

# The Museum of Modern Art

## MoMA ANNOUNCES THE 2023 PROGRAM FOR THE MARIE-JOSÉE AND HENRY KRAVIS STUDIO, WITH A FOCUS ON SOUND AND AUDITORY ART FORMS

### Presentations in 2023 Include a Just Above Midtown Performance Festival, a Studio Residency with Pamela Z, and Works by Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Suzanne Ciani, Sarah Davachi, and Alexandre Estrela

**NEW YORK, October 17, 2022**—The Museum of Modern Art announces a year of programs slated for 2023 in the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio, a state-of-the-art space in the heart of the Museum dedicated to MoMA's ongoing presentation of live and experimental works. The lineup, which will focus on multimedia work and live performances by artists exploring sound, features the **Just Above Midtown Performance Festival**, February 2–19, 2023; **Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled and Other Monologues**, April 8–June 11, 2023; **Studio Residency: Pamela Z**, July 8–August 13, 2023; **Studio Sound: Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi**, September 7–17, 2023; and **Alexandre Estrela: Flat Bells**, November 4, 2023–January 7, 2024.

“From revisiting resonant performances from the heyday of Just Above Midtown—Linda Goode Bryant’s gallery where Black art flourished during the 1970s and ’80s—to highlighting artists exploring the sonic possibilities of spaces, objects, and images, the 2023 Kravis Studio program brings a rich, intergenerational mix of iconic and emerging artists to MoMA to explore the power of sound,” said Stuart Comer, The Lonti Ebers Chief Curator of Media and Performance.

More details follow below; performance schedules to be announced.

#### **Just Above Midtown Performance Festival**

February 2–19, 2023

In conjunction with the exhibition [Just Above Midtown: Changing Spaces](#), in MoMA’s third-floor galleries, the JAM Performance Festival continues the path-making gallery’s commitment to live art with new works by artists who performed at the downtown Manhattan gallery during the 1980s.

Throughout the final weeks of the exhibition, three new projects in the Kravis Studio exemplify JAM’s spirit of improvisation, collaboration, and experimentation. Artist, vocalist, and dramatist Alva Rogers presents *Topsy-Turvy*; Vernon Reid, Greg Tate’s *Burnt Sugar*, the Arkestra Chamber, and special guests come together for *Lawrence D. “Butch” Morris Conduction*®, capturing the late cornetist and composer’s signature approach to structured improvisation; and Senga Nengudi Fittz and Kaylynn Sullivan TwoTrees, who have worked together for over 40 years, premiere their latest collaboration, *Tying & Un-Tying*.

*Organized by Thomas (T.) Jean Lax, Curator, with Lilia Rocio Taboada, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance, in collaboration with Linda Goode Bryant and*

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*Marielle Ingram. With thanks to Amber Edmond, Curatorial Fellow. Performances produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Producer, and Kate Scherer, Manager and Producer, with Aminah Ibrahim and Kayva Yang, Assistant Performance Coordinators, Performance and Live Programs.*

**Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Walled Unwalled and Other Monologues**

April 8–June 11, 2023

MoMA presents the work of Lawrence Abu Hamdan, an artist-investigator who practices “forensic listening.” In his video and audio installations and live performances, Abu-Hamdan documents and analyzes sound recordings to explore the intersection of sound and politics. For this exhibition and program of performances, Abu Hamdan’s 2018 installation *Walled/Unwalled* will be adapted for the Kravis Studio; the work, itself a solo performance for camera, will be presented alongside a series of monologues performed by the artist.

*Walled Unwalled*, which became part of MoMA’s collection in 2019, consists of narratives derived from legal cases that have hinged on evidence perceived through walls or doors. Recorded at an East Berlin sound studio once used by state radio to broadcast propaganda throughout the Eastern Bloc and over the Berlin Wall, this work contemplates “ear-witnessing” as a form of acoustic testimony and considers how the physical act of listening can both exonerate and incriminate. Regarding today’s surveillance culture, Abu Hamdan writes, “We’re all wall, and no wall at all.” Walls are erected to declare political boundaries and protect private spaces, yet are easily permeated by invisible sound waves, radio waves, and muon particles. This exhibition is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Signals: How Video Transformed the World*.

*Organized by Ana Janevski, Curator of Media and Performance and Erica Papernik-Shimizu, Associate Curator of Media and Performance with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance. Performances produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Producer, and Kate Scherer, Manager and Producer, with Olivia Rousey, Assistant Performance Coordinator, Performance and Live Programs.*

**Studio Residency: Pamela Z**

July 8–August 13, 2023

Composer-performer Pamela Z has been selected as this year’s artist for MoMA’s annual Studio Residency program. Offering space and resources for experimentation, collaboration, and incubation of new projects, this residency provides artists the ability to research and evolve their work, while offering audiences an opportunity to encounter artworks in development.

Pamela Z is a pioneer of live sonic and visual looping techniques. In her solo work, she performs with custom electronic instruments, using sensors that allow her to manipulate sound through her physical gestures, combining experimental, extended vocal techniques, operatic bel canto, spoken word, and sonic samples. At MoMA, Pamela Z will continue to develop her recent intermedia song cycle *Simultaneous*. Comprised of several short pieces exploring the concept of simultaneity, the work will incorporate voice, gesture control, real-time electronic processing, language, and immersive video projections that are partially reactive to sound and motion. The residency will culminate in a performance premiere of *Simultaneous*, a glimpse into an in-progress version of the work adapted for an installation format, and a public conversation with the artist.

*Organized by Martha Joseph, The Phyllis Ann and Walter Borten Assistant Curator of Media and Performance, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance. Performances produced by Kate Scherer, Manager and Producer, with Aminah Ibrahim, Assistant Performance Coordinator, Performance and Live Programs.*

**Studio Sound: Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi**

September 7–17, 2023

Studio Sound is a performance series that champions artists and musicians whose work engages new possibilities for sound and music. Exploring auditory art forms through both live and recorded performance, the program suggests an expanded history of art in which sound plays a more central role. The inaugural presentation of Studio Sound brings together Suzanne Ciani and Sarah Davachi—two ambient musicians of different generations working with innovative music technologies.

Often referred to as the “Diva of the Diode,” Suzanne Ciani is a pioneer of electronic music, and is known for her revelatory creations on a modular synthesizer called the Buchla, which revolutionized sonic experimentation when it was developed in 1964. Over her decades-long career, Ciani has used the Buchla to compose New Age electronic music and innovative commercial sound design. In the Kravis Studio, Ciani will perform *Improvisation on Four Sequences* on the Buchla 200e. Presented in quadraphonic sound, her work incorporates a spatial sound experience into her musical composition.

Sarah Davachi is a Canadian experimental composer and performer who creates immersive, layered drones using a wide range of acoustic and electronic instrumentation, including organs, strings, brass, and synthesizers. Continuing a lineage of minimalist composers such as Éliane Radigue, Tony Conrad, and La Monte Young, her works expand the human perception of sound through subtle variations of considered harmonic structures, exploring overtone complexity, intonation, and natural resonance. At MoMA, Davachi will present evening performances of new electroacoustic works that challenge listeners’ temporal experience of sound, including *Long Gradus*, a long-form composition for chamber ensemble. She will also premiere a new durational solo electronic work as a live, daytime installation.

*Organized by Martha Joseph, The Phyllis Ann and Walter Borten Assistant Curator of Media and Performance, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance. Performances produced by Kate Scherer, Manager and Producer, Performance and Live Programs.*

**Alexandre Estrela: Flat Bells**

November 4, 2023–January 7, 2024

With his first New York exhibition, *Flat Bells*, Portuguese artist Alexandre Estrela brings shimmering video animations and an immersive soundscape to the Kravis Studio. Informed by his background in painting, Estrela’s moving-image projects often explore the interplay between materials and perception, updating Conceptual art’s exploration of the relationship between idea and object for the digital age.

Drawing on elements of geometric abstraction, graphic design, and experimental music, *Flat Bells* orchestrates sonic tempo and visual rhythm across multiple screens to examine how visual culture is experienced and marked by technological obsolescence. This study of

spectatorship embraces the performative context of the Studio to stage another type of duet: that between man and machine. From neural networks to computer mainframes, synesthesia to earworms, Estrela calls attention to the systems that govern the life of the mind.

*Organized by Sophie Cavoulacos, Associate Curator, Department of Film, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance.*

### **THE MARIE-JOSÉE AND HENRY KRAVIS STUDIO**

Opened in October 2019 as part of MoMA's major expansion project, the Kravis Studio is a live space dedicated to performance, music, sound, spoken word, and expanded approaches to the moving image. Since MoMA's founding, the Museum has shown a commitment to dance and the performing arts through its collection and exhibition programming. It has been a bold innovator in positioning live art within broader narratives of art history. Situated at the heart of the Museum, within the collection gallery circuit on the fourth floor, the Kravis Studio is the world's first dedicated space for performance, process, and time-based art to be centrally integrated within the galleries of a major international collection.

Striving to create an open, accessible, and generous experience, the Kravis Studio includes a double-height glass wall with a view of 53rd Street, an overlook from the fifth-floor collection galleries, and an entrance on the fourth floor that can be exposed to the adjacent galleries or sealed to control light and sound. The space is designed to support the technical needs of performance with state-of-the-art facilities and carefully considered acoustics. The scale of the space provides an intimate and focused experience with the work. With a capacity to accommodate multiple configurations, the Kravis Studio is activated throughout the year by a range of performances, programs, and installations through commissions, festivals, residencies, rehearsals, and workshops.

### **SPONSORSHIP:**



The Kravis Studio programs are presented as part of The Hyundai Card Performance Series.

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