

Random International's largest Rain Room to date takes Shanghai by storm

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The largest installation to date of Random International's *Rain Room* has arrived at the Yuz Museum, Shanghai. *Photography: Random International*

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It seems only fitting that the largest iteration of [Random International's Rain Room](#) be created for the world's biggest economy – recent market tribulations notwithstanding. This weekend saw the unveiling of the new gem in Indonesian-Chinese billionaire collector Budi Tek's crown: the *Rain Room* at Shanghai's Yuz Museum.

Created by Random International, a London-based art collective founded by Wallpaper* Design Award winners Hannes Koch, Stuart Wood and Florian Ortkrass, the piece lives up to the group's reputation for creating high-tech, immersive installations that explore the connection between behaviour, reaction and intuition in relation to the human form and natural phenomena. Many have said that the experience of the *Rain Room* – which previously took London and New York by storm, in 2012 and 2013 respectively – is as close as we can come to being God; granting mere mortals the power to stop the flow of the elements. In truth, it is rather the opposite.

'You experience how it feels to be controlled *by* the weather,' explains Koch, 'because if you walk a little too fast you get soaked. You can't outpace gravity, you can't out perform it. You experience a *loss* of control; you experience a deliverance on technology. If there is a power cut you get soaked; if the sensor doesn't detect you, you get wet.'

Metaphysical interpretations aside, the *Rain Room* has taken on a strong environmental message by virtue of its [MoMA appearance](#) too; it's a connection made all the more poignant in Shanghai, one of the most polluted cities in the world with a heavy fog-like smog hanging permanently in its atmosphere. '*Rain Room* is not a funhouse,' explains MoMA PS1 and chief curator-at-large Klaus Biesenbach. 'It is a paradigm for our technology

and how fragile we are in this moment of progress. We think we can control it [the weather, the future, the elements] but we cannot.'

Behind the magic of the artwork is a highly tuned piece of technology. A sophisticated tracking system of cameras and sensors communicate with thousands of water valves to open and close in reaction to a physical presence, creating the invisible 'force field' that envelops you as you walk through the dark room and into the light. Water drips through a grid in the floor where it is filtered, treated and recycled, pumped through the machinery to fall back down moments later. A total of 1,800 litres of what Tek refers to as our 'most precious resource' are in play here every minute. The 150 sq m space can be experienced from within the rain or from the sidelines, for a different perspective.

If the enthusiasm of the 300 guests attending the opening night was anything to go by, the Yuz Museum's new piece will be a huge crowd pleaser. Adding to the electric excitement of the evening was a second work of art, privy to those lucky enough to attend: a dance by long-term Random collaborator and choreographer [Wayne McGregor](#).

Made possible with the support of the Volkswagen Group as part of the carmaker's cultural engagement initiative, the Asian premiere of the *Rain Room* signals the commitment of both the Yuz Foundation and Volkswagen to making art accessible to (and enjoyable for) all.

Address

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