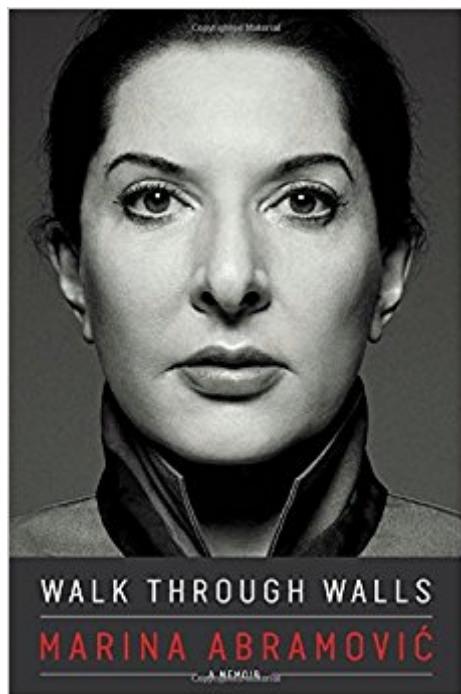


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# Walk Through Walls: A Memoir



## Synopsis

“I had experienced absolute freedom • I had felt that my body was without boundaries, limitless; that pain didn’t matter, that nothing mattered at all • and it intoxicated me.” In 2010, more than 750,000 people stood in line at Marina Abramović’s MoMA retrospective for the chance to sit across from her and communicate with her nonverbally in an unprecedented durational performance that lasted more than 700 hours. This celebration of nearly fifty years of groundbreaking performance art demonstrated once again that Marina Abramović is truly a force of nature. The child of Communist war-hero parents under Tito’s regime in postwar Yugoslavia, she was raised with a relentless work ethic. Even as she was beginning to build an international artistic career, Marina lived at home under her mother’s abusive control, strictly obeying a 10 p.m. curfew. But nothing could quell her insatiable curiosity, her desire to connect with people, or her distinctly Balkan sense of humor • all of which informs her art and her life. The beating heart of *Walk Through Walls* is an operatic love story • a twelve-year collaboration with fellow performance artist Ulay, much of which was spent penniless in a van traveling across Europe • a relationship that began to unravel and came to a dramatic end atop the Great Wall of China. Marina’s story, by turns moving, epic, and dryly funny, informs an incomparable artistic career that involves pushing her body past the limits of fear, pain, exhaustion, and danger in an uncompromising quest for emotional and spiritual transformation. A remarkable work of performance in its own right, *Walk Through Walls* is a vivid and powerful rendering of the unparalleled life of an extraordinary artist.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 384 pages

Publisher: Crown Archetype; First Edition edition (October 25, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1101905042

ISBN-13: 978-1101905043

Product Dimensions: 6.6 x 1.1 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 70 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #64,979 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Artists, Architects & Photographers #321 in Books > Arts &

## Customer Reviews

An Best Book of November 2016: She's nuts. There will be devotees devouring *Walk Through Walls* who will revel in the genius of performance artist Marina Abramović. But for those approaching this frank and fascinating memoir not knowing much about her, that would be an understandable assessment. After all, Abramović has willingly had a loaded pistol pointed at her head, been maimed by strangers, she's lost consciousness after laying in the middle of a gas-soaked star set aflame (and that's just for starters). It's an odd career trajectory considering Abramović's antithetical upbringing under the hem of a tyrannical mother who insisted she be home by ten at the tender age of 24. Danica Rosić was seemingly ashamed of her daughter's artistic endeavors, and yet when she died, Abramović discovered that she had stashed away newspaper clippings about her performances—holey clippings where she had carefully cut out her daughter's often nude (and sometimes mutilated) visage. You might be tempted to excise the more disturbing aspects of Abramović's narrative as well, but like a gruesome car crash, it's tough to look away. And if you find yourself cringing, well then, that's the point. One of the main purposes of Abramović's art--of her life--is to learn how to confront and transcend the uncomfortable—the physically and the emotionally painful. You may come away from *Walk Through Walls* thinking, yeah, this lady, she cray. But there is something to be said for someone with the audacity to run towards what the rest of us are only too happy to flee. --Erin Kodicek, The Book Review

"Candidly and vividly sharing her personal struggles as well as her artistic and spiritual discoveries, Abramovic presents a uniquely intense and affecting art memoir."—Booklist, A starred review—"Enchanting and emotionally raw, *Walk Through Walls* is an honest, gripping, and profound look into the heart and brilliant mind of one of the quintessential artists of the postmodern era."—Publishers Weekly, starred review—"Marina has lived like an unstoppable force of nature, with the kind of power that leaves me feeling breathless and disquieted—while at the same time profoundly impressed, awed, and inspired. As I turn the pages of her book, I hear her voice in my head, as if she were actually narrating the words. When Marina speaks, it sounds as if you're listening to a legendary folktale from the ancient

landscapes of the Balkan Mountains. Her voice is soothing, calm, and centered. It belies the trauma, fear, and darkness coiled at the root of her impulse to express and expunge. *Annie Lennox, Vanity Fair* "In her new memoir, *Walk Through Walls*, [Marina Abramović] exposes herself as provocatively and fearlessly in language as she has done for many years in her largely nonverbal performance art. Her page-turner of a narrative [is] at times shocking [genuinely moving, and always coruscatingly honest]. *Elle* "Abramović may be the only superstar performance artist in the world at the moment, and [the book itself has the veneer of an ambitious performance piece, as Abramović] exposes her deepest personal wounds and places them next to her artistic triumphs, in order to create a kind of epic mythology around her work. The author turns blank pages into a museum of the self, cutting herself open for the sake of the narrative. But in Abramović's case, the performance feels even more extreme. She has actually bled for her life story, onto pristine gallery floors. This Marina is the most charming one, the voice that makes *Walk Through Walls* propulsively readable. *New Republic* "[Walk Through Walls] is really close to what it's like to spend a weekend with her: Abramovic is funny, generous, and vituperative, a raconteur and comedian and the sometimes sad-sack hero of the epic tale of her mad life." *New York Magazine* Abramović's story is thoroughly detailed, with brutally honest descriptions of her life and performance pieces, all providing deep insights into her work. an informative, eye-opening look at the larger world of art. *Library Journal* "The memoir's most powerful moments come when Abramović shares the most intimate details of the romantic heartaches she endured. Marina pulls no punches about the men she loved and the artist feels more present than ever." *Smithsonian Magazine* "Walk Through Walls reads as a frank and straightforward retelling of a life story. Where is the dividing line that separates life and art? That question, and tension, make this an electrifying read. *BookPage* "...There is something intensely entralling about Abramović's simple, matter-of-factly candor in surveying, without belaboring, the traumatic formative experiences despite which she and, to a large extent, because of which she became the person and artist she is." *Brainpickings* "An entertaining page-turner dotted with juicy details . . . teems with that wonderfully jumbled, delightful, complicated mix of art and life. *The Daily Beast* "Walk Through Walls is...as entralling and powerful as [Marina's] career and work." *Riveter's* "[Walk Through Walls is] rawly intimate and weirdly mesmeric...quietly revelatory." *The Observer (UK)* "Walk Through Walls is the story

of a relentlessly independent artist thwarted in her quest for total connection with one person who eventually achieves it with thousands. Marina's magic derives from an emerging method that involves tests of endurance and deprivation more commonly associated with Navy Seal training than with the world of modern art. Just as her performances are impossible to turn away from, I could not put down this book. •Tom Reiss, Pulitzer and PEN award-winning author of *The Black Count* and *The Orientalist*

"Marina Abramović is famous for fiercely throwing herself, body and soul, into transformation through her art. In this intimate memoir, I hear her voice as I read. She confesses, confides, complains, instructs, and reflects with intelligence and humor on her difficult but ultimately magical life and liberating work." •Willem Dafoe

"Abramović is the most celebrated performance/conceptual artist in the world, and she's probably the only one with a sense of humor." •Bryan Appleyard, *Sunday Times UK*

"Walk Through Walls is beautiful, panoramic, touching, deep. I really love and admire the way Marina confronts all the weird contradictions of myth mixing with daily life. She manages to say personal as well as self-critical things about herself while still making a self-portrait that is rich and full of real self-respect. What a life!" •Laurie Anderson

"Marina's role as an artist, she believes, with a hubris that can sound naïf and a humility that disarms any impulse to resent it, is to lead her spectators through an anxious passage to a place of release from whatever has confined them." •Judith Thurman, *The New Yorker*

"In The Heart Sutra, Buddha says, 'Our life on earth is like a morning star, a bubble on water, a drop of dew, lightning in the summer sky, a dream in this floating world.' For Marina Abramović, there is no difference between art and life, life is a dream while it lasts, an absolute presence made in a vacuum." •Alejandro Jodorowsky

I really enjoyed reading about the life of this incredibly interesting artist. A look deeper into where the artist came from lets you know that there is so much more to her work then just what you see....Her works while visual are intended to make you think maybe even disturb you a bit...Or to bring an emotional reaction when you feel how the performance relates to you on a personal level...A must have for people who appreciate meaningful performance art.

Marina Abramovic is an amazing artist and I thoroughly enjoyed the book, though I do understand that some readers may be put off by her very direct and occasionally self-indulgent style of writing.

The book does provide a great deal of personal background to the life and work of an exceptional woman.

An amazing life story, written in easy reading style. Really worthwhile

If you were born in former Yugoslavia. Had parents who abused you following Balkan's way of raising little girls. Then you can relate to Marina and her art. It is healing and uplifting. Not to be missed out!

So good. Abramovic's drive to make things happen in her life is extremely inspiring.

Totally mindblowing - what a life Marina Abramovic has lived. She can also write!

This is one of the best, if not THE best memoir I have ever read. It starts a little choppy but after 2 or 3 chapters you won't be able to put it down. It is so upsetting that allowed some nut to post all those 1 star reviews! They should all be removed. They're clearly written by some religious fanatic who has not read the book and is just spewing hate because of their personal vendetta against Marina.

Loved it!

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