

Duration and Affect: A Study of Vulnerability and Tenacity in *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005) and *Almerisa Series* (1994–2008)

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As a radical form of art, performance art challenges the limits of the body, revealing the resilience and vulnerability of the artist. Photography captures fleeting moments and visual narratives, allowing for introspection on the diverse facets of personhood. While Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces* and Rineke Dijkstra's *Almerisa Series* both delve into the complexities of identity, endurance, and the human experience, they contrast with each other in terms of approaches, techniques, and contexts. This essay compares and contrasts the expression of vulnerability and tenacity in the human condition in the two artworks and explores the role of emotive responses elicited from the viewer, the inextricability of duration and affect, and the malleable social construct of time.¹

In exploring vulnerability and tenacity in the human condition, I argue that Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005) and Rineke Dijkstra's *Almerisa Series* (1994–2008) have manifestly elicited emotive responses from the viewer and demonstrated the inextricability of duration and affect. The theatricality and performativity of *Seven Easy Pieces* and displaced temporality of photography in *Almerisa Series* exemplify the subjectivity of time in the audience's emotional engagement on perception. In engaging with both documentation and time as a readymade, the two pieces have evoked the notion of repetition while articulating their inherent impossibility. Yet, the two pieces are distinct in their

narratives of immigration and exile—the expression of affection manifests as retrospective alienation in *Seven Easy Pieces*, but embodies prospective integration in *Almerisa Series*. While both pieces exemplify the fluidity of identity, the proposition is evinced in *Seven Easy Pieces* as a collective challenge to the stability of authorship in performance art. In contrast, Sehric's fluid identity is documented in the *Almerisa Series* as her individual journey of cultural integration and womanhood.

Seven Easy Pieces reinterprets seven iconic pieces originally performed by Abramović and her contemporaries during the 1960s and 70s as an exploration of vulnerability and resilience.² In *Body Pressure*, the artist's face is contorted in pain as she presses it against a glass pane, displaying both suffering and unwavering discipline (Fig. 1). *Action Pants: Genital Panic* juxtaposes Abramović's nakedness with her combative aura, symbolized by her safari attire and firm grip on her assault rifle, suggesting her ability to overcome vulnerability through focus and concentration (Fig. 2). In *The Conditioning*, the artist replaces burned-down candles with a stiff, ritualist demeanor in a display of determination *vis-à-vis* physical ordeal (Fig. 3). Finally, *Lips of Thomas* highlights Abramović's acts of self-cutting and self-flagellation, emphasizing both the fragility of physical injury and the artist's profound endurance.³

Unfolding as a demanding and occasionally

¹ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 2005), 188–189.

² “Marina Abramović: Seven Easy Pieces,” *The Guggenheim Museums and Foundation*, accessed May 25, 2024, <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/marina-abramovi-seven-easy-pieces>.

³ Nikki Cesare and Jenn Joy, “Performa/(Re)Performa,” *TDR* (1988–) 50, no. 1 (2006): 171.

perilous marathon, the interaction between the performer and the audience in *Seven Easy Pieces* elicits powerful emotional responses, underscoring the inseparability of duration and affect. In *Seedbed*, viewers compared the experience to the exhilaration of a carnival ride in their eager anticipation of the climax (Fig. 4).⁴ During *Lips of Thomas*, the audience remained transfixed, even as midnight approached, as Abramović lay bleeding on a massive ice cross (Fig. 5).⁵ Carving a star onto her abdomen with a razor, she evoked a fainting spell from one observer and an anonymous call to emergency services.⁶ In *Action Pants: Genital Panic*, Abramović's prolonged, intense gaze with a young woman moved both the artist and the audience to tears (Fig. 2).⁷ The mystical and ceremonial ambiance of *The Conditioning* (Fig. 3) and *Entering the Other Side* captivated spectators for hours (Fig. 6), while the banality of *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* drove audiences away (Fig. 7).⁸ By integrating audience participation as an intrinsic element of the transcendental experience, Abramović reveals how affect distorts the audience's perception of time.



Figure 1

Marina Abramović, *Body Pressure*, November 9, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.



Figure 2

Marina Abramović, *Action Pants: Genital Panic*, November 11, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.



Figure 3

Marina Abramović, *The Conditioning*, November 12, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.

⁴ Roberta Smith, "Turning Back the Clock to the Days of Crotchless Pants and a Deceased Rabbit," *The New York Times*, November 17, 2005.

⁵ Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

⁶ Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

⁷ Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

⁸ Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."



Figure 4

Marina Abramović, *Seedbed*, November 10, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005, Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.



Figure 5

Marina Abramović, *Lips of Thomas*, November 14, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.



Figure 6

Marina Abramović, *Entering the Other Side*, November 15, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.



Figure 7

Marina Abramović, *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, November 13, 2005. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, November 9–15, 2005. Performance, 7 hours. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York. © 2012 Marina Abramović, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. Image courtesy of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, and Kathryn Carr.

The documentation of performances in *Seven Easy Pieces* engages time and repetition, highlighting the transitory nature of performance art. The original performances, executed in an era when media production was neither instant nor easily accessible, were largely known through oral accounts and grainy photographs.⁹ With the consent of the original artists or their estates, *Seven Easy Pieces* resurrects these performances by stripping away their enigmatic aura and presenting them as living art.¹⁰ Alongside the DVD recordings, the documentation of *Seven Easy Pieces* in exhibitions, installations, and books has captured the performances in photographs, texts, and film. Such documentation not only recreates the originals but also becomes a focal point for future performances, serving as a vital link between the past, present, and future iterations of the same artistic concept.¹¹ They have also become part of the project's legacy, allowing the dissemination of the reenactments beyond the 2005 reenactment and contributing to the ongoing dialogue and scholarly engagement with Abramović's *oeuvre*. Thus, repetition manifests not only in the visual similarities between the original, Abramović's renditions, and future reenactments but also in preserving and revisiting the artist's creative intent and past practices.

A significant aspect of this lies in the recognition of time as a ready-made element and the acknowledgment of the inherent impossibility of true repetition. The affective experiences and ephemeral nature of performance art render each reenactment distinct due to the specific contextual and relational circumstances of a given time. By revisiting these historical works and presenting them as contemporary renditions, Abramović takes existing performances created within specific cultural contexts and reintroduces them into a new temporal framework. Not only does this highlight the malleability of time and the potential for reinterpretation,

but the reenactments in *Seven Easy Pieces* also create a temporal displacement which challenges the notion of time as a linear and fixed construct. In emphasizing the potential of time to be manipulated and recontextualized, the prolonged duration of the performances allows the audience to contemplate time's influence on human perception as they examine them in new light.

Notably, Marina Abramović's reenactments differed from their referent performances; for instance, when removed from Valie Export's intended *mise-en-scène*, Abramović's rendition of *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (1969) in a packed Munich movie theater lacked the immersive quality of the original.¹² Similarly, Abramović's reenactment of Joseph Beuys' *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965) failed to capture the commanding intellectualism associated with speech and language, making it perhaps the flattest performance in *Seven Easy Pieces*.¹³ Even in reenacting her own *Lips of Thomas*, Abramović introduced new elements absent from the original documentation, such as her father's military cap and a flag fashioned from the cloth bandage in the original performance.¹⁴ The lack of specifics in the documentation of the 1975 performance enabled Abramović's addition of these elements to her reenactments without compromising the former's artistic integrity, despite the two performances' distinctions from one another.¹⁵

The discussions so far have emphasized the temporal nature of performance art, and the audiences' affective experiences. Intrinsic to the former's ephemerality is an immediacy absent in the close-looking of traditional art forms; as the artist's performance unfolds in real time, its subjective emotive existence and the inevitability of its ending intensifies the audience's unmediated assimilation of sensorial experience.¹⁶ As

9 Lara Shalson, "Enduring Documents: Re-Documentation in Marina Abramović's *Seven Easy Pieces*," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 23, no. 3 (2013): 432–433, 434–441.

10 This sets *Seven Easy Pieces* apart from unauthorized commercial appropriations.

11 Shalson, "Enduring Documents," 432–433.

12 Cesare and Joy, "Performa/(Re)Performa," 171; Shalson, 440, 434.

13 Cesare and Joy, "Performa/(Re)Performa," 171, 172.

14 Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

15 Marina Abramović, Chris Thompson, and Katarina Weslien. "Pure Raw: Performance, Pedagogy, and (Re)Presentation," *PAJ* (Baltimore, Md.) 28, no. 1 (2006): 39.

16 Jessica Santone, "Marina Abramović's 'Seven Easy Pieces': Critical Documentation Strategies for Preserving Art's History," *Leonardo* (Oxford) 41, no. 2 (2008): 151

participants co-create meaning with the artist in this improvisational exercise, the transience of the performances facilitates the audiences' mnemonic *recall* of the actual event through their repeated reflection and reinterpretation.¹⁷ However, in *Seven Easy Pieces*, the incorporation of emotive aesthetics as a constitutive part of its composition also transforms the piece into a partially pre-manufactured spectacle, the latter of which pertains to the deliberate manipulation of visual and emotive elements in conveying a sense of drama.¹⁸ In *Seven Easy Pieces*, the artist's intentional use of her body as a medium of physical endurance evokes cognate responses from the audience; although the viewers' responses are spontaneous, this phenomenological experientiality is nevertheless controlled by Abramović's scripted performance.¹⁹

This proposition is furthered through *Seven Easy Pieces*' emphasis on repetition and intertextuality—as Abramović draws inspiration from the past performances of other artists, the audience's familiarity with the original creates a cycle of semiotic reinforcement in which viewers compare and contrast the reenactments with their referents.²⁰ In its elicitation of emotive responses from viewers, *Seven Easy Pieces* heightens their involvement and engagement and, as such, enables the partial construction of the performance by both Abramović and themselves.²¹ Yet by creating *Seven Easy Pieces* solely from existing records of past performances, Abramović also highlights how documentation inherently fails to accurately and holistically preserve a durational event.²² Documentation, by its nature, focuses on specific subject matter, inevitably leaving out other elements present in

the same temporal-spatial context.²³ Therefore, when a performance is “re-performed” at a different time, it is not an identical repetition of the original.²⁴ The artist can only reproduce an impression of the subject matter based on the incomplete description provided by the documentation, while the contextual circumstances have inevitably changed over time.²⁵

In *Seven Easy Pieces*, the impossibility of repetition imbues each reenactment with an exploration of ever-evolving artistic identity. Marina Abramović's project merges the delineations between herself and the original creators as she embodies their roles.²⁶ This blurring of boundaries prompts contemplation on the individuality and ownership of artistic ideas, suggesting that artistic identity can be fluid, borrowed, transformed, and reinterpreted.²⁷ Abramović deepens this investigation of artistic authenticity by drawing on the ephemeral nature of performance art as distinct from the object-centered approach of traditional art forms.²⁸ The reenactment of Abramović's own performances raises questions about whether authenticity resides solely in the original rendition or if it can be reproduced and experienced anew.²⁹ *Seven Easy Pieces* thus underscores the transformative power of performance art.

By embodying the roles of other artists, Abramović symbolically merges her own identity with theirs, and challenges the individualistic assumption upon which authorship is based. With each rendition, Abramović embarks on a journey of exploring diverse personas, showcasing the capacity of performance art to

17 Santone, “Marina Abramović's ‘Seven Easy Pieces’,” 148.

18 Santone, 151.

19 Santone, 148; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, “Pure Raw,” 29.

20 Santone, 148; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 34.

21 Santone, 152; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 29.

22 Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 45.

23 Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 45.

24 Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 45.

25 Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 45.

26 Claire Bishop, “Delegated Performance Outsourcing Authenticity,” in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (New York: Verso, 2012), 234, 237, 238.

27 Bishop, “Delegated Performance Outsourcing Authenticity,” 234, 237, 238.

28 Bishop, 219, 226, 238.

29 Bishop, 219, 226, 238.



Left

Figure 8

Rineke Dijkstra, *Almerisa, Asylum Center, Leiden, The Netherlands*, March 14, 1994. Chromogenic print, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Horace W. Goldsmith Fund through Robert B. Menschel. Image courtesy of Rineke Dijkstra.

Middle

Figure 9

Rineke Dijkstra, *Almerisa, Leidschendam, The Netherlands*, March 29, 2005. Chromogenic print, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Leila and Melville Straus. Image courtesy of Rineke Dijkstra.

Right

Figure 10

Rineke Dijkstra, *Almerisa, Zoetermeer, The Netherlands*, June 19, 2008. Chromogenic print, 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 inches. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Image courtesy of Rineke Dijkstra.

push the boundaries of identity and self-expression. Abramović thus becomes a conduit for the artistic vision of others while simultaneously asserting her own artistic agency.³⁰ In doing so, Abramović does not aim to fully replace the original performers; rather, she intends to represent and interpret the works through an accurate portrayal of their original intentions.³¹ Considered in context of Abramović's dedication of *Seven Easy Pieces* to the memory of her late friend Susan Sontag and the former's indignant response to the misappropriation of artistic concepts by commercial identities, such thematics can be conceived as Abramović's attempt to address the authentic preservation and historiography of performance art.³²

Similar to *Seven Easy Pieces*, *Almerisa Series* captures the vulnerability and resilience inherent in human nature. The series comprises eleven photos that document Almerisa's transformation from a young girl to a mother.³³ In the first photo, a somber Almerisa reflects a contemplative sadness, symbolizing her identity and vulnerability as a Bosnian child refugee (Fig. 8).³⁴ However, as the series progresses, the photos reveal a quiet strength. As Almerisa grows taller, her identity as a Dutch citizen becomes more grounded when her feet can literally touch the ground. The transition from wearing traditional dresses to fashionable vests and jeans and her increasingly relaxed posture reflect her growing confidence and successful integration into society (Fig. 9).³⁵ Finally, as a woman, Almerisa's dyed fringes and forward-leaning posture signify her certainty as a Western European and a new mother (Fig. 10).³⁶

Additional details within the portraits further

support this perspective. Almerisa herself draws a comparison between her life in the Netherlands and the chair featured in each photo. The series begins with her seated on a flimsy plastic chair (Fig. 8), but as the photos progress, the chairs gradually become sturdier and more elaborate (Fig. 9 & Fig. 10), a testimony to her increasing stability and gradual integration into Dutch society.³⁷ Despite the thematic similarities between *Seven Easy Pieces* and *Almerisa Series*, the two artworks diverge in their approach to conveying their respective messages. While *Seven Easy Pieces* juxtaposes Abramović's immediate suffering and endurance through continuous, durational performance, *Almerisa Series* employs discreet photography to capture specific moments over a span of fourteen years, emphasizing their inherent presence.³⁸

Abramović's spine-tingling performance in *Seven Easy Pieces* and the brooding psychological intensity of *Almerisa Series* are both emotionally evocative. Dijkstra's compositions in *Almerisa Series* adhere to a consistent and abstracted format, intentionally omitting extraneous details to emphasize the evocative power of Almerisa's facial and bodily expressions.³⁹ Set against the backdrop of war-induced displacement and the complexities of belonging, the gradual physiological and cultural changes in Almerisa's appearance not only elicit momentary empathy but also encourage viewers to project their own thoughts and emotions onto her visual transformation. Both *Seven Easy Pieces* and *Almerisa Series* create powerful affective experiences for their audience. While *Seven Easy Pieces* immerses viewers in the visceral dynamism of Abramović's durational performance, Almerisa's stillness in the photographs captures a past moment that lies on the edge of activity, allowing for reflection before or after a

30 Santone, 148; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 48.

31 Santone, 148; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 39.

32 Santone, 148; Abramović, Thompson, and Weslien, 29.

33 Rineke Dijkstra, "Interview," *Portrait Magazine*, October 11, 2013, <https://www.portrait.gov.au/magazines/45/interview>.

34 Richard B. Woodward, "The Awkward Years," *Wall Street Journal*, July 10, 2012, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304708604577502893950126440>.

35 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

36 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

37 Dijkstra, "Interview."

38 Gordon Coonfield, "'Marina Abramović Made Me Cry': Performance and Presence Work in the Affective Economy," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (2019): 306.

39 Sally Stein, "Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective," *Aperture*, no. 209 (2012): 16–17.

significant event takes place.⁴⁰

Almerisa Series serves as a poignant example of the inseparable relationship between duration and effect, evident in its compositional technique, creation process, and viewer interaction. As time functions integrally in *Seven Easy Pieces* due to the prolonged durations of the performances, Rineke Dijkstra's unusually long exposure times produce portraits of remarkable details. In both works, time is laden with symbolism.⁴¹ *Almerisa Series* also highlights how the perception of time is influenced by emotional affect. Living in the asylum, Almerisa found it challenging to gauge the passage of time between Dijkstra's annual visits due to the repetitive and monotonous nature of her life⁴² while the annual photo sessions felt remarkably brief for Almerisa as she eagerly anticipated them.⁴³ These dynamics observed in *Almerisa Series* find resonance in the reception of individual performances within *Seven Easy Pieces*, as exemplified in the tension between ennui and and captivation in *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, *Seedbed*, and *Lips of Thomas*.⁴⁴

As Almerisa gazes directly into the camera lens, her eyes evoke the intensity of a Vermeer portrait, drawing forth a reciprocal gaze from the portraitist and, by extension, from the present viewer. When the viewers immerse themselves in these portraits, Almerisa's frozen past encounters the viewer's ever-flowing internal clock, causing a deceleration of intuitive perception.⁴⁵ As the viewer's eyes traverse the collection of photographs, they assimilate the transformations that span Almerisa's fourteen years, compressing time into a precipitated narrative of her integration and coming-of-age. In *Seven Easy Pieces*, both Marina Abramović's durational performance and the audience's affective response occur

almost instantaneously, placing them in a shared temporal predicament with the artist. In contrast, the time gap between Dijkstra taking the photos and their public presentation channels the viewers' cognitive perception of their emotions into solitary contemplating as they project subjective thoughts and memories onto Almerisa's static countenance.

The concept of repetition is evident in various dimensions in *Almerisa Series* through the documentation of time. By capturing portraits of Almerisa over a span of fourteen years, the series reconstructs her coming-of-age narrative and visually emphasizes the significant milestones of her journey.⁴⁶ From a young girl to a mother holding her own child, the imagery in *Almerisa Series* reflects the cyclical nature of life.⁴⁷ In contrast to *Seven Easy Pieces*, which repeats and documents performances for future reenactments, *Almerisa Series* parallels the notion of repetition by tracing Almerisa's growth, while also elevating her individual story to a broader proposition.⁴⁸ The consistent composition of the photographs also highlights the recurring pattern of relational aesthetics formed through Dijkstra's annual visits to Almerisa's asylum center, adding a social dimension to the theme of repetition explored in *Seven Easy Pieces*.⁴⁹

Time in *Almerisa Series* therefore serves not only a supporting role for changes to be documented, but is also integral to art making as a ready-made. While the portraiture genre may seem staged, the temporal qualities of the subject exist independently, as the artist has only partial control. Almerisa's physiological and cultural changes are expressed through her own facial and bodily expressions, making them pre-existing material. In contrast to Abramović's incorporation of spontaneous

40 "Almerisa, Asylum Seekers' Center, Leiden, The Netherlands, March 14, 1994," *Institute of Contemporary Art Boston*, February, 2012, <https://www.icaboston.org/art/rineke-dijkstra/almerisa-asylum-seekers-center-leiden-netherlands-march-14-1994/>.

41 "Almerisa, Asylum Seekers' Center."

42 Dijkstra, "Interview."

43 Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

44 Smith, "Turning Back the Clock."

45 Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 188, 189.

46 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

47 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

48 Cesare and Joy, "Performa/(Re)Performa," 172.

49 Dijkstra, "Interview."

audience responses in *Seven Easy Pieces*, *Almerisa Series* preserves Almerisa's appearance and emotions as a ready-made entity. Dijkstra, the photographer, remarked that she prefers not to give much directions, allowing Almerisa to pose freely during photo taking.⁵⁰ This approach captures the transitory nature of the subject and highlights the passage of time within the series.

Notably, despite its repetitive composition, *Almerisa Series* tackles the concept of time as ready-made by acknowledging the impossibility of true repetition. Through annual photographs, Dijkstra captures Almerisa's evolving physiognomy and psychology, demonstrating that each visit brings about distinct transformations.⁵¹ While the series visually depicts Almerisa's growth, it offers only a glimpse of her multifaceted identity, lacking the contextual nuances that shape her complete coming-of-age journey.⁵² *Almerisa Series* materializes the perpetual flow of time, where subtle changes accumulate as temporal progress unfolds, enabling a retracing of paths with slight variations. In contrast to *Seven Easy Pieces*, which explores the impossibility of repetition by highlighting contextual and emotional distinctions from the original performances, *Almerisa Series* visually portrays the apparent differences in Almerisa's yearly portraits, drawing attention to the changes in the surrounding circumstances with the passage of time.⁵³

While *Almerisa Series* and *Seven Easy Pieces* both tackle tensions of identity, they differ in their approaches to representation, context, narrative mode, and compositional focus. *Seven Easy Pieces* explores fluid artistic identity through performance art, while *Almerisa Series* highlights an individual's personal journey amidst displacement.⁵⁴ Unlike *Seven Easy Pieces*, which probes questions of authorship and performance art as a collective, *Almerisa Series* intimately captures Almerisa's

individual development and identity exploration, delving into cultural adaptation and addressing the social contentions of displacement unaddressed by *Seven Easy Pieces*.⁵⁵ In depicting Almerisa's evolving identity, the narrative arc in *Almerisa Series* reflects the growth and transformation of its protagonist, which contrasts with the non-linear reenactments in *Seven Easy Pieces*.⁵⁶

Despite the differences in their appearances, techniques, and contexts, *Seven Easy Pieces* and *Almerisa Series* have both galvanized the subjective dimensions of duration in articulating affective narratives of vulnerability and resilience. Their engagement with the concept of documentation and time as a readymade have exemplified the inextricable relationship between affect and subjective temporality, and the malleability of time as a social construct. In evoking the notion of repetition and articulating its inherent impossibility, the two pieces embody the fluidity of identity in relaying narratives of artistic homage, and cultural displacement and integration in the human condition. Although the two pieces remain distinct in their expressions of human strength and suffering, *Seven Easy Pieces* and *Almerisa Series* encapsulate the universality of identity evolution *vis-à-vis* the self and the other, and as such, resonate in the civic imagination.

50 Rineke Dijkstra, "Rineke Dijkstra. Almerisa, Asylum Center, Leiden, The Netherlands. March 14, 1994: MOMA," *The Museum of Modern Art, Horace W. Goldsmith Fund*, 2012.

51 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

52 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

53 Woodward, "The Awkward Years."

54 Ariella Budick, "Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective, Guggenheim, New York," *Financial Times*, September 9, 2012, <https://www.ft.com/content/82cb2ce4-f388-11e1-9c6c-00144feabdc0>.

55 Budick, "Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective."

56 Budick, "Rineke Dijkstra: A Retrospective."

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