

Watch and be watched

A playful interactive exhibition is loaded with sinister undertones



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: *Recorders*
Manchester Art Gallery, UK, until
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Reviewed by Kat Austen

RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER'S art takes a piece of you, traps it and exposes it to the world. *Recorders*, the Mexican-born artist's new exhibition, uses interactive media to explore our fascination with watching ourselves. It also explores the disquieting feeling of being watched.

In *Pulse Index*, participants volunteer to have their fingerprint and pulse rate captured, then displayed as a pulsating image on a giant plasma screen. As with many of Lozano-Hemmer's pieces, the results from each participant appear incrementally in the artwork, shunting a previous picture off the screen in the process. You might feel an irrational sense of loss as your moment of "fame" passes.

A number of installations

co-opt participation on the sly. Cameras record you before you are aware of them. "Who will see me, and how long will my image be stored?" you may wonder.

No answers are provided. And while interacting with these installations is fun, it is hard to ignore the parallels with the intrusions of security cameras and the feelings of powerlessness that they engender.

Sinister undertones aside, *Recorders* prompts playfulness. Whether it be recording silly noises to be played back to strangers in *Microphones*, or cartwheeling across the expanse of floor space in front of *People on People*'s giant projection in the hope that your image will appear at some point, the way we behave when we know we are observed has a frivolity about it. Indeed, you can have so much fun at *Recorders* that you might even forget yourself – although the exhibits will remember you, at least for a while.