

# #10 Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: 1984x1984

## Audio Description Script by Fred Brack

“1984 by 1984,” by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, is titled in homage to George Orwell’s famous novel, *1984*, which considers a dystopian society reeling from the collapse of privacy. Many of Lozano-Hemmer’s works question the role of surveillance in modern society. This exhibit asks, “Have we reached the age of the end of privacy? If so, what does this digital invasion mean about our society …?”

As we look into this 20-square-foot empty room with a 10-foot ceiling and black side walls, we see a computer-projected image of nothing but brightly colored numbers on the entire back wall. From floor to ceiling, wall to wall, hundreds of small numbers (from 0 to 9) appear in rows: different colors, different fonts, but all pretty much the same size, row after row.

The image changes significantly when someone ventures into the room. If a person stands in the room, their body’s outline is superimposed on the rear wall, and *all* of the numbers within their outline change to “1984.” If the person moves, the outline moves, and the numbers leaving the image quickly rotate to new numbers several times before freezing, giving the visual effect of a rippling shadow.

When no one is in the room, the numbers ripple across rows in groups of four, changing randomly several times before stopping and continuing to the next group of four. *Where* the rippling starts is random starting 30 seconds after the last person leaves the room. The numbers are bright from the top row to the current ripple location, with everything beyond dimmed. If the rippling reaches the bottom, it starts again at the top row, while the rest of the screen dims, and bright numbers again ripple across.

If one looks carefully, they will see a small box at the bottom center of the rear wall. It senses bodies between 3’ feet into the room and 3’ away from the rear wall. The closer you are to the box, the larger your image on the screen. The images of the numbers, by the way, are taken from front doors around the world using Google Street View.