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MULTIMEDIA ARTISTS CREATE MODUS VIVENDI
INSTALLATION AT THE REFERENCE GALLERY, MIT

European multi-media artists Ulay and Marina Abramovic are in residence at the List Visual Art Center's Reference Gallery in MIT's Wiesner Building during the month of January. Their installation, Modus Vivendi, will be on view until February 9.

Ulay and Marina Abramovic have international reputations. The Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum of Eindhoven in the Netherlands recently organized a survey of their work during the past five years and they are featured in an exhibition, "Choices: Making an Art of Everyday Life," organized by Marcia Tucker for The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, opening February 1.

On Tuesday January 21 at 7 pm, the artists will present a special two-hour program including slides, video, and a discussion of their integration of life and work. A reception in The Reference Gallery will follow.

Marina Abramovic, born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, and Ulay (Uwe F. Laysiepen), born in Solingen, West Germany, have collaborated in performance, installation, photography, video and film work since 1975. They now reside in Amsterdam.

Upon their arrival in the United States, the artists worked for three days on new Polaroid photographs for their Reference Gallery installation, entitled Tuesday/Saturday. These gigantic 80"x 40" images of rich, saturated color and shallow but crystalline focus were

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produced in a room-sized "camera" built by the Polaroid Corporation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

A lens was attached to the side of a 12'x16' room which contains technicians who roll and peel the large strips of film. Special masking silhouettes created by the artists were applied to the negative before exposure. Outside, the artists manipulated gestures and colored lighting to create a vivid set of seven photographs of Marina Abramovic exploring a range of inner identities felt by the artists, drawn from primal and universal connecting energies, or animism. Two color panels and an image of an anonymous onlooker completes the series.

Discussing their installation here, Dana Friis-Hansen wrote: "This Polaroid process has particular significance as a medium for the extension of their work. Sharing the immediacy of the live event and the instant return of video, this series again reveals the artists' sophisticated dexterity in focusing their energies, intellectual and spiritual, to seize the moment." Mr. Friis-Hansen is assistant curator of the Committee on the Visual Arts.

In addition, the artists hope to complete the third in a series of videotapes planned for all seven continents, each a response to the particularities of place and culture. The third, representing the North American continent, is being produced in cooperation with the Film/Video Section of MIT's Media Laboratory. It will be premiered at the List Visual Arts Center; call 253-4680 after February 1 for details about the screening.

The two completed works in this series are: City of Angels (1983, 20 minutes), created at the temple of Ayuta near Bangkok, Thailand, and

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Terra delgi dea Madre (1984, 16 minutes), produced in Sicily. While these differ in setting, tone, and structure, Mr. Friis-Hansen has described them as being meditative and authentic.

"Their previous work has focused on the layers of personal and universal energies which they explored through simple unspoken actions and situations, often involving risk, endurance and co-dependence," Mr. Friis-Hansen said.

Thomas McEvelley, art historian and Contributing Editor of Artforum has stated: "Their work together has been and still is what they have called 'relation-work'--work which both lives off of and feeds into the investigation of relationship between two humans as they try to relate simultaneously to one another and to the world around them. The works specifically called "Relation Works" were mostly small highly focused performances in which each of them was thrown back both on his or her own patience and endurance and on the supportive partnership with which they faced the world together. In one of these works, for example, they sat back to back in an art gallery for eighteen hours, with their long hair braided together between them. If either of them fell the other would be brought down also; if either of them endured, the other would also--and this in full view of a world that was outside of and not always friendly to their partnership and the determined ordeals which they underwent as both tests and expressions of it."

The Reference Gallery functions as a hybrid of a laboratory, studio, and staging area, to make accessible the usually private process by which a work of art is realized. Ulay and Marina Abramovic's residency in the Reference Gallery has been organized by

the MIT Committee on the Visual Arts, and is funded by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities.

The Reference Gallery and the List Visual Arts Center are open weekdays 10 - 4 and weekends 1 - 5. Admission to exhibitions and events is free and open to the public.

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