



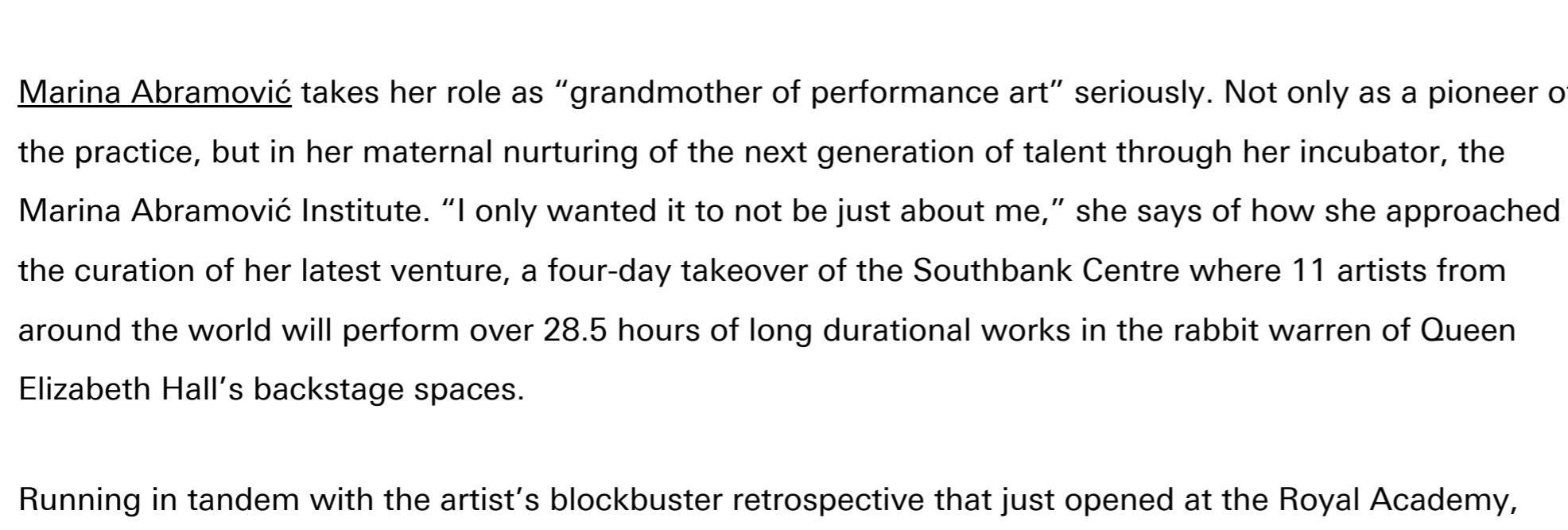
Miles Greenberg performs as part of Marina Abramović Institute Takeover at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall (4-8 Oct 2023). Photography Linda Nyland courtesy of the Southbank Centre.

Meet the Marina Abramović-approved artists taking over the Southbank Centre

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY - FEATURE

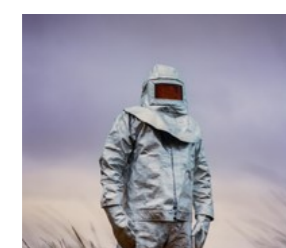


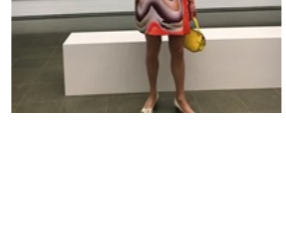
Alongside her history-making career retrospective at the Royal Academy, the artist and her incubator curate an experience to 'show how performance can live through the younger generation of artists'

7th October 2023
Text Vanessa Hsieh



Running in tandem with the artist's blockbuster retrospective that just opened at the Royal Academy, Abramović sees both these undertakings as a celebration of how far performance art as a whole has come. "When performance [art] started, nobody ever gave me, nobody ever gave a shit about performance – this was not even considered as art," she says comparing this attitude to her now becoming the first female in the RA's history to have her own solo show. Any performance artist who followed would be hard-pressed not to be influenced by Abramović's far-reaching career, but for the MAI roster in particular, this is their matriarch and the admiration between them is palpable and mutual. "I want to show how performance can live through the younger generation of artists."

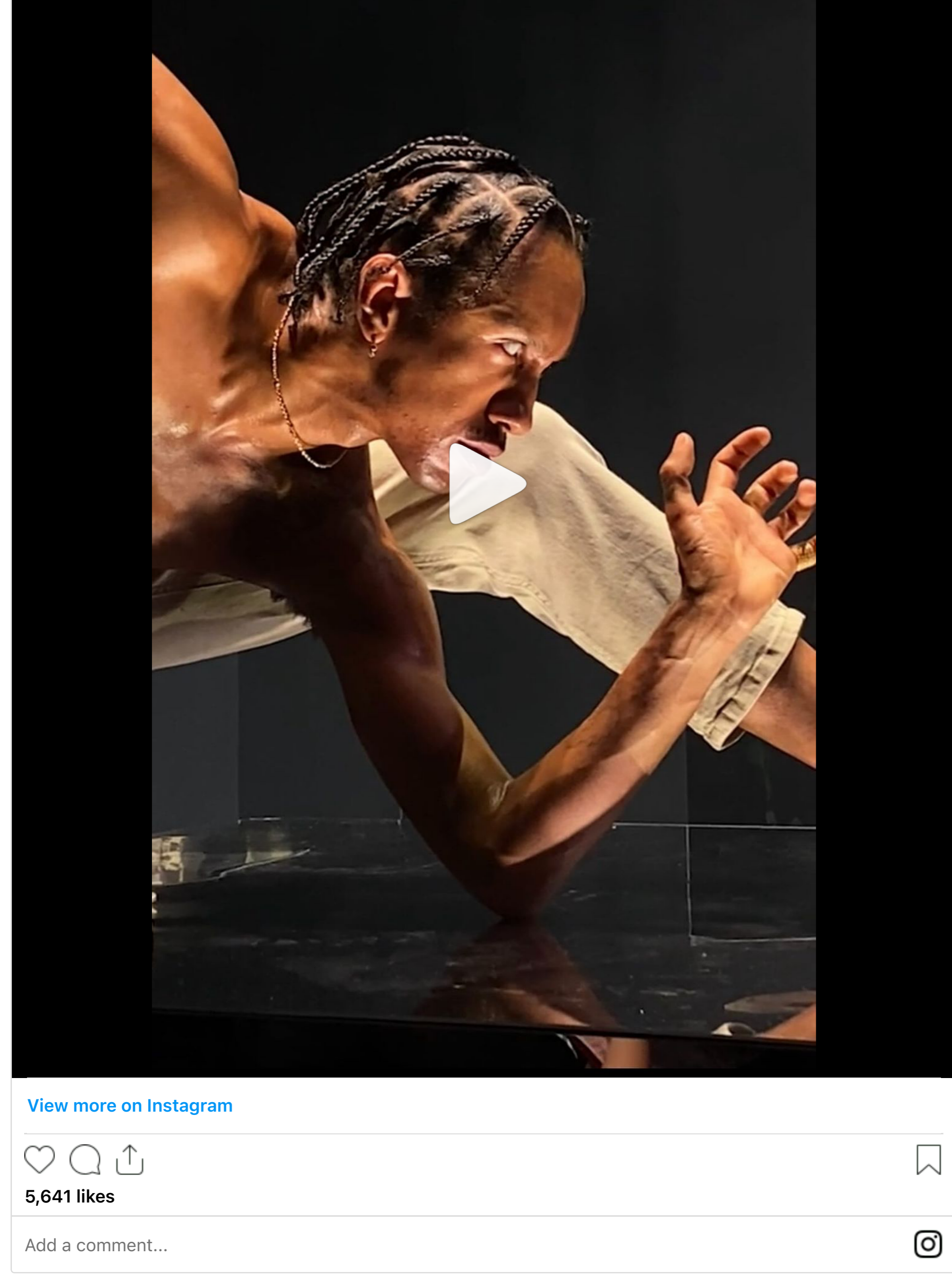
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"Performance is a living form of art, it's timeless art, and it's an immaterial form of art," she continues. "That's the power of performance: you have to be there to experience it, and, importantly, bring all emotions into you." Through their long durational pieces dotted through a labyrinth of rooms, artists including Carla Adra, Paul Setúbal, Carlos Martiel, Collective Absentia, Paula Garcia, Yiannis Pappas, Despina Zacharopoulou, Cassils, Sandra Johnston, Aleksandar Timentic and Miles Greenberg, confront themes of oppression, racism, violence, mortality and trauma. All Abramović asks is that you hold your beer. "I would like the audience to actually give us their word of honour, when they see the performances, they will not drink [more than] one bottle of beer," she says seriously but with a glint in her eyes, acknowledging that it is "such a big part of British culture," while elaborating. "Alcohol and art I never think is a good combination, especially if you're dealing with performance. You need to be concentrated, you need full attention, you have to be there with your body and mind."

The Marina Abramović Institute takeover of Southbank Centre runs until Sunday 8 October 2023. Watch our video and learn more about some of the artists featured below.

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MILES GREENBERG



Miles Greenberg performs as part of Marina Abramović Institute Takeover at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall (4-8 Oct 2023). Photography Linda Nyland courtesy of the Southbank Centre.

"I'm really interested in really brief and fleeting sensations in the body," says Miles Greenberg, a *Forbes* "30 Under 30" recognised artist who performs *Water in A Heatwave*, a ballet on plinths, as part of the takeover. "Things like an orgasm or a panic, attack, euphoria, ecstasy, agony... These things that are sort of like quick and very ephemeral and seeing what happens, sort of laboratory-style, if you were to stretch them over the course of like seven hours or eight hours or 12 hours or 24 hours."

Having seen "The Artist Is Present" at the MoMA aged 12, Abramović's influence was present in his life long before they met a few years later. In particular, one of her transitory objects, a bed for reflection at the very end of that show formed the foundations of his own work. "I remember laying down on that work, and feeling my body implicated and sort of writ large for the first time. I think I owe a lot to that moment. I don't know what it did, but I definitely know that it helped give me a lot of information as to what I wanted to do, and how I wanted to make art." The generosity of Abramović and her institute gave Greenberg his first paid gig as an artist, and he continues to revel in the adventure. "I'm from Montreal so the circus is always really close to my heart. It feels like I've kind of run away to the circus."

PAULA GARCIA



Paula Garcia performs as part of Marina Abramović Institute Takeover at the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall (4-8 Oct 2023). Photography Linda Nyland courtesy of the Southbank Centre.

Paula Garcia is an artist and independent curator from Brazil who has worked with the Marina Abramović Institute since 2012. "Marina changed my life really," she says frankly of the ongoing trust and opportunities that have stemmed from their longterm partnership. Like most performance artists, Garcia credits Abramović as a foundational reference, but their personal relationship adds another dimension of appreciation. "To be able to show your mentor your work, it's something really special," she says, joking. "It's like when you are like a young soccer player, and you're playing with Pelé."

For both, performance is a powerful exchange of energy between the artist and audience. "It's about real life, it's about exchanging energy between the performers and the public," Garcia says, excited about the feedback from the crowds coming through the doors of the Southbank Centre. "Noise Body", where the artist is encased in a magnetic suit with tonnes of nails thrown at her in a continuous, thunderous shower of steel, creates a claustrophobic, overwhelming, and yet completely arresting sensory experience for both sides of the performance. The payoff through this mutual transfer of time and energy is as Garcia notes Abramović always says, "As much time as you give to the work is as much time you will receive back."

DESPINA ZACHAROPOLOU



Despina Zacharopoulou, The most precious non-object, 8-hour long durational performance, ME/YOU YOU/ME, selected & supported by the Royal College of Art Student-led event competition, Gallery Sensel London, UK, 2016. Photography Patricio Soto Aguilar courtesy of the Southbank Centre.

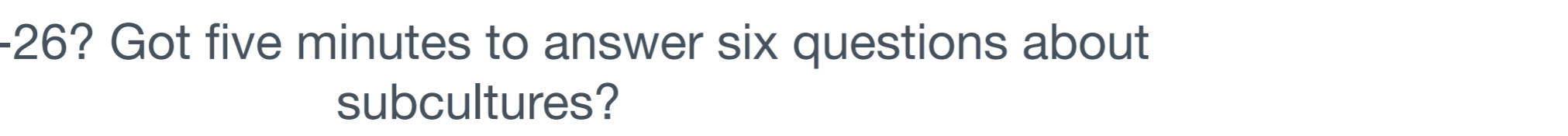
There are no photos of Despina Zacharopoulou's contribution to the Marina Abramović Institute's takeover of the Southbank Centre this as the work sees the audience spend strictly one-on-one sessions with the artist of a duration decided by them on a signed waiver. "Dokimi/Essay/Essai" borrows Foucault's idea of *essai*, describing how philosophy can be an experiment, "test or method for transforming one's life." "My work here is about the conditions under which one can philosophise."

The idea of "how performance art can be a form of inhabited philosophy," is the undercurrent that powers Zacharopoulou's practice while the Marina Abramović Institute has been instrumental in "[giving her] the space and time to experiment on long durational performances and realising large scale projects that wouldn't be possible in any other environment." Citing "Rhythm 0" as a formative inspiration, Zacharopoulou draws parallels between Abramović's seminal performance, how it "changed the relationality between a performance artist and the audience," and what she strives to achieve in her own. "My work also includes different ways of negotiating the porosity and the width of the boundaries between the performer and the audience. So this is why this work is so important to me."

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