

bitforms gallery

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: *Lapsus Lumen* September 16 – November 1, 2015

bitforms gallery
131 Allen Street
New York, NY 10002

Reception: Wednesday, September 16, 6 – 8 PM

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday, 12 – 6 PM

For his seventh solo show at bitforms gallery, Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer presents new and recent works that subvert computerized surveillance to construct playful, counterintuitive, and often disorienting experiences. Each of the seven pieces on display in *Lapsus Lumen*—four of them premieres—reappropriate an instance of surveillance culture to create tessellated landscapes: one-way mirrors, airport X-Ray scanners, face-recognition algorithms, full-body tracking, fingerprinting, and other pervasive technologies are transformed into platforms for connection.

As interruptions to a now normalized predatory control regime, the works in *Lapsus Lumen* elicit critical or poetic experiences; yet, the strength of the work rests in the acknowledgment of its own partial complicity with the very technologies that define our society of control. Working with an array of tools, materials, and forms, Lozano-Hemmer's practice is situated in, while also indebted to, a long lineage of Latin American artists dedicated to an expanded field of experimentation, including the pioneering multimedia installations of Marta Minujín, the computer-generated drawings of Manuel Felguérez, the optical explorations of Gyulia Kosice and Abraham Palatnik, and the relational objects of Lygia Clark and Helio Oiticia.

In his words, Lozano-Hemmer works with light "oscillating between the artifice of a nightclub and the violence of police interrogations." Throughout the exhibition is a questioning of the supposed purity of light as a medium for expression: contrary to a spiritual approach that seeks enlightenment and unification, the artist uses light literally and figuratively to obscure and create differentiation.

External Interior (2015) is an inside-out disco ball made with 1600 one-way mirrors mounted on a transparent acrylic sphere, reminiscent of both Julio Le Parc's mirrored sculptures and the tessellated vision present in insects with compound eyes. The piece is suspended from pulleys and has a counterweight so that it can be raised and lowered easily. As visitors introduce their head inside the sphere, they see a *mise en abyme* reflection multiplied kaleidoscopically, creating both a spacious, yet isolated, self-centered experience. Meanwhile, from the outside, the public can clearly see the person inside the sphere.

Performance Review (2013) is a photographic series comprising thousands of fingerprints captured by high magnification surveillance equipment from Lozano-Hemmer's monumental interactive installation, *Pulse Index* (2010). While the distinctive patterns found in friction ridges of the human finger allow for the identification of an individual, here those singularities are subsumed to create an ambiguous image, representing the generalized use of biometry itself. Named after banks—the two selections in this exhibition being *HSBC* and *UBS*—the C-prints in this series are unique, each consisting of 750 fingerprints. Other titles in the series include *Bank of America*, *BBVA*, *BNP*, *Barclays*, *Chase*, *Citibank*, *Deutsche Bank*, *RBS*, and *Santander*.

In *Airborne 6* (2015), excerpts from the book *Introduction to Thermodynamics of Irreversible Processes*, written in 1955 by Belgian physical chemist Ilya Prigogine, gradually appear on a flat screen on a black background. As a viewer stands in front of the work a sensor detects his or her presence and renders the letters of the text "airborne," generating turbulent movements. The letters accumulate slowly until the screen shows tens of thousands of letters, at which point the text fades out, and begins to scroll again from the beginning. This is the sixth piece of a series of interactive installations designed to animate literary, scientific, and philosophical texts on the subjects of complexity and non-linear dynamics, which "read" the public and react to their presence. The work of Prigogine famously defined "dissipative structure theory," key to the understanding of self-organizing systems that could reverse the maximization of entropy rule imposed by the second law of thermodynamics.

1984x1984 (2014) is the tenth piece in Lozano-Hemmer's *Shadow Box* series of interactive displays with a built-in computerized tracking system. The piece shows a grid of thousands of random numbers extracted from addresses photographed by Google Street View. Scanned by Google from the front doors of buildings around the world, the numbers have an immense variety of fonts, colors, textures, and styles. As a viewer walks in front of the piece, his or her silhouette is represented within the display, and within its form, all numbers countdown to show the number 1984 repeated throughout. The piece was made as a homage to George Orwell's eponymous dystopian novel, 30 years after his predicted date for the collapse of privacy.

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Please Empty Your Pockets (2010) is an installation that consists of a conveyor belt with a computerized scanner that records and accumulates everything that passes under its purview. Viewers are invited to place any small item on the conveyor belt, for example, keys, ID cards, wallets, worry beads, condoms, notepads, phones, coins, dolls, credit cards, and other everyday items that might be found in any one's pockets. Once these objects pass under the scanner, they reappear on the other side of the conveyor belt beside projected objects from the memory of the installation. As a real item is removed from the conveyor belt, it leaves behind a projected image of itself, which is then used to accompany future objects. The piece remembers up to 600,000 objects which are displayed beside new ones that are added to the installation throughout its duration. The piece intends to blend presence and absence, using traditional techniques of augmented reality, such as those described by Adolfo Casares' 1940 novel *La Invención de Morel*.

Redundant Assembly (2015) is a computerized mirror that uses a camera array to compose a live portrait of participants from nine simultaneous perspectives. As a viewer looks at the piece, face recognition algorithms detect his or her face as seen from all cameras, aligning them on the center of the display. The result is an uncanny representation of the subject, unbound from the symmetry and depth perception of binocular vision. When several people are detected simultaneously, a composite portrait of them is made in real-time.

BIOGRAPHY

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was born in Mexico City in 1967. In 1989 he received a B.Sc. in Physical Chemistry from Concordia University in Montréal, Canada. As an electronic artist, Lozano-Hemmer develops interactive installations that are at the intersection of architecture and performance art. His main interest is in creating platforms for public participation, by perverting technologies such as robotics, computerized surveillance, or telematic networks. Inspired by phantasmagoria, carnival, and animatronics, his light and shadow works are "antimonuments for alien agency." The artist's largest solo exhibition to date, "Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Pseudomatismos," will be on view at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) in Mexico City from October 28, 2015 – March 27, 2016.

Recently the subject of solo exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Fundación Telefónica in Madrid, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, he was the first artist to officially represent Mexico at the Venice Biennale with a solo exhibition at Palazzo Soranzo Van Axel in 2007. He has also shown at Art Biennials and Triennials in Havana, Istanbul, Kochi, Liverpool, Montréal, Moscow, New Orleans, New York ICP, Seville, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, and Sydney. Collections holding his work include MoMA in New York, Tate in London, Hirshhorn in Washington D.C., AGO in Toronto, CIFO in Miami, Jumex in Mexico City, DAROS in Zürich, Borusan Contemporary in Istanbul, MUAC in Mexico City, 21st Century Museum of Art in Kanazawa, MAG in Manchester, MUSAC in León, MONA in Hobart, ZKM in Karlsruhe, MAC in Montréal and SAM in Singapore, among others.

His large-scale interactive installations have been commissioned for events such as the Millennium Celebrations in Mexico City (1999), the Cultural Capital of Europe in Rotterdam (2001), the UN World Summit of Cities in Lyon (2003), the opening of the YCAM Center in Japan (2003), the Expansion of the European Union in Dublin (2004), the memorial for the Tlatelolco Student Massacre in Mexico City (2008), the Winter Olympics in Vancouver (2010), and the pre-opening exhibition for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi (2015).

Lozano-Hemmer has received two BAFTA British Academy Awards for Interactive Art in London, the Governor General's Award in Canada, a Golden Nica at the Prix Ars Electronica in Austria, "Artist of the year" Rave Award from *Wired* magazine, a Rockefeller fellowship, the Trophée des Lumières in Lyon, and an International Bauhaus Award in Dessau. He has lectured at Goldsmiths College, the Bartlett School, Princeton, Harvard, UC Berkeley, Cooper Union, USC, MIT MediaLab, Guggenheim Museum, LA MOCA, Netherlands Architecture Institute, Cornell, UPenn, SCAD, Danish Architecture Center, CCA in Montreal, ICA in London, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

bitforms gallery was founded in 2001 and is devoted to emerging and established contemporary artists who embrace the visual discourse of new media culture.

For images and more information on the exhibit, please visit www.bitforms.com and www.lozano-hemmer.com.

For publicity requests, please contact Associate Director Kerry Doran, kerry@bitforms.com or call (212) 366-6939.

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