

Random International's "Rain Room" at Yuz Museum, Shanghai

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August 18,
2015

As Shanghai gears up for Art Week in early September, one of the city's preeminent private museums is also preparing for the Asia premiere of a monumental, critically acclaimed art installation by the leading experimental UK art studio [Random International](#).

Entitled "Rain Room," the interactive installation of perpetually falling water stops "raining" wherever a person walks, responding directly to the movements and behavior of those in its vicinity.

This presentation of Rain Room in Shanghai, organized with the support of Volkswagen Group China, is a new, larger iteration of an installation by [Random International](#) that has previously been shown at the Barbican Museum in London and the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of the exhibition "EXPO 1: New York." It will be on display at the [Yuz Museum](#) from September 1 through December 31, 2015, before going on a traveling tour throughout Asia, starting with Beijing in the spring of 2016.

Prior to the opening, BLOUIN ARTINFO caught up with the studio to ask them to elaborate on the challenges presented by this large-scale project, the emotional and lyrical connotations of their rain installation, and their impressions of Shanghai's burgeoning art scene.

This upcoming iteration of Rain Room at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai will be twice the size of previous versions that you showed at the Barbican Museum in London (2012) and the MoMA in New York (2013). What sort of technical tweaks or modifications were necessary to prepare this larger version?

It is much larger but, to be precise, this *Rain Room* is 150 square meters, as opposed to the 100 square meter iterations previously exhibited. Even with 100 square meters, the first time that Jane Alison (who curated *Rain Room* at the Barbican) saw the piece fully installed, she remarked that she hadn't expected it to be so 'muscular', having seen it being fabricated in-house at our studio, and stacked up in crates in a van. It's a modular system, because each set up is different, and we alter its layout and arrangement each time according to the exhibition space. But of course, we have never experienced a *Rain Room* of this size before — no one has. We're excited to see what it's like in there, and to experience that growth in the intensity of the environment.

Rain Room recreates the seemingly natural, everyday phenomenon of a rain shower in an indoor setting. For you, what are the emotional resonances and connotations of rain — its smell, the feeling of moisture, the gentle pattering sound it makes? Is Rain Room meant to be a comforting, enveloping, or protective presence for the audience?

Rain has the power to affect people very deeply, but in very different ways. This has partly to do with variations in climate and global extremes of weather. You say rain is an everyday phenomenon, and to us (making the work in London) this is often the case, but to others? It can be quite the opposite.

In a sense, the work is always site-specific and changes in each setting and with every audience; the external context of the setting and the different associations of each participant can alter the experience and perception of the piece — perhaps even in a subconscious way.

Can you say a bit more about what the actual audience experience of encountering Rain Room is like? Are visitors given any sensory or "welcoming" cues to convince them that the rain will indeed clear up wherever they choose to walk?

We are enthusiastic minimalists, and *Rain Room* is very reduced in its settings; it's largely dis-embodied, very dark, with just one main light source, and as you approach, the sound of torrential rain fall just gets louder and louder. This setting alters your senses and you recalibrate your instincts and behavior.

There are no hints or cues, but when you first step in there, you let *Rain Room* welcome you itself by protecting you from the rain falling all around. It's very personal and immediate, because it is a matter of trust; even if there is fear or hesitation, you can build a relationship with the work as you see it responding to your movements.

What have been your impressions of the art scene in Shanghai? Where do you feel its potential and strengths lie?

From what we've seen there in 2008 and have observed since, it's incredible: it's loud, critical, and very energetic. This is the first time we have shown a work in China, so it's going to be thrilling to see our own work amid this scene in Shanghai.

Interesting and different ways of creating and showing and seeing art seem to evolve there, and that's definitely a strength. It rips you right out of complacency. We're honored that Budi Tek and the Yuz Foundation have acquired our work, and in so doing, taken such a leap of faith in emerging, UK-based artists. And we cannot wait to see it rain with our own eyes.