhibition marks the artist’s 80th birthday and establishes a profound dialogue between her pioneering performance art and the Renaissance masterpieces that have shaped the cultural identity of Venice. Curated by Shai Baitel, Artistic Director of the Modern Art Museum (MAM) Shanghai, in close collaboration with the artist, the exhibition unfolds across both the museum’s permanent collection galleries and its temporary exhibition spaces — a first in the institution’s history — embedding Abramović’s practice within the very heart of Venetian patrimony.

At its core, *Transforming Energy* is an encounter between past and present, material and immaterial, body and spirit. Visitors are invited to experience a series of interactive *Transitory Objects* — stone beds and structures embedded with crystals — by lying, sitting, or standing upon them, activating what Abramović calls “energy transmission.” Iconic works such as *Imponderabilia* (1977), *Rhythm 0* (1974), *Light/Dark* (1977),

Balkan Baroque (1997), and *Carrying the Skeleton* (2008) appear alongside projections of early performances, while new works created for the occasion bring her decades-long exploration of endurance, vulnerability, and transformation into sharp relief.

A highlight of the exhibition is the presentation of *Pietà (with Ulay)* (1983), placed in direct dialogue with Titian's *Pietà* (c. 1575-76), his final, unfinished masterpiece completed by Palma Giovane. This historic pairing, on the 450th anniversary of Titian's *Pietà*, reframes Renaissance typologies of grief, transcendence, and redemption through a contemporary lens, and underscores the enduring role of the human body as a site of both suffering and spiritual elevation.

In Venice — a city that has for centuries been a crossroads of culture, commerce, and the movement of rare materials — Abramović's use of quartz, amethyst, and other natural elements resonates with the history of Venetian mosaic and the Renaissance pursuit of material and metaphysical transformation. By placing the visitor's own body at the center of the work, the exhibition invites a durational form of looking: one that is less about passive observation and more about presence, participation, and the possibility of inner change.



Portrait by © Marco Anelli, 2025

Marina Abramović said: "I was 14 when my mother first brought me to the Venice Biennale. We travelled by train from Belgrade and as I stepped out of the station and saw Venice for the first time, I began to cry. It was so incredibly beautiful—unlike anything I had ever seen. Since then, returning to Venice has become a tradition, and after receiving the Golden Lion in 1997, the city has always held a special place in my life. Now, as I prepare to celebrate my 80th birthday, I return for an even more meaningful reason: to become the first woman artist to present an exhibition across the Gallerie dell'Accademia, including its contemporary collection, with *Transforming Energy*. It is a profound honor, and I am deeply touched by this opportunity."

Giulio Manieri Elia, the Accademia's Director, said: "The Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia's openness to contemporary art, in conjunction with the International Art Biennale, has become a highly anticipated and established event. Once again, the museum

renews its stimulating dialogue between ancient and modern art. Mario Mertz, Philip Guston, Georg Baselitz, Anish Kapoor, and Willem De Kooning were the featured artists in previous editions, and we are particularly honored and delighted that it is now the turn of Marina Abramović, the first female artist to be awarded the Golden Lion by the Biennale in Venice in 1997. On this occasion, she returns with both new and iconic works to celebrate her 80th birthday at the Gallerie dell'Accademia."

Alessandro Giuli, Italy's Minister of Culture, said: "The Ministry of Culture is proud to celebrate the 80th birthday of artist Marina Abramović in Italy by hosting the exhibition *Transforming Energy*, first in Venice at the Gallerie dell'Accademia and subsequently in Rome at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e

Contemporanea. A pioneer of performance art, Marina Abramović is today an undisputed leading figure in the art world.”

Shai Baitel, Curator said: “This is a transformative moment — not only for the Gallerie dell’Accademia, but for the role museums can play in the future. Placing Marina Abramović’s work within the permanent collection brings past and present into direct dialogue, and invites audiences to inhabit that space with their own bodies.”

The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with the Marina Abramović Institute and the Modern Art Museum Shanghai.

Portrait of artist Marina Abramović is by Clara Melchiorre

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MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice
May 6, 2026 – October 19, 2026

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