

# Flash Art

## RAFAEL-LOZANO HEMMER

### CENTRO CULTURAL TLATELOCO - MEXICO CITY



RAFAEL-LOZANO HEMMER, *Voz Alta*, 2008. Modified megaphone, 10kW robotic searchlights, FM radio transmitter, loudspeakers. Commissioned by Centro Cultural Tlateloco, Mexico City.

When it comes to words, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer tends to be abusive. He wants to be sure that what he says describes accurately the intention regarding his light and sound pieces. Never knowing which would have the best impact upon description and meaning, he ventures towards unfeasible paradoxes. He knows his business as a media catalyst. Self-described as a “nomadist globalizer,” he has come back to Mexico, yet again, as a bringer of chic, mass propaganda devices.

Prodigal son of Mexican art, living in Canada and sent away last year (blessings and misfortunes apart) as the country’s first representation at the 52nd Venice Biennale, Lozano-Hemmer has become a turning point (beyond contrasts and con-

turning point (beyond contrasts and conflicts) towards the civic and political need for artistic fanfare in the current administrations’ agendas: a means of guaranteed enlightenment for public places.

Lozano-Hemmer has made his comeback this year with a piece, *Arquitectura Relacional 15*, to commemorate 40 years since the 2nd October massacre, perpetuated by the Mexican army at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Three Cultures’ Square). This new light beam sculpture is accompanied by an “open mike” in the square, which offers visitors the chance to give their regards and testimony. There is also the broadcast of historical speeches and declarations at the same time on Radio UNAM (The National University Radio Station). The voices activate a light beam that hits the twenty storey building on the side of the square (where the Foreign Relations offices used to be). This beam activates a further three anti-aircraft beams, each one of them aimed at historical sites: west to the Revolution Monument, north to El Tepyac and east to El Zocalo. The climate and pollution make it difficult to glance at the beams outside la Plaza de las Tres Culturas. Even at the top of the building, overwhelmed by the magnificence of the view, they just disappeared in the distance, not as bangs but as whimpers. For a site that still remembers itself as a moment (and monument) of grief and deception (*dos de octubre no se olvida*), Lozano-Hemmer’s interactive installation had too much of a good intention and is almost too sentimental for the occasion.

*Ricardo Pohlenz*