

DS Institute (Caitlin Foley, Misha Rabinovich, Zach Dunn)

Artist: DS Institute (Caitlin Foley, Misha Rabinovich, Zach Dunn) <http://dsinstitute.com>

Title: Mobile Sauna & Sweat Battery

Date(s): Mobile Sauna NYS tour from September 2012-June 2013 (ongoing sauna sessions in its current location in Michigan)

Physical Description: The Mobile Sauna is built on a trailer and constructed using locally sourced materials including salvaged century-old Hemlock and Tamarack wood, recycled materials from individuals and groups (e.g. the ReStore of Habitat For Humanity) and features a hand-prepped untreated wooden interior. The interior is 6' x 11' and seats 7 people comfortably. It houses an efficient wood-fired sauna stove hand-built by a Finnish American family. The sweat battery is constructed using copper nails and epdm rubber left over from sauna construction, paper towels (soaked in donated sweat), activated charcoal, wires, aluminum foil, and an Adafruit MintyBoost circuit.

Distribution: The Mobile Sauna & Sweat Battery offered free sauna sessions and cell phone charging stations. During its neighborhood tour it was parked in over a dozen driveways in upstate New York and invitations to sauna were extended to everyone living in the respective neighborhoods. DS Institute members, along with mobile sauna hosts went door to door with flyers inviting people to participate. Additionally, Mobile Sauna sessions were held on site at the New Museum's Ideas City Festival in Manhattan, the CAC Woodside in Troy NY, the Gandee Gallery in Fabius NY, the Everson Museum in Syracuse NY, and 601 Tully in Syracuse NY.

Project Description: On an individual level the sauna cleanses people of physical toxins and releases stress. Surrendering to this act of cleansing in the presence of others creates a unique social bond. The public becomes intimate. The DS Institute's sauna was built on a trailer in order to enter into a culture that is becoming increasingly privatized and to remind us of the importance of shared experiences in fostering healthy lifestyles. The Mobile Sauna provides the possibility for people to enter a Temporary Autonomous Zone where everyone is equal. Time slows down in the sauna. No matter where the sauna is parked, it is always the same warm and rejuvenating environment inside. Mobile Sauna bathers were invited to extend this experience by donating their sweat to be the active ingredient in a working electrical battery used to charge cell phones so that participants could invite friends to join in. The ion transport solution in the battery is sweat, or released stress, which is still real (and holds its charge) but now is externalized and no longer doing damage inside the body and mind. The sweat battery requires sweat from many people to produce a substantial amount of energy. Communities often form in times of need and the sauna and sweat battery provide an opportunity to form positive bonds without experiencing a loss.

