THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO PRESENT MAJOR NEW COMMISSION BY HOLLY HERNDON AND MAT DRYHURST

NEW YORK, October 8, 2026 — The Museum of Modern Art will present ***Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst: Candlelight***, a newly commissioned audio, visual, and performance-based work by renowned artists and musicians Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst, marking the duo's first solo presentation in New York. The commission will be staged jointly in the Museum's Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Studio (March 27–June 13, 2027) and on the Hyundai Card Digital Wall (March 27–September 6, 2027), marking the first time MoMA has presented an exhibition across both spaces simultaneously. In the Kravis Studio, Herndon and Dryhurst will create an immersive audio environment for musician-led live choral performances, which will be open to audience participation. The artists will use the collective sound from these events to train AI models and, in turn, generate a new audiovisual work-in-process that will be displayed concurrently on the Hyundai Card Digital Wall. *Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst: Candlelight* is organized by Michelle Kuo, Chief Curator at Large and Publisher, with Helena Klevorn, Curatorial Assistant, Department of the Chief Curator at Large, and Ho Won Kim, Hyundai Card Exchange Visitor. The performances are produced by Kate Scherer, Senior Manager and Producer, with Olivia Rousey, Manager, Performance and Live Art.

Together, the two installations will turn the Museum into a laboratory for exploring the future of performance, technology, and human experience and the ways music, art, and machines can inspire collective emotion. Presenting new models for machine learning and human feeling, the exhibition will suggest how we might find ways to live with AI.

Herndon and Dryhurst train their AI models in public: Their spaces record the people who perform inside them and hold a memory of everything that happens there. New to this work is a focus on open-endedness, a branch of AI research built on the idea that the most important discoveries cannot be planned in advance and that rewards exploration over fixed goals. Through participatory singing, the artists draw parallels between older musical forms and the call-and-response training of AI models and AI agents. They have also incorporated their own subjective associations—the sounds, images, and feelings to which they are drawn—to better understand their own minds and network them with others. In open-ended experiments with AI models, they investigate how human knowledge and AI might grow together, each pushing the other into new territory. The artists ask: Do machines not only learn, but feel? How has AI begun to shape not just our thoughts, but our deepest and most personal emotions and memories? How might humans shape this new world, in turn?

"Holly Herndon and Mat Dryhurst explore the artistic possibilities—and confront the systemic risks—of artificial intelligence. They continually develop innovative ways of working with and through new technologies to connect audiences to unprecedented ideas,

forms, and experiences," said Kuo. "This commission will push their practice into a new dimension, allowing MoMA to serve as a platform for two of the most forward-thinking artists of our time."

"We see AI as a monumental, collective project and coordination technology, part of a lineage that includes group singing, where people contribute to something greater than themselves," said Herndon and Dryhurst. "We still don't know exactly what intelligence is; we don't know what we are, where we end and other things or beings begin; or where any of this leads. We feel our way down dark corridors, one step at a time, by candlelight. Open-endedness asks us to embrace that uncertainty—and still probe ahead."

Candlelight follows the commission *Play from Memory* for MoMA's online exhibition *Sound Machines* (2024). For that work, the artists created a series of machine-generated works informed by Gunild Keetman and Carl Orff's *Schulwerk*, a set of music-education methods and "imitation games" for children developed in the 1920s. Herndon and Dryhurst created 16 new machine-learning models that produce fantastical orchestral and choral sounds and imagery of imaginary instruments, performances, and lessons.

ARTISTS BIOS:

Holly Herndon (American, b. 1980) and Mat Dryhurst (British, b. 1984) have emerged as leading voices at the intersection of art, sound, technology, and governance. Their collaborative practice spans a range of mediums, from AI-generated performances and installations to the development of new technological systems and policy. Herndon is also a celebrated musician, having toured globally and released three full-length albums to date. She holds a PhD in computer music from Stanford University. Dryhurst is currently a senior fellow at the University of Oxford's Institute for Ethics in AI.

The artists have presented acclaimed joint exhibitions at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2026), Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2026), Berggruen Arts & Culture/Palazzo Diedo, Venice (2026), and Serpentine Gallery, London (2024). In addition to their artistic output, Herndon and Dryhurst cofounded Spawning, an organization dedicated to building ethical AI tools. In 2024, they published *All Media Is Training Data*, a retrospective of their career and a position statement on the future of AI and art. They were awarded the 2022 S+T+ARTS Grand Prize of the European Commission honoring innovation in technology, industry, and society stimulated by the arts, Austria's first Digital Human Rights Award in 2024, and the Kairos Prize in 2025. They are based in Berlin, Germany.

SPONSORSHIP:

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