



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 15 September 2003

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) will open with “Amodal Suspension”, a new project by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

For the inauguration of the Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has been invited to produce “Amodal Suspension”, —the largest interactive artwork in the World. From the 1st to the 24th of November 2003, short text messages sent by people over the Internet or by cell phone will be converted into patterns of flashing lights in the sky, turning the Japanese city of Yamaguchi into a giant communication switchboard.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In “Amodal Suspension” people will be able to send short text messages to each other using a cell phone or web browser connected to www.amodal.net. However, rather than being sent directly, the messages will be encoded as unique sequences of flashes and sent to the sky with a network of robotically-controlled lights. The piece, located in the public space around the new YCAM Center, will use 20 searchlights with tightly focused beams that will be seen from a distance of 15 Km (10 miles).

The signaling will be similar to Morse code or the flashing of fireflies, —the lights will modulate their intensity to represent different Japanese and Western characters. Each message, once encoded, will be “suspended” in the sky of Yamaguchi, bouncing around the center of the city, from one searchlight to another. Each light sequence will continue to circulate until somebody “catches” the message and reads it. To catch a text, participants must again use the cell phone or computer programs provided at www.amodal.net. To highlight the irony of globalization, the piece will use an automatic translation engine between Japanese and English, —this will produce inaccurate but charming results.

Once a message is read by a participant, it will disappear from the sky and it will be shown briefly on a large screen placed in front of the YCAM center. All submissions will be logged at the project website using an online virtual environment that will show them in three-dimensional patterns of Brownian motion. Visitors will be able to search, sort and navigate through the archived messages.

“Amodal Suspension” will create an interactive mesh of light over the city, a floating cloud of data that can be written on and read. The piece will provide a connective platform in which local residents and remote participants from different regions and countries can establish ad hoc relationships. This installation will add a new dimension to Yamaguchi’s rich cultural traditions surrounding the use of Light for celebration, such as the lantern and firefly festivals that take place every year.

AMODAL EVENTS

Amodal Suspension will open at 19:00 Japanese time (10:00 GMT) on November 1st, 2003 with a message sent by astronauts from the International Space Station.

A symposium on the project will take place on the 2nd of November at 18:30, featuring philosopher and author Brian Massumi, Cultural Studies theorist Yoshitaka Mori, project curators Yukiko Shikata and Abe Kazunao and artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Three additional lectures will be presented at YCAM to frame the project:

On November 9th at 14:00, local researcher Shingo Hirano will speak about fireflies.

On November 15th at 19:00, Akira Suzuki, Professor of Kobe Design University, will present "Soft Shelter: electronic networks in the city and hand-drawn maps".

On November 22nd at 19:00, Dr. Jun Tanaka, Professor at the University of Tokyo, will present "On the history of light in the city".

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

"Amodal Suspension" will be the latest in the series of "relational architecture" installations that Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has designed for cities in Europe and the Americas for the past seven years. These interactive interventions explore the intersection between new technologies, urban environments and public participation. This will be Lozano-Hemmer's largest project to date and his first in Asia. For this project he is collaborating with developers from Japan, Canada, China and Spain.

The work of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has received prestigious accolades including the Bauhaus Award in Germany, the Golden Nica in Austria, a World Technology Award in San Francisco and a BAFTA British Academy Award in the United Kingdom. His installations have been presented in Biennials in Havana, Istanbul, Graz and Liverpool, as well as in museums and festivals worldwide. Using robotics, real-time computer graphics, positional sound, Internet links, cell phones, ultrasonic sensors, and other devices, his pieces aim to reconnect the public sphere with an increasingly alienating urban condition. His previous projects include the interactive piece "Vectorial Elevation" www.alzado.net that was commissioned for the millennium celebrations in Mexico City and received over 800,000 participants from 89 countries. For information, videos and downloadable pictures of his work please refer to www.lozano-hemmer.com

YCAM IS

YCAM is a new type of cultural facility that pursues creative values in art and information. Designed by internationally acclaimed architect Arata Isozaki, the YCAM center will be one of the most ambitious cultural and technological institutions to be launched in 2003. Other opening events include works by Philippe Decouflé, Iori Nakai, Dumb Type, Ryoji Ikeda and Makoto Nomura, as well as performances by Issey Ogata, Angelin Preljocaj, Yoshihide Otomo and Shigehiro Ide.

While basing its activities on art, YCAM explores the trends of the latest media technologies, which are created in cooperation with education, industry, and science. Based on accumulation of such activities, the Center produces and shows to the public mainly artworks and performances. YCAM invites artists both at home and abroad, and provides them with a site for their experimental ideas and collaborations. Also encouraged is cooperation with other art centers and cultural organizations around the world, such as joint productions, and the results will be shown to the public.

Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) opening project
"Amodal Suspension – relational architecture 8"
by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

Dates: November 1st to 24th, 2003

Venue: YCAM and the central park in Yamaguchi City, in the South West of Japan.

Access: Computers, mobile phones and local access kiosks connected to the web address www.amodal.net

Production and organization: YCAM, Yamaguchi City, the Board of Education of Yamaguchi City and Yamaguchi Cultural Promotion Foundation

Support: Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canadian Embassy in Japan, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. and Fast Retailing Co., Ltd.

Credits:

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer — Conception and direction
Yukiko Shikata — Curator
Abe Kazunao — YCAM Curator
Conroy Badger, Motoi Ishibashi, Jennifer Laughlin, Emilio López-Galiacho, Shiro Yamamoto, Chong Zhang — Programmers
Miki Fukuda — Project manager
Yumico Cotaki, Chiaki Sakaguchi — Press
Daiya Aida — Education Program
Rie Yamasaki — Administration
Will Bauer, Jack Calmes, Olaf Pöttcher — Production support
Katsuhisa Nomura — Designer
Shosuke Fukuda — YCAM Director

PRESS CONTACT

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PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

High-resolution pictures of the project are available for download at the project website www.amodal.net

High-resolution pictures of previous work by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer are available for download at www.lozano-hemmer.com

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer previous projects

two origins relational architecture 7

- Festival Printemps de Septembre Toulouse 2002

TWO ORIGINS transforms the emblematic Place du Capitole by projecting the heretic "Book of Two Origins", a 13th century manuscript compiling the core theological beliefs of the dualist Cathars. Once a vibrant community in Toulouse, believers in two universal origins were virtually annihilated by the brutal crusades that gave birth to the Inquisition and France. The texts overlap as they are projected from two separate projectors; only when passers-by block one of the texts with their body is the other text readable within his or her shadow. "Two Origins" attempts to connect disparate planes of experience, inviting people to scan texts that had been folded by history and intolerance. *With the assistance of Jennifer Laughlin.*

body movies relational architecture 6

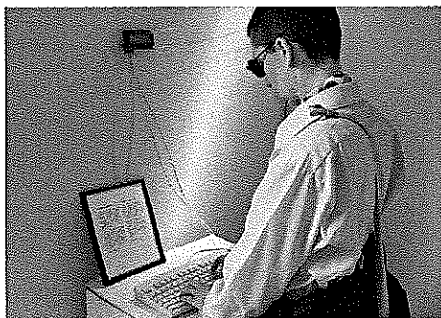
- V2, Cultural Capital of Europe Rotterdam 2001
- Sapphire 02, Lisbon Ars Electronica 2002, Linz
- Liverpool Biennial 2002
- Duisburg Alzente 2003



BODY MOVIES transforms public space with 400 to 1,800 square metres of interactive projections. Thousands of photo portraits taken on the streets of the cities where the project is exhibited are shown using robotically controlled projectors. However, the portraits only appear inside the projected shadows of local passers-by, whose silhouettes measure between 2 to 25 metres high, depending on how far people were from the powerful light sources placed on the floor of the square. A custom-made computer vision tracking system triggers new portraits as old ones are revealed. *With the assistance of 6 developers.*

33 questions per minute relational architecture 5

- Wilfredo Lam Art Centre Havana Biennial 2000
- Hagia Eirene Istanbul Biennial 2001
- Conde Duque Centre Cibervision 2, Madrid 2002
- Itau Cultural, Sao Paulo 2002
- "III Communication" Dundee Contemporary Art 2003



33 QUESTIONS PER MINUTE consists of a computer program which uses grammatical rules to combine words from a dictionary and generate 55 billion unique, fortuitous questions. The automated questions are presented at a rate of 33 per minute –the threshold of legibility– on 21 tiny LCD screens encrusted on the support columns of the Wilfredo Lam Art Center. A keyboard allows participants to log on to the building and add their own questions to the automatic flow. *With the assistance of Will Bauer, Conroy Badger, Ana Parga, María Velarde Torres, Luis Jiménez-Carlés, Luis Parga and Gabriela Raventós. English version with the assistance of Rebecca MacSween.*



vectorial elevation relational architecture 4

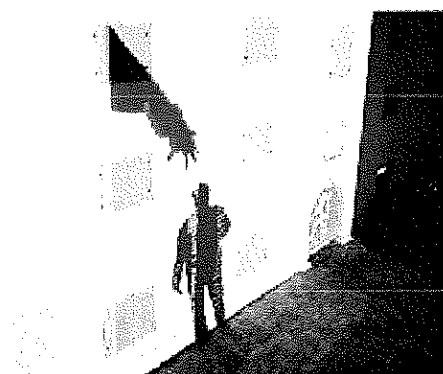
- Zócalo Square Mexico City 1999-2000
- Artium Square, Vitoria, Basque Country 2002



VECTORIAL ELEVATION was an interactive art project which allowed thousands of people from 89 countries to control 18 robotic searchlights with 126,000 watts of power and link Cyberspace with Mexico's most emblematic urban landscape. Mexico City's historic centre was transformed by immense light sculptures created by participants on the Internet using a virtual reality program. A personalized web page was made for every participant with comments, stats and virtual and real images of their design from three perspectives. The project was also localized for the capital city of the Basque Country. *With the assistance of ten developers.*
<http://www.alzado.net>

re:positioning fear relational architecture 3

- Film+Architektur Biennale Graz, Austria 1997



RE:POSITIONING FEAR was the third relational architecture project. A large scale installation on the Landeszeughaus military arsenal with a "teleabsence" interface of projected shadows of passers-by. Using tracking systems, the shadows were automatically focused and generated sounds. A real-time IRC discussion about the transformation of the concept of "fear" was projected inside the shadows; the chat involved 30 artists and theorists from 17 countries and the proceedings can be seen at the project web site. *Collaboration with Will Bauer. With the assistance of Robert Rotman, Conroy Badger, Nell Tenhaaf and 30 symposium participants.*
<http://rhizome.org/artbase/2398/fear/>

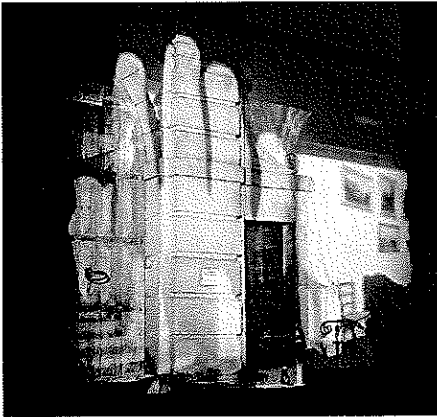
displaced emperors relational architecture 2

- Ars Electronica Festival Linz, Austria 1997

DISPLACED EMPERORS was the second relational architecture project. This installation used an "architact" interface to transform the Habsburg Castle in Linz, Austria. Wireless 3D sensors calculated where participants pointed to on the facade and a large animated projection of a hand was shown at that location. As people on the street "caressed" the building, they could reveal the interiors, which corresponded to Chapultepec Castle, the Habsburg residence in Mexico City. In addition, for ten schillings, people could press the "Moctezuma button" and trigger a temporary post-colonial override consisting of a huge image of the Aztec head-dress that is kept at the ethnological museum in Vienna. *Collaboration with Will Bauer and Susie Ramsay. With the assistance of Daniel Rivera and Patricia Maier.*

the trace, remote insinuated presence

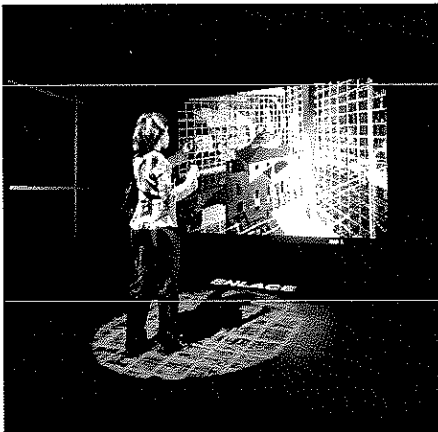
- ARCO 1995 Telefonica Foundation Stand
- Museum of Fine Arts Montreal, Canada 2000



THE TRACE is a telepresence installation that invites two participants in remote sites to share the same telematic space. The piece consists of vectors, sounds and graphics that respond to the movement of the participants. Two interactive stations are needed for the piece; these are interconnected with a normal ISDN digital line so they can be in the same exhibition hall, on either side of a city or in different cities. Part of the Fundación Telefónica Collection. *Collaboration with Will Bauer.*

the able skin

- Monterrey Museum, Mexico 1997
- Info-Architecture Festival, Madrid 1997
- Next Festival, Karlstad, Sweden 2000



THE ABLE SKIN is a media structure designed by architect Emilio López-Galiacho to hide any emblematic building that is not allowed to have a natural death, that is kept alive artificially through restoration, citation and simulation. A virtual reality installation allows participants to tour the first Able Skin, which covers Palladio's Villa Rotonda. The participant's motion controls the point of view in the projected environments on the wall and the floor. *Collaboration with Emilio López-Galiacho and Will Bauer.*

Quotes on previous pieces

Lozano-Hemmer responds to the fact that the Internet allows us to participate in events at a far remove. He demonstrates that barriers between digital and physical realities are not always immutable. The beams themselves are ephemeral, and thus the play of lights offers a monumental representation of our electronic connectedness.

-- Gary Hill, John Maeda, Aaron Betsky, et al SFMOMA Webby Jury, USA

What is definitive is the artistic energy that Rafael Lozano-Hemmer unfolds in his work: the force of spatial suggestion, the play of reality and projection, and his poetic capability to evoke a place without a site.

-- José Jiménez, *El Mundo*, Spain

The combination of a high-level of conceptualization and amazing technical expertise beautifully tie the "real" and "virtual" worlds together with a presentiment of the Internet's role in the exhibition of an individual's creativity to an unprejudiced society. The gift of a dream.

-- Masaya Fujita, CG-ARTS Society, Japan

This piece is interesting as a work of public art, as a sophisticated but simple user interface, and as a highly successful collaborative work. It was also interesting in its reappropriation of fascist lighting themes in a celebration of egalitarian access to public artistic expression.

-- Yukiko Shikata, Joachim Sauter, et al *Ars Electronica Jury*, Austria

Truly exceptional. Any art that competes with the Super Bowl merits special attention!

-- Erik Adigard. *MA Design*, USA

Lozano-Hemmer seeks to provide and provoke a contemporary re-reading of distinctive historical and urban features, while using the Internet to open onto a planetary audience of spectators and "interactors", and to build an environment of active critical discussion and reflection.

-- Sally Jane Norman, *ELIA Journal*, France

The effect is a light show, but the cause is an architecture of connectivity. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's approach falls into the ephemeral, instant architecture, entirely based on networks from conception to realization and sustenance. Vectorial Elevation's results are spectacular and also metaphorical. They provide us with a radically new understanding of an aesthetics of networks proper. The projected patterns are creating an epiphany-making manifest in a visible mode the coherence and beauty of invisible connections across the planet.

-- Derrick de Kerckhove, Director, McLuhan Program, U. of Toronto, Canada