

EXCUSE YOU

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer  
March 18 - May 13, 2023  
bitforms gallery SF

# bitforms gallery

## ***EXCUSE YOU!***

**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

**March 18–May 13, 2023**

Opening reception: Saturday, March 18, 5–7 PM

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday: 11 AM–6 PM

*EXCUSE YOU!* is a collection of recent works that showcases the salient concerns of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's studio over the past twenty years. Likening the show to an assortment of breaches, stammers, or obstacles, the artist uses play as an apparatus to question some of the most pressing issues of the contemporary moment, such as surveillance, climate change, and the manner in which digital life can collide with lived experience.

With a nod to the absurd, a philosophy that challenges the stronghold of reason, Lozano-Hemmer encourages viewers to become participants in order to reflect upon, for example, how the fetishization of consumer culture contributes to water scarcity (*Botella de Castigos*) or how precious aspects of human lives are held safe or at hostage by the digital gatekeeper of the password (*Password Breach*). Exhibited works engage with machines to create active portraits of the human condition that depend on the human as the operational force, as in *Remote Pulse* an interactive installation of two identical pulse-sensing stations, which uses the internet to connect the heartbeats of individuals divided by geography.

Despite their apparent playfulness, the pieces maintain the artist's long-standing sensitivity, which recognizes that they fit within an extended temporal spectrum of art history and mechanical tradition. *Descending a Parametric Staircase* pays homage to Duchamp's famous painting *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* (1912), which at its time was considered a scandalous interruption of the nude convention by splicing twenty different static positions. Nudes, Duchamp was reminded, reclined, not descended. Lozano-Hemmer hitches onto this spirit of provocation by challenging what material, genres, and bodies can or cannot do.

In *Bilateral Time Slicer* he uses a cutting-edge biometric instrument and vertical orientations to reflect upon ancient traditions of mask making, while *Hormonium* and *Thermal Drift Density Map* provide poetic translations for otherwise invisible or unremarkable signatures to render unconventional portraits. The neon *EXCUSE YOU!* is an indignant yet playful calling out using pop culture material, while two generative artworks, *Recurrent Rayuela* and *Recurrent Llull* respectively produce literary and philosophical loops based on the works of Julio Cortázar and Raymond Llull.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Bilateral Time Slicer*, 2016

Custom software (color, silent), biometric tracking system, computer, camera with digitizer, screen

Dimensions variable, portrait orientation

Edition of 6, 1 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment:  
\$ 250,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Botella de Castigos*, 2022

Raspberry Pi, square flat screen, aluminum frame

24.41 x 24.41 x 3.54 in / 62 x 62 x 9 cm

Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 55,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Descending a Parametric Staircase (big)*, 2018

Custom generative software (color, silent), custom screen, LED, computer

47 in diameter, 3.2 in depth

120 cm diameter, 8 cm depth

Edition of 3, 1 AP

\$ 50,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*EXCUSE YOU!*, 2022

Neon

70.87 x 11.02 in / 180 x 28 cm

Edition of 3, 1 AP

\$ 30,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Hormonium*, 2022

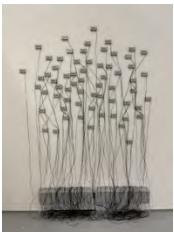
Custom software (black and white, silent), computer

Dimensions variable, landscape orientation

Edition of 6, 1 AP

Display: \$ 100,000

Unique Projection Treatment:  
\$ 250,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Password Breach*, 2021

77 ePaper displays, ESP feather boards, wifi router, cables, power supplies, software written in Wiring

49.2 x 59.1 in / 125 x 150 cm, installed

Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 75,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Recurrent Lull*, 2019

Custom software (black and white, silent), screen, computer

Dimensions variable

Edition of 6, 2 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment:  
\$ 250,000

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**  
*Recurrent Rayuela*, 2020  
Custom software, custom display, rotation encoder, computer  
20.9 in / 53 cm, diameter  
Edition of 6, 2 AP

\$ 75,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**  
*Remote Pulse (indoor)*, 2019  
Corian slab, aluminum mount, heart rate sensor plates, circuits, transducers, lightbulbs  
Two stands, 23 x 13 x 9 in / 59 x 32 x 23 cm each  
Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 65,000



**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**  
*Thermal Drift Density Map*, 2022  
Custom software, computer, thermal camera, screens or projectors  
Dimensions variable  
Edition of 6, 1 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment:  
\$ 250,000

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## **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Bilateral Time Slicer*, 2016

Custom software (color, silent), biometric tracking system, computer, camera with digitizer, screen

Dimensions variable, portrait orientation

Edition of 6, 1 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment: \$ 250,000

**Video documentation:** <https://vimeo.com/194090895>

A biometric tracking system finds the axis of symmetry of members of the public using face detection. When the axis is found to be in an almost vertical orientation the computer splits the live camera image into two slices. With each new participant time slices are recorded and pushed aside. When no one is viewing the work, the slices close and rejoin creating a procession of past recordings. The piece is inspired by time-lapse sculptures and masks that can be found in ancient traditions (Aztec three-faced mask, the avatars of Vishnu) and modern and contemporary art (Duchamp, Balla, Minujín, Schatz, Kanemaki). Like in the Aztec three-faced mask, the central strip corresponds to the younger, most recent portrait, whereas the farthest one to the sides represents the oldest portrait.

The piece exists either as a “treatment” featuring any size and aspect ratio screen. For example, the piece was installed in Miami using a 180 x 160 cm Barco Residential LED digital canvas that visually connected the piece to the form factor of a door. The treatment can be made much wider for example to fit a specific architecture, or it can be broken into an array of flat screens acting as a videowall. The piece also exists as a traditional shadowbox on a single, vertically oriented flat screen any size between 55 and 100 inches in diagonal.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Botella de Castigos*, 2022

Raspberry Pi, square flat screen, aluminum frame

24.41 x 24.41 x 3.54 in / 62 x 62 x 9 cm

Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 55,000

*Botella de Castigos* is an artwork where thousands of bottles are presented spinning slowly on a display, creating a clock that counts 59 seconds per minute. The bottles come from popular and elite “brands” of water from all over the world, as well as AI generated bottles of brands that do not exist. The piece mixes chance, time, and product design to comment on drinking water scarcity which is becoming the issue of our time. According to scientists at the Institute of Global Health, drinking bottled water has a 3,500 times higher cost of resource extraction than tap water and 1,440 times higher impact on ecosystems.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Descending a Parametric Staircase (big)*, 2018

Custom generative software (color, silent), custom screen, LED, computer

47 in diameter, 3.2 in depth

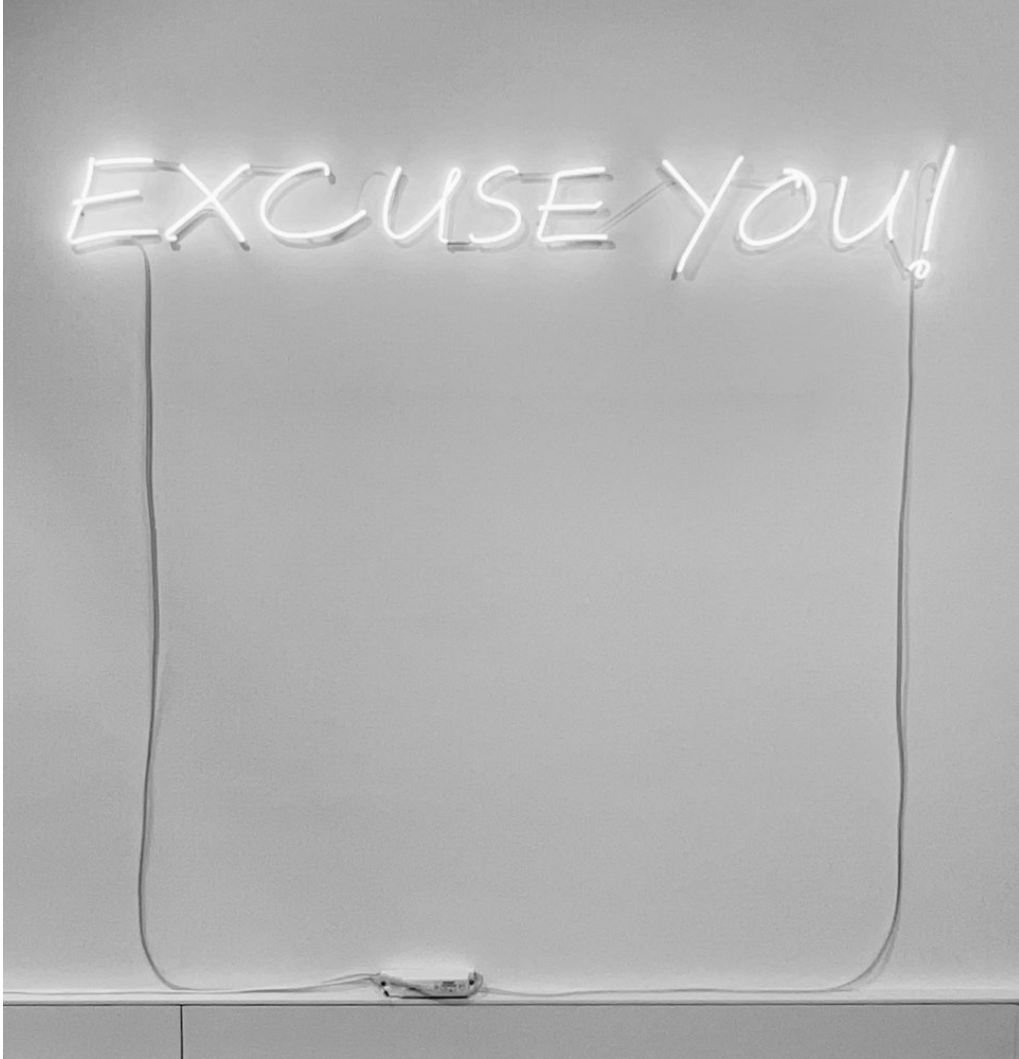
120 cm diameter, 8 cm depth

Edition of 3, 1 AP

\$ 50,000

*Descending a Parametric Staircase* is a homage to Duchamp's 1912 futurist composite *Nude Descending a Staircase* and his *Rotorelief* series from 1935. The piece depicts a descent into a never-ending spiral staircase in which a sequence of uncanny virtual characters can be seen and heard. The custom generative software produces a unique sequence of characters each time.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*EXCUSE YOU!*, 2022

Neon

70.87 x 11.02 in / 180 x 28 cm

Edition of 3, 1 AP

\$ 30,000

*EXCUSE YOU!* is a collaboration with poet Leigh Kotsilidis. It is an indignant yet playful neon sign. A timely calling out. A chastising. A snarky apology on your behalf. A potential for provocation. A chance for absolution. *EXCUSE YOU!* is the figurative finger pointing at all of us, saying own and apologize for your shit because it's about fucking time!



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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Hormonium*, 2022

Custom software (black and white, silent), computer

Dimensions variable, landscape orientation

Edition of 6, 1 AP

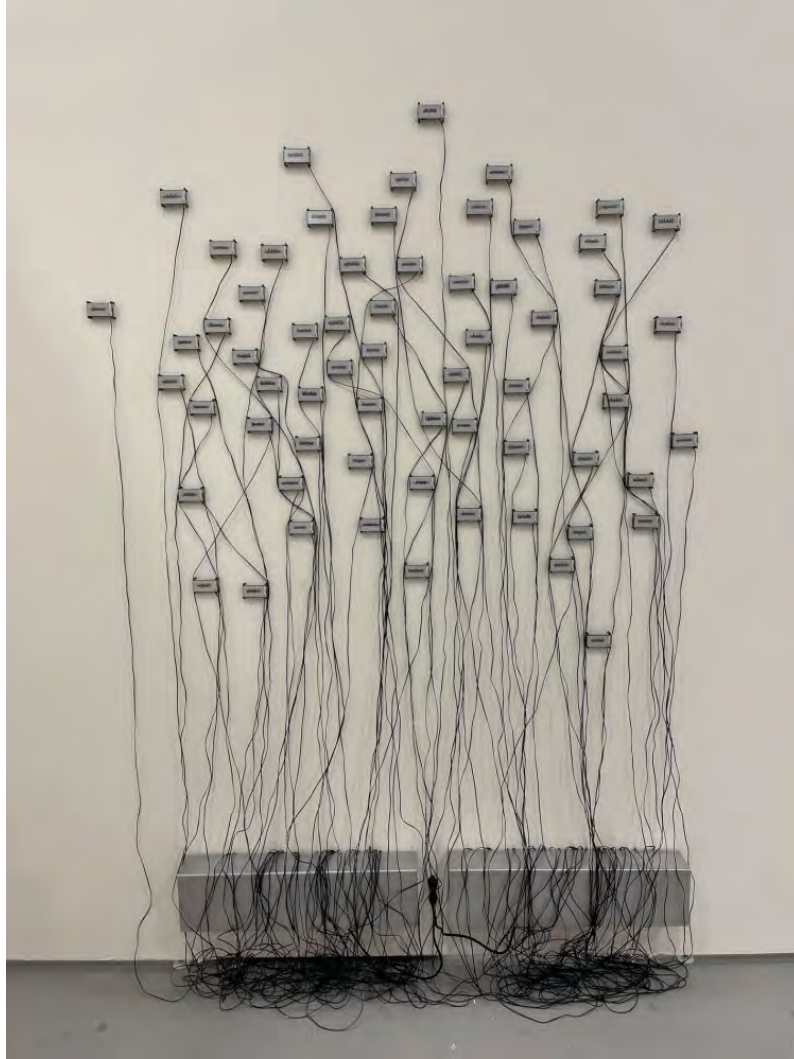
Display: \$ 100,000

Unique Projection Treatment: \$ 250,000

**Video documentation:** <https://vimeo.com/670810461>

*Hormonium* is a generative artwork that presents sequences of ocean waves crashing and releasing airborne text particles. The text corresponds to acronyms for many hormones within the body. *Hormonium* calls on chronobiology, or the study of biological rhythms, to release groupings of hormones in accordance with human time-cycles, exhibiting circadian, ultradian, and infradian rhythms. For example, the morning brings an influx of cortisol, progesterone and testosterone that splash across the screen in a wave of acronyms. The work ages over an 80 year cycle that is demonstrated by a decreased concentration of hormones like aldosterone and calcitonin while levels of norepinephrine and parathyroid increase towards the end of the sequence.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Password Breach*, 2021

77 ePaper displays, ESP feather boards, wifi router, cables, power supplies, software written in Wiring

49.2 x 59.1 in / 125 x 150 cm, installed

Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 75,000

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Password Breach* extracts passwords from salient historical data breaches and presents them as an additive smear on 77 small electronic-paper displays which synchronize and reset from time to time. The breaches include the Panama Papers, Ashley Madison, and RockYou2021.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Recurrent Lull*, 2019

Custom software (black and white, silent), screen, computer

Dimensions variable

Edition of 6, 2 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment: \$ 250,000

*Recurrent Lull* is a recursive algorithmic animation made with the collected works of Mediterranean philosopher and polymath Ramon Llull, born in the kingdom of Majorca in 1232. Among Llull's accomplishments was the very first symbolic machine, a series of concentric circles that could be operated to generate combinations of "elemental truths". The mechanistic approach to knowledge influenced Leibnitz and then Babbage to make the first mechanical computers. In this piece, Llull's writing is animated along co-linear cylindrical cogs that unpredictably become detached and even revealed not as closed loops but endless spirals. The entire flow of typography is generative and is never repeated.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Recurrent Rayuela*, 2020

Custom generative software (black and white, silent), custom screen, LED, computer

21 in / 53 cm, diameter

2.8 in / 7 cm, depth

Edition of 6, 2 AP

\$ 75,000

*Recurrent Rayuela* is a generative artwork made with the 155 chapters of the experimental novel *Rayuela* (Hopscotch) published in 1963 by Argentine writer Julio Cortázar. The piece consists of a black circular screen that shows a cube with thousands of letters from the book in a fluid, animated pool. When the screen is manually rotated by a visitor, the cube tumbles around and the letters become turbulent; after a few seconds, random excerpts from the novel emerge on screen from the turbulence. As soon as the rotation ends, the excerpts disappear and the pool of letters stabilizes again.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Remote Pulse (indoor)*, 2019

Corian slab, aluminum mount, heart rate sensor plates, circuits, transducers, lightbulbs

Two stands, 23 x 13 x 9 in / 59 x 32 x 23 cm each

Edition of 6, 1 AP

\$ 65,000

*Remote Pulse* is an interactive installation consisting of two identical pulse-sensing stations that are interconnected over the internet. When a person places their hands on one station automatically the person on the other station feels their pulse, as the plates vibrate in sync to the heartbeat of the remote person, and vice versa. The piece was originally presented as part of Lozano-Hemmer's *Border Tuner* installation across the US-Mexico border. The piece exists in two formats: outdoor plinth version and indoor wall-mounted version.

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**Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

*Thermal Drift Density Map*, 2022

Custom software, computer, thermal camera, screens or projectors

Dimensions variable

Edition of 6, 1 AP

Display: \$ 90,000

Unique Projection Treatment: \$ 250,000.00

**Video Documentation:** <https://vimeo.com/724923265>

*Thermal Drift* is an interactive artwork that visualizes the dispersion of body heat as emissions of thermal energy in the form of slow-moving packets or quanta that flow away from the participant. The project uses a thermal camera to detect heat and a particle system to visualize its dispersion. The piece uses computational image-making to define the boundary between body and environment as continuous fields of energy exchange. Thermal cameras, used in policing and military contexts, are instruments illustrative of asymmetrical power, where those bodies made subject are rarely given the opportunity to see themselves in imaged form. In such contexts, these imaging tools calibrated on body temperature make an essential human register a liability signaled as an ambient anomaly. In *Thermal Drift* the camera is placed in a safer and more playful environment, which affords it the opportunity to illustrate how body temperature paints personalized portraits, while using a shared signature of the human condition. The dispersive effect of *Thermal Drift* reveals how the human does not end at the epidermis but is in conversation with the surrounding atmosphere. Here dispersion also activates a redistribution of power normally held by the position of image-taking, to allow the “spectral subject” to be on the witnessing end of image-making.

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## **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

b. 1967, Mexico City

Lives and works in Montréal and Madrid

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is known for creating large-scale interactive installations in public spaces throughout Europe, Asia, and North America. Using robotics, custom software, projections, internet links, cell phones, sensors, LEDs, cameras, tracking systems, and often employing vanguard technologies, his “Antimonuments” challenge traditional notions of site-specificity, and instead focus on the idea of creating relationship-specific work through connective interfaces. His smaller-scale “Subsculptures” and his work in photography, video, and installation explore themes of surveillance, perception, and deception. Since his emergence in the 1990s, Lozano-Hemmer has mixed the disparate fields of digital media, robotics, medical science, performance art, and lived experience into interactive artworks.

His public artworks have been commissioned for the Philadelphia Association for Public Art (2012); La Triennale québécoise, Montreal, Canada (2011); Winter Olympics, Vancouver, Canada (2010); Federation Square, Melbourne, Australia (2010); the 50th Anniversary of the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2009); the memorial for the Tlatelolco Student Massacre, Mexico City (2008); Madison Square Park, New York (2008); Trafalgar Square, London (2008); Québec City’s 400th Anniversary (2008); the Expansion of the European Union, Dublin, Ireland (2004); the opening of the YCAM Center, Yamaguchi, Japan (2003); and the Millennium Celebrations, Mexico City (1999).

Featured recently in solo exhibitions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Center, Washington D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Fundación Telefónica, Buenos Aires; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Lozano-Hemmer was the first artist to represent Mexico at its national pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. Collections holding his work include the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami; Colección Jumex, Mexico City; Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City; DAROS Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; Borusan Contemporary, Istanbul; 21st C Museum of Art, Kanazawa; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; MUSAC, Leon; MONA, Hobart; ZKM, Karlsruhe; the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal and Singapore Art Museum, among others.

Past exhibitions of his work have also included The Barbican Centre, London; The Museum of Art, Hong Kong; and La Gaîté Lyrique, Paris; Kulczyk Foundation, Poznan; Art Basel Unlimited; and art biennials in Moscow, New Orleans, Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore, Liverpool, Istanbul, Seville, Seoul, Graz, and Havana. A recipient of the International Bauhaus Award in Dessau, his honors also include the Golden Nica from Ars Electronica, a Rockefeller Fellowship, a Daniel Langlois Foundation grant, two British Academy of Film and Television Arts awards in Interactive Art, and the Trophée des Lumières in Lyon.