

**Location**

Sweden, The Netherlands, Canada

**Users**

Museum visitors

**Maintained by**

Moderna Museet Stockholm;  
Bildmuseet, Umeå; Van  
Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; MOCA,  
Toronto

**Duration**

1999

**Category**

scientific, economy, social

**Nr. and Title**

U 051

# Light Therapy

**Initiator(s)**

Apolonija Šušteršič

**Description**

Light Therapy was originally made as a project for Moderna Museet in Stockholm, 1999. The idea was to focus on the program and typology of spaces within the contemporary museum today: how it functions as public space, and as a social or healing device in itself. Light Therapy became an addition to, and a comment on the museum's program. It is clear that museums today not only function as exhibition space, but that they are also generators of city development and places that offer visitors various other activities and outlets, such as an education program, library and reading room, restaurant and shop etc. Light Therapy is always designed with a generous amount of light simulating a bright, sunny day. The light elements used in the room are specially developed in relation to medical light treatments that affect our behavior. Everything in the room is white in order to keep the amount of light at the level of 10.000 lux. The room is furnished with white furniture, visitors get white coats, all objects and elements of the furniture in the room need to be white. There are Light Therapy instructions on the wall for visitors to consider as advice on how to use the room. Reading material is available for visitors to read and it is usually selected as a comment to the current issue discussed in public within specific situations / contexts where the room is installed. Invitations to use Light Therapy are placed in local newspapers and flyers are handed out in the urban realm to inform the public that light therapy is available to everyone. The logo for Light Therapy is developed by each hosting institution, to imply that the therapy is an authentic part of the museum experience.

**Goals**

To allow visitors of contemporary art museums to experience feelings of happiness and make them aware of its meaning within our everyday life.

**Beneficial outcomes**

This treatment is used to fight Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), milder winter blues and sleep disorders caused by jet lag and overwork, or lack of daylight. It is a therapy with no proven side effects, which everyone can use. Light therapy creates an artificial condition to improve our busy lives: "it is a 'new prosthesis' to make our everyday lives easier. It is a tool, which artificially makes you happy". However, the subject of happiness is always related to a specific context or situation where Light Therapy is installed which makes the visitors of a contemporary art museum aware of its role in society today.

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