MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ) INSTITUTE in dialogue with Joseph Beuys

13.7. 26.10. 2025

Museum schloss moyland



Overview of the performance programme

Duration of the performances 7-10 hours, during museum opening hours

All works were developed as part of a residency at Museum Schloss Moyland, the Joseph Beuys Archive and ArToll in the district of Kleve.

With performances by:

Yan Jun Chin (Malaysia/Germany),

Isaac Chong Wai (Hong Kong/Germany),

Cristiana Cott Negoescu (Romania/Germany),

Maria Stamenković Herranz (Serbia/Spain)

Sandra Johnston (Ireland),

Rubiane Maia (Brazil/United Kingdom),

Francesco Marzano (Italy/Germany),

Virginia Mastrogiannaki (Greece)

Michelle Samba (Friesland, Netherlands/Congo),

Luisa Sancho-Escanero

Martin Toloku (Ghana/Netherlands),

Evan Macrae Williams (Canada/Germany),

Eşref Yıldırım (Turkey)

Curated by:

Serge le Borgne (**France**), Billy Zhao (**USA**), Antje-Britt Mählmann (**Germany**)

Photography and film:

Kirsten Becken (Germany)

Eşref Yıldırım Performance week 1 July 13 - 20, 2025

Camouflage

With his performance *Camouflage*, Turkish artist **Eşref Yıldırım** takes up Joseph Beuys' idea that genuine dialogue is possible not only between humans, but also between humans and animals. Beuys saw an organic connection between humanity and nature – a relationship that has increasingly been lost in the modern age.

Yıldırım was deeply impressed by Beuys' legendary action I Like America and America Likes Me (1974), in which Beuys spent several days in a gallery space with a wild coyote. The tentative rapprochement between man and animal in this performance reminded Yıldırım of the intense relationship with his deceased dog Yağmur. Thid death coincided with the debate about a new animal protection law in Turkey – a personal loss that was combined with social relevance.

In contrast to Beuys, however, Yıldırım does not seek the controlled space of the gallery, but rather encounters in the natural habitat of the animals. *Camouflage*, realised in the outdoor space of Museum Schloss Moyland, is an attempt to cautiously approach the local ecosystem. Yıldırım covers his body with aquatic plants, which are favoured by the animals living there, and moves silently through the landscape – observing, listening, present.

With this gesture, Yıldırım questions the prevailing anthropocentric perspective. In a world where animals are often subordinated, exploited or killed, *Camouflage* reverses the roles: Humans take a back seat and animals take centre stage. The artist invites us to a new kind of togetherness – mindful, equal and at eye level.

Sandra Johnston Performance week 1 July 13 - 20, 2025

Bone-Battery//Flat-High

Sandra Johnston's current research in the Joseph Beuys Archive explores the many ways in which Beuys worked with the concept of energy flows – visible in his actions, objects, drawings and language.

A central theme here is Beuys' repeated use of the term 'battery' for his works, for example in *Battery Flat-High* (1963). This term refers to ideas of charge, current and transmission. Johnston interprets these ideas with a focus on the hidden, catalytic qualities of everyday objects and materials.

The flow of energy is particularly visible in Beuys' drawings and scores: lines of movement around figures suggest processes of emanation and transformation. These motifs appear both in his visionary, personal works and in the later blackboard artefacts from lectures, where they condense into a language of thought in diagrams and action schemes.

In her performance *Bone-Battery*//Flat-High, Johnston brings these concepts into a physical form where her actions make an inner, somatic space visible - through gestures of marking, repeating, cancelling and adapting, she allows energy processes to be experienced in space.



Eşref Yıldırım (b.1978, Bursa, Turkey) lives and works in Istanbul. He got his BA and MA degree at the Painting Department of Mimar Sinan University. His work is inspired by media representations that suggest a critique of power structures and social taboos shaping society. He focuses on the lives of individuals who are often suffocated by the pressures of social hierarchies, prescribed gender roles, and racism. His continuous dialogue with painting and his choice of recycled materials become an inherent part of his attitude towards his art practice.

His solo shows include; Days, Verses, Knots, Clear As Days, (Çankaya Municipality, Ankara, Turkey, 2025) Dust and Mold (Zilberman Berlin) Night Residuals (curator: T. Melis Golar, Bilsart, 2022), Diary of Defeats (Zilberman İstanbul, 2018), Prison for Minor Offenses (Zilberman İstanbul, 2014), Salute! (Zilberman İstanbul, 2014) and Nobody's Death (Zilberman İstanbul, 2012).



Dr Sandra Johnston has been active internationally since 1992 as an artist, researcher and educator working predominantly through performance art, video installations, drawing and writing. Johnston has held several teaching and research posts since 2002 and she currently lectures at Belfast School of Art. Her practice often involves fusing fragments of historical material into intricate relationships with performed gestures, enabling an opening out of personal narratives around trauma, memory, and implication. In 2020 Johnston was awarded the O'Malley Visual Arts Award by The Irish American Cultural Institute, and her work is represented in the Irish Arts Council, Northern Irish Arts Council and Irish Museum of Modern Art public collections.

Virginia Mastrogiannaki Performance week 1 July 13 - 20, 2025

TAVROS

In her performance, artist **Virginia Mastrogiannaki** explores the last years of Joseph Beuys' life and his increasing politicisation. The focus is on the influence of Anacharsis Cloots' universalist ideas on Beuys' artistic and ideological thinking – particularly in the context of his candidature for the European Parliament.

Mastrogiannaki analyses central founding texts of the European Union. She is particularly interested in the tension between language, identity and political symbolism. By deliberately removing economic terms from the EU treaties, she uncovers the ideational foundations of the Union and scrutinises which values define Europe today.

The title *Tavros* (bull) refers to the transformation of Zeus, the second hero of the myth of Europa, from which the European continent and the European Union took their name.

Isaac Chong Wai Performance week 1 und 2 July 13 - 27, 2025

Choreographing Gravity: Dance Rehearsal Performed by Ryota Maeda

In Isaac Chong Wai's newly commissioned performance Choreographing Gravity: Dance Rehearsal (2025), a dancer rehearses movements referencing artworks within a rotated rehearsal room, navigating between everyday life practices and a gravity altered by the spatial situation. Gravity, fundamental to our daily lives, shapes how we move, act, and relate to the world. Chong challenges this invisible force by reimagining it through a choreography that follows a different logic. This durational performance reinterprets the methods of Marina Abramović and the movement studies of Joseph Beuys through an embodied translation. While the rules of gravity are seemingly suspended and the rehearsal space tilts, the audience is invited to a disorientating experience of an unknown dance.



Virginia Mastrogiannaki is a Greek visual artist working with performance, sculpture, and video. Her work has been shown at the National Gallery of Greece, at ZKM in Germany, at MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo in Rome, at the Greek National Opera, in CHART Art Fair of Copenhagen, at the Old Parliament House/National Historical Museum of Greece, at Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi in Istanbul, at the Benaki Museum in Athens, in Venice International Performance Art Week, at MOMus (Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki), in Paris/Berlin festival, at the 60th Thessaloniki International Film Festival.



Isaac Chong Wai (b. 1990) is a Berlin Hong Kong based artist using glass, drawing, photography, video and performance as mediators to investigate contemporary global phenomena. His work transforms the emotions, tensions, and memories from human interactions into performative materiality and immersive experiences. Treading the line between the individual and the collective, he examines the vulnerability of the body and the inherent violence within social systems and historical traumas and imagines alternative microcosms of human relationality. Chong had his first German institutional solo exhibition, The End of Growth, at Museum Schloss Moyland under the direction of Dr. Antje-Britt Mählmann. Chong is a participating artist in the 60th Venice Biennale curated by Adriano Pedrosa and the 14th Taipei Biennial curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath. His works have gained recognition at prominent venues, including the Biennale of Videobrasil, São Paulo; Bundeskunsthalle Bonn; MMCA, Seoul; IFFR, Rotterdam; MOCA Taipei; and M+, Hong Kona.

Michelle Samba Performance week 2 July 22 - 27, 2025

I, Hereby

Each morning, the performer draws her own blood. In silence, she uses it as ink to stamp onto discarded museum paper with self-designed stamps. At a simple table in a stripped-down space, she repeats a daily protocol of classification and trace-making. The paper piles up. The gesture repeats.

The performance unfolds over six days. The room functions like an office, a checkpoint. The work draws from Joseph Beuys' Office for Direct Democracy (documenta 5, 1972), echoing its bureaucratic language. *I, Hereby* observes how systems assert truth through form. It reflects the aesthetics of permission and control, only to reveal their limits. What is registered here cannot be filed.

Francesco Marzano
Performance week 2 und 3
July 22 - August 03, 2025

Pneuma - Wärmezeitmaschine

Pneuma – Wärmezeitmaschine is an immersive, participatory performance that places breath at its centre – as a primal force of life, a collective bond, and a political symbol. The performer inhabits a resonating space in which his breath is acoustically amplified. Visitors are invited to become part of this sonic fabric through their own breathing. In this way, a living interplay of sounds, rhythms, resonances and bodies emerges – an acoustic sculpture, a breathing collective.

Pneuma means both "breath" and "soul" in Greek. The performance reflects on breath as a carrier of identity, a communicative potential, and a mirror of the macrocosm. Breath is as essential to our life as it is fragile – it can be hindered or suppressed, as demonstrated by pandemics or methods of violence and oppression.

Inspired by Joseph Beuys' participatory art concepts and his energy plan as well as by the breathing practices of the Marina Abramović Method, the project sees itself as an artistic-social experiment, a sensual and political invitation to attend to breath as a "primordial sound", the most reduced form of togetherness, and the most elemental form of relating to the world.



Michelle Samba is a multidisciplinary artist working with charged materials such as percussion, rope, hair and spoken invocations to explore presence and transformation.

She has worked with the Marina Abramović Institute and presented work across Europe. With a background in music, poetry and performance, she combines sound, rhythm and visual language with durational action. Her practice unfolds in formally simple yet emotionally resonant settings, using the body as both tool and transmitter.



Francesco Marzano (*1992, Bari) is a freelance performer and musician. He studied music and literature in Milan (Italy) and flute, music pedagogy and performance art in Cologne and Essen (Germany). His projects are characterized by a strong interdisciplinarity that combines sound, performance, word, installation. His artistic and research interests include autobiographical practices, interactions between memory and presence, individual and community, ephemeral actions and environments. He performed in several festivals including MiTo, Cantiere internazionale d'arte, Acht Brücken, Warsaw Autumn, KunstFestSpiele Herrenhausen and worked with artists such as Marina Abramović. Christina Kubisch, Salvatore Sciarrino and Doris Uhlich. He also works as a radio journalist and author in the fields of philology, performance art, theatre and music.

Cristiana Cott Negoescu Performance week 3 and 4 July 29 - August 10, 2025

Roulette

Roulette is a performative installation that materializes the tension between labor, chance, and systemic control. Set within an industrialized workspace, the performer engages in a repetitive cycle of production, dictated by the arbitrary logic of a lotto machine. The work highlights the alienation of labor, the erosion of workers' rights, and the illusion of choice within capitalist structures. The installation features a work station equipped with a pill press machine, sugar powder, and packaging materials, contrasting with a minimal break space furnished with a chair, instant noodles, and an iPad playing Joseph Beuys' Monologue. Cristiana operates in a looped sequence, caught between mechanized work and fleeting moments of relief determined by a system of chance.

Roulette draws from historical and contemporary labor models, referencing Joseph Beuys' Wirtschaftswertprinzip (economic value principle) and Monologue, both of which address commodification, labor value, and economic structures. The lotto machine, a direct nod to Beuys' Honey Pump at the Workplace, functions as an absurd mechanism of control, simulating the unpredictable yet structured nature of labor cycles. Cristiana's actions, pressing sugar into pills, packaging, and deconstructing them, reflect cycles of production and destruction, critiquing the notion of value creation within industrial and digital economies.

In its references to Joseph Beuys and contemporary labor conditions, *Roulette* becomes a mirror to a society where work is both necessary and absurd, where workers exist within systems they cannot control, and where the promise of freedom remains just beyond reach.

Maria Stamenković Herranz Performance week 3 and 4 July 27 - August 3, 2025

The Painted Heron

The Painted Heron is a long durational road journey film performance conceived by Maria Stamenković Herranz. The performance piece captures through film the daily progression of a journey from East to West – starting in Novi Sad, Serbia, and ending in Kleve, Germany. Combining walking and train travel, the journey unfolds through a mix of mapped routes and improvised decisions. Throughout the trip, the performer carries a living sunflower on her back. After seven days, the sunflower will be replanted in a field behind the castle at Museum Schloss Moyland. Rather than following a traditional narrative structure, the journey is captured in daily segments, later assembled into a continuous video that preserves the rawness of each clip.

The film will loop throughout the day in the museum space, inviting viewers to experience the rhythm and reality of the journey. It functions both as documentation and as an extension of the performance itself.

Conceived in dialogue with the legacy of Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramović, *The Painted Heron* reflects on the lasting impact of their artistic, ecological and political engagement. It also addresses Beuys' ecological philosophies, his work Eurasia and his visit to the Belgrade SKC in 1974.

The sunflower – exposed to shifting weather, borders, and encounters – embodies both fragility and endurance. Known for absorbing toxins from damaged soil, it symbolizes resilience and healing. Its movement across territories raises questions of land, belonging, and ecological care.

The performance route, shaped by histories of war and fragmentation, reflects on personal and collective memories.

Arriving at Schloss Moyland – a site marked by WWII trauma – the replanting becomes a gesture of regeneration. Influenced by the agricultural practice of *barbecho* (fallow), *The Painted Heron* embraces stillness, suggesting transformation through care, pause, and attention.



Cristiana Cott Negoescu is a Romanian-born artist based in Düsseldorf. Her work critically examines how political, economic, religious, and technological systems shape belief, control, and emotional investment. She creates spaces of ritual and disruption, using symbolic materials to interrogate transactional politics, emotional economies, and the illusion of choice. Cristiana draws on feminist and intersectional ideas in her work. She explores themes such as labor, migration, and manipulation, focusing on how systems shape meaning, influence participation, and create complicity in quiet but intrusive ways.



Maria Stamenković Herranz is an interdisciplinary artist whose work merges performance, visual art, and embodied research. She investigates how ephemeral actions leave lasting traces in matter and collective memory, positioning performance as a tool for social transformation and a bridge between history, politics, and spirituality. Through sculptural objects like bricks in This Mortal House Building 1 & 2, she challenges the boundary between action and object, encouraging active audience engagement with the evolving narrative. Her projects have been exhibited internationally at museums, theatres, and biennials, including the Benaki Museum (Athens, 2016), Sakip Sabanci Museum (Istanbul, 2020), Bangkok Art Biennale (Bangkok, 2021), March Art Project Gallery (Istanbul, 2022), Paris Photo (Paris, 2023), and Librairie du Palais Gallery during the Arles Photo Festival (Arles, 2024).

Luisa Sancho Escanero, co-created with Evan Macrae Williams and Yan Jun Chin Performance week 3 and 4 29.07. - 10.08.2025

The Loop

Three artists present a long durational performance that combines the ephemeral nature of performance art and dance. In a choreographic loop, they reinterpret the artistic work of Joseph Beuys.

The choreography is based on Beuys' drawings, interviews and actions centred on dance and the body. These elements are translated into movement and supplemented with projections, texts and off-screen voices that deepen the meaning. The result is a dramaturgically powerful combination of gesture, action and narrative.

Beuys' depictions of bodies and their abilities inspire the visual design of the performance. The boundaries between art and dance are blurred to form an abstract narrative – a cosmology that makes Beuys' work tangible as dance and evokes realisation in the audience.

Beuys' existing materials form the base of this work. Dance brings his art to life – not as a mere representation, but as a visionary view of the present and the future. The choreography invites the audience to re-imagine Beuys' work and thus transform the past into the present.



Luisa Sancho Escanero began her dance studies in her hometown Zaragoza, Spain. Her professional experience started at Northern Ballet Theatre and Ballet Zürich. As a solist dancer she worked at Ballet Biarritz, Compañía Metros/ Ramón Oller, Komische Oper Berlin, Pretty Ugly Tanz Köln/ Amanda Miller, Ballet Madrid, Introdans and Balletmainz. In parallel she worked as a guest artist in international productions with The Forsythe Company, Oper Köln, the Edinburgh International Festival, Cirque du Soleil, the Fashion Biennale Arnhem and the Deutsche Oper Berlin among others. Luisa holds a Master in Theatre Sciences and Research in the European Context - with a specialization in interculturality – at the Universidad Nacional a Distancia, UNED (Madrid, Spain) and has worked intensively in dance dramaturgy, artistic research, artistic production, strategic cooperations and on the development of numerous artistic, cultural and educational projects. She is currently the artistic director of the Tanzensemble Pfalztheater Kaiserslautern, Germany.



Evan Macrae Williams is a Canadian dancer and visual artist from Halifax, Nova Scotia, whose creation impetus focuses on the experiential forms of bodily movement through a variety of performative mediums. A main theme throughout his practice is the attempt to simulate, distort, and dismantle abject forms of collective memory through movement and corporeal expression.

His works have been shown in exhibitions and theaters in the Netherlands, Canada, and Germany, and since 2023 he has been a permanent member of the Tanzensemble at Pfalztheater Kaiserslautern.



Yan Jun Chin is a multidisciplinary artist whose work bridges dance, visual art, and digital media to explore the body as a vessel of memory, imagination, and transformation. Born in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, his practice is rooted in both traditional Chinese movement forms and contemporary dance forms. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Contemporary **Dance Performance from Boston Conservatory** at Berklee, with an emphasis in choreography. From 2019 to 2025, Chin was a soloist dancer at Pfalztheater Kaiserslautern in Germany. under the direction of Luisa Sancho Escanero, performing works by internationally renowned choreographers such as Alan Lucien Øyen, Daniele Proietto, and Iván Pérez. His stage work extends beyond dance into musical theater, opera, and experimental performance, reflecting a hybrid creative language.

Martin Toloku Performance week 4 August 05 - 10, 2025

Wounded-Soul

Wounded Soul is a long durational performance within an installation consisting of seven doors, each connected by a rope that is attached to the artist's body and restricts his freedom of movement. The performance activates the doors so that they appear either open or closed, simultaneously suggesting struggle, discomfort, unease or inner conflict. The work shows the reaction of a soul trapped in confinement and pain

The performance is inspired by Joseph Beuys' installation *Hinter dem Knochen wird gezählt – SCHMERZRAUM*, in which light is absorbed by a lead space and which confronts the audience with their own fear and vulnerability. At the same time, it thematises the possibility of re-encountering oneself and opening up to the outside world in order to become part of a larger social body.

Toluku translates his associations with Beuys' Schmerzraum into his performance installation. The seven doors as a symbol are borrowed from traditional healing rituals that originate from the culture of the Ewe tribes in the Volta region of Ghana. This ritual opens seven energy portals, a sign that leads into the unknown and at the same time becomes a labyrinth. This ritual-artistic practice is also reminiscent of shamanism, rituals and religious iconographies in the artistic practice of Joseph Beuys.

Rubiane Maia Performance week 4 August 05 - 10, 2025

Coming from the Plants

In her research and performance, the artist critically examines the conceptual structures of Joseph Beuys, in particular his idea of the economy of heat. Beuys describes energy as a dynamic flow of material and immaterial forces that can be perceived, controlled and transformed into immaterial labour. For him, energy is not an abstract element, but an active field that can transform human relationships on a personal and collective level.

Maia analyses Beuys' extensive notes and diagrams and recognises in them a complex architecture of thought in which the flow of energy functions as the central organising principle of his art and philosophy. In her project, she focuses on the energetic exchange between humans and more-than-humans and explores its potential for healing and transformation. Maia expands her perspective by referring to decolonial studies and the experiences of the African diaspora, to which she herself belongs. She focuses on transgenerational memory and trauma, which manifest themselves in bodies and territories and can be made accessible through conscious attention and performative gestures.

In her performance, Maia uses symbolic materials such as strands of hair, soil, plants and shipwrecks that tell stories of forced migration and displacement. With ritualistic actions, she creates a resonance space in which the repressed can be felt, heard and rethought. Her work invites us to experience delicate gestures and plant rhythms as an expression of care, grief and vitality as forces of rupture and reorganisation.



Martin Toloku is a Ghanian multidisciplinary artist born 1992 in Adidome, the Volta region of Ghana. He graduated in 2013 from Sogakofe Senior High School, where he studied visual art majoring in ceramics and later took an apprenticeship in sculpture with a traditional carver. He is an alumni of Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (2022-2024). Toloku's practice evolved from carving to installation, video work, studio practice, live performances and collaboration with both humans and animals (usually termite). He is fascinated with the materiality oft he process of decay, death, life, time, space, nature and ist inhabitants. Toloku has featured in several exhibitions and has participated in several residencies and biennales.

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Rubiane Maia is a Brazilian multidisciplinary artist based in Folkestone, UK. She completed a degree in Visual Arts and a Master degree in Institutional Psychology at Federal University of Espírito Santo, Brazil. Her work is a hybrid between performance, photography, video, installation and writing. In general, she is interested in the body, language, memory, phenomena and organic matter, being attracted by different states of perception and synergy through the relationships of interdependence and care between human and more-than-human beings, as minerals and plants. She often develops research in site specific contexts, always considering the elements, the landscape and the environment as guide and co-creators of her artworks.

MUSEUM SCHLOSS MOYLAND

The Museum Schloss Moyland is a nationally and internationally significant museum with an extensive collection of art from the 19th to the 21st century. At its core is one of the world's largest collections of works by the internationally acclaimed artist Joseph Beuys, who was born in Krefeld and grew up in nearby Kleve. This is complemented by numerous important positions in postmodern and contemporary art, including works by James Lee Byars, David Hockney, Katharina Sieverding, Charlotte Moorman, and Wolf Vostell. The collection was initiated by the art-enthusiast brothers Hans and Franz-Joseph van der Grinten and continues to grow. Through special exhibitions and collection presentations, the museum today aims to engage with contemporary social issues and explore current media and themes. Particular emphasis is placed on representing societal diversity, with a commitment to equal representation of female and male artists, as well as other possible forms of identity. The increased inclusion of digital media is a key part of this reorientation. Since 2022, the museum has placed a stronger focus on performative artistic approaches and on fostering dialogue between the historical positions in its collection and contemporary art. The museum and its exhibitions are housed in a historic neo-Gothic moated castle surrounded by a park that includes an exhibition hall and sculpture garden, located near the Dutch border. The museum also includes the Joseph Beuys Archive and a specialist art library. Through its research, exhibitions, and educational activities, Museum Schloss Moyland has established itself as center for art with regional, national, and international reach.

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ INSTITUTE

Marina Abramović Institute (MAI) presents and supports performance art at a global scale. Through an artist driven process, the Institute maintains both a multidisciplinary approach to performance and a focus on long durational work. Fostering an international network of performance artists and public participants, MAI is a part of the legacy of Marina Abramović.

The Institute creates communal participatory projects that critically engage with time, place, and human experiences. MAI seeks to address the complexity of the present time in order to shift awareness and consciousness of human beings through performance.

In 2023, MAI opened its space in Karyes, Greece, to support creative processes around performance art and generate collaborative thinking.

Marina Abramovic & MAI in dialogue with Joseph Beuys

13 July - 26 October 2025

Museum Schloss Moyland Am Schloss 4 47551 Bedburg-Hau

Credit Cover: Joseph Beuys & Marina Abramović

- 1) Ute Klophaus, Joseph Beuys, Performance "wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt", Galerie Schmela, Düsseldorf, 26 November 1965, black-and-white photograph, Stiftung Museum Schloss Moyland, For the work of Joseph Beuys: © VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025
- 2) 7 Easy Pieces, by Marina Abramović at Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 2005, Video still: Babette Mangolte © Courtesy of the Marina Abramović Archives

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