

ALAN BEGG

23.5°

The interlinked sculptural forms of 23.5° explore the interaction of light and darkness. The work comes out of my experience of Seasonal Affective Disorder – depression linked to the reduction of daylight levels in winter. Research for the work included boarding up the window in my living-room (briefly!) in mid-winter in order to experience total darkness. The tongue and groove joints of floorboards seemed to be an ideal way of eliminating light. These floorboards were then recycled into the finished work.

Forms and materials have been combined to suggest a push/pull dynamic between light and darkness. Aluminium foil, black felt and cast blue polystyrene resin have been selected for their contrasting 'optical' qualities of reflection, absorption, and transparency. An angle of 23.5° both links and destabilises the various forms. 23.5° is the angle of tilt of the Earth's axis, an angle which combines with our yearly orbit around the Sun to produce seasonal variations in daylight. The circles are all 6 feet in diameter – they correspond to the limits of my physical body. The wedge is a transitional form – it has been derived from the almost imperceptible changes in the sky at dawn and dusk at the edge of an open tilted window. The inverted orange reflective surface was derived from the indirect glow of streetlight in the night sky – a safe enclosed space within darkness?

Although the work looks 'designed' and pre-planned, it actually evolved through a fairly spontaneous process. This can be seen in the random configuration of the boards for example, and the loose placement of screws. 'Not knowing' is an important aspect of my work. Spontaneity and repetition, such as the boarding of a window, are a means of subverting control and the rational mind. Craftsmanship is a means to an end and only enough is done so as to energise the work.

The work can be seen as an exploration of connections between my personal experience of S.A.D., the constructed geometry of our living spaces, and the wider context of the solar system and its rhythms. The interlinked forms of 23.5° invite the viewer to interact with them in such a way that a dialogue of opposites is experienced directly. The work is dependant upon ambient light conditions and so a sense of continuous and surrounding space is evoked.