

CREATIVETIME

Media Contact:
Maureen Sullivan
212.206.6674 x 205
maureens@creativetime.org

MIKE NELSON
A PSYCHIC VACUUM
INSTALLATION FOR THE ESSEX STREET MARKET

117 DELANCEY @ CORNER OF ESSEX ST., LOWER EAST SIDE, NEW YORK CITY
SEPTEMBER 8 – OCTOBER 28, 2007
FRIDAY– SUNDAY, NOON - 6:00PM ADMISSION FREE.

PRESS PREVIEW WITH THE ARTIST
PUBLIC OPENING

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 10-NOON
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, NOON – 8PM



Mike Nelson, Gavin Kroeber and Nato Thompson planning the installation for The Essex Street Market.

**2007 TURNER PRIZE NOMINEE MIKE NELSON CREATES HIS FIRST LARGE-SCALE
INSTALLATION IN NEW YORK CITY WITH CREATIVE TIME**

(July 16, 2007 New York, NY) This fall, artist Mike Nelson transforms the disused interior of the Essex Street Market in NYC's Lower East Side, taking audiences on an unexpected journey through reconstructed rooms, passageways, and meticulously assembled environments of his installation titled *A Psychic Vacuum*. Inspired by the building's history, the surrounding neighborhood, literary and cultural references, and the current social climate in the United States, the project comes to life via materials gleaned from local salvage yards and debris from the market's heyday. This site-specific project, the London-based artist's first major installation in the U.S., will offer audiences

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an opportunity to explore a forgotten building, once a bustling part of the Lower East Side, which has been inaccessible to the public for the past thirteen years.

Accessed through a small door on Delancey Street, the work draws visitors into a parallel universe by way of a series of deeply believable and disquieting architectural spaces, confusing the real with the fictionally derelict. Entering Nelson's work is an active, and sometimes anxious, experience in which viewers move through an elaborate labyrinth of rooms often concealed within rooms, surrendering their bearings to experience the artist's three-dimensional narrative.

Mike Nelson's project continues Creative Time's history of giving artists the opportunity to participate in a dialogue about neighborhoods on the verge of change, and to produce site-specific works that merge art with architecture. Typical of his practice, Nelson has invested several months researching the Essex market building and surrounding area, gathering materials, and preparing a labor-intensive build-out to transform the space. Remnants of a Chinese restaurant that once existed in part of the building, along with the proliferation of tattoo parlors and clairvoyants' storefronts in the Lower East Side, serve as references that are re-interpreted in Nelson's installation. As with many of the artist's constructions, the charged atmospheres of this work will draw not only on such local material, but also upon the artist's own earlier works, popular culture, cinema and literature—notably Ray Bradbury, William S. Burroughs, and H.P. Lovecraft—to create an environment that can be seen as a metaphor for the turbulent geopolitical landscape of today.

A Psychic Vacuum is co-organized by Nato Thompson, Curator & Producer at Creative Time, and Peter Eleey, Curator at the Walker Art Center (previously Curator & Producer at Creative Time).

THE ARTIST

Mike Nelson was born in Loughborough, England in 1967. He studied at Reading University, 1986-1990, and attended Chelsea College of Art and Design from 1992 – 1993. He was short-listed for the 2001 Turner Prize, and is once again a nominee this year, with an installation to be presented in the Turner show at Tate Liverpool from October 19 – January 13. The winner will be announced on December 3. The artist is represented by Matt's Gallery, London and Galleria Franco Noero, Torino.

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Nelson has been creating architectural environments for the better part of the last decade, including his now-legendary *Coral Reef* (2000) at Matt's Gallery. He has exhibited internationally, with commissions at the 2001 Venice Biennale, 2002 Sydney Biennial, 2003 Istanbul Bienal, and 2004 Bienal de São Paulo. He has also presented large-scale installations in Copenhagen, Glasgow, Serbia and Bucharest. His recent shows include Matt's Gallery, London, England; an offsite work for Turner Contemporary, Margate, England; Musee d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland; Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, England; the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin; Camden Art Centre, London. Nelson's first U.S. exhibition was *The Pumpkin Palace* (2003), a work created in an old hospital bus curated by Ralph Rugoff at the CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco. The project was re-presented at the Basel Art Fair in Switzerland in June 2007.

ABOUT ESSEX STREET MARKET

In an effort to ease street congestion caused by pushcarts and vendors, Mayor LaGuardia created several indoor retail markets throughout the city including the Essex Street Market in 1940. In the early years, Essex Street Market's identity was shaped by the Lower East Side's Jewish and Italian immigrants, and later a Puerto Rican population, who served as both the merchants and the customers. The Market was originally comprised of 4 separate buildings. Building D, the site of Mike Nelson's installation with Creative Time, originally contained meat markets, but over the years has housed a diner, liquor store and most recently, a Chinese restaurant. In the 1970s, the Market began to fall out of favor as customers turned to more convenient supermarkets. In 1995 the City of New York and the Economic Development Corporation (NYEDC) assumed direct control of the Market, consolidating tenants into two of the original four spaces. As a result, building D has not been open for commercial use in over a decade.

ABOUT CREATIVE TIME

Creative Time presents the most innovative art in the public realm. Launched in New York in 1974, it works with artists who ignite the imagination and explore ideas that shape society. It initiates a dynamic conversation among artists, sites, and audiences, in projects

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that enliven public spaces with free and powerful expression. Creative Time Books, interactive website, talks, and programs provide deeper insight into the public projects.

SUPPORT

The exhibition is made possible, in part, by The Henry Moore Foundation, the British Council, and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, with the generous support of The September 11th Fund. Additional funding provided by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; the New York State Council on the Arts, a State agency; and New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn. Special thanks to the City of New York and the Economic Development Corporation. Exhibition materials provided, in part, by Materials for the Arts, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs/NYC Department of Sanitation/NYC Department of Education.