

INSIDE/OUT

A MoMA/MoMA PS1 BLOG

MAY 17, 2013 | [BEHIND THE SCENES](#), [COLLECTION & EXHIBITIONS](#), [RAIN ROOM](#)

Making the Rain

Posted by [Random International](#)◀ ▶ **Image 1 / 9** [PERMALINK](#)

Random International. *Rain Room*. Installation view at The Museum of Modern Art with dancers from Wayne McGregor | Random Dance. *Rain Room* is part of MoMA PS1's *EXPO 1: New York, 2013*. Photo by Charles Rousel

Rain Room's conception was swift. We were coming up with ideas for dropping an image from above, so each individual pixel would fall into place, using water on water-reactive ground. Considering the structure that would need to be created for this to happen, we refined the idea into something more immediate: making monumental rain through which you can walk without getting wet.

Complete immersion in a unique environment has long been a driving interest of the studio. We're intrigued by how people and objects behave and respond to one another and how that can bring a spatial sphere to life.



From left: Random International. *Audience*. 2008. Mirror, metal cast bases, motors, custom motion tracking software, camera, computer, dimensions variable, each mirror: 150 x 250 x 150 mm. Edition of 8 + 4 AP. Carpenters Workshop Gallery; *Swarm Study / III*. 2011. Electronics, Corian, steel frame, 123 x 456 x 789 mm. Installation view at the Victoria and Albert Museum

Our 2008 work *Audience* explored how people could engage with something clearly inanimate as though it were human and the ensuing sense of intrigue and joy. Later in 2011, *Swarm Study / III* showed how natural life can be simulated in art and the animating effect this has on surrounding space. With *Rain Room* we wanted to push this further; you actually enter the

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environment to engage with the artwork, you become part of the piece.

Rain Room's gestation period was long—four years from start to finish. The studio is fortunate to have true patrons and supporters in Maxine and Stuart Frankel and RH Contemporary Art, both of whom took a leap of faith into *Rain Room* when it existed only as an idea on the page, as did the Barbican Centre in London. We are also lucky to have a team within the studio willing to embrace researching and prototyping something completely outside their areas of engineering expertise and, in MoMA, an institution with the vision to take this further.

We went through the process together, setting up a first working prototype in our studio during the summer of 2011. Even on this small scale, we began to see the piece's sensory effects: the scent of the water during a London August, the overpowering sound, the impossibility of seeing the drops against the white cube of our studio space. We also glimpsed the varied emotional reactions; everyone feeling bizarrely afraid to enter, nobody wanting to be the first to do so, and the childlike wonder that followed once we did.

These small beginnings have large outcomes. Now, in the realization of the piece at MoMA, we see how all these factors combine to form the surreal experience of *Rain Room*: the hesitancy, the faith, the sense of astonishment.

MoMA presents *Rain Room* as part of *EXPO 1: New York*—MoMA PS1's festival of exhibitions, a school, a colony, a cinema, and more—and adds an entirely new layer to the piece. While it wasn't originally intended as a didactic work, it is an open-ended environment which invites people to take away personal reflections from their individual experiences. The context of *EXPO 1: New York* can inspire new levels of contemplation. People form the piece, as such it is always different.

Rain Room is on view at MoMA through July 28. For more details and admission information please visit MoMA.org.

Tags: [EXPO 1: New York](#), [Rain Room](#)

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MAY 17, 2013, 11:12 A.M.

magic rain

Posted by MariaAngela Muccioli

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