

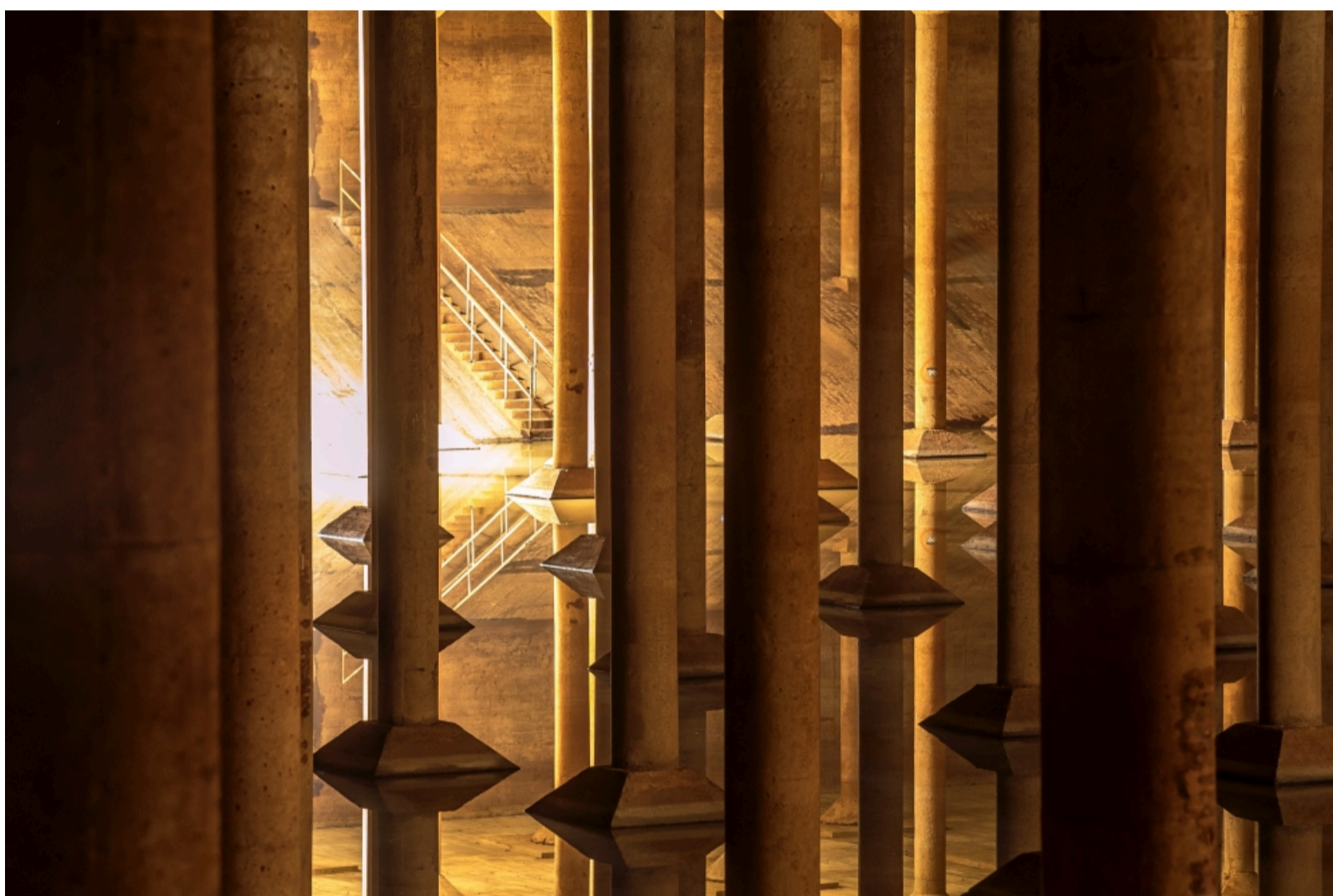
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New cistern installation at Buffalo Bayou Park to kickstart centennial year



By [Cassandra Jenkins](#) | 3:44 PM Mar 24, 2026 CDT
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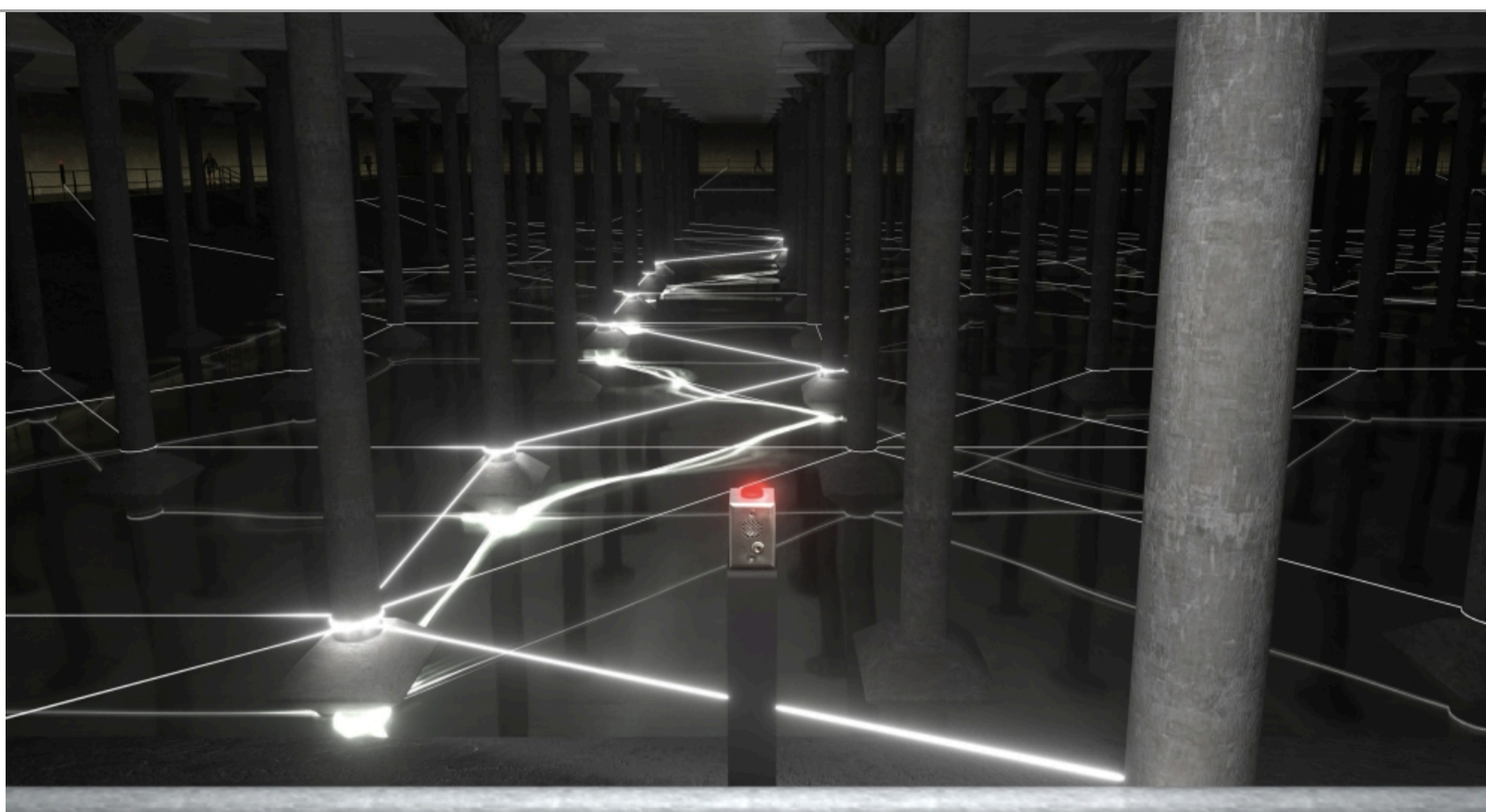
A cistern is an artificial reservoir, often underground, designed to store water. (Courtesy Buffalo Bayou Partnership)

The Buffalo Bayou Partnership is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the park's cistern with a new major interactive public art project called "Undercurrents."

What's happening

"Undercurrents" will be an interactive installation by renowned multimedia artist [Rafael Lozano-Hemmer](#), a Mexican Canadian artist who creates platforms using robotic lights, digital fountains and computerized surveillance.

The Buffalo Bayou Cistern installation, according to a March 24 news release, will include a mile's worth of LED lighting suspended in a web-like grid above the entire reflective service of the Cistern's waterline.



"Undercurrents" will bring light and sound to the cistern. (Rendering courtesy Rafael Lozano-Hemmer)

Random patterns of light will also be triggered by a system of linked intercoms set up along the perimeter of the space. Visitors are encouraged to use the intercoms to record brief messages, which are then encoded and displayed as light pulses in an array of patterns communicated at the water's surface. These ever-changing light currents are the visual "voice" supplied by visitors' recorded messages mixed with the recorded spoken works by five Houston writers.

Quote of note



"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 Karen Farber, BBP's Vice President of External Affairs. "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 to see-and hear-the space through this new artwork."

More details

The Cistern will be closed at the end of March for the installation and will reopen for its debut April 24. "Undercurrents" will be open through Jan. 24, 2027. However, due to the special nature of the work, officials said that "Undercurrents" will only be able to be viewed by 45 visitors at a time in groups admitted every 15 minutes.

The new art installation will also kickstart a month-long calendar of special events and activations,