

Time Out

13-20 February 2002

Sarah Kent

Four lightboxes show a barren landscape in Greenland photographed by Anthony Oliver at 6am, midday, 6pm and midnight. In three of the images the light is cold and bright - like a crisp, clear, English winter day. Only the midnight shot has a warm glow; it was summertime, when daylight lasts 24 hours. Bruce Gilchrist and Jo Joelson spent a month in Greenland measuring the light falling on to and reflected from objects such as flowers, rocks and their own skin. In the boiler house at Wapping, they offer the chance to experience a comparable range of warm and cold light. You sit on a translucent chair in a white cubicle and place your hands on two bronze electrodes so completing a circuit that activates light panels in the ceiling. Resting my hands lightly on the electrodes, I was bathed in a cold, brilliant light that occasionally flickered warm before returning to limpid coolness. During a second session, a powerful tingling travelled up my arms as I pressed my palms firmly on the plates. When I realised that changes in touch altered the light, the experience became less meditative and more like an interactive game. On the way to Wapping I had noticed how tired I felt. After my irradiation I was more alert and, that night took a long time to go to sleep yet, in the morning, I woke early and energised. Given that dragging myself out of bed had proved more difficult each day - as though I'd been over- taken by a desire to hibernate - this felt like a rebirth. SAD - seasonal affective disorder -is a recognised form of depression caused by winter gloom, which can be treated with light therapy. If the winter blues are sapping your vitality, absorb the dose of pure energy offered by Polaria.