WUM NEWS LONDON: Obra Sonora, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Debut at Carroll / Fletcher

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Voice Array, 2011* at **Carroll / Fletcher**, London, Images Courtesy of the Gallery

Sphere Packing, 2014

With a flawless *Obra Sonora*– or sound work in English– Mexican-born, Montreal-based artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer [http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/] is exhibiting his first solo show in London [**On view through November 1st**] at Carroll / Fletcher [http://www.carrollfletcher.com/exhibitions/current/] with an artist-led tour

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that will take place this coming **Friday October 17th** at 4:30PM.

With Lozano-Hemmer's most recent exhibitions at the *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,* the *Fundación Telefónica* in Buenos Aires and the *Museum of Contemporary Art* in Sydney, the artist is presenting sound work as the primary medium for his show.

Four acoustic installations–two new ones (*Sphere Packing* and *Pan-Anthem*) and *Last Breath* (2012), *Voice Array* (2011) follow the concept of 'speakers as pixels' Lozano-Hemmer's installations use multi-channel audio to panoramically represent sound data, ranging from the voice recordings of thousands of gallery visitors to national anthems, and the complete works of eleven classical composers.

In Pan-Anthem, hundreds of national anthems are poised to play, upon the approach of the viewer.

Individual movable speakers are magnetically fixed across the wall at the front of the gallery, precisely arranged to visualise a set of national statistics: whether population, GDP, land mass, year of independence, or percentage of women in parliament, to name a few possible arrangements.

For example, at the gallery the work is configured to show the spread of national military spending per capita, on the far left of the wall the public can hear anthems of countries without military forces like Costa Rica, Grenada and Andorra.

As they walk to the right, they are able to hear India 2.5 m away, then China 5 m away, the Canadian Anthem plays at 6.5 m, Russia at 7 m, UK at 7.5 m, and finally, the U.S. 'Star Spangled Banner' plays with the anthems of Israel, UAE and Saudi Arabia at the far right of the room, 8 m away.

As a visitor approaches a particular set of speakers, these start playing automatically, creating a positional panoramic playback of anthems associated to specific metrics.

Inspired by the American composer **Charles Ives**' practice of simultaneity as a compositional tool, Lozano-Hemmer presents *Sphere Packing,* a series of 3D-printed spheres designed to concentrate the entire musical output of a composer into a singular multi-channel device.

Each sphere represents a particular composer, and contains a tiny loudspeaker of their musical works. The size of each hanging orb is therefore directly proportional to how prolific the composer was.

For example, for Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is 35 cm in diameter and holds 565 loudspeakers playing simultaneously his 565 different compositions, while the one for Gustav Mahler is 11 cm in diameter and plays his 39 compositions across 39 loudspeakers.

Gallery visitors standing a few meters away from a sphere will hear a faint murmur of sounds, as each score plays at once. As visitors, moves closer, they will be able to listen to individual speakers and hone in on specific compositions.

by Jesus Manuel Rojas Torres

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