



Interactive art that's larger than life

By Joyce Hor-Chung Lau

HONG KONG

Patra Li, 17, was out on the city's neon-ringed boardwalk at 10:30 last Friday night, waving her arms in front of a large, illuminated cube. Her 4-year-old brother danced in front of her, and the two watched as they cast 30-meter-high shadows onto the outer walls of the Hong Kong Museum of Art.

Their silhouettes mingled with those of other passersby. And these, in turn, were superimposed onto flashing images of people in Hong Kong taken by eight local photographers. The spectacle of light and shadow — made possible by high-powered projectors and floodlights — lit up the harbor-side.

"It's very creative," Patra said of the large-scale installation. "Hopefully, events like this will help raise the standard of Hong Kong's cultural scene."

Patra's father, Alex, said that it was good to have art on the outside of the museum, as well as on its inside. "Things like the arts festival or the museum can be seen as a bit upper class," he said. "This is for the general public. It's a good thing here, because it can be hard to get the whole family to go to an art event together."

The Li family, along with many others, were participating in "Body Movies," a work by the Mexico-born artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, who is best known for building what he calls "anti-

monuments": enormous, high-tech, interactive works that take over public spaces, sometimes for weeks at a time.

"A lot of my work is not so much about people communicating with machines, as through machines," he said in a video conference. (It was only fitting that Lozano-Hemmer would show up for his interview on a projection screen, through a video feed from his home in Montreal, via a MacBook Pro operated by a cigarette-puffing assistant.)

He explained that most people relate to technology in a solitary way — for example, working on a computer in a cubicle — and that he wanted his art to challenge that.

"I want to use technology to create something intimate," he said. "In this work, people are having an instant relationship with an image. The people are taking over, amplifying their personalities. 'Body Movies' is a new way of connecting hundreds of people."

Videos of past "Body Movies" exhibitions in Europe — in Duisburg, Germany; Linz, Austria; Liverpool; Lisbon; and Rotterdam — show pedestrians interacting with a playfulness rarely seen in museums or galleries. In Rotterdam, one girl skipped away from the floodlights toward



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