

# Art of finding common ground

By [Nick Hackworth](#) [Evening Standard](#) | 21 October 2003



**T**he idea of commonwealth has roots stretching back to the old Germanic custom of communally owned land, ruled by common consent.

Now it is a commodity like any other and that ancient idea is obsolete. One of the more interesting suggestions made by this exhibition is that culture has become our equivalent of communal land where minds, if not bodies, may freely roam.

Five highly fashionable artists from Europe and Latin America have been brought together - Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, Thomas Hirschhorn, Carsten Holler and Gabriel Orozco - all of whom make objects or installations that you can interact with.

The tone and intent of the work varies, as does its effect - from the pompous and ineffective to the amusing and appropriate.

Nestling at the wrong end of the quality spectrum are uber-trendy Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn's installations, made from everyday materials, that pretend to be populist and accessible but are utterly pretentious.

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Here U-Lounge, a hut made in DIY fashion with brown tape and cardboard, is meant to be a place for "poetry, philosophy and art", a place where "people can sit, read, talk and reflect". But, of course, people will just wander in and out bemused by the chaotic display, realising that such work is no more than an empty pose, uninterested in real communication.

Far better are the works by Carsten Hiller and Gabriel Orozco, who, judging from the artwork, have a better measure of our times. In their work is partially realised the idea of culture as a communal space, and one in which play not politics is the order of the day.

Holler presents an installation in which visitors can chuck foam frisbees into holes in the fabric of large white tent.

One of Orozco's works, meanwhile, is Oval with Pendulum, an oval billiard table with no pockets, two white balls and a red one, which is hung from the ceiling on a wire so that it swings like a pendulum if hit.

It metaphorically and accurately casts those who use it as "homo ludens", man the player, for whom life is nothing more than a game without intrinsic meaning.

*Until 28 December. Information: 020 7887 8888.*