

Media information: Friday 20 February 2009

BALTIC

TOBIAS PUTRIH AND MOS OVERHANG

Level 2

Friday 10 April – Monday 31 August 2009

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art presents a collaborative project by Slovenian born and New York based artist **Tobias Putrih** and American architect and design company **MOS**. The work opens to the public on **Friday 10 April**, in advance of the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, and runs until **Monday 31 August**.

For the installation at **BALTIC**, **Putrih** has collaborated with **MOS** studio using software, developed by principle partner **Michael Meredith** that calculates and generates optimal equilibrium structures. Experimenting with different parameters, they have used Styrofoam cubes and stack structures according to the basic rules of equilibrium and 'maximum overhang stacking' to produce a super lightweight structure on the verge of collapse. During assembly parts of the structure are supported and then the supports removed as the structure's interlocking elements develop, creating non-equilibrium parts in equilibrium. The structure will reach high into the Level 2 space (ceiling height: 7.3meters) lending a strange monumentality to the work. A smaller brutally heavy structure from concrete acts as a model, or vice versa creating an interesting narrative.

Putrih's work is informed by the breakdown of cultural communication between Eastern Europe and the rest of the world. His work finds its roots in the history of modernist utopian architecture, but nearly every one of his constructions undermines the seriousness and assuredness of their references. With a calculated instability, **Putrih's** work exists between science, sculpture and architecture. Exploring the potential of an idea, his works could be considered proposals for objects or architectural spaces that will probably never be built. Many of his makeshift structures

use materials such as cardboard and sticky tape. The resulting temporary objects beg questions about their own fragile existence, leaving irresolution and doubt; **Putrih** suggests every utopia anticipates a possible meltdown and every system of knowledge has its black holes.

This exhibition is presented at a time when the fragility of modernist utopian architecture can be seen on **BALTIC**'s doorstep as **Alessandro Vincentelli, Acting Head of Programme** explains: *“Presenting Tobias’ work at this time is acutely poignant as we are on the eve of The Trinity Square Car Park, an iconic example of modernist architecture in Gateshead, being demolished. Western art and architecture and Putrih’s scepticism of its success is at the very heart of his work. His collaboration with Michael Meredith from MOS has resulted in an imposing towering structure whose precariousness can be contrasted to much of our own city skyline.”*

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For further information and images please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS

BALTIC is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England. **BALTIC** presents a constantly changing, distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation, commissioning and communication of contemporary visual art. **BALTIC** has welcomed over 3 million visitors, since opening to the public in July 2002.

TOBIAS PUTRIH BIOGRAPHY

Tobias Putrih was born 1972 in Kranj, Slovenia, graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts, Ljubljana, Slovenia before studying at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, Germany from 1997 – 1998. During 2009 he will exhibit at Boijmans Van Beuingen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands and Espace 315, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France.

He exhibited on the Slovenia Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale and at Art Basel 34. Recent solo exhibitions have been presented at White Cube, London (2008), Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland (2008), Galleria Civica, Modena Italy (2008), Neuberger Museum of Art, New York (2007), Galleria Pinksummer, Genova Italy (2007) and Max protectch Gallery, New York.

MOS BIOGRAPHY

MOS are a collective of designers and architects. The two principals, Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample, teach at Harvard University and Yale University while maintaining the practice. They work all over the world, designing private houses, institutional buildings, urban strategies, research, books and installations. Through their work they engage architecture as an open system of interrelated issues ranging from

architectural typology, digital methodologies, sustainability, structure, fabrication, materiality, tactility, and use, as well as larger networks of the social, cultural, and environmental. This process of participation and inclusion allows MOS to operate, producing and inflecting environments at a multiplicity of scales.

GALLERY INFORMATION:

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Opening hours:

Monday - Sunday 10.00 - 18.00 (excluding Tuesday)
Tuesday 10.30 – 18.00

ADMISSION FREE

