

**PRESS RELEASE****RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER – *MATERIALIZED SURVEILLANCE***

Max Estrella Gallery presents the first solo exhibition of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (Mexico City, 1967) in Spain. Best known for his interactive interventions in public spaces, Lozano-Hemmer's installations use technologies such as robotics, projections, sensors and communication networks to create "platforms for participation".

The exhibition consists of five installations that attempt to materialize computerized surveillance by turning technological observation into tangible form. The pieces use various devices to perceive the environment and respond to the public's presence, such as camera tracking, infrared sensors, and fingerprinting microscopes. Far from moralizing about the Orwellian condition of surveillance, Lozano-Hemmer's aim is to create experiences of connection and complicity by using creative and critical strategies such as ambiguity, irony, repetition and performance.

In *Reference Flow*, 2009, the main piece of the exhibition, automated *Exit* signs rotate to follow the public's movements. The arrows are always pointing to the left, signalling different escape routes that have nothing to do with the architecture of the exhibition space. If several people are walking around the signs, they attempt to follow everyone but often get confused, either displaying turbulent behaviour or stopping altogether.

In *Inspired by real events*, 2005, performance and photography are combined in an attempt to intervene on surveillance cameras placed in public spaces of Mexico City, including emblematic places such as the Angel of Independence plaza. Lozano-Hemmer placed his own camera next to the closed circuit camera in order to see what it saw. Then he asked volunteers to step up a ladder and switch his camera off. The photos capture the moment just before the camera is turned off, showing the interesting deformations caused by the wide-angle lens.

The exhibition also premieres the work *Cardinal Directions*, 2010, in which a surveillance monitor shows an extract of Vicente Huidobro's poem "Altazor" (1919-1931). Referring to the geography of his native Chile, Huidobro wrote "The four cardinal directions are three: North and South". When a presence is detected by infrared sensors, the monitor starts to rotate. As the poem is "geolocated" it always aligns itself to the cardinal points, and the public must walk around the piece in order to read it, like a kind of periscope.

Another installation being premiered is *Pulse Index*, 2010 in which participants' fingerprints are recorded at the same time as their heart rates. The piece displays the vital signs of the last 733 participants. As new recordings are added, the oldest ones disappear, bringing to mind our mortality, a kind of *memento mori*. This biometric installation is part of a series that Lozano-Hemmer started with *Pulse Room*, the main piece of his solo exhibition in the Mexican Pavilion during the 2007 Venice Biennial.

Rounding off the exhibition is the playful yet analytical *Company of Colours*, 2009. As participants stand in front of the high-resolution interactive screen, an integrated computerized monitoring system reconstructs their image in real-time using a variety of colour palettes that figure significantly in the history of computers and videogames. Premiering at the Guggenheim Museum's 50th Anniversary, this piece reflects on how the limited colour gamuts found in displays create specific and recognizable styles of representation, underlining the active role of surveillance in the construction of artificial realities.

The Mexican-Canadian-Spanish artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has been commissioned to do public artworks in Trafalgar Square (London, 2008), Madison Square Park (New York City, 2008), for the 40th Anniversary of the Tlatelolco Student Massacre in Mexico City (2008), at the Olympic Games (Vancouver 2010) and in Federation Square (Melbourne, 2010). His installations have been shown in Art Biennials in Venice, Istanbul, Havana, Sydney, Liverpool, Shanghai, Seoul, Seville, New Orleans and elsewhere. His work is in several collections including those of MoMA in New York, the TATE in London and the Daros Foundation in Zürich. Among the awards he has received are two BAFTAs (London), one Golden Nica (Linz), one Trophée des Lumières (Lyon) and the First International Bauhaus Award (Dessau).

You can visit his website at:
www.lozano-hemmer.com

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

GALERIA MAX ESTRELLA. Santo Tomé, 6 (patio) Madrid, Spain

May 13th to July 24th, 2010

Monday to Friday: 10 am to 2 pm / 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Saturdays: 11 am to 2 pm / 5 pm to 8:30 pm.

Opening: Thursday, May 13th at 8 pm