Crystal Bridges' new 'Listening Forest' exhibition to use interactive art to create spaces of connection

Eight new immersive experiences by artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer will transform the North Forest at Crystal Bridges

August 22, 2022

Summon, simulation by Antimodular Studio (Courtesy of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art)

Bentonville, Arkansas – Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's North Forest will glow this year with the debut of *Listening Forest*, a new interactive exhibition featuring immersive installations by artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Listening Forest consists of eight site-specific audiovisual artworks installed along the North Forest trail at Crystal Bridges. The exhibition is designed to be experienced at night and will be on view from August 31, 2022, through January 1, 2023.

Lozano-Hemmer is an award-winning media artist originally from Mexico City. He creates platforms for public participation using technologies such as robotic lights, digital fountains, computer vision, artificial intelligence, and telematic networks. His work has

been commissioned for events such as the Vancouver Olympics, collected by museums including MoMA, Hirshhorn, Tate, and SFMOMA, and exhibited in art biennials in Venice, Sydney, New Orleans, Shanghai, Istanbul, and Singapore, among others. *Listening Forest* will be the most significant display of his outdoor installations to date, providing a mid-career survey of his largest works.

In *Listening Forest*, Lozano-Hemmer creates artworks that respond to the visitor's presence and participation, highlighting the unique physical characteristics of individuals while simultaneously creating connections between strangers and the landscape itself.

"*Listening Forest* promises to engage the audience in unique ways, whether it be by measuring their heart rate or body heat, analyzing their facial features, or sharing their own voice messages alongside curated oral histories," Lozano-Hemmer said. "By combining art and technology, we are able to share our stories, create intimacy, and

strengthen our sense of community. In *Listening Forest,* the public will be an integral part of the artwork."

The exhibition will sense visitors and interact playfully and poetically with their participation. The installations highlight the interconnectedness of visitors in the forest and are aimed at creating feelings of wonder, joy, common purpose, and reflection.

"With Crystal Bridges sitting on over 120 acres of native Ozark forest, we relish the opportunity to explore the forest in new ways that connect us to each other," said Rod Bigelow, executive director and chief diversity and Inclusion officer. "These eight installations allow our guests the opportunity to explore an immersive art experience in an interesting and meaningful way. Outside of the museum walls and amidst the wonders of nature, the sound and light experience will surprise and delight guests of all ages

The exhibition includes the following eight installations: *Recorded Assembly, Arkansas Text Stream, Pulse Forest, Thermal Drift, Remote Pulse, Embodied Light Beacons, Voice Forest,* and *Summon.*

- *Recorded Assembly* will merge the facial features of participants into a constantly changing portrait of previous forest visitors.

- *Arkansas Text Stream* will consist of brief texts sourced from Northwest Arkansas community members animated as a slow stream of letters projected on the footpath that transform into phrases as the presence of people is detected.

- In *Pulse Forest,* visitors can add their heartbeat to an array of 3,000 lightbulbs, each glimmering to the pulse of a different participant from the past.

- *Thermal Drift* features a thermal camera that registers a visitor's heat signature and visualizes that energy as particles floating into the surrounding space.

- *Remote Pulse* will consist of two identical pulse-sensing stations that connect strangers and beams of light across the forest.

- *Embodied Light Beacons* will allow guests to control giant, 20-foot-tall stick figures made of light.

- In *Voice Forest*, guests can leave a voice recording that will join a chorus of voices left by previous forest visitors.

- In *Summon*, microphones will pick up sounds from visitors on a bridge and translate them into an array of light in the ravine below.

Listening Forest also features a commissioned soundtrack composed and recorded by British electronic musician Scanner (Robin Rimbaud).

Exhibition tickets are$15-27 for adults, and $7-15 for children (prices vary based on the day and membership status) with group rates available. Tickets may be purchased online here.

Listening Forest by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer was organized by Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas.

*Listening Forest i*s sponsored by the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation and Kenneth and Mandy Davis.

SOURCE   Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art