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Lesser-known at home, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is a rising star on the international art scene



SURVEILLANCE SAYS: Lozano-Hemmer

by CHRISTINE REDFERN

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is a rare artist, one whose work is probably better known around the world than locally. If you walked out on the street today, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who had experienced one of his installations, yet his art is sought after by such institutional heavyweights as New York's MOMA and London's Tate Modern.

In 2003, he won *Wired* maga-

zine's Artist/performer of the year award. In 2005, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts bestowed their Award for Interactive Art on him. His work has been shown in Mexico, throughout Europe and across Asia. In 2007, his international reputation is set to increase yet again, as Lozano-Hemmer has been asked to represent Mexico at the Venice Biennale, one of the most prestigious events in contemporary art.

Lozano-Hemmer's work these days is divided into two streams: the large-scale public works that focus on public access in the tradition of *son et lumière* spectacles and a whole series of other works that revolve around kinetic sculpture or installation. The latter involves different issues of portability and preservation, but his primary interests remain the same: surveillance, presence and absence. Lozano-Hemmer's gaze is drawn to the new powerful generation of computer surveillance. The ominous potential of this technology, he says, requires a new kind of art. He modestly

describes his output as, "Sometimes I'm searchlight guy, sometimes I'm shadow guy—now I'm also trying to be camera or robotics guy." His installations incorporate high-end surveillance equipment, interactive projections, as well as powerful searchlights or projectors (for example, *Vectorial Elevation*, *Body Movies*, *Under Scan*, *Subtitled Public*). They may require a team of engineers to make, but the most exciting aspect of this work is how it allows and encourages creative input and interaction among the viewers.

In 2007, apart from Venice, Lozano-Hemmer will show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York; "End of the World" Biennial in Ushuaia, Argentina; Artefact Festival in Belgium and the Museo de arte contemporáneo in Mexico. If you won't be travelling to these exhibitions, but want to get a feel for his work, check out the past and present work of one of our hottest artists online at www.lozano-hemmer.com. ★