

## Random International: Rain Room, The Curve, Barbican, preview

**Ever walked in the rain without getting wet? Jane Shilling writes about the Barbican's latest venture, Rain Room.**



In collaboration: the Random Dance Company. Photo: Alastair Muir/Rex Features

**W**hat with the weather we've been having lately, rainfall seems a rather tactless subject for an artwork. But it is hardly the fault of the arts collective rAndom [sic] International that we've had a soggy summer and an inundated autumn. And the charm of their Rain Room installation at the Barbican's Curve gallery, which opens this Thursday, is that – thanks to some almost inconceivably ingenious digital technology involving motion sensor cameras – you can walk through their hundred square metres of falling raindrops without getting wet at all.

The thirtysomething trio of Hannes Koch, Florian Ortkrass and Stuart Wood met at the Royal College of Art and have been working together since 2005.

In 2008 their installation Audience, in which mirrors reacted to human movement, caught the attention of choreographer Wayne McGregor, artistic director of Sadler's Wells's Random Dance Company.

After an initial confusion of nomenclature – “I'm from Random.” “No, we're from rAndom” – a collaboration was born in which rAndom designed the sets for McGregor's 2010 ballet FAR. Now the roles are reversed, and on four Sundays during the Barbican's free exhibition, dancers from McGregor's company will perform a piece inspired by the installation, to music by Max Richter.

And if you should find yourself strolling down the rue de la Verrerie in Paris between now and December 21, a show at the Carpenters Workshop Gallery, *Before the Rain*, revisits the studio's earlier work. Though for all but the most serious students of modern art, the Rain Room's most potent attraction is the simple, childish pleasure of dodging raindrops.

*Random International: Rain Room runs from October 4, 2012 until March 3, 2013 in The Curve, Barbican. Admission free.*