

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA PRESENTS ALEXANDRE ESTRELA: FLAT BELLS, OPENING IN THE KRAVIS STUDIO ON NOVEMBER 4

***Flat Bells*, Estrela's First Exhibition in New York, Comprises Metal Screens, Video Animations, and Immersive Soundscapes Generated by Algorithms**

NEW YORK, September 28, 2023—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Alexandre Estrela: Flat Bells***, on view in The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio from November 4, 2023, through January 7, 2024. In the room-sized work conceived for the Studio, floating metal plates, shimmering video animations, and an immersive soundscape fill the space, dictated by the ever-changing rhythm of an algorithmic system designed by the artist. *Flat Bells* is Alexandre Estrela's (Portuguese, b. 1971) first exhibition in New York. Drawing on a long history of self-generating artworks, from automated computer graphics to kinetic sculpture, Estrela's immersive multimedia environment considers forms of artificial life and timely questions of machinic agency and human perception. *Alexandre Estrela: Flat Bells* is organized by Sophie Cavoulacos, Associate Curator, Department of Film, with May Makki, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance.

"Alexandre Estrela is an adventurous and polymathic mind whose deeply considered approach has been key in conceptualizing the Studio's commitment to expanded film and media practices," said Cavoulacos. "This ambitious project digs deep into rich histories of avant-garde cinema, concrete music, and cybernetics while feeling undeniably contemporary, finding new insights from our technologically mediated visual culture."

To create this new major work, Estrela took inspiration from a set of 1980s-era printing plates with geometric patterns that the artist came across in an abandoned Lisbon press. Once used to create graphic logos for now-forgotten companies, these pocket-sized metal objects evoked for Estrela "the waning legacy of modernism," functioning as accidental works of geometric abstraction and markers of technical obsolescence from early moments in the digital age.

Estrela based the installation's animated projections on these patterns, adapting them to four engraved screens, which will be suspended from the Studio's ceiling. Collectively, they emit a series of sounds which the artist created by "playing" each plate as if it were a percussive instrument, such as a gong or a bell. The dual function of the work's metal screens—at once projection surface and acoustic tool—builds on the artist's longstanding experimentation with materials and perception.

The installation also includes a centerpiece projection covering the Studio's 53rd Street window, evoking the cityscape beyond. With cyclic zooms and color shifts, Estrela's artificial skyline hosts a procession of moving dark forms seemingly derived from the smaller screens, recalling the shadow play of pre-cinematic phantasmagoria and early experiments in filmic abstraction.

While *Flat Bells* is algorithmically generated, Estrela is interested in how its actions can echo animal behavior. Whether collaborating or competing, the work's components respond to each other, creating an intelligent and ever-changing rhythmic dialogue. Experienced today, these self-moving images propose a new model to reflect on the relationship between human and machine.

SPONSORSHIP:



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