

ART LIES

text by Beryl Graham and Sarah Cook

The behaviors of new media towards a post-hype *hospitality* aesthetics?

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer,⁴ who represented Mexico in the Venice Biennale in 2007, was using the term “Relational Architecture” some time before the recent debate, and it still forms a useful phrase for accurately describing the nature of “planning” participation—artists, like architects, might cunningly design a shell within which certain behaviors might be encouraged but not controlled. Indeed, his work often displays a complex tension between the behavior or action of the group and the individual. In *Pulse Room* (2006) a light bulb starts to pulse to the user’s heartbeat when she holds two sensors: each small personal spectacle of electric energy slides gently into a bank of many light bulbs, which forces someone else’s heartbeat to shuffle off the end of the grid. Are we tracing only our own heartbeat here, or are we responsible for other people?

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Pulse Room*, 2006; La Constancia textile factory; originally commissioned by Plataforma, Puebla, Mexico; courtesy the artist; photo by Alejandro Biazquez

