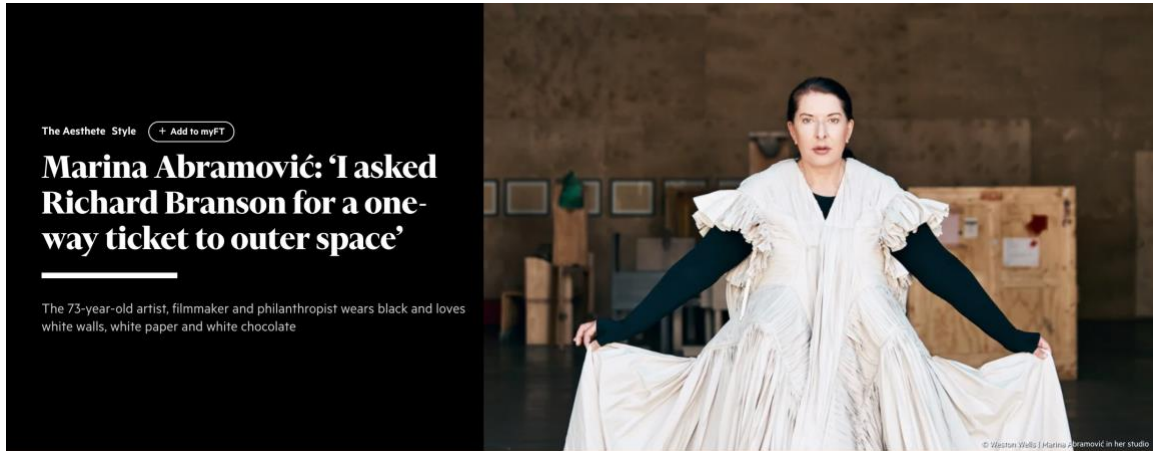


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Ohly Evans, Christina. "Marina Abramović: 'I asked Richard Branson for a one-way ticket to outer space'." *Financial Times*. September 21, 2020.

FINANCIAL TIMES



© Weston Wells | Marina Abramović in her studio

My style signifier is black, black, black. I wear clothes that can easily transition from work to night, and my uniform includes a Givenchy dress by Riccardo Tisci that I bought in New York 10 years ago. Always looking the same keeps things simple and comfortable.



Her Mazda MX-5 Miata © Weston Wells

The last thing I bought and loved was a convertible Mazda MX-5 Miata. It's a beautiful car; I love its round shapes. I'm 73 years old, so it wasn't exactly a

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midlife-crisis purchase, but since I only learned to drive at 65, it was a big deal. There is nothing better than driving around upstate New York with the top down.

My style icon is Grace Jones. She blows my mind; she's the same age as me and wears these incredible high heels and has a body to kill for. She has an amazing attitude to life.

The best book I've read this year is *Life for Sale* by Yukio Mishima, a darkly comedic book that's full of tension and surprise. After surviving a suicide attempt, the main character puts his life up for sale, but ends up enmeshed with the government and organised crime instead. The author took his own life by the Japanese ritual of hara-kiri.



Abramović's home © Weston Wells

Wherever I am, I like to be surrounded by white walls. Collections take up space and I'm nomadic, so I'm used to living with very few things. I lived in a 1960s Citroën bus for five years, so I know how to pack very light. I also know where to find the shower in every gas station in Europe.

On my wish list are sour-cherry trees and pear trees for my home in upstate New York. I like the idea of being self-sufficient, and these trees – in addition to being beautiful and giving oxygen – bear fruits that I love. My grandmother used to bake pies using sour cherries, so I'm looking forward to seeing how they do in this climate.

The works of art that changed everything were Duchamp's "readymade" pieces, including *Bicycle Wheel* and *Fountain*. We must always look to the artists who changed the way society thinks. Duchamp was a master of this.

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The quartz crystal she carries in her pocket © Weston Wells



Her cashmere shawl from Chrome Hearts © Weston Wells

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An object I would never part with is a small quartz crystal that I carry in my pocket wherever I go. I believe that if we tune into the waves of the crystal, we can tune into the energy of the planet.

I recently found a cashmere shawl from Chrome Hearts in LA that had been missing for years. It's actually a large blanket that I wear as a scarf – on planes, in air-conditioned hotel rooms – and it makes me feel as if I am bringing a piece of home with me wherever I go.

The one artist whose work I would collect if I could is van Gogh. He had an incredible perception of the world and his paintings captured an air full of atomic energy. The *Starry Night*, for example, is so beautiful that it's almost overwhelming.



Abramović at home in upstate New York © Weston Wells. Clothing from Kasuri, Hudson, NY; styling by Jonathan Osofsky/Kasuri; coat, Homme Plissé Issey Miyake Edge coat

I'm fascinated by the potential and emptiness of white paper, which I always have around me, wherever I go. Before something is written on it, before a drawing is made, it calls me to create.

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During the pandemic, I have been reflecting on loneliness and solitude. Loneliness creates sadness, but solitude is quite lovely because you start to really think of – and take care of – yourself. I'm sleeping well, exercising and eating good food and, best of all, I don't feel guilty about wasting time. But I've also spent a lot of time thinking about freelance artists and what they've been facing, which is incredibly sad.

The best gift I've given recently was a scarf that I knitted myself, for my friend Serge Le Borgne. The most beautiful and meaningful things are those that are made by hand, with love. I knit these for all my closest friends. I like to give them my time.



Her rose-gold Cartier earrings © Weston Wells

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Love Thermometer by Rebecca Horn © Weston Wells

And the best gift I've received recently is a pair of rose-gold Cartier earrings, from my partner Todd Eckert. I got my ears pierced when I turned 70, and these flower bouquet studs are really beautiful and understated. I don't wear much jewellery, but these are incredibly special.

I also treasure my *Love Thermometer*, a present that my friend, the wonderful artist Rebecca Horn, gave me a long time ago. There is a red liquid inside that has a magic tendency to rise and fall when warmed with the hands. It can predict one's capacity to generate love.

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Abramović in her studio © Weston Wells. Clothing from Kasuri, Hudson, NY; styling by Jonathan Osofsky/Kasuri; dress, Rick Owens Defilé Tecuatl dress

If I weren't doing what I do, I would be a real-estate developer. I love old, fucked-up buildings with potential! I'm interested in the idea of real estate that isn't necessarily about making money, but more about creating communal structures. When I need to feel inspired, I get out into nature. I don't work in a studio, so I am always out observing street life and nature. From volcanoes to waterfalls to forests and oceans, there is a kind of energy that I find only in these places. Stromboli, for example: my time spent living on this island was one of the most creative periods in my life.

The last music I downloaded was "4 Degrees" by Anohni, the artist formerly known as Antony Hegarty. It's a very sad song about climate change and the title refers to the devastating rise in global temperature that's possible by 2100.

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Exterior of the studio © Weston Wells



The coffee table in her living room © Weston Wells

With time on my hands, I read and write – often, these days, about my childhood in Serbia. Now that I have the time to really sleep too, I am having colourful dreams.

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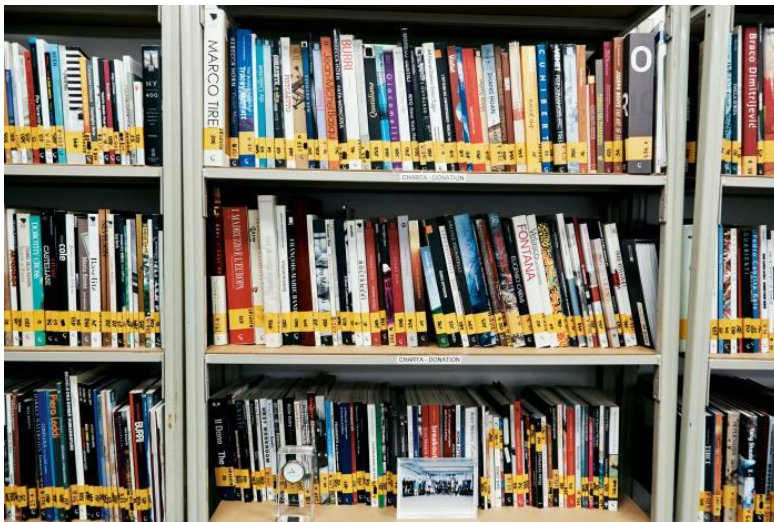
I've recently discovered online exercise – no trainer required. I have 10 sites and apps that I love for meditation, yoga, stretching, and relaxation, and whether I have five, 10 or 30 minutes, I can always fit in a workout at home.

An indulgence I would never forgo is chocolate – and not the healthy 90 per cent cocoa kind! My favourite is the Belgian white-chocolate squares, filled with nougat and topped with almonds, that Leonidas used to make. It is a real weakness: I am disciplined about many things, but not this.

An object that I love looking at is a round rock that I found in the river at the back of my house. When you turn it over there is a perfect circle engraved in it, made by the river current – and time.

Some of my best ideas have come from sitting on a plane: from the window seat you see the vast expanse and the bigger picture beyond. I went to Richard Branson's Necker Island and asked him for a one-way ticket to outer space – that would be the ultimate inspiration.

The last item of clothing I added to my wardrobe was a Riccardo Tisci for Burberry beige trench coat. It isn't black, which is a departure for me, but I love it.



The reference library in her studio © Weston Wells

This year, I've really come to appreciate how people gather on this planet. Everything felt so separate before – from geographies to languages to religions – but coronavirus has brought everyone together in a way. I've really relied on friends. We all used to be so busy, and now we have time to reconnect and have meaningful, warm conversations – an incredible gift.

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The gadget I couldn't do without is my blood-pressure monitor. I got very bad Lyme disease a few years ago and my blood pressure was all over the place, so I like to check it once a day.



Comme des Garçons Wonderoud, £95 for 100ml EDP, doverstreetmarket.com

The beauty staples I'm never without are Wonderoud eau de parfum by Comme des Garçons; Nars make-up, including Sheer Glow Foundation; and the entire Dr Hauschka skincare range. I love its Revitalising Mask and lotions such as the Rose Day Cream and the nourishing Night Serum. *Comme des Garçons Wonderoud, £95 for 100ml EDP, doverstreetmarket.com. Nars Sheer Glow Foundation, £33.50, Dr Hauschka Revitalising Mask, £39.50 for 30ml; Rose Day Cream, £30.50 for 30ml; Night Serum, £29.50 for 20ml.*

I can't wait to return to Bhutan and to Ladakh, in Kashmir. Happiness and wellbeing are a big part of life in Bhutan. The government determines the happiness of the culture – can you imagine that in America? In Ladakh, which is very mountainous and high-altitude, you have a special clarity of mind – not to mention excellent air quality.

Right now, I'm Happy to have finished my opera *7 Deaths of Maria Callas*. It is a combination of performance art and video and focuses on seven famous arias associated with Callas. I'm also planning my Royal Academy show *After Life*, which has been pushed back to autumn 2021. I'll be the first woman to have a dedicated solo show in the main galleries and I'm very excited about it – whenever it happens.

[Christie's](#) will offer [Abramović's mixed-reality work The Life](#) during Frieze Week in London this October. [7 Deaths of Maria Callas](#) is available to watch on [Staatsoper.TV](#) until 7 October.