



RAINY WITH A CHANCE OF ART

MoMA's new exhibit gives visitors godlike powers over weather.

By Kaja Cutruzzola

New York's latest must-visit-or-be-shunned installation is dark, humid, crowded, and has a line stretching down the block. But those small inconveniences are forgotten when visitors finally enter the *Rain Room*, where they can stand—or sway, skip, or dance—in the middle of a downpour and remain untouched by a single drop of water. Cool, right?

Created by design group rAndom International, the much-hyped *Rain Room* was transplanted last week to the Museum of Modern Art following a successful run at the Barbican Centre in London, where Brits got to experience their dreary outdoors indoors.

Boo-hoo!

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Watch a video of the 'Rain Room' from the Barbican.

So how does one exercise godlike powers of weather manipulation? Step one is outwaiting the crowds descending like cicadas on West 54th Street (on May 12, opening day, **MoMA tweeted** that the wait was three hours). Step two is, once inside the black-walled space lit theatrically by a single spotlight, working up the nerve to enter the misty sheath and trusting that you won't get wet. It's a courage under fire—er, rain—moment, made possible by 3-D sensors that pinpoint your movements and instantly halt the overhead showers wherever you step. On a recent visit three dancers wearing nude-colored outfits twirled gracefully under the cascade, nary a raindrop splashing them. One woman tried frantically to capture the dancers on her iPad but her blinding camera flashes made difficult any acts of contemplation.

And contemplation is sort of the point. As part of MoMA PS1's (a MoMA outpost in Queens) more expansive exhibition **EXPO 1: New York**, the idea is for viewers to think about ecological challenges in the context of the changing world. Far removed from real-life rainstorms that cripple umbrellas and soak shoes, *Rain Room* allows one to hit the pause button on a moment of weather. Visitors are given a power over their surroundings they've never before experienced.

But first, a few words of advice: don't bring an umbrella or stay on the sidelines—or fear looking like one visitor spotted checking her iPhone on the way out. “Did you walk under it?” asked her friend. “No, I was scared,” replied the woman. “But I Instagrammed it.”

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