

# TORONTO STAR

ENTERTAINMENT > WHAT'S ON > VISUAL ARTS

## DECONSTRUCTED: PULSE FRONT

# Light up the night to the beat of your heart

### Vital signs

The Luminato Pulse Front light show at Harbourfront Centre is an interactive exhibit which allows users to control the most powerful searchlights in the world

- 1 The user grips sensors, which pick up the electrical signals generated by their heartbeat
- 2 The signals are sent via USB cable to a mini computer in the base of the pulse station
- 3 The computer transmits the signals through an Ethernet cable to the control room
- 4 The information is converted into digital signals which travel to the searchlight via cable
- 5 The light immediately to the left of the user flashes with an intensity that reflects their pulse

A 10,000-watt searchlight sits atop each three-metre-high scaffold tower

Three biodiesel generators will power the light show installation. Telus, the main sponsor, is buying carbon credits to offset the environmental impact of the show.

REES ST. QUEEN'S QUAY WEST

Five spotlight towers line each side of York Quay

Radisson Admiral Hotel

Ann Tindal Park

York Quay Centre

Service Canada

Queen's Quay Terminal

Pier 4 Storehouse Restaurant

Concert Stage

Pond

The Power Plant Gallery

Premiere Dance Theatre

Central control room in the Radisson Hotel

10 spotlight towers and pulse stations

● Light towers  
■ Pulse stations

HARBOURFRONT

SOURCE: The Power Plant; Rafael Lozano-Hemmer; Syncrolite

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**PETER GODDARD**  
VISUAL ARTS COLUMNIST

Talk about showing a little heart.

With "Pulse Front," your heart rate will light up the city.

One of the world's biggest interactive light sculptures, "Pulse Front: Relational Architecture 12" from Montreal-based artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, will blast 20 pulsing mega-watt light beams with its awesome 200,000 watts of power up to 10 kilometres into the sky northward over the city.

Here's a light show visible from space.

"The dome of light on top of all of Harbourfront will be controlled by people's pulses," says the internationally acclaimed Mexican-born Canadian artist also representing Mexico at the Venice Biennale in Italy starting next week.

For more than 16 years, the artist with chemistry degree (he graduated in 1989 from Montreal's Concordia University) has been displaying his "anti-monuments," from the millennium celebrations in Mexico City in 1999, to the ceremonies in Dublin marking the formal expansion of the European Union in 2004.

"Pulse Front" is also part of "Auto Emotion: Autobiography, emotion and self-fashioning" an art-star driven exhibition at the Power Plant at Harbourfront Centre that's curated by the gallery's director, Gregory Burke.

In their individual efforts toward their own self-fashioning, "Pulse Front's" visitors, "are registering their own heartbeats as spectacular projections," says Burke.

"They are, in effect, autographs," he adds.

"The involvement and even empowering of the audience was important. We wanted something uplifting and involving. For such a

public work linked to 'Auto Emotion' we wanted something celebratory, as some of the themes in the show are dark."

"'Pulse Front' is not another case of a spectacle controlled the people," says Lozano-Hemmer. "It's not the media controlling the people either. It's quite the opposite. This is about the differences in all of us, about the many way variations in the way we are different from one another."

## THE ARTIST



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer created *Pulse Front: Relational Architecture 12* at Harbourfront.

# Turning a spotlight on the world

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is the man behind the spotlights.

The electronic artist makes his Canadian debut with *Pulse Front:*

*Relational Architecture 12* (which starts lighting up the Harbourfront sky tonight) but he's gained international recognition with his bright, interactive artworks in public spaces around the world.

"Most of the work I've been doing in the past 16 years has been for large public spaces," he told the *Star* in April. Born in Mexico City in 1967, Lozano-Hemmer's works include "Under Scan." The light show put on in Nottingham, England until 2006 was described as the world's "largest interactive video art" work. The winner of a Golden Nica, the highest prize at the 2000 Prix Ars Electronica in Austria, He's had works commissioned for the millennium celebrations in Mexico City and the United Nations' World Summit of Cities in Lyon.

Aside from *Pulse Front*, Lozano-Hemmer's *Homographies*, will also be on display at the TD Centre throughout Luminato.

The interactive display, with 48 rotating, robotic light tubes that hang from the roof and form patterns based on people below, will be a permanent fixture at the AGO.