

M O O D

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Utopias are sites with no real place.
– Michel Foucault

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ABSTRACT

MOOD is an art installation intended for public space. It takes shape as a semi-mobile architectural sculpture which can be demounted and moved between different environments such as parks, art galleries or the urban outskirts. MOOD is a fully functional artwork in its own right, being both a socio-political artistic research project, an exploration of sculptural intervention and a positive contribution to the wider discourse on mental health. When presented as a work of art in the gallery space, it is also expected to be considered as an artistic representation. The translatability of an artworks transition between different stages and scenarios is explored in this project. This theme has been actualised by the COVID-19 lockdown which made the completion and exhibition of the physical work impossible.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Trondheim Academy of Fine Art Professors Alex Murray-Leslie, Anne-Karin Furunes, Simon Harvey and Jeremy Welsh for supervision, inspiration and guidance, Professor Barbara Matusiak from the Department of Architecture and Technology for the useful instructions on day light effects, centre director Pasi Aalto from NTNU Wood for preparing the jig, senior engineers Jörg Siegfried Schauer and Peter Roze for technical assistance, architect Tom Teulon for sketching sessions, artist and companion Martin Palmer for brainstorming and critique, and light designer Abigail Nava for feedback, testing and contacts. Last but not least I wish to thank curators Anne-Gro Erikstad of LevArt and Ragnar Wold of Wold visningsrom for believing in MOOD before completion and committing to the project after the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work as an artist often involves collaboration, installation, social interaction and an engagement with public space. I apply an experimental approach to materials and media, often making works that have a limited life span, addressing a specific audience or situation. My objective is to push social boundaries and experiment with new contexts in which contemporary art might operate, in order to 'nudge' or 'disturb' common views of everyday objects and situations. A recurring theme in my work is hospitality, human health and well-being, with a focus on the broader function of cultural work and its potential to effect society. My work revolves around a sense of vulnerability and an awareness of the necessity of taking risks in order for me to communicate what I want to express.

Despite the often serious themes I explore in my art, such as alienation and mental health, it is important for me to make use of humour, elements of surprise and playful aesthetics in order to address issues that are both socially complex and emotionally ambiguous and to invite my audience to reconsider the contexts I am operating in, whether in a gallery or public space and what their experience of my work in each given situation implies.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is an important part of my work. In the words of artist Vito Acconci, "I don't think something public can come from a single person" (Niarchos, 2012). I believe in acting together across sectors and disciplines. Joined forces allow for an agency that will inspire people to tackle the challenges we face as a society,¹ while advancing the idea of what an artwork and its multiple functions can be.

¹ Cf. KIT Artistic Entrepreneurship module (2019)

INTRODUCTION

Our spaceship is so superbly designed as to be able to keep life regenerating on board despite the phenomenon, entropy, by which all local physical systems lose energy. So we have to obtain our biological life-regenerating energy from another spaceship - the sun.

- R. Buckminster Fuller (1969)

MOOD is an art installation intended for public space. It takes shape as a semi-mobile architectural sculpture which can be demounted and moved between different environments like parks, art galleries or urban outskirts. The sculpture is intended to appear as an unexpected intervention in its surroundings. It alludes to the geodesic domes² popularised by Buckminster Fuller (Teresa & Jiménez 2010), but has unconventional dimensions from a human architectural point of view. It has no apparent function, other than hosting a series of pulsating lights inside. It is reminiscent of something that has arrived from outer space. This 'otherness' makes it a potential common space. Nobody can claim ownership over it, or know exactly how to relate to it.

There is one outstandingly important fact about our spaceship, and that is that no instruction book came with it.

- ibid.

The installation emits light at a strength which the human eye perceives as sun light, thus having the same effect as clinical light therapy treatment.³ MOOD is both an installation intended for public space, where it offers real and biologically confirmed health benefits to the audience that visits it, as well as a translation or representation of underlying themes when exhibited in the gallery space.

Even before I arrived in Trondheim and experienced my first 'real winter,' I had made several artworks dealing with light and light therapy. Being half Madeiranese but raised in Denmark, the difference between the two cultures (and also the climates) made a great impression on me. How does long dark winters and the absence of the sun affect a population and the behaviour of a people? Struggling with the Scandinavian winter season, I learned that a significant portion of the population suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), or so-called winter depressions. I also learned that staring into an artificial source of light has positive effects, even on people with chronic or major depressive disorders. This topic has remained an important area of artistic research for me in the last few years.

² A geodesic dome is a hemispherical thin-shell structure based on a geodesic polyhedron. The triangular elements of the dome are structurally rigid and distribute the structural stress throughout the structure, making geodesic domes able to withstand very heavy loads for their size.

³ Light therapy affect brain chemicals linked to mood and sleep. Using light therapy may help with certain types of depression, sleep disorders and other conditions. Light therapy is also known as bright light therapy or phototherapy. For examples of clinical light therapy resources, see: <https://sad.psychiatry.ubc.ca/resources/clinician-resources/> (Accessed: 29 May 2020)

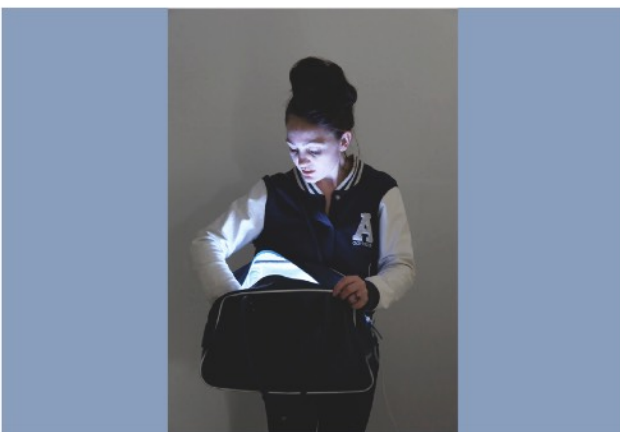
MOOD explores the boundaries between usefulness and art as representation. It is something that has been produced as artistic practice, but is intended to offer a clearly beneficial result as a social and revitalising space for receiving light therapy.

I seek to answer the following research questions:

- How does an architectural structure that is 'activated' by its visitors translate as a work of art?
- Where is the line between sculpture, relational aesthetics and architecture?
- Is useful art even possible?

In the following thesis I will describe the themes, methodologies and theories employed in the development of MOOD. I will situate my work within the field of contemporary art and evaluate what I intended to do and what I accomplished.

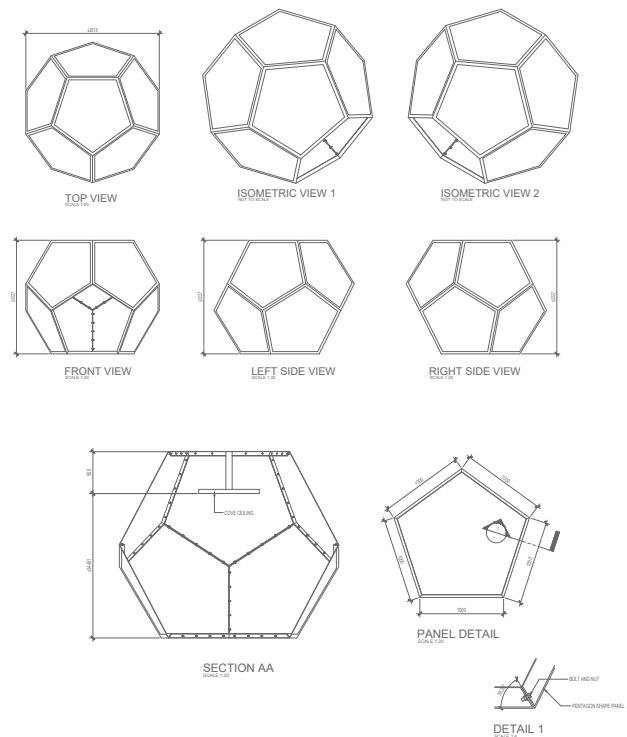
This last point has become even more crucial after March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic caused an international shutdown of our societies. This led to a closure of the Art Academy which meant access to workshops, studios and final material deliveries necessary to complete the work became impossible within the remaining timeframe. It is at this stage prior to the onset of the Pandemic I had already referred to the project as a utopian work. Ironically, now that the work is literally nonexistent, it has truly become utopian. In response to this situation, one final question explored in this thesis is therefore about translatability, not only between gallery and public space, but between idea and manifestation. To what extent can an artwork communicate its purpose when it exists as a proposal, or a work of fiction?



Early artworks concerned with light and light therapy
Bag Full of Sunshine (2014), Therapeutic Lighting Cap (2015)

MATERIAL AND MEDIUM: VISUAL REPRESENTATION

MOOD is built as a 218 x 218 cm dodecahedron, i.e. an equal-sided pentatonic cube. This form is one of the five Platonic solids. Some have associated the four other shapes (tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, icosahedron) with the four natural elements on earth. The dodecahedron is associated with the shape of the Universe, while that is not physically true, there is a poetic beauty in it. The Platonic solids are also the only shapes we know that are equal on all sides in three-dimensional space. Who knows what will happen if we add more dimensions to them?



MOOD CAD drawings used to calculate angles and dimensions of the construction

There is a circular entrance on one side of the sculpture, again referring to Platon's theory of forms.⁴ Inside, visitors can observe a light installation, displayed by RGB-W LED⁵ bars programmed with a DMX⁶ controller behind a semi-transparent plexiglass plate in the ceiling.

The sculpture is made by 11 recycled plywood plates (18 mm), cut as pentagons measuring 95 cm on each side, with 114° angles prepared on a jig, so that all sides of each plate fits with the next. When joined, they create a perfect dodecahedron, connected by an angular metal plate in each corner.⁷



MOOD under construction
Dimensions and technique.

⁴ Platon observed that forms perceived as circles or lines are not exactly circular or straight, and that true circles and lines could never be detected since by definition they are sets of infinitely small points. But if the perfect ones were not real, how could they direct the manufacturer?

⁵ RGB+W LED strip uses either a 4-in-1 LED chip that has a white chip as well as red, green and blue or an RGB chip alongside a white chip. Although RGB can produce a colour close to white, a dedicated white LED provides a much purer white tone and allows you the option of an extra warm or cool white chip. The extra white chip also provides extra scope for colour mixing with the RGB chips to create a huge range of unique shades. It is necessary with RGB-W in MOOD to achieve the sufficient lux strength.

⁶ DMX is a lighting control protocol which allows users to control lighting systems. DMX originated as a way to set the bar for lighting manufacturers to build fixtures that would all be compatible with each other, instead of having individual control stations for each set of lighting. DMX control is usually achieved with a DMX console on which a show can be recorded and scenes can be built and edited. This is convenient for MOOD since a simple controller can be installed with the LED bars, instead of relying on software and a computer.

⁷ This makes it a solid construction that can hold the weight of several human adults, while also being fairly easy to mount, deconstruct and move.

The plates are airbrushed with a pearlescent coating. I want the sculpture to reflect nature on the one hand (we recognise iridescent shades⁸ from pearls, insects, animals and certain gemstones and minerals) and on the other to give it a futuristic or mechanical appearance. In modern times we associate similar metallic shades with industrial coatings, engine oil and automotive parts. It is my intention that these effect pigments afford this dual association and also a seductive and vibrant appearance of life and activity when lighting effects, or the angle that the sculpture is seen from, changes. This colouring has a duality in the work; it gives it a sense of 'otherness' but also belonging, as it reflects the shades and movements of its environment.

I strive for sustainability in my work and while recycled wood may be the most environmentally beneficial material to use within my budget, effect pigments such as the pearlescent coating may not be as equally sustainable. Unfortunately I have not been able to find a substitute to create the angle-dependent colour effects necessary to realise the aesthetic dimension of the work.

Ideally, MOOD should run on solar energy, thus retaining energy from the sun at times when we can't see it and re-releasing 'sun light' and warmth to visitors when they need it, while doubling as a space (and even shelter) for social interaction. This adds to the sustainability of the sculpture and allows it to be installed without access to power outlets (visible power outlets also breaks the illusion). Solar energy is preferable to other renewable energy sources for the poetic quality that the retainment and transmission of sun light adds to the project.



Pearlescent airbrushing
Iridescent mirroring

⁸ Iridescence (also known as goniochromism) is the phenomenon of certain surfaces that appear to gradually change colour as the angle of view or the angle of illumination changes. Examples of iridescence include soap bubbles, feathers, butterfly wings and seashell nacre, as well as certain minerals. It is often created by structural coloration (microstructures that interfere with light).

BACKGROUND: MOOD IN CONTEXT

The natural impulse of artists is trying to understand the things surrounding them and sharing with others the questions they make to themselves and the answers they find.

- Tania Bruguera (2012)

In addition to the aforementioned interest in light therapy as an artistic practice, the MOOD project is also inspired by an interest in historic pilgrim pavilions, British coffee houses and the tea ceremonies of the Japanese *chashitsu*. These are all about hospitality, social ritual and temporarily receiving guests. These places would thus gather different people who would socially engage with each other simply because they were in the same space.

While visitors to the coffee houses often would share an interest in politics (the coffee houses became public arenas for political debate) and guests at the pilgrim pavilions would often be religious travellers, both places were sites for questions, gathering and debates among people who often didn't already know each other.

The Japanese Tea Ceremony, on the other hand, is meant as an occasion to appreciate the simplicity of the tea room's design, the feeling of the Chawan in the hand, the company, and simply a moment of purity.

Central to MOOD is a societal critique regarding the disappearance of these kind of public meeting points and how we use public space today, and a commentary on how humans interact (or lack interaction) with each other in contemporary society.

In the following subsections I will elaborate both on my process and important theories and interests that have inspired my work with the project.



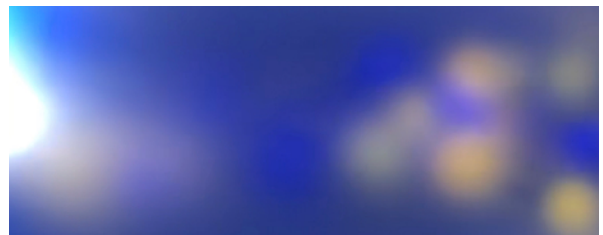
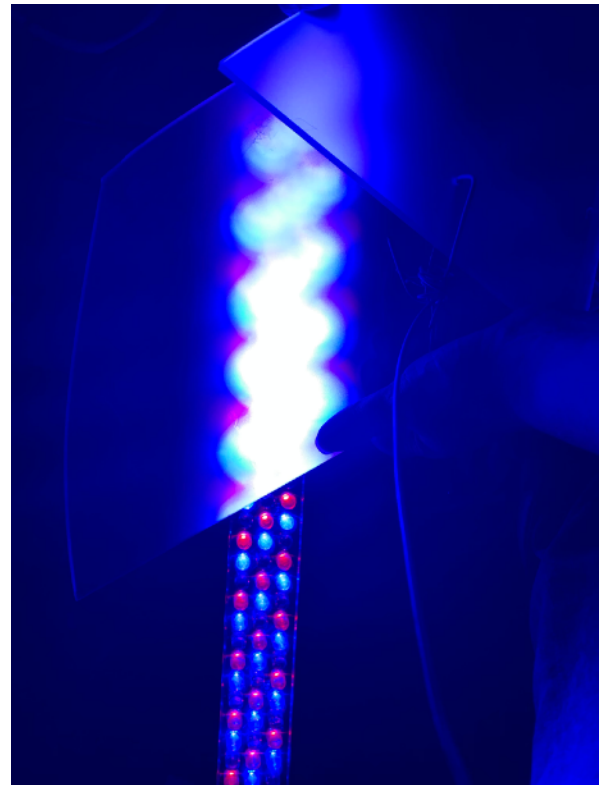
MOOD under construction
Experiments with light

Light Therapy

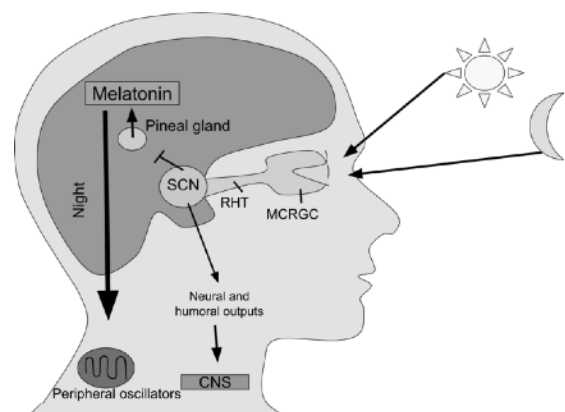
When MOOD works as intended, several visitors will gather inside the sphere at the same time. The atmosphere is surreal but soothing. The LED bars emits light at 2000 lux⁹, which the human eye perceives as sun light. When our photosensitive retinal cells believe they are exposed to sun light, the pineal gland's production of melatonin is inhibited and the hormones produced keep the human awake, with an increased sense of well-being caused by the production of serotonin in the brain. MOOD is therefore an art work with a very real and biologically informed mood regulating effect.

The subtle, revitalising effect of the light therapy is a crucial concept in MOOD. While light therapy has a documented positive effect on the human mood it is also effectively used in the treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder (Levitt, Lam & Levitan, 2002) in addition to other minor depressions (Mendelson et.al. 1999).

The shape of the sculpture invites the visitors to sit back in a circle, focusing upwards on the source of light. This situation is intended to invoke the primordial or genetic memory of gathering around bonfires under the stars (I believe this is the reason why humans still gather in circles whenever there is a source of light in the centre of a space). Some participants will talk and share stories whilst others prefer to listen while they are all staring into the light, which functions as an intermediary or common focal point making social interaction with strangers easier.



Testing light through semi-transparent plate



When eyes receive light from the sun, the pineal gland's production of melatonin is inhibited and the hormones produced keep the human awake. When the eyes do not receive light, melatonin is produced in the pineal gland and the human becomes tired.

⁹ Lux (lx) is the SI derived unit of illuminance, measuring luminous flux per unit area. It is equal to one lumen per square metre. In photometry, this is used as a measure of the intensity, as perceived by the human eye, of light that hits or passes through a surface.

As part of my research, I have met with Professor Barbara Matusiak from the Light and Colour Centre at the Department for Architecture and Technology, NTNU. According to her, for therapeutic light to be efficient, exposure should be given in intervals corresponding with natural day light cycles, and should not be used in the evenings as it will then have a disruptive rather than positive effect on the receiver. Interestingly, light therapy is also used as a treatment for people who suffer from circadian rhythm sleep disorders.

Further, she advised me that a bright blue light should be used in the mornings, whereas a yellow hue is more beneficial later in the day. In addition, a yellow light will be more effective from a distance, while blue should be applied for close encounters with the source of light.

To add, the lower part of the retina is more light sensitive, so it is beneficial to look upwards while being exposed to therapeutic lightning. Based on this information, it is advisable that visitors stay inside the sculpture for a minimum of 10 minutes (ideally visiting MOOD regularly) if it is to have any real effect. For this reason, the light installation in MOOD is installed in the ceiling, and is programmed to display a 'dance of light' as an aesthetic experience to keep the visitors attention with the colour scheme changing through the cycle of the day.

MOOD is thus both an installation intended for public space, where it offers real and biologically confirmed health benefits to the visitors, as well as a translation or representation when exhibited in the gallery space. By stating that the installation offers light therapy treatment, or that it has a 'healing effect', while visitors gather around the artificial 'bonfire' I am offering a positive sculptural intervention containing a subtle and nonintrusive treatment, free from the clinical or institutionalised context it is normally associated with. It is also nudging visitors with inherent questions about social interaction with strangers, hopefully aiding both mental and social well-being in the process.

Disclaimer

I do not suggest that my sculpture should replace conventional treatment for depression, but in other cases light treatment is an evidence-based treatment where doctors commonly prescribe light boxes to patients. I'm therefore taking the advice from Dr. Matusiak into consideration and proposes a different and more socially engaged way of receiving light therapy.

Goethe's Colour Theory

I have studied Goethe's theory of colours, as laid out in his famous book *Zur Farbenlehre* (1810, English 1840), and consider this to be more in line with an artistic research practice than a purely scientific investigation. Applying an affective approach, Goethe attempted to develop a wide-ranging exposition through which is revealed the essential character of colours as he experienced them, while displaying light and colour in an ordered series of experiments that others could experience for themselves. As Wittgenstein suggests, "what Goethe was really seeking was not a physiological but a psychological theory of colours" (quoted in Gunnell, 2014, p. 54).

The light installation in MOOD makes use of complementary colours in blue, yellow, red and green hues, displayed behind a semi-transparent plexiglass plate in the ceiling. As Goethe correctly observed, while the highest degree of light, such as that of the sun is for the most part colourless, this light appears to us as yellow. If the density of such a medium be increased, or if its volume become greater, "we shall see the light gradually assume a yellow-red hue, which at last deepens to a ruby colour. If on the other hand darkness is seen through a semi-transparent medium, which is itself illumined by a light striking on it, a blue colour appears: this becomes lighter and paler as the density of the medium is increased, but on the contrary appears darker and deeper the more transparent the medium becomes: in the least degree of dimness short of absolute transparence, always supposing a perfectly colourless medium, this deep blue approaches the most beautiful violet" (Goethe 1840, p. 34)

In prismatic experiments it extends itself alone and widely in the light space, while the two poles remain separated from each other, before it mixes with blue. In its highest purity yellow always carries with it "the nature of brightness," and has, in Goethe's words, a "serene, gay, softly exciting character."¹⁰ (quoted in Popova, no date).

As yellow is always accompanied with light, so it may be said that blue still brings a principle of darkness with it. Goethe observed that this colour has a peculiar and almost indescribable effect on the eye; "As a hue it is powerful - but it is on the negative side, and in its highest purity is, as it were, a stimulating negation. It's appearance, then, is a kind of contradiction between excitement and repose" (ibid.) We love to contemplate blue, Goethe explains, not because it advances to us, but because it draws us after it. Consider for example our perception of the sky or distant mountains.

I find the interplay of blue and yellow, and Goethe's observation of them, to have a poetic quality which adds to the MOOD project, in addition to the scientifically grounded reasons for applying these particular colours as explained in the previous section.

The Sociological Theories of Erving Goffman

The MOOD project is also drawing on the sociological theories of Dr. Erving Goffman (1922-1982), who is known for his study of social and symbolical interaction, social organisation of experience, total institutions, stigma and “the sociology of everyday life.” In his book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963), he examines how people manage impressions of themselves to protect themselves when they depart from approved standards of behaviour – mainly through concealment.

Goffman is interested in how people remain guarded to ensure that they do not show themselves to others in an unfavourable light, and writes about how stigma pertains to the shame that a person feels when he or she fails to meet other people's standards, and to the fear of being discredited. He is also concerned with how institutionalisation socialises people into roles and how 'total institutions' greatly affect people's interactions.

Reflecting on these diverse topics and the way we perceive and interact with each other is a central theme in my artistic practice. With MOOD I attempt to create a space that breaks away from the institutionalised. It is unfamiliar for all, and thus reframes how visitors in that space are expected to manage the impression of themselves. This is substantiated by the iridescent play of metallic shades on the walls, where abstractions of the visitors movements are reflected back at them.

Useful Art, Relational Aesthetics & Social Engagement

MOOD is a merging of relational aesthetics, a socially engaged art practice and *Arte Útil*. The latter is Spanish and translates as “useful art”, although a dimension is lost in translation by the fact that *útil* also means a tool. The word comes from the *Manifiesto de Arte Útil* written by the Argentine artist Eduardo Costa in 1969 and later popularised by Cuban artist Tania Bruguera. According to her, useful art aims to “imagine, create, develop and implement something that, produced in artistic practice, offers the people a clearly beneficial result. It is art because it is the elaboration of a proposal that does not yet exist in the real world and because it is made with the hope and belief that something may be done better, even when the conditions for it to happen may not be there yet.” (Bruguera 2012). I apply this definition to MOOD, both when it is manifested as a work of art in public space, but also in its current existence as a utopian proposal as described in this thesis.

It is relational by the definition of French art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, in that MOOD is a “set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.” (Bourriaud 1998, p. 113).

Social practice is a complex art term, often applied by artists dealing with social change through collaboration with individuals, institutions and communities. For me, my process is always social and participatory. As I write in my introductory statement, I don't think something public can come from a single person. I believe in acting together across sectors and disciplines. Both the theoretical and physical development of MOOD is the result of inviting others in to help realise my artistic concept.

Although I am always deeply involved and in control of all parts of my process, I consider my artistic practice to be linked to socially engaged art, in that it involves people as the real medium or material of the work, both during production and when it turns "the viewer into a performer or participant". (Niarchos, 2012). Also, as artist and author Pablo Helguera writes, "socially engaged art functions by attaching itself to subjects and problems that normally belong to other disciplines, moving them temporarily into a space of ambiguity. It is this temporary snatching away of subjects into the realm of art-making that brings new insights to a particular problem or condition and in turn makes it visible to other disciplines. For this reason, I believe that the best term for this kind of practice is what I have thus far been using as a generic descriptor —that is, 'socially engaged art', a term that emerged in the mid-1970s, as it unambiguously acknowledges a connection to the practice of art." (Helguera 2011, pp. 4-5). This must be seen in connection to relational aesthetics, where the 'art' in what is happening is only preserved in its "parent principle, which ironically refers more to traditional values – i.e., beauty – than does 'art.'" (ibid. p. 3). Also 'social practice', which tries to "democratise the construct, making the artist into an individual whose specialty includes working with society in a professional capacity." The exclusion of the word 'art' stems from "a growing general discomfort with the term." (ibid., p. 3). I don't agree with that. I consider MOOD to be an artwork first, realised by relational and social means.

Finally, when a group of people gather inside the sculpture with onlookers standing by, MOOD it is also an exploration of how to deal with what Professor Claire Bishop calls the "division between first-hand participants and secondary audience ('temporary community' vs 'outside public'), and the division between artistic goals and problem solving/ concrete outcomes." (Bishop 2012, p. 19). This underlines my previous point about the boundaries between creating something that is intended to offer a clearly beneficial result as a social and revitalising space for receiving light therapy, but which simultaneously exists as an artistic representation activated by the very same visitors.



Useful MOOD model #1
Measuring angles

Translatability

Placing the sculpture in public space and to have strangers interact inside of it is an integrated part of the concept of this project. I currently have two opportunities to exhibit the sculpture in public space when the COVID-19 situation is over. Unfortunately, due to the situation, it will not be experienced in a gallery setting as an extension of this thesis, as first intended. In any case, the idea is to add a question of translatability of an art work between different settings and is something I have explored in several of my works.



Useful MOOD mode #2
Digital sketch for LevArt PARK

What happens when you change the expression of an idea, or the setting where you present your work? When does a work stop being the container of a specific idea and turn into something else? In this case, the sculpture is a development from a previous project, as an extension of the same idea, but more importantly, an installation that is meant for public space and explores this. What happens when it is taken back into the gallery, as a representation of its own function?

As Jeremy Lecomte (2017) has pointed out, the issue with these spaces is that it neutralises the linearity of time, it allows us no tool to navigate. The white cube (or blank space) is not natural, but historically constructed.

By grounding his criticism in a historical and speculative debate on the white cube as put forward by Brian O'Doherty (1976, 1999), Lecomte shows that only a proper architectural reading of the white cube can really grasp the role that it plays as the material, institutional and symbolic space in which contemporary art is both exhibited and legitimised.

By examining the white cube in direct connection to Le Corbusier, Lecomte points out how contemporary art must be defined as a specific genre, defined by a logic of self-referential indeterminacy that directly belongs to its generic space of exhibition, hence positing that any claim about the necessity to exit contemporary art must be addressed in relation to this extended space.

Further, MOOD explores its own transition between being perceived as an architectural object, i.e. a room designed for people to enter, and my claim that it is a sculpture because of its representability and spatial dysfunction, whereas form follows function from an architectural point of view. I will leave this problem unresolved.

Utopia and Heterotopia

If you know from where to set sail, with a friendly pilot offering expertise, it should not take you too long to reach Utopia.

- China Miéville (2016)

I am referring to MOOD as a utopian art project. As Foucault points out, utopias are sites with no real place, which have “a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society.” (Foucault 1967, p. 3). Utopia present society itself in a perfected form, but are fundamentally unreal spaces.

Since MOOD exists as a temporal space or intervention moving between different environments, it can also be considered a heterotopia, a complex idea explained by Foucault in a series of principles in his essay *Des Espace Autres* (1967), translated as *Of Other Spaces* in 1984. In relation to MOOD it means that the place is absolutely real for the visitor occupying it in the moment, although MOOD is not bound to a specific site. In theory it can exist as multiple copies in several places but be explained by a single idea. It is connected with all the space that surrounds it and at the same time acts as a mirror or representation.

It is utopian because it tries to “imagine, create, develop and implement (...) a proposal that does not yet exist in the real world and because it is made with the hope and belief that something may be done better, even when the conditions for it to happen may not be there yet”. (Bruguera 2012)

Without the conditions to realise the project, it currently exists purely in an imaginary state of proposal. It is my argument that, much like Thomas Moore’s original Utopia, MOOD may still make an impact this way.



I think imagination is the single most useful tool humankind possesses. It beats the opposable thumb. I can imagine living without my thumbs, but not without my imagination.

- Ursula K. Le Guin (2016)

EPILOGUE: CRITICAL REFLECTION

The great thing about models and drawings is that they're probably easier to understand than a real space. A real space you have to move through, a real space isn't still. You don't see it all at once. You know it minute by minute. Overall view probably helps you think of other spaces, going through a space helps you think how can I interact with the space, or people in a space.

- Vito Acconci (2012)

My intention with MOOD is to challenge the concept of an artwork and what its function can be. It is part temporary sculpture, part relational aesthetics, part mental health awareness program and part sociopolitical discourse. It is also relating to the still relevant debate about the white cube and the ideology of the gallery space, as the installation does not necessarily relate to the gallery, nor is it a conventional artwork in common space. MOOD is available for everyone. Its social mechanism does not rely on an audience familiar with art. It is a social space and a non-institutionalised space for health and well-being.

I consider MOOD to be "a way of working with aesthetic experiences that focus on the implementation of art in society where art's function is no longer to be a space for 'signalling' problems, but the place from which to create the proposal and implementation of possible solutions." (Bruguera 2012). I agree with Bruguera that we "should go back to the times when art was not something to look at in awe, but something to generate from." (ibid.) As Hal Foster suggests, although "many artists privilege phenomenological experience, they often offer the near-reverse: 'experience' handed down back to us as 'atmosphere' or 'affect' - that is, as environments that confuse the actual with the virtual." (Foster 2011, pp. xi-xii). He goes on to argue that this way the phenomenological reflexivity of 'seeing oneself see' approaches its opposite: a space that seems to do the perceiving for us. My intention with MOOD is to avoid this, and to follow Foster's line of thought further I "insist on the sensuous particularity of experience in the here-and-now and to resist the stunned subjectivity and arrested sociality supported by spectacle." (ibid.)

MOOD values what is invisible, as pointed out by Claire Bishop: "a group dynamic, a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness. As a result, it is an art dependent on firsthand experience, and preferably over a long duration." (Bishop 2012, p. 5). For this reason I decided against creating a virtual or other alternative representation of MOOD when it became clear that the project could not be realised as planned, due to the lockdown caused by COVID-19. It simply would not make sense, as it would be an incomparably different work. Another argument for my decision is substantiated by artist Richard Serra in his interview with Hal Foster: "Unless the work is inventive formally, it can't change anything. It has to be inventive formally to change one's perception, emotions and experience." (Foster 2011, p. 235). I will not be able to achieve this outside the context for which MOOD is intended.

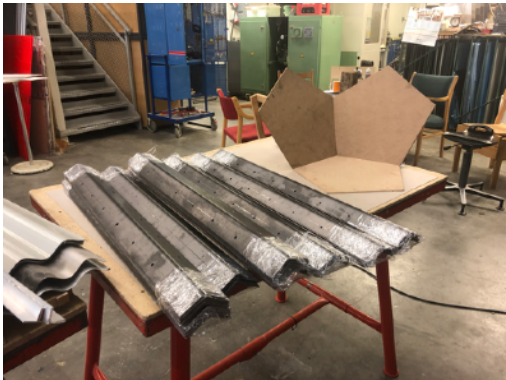
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APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION



APPENDIX 2: PROCESS IMAGES





Utopian exhibition site
TKM Gråmølne, May 2020