

Exhibition February 26 – September 1, 2025
Sabatini Building, Floor 4

Laia Estruch

Hello Everyone



Crol (Moll) (Crawl [Wet], 2019), at Montjuïc Municipal Pool, Barcelona. Artist's collection and Galería Ehrhardt Flórez.
Photo: Anna Fàbrega

**MUSEO NACIONAL
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Hello Everyone is imagined as a navigable warehouse, a living-and-breathing repository, where sculptural resources and vocal expressions can be stored, arranged, and reanimated in the present. The practice of Laia Estruch (b. 1981, Barcelona) is located at the intersection of performing and exhibiting and centers on the voice and its entanglement with experimental theater, physical exercise, and embodied storytelling. Her performance work has spanned ancestral poetry and post-punk music, yet it has increasingly evolved beyond spoken or sung words toward a primal sonic language that explores raw communicative effects, body consciousness, and the sound and breath of the natural world.

This transition has paralleled the creation of often monumental sculptural settings for her vocal projects, including steel slides, inflatable buoys, and multicolor “sails.” These structures become surrogate bodies, as well as interpretive scores or librettos for guiding the development of a movement and voice repertoire through what the artist terms performance “rehearsals.” Drawing on varied modes of staging the voice and engaging bodies in space—whether in museums, theaters, concert halls, sports settings, public plazas, or the landscape—Estruch underscores the inherent cultural and political complexities of speaking out, revealing the voice as neither neutral nor innocent.

The exhibition resists a chronological or thematic progression and rejects the conventional retrospective model of tracing an artist’s development. Instead, its layout adopts a heuristic and utilitarian approach to seemingly fitting too many elements into an exhibition space while maintaining its accessibility. It is a deliberate compromise between display and storage: some floor-based sculptures appear in their original form, while others are “turned off,” dismantled, and hung against the wall. These choices purposefully confront the visitor with the disarming strangeness of Estruch’s work, and its varied temporalities, scales, materials, bodies, sensibilities, and voices. For the artist, the exhibition also represents a history to be encountered and interpreted anew. Accordingly, during its course, the exhibition

will give rise to a new version of the performance *Mix* (2021)—a form of storytelling and live editing of the vocal registers Estruch has developed over the years of interacting one-on-one with what is now an assembled chorus of projects.

The most prominent physical element in the exhibition derives from *Trena* (Braid), a project created in 2023 for the Sala Oval of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), Barcelona, that originally featured three thirty-five-meter-long pneumatic tunnels. This installation evoked the experience of moving through a giant resonant windpipe. For *Hello Everyone*, *Trena* has been dismembered and upcycled into new works. *Trena (Cortina)* (Braid [Curtain], 2025) is a sinuous retractable curtain that bisects the largest of the two galleries as if partitioning the exhibition into different storage zones.

As the artist describes: “*Trena (Cortina)* brings organization and rhythm to this archive of works. It gathers and facilitates relationships; closed, it divides, but open, it unites. It becomes

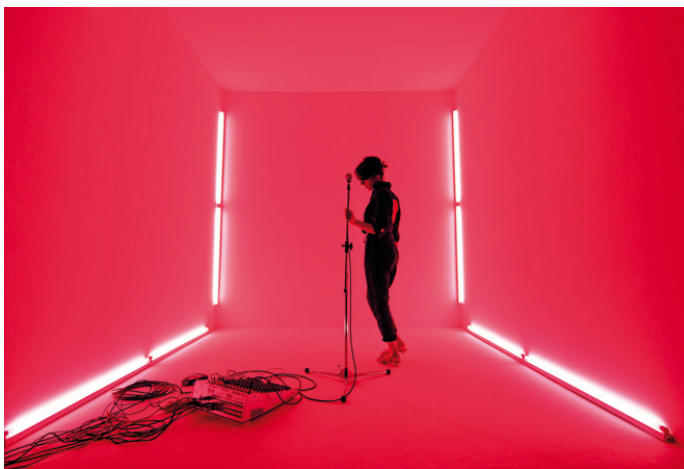


Trena (Braid, 2023), at Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC), Barcelona. Project created in 2023 for the Sala Oval of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona. Artist's collection and Galería Ehrhardt Flórez. Photo: Anna Fàbrega

a new performative and sonic element that obscures, filters, or changes the appearance of previous pieces, bringing new color, resonance, or form, as if casting a veil over them in the present. Here it also situates you within the scenography of the exhibition's entrances, exits, and intermediate spaces. It creates a rhythm within *Hello Everyone*, much like a theatrical curtain opens and closes a play. The curtain also becomes a new stage and a vertical instrument with horizontal movements for the performance *Mix*. Its track guides us through the exhibition in a constant back-and-forth motion, like a timeline through the works that extends and contracts, folds and wrinkles.”

The greeting that forms the exhibition's title refers to *Jingle* (2011), the work through which Estruch self-consciously launched her art career via a viral melody, a pop record, and live shows that told the story of the project's own development. Beginning “Hello everyone my name is Laia Estruch,” *Jingle* was a wry declaration of intent about finding one's voice as an artist. One of the key issues that this exhibition tackles is the notion of embodiment and performativity, beyond the physical presence of the artist herself. Accordingly, *Jingle* and other performances are not straightforwardly present in the galleries in the form of documentation or reenactments. Instead, *Jingle* forms part of *Hello Everyone Audio* (2025)—a new multipart sound installation that permeates the exhibition and brings together live recordings and studio sessions from Estruch's repertoire to form clusters of sound remixes that, like the curtain, also create perimeters between the physical works. It also makes an appearance in *Hello Everyone Video* (2025), a moving-image compilation presented on a screen in the exhibition and developed as a communications campaign for social media.

Following *Jingle*, Estruch's performances adopted an abrupt shift in tone. *Performance al teatre* (Performance at the Theater, 2012)—represented in this exhibition by four graphic works—was staged like a minimalist existential play. With its mumbles,



Jingle (2011), at La Capella, Barcelona. Photo: Pep Herrero

cries, exclamations, and halting respiration, her intense and “irrational” monologue delved into what has been described as “extended vocal techniques” or the “extra-normal” voice. The exploration of nonverbal language and the plasticity of the voice, the direct experience of vocalicity as air expelled from within the human body, has been present in Estruch’s work ever since. With the projects */fu:d/* (2014) and *Àlbum Victòria* (Victoria Album, 2015), Estruch “translated” source materials of varied kinds—a British Victorian cookbook, and a folio of Surrealist-influenced drawings, respectively—into scores or librettos that became the basis for performance readings that further expanded the range of her vocal repertoire toward both humor and expressive distortion.

Inspired by playground apparatuses, Estruch’s *Moat* series (2016–17) marked a significant inflection point as she introduced sculptural elements into her practice. The metal structure of *Moat-1* (2016) was not merely a prop, but an integral component that could induce and habituate a set of physical interactions



Moat-1 (2016), at Antic Teatre, Barcelona. MACBA Collection. Long-term loan from Barcelona City Council. Photo: Alessia Bombaci

and vocal expressions. Performance became a site where the body and sculpture were in continuous dialogue, and the interrelation between physical movement, sound production, and playful exploration became ever-more intimate. With *Moat-3* (2017), the use of a more supple sculptural medium—inflatables—enabled Estruch greater capacity to explore the aerial dimensions of performance, moving away from the floor-bound conventions of traditional dance and theater.

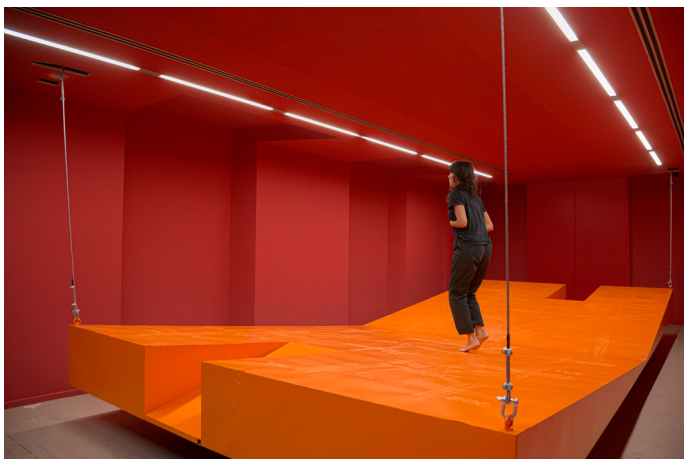
With *Sibina* (2019), Estruch ventured into a new medium: water. This project marked a departure from her previous work by focusing on self-scripted vocalizations to a greater degree and engaging with water as a literal and metaphorical element. Estruch's performances involved vocal explorations with metal troughs filled with water, evoking mythological and cultural associations with the *dones d'aigua* (water-women) of Catalan folklore. The interplay between voice and water in *Sibina* created an allegorical exploration of liquid memory, hydrology, and the fluid materiality of sound. The project *Crol*

(Crawl, 2019) furthered Estruch's investigation into aqueous acoustics and the voice's physicality by using a swimming pool as a stage where she interacted with a cast of large inflatable sculptures.

Ganivet (Knife, 2020) continued to evolve her approach to sculpture as both a performance stage and an instrument, both in the sense of a tool and a device to be played. A large suspended metal structure, marked with graphic notations, functioned as a living score and hovering sound stage for Estruch's performances. This approach drew on the legacy of artist Joan Brossa, whose work combined poetry with visual and performative intent. This work also echoed Estruch's earlier engagement with */fu:d/* and *Àlbum Victòria*, where performance and score intersected in a reciprocal relationship between action and document, voice, and word.

Ocells perduts (Stray Birds, 2021–22) emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic, a time when restrictions on movement and the physical impact of voice and breath became acutely felt. Accompanied by the windsock sculpture presented in *Hello Everyone*, Estruch performed on a suspended walkway, enveloped by a giant net that recalled the bird traps used to catch and release birds for research at migration hotspots. Her exploration of avian vocality invoked sensations of aerial freedom and reflected on the origins of language through mimicry of the natural world.

The *Kite* series (2022–24) comprises vividly hued tensile "sails" that form sprung performance spaces, attuned to the dynamics of wind, voice, and gesture. Each work reflects the specific environmental and cultural context for which it was first conceived—whether Catalonia's Alt Empordà, the island of Menorca, or the Los Cabos region of Baja California Sur, Mexico. These sculptures act as visual anchors and auditory baffles, shaping an exchange of airflows—both meteorological and vocal—and a shared human and natural soundscape.



Ganivet (Knife, 2020), at Fundació Joan Brossa, Barcelona. Artist's collection and Galeria Ehrhardt Flórez. Photo: Eva Carasol



Kite-1 (2022), at Spiritvessel, Espinavessa, Girona. MORERA Collection. Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani de Lleida. Long-term loan from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Art Collection. Photo: Anna Fàbrega

Estruch's practice affirms voice as a tangible, sensorial agency with the capacity to claim space. Her almost animistic approach to sculpture inherently entails bodily movement and vocal action; here it can perform just as the human body can also be sculptural. Her works demonstrate that voices, as both embodied acts and autonomous forces, can assert material resistance as well as expressive connection. Estruch insists that the diversity of voices matters and holds weight; they must not only resound but also be meaningfully heard.

Latitudes (Max Andrews, and Mariana Cánepa Luna)

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Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

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Opening hours

Monday to Saturday and public
holidays from
10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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Closed on Tuesdays

Exhibition rooms in all venues
will be cleared 15 minutes before
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