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New Media Artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer Stretching Searchlight Lattice Over Philadelphia



Next month new media artist **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer** will light up the Philadelphia sky with 24 high-powered, crowd-controlled searchlights for a massive light artwork titled "Open Air" that will close the **Live Arts Festival and Philly Fringe**. The lights, whose beams will be guided by the voices and movements of users of a free mobile app developed by Lozano-Hemmer's studio as they walk along the half-mile stretch of Benjamin Franklin Parkway that houses the **Philadelphia Art Museum, Rodin Museum, and the new Barnes Foundation**.



Created in conjunction with the **Association for Public Art**, Lozano-Hemmer's "Open Air" will run September 20-October 14, concurrently with his new solo show at New York's bitforms gallery, "Voice Array" (September 6-October 13).

"Our interest in the potential of new media as a framework for public art on an urban scale led us to Lozano-Hemmer, who is recognized internationally as a major figure in the evolving understanding of technology as a creative force," Association for Public Art executive director **Penny Balkin Bach** said in a statement. "We're excited to bring him to Philadelphia to create a work that will transform the skyline, engage the public in a unique experience and bring international attention to the city."

For his part, the artist emphasizes the work's unexpected intimacy. "While the project will be spectacular in scale," he said in a statement, "what matters to me is that individual participants can personalize their city with their contributions."

The "Open Air" app will measure users' movements, voice intonations, frequencies, and volumes to determine the movements and intensities of the searchlight's beams, making for a majestic but also potentially chaotic public light art spectacle.

— Benjamin Sutton

(Renderings courtesy the artist, Association for Public Art.)