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CARSTEN HOLLER

BACK IN 2001, before the Democratic Republic of Congo started to make headlines as one of the biggest battlefields in African history, the German artist Carsten Holler made his first trip to Kinshasa, the country's capital and the third-largest city on the continent. "Kinshasa is electric, filled with music, *sapeurs*" — men and women who fancy themselves members of a high-end fashion cult and engage in regular "Defi de Sape," or non-violent label wars — "and live concerts, like no other town I have seen," Holler recalls. "I love this culture, and I thought it would be great to put it on a one-to-one ratio with our so-called Western culture." Seven years and countless return trips to the D.R.C. later, Holler has opened the Double Club, a temporary supper club and nightclub, which does just that. Sponsored by Prada, the Italian fashion company, and designed in collaboration with the architects Reed Kram and Clemens Weisshaar in an old Victorian warehouse in North London (home to the city's longest-running Goth nightclub), the Double Club is divided by virtual lines into cultural and aesthetic extremes that converge in subtle ways. The restaurant, laid out like a chessboard, serves both Congolese and Western dishes; the disco features a rotating dance floor and a soundtrack that changes at regular intervals from thumping Western house music to Congolese rumba rock (distorted to approximate the low-tech vibe of Congolese sound systems handmade from scrap-yard salvage). Here, in the courtyard bar (still undergoing its finishing touches at the time of this photograph), an enlarged reproduction of "J'Aime la Couleur," by the Kinshasa-based painter Chéri Samba, faces off with Holler's "Tile Garden," painted with motifs from the "Flying City" drawn by the Russian utopian architect Georgi Krutikow in 1928. Two London club kids, "Echo" and "Nunu" (far left and center), mingle with local *sapeurs*, "Barry White" and "Bruce"; Holler, seated at right, is apparently not taking sides. "It's really about keeping things apart, spacewise and timewise," he says of this sci-fi disco scene. "But, yes, in people's minds and bellies, this comes together." The Double Club will remain open to the public for approximately three months; a percentage of the proceeds will go to benefit City of Joy, a relief organization in the D.R.C. ALIX BROWNE