
Dry spell of rain: Visitors are in control of Barbican's indoor storm - Visual Arts - Arts

After a summer of torrential downpours and flooding, it's a question we've probably all asked ourselves — what would it be like to control the rain?

A new installation at the Barbican gives visitors the chance to find out, with a hi-tech indoor rainstorm that falls everywhere except on the individual walking through it.

The work, called Rain Room, was developed by three young artists who met at Brunel University.

Using 3D video cameras, computer equipment and 2,000 litres of water, Rain Room covers 100 square metres and lets people control the weather.

The cameras track body movement and sensors ensure that as visitors walk through the space, they don't get wet.

Several people can be in the "rain" at the same time as the cameras can track multiple bodies simultaneously.

Hannes Koch, Florian Ortkrass and Stuart Wood of the Random International collective have worked since January to develop the idea and the technology for the installation.

Koch said: "We wanted to challenge people so we haven't given them many visual clues about how to behave because it's interesting to watch how they react to the idea.

"It's a sort of psychology experiment in human behaviour."

Wood said the installation was the collective's biggest and most challenging work.

Rain Room opens at the Barbican's Curve gallery tomorrow and runs until March. Entry is free. Towels will be available.

