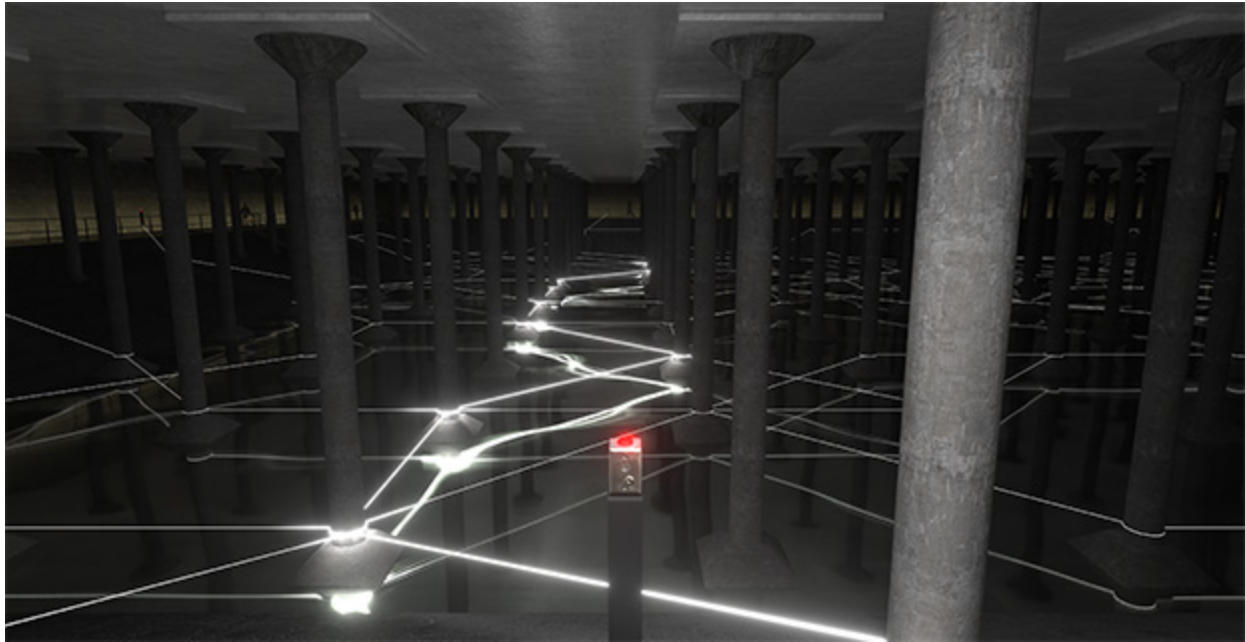


# Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Undercurrents | Glasstire

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March 20, 2026

## Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Undercurrents



**April 24, 2026 - January 27, 2027**

From Buffalo Bayou Partnership:

“Undercurrents” will construct an interactive chamber of voice messages that travel as light pulses along a network of catenaries across the cavernous Cistern, leading to an audiovisual representation of communication across time, space, and relationships. The work consists of a mile-long, nerve-like labyrinth of white LED linear lights extending between the space’s 221 columns, suspended just above the mirrored surface of water covering the floor. The resulting matrix of zigzagging lines of light creates a seemingly endless visual “switchboard” of connection across the entire width and length of the Cistern, an effect doubled by the uncanny reflectivity of the water pooled at the bottom of this monumental piece of Houston’s infrastructural history.

A system of intercoms is linked to the network of lights placed at regular intervals along the quarter-mile perimeter of the space, each consisting of a microphone, speaker, and push button. The intercoms beckon visitors to press a button, speak, and record brief messages, which are then encoded into modulations of light brightness and visually transmitted along a linear path within the switchboard. These visual pathways fork and bounce around the vastness, traveling steadily until reaching another intercom.

The spirit of the artwork is that the exchange of voice recordings is slow, unpredictable, and contains traces of memories of what people say in the present, combined with an archive of curated voices from the past. Specially selected content of recorded poetry by Houston writers will amplify the presentation, acting as an “echo” of the messages shared by visitors. A mix of original and new site-responsive materials will cultivate a more complex and reflective environment, transcending time and space through spoken word.

“Undercurrents’ aims to create a choral work where live voice messages from participants are mixed with poetry commissioned from some of Texas’s most salient authors. The project is made in the spirit of ‘coming together’ that the great American composer Frederic Rzewski proposed as the most important objective of art at a time of turmoil,” explained Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Ultimately, “Undercurrents” is an audiovisual forum of the thoughts and messages of its participants, playing back in tandem with resonant poetry. As visitors traverse the artwork, they may add to or simply witness this creation, experiencing the piece like a mesmerizing reservoir that makes tangible our fleeting vocalizations of existing here, now, and in relation to others. Each instance of the installation will be unique, continually shaped and changed by the visitors who interact with it.

“As our first truly interactive installation in the Cistern, ‘Undercurrents’ offers visitors not only something to behold, but something to become a part of,” said BBP’s Vice President of External Affairs, Karen Farber. “It is such an honor to witness Rafael’s inventive studio responding to the unique conditions of the Cistern and we can’t wait for audiences see – and hear – the space through this new artwork.”

“Undercurrents” will be on view to the public beginning April 24, 2026, with tours available Wednesday through Sunday. Multiple public programs, including readings and performances featuring contributing writers, will be presented throughout the run of the installation. Reinforcing BBP’s commitment to accessibility, free admission is offered on the first Thursday of each month; discounted tickets are available for students, seniors, and military; and the Cistern itself is ADA compliant.

This project is organized by Buffalo Bayou Partnership with lead underwriting generously provided by The Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation. Major support provided by John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation and VIA Art Fund with additional support provided by an Anonymous Donor; Mara and Erick Calderon; and Jereann Chaney. Buffalo Bayou Partnership is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance. Project management and curatorial collaboration provided by Weingarten Art Group.

About Rafael Lozano-Hemmer Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Mexican Canadian media artist, creates platforms for public participation by using robotic lights, digital fountains, computerized surveillance, and telematic networks. Inspired by phantasmagoria, carnival, and animatronics, his interactive works are “anti-monuments for people to self-represent.”

He was the first artist to represent Mexico at the 2007 Venice Biennale. His large-scale participatory art installations transform public spaces, creating connective environments for communities. In 2019, he presented “Border Tuner,” designed to interconnect the bordering cities of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Other works were commissioned for events such as the Millennium Celebrations in Mexico City (1999), the UN World Summit in Lyon (2003), the Winter Olympics in Vancouver (2010), and the pre-opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi (2015), among others. His works are in collections around the world such as MoMA, Guggenheim, TATE, Reina Sofía, and Hirshhorn.

About Buffalo Bayou Partnership Since 1986, Buffalo Bayou Partnership (BBP) has been reimagining Houston’s most significant natural waterway. As the nonprofit leading the way in creating parks, trails, and vibrant public spaces, BBP focuses on the 10-mile stretch of Buffalo Bayou from Shepherd Drive through downtown and the East End, and on to the Port of Houston Turning Basin. BBP also operates comprehensive green space and waterway maintenance programs and engages tens of thousands of visitors each year with dynamic programming, public art, volunteer events, and recreational experiences that bring the bayou — and the city — to life.

About the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern A structure reminiscent of the ancient Roman cisterns in Istanbul, the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern is a cavernous, 87,500-square-foot-space featuring more than 200 slender, 25-foot-high concrete columns. BBP rediscovered the Cistern in 2010 when it was developing Buffalo Bayou Park, a 160-acre green space west of downtown Houston. Recognizing the significance of the highly unusual site, BBP took the bold step of repurposing the Cistern into a magnificent public space. In addition to tours highlighting the history and architecture of the Cistern, BBP presents an ambitious program of changing art installations in this iconic space, including past projects by Magdalena Fernández, Carlos Cruz-Diez, Anri Sala, and Rachel Rossin."

### [Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern](#)

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