RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER

Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer coined the term ‘Relational Architecture’ to refer to large-scale interactive events that transform emblematic buildings through new technological interfaces.

Lozano-Hemmer’s work involves the deployment of data networks, monumental projections, robotic lights, custom-made sensors, samplers and other devices to create participatory experiences where several realities are co-present. In 1998 he was commissioned to develop a piece for the millennium celebrations in Mexico City’s Zócalo Plaza. Vectorial Elevation, Relational Architecture No. 4 invited participants on the Internet to create light sculptures in the sky using a 3D interface on the Web. Participants from all over the world were able to direct searchlight beams installed on the rooftops of buildings around the square, and their designs were automatically documented in the project site at http://www.alzado.net.

Body Movies, Relational Architecture No. 5 is an adaptation of an existing interactive projection artwork that will be re-presented in Liverpool city centre. 1,200 portraits of people taken on the streets of Liverpool, Rotterdam, Madrid, Mexico and Montreal are projected onto a large screen in Williamson Square. The portraits will only appear inside the projected shadows of local passers-by, whose silhouettes will measure up to 20 metres high, depending on how far people are from the powerful light sources placed on the ground. The piece is managed by a custom-made computer vision system that tracks the shadows in real-time. The shadow interface was inspired by Samuel van Hoogstraten’s engraving The Shadow Dance (Rotterdam, 1675). Body Movies aims to explore the intersection between new technologies, urban space and public activation.

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