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For immediate release

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**PALM BEACH ICA PRESENTS MAJOR NEW WORK
BY ACCLAIMED SLOVENIAN ARTIST MARJETICA POTRČ
Museum Publishes Catalogue to Accompany
*Marjetica Potrč: Urgent Architecture***

LAKE WORTH, FL – November 22, 2003 – The Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art (PBICA) will present a newly commissioned installation by Marjetica Potrč, a leading international artist currently exhibiting at the Venice Biennale. *Marjetica Potrč: Urgent Architecture* is the artist’s first major presentation in a U.S. museum since winning the Hugo Boss Prize at the Guggenheim Museum in 2000. Known for her ingenious reimagining of architectural structures in “unplanned” cities (barrios, favelas, shantytowns, squatter communities), Potrč will create a complex and visually arresting architectural collage based on her research in densely populated communities in Caracas, the West Bank, and West Palm Beach.

After its showing at PBICA from November 22, 2003 through February 29, 2004, *Marjetica Potrč: Urgent Architecture* will travel to the List Visual Art Center at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where it will be on view from May 6 through July 11, 2004.

Marjetica Potrč: Urgent Architecture is curated by PBICA Director Michael Rush and organized by PBICA under the direction of Phillip Estlund and Jody Servon. Contributing to the fully illustrated catalogue along with Rush are Carlos Basualdo, independent curator, currently represented at the Venice Biennale and Eyal Weizman, an Israeli architect. Known for his controversial solutions for housing in the West Bank, Weizman will engage in a printed dialogue with Marjetica Potrč. Catalogue design is by Tifenn

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Aubert, the New York-based designer responsible for the popular PBICA catalogue, *BROOKLYN!* The catalogue will be available one month after the exhibition opens since it will document the project being made specifically for PBICA.

The Exhibition

Marjetica Potrč is an artist and architect with particular interest in “informal” or “unplanned” cities, such as those that develop in major urban areas like São Paulo, Brazil; Caracas, Venezuela; San Juan, Puerto Rico and many other cities in the world. Given the often desperate lack of resources in these communities, Potrč has designed “self-sustaining” housing units that can provide water, sewage and electrical service to the occupants. Rather than designing purely practical and drab residences, she injects her designs with glowing colors (pinks and oranges) as a way of celebrating life and the beauty she sees in shared needs. “We all seek the same things,” she says, “shelter, food, water and beauty.”

Working with the themes of security, defense and pursuit of happiness, Potrč will construct a massive installation of housing units based on what she has seen of gated communities and temporary shelters (that have become permanent) in Caracas, the West Bank and West Palm Beach. Potrč sees strong affinities between these three areas in terms of the tensions between public and private space; safety and community interaction. Using available materials from concrete blocks to barbed wire and wood and aluminum, Potrč’s installation will be a monolithic testimony to the power of art and architecture in shaping and reimagining the human environment. “Such (designs) bring about a long-needed dialogue between the formal and informal city, which obviously benefits everyone,” Potrč says. “The timing is good, too. Every three days, more than a million people move to urban areas, and many of them live in shantytowns.”

PBICA Director and curator of the exhibition, Michael Rush says, “Marjetica is one of the most extraordinary artists I have ever encountered. Her work doesn’t happen in the isolated confines of the studio, but rather in the world where masses of people compete for space and basic necessities. But far from being depressing or confrontational, her work is charged with beauty, humor and a tremendous sense of possibility. She is involved in a huge enterprise which involves nothing less than the fundamentals of human life and spirit.”

The PBICA exhibition will also feature several of Potrč’s “power tools,” such as her “Hippo Water Roller,” a rolling container for water that substitutes for the heavy and clumsy vessels women place on their heads in many parts of the world; a “Clockwork Mobile Telephone Charger,” and a “Survival Kit,” used by the Mexican government and the U.S. Border Patrol for would-be immigrants. It contains anti-diarrheal medicine, adhesive bandages, and powder to prevent dehydration, birth control pills and condoms.

Also included will be a representative selection of her “Animal Sightings” Series, a set of digital prints of animals such as coyotes, bears and raccoons caught roaming cities and visiting houses.

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About the Artist

Born in 1953 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where she still lives, Marjetica Potrč was trained in architecture and fine art. She received degrees at the University of Ljubljana where she is now a Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts. She has exhibited widely in the U.S. and Europe, including representing Slovenia at the Venice Biennale in 1993 along with the artist collective IRWIN. Other exhibiting venues include: the Center for Curatorial Studies Museum, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (1996); São Paulo Biennial, São Paulo, Brazil (1996); Skulptur. Projekte in Muenster (1997); La casa, il Corpo, il Cuore: Konstruktion der Identitaeten, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna (1999); Urban Visions, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts (1999); Manifesta 3, Ljubljana, Slovenia (2000); Guggenheim Museum, NY (2001); Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2001); and Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY (2002). In addition, Potrč has received numerous awards, including grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1993 and 1999) and the Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, Ljubljana (1994), Parque de la Memoria Sculpture Prize, Buenos Aires (2000), a Philip Morris Kunstfoerderung Grant to participate in the International Studio Program of Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin (2000). She received the prestigious Hugo Boss Prize from the Guggenheim Museum in 2000.

Curator

Michael Rush was appointed Director and Chief Curator of PBICA in 2000. For PBICA, he has curated *BROOKLYN!*, with Dominique Nahas; *Sculpture Now*; *Sue Williams*; *Günter Brus*; *Video Jam*, with Galen Joseph-Hunter and *Japan:Rising*, with Dominique Nahas. He contributes regularly to several publications, including *PAJ*, *The New York Times*, *artnet.com*, and *Art in America*. He is the author of *New Media in Late 20th-Century Art*, published in 1999 and *Video Art*, just published by Thames and Hudson.

Concurrent Exhibition

Marjetica Potrč: Urgent Architecture runs concurrently with *Scott Peterman: Retreat*, a solo exhibition of over 20 photographs by Maine-based photographer Scott Peterman, organized by PBICA.

Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art

J. Patrick Lannan, Sr. renovated the historic facility in 1980 to house his own collection of contemporary art and design. After his death, the building and remaining works were donated in 1989 by the Lannan family to Palm Beach Community College (as the Lannan Foundation), and a majority of the collection was relocated to Los Angeles. In July of 1999, philanthropists Robert M. and Mary Montgomery purchased the landmark art deco movie theater from Palm Beach Community College and renovated it to found the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art.

Today, housed in the 1939 Lake Theater on the main street of Lake Worth, Florida, the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art is devoted to the premise that contemporary art is a vital means of

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understanding the world and today's culture. The museum aims to serve as a place of pleasure and significance, a place where large questions are posed and investigated. It is a venue for major national and international art in all media and a meeting ground for the diverse populations who live in and visit the Palm Beach region.

PBICA is proceeding with the construction of a new building after a recent final approval from the City of Lake Worth. The building will be located directly behind the museum on L Street, and will provide much needed space for expanded programs. In addition, it will be available for rent for private events. It is scheduled for completion within one year.

Public Programs:

The museum offers numerous public programs in direct relation to current exhibitions. These include Artist-to-Artist Dialogues, Family Hands-on Workshops, Art Book Club, Culture Club (targeting teens), and *Cine al Fresco*, the PBICA series of themed free outdoor films. Most notable are Art Talks, artist presentations and panel discussions on current exhibitions led by exhibiting artists and arts professionals. Dates for many of the programs are yet to be confirmed. Unless otherwise noted, all programs will take place at PBICA and are free with paid museum admission. Attendees are encouraged to view the exhibition prior to the start of the program. Reservations requested.

Urgent Architecture: A Dialogue Saturday, November 22, 11:00 a.m.

A discussion by exhibiting artist Marjetica Potrč and PBICA Director and exhibition curator Michael Rush, exploring architectural and social issues as portrayed in Potrč's exhibition.

Architectural Influences: A Talk by Zaha Hadid Thursday, January 15, 7:00 p.m.

The internationally renowned British architect, known for her Deconstructivist building designs, will present and discuss her work and commissions from around the world.

The Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art is located at 601 Lake Avenue in Downtown Lake Worth. Hours are Tuesday through Sunday from noon until 6:00 p.m. The museum is open until 8:00 p.m. on the first and third Friday of the month and admission is free between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. Regular admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for seniors and students. Children under 12 are free. For more information, please call (561) 582-0006 or visit www.palmbeachica.org.

The exhibitions and programs at PBICA are generously supported by Robert and Mary Montgomery.

Heading Image Credit Information:

Left to Right:

1-2 Black-and-white source photos on left by Timothy Hursley.

3 *East Wahdat: Upgrading Program*, 1999, building materials, communication and energy infrastructure. Installation dimensions variable. *50 Years of Central European Art*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria. Photo by Matija Pavlovec.

4 *East Wahdat: Upgrading Program*, 2000, building materials, communication and energy infrastructure. Installation dimensions variable. Centre Gallery, Wolfson Galleries, Miami, FL. Photo by Jose Rodriguez.

5 *East Wahdat: Upgrading Program*, 2001, building materials, communication and energy infrastructure. Installation dimensions variable. Collection of Allen Memorial Art Museum. *The Sheltering Connection, Selections from the Permanent Collection*, Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH. Photo by John Seyfried.

6 *East Wahdat: Upgrading Program*, 2003, building materials, communication and energy infrastructure. Installation dimensions variable. Collection of Allen Memorial Art Museum. *The Pursuit of Happiness*, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland. Photo by Dominique Uldry.

All images courtesy of the artist and Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY.