

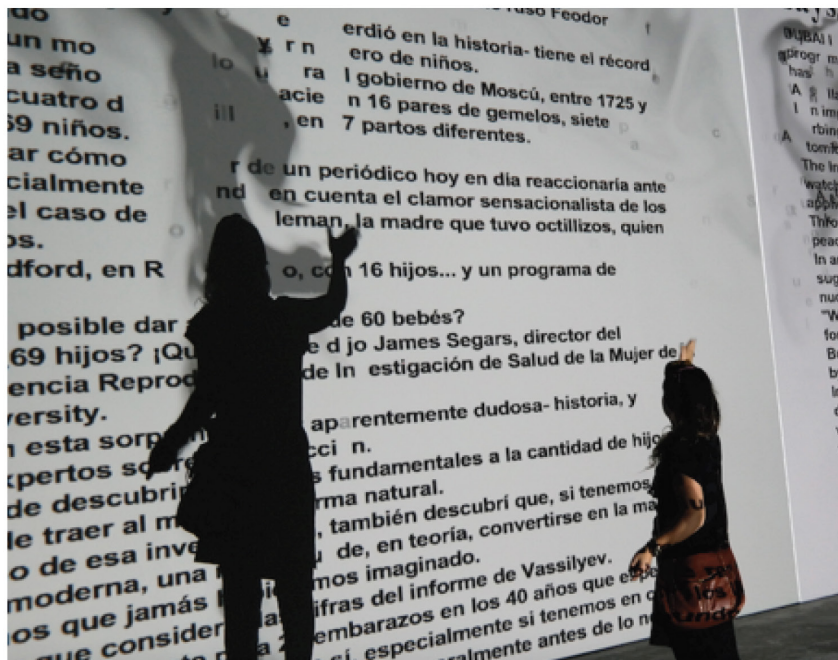


30.10.2015 Julia Libertad

Pseudomatismos in Mexico. An interview with Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

The biggest contemporary art gallery in Mexico is putting electronic art and technology in the spotlight with an exhibition of one of its most important representatives. Until March 27 2016 Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer will have his first monographic exhibition at the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico. HAPPENING met with the artist.

This is the first time you've had an exhibition in a Mexican museum, while you've represented the country around the world for many years...



Not only is it the first monographic exhibition in Mexico, but also the biggest exhibition of my career, with 42 pieces shown together. We're presenting five new pieces and 30 of the works are being presented for the first time in the Americas. We're also using a new way to show electronic art.

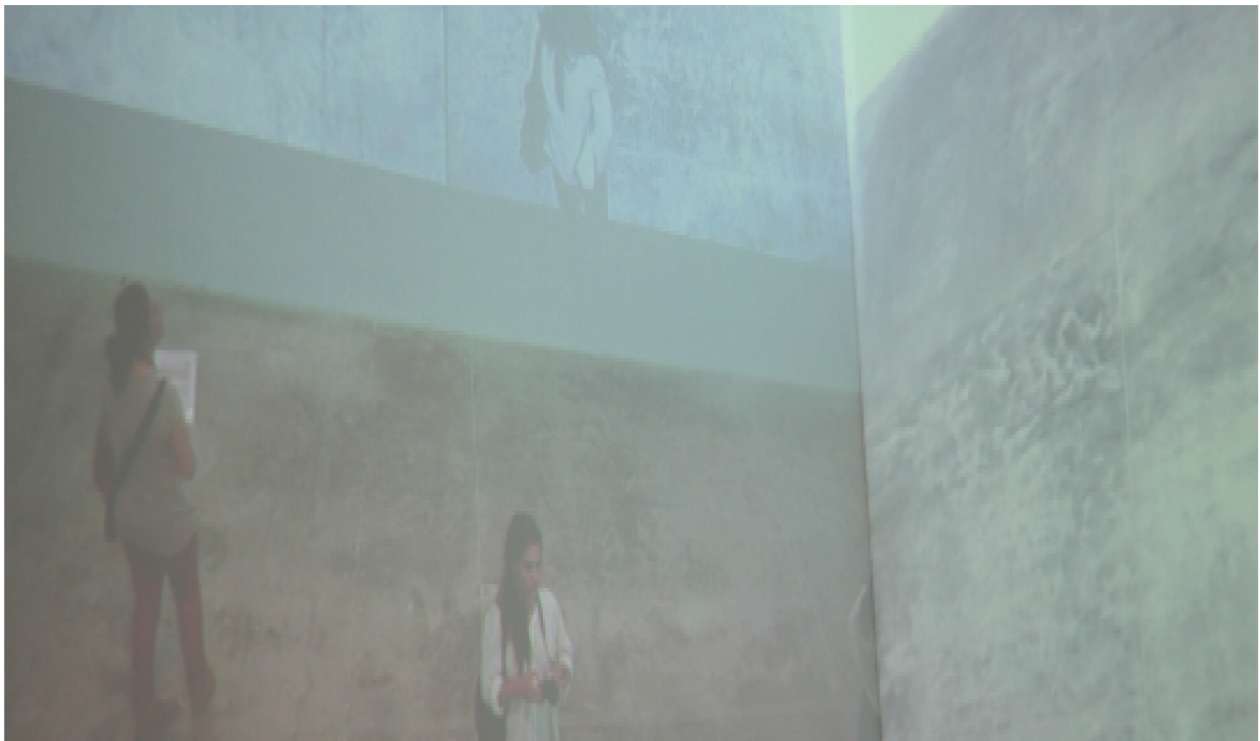
For this exhibition, my whole team came over from Montréal. We're a team of 10 and we show works in open source,

which means that you come see the show, and you can buy the exhibition catalog or a USB key that contains the full source code, drawings, archives, etc. to generate all the exhibited works. It's a new way of showing electronic art where the most important aspect is not the code itself, but rather the relationships that develop with the open source community.

Also, the exhibition doesn't have a theological, or closed, theme. It's an expansive exhibition, showing the works in their conceptual context between it and the visitors.

Your exhibition is called "Pseudomatismos", did you invent this neologism, can you explain to us what it means?

Yes, it is inspired by surrealist automatism, this idea that through the arbitrary and the random, somehow we express different levels of the subconscious and the truth. In our case, the pseudomatism encompasses the idea of the impossibility of the randomness of the universal machine, where all pretense of autonomy is only a simulation, because we are not in front of a robot, we are not in front of something independent, but there is a relationship with those who are present: where the automaton acts "by itself", the pseudomaton acts only in relation to others. This element of relation and context is central in all of my works.



This exhibition includes a new work produced in collaboration with the Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko...

I met Krzysztof Wodiczko five years ago, an artist I've always admired. He has worked in cities around the world with screenings and works that make us reflect on public space, on the structures of power, and is someone I've always respected greatly.

When we started to talk about it, he found that he had also watched my work with interest, particularly my research and so we decided to start collaborating. The piece we're presenting in Mexico was originally designed for the Architecture Biennale in Beijing, it's called Pavillon d'Ampliatiions. However, according to the Chinese organizers, the work could not be performed because of technical and logistical difficulties. We believe this is because the piece was too "political."

We therefore did it in Mexico. It includes 12 cameras and 12 projectors that follow the public through facial recognition systems and computer monitoring. This system produces a record of the movement of participants in the exhibition space, although we do not monitor the same subject, but rather his relations with others, i.e. his distance from others and behavior in the space. For the exhibition, it's a very Brechtian piece that tries to make surveillance methods tangible. The final message is always that an exhibition space is never neutral.

