

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) will open with “Amodal Suspension”, a new interactive installation by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

From the 1st to the 24th of November 2003, short text messages sent by people over the Internet or by cell phone will be converted into patterns of flashing lights in the sky, turning the Japanese city of Yamaguchi into a giant communication switchboard. The piece will be located in the public space around the new YCAM Center and will be accessible through address www.amodal.net

PROJECT OVERVIEW

“Amodal Suspension” will be a large-scale interactive installation where people can send short text messages to each other using a cell phone or web browser connected to address www.amodal.net. However, rather than being sent directly, the messages will be encoded as unique sequences of flashes and sent to the sky with a network of 20 robotically-controlled searchlights.

The signaling will be similar to Morse code or the flashing of fireflies, —the lights will modulate their intensity to represent different text characters. Each message, once encoded, will be “suspended” in the sky of the city, bouncing around the YCAM center, relayed from one searchlight to another. An email will be sent to the intended recipient to notify him or her that “a message is waiting for them in the sky of Yamaguchi”.

Each light sequence will continue to circulate until the recipient or somebody else “catches” the message and reads it. To catch a text, participants must again use the cell phone or computer programs provided at www.amodal.net. To highlight the irony of globalization, the piece will employ an automatic translation engine between Japanese and English, —this will produce inaccurate but charming results.

Once a participant reads a message, it will disappear from the sky and it will be shown briefly on a large projection on the façade of the YCAM center. The author of the message will be notified by email, as will the intended recipient. All submissions will be logged at the project website using an online virtual environment that will show them in three-dimensional patterns of Brownian motion. Visitors will be able to search, sort and navigate through the archived messages.

“Amodal Suspension” will create an interactive mesh of light over the city, a floating cloud of data that can be written to and read. The piece will provide a connective platform in which local residents and remote participants from different regions and countries can establish ad hoc relationships. While visualizing the traffic of information on an urban scale, the piece is also intended as a deviation from the assumed transparency of electronic communication.

AMODAL EVENTS

Amodal Suspension will open at 19:00 Japanese time (10:00 GMT) on November 1st, 2003 with a message sent by astronaut Mamoru Mohri.

A symposium on the project will take place on the 2nd of November at 18:30, featuring philosopher and author Brian Massumi, Cultural Studies theorist Yoshitaka Mori, project curators Yukiko Shikata and Abe Kazunao and artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Three additional lectures will be presented at YCAM to frame the project:

On November 9th at 14:00, local researcher Shimgo Hirano will speak about fireflies.

On November 15th at 19:00, Akira Suzuki, Professor of Kobe Design University, will present "Soft Shelter: electronic networks in the city and hand-drawn maps".

On November 22nd at 19:00, Dr. Jun Tanaka, Professor at the University of Tokyo, will present "On the history of light in the city".

AMODAL ACCESS PODS

The following art and technology centers around the World will set-up "Access Pods" that will offer their visitors an enhanced experience to participate in Amodal Suspension. Please check with each center to confirm location and opening times.

MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani in Barcelona

MARS Lab Fraunhofer Institut für Medienkommunikation in Bonn

C3 Center for Culture and Communication in Budapest

Fundación Telefónica in Buenos Aires

MIT MediaLab in Cambridge

KHM Kunsthochschule für Medien in Cologne

Bauhaus in Dessau

IAMAS Institute of Advanced Media Arts and Sciences in Gifu

ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Karlsruhe

Kyoto Art Center in Kyoto

FACT Film, Art and Creative Technology in Liverpool

Science Museum in London

Ojo Atómico in Madrid

Laboratorio Arte Alameda in Mexico City

SAT Société des Arts Technologiques in Montreal

Sarai in New Delhi

Eyebeam in New York City

Wood Street Galleries in Pittsburgh

V2_Organisatie in Rotterdam

Itaú Cultural Center in São Paulo

Sendai Mediatheque in Sendai

Art Center Nabi in Seoul

NTT-ICC Inter Communication Center in Tokyo

MeSci National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation in Tokyo

Ontario Science Centre in Toronto

Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver

Multimedia Institute in Zagreb

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

“Amodal Suspension” will be the latest in the series of “relational architecture” installations that Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has designed for cities in Europe and the Americas for the past seven years. These interactive interventions explore the intersection between new technologies, urban environments and public participation. This will be Lozano-Hemmer’s largest project to date and his first in Asia. For this project he is collaborating with developers from Japan, Canada, China and Spain.

The work of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer has received prestigious accolades including the Bauhaus Award in Germany, the Golden Nica in Austria, a World Technology Award in San Francisco and a BAFTA British Academy Award in the United Kingdom. His installations have been presented in Biennials in Havana, Istanbul, Graz and Liverpool, as well as in museums and festivals worldwide. Using robotics, real-time computer graphics, positional sound, Internet links, cell phones, ultrasonic sensors, and other devices, his pieces aim to reconnect the public sphere with an increasingly alienating urban condition. His previous projects include the interactive piece “Vectorial Elevation” www.alzado.net that was commissioned for the millennium celebrations in Mexico City and received over 800,000 participants from 89 countries. For information, videos and downloadable pictures of his work please refer to www.lozano-hemmer.com

YCAM IS

YCAM is a new type of cultural facility that pursues creative values in art and information. Designed by internationally acclaimed architect Arata Isozaki, the YCAM center will be one of the most ambitious cultural and technological institutions to be launched in 2003. Other opening events include works by Philippe Decouflé, Iori Nakai, Dumb Type, Ryoji Ikeda, Exonemo and Makoto Nomura, as well as performances by Issey Ogata, Angelin Preljocaj, Yoshihide Otomo and Shigehiro Ide.

While basing its activities on art, YCAM explores the trends of the latest media technologies, which are created in cooperation with education, industry, and science. Based on accumulation of such activities, the Center produces and shows to the public mainly artworks and performances. YCAM invites artists both at home and abroad, and provides them with a site for their experimental ideas and collaborations. Also encouraged is cooperation with other art centers and cultural organizations around the world, such as joint productions, and the results will be shown to the public.

**Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM) opening project
"Amodal Suspension – relational architecture 8"
by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer**

Dates: November 1st to 24th, 2003

Venue: YCAM and the central park in Yamaguchi City, in the South West of Japan. The searchlights will be visible from a 15 Km (10 Mile) radius.

Access: Computers, mobile phones and local access kiosks connected to the web address www.amodal.net All the programs in the site have been written in the Java language and can be run with the vast majority of web browsers and operating systems. Special "Access Pods" will be installed in several Art and Science centers around the world, these Pods will feature an enhanced experience and documentation on the project.

Production and organization: YCAM, Yamaguchi City, the Board of Education of Yamaguchi City and Yamaguchi Cultural Promotion Foundation

Support: Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canadian Embassy in Japan, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. and Fast Retailing Co., Ltd.

Credits:

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer — Conception and direction

Yukiko Shikata — Curator

Kazunao Abe — YCAM Curator

Conroy Badger, Motoi Ishibashi, Jennifer Laughlin, Emilio López-Galiacho, Shiro Yamamoto, Chong Zhang — Programmers

Miki Fukuda — Project manager

Shiro Yamamoto — Technical manager

Yumico Cotaki, Chiaki Sakaguchi — Press

Daiya Aida — Education Program

Rie Yamasaki — Administration

Will Bauer, Jack Calmes, Olaf Pöttcher, Hiroshi Kanechiku — Production support

Katsuhisa Nomura — Designer

Shosuke Fukuda — YCAM Director

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PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

High-resolution pictures of the project are available for download at the project website www.amodal.net

High-resolution pictures of previous work by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer are available for download at www.lozano-hemmer.com