# RedSkyFalls
# Alexandre Estrela
# 09.05—22.11.2026

ORGANISATION AND COMMISSIONER

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA | CULTURA, JUVENTUDE E DESPORTO

dg'ARTES DIREÇÃO-GERAL DAS ARTES

CURATED BY ANA BALIZA RICARDO NICOLAU

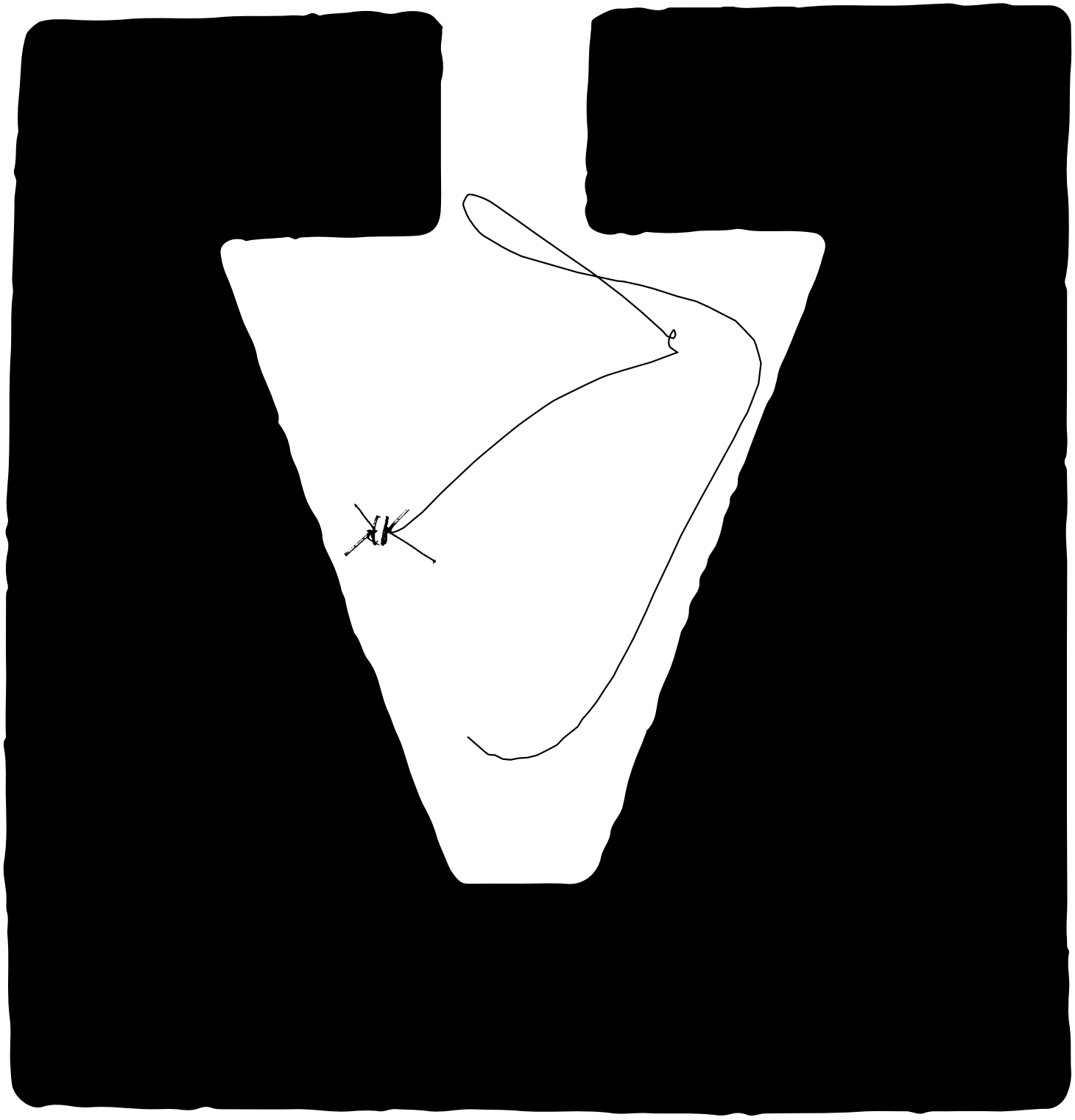
PORTUGAL PAVILION

FONDACO MARCELLO CALLE DEL TRAGHETTO 3415 VENICE

La Biennale di Venezia

61. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali



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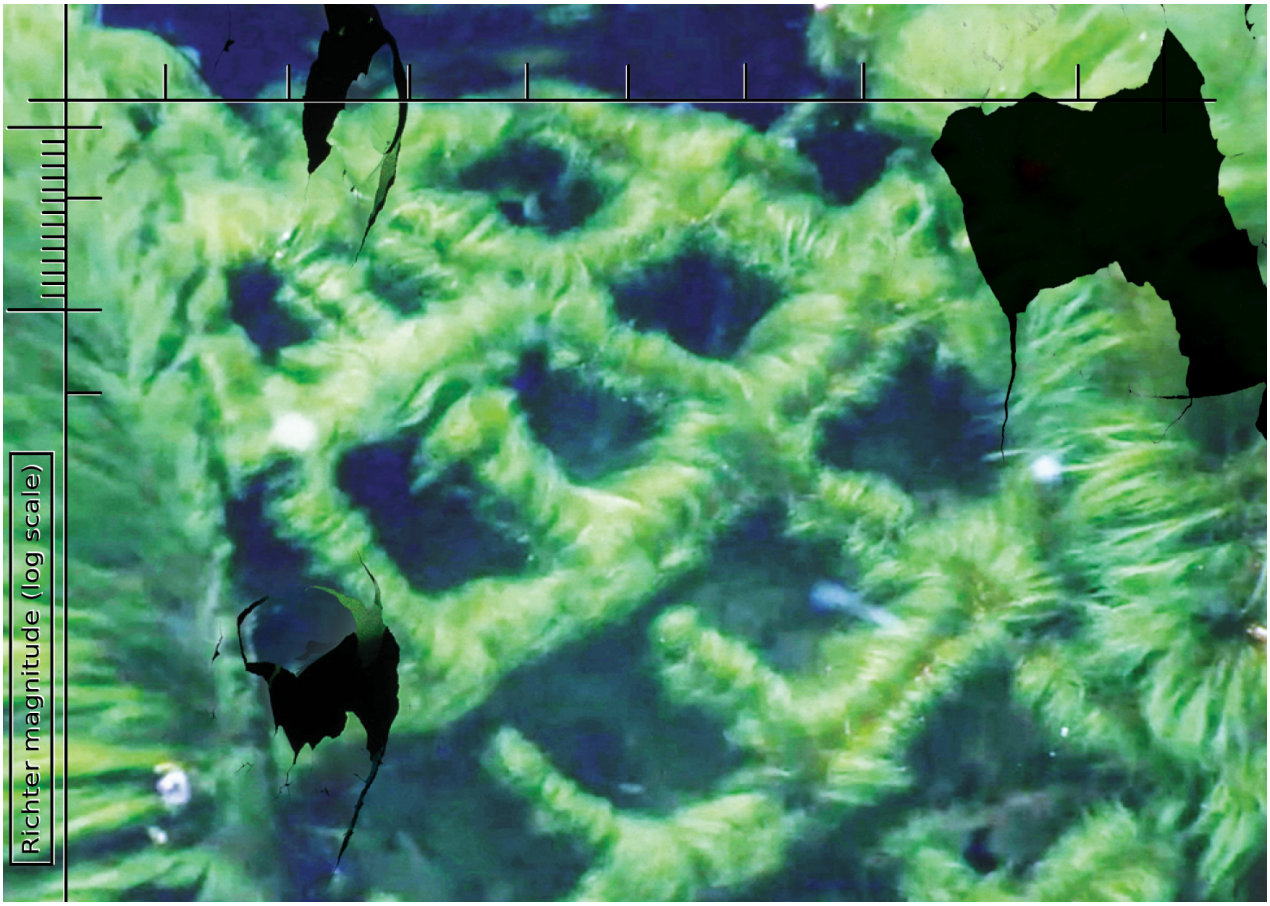
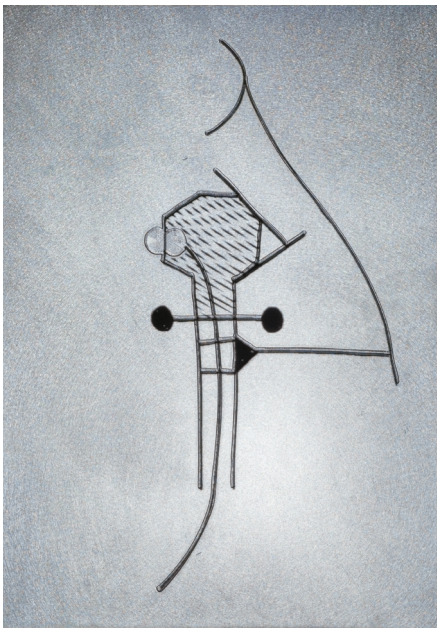
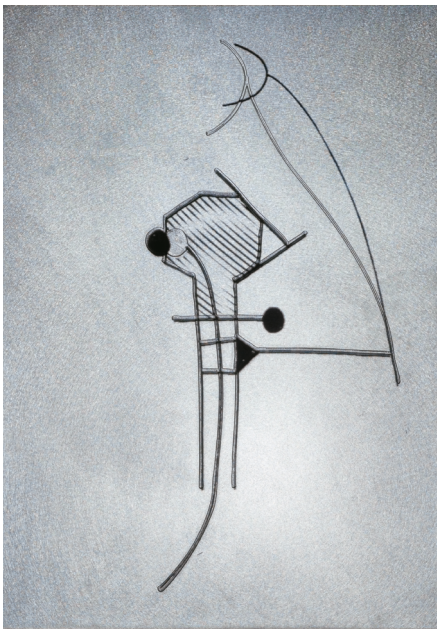
RedSkyFalls by Alexandre Estrela will represent Portugal at the 61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Curated by Ana Baliza and Ricardo Nicolau, it will be held from May 9 to November 22, 2026.

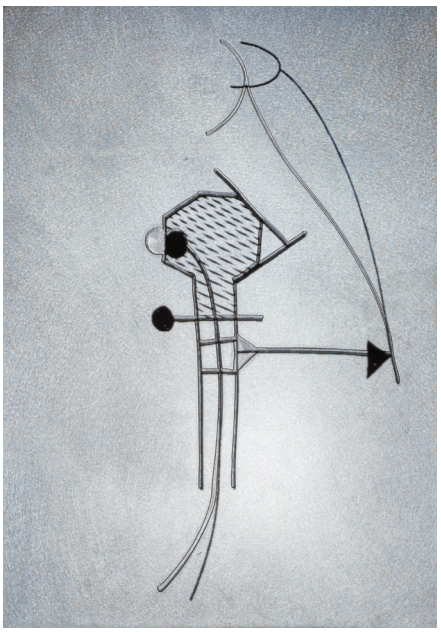
The artist presents a new installation that expands the logic of a homonymous 2019 work, now working as an operating system for new digital beings. The project was selected for the Biennale Arte 2026, structured “In Minor Keys,” as it resonates with the piece’s quieter registers.




Paper screen torn by the sonic vibration of a loudspeaker, 2026
(promotional image for RedSkyFalls, Alexandre Estrela, 2019–2025)







When the red sky falls, paradigms shift between divine providence, science as credo, data as oracle, and new obscurantist myths. Seismographs register these sideways movements, as humanity inscribes environmental and social fracture lines into the Earth's crust. Tectonic manifestations open fissures, not only in the ground but also in thought.

RedSkyFalls proposes a way of experiencing these ruptures by observing a system that responds in real time to events of geophysical scale, both near and distant.

This attention to ruptures is inscribed in a genealogy of pre-digital seismic perception. In zones of tectonic instability, nature becomes a warning system. Frogs abandoning ponds, snakes and worms leaving their holes, bees swarming, and the sudden silence of cicadas are natural anomalies that have become the basis for seismic interpretation. During the Cold War, under nuclear threat, animal and human sensory networks were mobilized as bio-sentinels for seismological monitoring. Too permeable to the interpretation of phenomena as the exception, such a line of research lost momentum in the mid-1990s. The holistic view of earthquakes as a set of geophysical, socio-environmental, and sensory phenomena thus faded. RedSkyFalls recovers this sensitivity, shifting the point of view to an artificial ecosystem.

In RedSkyFalls, the landscape of a computer screensaver serves as a habitat for aquatic plants and small luminous organisms, the RÉPLICAS, nestled inside the grooves of aluminium plates.

Built from a calibrated mix of animal parts drawn from a dark cauldron, each RÉPLICA borrows its vital pulse from the beat of a heart in a fly's leg, the wave of a fish larva's tail, and the quiver of a rat's whisker. This patchwork of movement engraves onto the metal plate a linear fossil that inherits an animal, perhaps digital, intuition. Along this path, light generates figures that continuously fulfil a hollow-graphic fate. Just as catfish thrash their tails in Japan on the threshold of an earthquake, the RÉPLICAS seem to foresee or even induce tremors, so that cause and effect begin to slip.

Under close observation, we can recognize in the behaviour of these artificial sentinels the infra-signals of underground disturbances that every so often erupt in this ecosystem, just as on Earth, in the form of a green piercing call that forces everything into synchronicity.

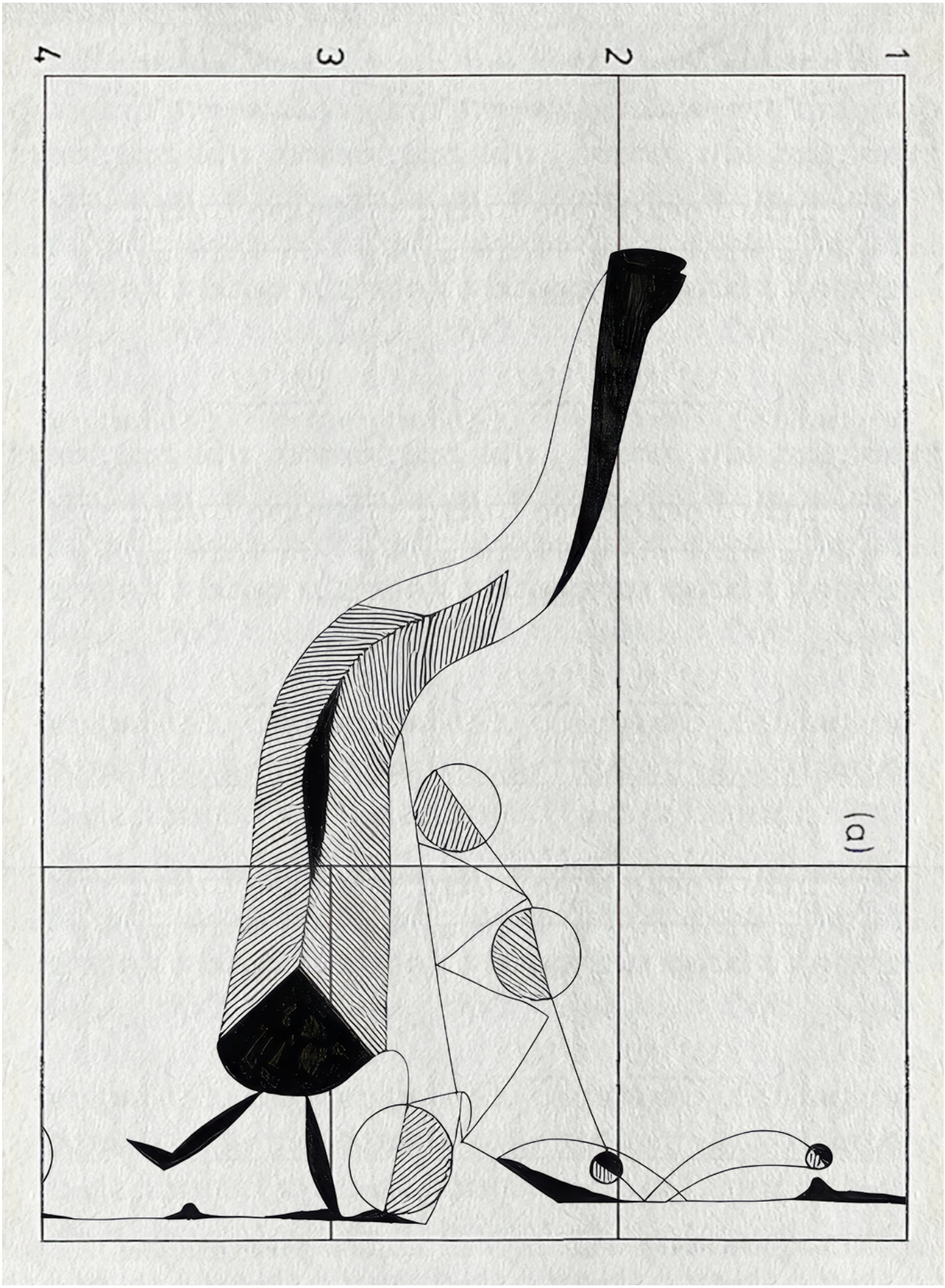
Alexandre Estrela, RÉPLICA, 2025. RedSkyFalls installation (detail), computer-generated projection on an engraved aluminum plate, mono sound, 50 × 35.4 cm, infinite loop. Photo: Hugo Botelho Rodrigues.
© Alexandre Estrela. Courtesy of the artist.

Through the study of fur, fin, and heart responses to seismic changes, RedSkyFalls rehearses a science of particulars. Perceptual recalibration makes attention shift away from a grand narrative to the observation of a quiet game of life played by beings — both natural and artificial — that survive extreme conditions through the laws of interdependence and cooperation.

RedSkyFalls expands into highly seismic geographies, where the piece responds to tectonic events with greater synchrony. As in Venice, these extensions react to seismic activity in San Francisco (The Wattis Institute), Lima (MALI), Los Angeles (REDCAT), and Lisbon (Galeria Zé dos Bois), still waiting for the Big One since 1755.

During its seven-month exhibition in Venice, the installation is expanded by the programme SURVEY ON AN S WAVE, organized by Marco Bene. A series of events — talks, concerts, happenings, screenings — proposes a reverberating reading of the piece. In his performative visits, Bene brings with him a Portable Seismic Archive, which temporarily introduces other works and artists into the exhibition, opening and bridging gaps in RedSkyFalls.

Across all its forms, RedSkyFalls proposes a poetic method of survival through the construction of a synchronized relational infrastructure.




Alexandre Estrela, CARTOONS FOR TV [Morto em Veneza], 2026. Courtesy of the artist.

OFFICIAL PORTUGUESE REPRESENTATION

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Margarida Balseiro Lopes

At a time when the world seems to be living in a permanent state of urgency – between overlapping crises, technological accelerations, and political and environmental unrest – the International Art Exhibition reminds us that there is another way of being. A more attentive, more sensitive, more human way. A space where artistic practices are not limited to illustrating reality: they traverse it, disrupt it, and make visible what so often remains hidden. Under the title IN MINOR KEYS, this edition proposes a deliberate detour: moving away from noise, excess, and immediacy, and tuning the ear to lower, slower, more subtle frequencies.

It is from this territory of resonance and attention that Portugal presents itself in Venice. Not with a manifesto, but with an experience. RedSkyFalls, an installation conceived by Alexandre Estrela, curated by Ana Baliza and Ricardo Nicolau, proposes an encounter with what is almost invisible: vibrations, micro-variations, instabilities in the ground and the air. Minimal signs that, when added together, reconfigure the way we understand our surroundings.

The installation functions as a sensitive and continuous organism, in constant relation with the world. Seismic data captured in real time alters the exhibition landscape and triggers responses in space: accelerations, ruptures, vibrations, pauses. A room breathing to the rhythm of the planet.

Technology operates here as a mechanism of mediation, a way of making the silent audible, of bringing the body closer to what happens beyond its immediate field. At a time when trust in science and information is weakening and misinformation is intensifying, this work insists on the materiality of the real and the need to learn to read it, without mythification or cynicism, with attention and rigour.

More than a data translation device, this installation is also an exercise in approximation. By synchronising ourselves with often distant geophysical events, RedSkyFalls trains us to perceive the world more patiently, a ‘science of singularities’ made up of clues, small variations and interdependencies, reminding us that what sustains life is not only what imposes itself in the immediate moment but also what persists silently beneath the surface.

By shifting our gaze from the event to the vibration, from the impact to the clue, this work gives us back a crucial idea of time. A time that is neither one of acceleration nor of permanent urgency, but one of attention. For this reason too, this project is particularly relevant to the theme of this Biennial. In minor keys, the territory of restraint and intensity, brings us closer to what is essential.

RedSkyFalls evokes, as myth and memory, the 1755 earthquake. In Venice, a city built on water, vulnerable and resilient, always negotiating with collapse, this moment takes on a particular clarity.

The red sky that ‘fell over the seven hills’ of Lisbon echoes here as a transversal image: an omen of natural disaster, but also a historical signature of the planet’s transformations. Based on this image, the work does not seek to explain the world; rather, it proposes a way of feeling and understanding it. A knowledge that does not seek to dominate chaos but to learn to inhabit it.

A line of continuity is thus drawn between Lisbon and Venice: two cities marked by an intimate relationship with instability and the memory of catastrophes, but also by the capacity for reconstruction and reinvention. This installation invokes this history not as a monument, but as a question. As if each vibration could be read as a warning and as a possibility, not to anticipate the inevitable, but to make us more attentive to the fragile conditions that sustain the present.

Perhaps this is one of the most urgent tasks today: relearning how to distinguish signs. To recognise that what seems distant, minimal or invisible has consequences; and that beneath every grand narrative there is always a vibration that precedes and follows it. It is on this frequency that RedSkyFalls finds us. And it is on this same frequency that Portugal affirms its presence at this International Art Exhibition: not to raise its voice above the world, but to listen with it; tuning in, through minor tones, to possibilities for imagining together.

## SURVEY ON AN S WAVE

Organised by
Marco Bene

Broadcast on RTP/Antena 2 (Portugal)
All the events in this programme respond to the temporal pulse of global seismic activity, being triggered, interrupted, or modulated over the course of their duration.

Fondaco Marcello
Cinema Galleggiante

Venice

May–November 2026
Events run 6–10 pm

SURVEY ON AN S WAVE is a five-part parallel programme conceived by Marco Bene, unfolding over the seven months of RedSkyFalls at Fondaco Marcello. Amid quakes and cracks, the programme presents recurring guided tours with a PORTABLE SEISMIC ARCHIVE, radio-wave propagation and floating events on the Venetian lagoon.

Revisiting the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake's Ministerial Survey — a founding gesture of modern seismology — the programme recasts the questionnaire as a speculative device for entering RedSkyFallsology: an uncertain, anti-utilitarian science attentive to subtle oscillations between image, matter and perception.

At its core, the PORTABLE SEISMIC ARCHIVE forms an exhibition within the exhibition, assembling a mutable constellation of works and artists for an experimental reading of the piece guided by Bene. If Enlightenment inquiry sought stable ground, this programme instead invites thinkers and makers to dwell in instability — imagining a 'lightened' alterity capable of unsettling the bedrock of our habitual sense-making, or, at the very least, shaking the pillars of La Serenissima itself.

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### PART I — OMENS & TREMORS

Vectors of Fate and First Oscillations

Both the unasked and the opening questions of Marquês de Pombal's 1755 Inquiry are revived through and redirected toward RedSkyFalls, attuned to telluric warnings — the strange murmurs that preceded the quake: stillness, red vapours, prophetic chatter, animal agitation — signals suspended between superstition and science.

**10.05.2026**

GIOVANBATTISTA TUSA
Conference / Performance

MIGUEL ABREU
Concert

**11.05.2026**

MARCO BENE
Portable Seismic Archive I
Performance Visit

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PART II ENTROPY & ELEGY
Structures in Ruin and Death

We ask how the images of RedSkyFalls act upon matter, and what persists once the tremor has passed. This chapter considers collapse as a constructive force — where fracture, erosion and instability become conditions of form.

15.06.2026 MARCO BENE
Portable Seismic Archive II
Performance Visit

STANLEY SCHTINTER
Film projection / Performance

PART III WATER & ABYSS
Liquid Phenomena and Depths

We descend into submerged territories where tremor meets tide, where mythical creatures and measurement intersect. Here, seismic force is refracted through liquid matter — currents, pressure, resonance — as instability moves from the earth's crust to the oceanic depths.

09.09.2026 ALEXANDRE ESTRELA
Ruin Marble
Installation and live sound performance by Gabriel Ferrandini
Presented at Cinema Galleggiante
www.cinemagalleggiante.it/en

10.09.2026 LAIA ESTRUCH
Aquatic Sound Performance

GAVIN BRYARS
Concert

14.09.2026 MARCO BENE
Portable Seismic Archive III
Performance Visit

PART IV ECHOES & SILENCE
Aftershocks and Stillness

Through its RÉPLICAS, RedSkyFalls responds to the aftershocks and memories of past earthquakes. This chapter turns to reproducibility, latency and the charged interval between events — the silence in which tremors are recorded, repeated and inscribed into history.

01.11.2026 WALTER BENJAMIN
Radio Stories for Children:
The Lisbon Earthquake (1929–1932)
Reading session by Nu No

MARCO BENE
Portable Seismic Archive IV
Performance Visit

POST BROTHERS
Presentation / Conference

Nu No
Concert / Performance

PART V ASHES & REPAIR
Fire, Resistance and Memory

Here we turn to fire, then endurance and reconstruction: what sustains an installation and a city after catastrophe. Repair appears not as restoration but as continuation — a fragile persistence shaped by resources, memory and ashes.

13.11.2026 VON CALHAU!
Performance

GIULIA VISMARA
Concert

14.11.2026 CHARLEMAGNE PALESTINE
Concert / Performance

16.11.2026 MARCO BENE
Portable Seismic Archive V
Performance Visit

JASON FULFORD
Presentation / Lecture

SISMO-SINAL
Galeria Zé dos Bois
Lisbon

May–November 2026

SISMO-SINAL is a mediation and creation programme that proposes an experimental approach to the work, experienced at a distance and in synchrony with the installation presented in Venice. Through a RÉPLICA installed at Galeria Zé dos Bois, which also responds to seismic activity, workshops and guided tours in collaboration with ZDB's Education Department will take place over the seven months of the exhibition.

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23.05.—22.11.2026

RÉPLICA
Exhibition synchronised with the installation in Venice

Guided Tours (5 per month)
Accessible Guided Tours (2 per month)

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Sept. 2026

WORKSHOPS
Conversion of seismic impulses into visual, sonic, and tactile forms. Led by artists and scientists, with the participation of MA students at ESAD/Caldas da Rainha.

Scientific supervision: João Frazão (Neurogears) and Matheus Farias (Moita Lab, Champalimaud Research)

Artistic supervision: Elisa Pône, Igor Jesus, Marfox, Joana da Conceição, Von Calhau!

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Oct.—Nov. 2026

WORKSHOPS Exhibition

Curatorial supervision: Natxo Checa

RedSkyFalls
ENCYCLOPEDIA

www.redskyfalls.com

Issued
May
July
September
November
2026

Illustrated encyclopedia bringing together a series of contributions by an extended network of collaborators from various fields and geographies, probing and amplifying the project's fissures and aftershocks.

Its inception highlights the temporal coincidence between the great earthquake of 1755 and the publication of the renowned Encyclopédie by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert.

The installation functions as a mental backdrop for a set of encyclopedic entries — a lens, a conduit, a field of investigation and tautological reflection; or a line in a text, a pretext for speaking about tangential things, a thread in a rhizome. This "Encyclopedia," perhaps more poetic than scientific, brings together myth, observable evidence, speculation, fiction, and appropriation, privileging the aberrant, delirium, extravagant theories, pseudo-scientific considerations, and philosophical impasses over pragmatic knowledge and orthodox ideas. Between common data and the "excessively singular"; between history and fiction; between physics and pataphysics; it is something between a DICTIONNAIRE RAISONNÉ and DÉRAISONNÉ.

EXHIBITOR

ALEXANDRE ESTRELA is an artist whose work explores the perception of still and moving images through the manipulation of objects and projections, in search of a poetic language. He is Portugal's official representative at Biennale Arte 2026, with the multimedia installation RedSkyFalls. Recent solo exhibitions include A NATUREZA ABORRECE O MONSTRO, Culturgest, Lisbon (2024); FLAT BELLS, MoMA, New York (2023); ALL AND EVERYTHING, Museo Rufino Tamayo (2020); RODA LUME, MuHKA, Antwerp (2016); POCKETS OF SILENCE, Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid (2015); and MEIO CONCRETO, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2013).

The artist is represented by Galería Travesía Cuatro (Madrid, CDMX, GDL).

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MICKEY MOUTH, 2025
https://vimeo.com/1115786833

Computer-generated video projection on a painted wooden screen.
Sound: Alexandre Estrela, using an instrument programmed in Max by Borja Caro.

TAPE WORM, 2024
https://vimeo.com/1117396087

Single-channel computer-generated video projection on an engraved aluminium screen.
Sound: Field recordings by Martim Melo.

FLAT BELLS, 2023
https://vimeo.com/976503231

Five-channel computer-generated video, eight-channel audio, and four engraved aluminium plates.

RUIN MARBLE, 2021
https://vimeo.com/810187360

Video projection on a prepared wooden screen with a brass structure.
Video: HD MOV, colour, continuous loop, stereo sound.
Sound: Gabriel Ferrandini and Pedro Tavares; programmed by Borja Caro; stereo.

## CURATORS

ANA BALIZA is a curator, designer, and editor. She is the curator of the Portugal Pavilion at Biennale Arte 2026. She co-directs the farO programme (since 2022), previously known as Oporto (2012–2020), a platform for artistic research and dissemination. At the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, she curated Robin Fior's first exhibition (2019) and served as artistic director of DANÇA NÃO DANÇA (2024). She is the founder of "Amigos de", a society dedicated to preserving rare artist species.

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RICARDO NICOLAU is a curator and editor. He is the curator of the Portugal Pavilion at Biennale Arte 2026. Since 2006, he has been Deputy Director of the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, where he curates solo exhibitions — including those by Ricardo Valentim, Nora Turato, Von Calhau!, and Charlotte Moth — and collection-based shows, notably ZÉRO DE CONDUITE, 2018; AUTO-EDIÇÃO no Porto, 1999–2019, 2019; QUE SAIS-JE?: Livros e edições de artista, CAPC Bordeaux, 2015 / Serralves, 2016; and AUTO DOS ANFITRIÕES, 2026. At Serralves, he has also organised O MUSEU COMO PERFORMANCE since 2015. He has collaborated with Ana Jotta on the publications JOTTA DOSSIER (2009), ENTREVISTA PERPÉTUA (2017), and ANA ANA ANA (2024).

## ORGANIZER OF SURVEY ON AN S WAVE

MARCO BENE is a curator and researcher. Organizer of SURVEY ON AN S WAVE for the Portugal Pavilion at Biennale Arte 2026. He was a researcher in the Art and Curatorial Practice programme at The New Centre for Research & Practice. Selected projects include João Maria Gusmão's ANIMAL FARM (2024, 99 Canal/ZDB); Alexandre Estrela's ELECTRIFIED SHADOW PICTURES (2022, MoMA); and CAEBD (Foreign & Domestic and the Emily Harvey Foundation, New York, 2025), part of an ongoing five-part curatorial project.

## BIENNALE'S THEME

IN MINOR KEYS is the theme of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, proposed by Cameroonian-Swiss curator Koyo Kouoh. In her curatorial text, Kouoh writes that the minor keys "refuse orchestral bombast and goose-step military marches," and imagines "an archipelago of oases: gardens, courtyards, compounds, lofts, dance floors" — intimate, convivial worlds shaped by artists that offer sustenance, especially in difficult times. She frames the exhibition as an experience "more sensory than didactic," inviting visitors into quieter registers that unsettle dominant narratives.

## PORTUGAL PAVILION

Portugal has participated regularly in the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia since the 1980s; without a permanent pavilion, its official representation is largely nomadic. This year's exhibition takes place at Fondaco Marcello (from the Arabic FUNDUQ), an old merchant warehouse on the Grand Canal, historically linked to the storage and trade of goods such as tobacco and silk. This venue previously hosted Portuguese contributions to the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia by Ângela Ferreira (2007), João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva (2009), and Francisco Tropa (2011).

## COMMISSIONER

Directorate-General for the Arts (DGARTES) is the body of the Portuguese Republic that coordinates and implements policies to support the arts in Portugal, with a focus on promoting and enhancing artistic creation, as well as ensuring universal access to the arts.

As part of its strategic mission to promote Portuguese artistic creation internationally, DGARTES aims to affirm the talent, diversity, and relevance of Portuguese creators in prestigious cultural contexts worldwide. DGARTES is responsible for commissioning Portugal's representation at the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia, among the most relevant and renowned international stages for contemporary art and architecture, following the strategic guidelines defined by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport within the scope of External Cultural Action.

RedSkyFalls
Alexandre Estrela

Curated by Ana Baliza
and Ricardo Nicolau

Fondaco Marcello, Venice
09.05–22.11.2026

Organisation
Ministério da Cultura,
Juventude e Desporto,
Margarida Balseiro Lopes

Commissioner
Direção-Geral das Artes
Américo Rodrigues,
Director-General

Executive Production and
Communication (DGARTES):
Catarina Correia,
Raquel Monteiro, Sofia Isidoro
Venice Production: João L. Moreira
Translation: Kennis Translations, S.A

SIMULTANEOUS EXHIBITIONS (RÉPLICAS)
Galeria Zé dos Bois
(Lisbon, Portugal)
MALI (Lima, Peru)
REDCAT–Roy and Edna Disney
CalArts Theater
(Los Angeles, USA)
Wattis Institute–CCA Wattis
Institute for Contemporary Arts
(San Francisco, USA)

INSTALLATION
Generative systems engineering:
Ian Duclos
Animation: Rui Almeida
Sound design: Miguel Abreu,
Ian Duclos
Scientific consultancy: Laboratory
of Neurogenetics of Locomotion,
NOVA Medical School; Moita Lab
and Orger Lab, Champalimaud
Research; Portuguese Institute
for Sea and Atmosphere (IPMA)

PROJECT
Executive production:
Mariana Vitale
Studio management and production:
Patrícia Assis
Editorial Proofreading:
Paloma Portela

EXHIBITION
Architecture: Space Collectors
Production and installation:
ArtWorks
Audiovisual installation:
Ian Duclos, Francisco Antão

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

SURVEY ON AN S WAVE
Programme of events and
performative visits

Organized by Marco Bene
Fondaco Marcello and Cinema
Galleggiante, Venice

Production: Alessandra Messali
Sound and recording technician:
Mattia Biadene
Participants: Giovanbattista
Tusa, Miguel Abreu, Stanley
Schtinter, Laia Estruch, Gavin
Bryars, Gabriel Ferrandini,
Nu No, Post Brothers,
Von Calhau!, Giulia Vismara,
Charlemagne Palestine, Jason
Fulford and artists in the
Portable Seismic Archive and
the Emily Harvey Foundation
Venice

RedSkyFalls ENCYCLOPEDIA
Collaborative editorial
online project

Editorial direction:
Ricardo Nicolau, Paloma Portela
Editorial team: Ana Baliza,
Alexandre Estrela, Marco Bene

SISMO-SINAL
Creation and Mediation Programme
Galeria Zé dos Bois, Lisbon

Production: Galeria Zé dos Bois (ZDB)
Guided tours: ZDB Education
Department, with the participation
of investigators from different
research fields
Accessible tours and audio
description: Anaísa Raquel

Workshops
Scientific supervision:
João Frazão (Neurogears)
and Matheus Farias (Moita Lab,
Champalimaud Research)
Artistic supervision: Elisa Pône,
Igor Jesus, Marfox, Joana
da Conceição, Von Calhau!
With participation from MA students
from ESAD/Caldas da Rainha

AFTERSHOCK-ONDA CHOC
Restaging of the work, events
programme, catalogue launch
Serralves Museum of
Contemporary Art, Porto

Curation: Ricardo Nicolau,
Ana Baliza, Alexandre Estrela,
Marco Bene, Paloma Portela,
Pedro Rocha, Giovanni Tusa
Production and installation:
Serralves Museum
of Contemporary Art

CATALOGUE
Editorial design: Ilhas Studio
Editorial Coordination:
Sara de Chiara
Publisher: Daisy Editions
Distribution: Idea Books
and Les Presses du Réel

COMMUNICATION
Graphic identity: farO
Communication design:
Ana Resende Studio
Web developer: Joel Domingues
Translations: Paloma Portela,
Sara de Chiara
Audiovisual editing
and documentation:
Hugo Botelho Rodrigues
Radio announcements: Natxo Checa
Audio description for TV:
Gabriel Abrantes
Social media: Maria Mendes

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Beatriz Vasconcelos
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Wattis Institute for
Contemporary Arts,
MALI–Museo de Arte de Lima,
Galeria Zé dos Bois, farO,
Emily Harvey Foundation,
ESAD.CR–LIDA/IP Leiria,
Embaixada de Portugal no Japão

Scientific partners: IPMA,
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Champalimaud Research

Editorial partners: Contemporânea,
Electra, A Batalha, Wrong Wrong

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Antena 2, Antena 3, Canal180,
Coffeepaste, Gerador

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ROY AND EDNA DISNEY CALARTS THEATER

The Wattis Institute

MALI

ZDB

THE EMILY HARVEY FOUNDATION

EMBAIXADA DE PORTUGAL NO JAPÃO
在日ポルトガル大使館

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ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE ARTES E DESIGN

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PRESS LINKS

Press Kit
https://bit.ly/redskyfalls-press-kit

Press Release (word)
https://bit.ly/redskyfalls-press-release

Images of the Piece
https://bit.ly/redskyfalls-photos

Portraits of the Artist and Curators
https://bit.ly/redskyfalls-portraits

Other Works by the Artist
https://bit.ly/redskyfalls-other-works

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INQUIRIES ABOUT THE ARTIST
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#BiennaleArte2026
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PORTUGAL PAVILION
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https://maps.app.goo.gl/p342E57gp2f17kEL9



Photo: Paula Melâneo