



RUN IT BY ME

# CREATIVE EXERCISE

Endurance-artist Guido van der Werve matches marathons he ran with works of art.

→ In 2012, Dutch filmmaker and visual artist Guido van der Werve completed a triathlon of his own design: a 17-mile swim, 870-mile bike ride, and 186-mile run over 16 days from Paris to Warsaw, where he visited the site where composer Frédéric Chopin's heart is buried. He then created a film about his trek. In another performance piece, he gave a lecture at a museum in Queens, New York, and then ran 27 miles to put flowers on the grave of composer Sergei Rachmaninoff. Van der Werve, 39, has finished all six World Major Marathons, and has a PR of 2:57. "I run to quiet the mind," he says. "Running helps to understand what's important and what isn't." Here, he selects pieces of art that capture the spirit of his race experiences. —NOAH DAVIS



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## 1/ THE RACE 2013 BOSTON (3:05)

**THE ART** Walter De Maria's *The Lightning Field*

"It was a beautiful day. Then the bombs went off. *The Lightning Field* is a land-art piece: A group of metal rods stand in a landscape. There is a cabin nearby. During a thunderstorm, lightning strikes the rods. It's beautiful. But if you're in the cabin when the lightning hits, it must be very frightening."

## 2/ THE RACE 2013 BERLIN (2:57)

**THE ART** Sir John Everett Millais's *Ophelia*

"Running a great marathon is finding the maximum amount of suffering you can handle. It's a victory over suffering. *Ophelia* is a beautiful painting. There's the beauty of the girl, but there's suffering because she looks dead. In the race and in *Ophelia*, there is a harmony between beauty and suffering."

## 3/ THE RACE 2013 NYC (3:02)

**THE ART** Willem de Kooning's *Gotham News*

"I lived in New York for two years and never figured it out. Running in the boroughs only added to that confusion. The weather was cold. The crowds were loud. I identify with de Kooning, a fellow Dutchman in New York, who tried to capture all the chaos—the intensity, the color, the liveliness—of the city."

## 4/ THE RACE 2014 CHICAGO (3:14)

**THE ART** Piero Manzoni's *Artist's S---*

"I picked up a stomach flu on the way to Chicago. The day before, I wasn't sure if I could run. I ran the first half in one and a half hours, but I really needed to go to the toilet. I spent five minutes on the porta-potty before I was able to continue and finish. That makes this work fitting for my experience."

## 5/ THE RACE 2014 TOKYO (2:58)

**THE ART** Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void*

"I had never been to Japan before, and the whole experience was a bit like a dream. In the best case, running gets you to a zen state. It was one of those experiences where you have to jump and everything will be great. *Leap into the Void* shows a man soaring in a zen-influenced, nirvana-like state."

## 6/ THE RACE 2015 LONDON (3:08)

**THE ART** Henri Matisse's *Portrait of Madame Matisse*

"I got injured, so I couldn't train the last month before the race. On race day, it was raining and cold. The crowds were really loud and wild, which bothered me. Matisse's work is a very loud painting. It's beautiful, but so much color is confusing and the expression of the woman is unsettling to me."