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"Voice Tunnel" in NYC

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Celebrity interviewer and CNN iReporter ALADINO visited today the "Voice Tunnel" which is the signature event of Summer Streets 2013.

Open to pedestrians for the first time in history, the Park Avenue Tunnel, which runs from East 33rd Street to East 40th Street, opened to pedestrians at the 33rd Street entrance between the hours of 7 am and 1 pm.

Voice Tunnel is an interactive light and sound installation by Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, whom ALADINO had the opportunity to meet and interview.

The artist transformed the 1,400 foot long Park Avenue Tunnel with 300 theatrical spotlights that produced glimmering arches of light along the tunnel's walls and ceiling.

Participants will be able to influence the intensity of each light by speaking into a special intercom at the tunnel's center which records their voice and loops it.

Louder speech will increase the lights' brightness proportionally, creating a Morse-like code of flashes throughout the tunnel. The individual voices will be heard as pedestrians walk through the tunnel, on 180 loudspeakers, one beside each light arch and synchronized with it.

At any given time, the tunnel will be illuminated by the voices of the past 90 participants: as new participants speak into the intercom, older recordings will get pushed away by one position down the array of light fixtures until they leave the tunnel, so that the content of the piece is changing constantly.

About the artist:

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was born in Mexico City in 1967. In 1989 he received a B.Sc. in Physical Chemistry from Concordia University in Montréal, Canada.

Electronic artist, develops interactive installations that are at the intersection of architecture and performance art. His main interest is in creating platforms for public participation, by perverting technologies such as robotics, computerized surveillance or telematic networks. Inspired by phantasmagoria, carnival and animatronics, his light and shadow works are "antimonuments for alien agency".

His large-scale interactive installations have been commissioned for events such as the Millennium Celebrations in Mexico City (1999), the Cultural Capital of Europe in Rotterdam (2001), the UN World Summit of Cities in Lyon (2003), the opening of the YCAM Center in Japan (2003), the Expansion of the European Union in Dublin (2004), the memorial for the Tlatelolco Student Massacre in Mexico City (2008), the 50th Anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum in New York (2009) and the Winter Olympics in Vancouver (2010).

Recently the subject of solo exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Fundación Telefónica in Buenos Aires and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, he was the first artist to officially represent Mexico at the Venice Biennale with a solo exhibition at Palazzo Soranzo Van Axel in 2007. He has also shown at Art Biennials and Triennials in Havana, Istanbul, Liverpool, Montréal, Moscow, New Orleans, Panama, Seville, Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore and Sydney. Collections holding his work include the MoMA in New York, Tate in London, AGO in Toronto, CIFO in Miami, Jumex in Mexico City, DAROS in Zurich, Borusan Contemporary in Istanbul, MUAC in Mexico City, 21st Century Museum of Art in Kanazawa, MAG in Manchester, MUSAC in Leon, MONA in Hobart, ZKM in Karlsruhe, MAC in Montréal and SAM in Singapore, among others.

He has received two BAFTA British Academy Awards for Interactive Art in London, a Golden Nica at the Prix Ars Electronica in Austria, "Artist of the year" Rave Award from Wired Magazine, a Rockefeller fellowship, the Trophée des Lumières in Lyon and an International Bauhaus Award in Dessau. He has lectured at Goldsmiths college, the Bartlett school, Princeton,

Harvard, UC Berkeley, Cooper Union, USC, MIT MediaLab, Guggenheim Museum, LA MOCA, Netherlands Architecture Institute, Cornell, UPenn, SCAD, Danish Architecture Centre, CCA in Montreal, ICA in London and the Art Institute of Chicago.

You can find his work at <http://www.lozano-hemmer.com>