



# EMPTY PREMISES

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## A N I N C O U N C E M E N T

“How does one inhabit emptiness? There is a tension and struggle between the will of the space in preserving its void and the will of the forces that wish to occupy it. This conflict became the subject matter of conversation between the Director of EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens), Katerina Koskina, and curator Lanfranco Aceti after they shared their concerns for the realization of any exhibition starting from zero. These concerns are only magnified in the case of the opening of a new museum, as is the current situation of the EMST.

*empty pr(æ)mises* is a project conceived and curated by Katerina Koskina and Lanfranco Aceti for which artists are invited to visualize and localize the struggle between the promise of a future idea and the process of realization in the empty premise—the temporary exhibition space of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST). Details on the call for submissions, the curatorial statement and the exhibition space can be found [here](#).

Artworks in *fieri* will be selected for an online exhibition with the Museum of Contemporary Cuts (MoCC) by a committee consisting of Lanfranco Aceti, Bart De Baere, Katerina Koskina, Barbara London and Monika Szewczyk. The art projects will also be considered for future physical exhibitions at EMST. The most exceptional project proposals will be included in a highly illustrated catalogue published by the Leonardo Electronic Almanac—MIT Press.”

# CURATORIAL STATEMENT

June 16, 2016

## *empty pr(æ)mises* An in Fieri Curatorial Framework

Conceptual Framework

Curators: Lanfranco Aceti and Katerina Koskina

How does one inhabit emptiness? There is a tension and struggle inherent to the space between the will of preserving its void and the will of the forces that wish to occupy it.

For Katerina Koskina, director of EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens), the complexity of emptiness and its overabundance of possibilities has been a dilemma from the moment she first visited the Museum building in December 2014. The building stood unfinished; complete in structure but internally void. For a director or curator, inhabiting an empty building designed to become a museum encapsulates the struggling dualities of spatial realization. The architecture, especially when interesting, amplifies the emptiness and little by little imposes its 'presence', while simultaneously consolidating the idea that "it is better to have an interesting empty building rather than a full one without a concrete aim." This conflict between emptiness and fulfillment became for the director of EMST a fixation and the subject matter of conversations between her and curator Lanfranco Aceti. The context of this dialogue is their agony for the realization of any exhibition starting from zero, which becomes more imperative in the case of the opening of a museum. From their discussions emerged the project *empty pr(æ)mises*.

*empty pr(æ)mises* is a struggle between the promise of a future idea and the process of realization in the empty premises which could host it. The promises of a future museum clash against the reality of the premises, which oblige a re-evaluation of the idea itself, but also of our identity in relationship to the promises made. The infinite possibilities of realization embedded in the promises of a space and the restrictions of contemporary spatial and socio-political realities inherent to the premises entangle with the role that the virtual and physical premises play both as space and context. These multiple interconnections can either support or disrupt the potential fulfillment and manifestation of the functions of promises and premises.

In the complex entwining and conflicting negotiations of ideas, place making, materials and technologies as well as architectural and engineering structures, lies the struggle in defining art spaces, processes, actualizations and materializations. These are a reflection of socio-political and cultural phenomena that shed a light on the ontology of an aesthetic that is both of being and becoming.

The physical premises, as both aesthetic and architectural structures of being and becoming, transform and condition the conceptual premises that underpin the development of ideas, artworks and interactions within a general process of being constantly *in fieri*.



The artworks *in fieri* in their possibility of being or never being realized, redefine engagement with the multiple forms of everyday reality and of the necessity of actualization and resistance of both promises and premises. These are molded by a range of contextual factors that do not necessarily respond just to aesthetic or philosophical underpinnings, but to the phenomenological realities of our culture and socio-political times. The specific realization of actualization and resistance of PR(OE)MISES is visible in the current socio-political climate in Greece as a reflection of world turmoils. Greece is a country in a state of socio-political emergency, within which decisions with financial repercussions are constantly called into question—including the existence and operation of a huge, much awaited, National Museum of Contemporary Art.

The impact of the financial crisis and the years of unresolved administrative issues have left a beautiful, new and completed building—funded by the European Union and Greece—unused. The old Fix brewery became a landmark in the sixties by the legendary architect of Greek modernity, Takis Zenetos, with the collaboration of Margaritis Apostolidis and was turned in a Museum building by the 3SK architectural studio. Now, after having transferred to the new building in 2015, EMST has to be financially supported in order to operate and fulfill its institutional purpose of bringing into being a national collective vision.

The constant process of becoming—in its static phase of suspension between being and non-being—allows time for reflection, in spite of a contemporary global context characterized by immediacy and speed. It is in this phase of suspended existence that opportunities arise, are evaluated, actualized or discarded.

Promises and premises are not necessarily actualized in their original form, or within their envisaged modalities, but as a result of opportunities and chances. The space itself at times appears to dictate what is and is not to be. The voice of the space and even the documentation of this creative struggle becomes an opportunity to envisage art, curatorial approaches and aesthetic practices which otherwise would not have a space to exist.

An archive of emptiness and opportunities, *in fieri*, characterizes this international project which looks at art, curating and critical writing as a reflection on what may come, what is forthcoming, what could have been, and what never will be. It is a reflection on the notion of emptiness, but also on the understanding of premises and promises, which are made of both opportunities and betrayals.

The promise of premise, and the premise of promise, applies even more so in the case of the long awaited opening of EMST. What impact will the Museum have in the city and the country's life through its artistic, theoretical, social, educational, and entertainment policies? Will the building be used only to host its international collection of contemporary art, showcase the works of the little known, although vibrant and active Greek art scene, or will it be a living space, a kind of work in progress, permanently changing to follow its own process of completion? How can such a challenging goal be reached?

The two curators realized that this dialogue should expand and include one of the most important factors of a museum—the artists themselves. The curators hereby invite them to test their ideas and visions of creatively occupying an empty space within the Museum. The international selection committee (Lanfranco Aceti, Bart De Baere, Lilian Haberer, Katerina Koskina, Barbara London, Monika Szewczyk) seeks superior innovation, testing preconceived notions of the Museum as a notion while exploring the infinite possibilities of empty spaces in the Museum.

We believe the proposed works or projects will provide EMST, which is currently trapped in between promises and premises, with answers to this conflicted identity with the ultimate goal of the realization of some. The important factor is that a dialogue will have begun and will be recorded as a web project by EMST and the Museum of Contemporary Cuts and as an electronic publication by the Leonardo Electronic Almanac—MIT Press supported by Arts Administration @ Boston University.

Lanfranco Aceti and Katerina Koskina

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Call for Submissions

Curators: Lanfranco Aceti and Katerina Koskina

Call for Submissions

The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, in collaboration with the Museum of Contemporary Cuts, Leonardo Electronic Almanac (MIT Press) and with Arts Administration @ Boston University launches a call for artworks open to international artists on the theme of *empty pr(æ)mises*.

*empty pr(æ)mises*, conceived and curated by Lanfranco Aceti and Katerina Koskina, will focus on the intertwining of the words promises and premises.

How does one inhabit emptiness? For this project artists are invited to visualize and localize within the space of the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST) the struggle between the promises of future ideas and the processes of their realizations in the empty premises which should host them.

The promises clash against the reality of the premises which oblige a re-evaluation of the idea itself, but also of our identity in relationship to the promises made. The infinite possibilities of realization embedded in the promises of a space and the restrictions of contemporary spatial and socio-political realities inherent to the premises entangle with the role that the virtual and physical premises play both as space and context. These multiple interconnections can either support or disrupt the potential fulfillment and manifestation of the functions of promises and premises.

In the complex entwining and conflicting negotiations of ideas, placemaking, materials and technologies as well as architectural and engineering structures, lies the artists and curators' struggle in defining art spaces, processes, interventions and materializations. These are a reflection of socio-political and cultural phenomena that shed a light on the ontology of an aesthetic that is both of being and becoming.

The artworks, as projects *in fieri*, (in development), because of their very nature of proposals—similarly to architectural projects—will define and shape the emptiness of the space of the EMST, bringing to light the infinite arrays of creative and aesthetic possibilities.

These aesthetic propositions, contrary to architectural projects, will not remain at the stage of ideas but will be collected in a publication by the Leonardo Electronic Almanac—MIT Press. In this publication each artist's proposed artworks can be displayed over ten pages, or 'spaces', with images in full color. The collection thus created with multiple proposals will embody the role that the EMST could play in both the international and national contemporary art scenes.

The artists' proposed images will also be displayed on the online space of the EMST and the Museum of Contemporary Cuts (MoCC)—creating a public archive of ideas. Each image will also be disseminated via social media.

The existence of these proposals for the empty premises of the EMST holds the promise of their possible realization in the physical space of the museum. In this time of blended spaces and activities which transition publicly between the conceptual space, the virtual display and the physical realization—not necessarily in a pre-established and orderly fashion—the physical embodiment of an artwork is not strictly linked to its original location. The realm of possibilities are embedded in the premise (intended here as a conceptual assertion) of the artwork and these are increasingly unbound from the restrictions of the social-political realities that characterize the locus in which the project originated.

For their proposals we ask that artists consider all of the above, with special consideration to the context of this project rooted in the long awaited building of the EMST (National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens) which was built to host an important international collection of contemporary art. The impact of the financial crisis has left a new and completed empty building, at the very centre of modern-day Athens, suspended and awaiting the realization of its function: trapped in between promises and premises, realities and virtualities, local and international expectations.

## Application Details

To be considered for this project please provide the following:

### Phase 1 - Deadline by December 01, 2016

1) Expression of interest which should include your contact details, mobile number and email address. At this stage you can state via email that you are committed in making a submission. Please send your email to the following address: emptypromises.emst@gmail.com by December 01, 2016.

### Phase 2 - Deadline by March 01, 2016

1) For the catalog proposal: A project for the EMST space—description, details and restrictions are attached. Even if there are restrictions to the physical space—as in all projects—we ask artists to envisage as a daring project as possible in total freedom: every medium and every practice are acceptable (including but not limited to: internet art, conceptual art, performance, sculpture, painting, installation, etc.). We would like to receive innovative, daring and audacious usages of the space that challenge traditional perceptions of aesthetics and roles of contemporary art museums.

For your proposal to be considered, please provide the following:

I. Minimum 10 to maximum 15 images at high resolution for print publication. Measurements for the high resolution images' dimensions for publication are as follows: A single full page image should be at least 18,5 cm (width) x 26 cm (height) and must be at 300 dpi minimum, .TIFF preferred (otherwise .JPG). A double spread (an image on two adjacent pages) should be at least 36,2 cm (width) x 26 cm (height) and must be 300 dpi minimum. All images should be named as follows: Number\_FirstName\_ LastName\_Print, e.g. 01\_John\_Smith\_Print

II. All images and documentation should be provided with a Dropbox link. The Dropbox folder containing all the submission materials should be named as follow: FirstName\_LastName\_EMSTep e.g. John\_Smith\_EMSTep

III. The link should be emailed to emptypromises.emst@gmail.com with the subject of the email: EMSTep - FirstName - LastName, e.g. EMSTep - John - Smith

IV. There should also be a Word document .doc or .docx (no other documents will be accepted) with the following information in the given order 1) First Name and Last Name 2) Postal Address 3) Email 4) Phone Numbers (a landline and a mobile number) 5) Biography (500 words) 6) Artist Statement (500 words).

V. In a second .doc or .docx Word document named FirstName\_LastName\_Captions, e.g. John\_Smith\_Captions.doc there should be all the captions. Caption should be numbered in sequential order from 01 to 15 and their numbers should correspond to the numbers in the images filenames in order to avoid errors. Captions should follow this convention: Artist's First Name and Last Name, *Work Title* (in italics), Year of Production. Medium or Media. Dimensions.

2) For the display of images on the EMST website, on Leonardo Electronic Almanac (MIT Press) and the Museum of Contemporary Cuts we will need:

I. Minimum 15 to maximum 30 images and videos. Images sizes are as follows: 2000px wide at 1200px high suitable for web (72dpi).

II. All web images should be named as follows: Number\_FirstName\_LastName\_Web  
e.g. 01\_John\_Smith\_Web

III. In a .doc or .docx word document named FirstName\_LastName\_Captions\_Web, e.g. 01\_John\_Smith\_Captions\_Web.doc there should be all the captions for the web images. Caption should be numbered in sequential order from 01 to 30 and their numbers should correspond to the numbers in the images filenames in order to avoid errors. Captions should follow this convention: Artist's First Name and Last Name, *Work Title* (in italics), Year of Production. Medium or Media. Dimensions.

3) Signed copyright agreement for publication, online distribution and exhibition

