

PEOPLE

Ulay's Mysterious New Performance Takes a Dig at Marina Abramović

Rain Embuscado, Friday, March 18, 2016



Ulay.

Photo: Courtesy of Patrick McMullan.

In 1977, long before artists Ulay and Marina Abramović would become *deeply estranged*, the pair performed *Balance Proof*, which found the naked artists balancing a double-sided mirror between them. The seminal performance was held at the *Musée d'art et d'histoire* in Geneva, Switzerland. Nearly 40 years later, Ulay will be revisiting the very same room of this museum to enact a performance of his own.

The German artist was invited by curator Adelina von Fürstenberg to celebrate *ART for The World's* year-long 20th anniversary this April. As a non-government organization associated with the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), *ART for The World* enlists artists from across the globe for exhibitions and events.

"For *ART for The World*, I asked the museum for the same room as his performance with Marina Abramović in the 70s," von Fürstenberg told artnet News in a phone conversation. "Ulay accepted my invitation and he will be doing another performance with a mirror, but this time he will be alone."

Ulay, *A Skeleton in the Closet* (2015).
Photo: Courtesy of Evert van Duuren.

According to von Fürstenberg, a video camera will be mounted on the ceiling to record the performance, which is intriguingly titled *Invisible Opponent*. The mirror, which will be placed on the floor, will be pink, which von Fürstenberg described as a deliberate artistic decision.

"The mirror is in the color pink because he did this *monograph* about his work last year," she explained. "Some pages of this book are in pink and totally empty because these pages were his performances with Marina, and she did not give him permission to use these images. In a way, the color pink represents the problems between them."

Ulay, *Code of Conduct* (2015).
Photo: Courtesy of Theodoriki Lena Pitsak.

Beyond the mirror, little else is known about Ulay's upcoming performance—even on von Fürstenberg's part. "It will be interesting because I don't want to know," she said. "It's important to have this element of surprise, not to know exactly what it will be."

Ulay's performance *Invisible Opponent* will be held at the *Musée d'art et d'histoire* of Geneva on April 5. Ulay will be screening his film and hosting his Q&A the day before on April 4.