

EL PAÍS

Making different waves

Barcelona show explores electromagnetic radiation

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Would you like to know what it feels like to become a human radio set and use your body to tune into broadcast stations? Now you can, thanks to an installation called *Frecuencia y volumen* (Frequency and volume) by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer. This peculiar display turns visitors into walking antennas in such a way that, as they move across space, their bodies' shadows enable them to capture any radio frequency and turn the volume up or down. Things really get interesting when there are several people in the room at the same time, and the cacophony of sounds gives everyone a sense of the swarm of radio waves that surrounds us.

The work is part of *Campos invisibles. Geografía de las ondas radio* (Invisible fields. A geography of radio waves), an exhibition at the Arts Santa Mònica center in Barcelona. Open until March 4, this show explores radio waves, a type of electromagnetic radiation that is considered the most important discovery in the field of physics since the late 19th century. "Waves are invisible, but they are all around us," explains José Luis de Vicente, curator of the show with Honor Harger, who directs the Lighthouse center in Brighton. "Everyone knows about them, but few people are aware of how they work, how they are managed and how they are sold."

The exhibition, which will later travel to Britain, attempts to shed some light on this enigmatic world through a series of works that visualize the electromagnetic spectrum in different and unexpected ways. "The radio, the telegraph and the telephone put an end to geographic distance, transforming our vision of the world and becoming the technical and conceptual backdrop for information technologies," adds De Vicente.

Two other art centers are



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Frecuencia y Volumen*. / XAVI SOTO

partnering in the project: Bòlit from Girona and La Laboral from Gijón, which will also display some work. In another installation, Job Ramos attempts to reproduce the experience of Radio Liberty, a US station that broadcast out of Pals, on the Costa Brava, between 1951 and 2001, whose enormous antennas were destroyed in 2006 amid great controversy. Another work is *Observatorio*, by Clara Boj and Diego Díaz, who created an enhanced reality device installed inside a spyglass of sorts aimed at Barcelona's La Rambla, which allows you to visualize

and count the number of open and closed WiFi connections at any given time.

Some installations try to visualize encrypted military messages and other secretive forms of communication. There is also a Faraday cage, a black hole of sorts that blocks all cellphones no matter how new, providing a moment of Hertzian respite that is all too infrequent in our modern world.

Campos invisibles. Geografía de las ondas radio. Until March 4 at Centro Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona. www.artssantamonica.cat