

Expanded

Primeira Pedra

First Stone

Carsten Höller
Julião Sarmiento
Marina Abramović

Curated by Guta Moura Guedes

Fondazione Giorgio Cini — Venice
10 May — 24 November 2019

Expanded

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EXPANDED is a research and investigation project based on art. It presents original creations by Carsten Höller, Julião Sarmento and Marina Abramović, all conceived to be displayed in a public context.

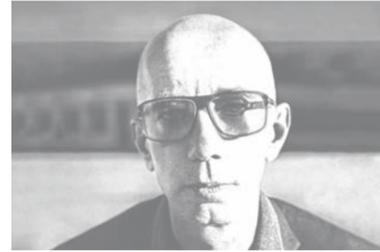
The artworks presented explore, in one way or another, our perception of space, scale, time and place, as well as the possibility of expanding our self-imposed or culturally-based borders. Produced in stone, a natural resource that is millions of years old, they share a unifying element that provides them with a deep, timeless and resilient character, contradicting the chaos and superficiality of the contemporary world.

Placed within the gardens of the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, immersed in nature and displayed together, these pieces provide visitors with moments of experimentation and confrontation, underlining the value of art and culture in public spaces.

Guta Moura Guedes

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Carsten Höller uses his training as a scientist in his work as an artist, concentrating particularly on the nature of human relationships. Born in Brussels in 1961, he now lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden and Biriwa, Ghana. His major installations include *Test Site*, a series of giant slides for Tate Modern's Turbine Hall (2006), *Amusement Park* — an installation of full-size funfair rides turning and moving at very slow speed at MASS



© John Scarbrick

Dice have become a quintessential representation of the concept of chance. We persistently attempt to avoid it and instead try to control the variables around us. This piece proposes the exploration of situations in which this certainty is substituted by doubt and chance.

MoCA, North Adams (2006), *Flying Machine* (1996), a work which hoists the viewer through the air, *Upside-Down Goggles*, an experiment with goggles that modify vision, and the famous *The Double Club* (2008-2009) in London, which took the form of a bar, restaurant and nightclub designed to create a dialogue between Congolese and Western culture. His *Revolving Hotel Room* (2008), a rotating art installation that becomes a fully operational hotel room at night, was shown as part of *theanyspacewhatever* exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in 2009. For his 2015 exhibition *Decision* at the Hayward Gallery, he turned the whole building into an experimental parcours with two entrances and four exits, two of them slides. His works have been shown internationally over the last two decades, including solo exhibitions at Fondazione Prada, Milan (2000), Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2004), Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2008), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010), Hamburger Bahnhof and Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2011), New Museum, New York (2011) Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Vienna (2014), Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2016), Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Høvikodden, Norway (2017), and most recently the exhibition *The Florence Experiment* at the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence (2018).

In the context of this project, Carsten Höller created a new version of his *Dice* piece from 2014. The dots of the large-scale cube are replaced with openings that allow visitors to penetrate the piece. Höller's work has progressively been focusing on two subjects: on the one hand, the creation of structures that work as devices that can be used (complemented, or activated) by the spectator, converted into user; on the other, his inhabited or usable sculptures are porous, i.e., they have perforations, connections between interior and exterior, calling upon the

Dice (Limestone) 2019

Dimensions 2400 x 2400 x 2400 mm
Approximate Weight 20000 kg
Stone Supplier and Production Julipedra, Solancis
Stone Lioz Limestone
Finishing Polished

The most well-known and widely used limestone in Portugal. It contains large quantities of fossils dating back 120 million years, giving it a beautiful patterned texture. Usually presenting in cream, there are also light grey, yellow, red and blueish variations.

organicity of the structures we recognise from our functional connection with the world. In agreement with Daniel Birnbaum, Höller has called the first of these characteristics “unsaturated”, for these installations are about the function of their use, about being and not being the subject — which implies an ontology of the process and action, rather than of the results. Unlike a long artistic tradition that has a predilection for the work's objectuality and reification, Höller's installations call for action and use. The second of these characteristics, porosity — or permeability between inside and outside —, involves a great phenomenological sophistication, and requires the possibility of a perceptive change. At times, the connection between the inner and outer part of a given device proposes a vertiginous immersion (such as the massive slide installations exhibited in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, Hayward Gallery, and ArcelorMittal Orbit; or in the various other slides Höller has been conceiving since 1999), predicating that art holds that emotional capital based on the transformation of our fruition. The cube he has now created is based on a contradiction (a frequent occurrence in Höller's creative process) between the solemnity of Lioz limestone and the lucidity of the device, which forms a playground (owing to the dimensions of the inside). References are deeply rooted in Art History: in particular the memory of Tony Smith's 1962 *Die*, a wordplay regarding the piece's dimension, the depth of a grave, now converted into an amusing game. This scale also suggests that the object could have come from Brobdingnag, the island of giants where Gulliver docked. In Höller's complex imaginary, in which the change of perception seems to be the artworks' fate, limestone ironizes the potential of the monument, transferring its objectual character to a virtually metaphorical dimension of the humorous fragility of existence. **Delfim Sardo**



Julião Sarmiento

One of the most remarkable Portuguese contemporary artists, Julião Sarmiento was born in 1948 in Lisbon, Portugal, and studied Painting and Architecture at the Lisbon School of Fine Arts. He currently lives and works in Estoril. Throughout his career, Sarmiento has used a wide range of media, from painting, drawing and sculpture to photography, film, video, performance, sound and installation, as well as site-specific projects. Over the past five decades, he has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in prestigious institutions around the world, including the Gulbenkian Foundation Museum, the Serralves Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum, Haus der Kunst, the Van Abbemuseum and Tate Modern. Julião Sarmiento also represented Portugal at the 46th Venice Biennale, in 1997, and participated in Documenta (1982, 1987), the Paris Biennale (1981) and the São Paulo Biennale (1992, 2002). He has been awarded with several significant prizes, including the Visual Arts and Architecture Award by AICA Portugal, and the International Prize of “Il Lazio”, Regione Lazio, Italy. His work is represented in many public and private collections in North and South America, Europe and Japan.



© AL&K

Forgive me for the historical inaccuracy and blatant speculation, but what interested me the most in this piece was Donald Judd’s eventual perspective of Bruno Munari’s CUBE ashtray. The transformation of the ingenious functionality of a design object into an already historical sculptural postulate.

Julião Sarmiento is an artist whose work interweaves his personal, idiosyncratic, literary, imagetic and cinematographic references with those of the history of modern art. Through a process of recollecting histories, references and images, his work operates within a permanent movement of revision. The sculpture Sarmiento created for the *Expanded* project arises from a very particular and specific discovery: the connection between a cubic Donald Judd sculpture and the iconic *Cube Ashtray* by Bruno Munari, created in 1957 for Danese Milano — which

Azul Cadoiço 2019

Dimensions 1200 x 1200 x 1200 mm
Approximate Weight 2800 kg
Stone Supplier and Production Airelimestones
Materials Wood Pallets, Azul Cadoiço Limestone
Finishing Honed | Sandblasted & Brushed

With a bluish-grey hue and millimetric light brownish scattered stains, the tonality of this stone is one of the most consistent among Portuguese limestones. Highly compact, it is unaffected by open cracks, cavities or foliation, and contains sporadic evidence of fossils.

continues to produce it in its two original dimensions of 6 and 8 centimetres. In fact, the two works (in Judd’s case, the sculpture would be repeated in several shapes and materials beginning in 1966) are practically isomorphic, with the evident difference in scale between the object for use and the specific object, between the sculpture and architecture that inform Judd’s artwork. Thus, Sarmiento has produced a cube that is formally similar

to Munari’s ashtray, but has the same dimensions of Donald Judd’s first cubic sculpture, cast in a material that neither of them used — a limestone called “azul cadoiço” —, adding yet another semantic level to the history of the use of cubes in contemporary art: the piece rests on pallets that function as a plinth, conscious of the fact that Judd’s sculptural assumptions required the complete opposite, contact between the artwork and the ground. The history of the use of the cube in American post-war art is marked by other iconic examples, such as Tony Smith’s *Die* sculpture (1962), a set of 4 mirrored cubes by Robert Morris (1965), the *One Tone Prop (House of Cards)* by Richard Serra (1969) and Sol Lewitt’s cubic structures. In all of these examples, the relationship with the ground is fundamental, for its rhetoric carries the dubious character that Tony Smith synthetically expressed when stating that the piece was not an object nor a monument. Sarmiento’s sculpture rubs salt into the wound: in that year of 1957, the same year Brancusi died, the synthesis of non-expression entered into objects through the hands of Munari. Whether this constituted a model for Donald Judd remains speculation. But the connection between functionality and phenomenological primacy, the dubious character between the object and the massivity of stone, presents a new narrative for the migration of the universes of art and design. **Delfim Sardo**

Marina Abramović

Since the beginning of her career in Belgrade during the early 1970s, Marina Abramović has pioneered performance art, creating some of the form’s most important early works. Exploring her physical and mental limits, she has withstood pain, exhaustion, and danger in her quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. Abramović was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the 1997 Venice Biennale.



© Johan Lindberg

I do not consider these works as sculptures, but as transitory objects to trigger physical or mental experiences among the public through direct interaction. When the experience is achieved the objects can be removed.

In 2010, she had her first major U.S. retrospective and simultaneously performed for over 700 hours in *The Artist is Present* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Abramović founded Marina Abramović Institute (MAI), a platform for immaterial and long durational work to create new possibilities for collaboration among thinkers of all fields. Her most recent publication is *Walk Through Walls: A Memoir*, Published by Crown Archetype on October 25, 2016. Her retrospective *The Cleaner* opened at Moderna Museet, Stockholm in February 2017 and has toured to the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter in Oslo, Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn, Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, and Centre for Contemporary Art Znaki Czasu in Toruń. The exhibition will culminate with a final presentation in Belgrade, Serbia in 2019.

First Stone

The chair is the quintessential object of the elegy of the body. Perhaps because it is the piece of furniture closest to the ergonomics of the body, it forever implies an evocation of who could be occupying it. One could state that the chair is the model of sculpture, its matrix: it implies the existence of a body, summons us to think about absence, proposes a duration, a wait for someone to engage in it — and by doing so, the chair is a matrix for any scenic prop as a place for a body, marking its absence or summoning its ghost. Marina Abramović has regularly been using

Chair for Human Use (II) from the series Transitory Objects for Human Use 2015/2019 © Marina Abramović Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives

Dimensions 850 x 630 x 1130 mm
Approximate Weight 280 kg each
Stone Supplier Pedra Secular
Production Mármoreos Galráo
Materials Gabro de Odivelas Granite, Quartz Crystal
Finishing Sandblasted

With an extremely homogeneous tonality, Gabro de Odivelas is one of the rarest forms of Portuguese granite. Challenging to work with due to its mineral composition, it presents a medium-grained texture and is highly coveted for its striking dark colouring.

devices that invoke either the body or its memory, that render the artist present. In many of her performances, the artist uses chairs, and has also used them as sculptural elements. In 1993, in an installation located within a small Portuguese village, Abramović presented the *Chairs for Departure* project, which was composed of two steel chairs, one of which had conventional dimensions and the other, placed right next to it, was 16m in height. A text invited spectators to sit on the chair and place

their spirit on the other tremendously high one. The chair, cast out of steel, transformed into a monument due to its sheer weight, was thus converted into a mechanism for the flight of the spirit. The present project originates from the very same assumption, but with an element of duality, including the memory of Abramović’s performative work: there are two stone chairs, two monoliths, that through their presence, invoke a relationship, a physical or projective occupation. They propose a connection, a tension — always frequent themes of her work. **Delfim Sardo**

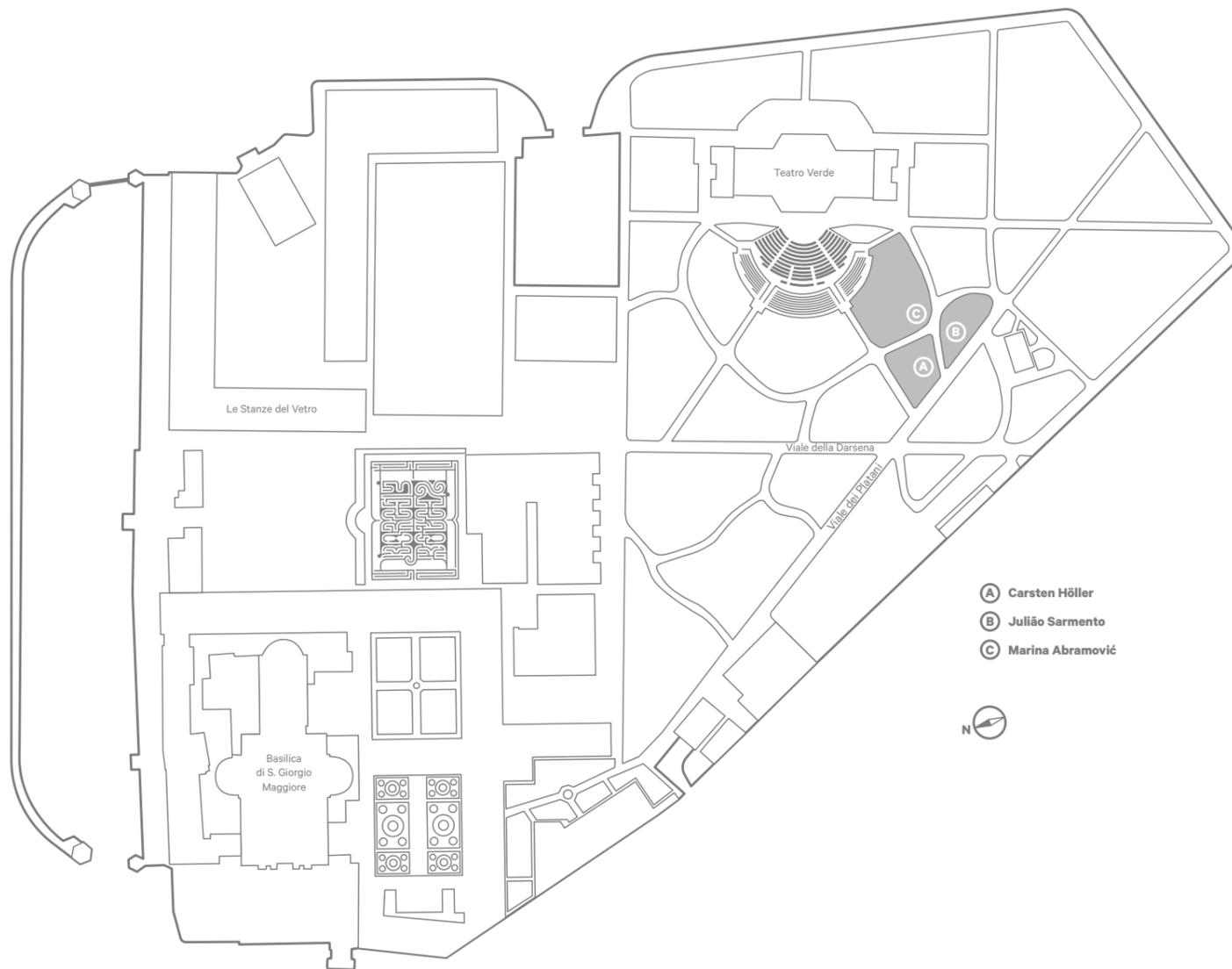
Instructions for the public:

- Sit in a chair.
- Close your eyes and take a few deep, relaxing breaths.
- Open your eyes and focus on the eyes of the person in front of you.
- Engage in mutual gaze.
- Be as motionless as possible.
- Blink as little as possible.
- Breathe as slowly as possible.
- Stay for as long as you wish.

Expanded

Primeira Pedra

First Stone



First Stone

First Stone (Primeira Pedra) is an experimental international research programme that explores the potential of Portuguese Stone. Centred on the unique physical and visual characteristics of the various types of stone found across Portugal's landscape, First Stone intersects production and design through the development of innovative applications for this exceptional material, highlighting its quality as well as the vast industry that is connected to its extraction and transformation.

Over 2016 and 2017, First Stone accomplished three central research and development projects – Resistance, Still Motion and Common Sense – which were materialised through exhibitions and presentations in Venice, Milan, Weil am Rhein, São Paulo, London and New York. Inviting some of the most resounding names from the fields of design and architecture, these projects are a tribute to the extraordinary versatility of this ageless resource.

Remaining true to its objective of revealing the possibilities of Portuguese Stone as well as the sociocultural context that it encapsulates, First Stone has developed new projects for 2019 and 2020 with architects and designers, and broadened its scope into the visual arts with the contributions of prominent contemporary artists. Focussing on all stages and dimensions of this material, as well as its impact on the environment, these new projects also explore unconventional approaches, reinventing stone through the use of other materials and alternative concepts.

The next projects will be presented in Venice, Paris and New York, as well as in a formative exhibition in Lisbon, showcasing all of the projects and pieces developed so far. First Stone is also complemented by a comprehensive website, a series of documentaries about the fruition of the several projects and two apps for digital mobile platforms.

www.primeirapedra.com

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(experimentadesign)

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