



## FEATURES

## Venetian Opera

The Montreal-based artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer represents Mexico in Venice with interactive, technology-based artworks and plans for a Gothic palace  
by Christine Redfern



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, 2005  
PHOTO BERND HIEPE

Installation view of *Pulse Room*,  
Plataforma Exhibition, Puebla,  
Mexico 2006 100 incandescent  
lamps, heart-rate sensors and  
computerized dimmers  
PHOTO ANTIMODULAR RESEARCH

*In recent years, the Mexico-born, Montreal-based Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has been one of Canada's most exciting artists on the international scene, yet locally, few people know his name. Lozano-Hemmer's work breaks down the traditional artist/viewer dichotomy, not only requiring input from viewers to function, but often giving them a platform for artistic expression of their own. Finally, though, Canadians will have a chance to experience his work on home soil. As of June 1, The Power Plant in Toronto and the Art Gallery of Ontario will exhibit two of his large-scale works as part of the Luminato festival. This fall, he is part of an exhibition at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. Additionally, his summer 2007 schedule is filled with prestigious international events: he will represent Mexico at the Venice Biennale, is included in "Art Unlimited," a special section of Art Basel reserved for large-scale works, will speak at Tate Modern and opens his work 33 Questions per Minute at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. We recently got together to talk about his work for Venice.*

**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer:**

The Mexican Pavilion is located in the Gothic-style Palazzo Soranzo Van Axel in central Venice. *Pulse Room*, which consists of 100 bulbs hanging from the ceiling, takes over the whole second floor. When you grab the sensor handles, the closest light bulb flashes in time with your heartbeat and records the pattern. The moment you release the handles, all the lights turn off and then each recording moves one step along the line—so each flashing bulb represents a different person's heartbeat. The effect is mesmerizing, for the patterns syncopate and then they get synchronized. It reminds me of the music of American minimalist composers like Steve Reich and Glenn Branca,



# Venetian OPERA

MONTREAL'S RAFAEL  
LOZANO-HEMMER

REPRESENTS MEXICO AT THE VENICE BIENNALE

by CHRISTINE REDFERN

