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FEATURES

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's robotic sand installation honours lives lost to Covid-19

At the Brooklyn Museum, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's participatory work, *A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial*, offers space to collectively honour and grieve victims of the pandemic



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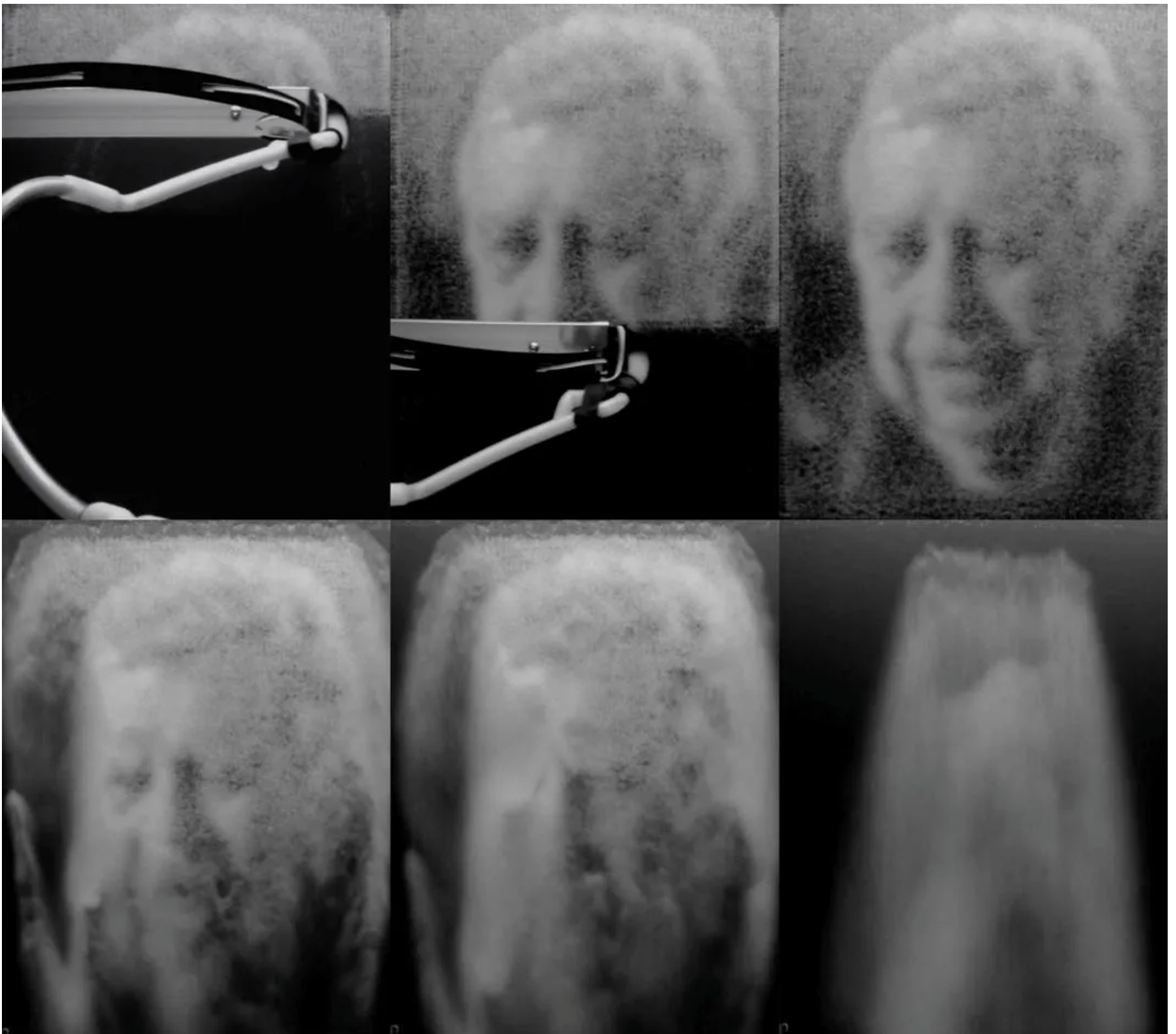


Installation view of Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, *A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial*, at the Brooklyn Museum until 26 June 2022

(Image credit: Jonathan Dorado)

Since it emerged, the Covid-19 pandemic has claimed the lives of more than five million people globally. The loss is extraordinary, and the agony has been exacerbated by restrictions on collective mourning with family and friends denied physical participation in funerary rites and rituals for their loved ones. In 2020, Mexican-Canadian media artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer responded with a virtual memorial whereby bereaved family and friends could create individual homages.

A Crack in the Hourglass was first commissioned by the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City and has been taking place virtually since November 2020. The project was staged as an ephemeral ‘anti-monument’; a space for catharsis and an impassioned lament that depends entirely on the participation of others.



Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, *A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial*, at the Brooklyn Museum
(Image credit: Jonathan Dorado)

Through ephemeral portraits made from hourglass sand, the installation and its online platform provide communities with space to collectively mourn and honour those lost to Covid-19 in New York City – which has seen some of the highest numbers of pandemic-related deaths in the United States – and worldwide.

The Brooklyn Museum is now presenting the first physical version of the work. Participants are invited to submit photographs of their loved ones who have died from Covid-19 through the project’s online platform, accompanied by a personal dedication, and watch in person or via live stream as a robotic arm deposits grains of sand onto a black surface to recreate the image. Once each portrait is formed, it is digitally archived and gradually erased by gravity. The same sand is then recycled into the next portrait forming an infinite number of memorials.

'This project is designed for mourning our losses at a time when we have been socially distant and denied proximity to those affected. The piece also represents continuity, as the same sand is used to make an endless number of unique portraits,' says Lozano-Hemmer, who is known for provocative indoor and outdoor art installations on the intersection of technology, architecture, performance, and public art. 'I am very eager to see how the project is received in New York City, an epicentre of the pandemic, and am thankful to the Brooklyn Museum for bringing it to the United States.'



Raphael Lozano-Hemmer at the Brooklyn Museum. 'A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial', until 26 June 2022.
(Image credit: Jonathan Dorado)



(Image credit: Jonathan Dorado)



Top and above: installation view of Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, *A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial*, at the Brooklyn Museum
(Image credit: Jonathan Dorado)

INFORMATION

Raphael Lozano-Hemmer, *A Crack in the Hourglass, An Ongoing Covid-19 Memorial*, until 26 June 2022, the Brooklyn Museum, [brooklynmuseum.org](https://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

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