

# escArt

## PRESENCE AS MATERIAL

We live in a time of permanent optimization. Every moment is expected to be useful, every state improved, every experience refined. Even silence has become functional: a tool for productivity, regeneration or performance. Presence is trained, attention measured, awareness monetized. In such a world, simple being appears almost suspicious. And yet, beneath all the strategies of self-improvement, a quiet longing persists: the wish for a space in which nothing needs to be achieved.

When Marina Abramović sat silently at a table in the MoMA in 2010, facing whoever chose to sit across from her, she offered precisely such a space. 'The Artist Is Present' consisted of almost nothing: two chairs, two bodies, two gazes. No conversation, no instruction, no explanation. And still, people cried, softened, opened, fell into deep stillness. The radical simplicity of the situation revealed something essential: presence is not a technique, but an event. It does not arise from methods or goals, but from sustained attention and the courage to remain.

Long before this, Marcel Duchamp had already shifted our understanding of art by declaring ordinary objects to be artworks. With this gesture, he moved the focus away from craftsmanship and onto perception itself. Meaning no longer resided in the object, but in the act of seeing, framing, and attending. Art became less a product and more a condition— a question of awareness. In this sense, presence itself can be understood as a contemporary artistic practice.

Science fiction has long explored the consequences of a world that fully economizes time and attention. In the film 'In Time', human lifespan becomes currency. The poor die young, the rich accumulate decades. What appears as dystopian exaggeration is already familiar: our time, focus, and presence have become the most valuable resources of the digital economy. Every second is measured, extracted or optimized. In such a context, not optimizing becomes a quiet act of resistance.

And Michael Ende's 'Momo' tells a similar story. The grey gentlemen steal people's time by persuading them to become efficient, productive, and busy. What is lost is not only leisure, but depth, relationship, and aliveness. Momo herself possesses no special power except one: the ability to listen. Through her presence, people reconnect with themselves. Not through advice, not through solutions, but through attention.

This is the lineage in which this space stands. It is not coaching, not therapy, not consulting. It offers no quick fixes, no strategies, no promises of improvement. Instead, it opens a field in which silence and conversation, art and everyday life, politics and spirituality, the large questions and the smallest details can coexist. Sometimes we may sit in stillness, holding attention. Sometimes words will unfold. Sometimes curiosity about one another, about biography, motivation, attraction, or shared history will shape the encounter. Sometimes a concrete project may appear, and the response will be artistic reflection rather than problem-solving.

**There is no fixed agenda and no predefined outcome.**

What is offered instead is presence: a space in which attention can deepen, perception can shift, and something real can emerge without pressure to perform or succeed. In a world obsessed with solutions, staying with the question becomes meaningful. In a culture of acceleration, slowness becomes an artistic gesture.