

Drought Adds Wrinkle to ‘Rain Room’ Exhibit in California

By ADAM NAGOURNEY



“Rain Room” at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where it opened last week. The installation, which attracted long lines in New York two years ago, uses motion sensors to allow visitors to walk slowly through a downpour without getting wet.

Monica Almeida / The New York Times

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LOS ANGELES — For Southern Californians struggling through the worst drought in the history of the state, relief may finally be here — or at least a sprinkle of relief. Rain has arrived, but it is confined to a 2,500-square-foot windowless room in a museum exhibition on the Miracle Mile, open to a handful of people who are let in for precisely 15 minutes to experience it in all its soaking, spritzing glory.

“[Rain Room](#),” as it is known, had its run in London and New York, and it is also on display in Shanghai. But its opening at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#) last week has struck a different kind of nerve. If people in New York [lined up](#) for hours for the theatricality of it — the torrents of rain, controlled by motion cameras, pause as you walk under them, creating a Moses-parting-the-seas kind of spectacle — the exhibit here is truly novel and timely, a reminder of what is missing in the [parched West](#) these days.

“The only rain we get is indoors, and it doesn’t hit us,” said Ken Bruce, 51, an animation artist who spread his arms wide as he walked under the high-tech rain ceiling in a mostly fruitless attempt to do what people normally avoid at all costs: get wet.

“I wouldn’t have minded being hit by some of it,” Mr. Bruce said.

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