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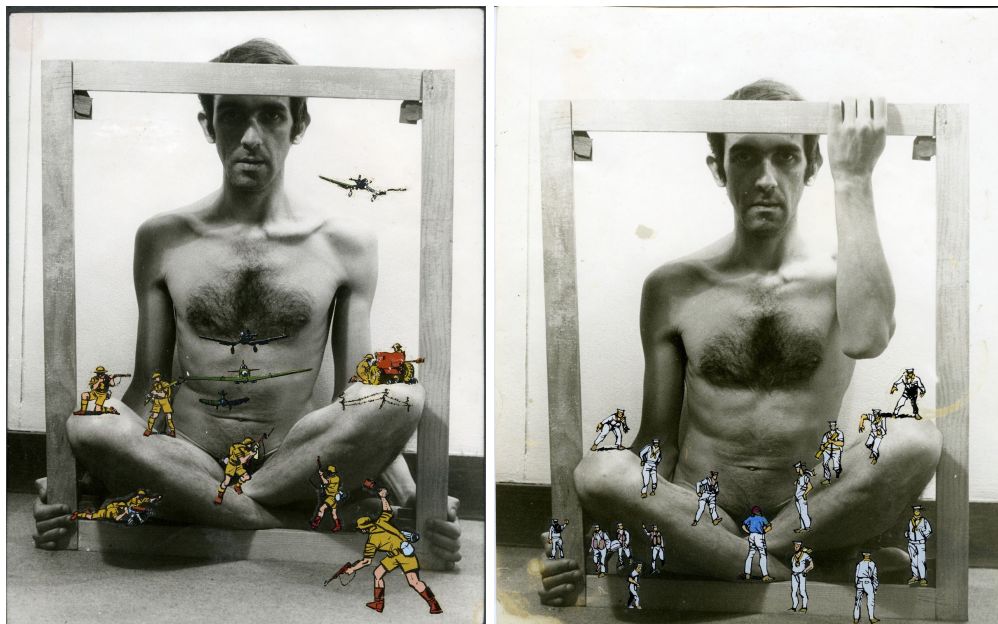
For Immediate Release.

MCASB Highlights Prolific Portuguese Artist Silvestre Pestana in New Exhibition

Exhibition: Bloom Projects Exchange Series: Silvestre Pestana, *Breathless* co-curated by André Sousa and Mauro Cerqueira of Uma Certa Falta de Coerência (A Certain Lack of Coherence) and Brooke Kellaway, MCASB

Opening reception: May 20, 2017, 6 - 8 pm

Exhibition on view: May 21, 2017 - August 20, 2017



From left to right: Silvestre Pestana, *Breathless II* in *Poemografias*, 1983/2017 from *The Loss of a Child* series, Digital print from original photograph, 33.89 x 43.87 in., Courtesy the Artist. Silvestre Pestana, *Breathless III* in *Poemografias*, 1983/2017 from *The Loss of a Child* series, Digital print from original photograph, 33.89 x 43.87 in., Courtesy the Artist.

In collaboration with Uma Certa Falta de Coerência (A Certain Lack of Coherence), a project space based in Porto, Portugal, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) presents a solo exhibition by artist Silvestre Pestana.

The first solo museum exhibition of Pestana's work in the U.S., *Breathless* features an intimate view into the vast universe of one of Portugal's most pioneering artists. Pestana's practice, which evolved out of a background in experimental poetry, has involved forays into the realms of sculpture, video, performance,

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photography, and gaming over the past fifty years. These works seek to explore how humans interact with and negotiate a variety of controlling forces in the world and how art can be a vehicle for challenging those very same forces, be they technological, economic, or political. Including a selection of Pestana's earlier pieces, as well as works from later in his career, the exhibition touches on a number of pervasive issues facing society today, from the changing state of our environment to the impact of war, all of which have continuously informed Pestana's work throughout the course of his illustrious career.

Pestana's early work in the 1960s was deeply affected by the social conditions of Portugal during the dictatorial regime of Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, which lasted from 1933 through 1974. He was part of a group of experimental poets who used forms of language as a means of radical communication during a time of censorship, propaganda, and standardization. This process of activating written words and various visual, sonic, and spatial elements into a new subversive language led Pestana to expand his work in poetry into various mediums. Influenced by notable figures, including poet Ernesto de Melo e Castro, semiotician Umberto Eco, media theorist Marshall McLuhan, and multidisciplinary artist Joseph Beuys, Pestana consistently considers art's possibility as a form of resistance and protest against the dominant, often disguised structures that we are constantly entangled with in the struggle for freedom against oppressive entities. His work is highly informed by his awareness of the impact of technology, a political conscience, and his own life experience as a body in exile, a free body, and an aging body.

Silvestre Pestana (b. 1949, Funchal, Madeira) studied Graphic Arts and Design at the School of Fine Arts of Porto, PT and received a Master's degree in Art Education and Design from the De Montfort University, Leicester, UK. Between 1969 and 1974, while living in Stockholm, SE as a political exile, his artistic practice developed through experimentation with various forms of poetry, performance, and music. In the late '70s, he directed the first video art films in Portugal, where he was one of the main producers of this art form. He was also the first artist to write poetry for Spectrum personal computers from 1982-84. For the past several years Pestana has continued to incorporate new technologies into his practice, including drones and online virtual platforms. His work was recently featured in a major retrospective at Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, PT (2016) and has also been included in exhibitions at the following venues: Maia Biennial, Porto, PT (2015); Espaço Mira, Porto, PT (2014); Casa da Escrita, Coimbra, PT (2013); Centre of Modern Art, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, PT (2010); and Uma Certa Falta de Coerência (A Certain Lack of Coherence), Porto, PT (2009). Pestana lives and works in Porto, PT.

This exhibition is part of MCASB's Exchange exhibition series that takes place in the museum's Bloom Project exhibition gallery, a space that for over a decade continues to feature new commissions and experimental projects by regional, national, and international emerging or under-recognized artists. The series presents solo exhibitions focused on programmatic collaborations with small-to mid-sized "off-centered" art organizations in cities across the globe. While bringing increased visibility to vibrant yet less broadly known artistic contexts, the exhibitions generate dialogue on innovative and localized approaches to display, communication, publishing, and audience development. A focal part of the series is public programming that involves critical discussion amongst Santa Barbara artists and arts professionals on articulating the necessity of new or expanded arts initiatives; and considering various factors that influence how these initiatives emerge and endure, notably in regions outside of major artistic centers, as is our town.

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About Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara:

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is a non-profit, non-collecting museum dedicated to the exhibition, education, and cultivation of the art of our time. Formerly Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF), MCASB is the premier venue for contemporary art between Los Angeles and San Francisco. MCASB is located at the Paseo Nuevo Shopping Center Upper Arts Terrace in downtown Santa Barbara,

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CA. With the opening of the MCASB Satellite @ Hotel Indigo Santa Barbara in February of 2012, MCASB becomes one museum with two locations. Located in the Hotel Indigo Santa Barbara at 121 State Street, the MCASB Satellite space features yearlong exhibitions of stimulating contemporary artworks.

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