

## ANCIENT & MODERN

### PRESS RELEASE

#### LÁSZLÓ MOHOLY-NAGY AND SCOTT MYLES

24 MAY - 30 JUNE 2007

ANCIENT & MODERN presents previously unseen photographs by László Moholy-Nagy alongside new sculpture and screen-printed posters by Scott Myles.

In 1935 László Moholy-Nagy moved to London. Embracing commercial applications of his experimental work as a painter, photographer, film maker and designer he was commissioned to provide documentary photographs for books on Eton College, Oxford University and, at the opposite end of Britain's social scale, London's street markets. This exhibition features photographs taken by Moholy-Nagy of the Caledonian and Petticoat Lane markets originally intended for Mary Benedetta's *The Street Markets of London* (published by John Miles Ltd. in 1936) but unused. They are presented here in public for the first time.

These images sit in a eccentric catalogue of works by Moholy-Nagy made at this time that include films about Sussex lobster fishermen and Tecton's buildings at London and Whippsnade Zoos; Window displays for Simpsons of Piccadilly; advertisements for London Underground and Imperial Airways and a film set for Alexander Korda's *Things to Come* (1936). Dismissed in Britain in their time as continental 'tricks' Moholy-Nagy's photographs are now considered canonical in both fine and applied art. The pictures retain something of the dramatic, angular perspectives of his Bauhaus work but are more sympathetic studies of their human subjects.

Scott Myles' practice incorporates an array of media and reference points. Myles has previously produced works that involve display systems - retail signs, turntables and shelves reframed or adapted from their original purpose. For example *No* (2002) - a frieze of photocopied photographs that isolate the word 'no' from a series of shop signs; *(Untitled)* 2006 - a revolving Perspex sculpture based upon a bookcase and *On Display and Disguise* (2006) - a pair of marbled shelves, one displayed upside-down, on top of the other, negating their purpose.

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Exploring formal issues of display, determinism and chance, material and function, Myles' works can also be seen as a personal, psychological enquiry inspired not only by art histories but by literature - most recently, by Lawrence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759 - 67).

#### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

László Moholy-Nagy was born László Weisz in Borsod, Hungary in 1895. After studying law and serving in the Austro Hungarian army in the First World War he attended art classes in Budapest. In 1923, after making pioneering work in the fields of painting and photography inspired by Constructivism and Dada he was appointed as a Professor at the Bauhaus in Weimar under Walter Gropius. He resigned his position in 1928 and moved to Berlin (where he designed stage sets and costumes) and then on to Amsterdam before arriving in London in 1935. In 1937 he relocated to the United States where he was appointed as a director of the New Bauhaus: American School of Design, later founded the School of Design in Chicago and continued to write and produce paintings, photography, kinetic sculpture, film, and commercial design work until his death in 1946. Moholy Nagy was the subject of a retrospective (alongside Josef Albers) at Tate Modern in 2006.

Scott Myles was born in Dundee in 1975 and lives and works in Glasgow. He has held solo exhibitions in recent years at the Breeder in Athens, with Jack Hanley in San Francisco, the Modern Institute in Glasgow, Galeria Sonia Rosso in Turin and the Kunsthalle Zurich. He has participated in a number of significant group exhibitions including the Tate Triennial 2006 at Tate Britain and 'Kontext Form, Troja', Junge Szene'03 at the Vienna Secession. A major monograph on his work with an essay by Caoimhín Mac Giolla Léith will be published later this year by JRP Ringier in conjunction with Kunsthalle Zurich.

ANCIENT & MODERN is directed by Bruce Haines and Rob Tufnell.

Exhibition preview: Wednesday 14 January, 6 - 8pm

Open Wednesdays - Saturdays 12 - 6pm and by appointment. Closed on Thursdays.

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