

MARLA FRANCIS



I'm a performance artist, choreographer, director, and educator, my work emerges at the intersection of body, space, and the unseen. I am the founder of I FIGLI DI MARLA and the creator of Emotional Dance, a somatic method that fosters emotional connection through movement and presence.

My artistic practice unfolds through performance, choreography, poetry, and somatic explorations. I am drawn to the uncanny that which is both familiar and strange as a lens to investigate what lies beneath the surface of lived experience. In my work, the body does not merely perform; it remembers, echoes, and disturbs. It becomes a liminal entity between presence and absence, gesture and void through which the unconscious and the repressed find expression.

I use space not as a backdrop, but as a partner. The spaces I inhabit abandoned, domestic, intimate, or raw act as emotional landscapes, amplifying the body's silent narratives. My performances often evoke a sense of transience, a haunting in motion, where the boundaries between self and environment dissolve. In this fusion, the body becomes both vessel and threshold: a portal through which the invisible can emerge.

My practice is an ongoing inquiry into vulnerability, ritual, and the disquieting beauty of transformation. It invites the viewer into spaces that unsettle and awaken, where the somatic meets the poetic, and where the removed returns not to be resolved, but to be witnessed.

EDUCATION

Linklater Method | 2024 - 2019

Centro Studio Attori, Milan IT

The Seagull by Anton Čechov with Irina Galli| 2023 Text analysis, Centro Studio Attori, Milan IT

Intensive with Michael Margotta | 2023 - 2015

In-depth study of Stanislavsky/Strasberg method
Rome IT - New York USA

The treatment of waves with Claudia Castellucci 2022
ORA residenze artistiche Piaveda IT

Voce | 2025-2018

With Max Elli, Silvia Chiminelli, Gustavo Frigerio,
Francesca De Mori

Sensitive & Butoh Dance with Kea Tonetti | 2017

Spazio CONTINUUM, Milan IT

Release Technique with Ariella Vidach | 2017

AiEP, Milan IT

Gaga Method | 2017

Intensive with Ohad Naharin, Gaga, Carreau du
Temple Paris FR

ISA In Teatro Summer Academy winner Siae
Illumina|2017 Intensive with El Conde de Torrejuelo,
Collettivo CineticO, Gustavo Frigerio, Geraldine
Pilgrim, Oscar Gomez Mata, Sonia Gomez|Polverigi
IT

Centro Sperimentale di cinematografia Rome IT|
2014 Intensive with Vito Mancusi

Bachelor's Degree in Media Languages| 2012
Faculty of Letters and Philosophy
Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore
Milan IT

Martha Graham Technique | 2008

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, New York USA

Broadway Dance School | 2008- 2006

New York USA

AWARDS

Winner of the following calls:

2025 **Bim Specificissimo**, Milan

2023 **TAGLI**, Stromboli

2020 **Aiep, Ariella Vidach**, Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan

2017 **Santarcangelo dei Teatri** artistic residency

2017 **ISA Inteatro SIAE**

2016 Finalist “**Giovani realtà del teatro**” with the
project High Reactors at the Nico Pepe Academy of
Dramatic Art in Udine

SELECTED WORKS

SSS FFF BRR MWHUA
Bim Specificissimo 2025



Bim, Specificissimo, Milan 2025 ph. Gianmarco Gaviani







What is space: Physical, mental, emotional? And when two or more spaces meet, what is the boundary within which there is respect, and when does it become intrusion, abuse or violence?

PANEURITMIA



Artistic residency TAGLI Stromboli 2022 ph. Gianmarco Gaviani

Teatro Comandini, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Cesena 2022-2023

Music: Filippo Conti IFDM performers: Silvia Indellicati, Filippo Fanelli Terlizzi, Michele Gorlero





PANEURITMIA is a psycho-magical performance inspired by Peter Deunov's 1920 system of physical and vocal exercises, which aim at reconnecting with the rhythm of the cosmos. At the core of the work are the idea of bonds and relationships, and the act of weaving and unweaving through a shared rhythm.

<https://vimeo.com/758728617>

<https://vimeo.com/753929049>

SENZA PESO

Poetry sound performance 2021

Poetry by Marla Francis

Music Federica Furlani

Production: Associazione della musica Torino and Anabasi Art

<https://vimeo.com/976512846>



JULIE

neuroromantica

2020-2022

August Strindberg's tragedy is reactivated to stimulate a reflection on power dynamics subjugating gendered and classes bodies.

Production: I FIGLI DI MARLA, Ariella Vidach, Santarcangelo dei Teatri

Performers: Gaia Ginevra Giorgi, Erica Meucci, Riccardo Santalucia.

Music: Riccardo Santalucia <https://vimeo.com/466076011> <https://vimeo.com/463757240>



Julie, 2020, Aiep, Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan ph. Giulia Pesole



HIGH REACTORS

2016-2020

<https://vimeo.com/332427295>

<https://vimeo.com/157057362>

The so—called High Reactors or HSP (highly sensitive people) are clinically defined as individuals highly susceptible both on a physical and psycho—emotional level.

This performance has been created by analyzing in an organic way the various phases a hypersensitive person has to go through when he/she gets in touch with the surrounding environment and the person next to him/her, moving towards an own centering.

HR is based on several scientific essays written by the psychoterapist Rolf Sellin.



Neues Meseum, 2017, Berlin, ph. Luca Nistler



Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2018, ph.Aika Lux



Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2018, ph.Guillaume Lebrun



Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2018, ph. Guillaume Lebrun



- May I kiss you?
- Yes.

Emotional Dance

Emotional Dance is a somatic practice and a politics of feeling.

Created by Marla Francis, it offers a space for emotional release, deep listening, and active presence beyond aesthetic or productive expectations. Through breath, movement, voice, and writing, it invites participants to reconnect with themselves and others.

More than a method, it is a subtle form of resistance: feminist, porous, and non-hierarchical. It welcomes tired, affective, and offbeat bodies, opposing dominant ideals of efficiency, invulnerability, and perfection. Emotional Dance is not meant to be observed, but inhabited.





COMMISSIONS SELECTION



Senza Peso 2024, In Aeras, **Museo Bagatti Valsecchi**, Milan ph. Gianmarco Gaviani



Stone Islands AW020 021 Director: Ken Yamamoto, Hap srl
Dancer: Fabio Calvisi



Napapijri 2018 Golab Agency Milan



Buka- Elita Design week 2017 Milan