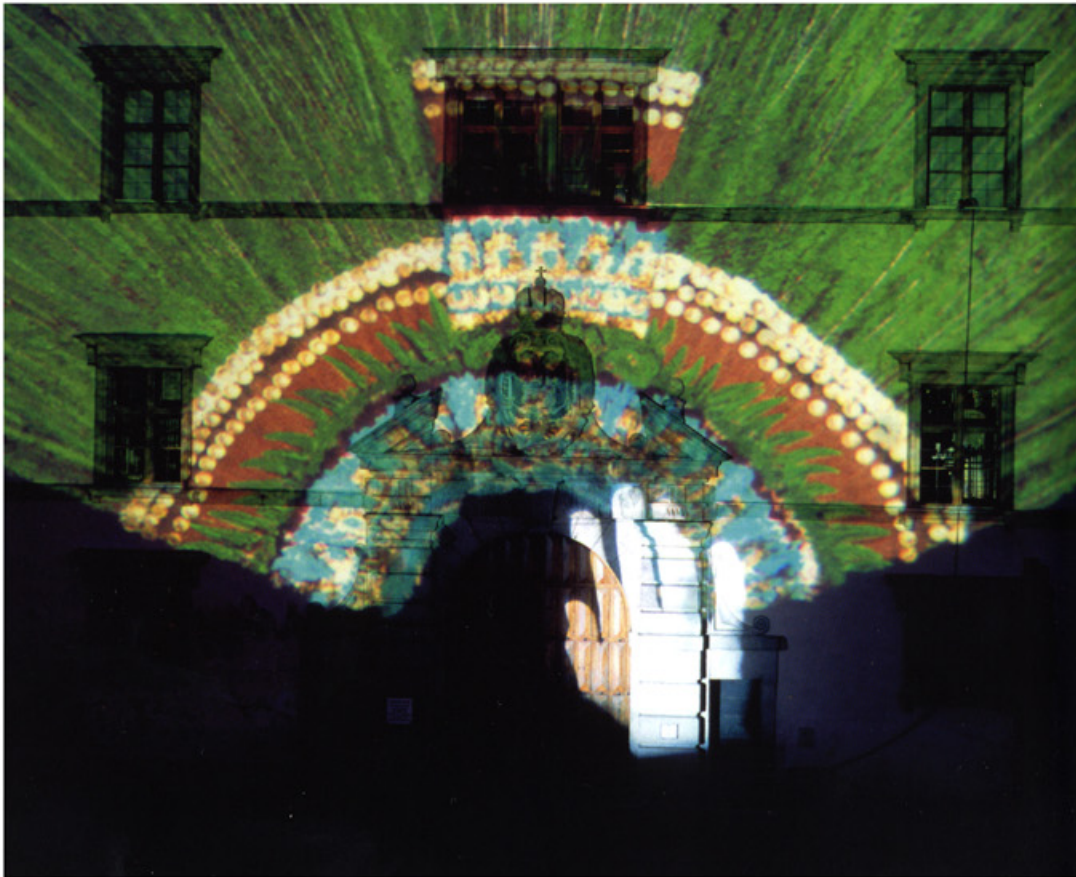


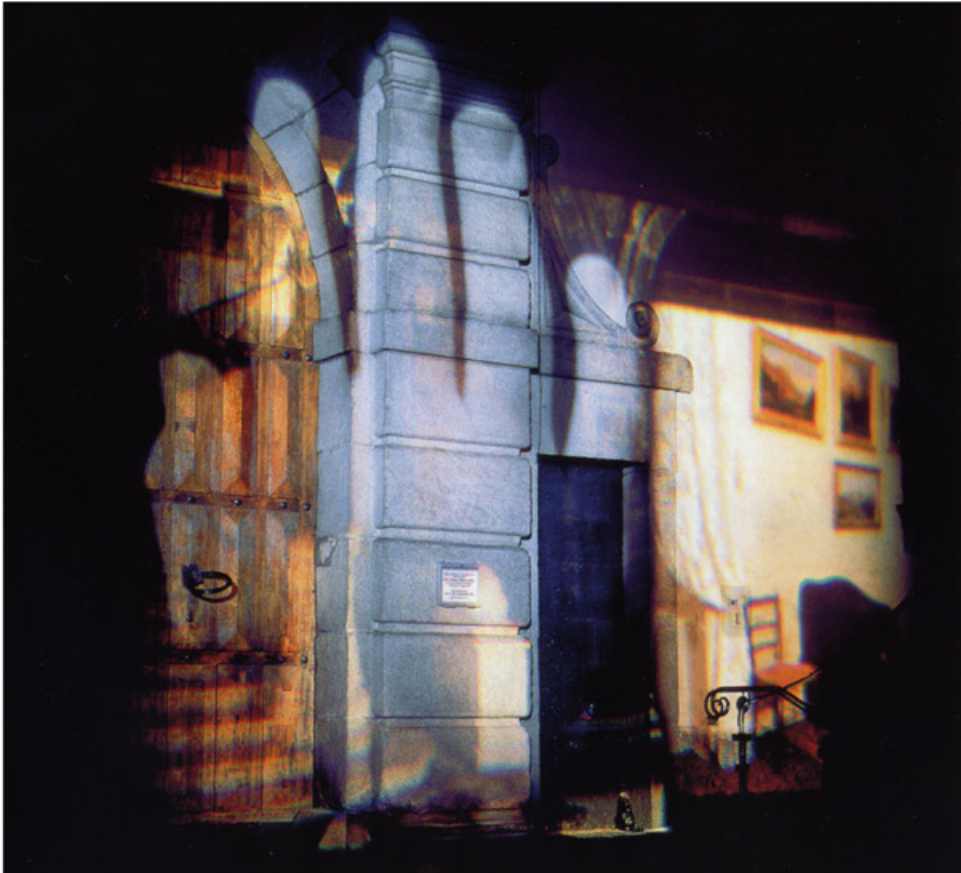
The augmentation of a physical architecture with a virtual memory and narrative is what Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer (b. 1967) has referred to as 'relational architecture', which he defines as 'the technological actualization of buildings and public spaces with artificial memory'. Lozano-Hemmer has created a whole series of relational architecture projects, in which he augments buildings and sites by adding audio-visual elements to them that point to broader historical, political, or aesthetic contexts. While Lozano-Hemmer's projects are distinctly different from *The Legible City's* purely virtual architecture in that they expand a physical building into an artificial construct, they equally experiment with the tension between physical and virtual architecture. In his project *Displaced Emperors (Relational Architecture #2)*, which was shown in Linz in 1997, Lozano-Hemmer established a link between Mexico and Austria through seemingly unrelated historical oddities: the Mexican empire of the Austrian Maximilian of Habsburg (1864–7) and the feather crown ('Penacho de Moctezuma') of one of the last Aztec emperors, which was in the possession of the Ethnological Museum of Vienna. The actual intervention transformed the outside of the Habsburg Castle in Linz: by pointing to

70. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, with Will Bauer and Susie Ramsay, *Displaced Emperors (Relational Architecture #2)*, 1997





places on the façade, the audience (whose movements were tracked by wireless sensors) triggered the projection of a large animated hand that appeared at the location to which they pointed. Moving their hand over the building, participants could seemingly unveil its interiors, which appeared as a projection on the building. However, these interiors did not represent the actual inside of the castle but that of Chapultepec Castle, the Habsburg residence in Mexico City. The audience could also make the feather headdress appear as a projection by pressing a 'Moctezuma button' at various stations. *Displaced Emperors* thus literally displaced and replaced strands of colonial history, endowing a familiar physical site with a context that was far from well known, and implicating the public in historical power relations. The artist continued his architectural intervention in his project *Vectorial Elevation* (since 1999), which transformed the urban landscape by means of more than a dozen robotically controlled gigantic searchlights.



89. **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**, *Body Movies: Relational Architecture #6*, 2001. The piece reversed the traditional roles of light and darkness – the basic elements of cinema – in the production of projected images, for shadows were necessary for the projections to become visible. Depending on how close the pedestrians came to the lights in the square, their shadows would be between two and twenty-two metres high. A camera-based tracking system monitored the shadows and, once they had revealed all the portraits in a given scene, a computer changed the scene to a different set of portraits.

An exploration of interactive portraits in a public space unfolds in Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Body Movies* (2001), which combines techniques of *trompe l'oeil* and shadow play. Presented in Rotterdam in 2001, the project transformed the Schouwburgplein square into a 1,200-square-metre interactive projection environment. By means of robotically controlled projectors located around the square, portraits of people from cities around the world were projected onto walls. However, the portraits were faded out by powerful lights placed on the floor of the square and became visible only if passers-by threw shadows onto the walls, which made the portraits appear inside their silhouettes. While the project in itself has a distinctly performative aspect, it gained new dimensions when people repeatedly returned to the site to stage their own gigantic shadow plays.

