

SLIGHT AGITATION 1/4: TOBIAS PUTRIH

Milan, 19 October 2016 – From 20 October 2016, Fondazione Prada will present “Slight Agitation”, a four-part project of newly commissioned, site-specific works in sequence within the Cisterna, one of the pre-existing buildings at Fondazione Prada’s Milan venue.

Curated by the **Fondazione Prada Thought Council**, whose current members are Shumon Basar, Cédric Libert, Elvira Dyangani Ose, and Dieter Roelstraete, “Slight Agitation” will unfold in four chapters realized by the international artists **Tobias Putrih** (Slovenia, 1972), **Pamela Rosenkranz** (Switzerland, 1979), **Laura Lima** (Brazil, 1971) and **Gelitin**, the Austrian collective active since 1993.

The title of the project was inspired by the poetic expression “**une légère agitation**”, employed by the French historian Fernand Braudel to describe the tidal movement of the Mediterranean. This metaphor embodies the Thought Council’s starting point to present interventions by artists whose practices differ considerably in philosophical and material terms, all of them commissioned to interfere and dialogue with the spatial context of the Cisterna and to influence the viewer’s physical experience and all her or his attendant senses through their works. The immersive nature of presented works will turn the exhibition space **into a political, social, playful or creative environment** on rotation.

Renowned for his architectural and sculptural installations, which resemble models, prototypes and the temporary configurations of an often critical or utopic conceptual process, Tobias Putrih will realize the first intervention included in the “Slight Agitation” series, on view until 22 January 2017. Through his work, the environments within the Cisterna will take on three different configurations, which all engage with ideas of play, politics and emancipation: a **theater** for an ongoing brick construction, a tactile ‘**blind room**’ and a sculpture that turns into a **labyrinth**.

The ephemeral brick structure, which visitors can rearrange freely, lies at the center of the first room, recalling an ancient forum or amphitheatre. Realized in cardboard and wood, it is reminiscent of the concepts of negotiation and exchange typical of the Roman *Res Publica*, whilst also evoking Greek dramaturgical tradition.

The second room is almost entirely filled with a 5m high wall construction punched by cylindrical openings in which people are welcome to place their arms and experience a hidden tactile discovery. The actual elements comprised in the installation are only visible from a bridge connected to the higher level balcony accessible from outside the Cisterna building, where visitors will be able to view the content of the work without touching it.

The third room contains translucent L-shaped panels that can be easily handled by a pair of visitors. People are encouraged to move them around to create smaller spaces or new configurations. Once in a while they will be placed again in their original configuration, stacked against each other in the perfect order of a pyramid.

As a whole, Putrih's intervention embodies an **inhabited game**. In its individual configurations, it evokes the innocence of childhood and the surprise caused by initial discoveries made through play, subsequently building a real scale autonomous world, linked to the imaginative aspect of **children's playful adventures**. Through this project, the artist explicitly echoes many historical precedents between art, architectures and experimental pedagogy: from **Friedrich Fröbel's** Kindergarten to **Frank Lloyd Wright's** wooden blocks; from Vorkurs, the preparatory course for Bauhaus students conceived by **Johannes Itten**, to **Dada and Surrealist games**; from 1960s countercultures to **Buckminster Fuller's** World Game.

With this new work, the artist explores the limits and possibilities of learning through play, extending the physical experience of a large-scale game into the political realm of **negotiation and the awareness of collective behaviors**. Instead of one-player game with predefined rules, Putrih proposes an evolutionary self-reflective set of play that engages with the audience, the curators and the artist himself, implying a collaborative interaction between all subjects involved.

The installation is also a reflection on the dogmas of **contemporary organizational theory**, whose objective is to build a perfect team capable of ideal results in terms of productivity and performance. Putrih claims that two specific events significantly contributed to change this state of things: the publication of "The Evolution of Cooperation" by Robert Axelrod in 1983 and the launch of Google's Aristotle project in 2012. According to his words "Both projects shared a common conclusion, emphasizing the **crucial importance of collaboration and trust** over competition between team members for achieving optimal results".

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Tobias Putrih – biographical notes

Tobias Putrih examines an elusive nature of designing and building functional as well as abstract objects and spaces. His work spans from sculpture, drawing and architectural installation to exhibition design and film making. His doubts and questions about the process of designing and making things often leads to intentionally fragile, interchangeable and dissolving structures undermining utility as the essence of their existence. Following architecture and product design his works are mostly described as models, prototypes and mockups, things stuck in the process of constant reconstruction.

He was born 1972 in Kranj, Slovenia. Major presentation of his work include solo shows at Museum Boijmans Van Beunigen, Rotterdam; BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; MIT List Center, Cambridge and Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich. His larger installations include an exhibition at Espace315 at Centre Pompidou, Paris and at Capella MACBA, Barcelona; and collaborations with filmmaker Runa Islam at Galeria Civica in Modena and Kunsthaus, Zurich. Group exhibitions he has participated, include TRACK, Smak, Ghent; Forms of Resistance, VanAbbe Museum, Eindhoven; Manifesta 4, Frankfurt and 29th Sao Paulo Biennale. In 2007 he represented Slovenia at the Venice Biennale. His work is included among others in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musée d' Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg and Museum Boijmans Van Beunigen, Rotterdam.