

moodbank





6	Diary: Getting Moody
8	'Affective Capitalism' and the Moodbank
12	Diary: Making a Believable Bank
14	Urban Dream Brokerage and the Moodbank: A Conversation
18	Diary: Creating the Wellington Branch
21	Constructing Connectivity, Hybridizing New and Old Systems of Exchange
26	Diary: Being Open
28	Moodbank: User Experience
32	Diary: The Future of Mood Banking
37	References



City spaces have often been thought about in terms of the functional flows of people and things: the money that is exchanged, the congestion of rush hour, the accumulation of rubbish and the cold face of professionalism. More recently businesses and governments have come to see the value in finding out how happy we are. But what about the more diverse and complex emotional life of the city? How do we actually feel?

'Mood Manager'. Styling courtesy of Greta Menzies. Image courtesy of Russel Kyles.

March 13 - 22, 2014

Wellington



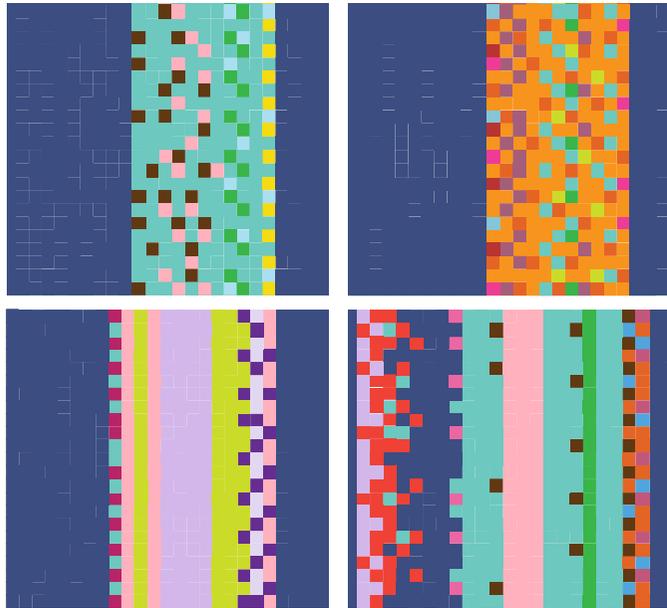
'Moodbank shop front'.

At the Moodbank, which opened in Wellington, New Zealand in March 2014, customers could visualise, deposit and exchange their feelings. Quick transactions were made via an ATM-style mood machine found in various locations throughout the city, on-line or by visiting the branch. One-to-one and group appointments were made with the Mood Manager for more detailed mappings of mood. Mood deposits were used to create collective visualisations of the mood of Wellington. The data gathered on-line and via our ATM-style mood machine produced digital mood trends and a market index that mimicked a stock exchange ticker.

The Moodbank, which may pop-up in other locations, consciously acknowledges and validates all moods rather than just those that are deemed valuable in consumer culture. We want to provoke debate regarding appropriate and inappropriate emotion and the privileging of happiness. By mimicking and subverting the aesthetics of a bank and by contrasting analogue and digital data we hope to draw attention to the processes in which our feelings become commercially valuable. In our attempt to make the collective mood of the city visible we propose a social rather than an economic form of exchange. Mood is intimate, relational, and contextual; it is

complex, contradictory and messy. By visualising how we feel we are recognising the value of the often unseen emotional experiences that make up our collective mood.

This publication documents the creation, opening and end results of the Moodbank in Wellington. It also includes reflections on the project by Vanessa Crowe, Sarah Elsie Baker, Mark Amery and Sophie Jerram, and Meredith Crowe. These essays and discussions explore the conceptual legacy of Moodbank and consider the future of the project.



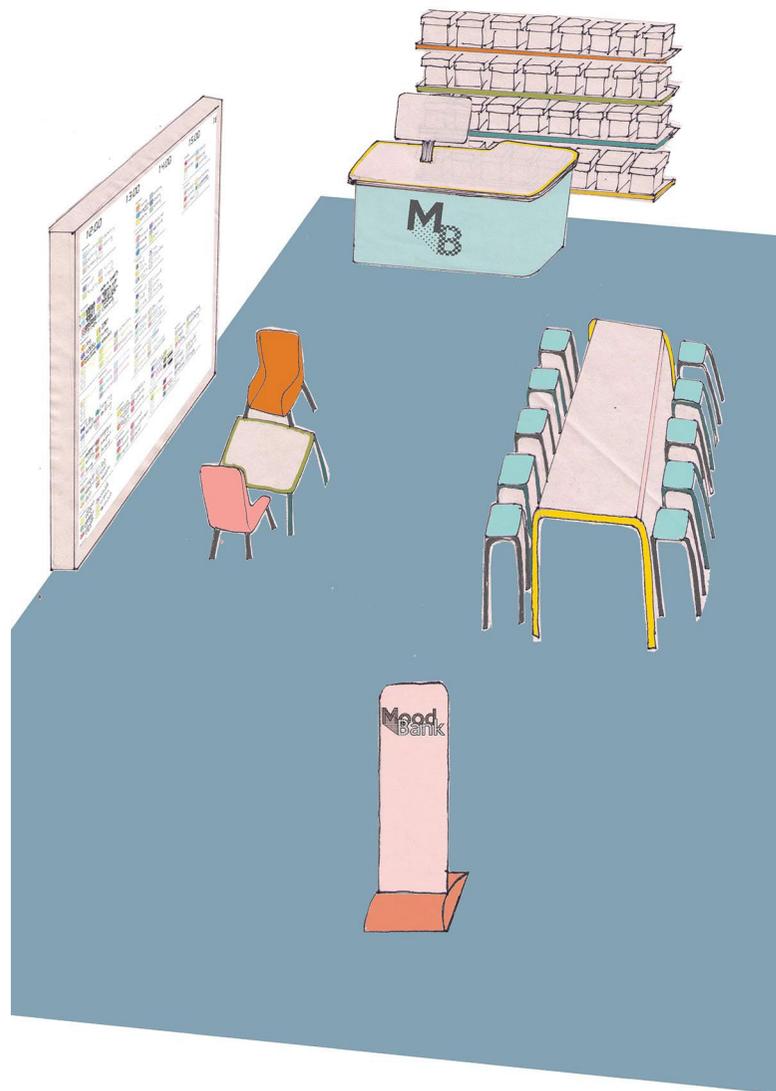
‘Initial mood diaries’.

The story of the Moodbank began in Sarah’s office when we started talking about domestic life and how certain practices made us feel: how cleaning could sometimes be a torturous chore and at other times a cathartic experience. Vanessa reached into her bag to grab her laptop and opened a document in Illustrator. In it she had been colouring a grid according to her daily activities and how those tasks had made her feel. We spoke about how the grid was beautiful but also interesting in terms of documenting everyday experiences. Vanessa reflected on how the process had helped her deal with the range of emotions she had been experiencing in her daily life. We thought about how it would be interesting to get other people to complete a similar activity and see how they felt. Originally we proposed a visual display of this data for light boxes in Wellington, so the city could see how eight of its inhabitants felt. In the end we did not get the funding for the light boxes, but in hindsight this was a positive outcome that propelled the Moodbank project forward.

Over time we talked more about how commercial organisations and governments were becoming interested in emotion, but also about how the grid that Vanessa had drawn was a much deeper engagement with mood than those in the commercial

realm. The concept of the Moodbank was born and we started to apply for funding to open a bank. We began reading more about emotion and cultural contexts, as well as observing how mood was created in city environments. We looked at how moods were established through aesthetics in banks, observing the conventions and processes of exchange. We speculated on trends in contemporary industrial, graphic, interior and critical design and observed the overlaps with contemporary art practices. In particular, we were influenced by Emmanuelle Moureaux’s design of the Sugamo Shinkin Banks in Tokyo and a colour palette pulled from a trend-forecasting page. We were keen to make the aesthetic of the Moodbank consistent with emerging design trends in banking while maintaining a slight otherworldliness. We decided that we wanted to create a strangely familiar experience, one that positioned the visitor in contemporary consumer culture as well as taking them outside of that culture in order to encourage reflection.

In the year leading up to the opening of the Moodbank the interest that commercial organisations had in mood became increasingly more obvious to us. For example BNZ developed an online ‘emotion scan’ service that records users’ emotional responses to future financial scenarios. It became clear that



one of the aims of the Moodbank would be to materialise and make people think about the commodification of emotion that was occurring in both physical and digital environments. The project had grown from a visual display of mood data to opening a bank with all its facilities. It dawned on us that we would need to collaborate with other people in order to make the project viable.

Current: 'Moodbank furniture ideas'.

Next: 'Moodbank, Wellington'.

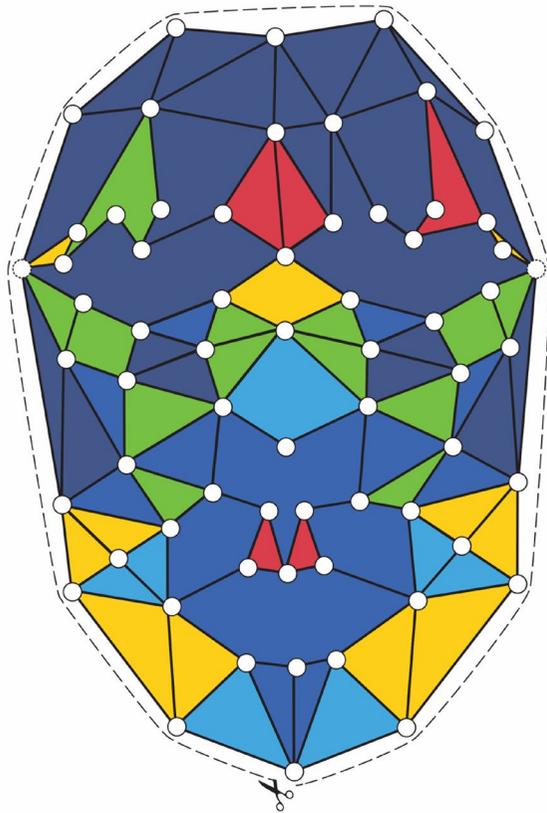


Sarah Elsie Baker

‘Affective Capitalism’
and the Moodbank

Contrary to most narratives of modernity, emotional life was always central to capitalism. It was in the early twentieth century, however, that emotion became a conscious object of knowledge in the realm of economic production and consumption (Illouz, 2007). The emotional wellbeing of employers started to be seen as a route to greater efficiency, and the emotional desires of consumers were thought of as key to the promotion of goods. While much has been written about both these areas, for instance the work on emotion and immaterial labour by academics such as Hochschild, 1982; and studies of emotion and the appeal of advertising such as Leiss et al., 2005; less research has focused on the emotional labour of ‘citizen-consumers’. For example, how we are called into action by governments and commercial organisations, and how appropriate and inappropriate emotions are produced and managed in the spaces of consumer culture. By creating the Moodbank with Vanessa, I was keen to explore whether and how emotion had become central to economic behavior and if emotional life had become driven by the logic of economic relations.

In the process of planning the project a number of events confirmed that our focus on the value of emotion was both



timely and necessary. BNZ bank in New Zealand started to use face-mapping technology to predict financial behavior according to the emotional response of their customers. On-line or in branch customers were asked to think about their future and react to various lifestyle scenarios. Whether marketing gimmick, or more sinister spy-like software, the BNZ EmotionScan confirmed why it was so important to reflect upon the commodification of emotion.

A few months later we secured funding from Wellington Council for the digital part of the project. The council generously said that they would negotiate with NZX to see if we could post data from the mood machine on the stockmarket ticker in Wellington. I had been surprised that NZX would even consider the idea. Less surprisingly, they decided that they did not want ‘negative’ emotions on the ticker and they felt that the stock market should be associated with ‘positive’ feelings. This reaction reinforced much of the reading I had been doing at the time, particularly the arguments of Sara Ahmed (2010) in ‘The Promise of Happiness’. Ahmed writes of how in many western nations the discourse of happiness has become prevalent. For example, there is now a UN Happiness Day and a world database of happiness. In New Zealand a study at the

University of Canterbury attempts to measure ‘Gross National Happiness’ instead of ‘Gross Domestic Product’ (University of Canterbury, 2013).

While happiness studies attempt to go beyond economic productivity and have a focus on sustainability and wellbeing, Ahmed argues that they reproduce a number of problematic assumptions. She writes how happiness research is problematic because it assumes happiness is ‘out there’ and can be objectively measured. It presumes that if people say they are happy they are happy, that self-reporting is uncomplicated, and that feelings can be conveyed by language alone. It does not allow for ambivalent feelings and infers that negative or neutral emotions are not as valuable as positive ones. This is highly questionable because many political movements have struggled against the hegemony of happiness rather than for it (Ahmed, 2007:2). While government research into wellbeing has become more varied (see Wellington region GPI, 2013, for example), the prevalence of positivity continues to be indicative of how neoliberal governments often reinforce capitalist agendas of growth. So to counteract the ‘hegemony of happiness’, Vanessa and I decided that we wanted to acknowledge all emotions equally at the bank, to use visual

MAKE YOUR OWN MOOD MASK

moodbank

FINDING OUT HOW WELLINGTONERS FEEL
VISIT THE MOODBANK, 231 MANNERS ST
10-21 MARCH 2014
WWW.MOODBANK.CO.NZ

‘Moodbank mask’.

moodbank

... INSPIRED... FIERCE...
 ... DISAPPOINTED... GRUMPY...
 ... FRUSTRATED... ANGRY...
 ... ENVIOUS... FLUSTERED...
 ... ANXIOUS... EXHAUSTED...
 ... NERVOUS... RUSHED... LOVED...
 ... LUSTFUL... STOKED...
 ... CAREFREE... LOLING...
 ... CONTEMPLATIVE... RELAXED...
 ... CONTENT... MELLOW...
 ... FULFILLED... GROGGY...
 ... LONELY... DRAINED... MEH...
 ... UNEMOTIONAL... CURIOUS...
 ... BUZZING... ENTERTAINED...

‘Moodbank t shirt design’.

methods, and to allow customers to deposit contradictory emotions at any one time.

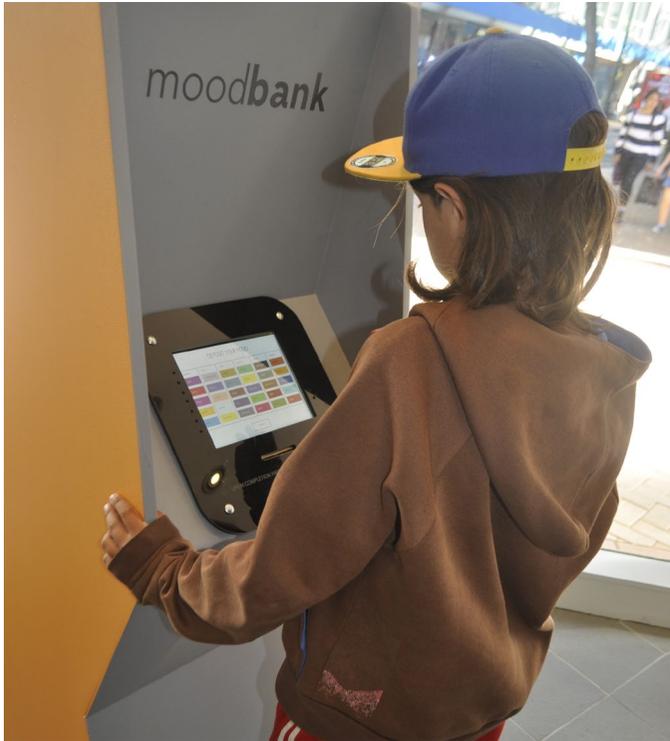
As I suggested above, commercial interest in emotion is by no means new. Yet, the techniques and technologies involved in creating and controlling emotion are developing, and the discourse of emotion as capital is becoming ever more prevalent. In design, for example, a relatively new field of ‘emotional engineering’ has emerged (see Fukuda, 2013). These scientific/quantitative studies use cognitive and bodily responses to measure reactions to new products and materials. Those involved often justify this sort of research in terms of the saturation of markets and the need to make emotional connections with consumers in order to gain market dominance. On-line social networks such as facebook and twitter have become the perfect spaces for market research focused on emotion and sentiment analysis, and there is now a wide range of software designed to measure attitudes. As Mark Andrejevic (2013:43-44) argues:

‘The realm of sentiment and emotion was the crucial dimension of human response that had not yet opened itself up to automated forms of mass quantification, collection and

mining. The opening came just in time, it turns out, to address the turn to affect in an era when emotional response allegedly holds the key to cutting through the clutter of available information.’

This turn to affect among commercial organisations has been called ‘affective capitalism’ (Affective Capitalism Symposium, 2014). The notion is useful in that it refers to the variety of ways that commercial interest in feeling (both cognitive and non-cognitive) ‘transforms us into assets, goods and services by appealing to our desires, needs and social relationships, or by making us act on mere gut-feeling’ (Affective Capitalism Symposium, 2014). Luckily, affect is not so easily or wholly subsumed into capital and the problem with many recent techniques and technologies, as their arbiters are well aware (see Burn-Murdoch, 2013), is that human responses are contextual. What moves us, or connects us to this or that, changes over time and place; it is individually as well as collectively experienced. While more complex techniques and technologies will develop and their critique is essential, the richness of human experience in context will always go beyond that which can be measured.

'Affective Capitalism' and the Moodbank



'Mood machine in use'.

Up to this point in my writing I have talked of emotion and feeling, but referred little to mood. By using the concept of mood in our project we were keen to refer to collective experience and to draw together emotion, practice and context. As Charles Altieri (2003) has suggested: 'Moods are modes of feeling where the sense of subjectivity becomes diffuse and sensation merges into something close to atmosphere, something that seems to pervade an entire scene or situation.' By putting mood deposits on the wall of the bank we, and our customers, were about to get a sense of the feeling of Wellington. Rather than automate, quantify and decontextualize emotion, we wanted to draw out, and encourage people to reflect on, the contextual messiness of the emotional life of the city. Through our design decisions it was essential that we did not reproduce the very conditions that we wanted to critique.

In short interviews with a random sample of visitors it seems that this conceptual strategy was successful. Many mention that Moodbank was a non-judgemental and social space that created time to reflect. When sitting at the communal tables some people talked to strangers about what they were drawing, others felt reassured when looking at the range of

emotional experiences represented on the walls. When asked how the project was different from a bank, some mentioned how the experience was distinct because it was not focused on promoting certain moods or creating certain desires, but about the diversity of feelings that people had at a particular moment. This seemed to be a refreshing experience in the context of consumer culture in which there is a constant attempt to create, mould and manage our emotions.

At the same time, I believe that it was also our use of the conventions of consumer culture that made the Moodbank a success. Whether we like it or not, shopping and banking are some of the most common ways in which we engage with the world: companies constantly attempt to catch our attention with seductively designed spaces, furniture and signage; and we are already familiar with deposits slips, teller's desks, leaflets, uniforms and queues. By using the tropes of commercial enterprise we gave people a less daunting space to be creative. We were also able to reclaim or reterritorialise some of the conventions of commercialism in order to make people more critical of commercial processes. Or at the very least, the Moodbank forms part of a discussion of 'affective capitalism'.

One of the key questions that we wanted to ask by producing the Moodbank was 'what are feelings worth?' When thinking about this question, a stock market ticker with varying values was conjured in our minds. Over coffee we both started to get excited about the prospect of appropriating the stock market ticker on the waterfront in Wellington in order to show the mood data that would be gathered by the Moodmachine.

The Moodmachine had been designed and redesigned a number of times by that stage. The idea of the machine was that it would mimic a cash machine as well as collect quantitative data about mood over time through its interface. The machine also worked to validate the serious and professional nature of our project, after all what bank doesn't have some sort of cash machine. When designing the machine we were influenced by the typical shapes of cash machines, angular with rounded corners to connote solid values and trustworthiness, but we also wanted to make the machine seem friendly. We did this by using wood rather than metal, using slightly unusual measurements and by painting the machine grey and orange. The back of the machine was left open slightly so users could see the inner-workings and we hoped that this would refer to the façade of reliability and trustworthiness that

banks aim to conjure through design. When designing the moodmachine interface we were keen to include a wide range of emotions that users could select. We chose emotions and their associated colours from tests we had completed using analogue deposit slips with students and friends. We wanted people to be able to choose multiple moods when using the machine so we selected a variety of 30 moods including meh, wishy-washy, drained, lustful and buzzing. The moods chosen by an individual were mapped onto a face similar to the facial mapping technology that was used by BNZ that could be printed as a mood mask. Users were then able to see their data in relation to other people who had used the machine in a variety of graphs.

We both knew that the idea to show mood data from the machine on the stock market ticker was ambitious, but agreed that it was worth a go. We secured funding from the council for the digital part of the project and they also said they would help us negotiate the stock market ticker. We continued to think that it would be a bit of a long shot to have mood data rising and falling on the ticker instead of the stocks and shares. We were right. The company who own the ticker only wanted 'positive' emotions on it. This went against the whole premise

November 2013 - 10 March 2014:

Making a believable bank

of the project, so with help from the council we managed to negotiate space to advertise the Moodbank and ask the question “How do we feel...what is it worth?... deposit your mood” on the ticker on the waterfront in Wellington.





Current: 'Cleaning the vacant space'. Image courtesy of Sarah Elsie Baker

Next: 'Mood Manager with customer', Styling courtesy of Greta Menzies. Image courtesy of Russel Kyle

Mark Amery: I was struck, having the Urban Dream Brokerage projects Moodbank and The Waiting Room running simultaneously, how both revived different forms of private public space that are becoming more scarce. Waiting, well-thumbed magazine in hand to see the bank manager is becoming less common. Equally too, the sitting down at a desk to fill out a form. A number of these regular monthly movements in our lives have been replaced by long waits on the phone or passing through internet gateways, from the security of our own homes. People don't even go to church like they used to. And while the retail spend is growing again, the number of physical retail outlets is shrinking - leading to space vacancies its difficult to imagine ever being filled. Yet more people are moving into the central city. Moodbank playfully suggests new social uses for former bank sites at an opportune time. Will the use of these vacant spaces for gathering points become inevitable? Will we look back on Moodbank as a creative forerunner of things to come? Or will we simply just get more dislocated from those around us in our communities? What do you think Sophie?

Sophie Jerram: The values of the market place are always changing. Remember when it cost thousands of dollars to

Urban Dream Brokerage and the Moodbank

buy a decent home stereo, and now we are generally playing music via mobile and home devices that were designed for other purposes? Stereos aren't the consumer items they once were. I think it's the same with city property: there is less of a need to buy things in stores, or to come into town to do your banking, but there is still a need to meet, and to share ideas. With apartment living on the rise, even in relatively static growth cities like Wellington, there will still be a demand for town activity; these city spaces will surely become repurposed. Moodbank of course is a forerunner of exciting things to come - and then I am always optimistic. The key to our UDB work, I believe is to encourage the private property owners to see themselves as contributors to the commons, or important kaitiaki or stewards, rather than isolated individuals who sell and buy without recourse to the needs of the community.

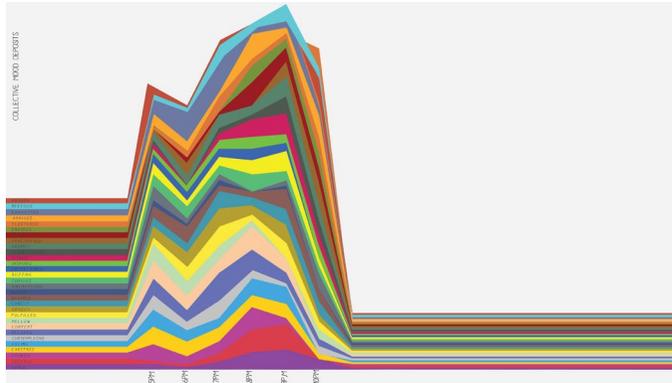
What I believe Moodbank has also anticipated is a very clear articulation of a new currency of our city spaces that we so crave. Vanessa and Sarah have enabled people to name and visualise that which is never acknowledged except on an individual level, mostly between friends. By placing moods on display in a public space, a space designed to legitimate rather than marginalise its interactions, the Moodbank gave voice



Urban Dream Brokerage
and the Moodbank

to the personal states of experiences that so often drive our interactions in the city. For me it was like someone shining an ultraviolet light into a dark room of people wearing white clothing - we could suddenly see a common denominator and differences too, variations of white. So, recognising something that is there already but is not acknowledged by the city's built infrastructure was tremendously powerful. It also reminded us of the ways in which we talk about measures of value in a city - counting public transport journeys taken, number of library books taken out, economic activity generated by tourists, rates income, population growth, etc. It brought out a desire to see this method of measurement formalised somehow. Do you get the same 'making visible' drive out of the project?

Mark: Absolutely. But it's more that people got around tables together, chose coloured pencils and drew. They were made to congregate and, ultimately, share their emotions. In a sense the most important stuff going on wasn't put down on paper or into a computer, but the open exchanges of people just talking about how they're feeling whilst they drew, or looked at the drawings. Rather than the glib "How are you?" "I'm fine" exchange we all go through. There's a kind of church in that. Seen The Lego movie? The adult irony of 'Lego City' where



'Mood machine graph'.

everyone watches the same reality television show and sings happily 'Everything is Awesome'. All deeply ironic but at the same time guaranteed that the song will - in this world - be as big an earworm hit as Pharrell Williams' 'Happy'. Its more than just making that visual, I think its the empowerment people get, particularly in a city 'worker hive' environment, of owning a more diverse set of moods. We of many colours.

I like the plain daft flawed ambitiousness of the project - where it sets out to do something that it knows can't be properly computed. That in doing this it ultimately makes us think through how totally unreliable any kind of computation of numbers is in telling us anything. How all surveys are fraught. The moods you could select at the Moodbank were so playful and willfully subjective, ranging from the obvious (nervous, content) to the slightly ridiculous (lolling, stoked), and yet then an insertion was made into the NZX stock exchange ticker down on the waterfront - as if this might be as valued data as stock prices. The hearsay I heard was that Moodbank couldn't put the variables of mood up on the ticker as desired because they wouldn't be Wellington's branded 'absolutely positive' moof. Interesting and ridiculous! But, so recent decades have taught us, is the stock exchange!

Urban Dream Brokerage and the Moodbank

Moodbank made me think about our obsession, our addiction to stats and graphs. That we might divine almost something spiritual from pawing over a line of temperature predictions. That rather than be in the moment, we spend much time considering predictions for the coming moment based on those that came before. And also, perhaps most importantly, what the collection of this data by unseen forces might mean in terms of how we are subtly controlled.

Sophie: I took part in a panel discussion in the Moodbank one evening which got on to the uses and potential abuses of the mood bank data and its manipulation. Frankly, I can't see that people would be manipulated that way while it was voluntary. That is, you are likely to start changing the authenticity of your response as soon as you understand your data is being used to sell you something. Unless you were being paid to provide your moods, like being paid to give blood - now that could end badly... The joy of the voluntary confession kept this project in the realm of the light and absurd; the complete inability for the words and colours to really confer any equivalent state in others. But yet we try. Like a Luis Bunel film, this urban confessional was maintained by well-coiffured bank clerks who kept the pencils sharp and the deposits efficiently processed.



A Conversation by Mark Amery and Sophie Jerram

Urban Dream Brokerage and the Moodbank

And for the period of the project, the retail site was in net social surplus: buoyant with curiosity; filled with seekers, hunting, as you suggest, for the divine, in records of their emotional experiences.

March 13 - 22, 2014

Wellington



'Moodbank installation'.

On February 22 we were given the keys to the old ASB bank, a huge vacant space with entrances on both Victoria and Manners St. For just a minimal payment for utilities Helen Kirlew Smith of Urban Dream Brokerage had negotiated a month long lease of the space off Bill Giannakais of the Shoreline Property Group. The space had large windows looking out upon the constant flow of foot traffic moving along Manners St. The street sees a wide range of people briskly weaving their way through the CBD to places of work, leisure, consumption and home. It is also the site of two other banks and a third that had recently closed. The location and its banking history made it the perfect site to present a new type of currency and exchange to Wellington's city dwellers.

The Moodbank was due to open on March 12. With a space secured, we set about publicising our bank's opening, confirming volunteers and meeting the challenge of transforming the disused and somewhat abandoned space into a professional pop-up bank within three weeks. The space was messy – the floor had remnants of glue that previously adhered floor coverings to concrete and was punctuated by lines that showed where bank managers offices were previously situated. On closer inspection there were tags, labels,

22 February - 10 March 2014:

Creating the Wellington branch

buttons, price tags and gaffer tape tracing the existence of the temporary pop-up shops that had since occupied the space. Tangled electrical cords fell from the ceiling where tiles were damaged or missing. The far corner of the space was truncated by a kitchen space with a counter. It felt obnoxiously large, functional but somehow anomalous to our knowledge of the previous life of the space.

We made a plan for how we would delineate the space. The room was much larger than what we needed, but we decided to keep it open to take advantage of the street view through the floor to ceiling windows on both Manners and Victoria St. We chose to use paint to indicate the space that our bank would occupy. The walls, floor pillars and anything in between within the designated space would be painted the same colour, leaving the remainder of the room untouched to intentionally acknowledge the temporal nature of our project. This decision would reveal traces of the previous function of the space and would provide an obvious contrast between the order and professionalism of commercial environments and the more raw and chaotic aspects of everyday life that we are conditioned to hide away.

March 13 - 22, 2014

Wellington



'Moodbank stools'. Designed by Zac Moller.

The part of the space that we chose to occupy was painted a light concrete grey, conveying a sense of seriousness, professionalism, and restrained warmth. This was informed by Vanessa's previous experiments with space where objects and space have been wrapped to simultaneously cover over, shift and expose the nature of the environment. In the far corner of the room we stacked cardboard boxes floor to roof to hide the disused kitchen, also painted grey to convey order and uniformity. They formed a geometric partition perhaps reminiscent of late 20C commercial spaces. The boxes were also chosen to reference the storage and categorisation of information in contemporary culture, while hinting at the ways that the mind archives feelings, thoughts and experiences.

With thanks to professional painter Ed Morley-Hall the space was beautifully and efficiently painted and ready to be furnished. We were fortunate to employ the services of industrial design graduate Pat Crowe-Rishworth who upcycled furniture bought from the Post Shop recycle centre. Three tables were customized with holes drilled through the centre to hold a row of coloured pencils, similar to customized insertion of calculators and deposit slip holder into the surface of conventional bank furniture. We wanted to evoke a quirky

22 February - 10 March 2014:

Creating the Wellington branch

appeal through mixing the professional seriousness of banking functionalism with the allure of a rainbow of colouring pencils. Similarly the stools we commissioned from the industrial designer Zachary Moller answered a brief that asked for a hybrid of commercial functionalism and humanness. Both Patrick and Zachary appealed to us as designers because they demonstrated an appreciation for the human emotions that specific materials and processes can convey. The pops of colour that plugged the stout antler protrusions on Zac's steel grey and black stools did just that.

With such a vast space it became apparent that we would need more seating and we were fortunate to be able to purchase plastic formed chairs from Nood at cost price. We selected the mushroom, aqua and lemon coloured chairs, "on trend" colours that would jump out of our lego grey blank canvas. The colour palette for our branding and space went through many iterations, though in the end it looked much the same as some of our initial inspirations.

With furniture installed next came signage, we cut our large scale logos from bright orange vinyl for our front window and tellers desk. It provided another pop colour to jump off



22 February - 10 March 2014:
Creating the Wellington branch

the lego grey, while also providing third point of balance on the colour wheel next to the yellow aqua chair combo, on reflection perhaps we were subconsciously embedding the colour and 'happiness' of Emmanuelle Moureaux's banks within the greyness associated with conventional banks.

Looking across the road, the ASB provided a useful reference for window dressing. We decided upon similar floating foam board posters, but ours were printed in black and white. We used a 'hand drawn' font to write in large lettering and coloured in the branding symbols to look friendly and human. When the signage went up and when we displayed our first batch of brochures the bank started to come to life. When the volunteers came in for training and put on their uniforms it was clear to us that we really were opening a bank, even if it was one without monetary exchange.

Constructing connectivity, hybridizing new and old systems of exchange

“The Moodbank is much the same as any other bank, we have a similar range of services, but our currency is mood not money.”

This was the line you would have heard from our Mood Manager when you entered the Moodbank branch. We adopted the conventions of banking in order to associate mood with value and exchange. By playfully employing such familiar conventions, we hoped to make our project accessible to a wide range of people. There was a deadpan humor involved in the selling of our new mood currency, people seemed to ‘get it’, and wanted to play along. We asked ‘How do we feel?’ and ‘What is it worth?’ to provoke thinking about the value of mood in everyday life. Our goal was to make the collective mood of the city visible while providing a social rather than an economic form of exchange.

By opening a branch we wanted to refer back to days gone by where customers did all their banking in person, from filling out deposit and withdrawal slips, to making appointments to see the bank manager. These types of analogue processes and physical spaces are disappearing from our everyday life, becoming digitalized, moving to online sites. Becoming less and less the norm, we speculated on how the value of these spaces

and interactions has changed. At the same time we could not ignore Internet banking – it is just the way people do things these days - so we adopted both the conventions of traditional and contemporary banking. However, we radically changed the way currency was exchanged. We refused to buy into a credit and debit exchange system that privileged good moods over bad ones, allowing a user to deposit bad moods and withdraw good ones, or placing a numeracy value on individual moods.

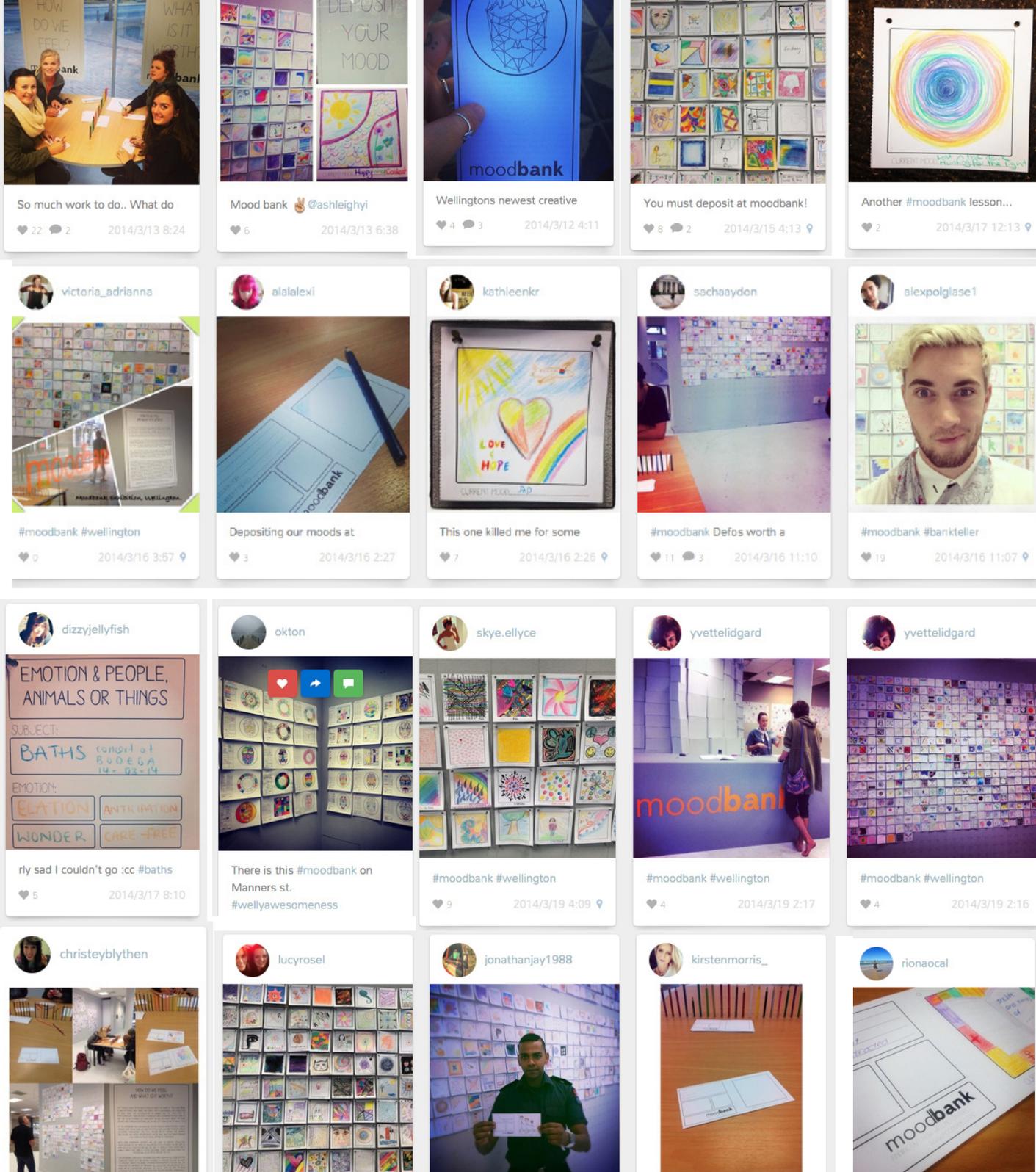
Instead we insisted that all moods deposited were of the same value and that our system of exchange was a social one that involved acknowledgment and sharing. For ten days the pop-up Moodbank opened its doors in the centre of Wellington’s business district. We caught the eye of curious passersby and drew them in. Users were quick to accept our new form of currency and exchange, welcoming the opportunity to express their individual experience, to have their mood acknowledged and to share their experience. Our currency was popular with over 2000 analogue deposits made in the ten days of being open and over 4000 emotions deposited via our ATM style Moodmachine and online banking services.

Vanessa Crowe

Constructing connectivity, hybridizing new and old systems of exchange

Prior to opening we had been somewhat anxious about how our refusal to copy the familiar credit/debit exchange system of a bank would be received. But people seemed to approve without hesitation. In hindsight perhaps this was because it was already familiar, not from banking but from our everyday use of social media where we increasingly are engaging and express our experience in a non linear web of liking and sharing. In many ways the Moodbank was an analogue social networking space where people could come, be social, express their feelings as a diversion from, or opportunity to reflect upon their everyday life. The popularity of non-linear, non-hierarchical exchange system saw the Moodbank often filled to the brim with people expressing their usually private feelings and experiences and sharing them with the stranger sitting next to them. Though the physicality of this engagement made it different to the quantifiable sharing and liking of social media platforms. The experience wasn't mediated through an algorithm, individual and collective sharing of moods was anonymous, with an exchange that pivoted on a non-biased acknowledgement.

As technology advances we are constantly presented with new and more intricate ways to express and quantify human





Current: 'Moodbank window poster'.

Next: 'Teller's desk'. Image courtesy of Gabrielle McKone

Constructing connectivity, hybridizing new and old systems of exchange

experience and enhance 'connectivity'. There seems to be a correlation between technology enabling new forms of online active exchange and recognition that knowing how people are feeling is of value. In the year leading up to the opening of the Moodbank we observed that from commercial banking to social media, finding out how people are feeling was becoming of increasing value and interest, particularly as technology evolved new methods to do so. We saw the BNZ develop the online 'emotion scan' service that reads and records users emotional responses to future financial scenarios using face scan technology (BNZ 2013). Similarly Facebook and Google adopted facial recognition technology (Hsu 2013) and Facebook adding a new feeling feature to their status updates, where users can choose from a library of feelings when updating their status. On one hand we see that it is a positive thing that peoples feelings and emotional responses are being valued. But the recent publicity about Facebook's secret emotion experiment is a poignant example of our vulnerability within the bigger picture of our collective liking and sharing of experiences (The Guardian 2014). The commercial value in finding out how people feel and more worryingly how feelings can be manipulated puts a different spin of all this evolving 'connectivity'.

Interestingly since running out project in March, Sovereign Insurance launched "NZMoodmap", to measure the mood of New Zealand (Sovereign 2014). Whilst sharing curious similarities with the Moodbank project, that being the mapping of mood, the development of Sovereign Insurance's NZMoodmap validates the Moodbanks position on the increasing value of mood within business and government. In prompting users to log their mood according to a linear scale of 'I've had better' through to 'on top of the world' the NZMoodmap similarly draws on the common language we use to articulate our feelings. Though in measuring mood on a linear scale of bad to good and using its data to create "Happiness Hotspots" on their map, it enacts the privileging of happiness that Sarah has discussed as being a feature of 'Affective Capitalism', providing a perfect example of mood commodification.

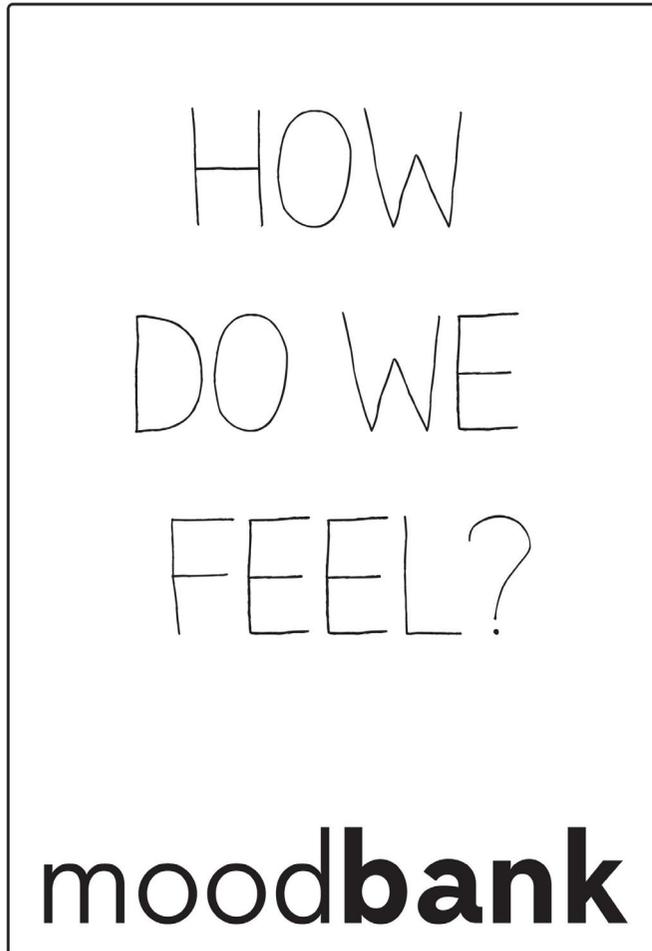
Another blatant example of this Affective Capitalism is the Coke "Make Someone Happy Today" ad campaign (Coke 2014). A poster with this phrase, recently on the streets of Wellington has a smaller subtext reading "If you've shared a moment of happiness today, why not share it with us by tagging your content with #makesomeonehappy". In tiny writing below



Vanessa Crowe

Constructing connectivity, hybridizing new and old systems of exchange

this it reads “(Using our hashtag gives us the OK to repost your content on our social media sites including Facebook and coke.co.nz)”. This prompted a look at the Coke NZ Facebook page, where there is only one image tagged and none on their website. The image posted to Facebook was in reference to a Coke promotion on the Whakapapa field posted by the ski field owners. Following this post is a string of comments about the litter, obesity and tooth rot, caused by Coke. While business’ attempt to manipulate the trending potentials of social media, ultimately social democracy plays a part in what trends generate. In the case of the Moodbank project, our success was affirmed and boosted though the power of this social democracy. Thanks to mobile devices enabling simultaneous experiencing, recording and sharing of our real life online, the Moodbank had a strong following. Visitor numbers increased towards the end of the project as news of our presence spread through user posts on sites such as twitter, instagram, pinsta, tumblr & facebook. One tumblr post was shared and liked 572 times. It was exciting to see a further extension of Moodbank exchange instigated wholly by users, it proved that the Moodbank had successfully hybridized a physical and digital existence.



'Moodbank window poster'.

With all the cross overs in digital space, the physical Moodbank branch provided something special. When visiting the Moodbank branch it became apparent that there is something unique about the exchange that happens in physical space and in real time. It presented a mix of normalcy and novelty. This renewed value of things done by hand is affirmed in an analogue aesthetic that is emerging online. It seemed an effective way to make digital space feel more humanised. For our promo material and interface design we used a 'hand drawn' font and coloured in our posters and branding with colouring in pencils. The font and hand colouring looks friendly and human. Similarly it is interesting to note that the bleed between digital and physical goes both ways, The New Aesthetic is a project that looks at how the aesthetics of the digital world are finding their way into the physical world, documenting examples of pixilation being a decorative feature in design while symbols and icons generated for digital interfaces that are a ubiquitous part of our online experience are now commonly used in physical space to visually communicate ideas quickly (Bridle, 2013).

The Moodbank provokes questions and draws attention to the value of mood, feeling and individual experience both for

individuals and within business and government. A new system of active social exchange has emerged which doesn't follow the linear debit/credit systems of the past. As technology advances the methods in which we can exchange and express our experience are becoming increasingly interactive. With that, the value of mood, with all its complex nuances will continue to rise. To privilege happiness over other moods reiterates a linear value aligning with a debit/credit system. For many people, everyday life is now a dual experience of digital and physical spaces. Because of this, physical social exchange and analogue processes have a renewed value and appreciation. This renewed appreciation for analogue processes is also informing digital space, to help make spaces feel more humanized and friendly. In turn the online methods for liking and sharing which follow non-linear, non-hierarchical structures can be usefully applied within physical spaces. Humans crave self-expression and acknowledgement. Providing active forms of exchange and an expression of the complexity of mood is a valuable part of the evolution of digital and physical spaces.



12 March - 22 March 2014:

Being open

When we started to work in the space in the centre of Wellington passers-by and local business owners became curious. They stood at the window looking at signage, at first looking slightly confused. What were we selling?

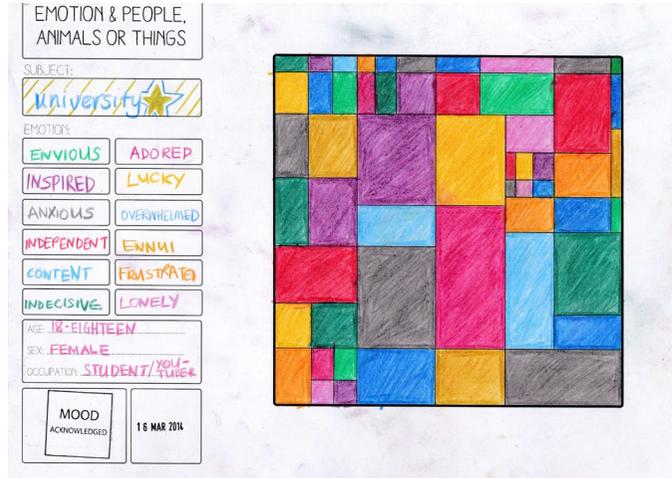
When we opened the doors the number of people coming in surprised us. Some were just asking about our project, but after a quick chat with one of us they were almost always keen to contribute. In the weeks leading up to the project we had been writing a rough script for volunteers and had a training session before we opened, but none of us knew how it would work. As people came through the doors we learnt to go up to them and describe the project as a bank where you can deposit and exchange mood not money. We would then ask them if they would like to make a deposit and lead them to a table. The conventions of banking, a teller's desk, a mood machine and deposit slips seemed to make people feel comfortable because they had experienced these things before and knew how to engage with them. At once the biggest surprise to us was the variety of highly creative ways that people filled out their mood deposits. We had expected people to colour-in what they were given but the deposits they came to the desk with were much more expressive than that.

March 13 - 22, 2014

12 March - 22 March 2014:

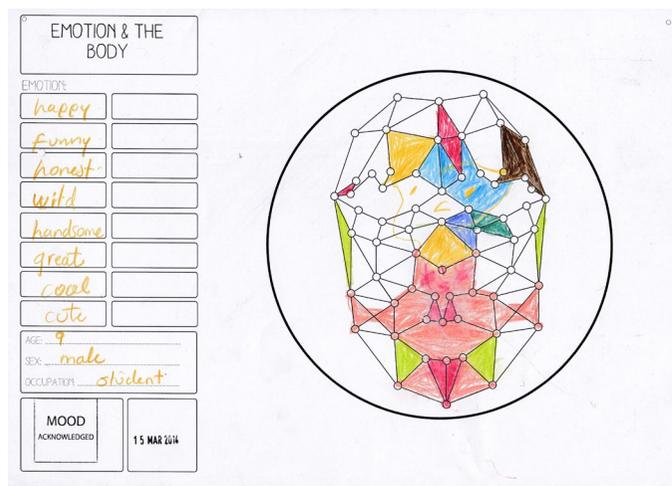
Wellington

Being open



The Moodbank provided a space where people could come, be social, and express their feelings. It was a place to escape and reflect on everyday life. How people would deposit their mood and just what the exchange would involve was something that occupied a large part of our previous years research. We had been engaged with multiple tests, designs and redesigns of our deposit slips and templates. Eventually we refined our designs and made three template options and a quick deposit slip. The templates provided users with the opportunity to consider the mood contextually, in relation to time, their own body or other people animals or things. A faceted grid, wheel and face form were chosen to represent each of these things, at the same time referencing current technology and examples we found of the commodification of emotion by business and banks. The grid was chosen in order to reference historic works by artists who have juxtaposed the rigidity of the grid with the fluidity of human, everyday experience. The quick deposit slips, aimed to provide users with a simple fast way to 'deposit' whatever mood or feeling they wished, a simple square on one side with a perforated line dividing it from a box for 'office use' where upon depositing ones mood, the box would be dated and stamped with a "Mood Acknowledged" stamp.

When customers came to the desk we would collect the templates or deposit slips, scan them and stamp them. Often we would describe how mood could not be withdrawn at the bank but how we wanted to encourage more social forms of exchange in the space, such as seeing how you feel in relation to other people. Sometimes this needed no explanation, people had already been chatting with strangers at communal tables about their mood. Some expressed how comfortable they felt in an environment where all moods were acknowledged. For others it was the time that they had taken colouring and looking at the diversity of other people's deposits that had been such an enjoyable contrast to much of contemporary life. As one visitor reflected 'this is not like a usual bank because you are not trying to encourage or persuade me to feel a certain way, you are interested in how I feel now, without judgement.'



Previous: 'Mood machine, Civic Square, Wellington'.

Current: 'Emotion and people, animals or things template' 'Emotion and the body template'.



From the outside the Moodbank looked like any other pop up store front, if not actually clued up with graphic design. Now that the attention economy is just as potent as the financial, the Moodbank seemed to shout and wave along with the best of them, but it was soon obvious that this project was not nearly so linear in its ambitions.

A very nice customer-service-smile woman directed me towards one of the stations and gestured at the pencils and paper that were integrated into the table design; like the stationary slot in a wooden hinged school desk. It was only once I sat down that I realised I was sitting at school desk height, like I was about to start using felt-tip pens and a colouring book, and I wasn't far off. There were a couple of choices for colouring templates. I chose the simpler looking of the two with a small box to colour in and the question "how do you feel."

Most of the space behaved like an almost standard service facility. There were several desks like the one I was sitting at set up with their little stools. The big customer service desk loomed over the space as unthreateningly as possible, but it was about four-times the size (and height) of where I was sitting. There was also a contraption that looked suspiciously

like an ATM right near the automatic doors which I was very curious about.

After that it got interesting; the other half of the room was unclothed, bare concrete floor, nothing on the walls. The floor covering actually just stopped, like there was this big diagonal transition line that ran through, and it was almost as effective as a wall. I felt like maybe I wasn't supposed to know that part of the space was there so I consciously averted my eyes and ignored it. Having worked in retail, it was representative of "the back room" where everything is stored and anything messy gets lumped so as not to interrupt the smooth experience of the store for the customer. The other surprise was a wall showing a collection of the small squares of paper like the one sitting on the desk in front of me that people had finished. I was too far away to see anything in detail but I could see shapes and colours. It gave this odd sensation of being part of a culture; somehow both quantifiably and qualifyably. I wanted to be part of that crew.

To do so, I needed to answer the question in front of me "how do you feel" with both text and coloured pencils. The pencils were all set into the desk, pointing towards the ceiling in a

Current: 'Moodmanager at tellers desk'.

Next: 'Mood deposit slips'.

March 13 - 22, 2014

User Experience

Wellington



fashion that suggested they used to be arranged by colour and all the same length, but those who had gone before me had left them looking well used. I determinedly chose colours that obviously hadn't been selected much, which left me with an admittedly odd pallet. I looked from the pencils to the paper, and back again for about three minutes.

of me there was a whirl of colour and form, pattern, texture, symmetry and a-symmetry. Most of them seemed to make very little sense, and as I looked at them I could see few links between those who had deposited the same emotion. It seems the golden-yellow pencil could mean anything from "chilled" to "amaze-balls" and even "sickly." Blues and oranges seemed most common so far, but again could range from "tired" or "cool" to "angry" or "frustrated."



I stood up and took my uncoloured piece of paper back up to the counter, and started probing the woman behind the desk; "what happens to these?" "Are they going online?" "What else will happen to the information?" And she answered my questions patiently and as best as she could, but her manner was so wonderfully "this is just my day job" convincing I wouldn't have been surprised if she had said, "I'm sorry but I will have to put you in touch with one of our banking advisors, please leave your name and number and they will contact you within twenty-four hours."

I sat back down and stared at the increasingly intimidating 50 x 50mm white box in front of me; "how do you feel?" I remember thinking, "just start" so I drew a kind of cross grid shape in a nice light, noncommittal olive green colour, and instantly hated it. Changing tack, I tried to think of a word I wanted to use (probably the logical place to start really). How did I feel? I hadn't really stopped to think about it. Confused, frustrated, suspicious; which I decided was dumb because I was here by choice. Happy seemed like a cop-out. I was tempted for a while to write 'fine' or 'good' since that is how I would probably have responded if someone had asked me face-to-face, but then it is such a nothing answer. The Moodbank was such an opportunity to not just be fine.



I thanked her and went over to the wall where the previous deposits were displayed. I instantly regretted my colour choices, but had committed to them and now felt some kind of weird attachment to those poor unused colours that represented the unfelt or at least unacknowledged. On the wall in front



Meredith Leigh Crowe

User Experience

No one seemed particularly interested in the quality of the drawing, or in categorising any of the deposits by colour, style, mood, nothing. And yet the Moodbank wasn't offering some nonchalant opportunity. The designed environment was like being in the branch of a bank or insurance broker, like I would find one exactly the same (customer service rep included) in the next town over. It didn't have uniqueness or even a whiff of pretence. It didn't seem to be watching me, or monitoring what I was doing or making. It didn't seem to thank me for being there, but would welcome me none the less. I simply got to have my three minutes of fame if I chose, and add my piece to the database.

After sheepishly hiding my olive grid at the back of the deposit forms stack I started again, this time boldly. I used a dark but somehow bright purple to draw a small ellipse in the centre, and then drew another in a red-orange slightly larger and perpendicular to it but tucked in behind. Then, lining up with the purple I drew a teal ellipse, then another purple and so on. My lines got thinner towards the edge of the sketch, and the confined space made short work of any a-symmetry and inconsistencies; but too bad. I had drawn it. It was ugly, I should have rejigged my colour choice when I had the chance, and as



Meredith Leigh Crowe

User Experience

it turns out ellipses aren't my specialty, but there you go. I sat there for a while feeling unproportionately smug.

The Moodbank asked for a strange combination of behaviours, ones learned from different places that didn't seem to fit together. It wanted me to both fill in the details of a deposit slip and reflect on and give voice to how I was feeling. I had to sit at a desk and complete a very specific task, but the desk was too close to the floor and they gave me colouring pencils. More than anything though, the Moodbank didn't really want anything from me. Not even anything of me. Only for me, which was hard. It wanted me to attend to how I was feeling, abstractly and anonymously, and purely for myself. No one was going to give me a pat on the back or a gold star no matter what I did. It meant that anything I did, I was doing for me. It was oddly confrontational.

I deposited my funny ellipse drawing at the counter and answered the question "how do you feel?" with the word "GAME". I still have the acknowledgment-stamped deposit slip.

Previous: 'Moodbank table and deposit slips'.

Current 'Mood deposits'.



22 March 2014 onwards:
The future of moodbanking

After ten days of people flowing in and out with tellers and Mood Managers dutifully receiving and acknowledging mood deposits we closed our doors for the last time. It seemed odd to close as it was as if we had just got started, we really had gone to the full extent in setting up our bank and it was proving so popular, it was gaining a whole momentum of its own. But we were exhausted, “its been like working in McDonalds at Heathrow airport!” Sarah said. So we closed the doors, packed down the space and found ourselves left with over 2000 mood deposits.

There was much speculation about what we would do with the mood deposits, what information can we gather, what will the findings tell us and how could it be used? Firstly Vanessa set to work creating photo collages of the deposits, to create a visual sense of the enormity of the emotions that were banked. She set up a blog to upload and archive the digital deposits, and also went through and recorded all the phrases used, catagorising a total of 1016 different moods. The diversity of moods deposited and by whom provided an enormous amount of information – big data in analogue form. With the extent and diversity of the mood information, what soon became apparent to us was that the true value of this information actually lay in its

messiness, rather than in quantifiable conclusions. It proves to us that moods are complex, diverse, and difficult to define. With increasing evidence and examples to support having our proposition that there is a growing mood economy, we decided that rather than trying to present quantifiable conclusions from our mood deposit data, we would think of it as our banks equity, to be used to help enable further sharing and exchanging of our mood currency via our mood machine.

Soon after the branch closed, Vanessa was invited to present a Moodbank project as part of a commission by Letting Space and JWT Advertising Auckland. The brief asked for a project that would engage with the public commons in the Imperial Building on Queens St Auckland where the JWT office is located. Inside their office a large glass cabinet that divided the JWT boardroom and office spaces was also to be filled with a corresponding artwork. We proposed a project titled "Imperial Moods", that would situate the mood machine in the café on the first floor of the Imperial building, an open throughfare between Fort Lane and Queens St. Members of the public and building users could deposit their moods and in turn find out how other people within their building were feeling, hopefully creating a sense of communal exchange and opportunity for

reflection in an otherwise busy space. Inside the cabinet within JWT's office, moods would be displayed alongside a Moodbank ad campaign. To follow through with intent to build on the Moodbank branch, Vanessa began working on a new mood machine interface that incorporated the entire catalogue of 1016 moods, of which users could choose from a drop down menu. Though, in a meeting soon after the project was given the go ahead, it was mentioned that Sovereign Insurance had just become one of JWT's clients and the similarities between Sovereign's NZMoodmap campaign and the Moodbank concept and aesthetic were noted. Having produced Moodbank before the NZMoodmap was launched we felt confident in our position and proceeded onward. For us the NZMoodmap being launched was interesting in that validated our position that mood and finding out how people feel is of value. Though they also came from the exact perspective that we critique. Their 'happiness hotspots' providing an example of how (ultimately economic) value is assigned to happiness over and above other experiences. The premise of "Imperial Moods" was to offer another angle to the growing discourse on mood value, countering our cultural hunger for happiness with an abundance of other diverse feelings. Soon after however, JWT pulled the plug on the "Imperial Moods" project

ACCOUNT STATEMENT

at 10:55am on Thursday 8 February 2015

VIEW TRENDS

VIEW SUMMARY

Date	Transaction Discription
4 February 2015	A LITTLE BIT BLUE BUT WITH A GLIMMER OF HOPE
4 February 2015	CONFUSED BUT HAPPY
4 February 2015	BAHAHAHA
5 February 2015	UNGROUND
6 February 2015	CONFUZZLED
6 February 2015	POLITIC-CITY-SOCIAL
6 February 2015	BUZZY IMPATIENCE, ANTICIPATORY
7 February 2015	I'M HUNGRY
7 February 2015	HAPPY/SORE + TIRED/INSPIRED
8 February 2015	WARMLY MILD
8 February 2015	DAUNTED
8 February 2015	LUCKY & HAPPY & THANKFUL & PROUD
8 February 2015	PLAYFUL, WHIZZ BANG

stating they did not want to upset their new client, Sovereign. That a national insurance company and major international advertising company felt that it was safer to not be associated with the Moodbank project says something about the potency and value of our project and its contribution to the growing discourse of mood and the value of finding out how people feel.

In September 2014 Vanessa was invited to be part of the “Civic and Social” panel at the Aotearoa Digital Arts symposium in Auckland alongside representatives from the Auckland City council and other artists who work with social engagement in public space including internationally acclaimed artist Jeanne van Heeswijk. The Moodbank project was well received and proved its relevance to current interest in finding new systems and ways of thinking around how to activity engage with and grow communities within the urban environment. Following this symposium Auckland Live invited us to discuss the potential for a long term Moodbank project run in conjunction with the Aotea Centre and Colab in 2016.

Meanwhile Vanessa and Letting Space set about finding a new site to present the Moodmachine. After considering a range of



Current: 'Moodbank Wynyard ATM interface detail'.

Next: 'Promotional image' Styling courtesy of Greta Menzies.
Image courtesy of Russell Kylan

options we decided to approach Auckland Waterfront pitching a proposal to install the Moodmachine in the Wynward Quarter. As a new development this site provides an interesting intersect of business development as well as aspirations to develop and nurture a local diverse community. The Wynyard Quarter kiosk promotes this development. With the multistory ASB bank looming behind, the Moodmachine will be installed outside the kiosk, named Moodbank, Wynyard. Next to the kiosk is a stack of shipping containers, at the top of the stack a large lightbox will intermittently play a Moodbank advertisement. At ground level, in the site of an old ATM machine installed into the shipping container, a Moodbank monitor will display graphs and deposited moods, sharing Wynyard's moods with its community.

Our vision for Moodbank is that, as opportunities arise, it continues to engage with urban communities in ways that create and enable a meaningful exchange where people's individual experiences are acknowledged and valued.



The Moodbank could not of been conceived, funded or produced without the generosity of numerous people and organisations. We would like to thank:

Pat Crowe-Rishworth for furniture design and construction, Zac Moller for design and construction of seating, Ben Jack for digital programming, Greta Menzies for styling our photoshoot, Russel Kylen for taking our photos, Ed Morley Hall and Owen Kahl for building, painting and spatial design assistance.

All our Mood Managers & Mood Tellers:

Selin Tuomey, Julia Truscott, Regan Roberts, Kathleen Kuehn, Riki Singleton, Tanya Barrington, Clementine Smart, Jayden Hamilton, Tina Pope, Zara Fong, Rochelle Harris, Katie Ro, and Rachel Gannaway.

Victoria University of Wellington, The Wellington City Council Public Art Fund, Urban Dream Brokerage, Tuatara, and Nood for their funding and encouragement.

We could not have done it without you!

12pm
12th/March



Vanessa Crowe

Constructing connectivity, hybridizing new and old systems of exchange

References

- BNZ. (2013). EmotionScan. Know how you feel about money and can be good with it. Retrieved from <https://begoodwithmoney.co.nz/emotion-scan>
- Theguardian (2014). Facebook sorry – almost – for secret psychological experiment on users. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/oct/02/facebook-sorry-secret-psychological-experiment-users>
- Hsu, J. (2013). Face of the Future: How Facial-Recognition Tech Will Change Everything. Retrieved from <http://news.yahoo.com/face-future-facial-recognition-tech-change-everything-163230054.html>
- Sovereign (2014). The NZ Mood Map: Sovereign. Retrieved from <http://www.moodmap.co.nz/#/>
- Coke (2014). #MakingHappyNZ. Retrieved from <https://www.coke.co.nz/makinghappynz>
- Bridle, J. (2013). #sxaesthetic. Retrieved from <http://booktwo.org/notebook/sxaesthetic/>

moodbank

March 13 - 22, 2014

Wellington



'Mood ticker'.

Sarah Elsie Baker

'Affective Capitalism' and the Moodbank

References

- Ahmed, S. (2010) *The Promise of Happiness*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Altieri, C. (2003) *The Particulars of Rapture*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- Andrejevic, M. (2013) *Infoglut: How too much information is changing what we think and know*. Routledge, London.
- Burn-Murdoch, J. (2013) 'Social Media Analytics: are we nearly there yet'. *The Guardian*. Monday 10 June.
- Fukuda, S. (2013) *Emotional Engineering vol 2*. Springer, New York.
- Hochschild, A. (1983) *The Managed Heart*. University of California Press, California.
- Illouz, E. (2007) *Cold Intimacies: The making of emotional capitalism*. Polity Press, London.
- Leiss, W. et al (2005) *Social Communication in Advertising*. Routledge, London.
- University of Canterbury (2013) 'UC investigating NZ's gross national happiness' Found at <http://www.comsdev.canterbury.ac.nz/rss/news/?feed=news&articleId=801>

