



Press Release

The exhibition *Empty Pr(oe)mises* has confronted, throughout its development, the very challenges it sought to address and showcase: the emptiness of political promises leading to vacant premises, the personalism of curators/directors at the expense of stable programming, and a lack of general resources with the expectation that a monumental building can exist as a museum independently of the people creating art for it.

The complexity of curating during times of crisis has affected the exhibition itself, rendering it unable to deliver on its promises due to the betrayal of assurances given but never respected.

Conceived by Lanfranco Aceti and co-curated with Katerina Koskina, the initial project never reached full development, hindered by intense political wrangling that impacted its progress.

The final blow came with the refusal of the current director of EMST, Katerina Gregos, to allow the project to continue under her tenure. Consequently, *Empty Pr(oe)mises* could not showcase selected artists' interpretations of the call for works of art in EMST's temporary exhibition space.

Empty Pr(oe)mises is now presented as an exhibition illustrating the vacuousness, emptiness, and perils of curating. It serves as a public historical record and a resting place for this particular collaboration with institutions and individuals who are now tasked with populating the graveyard they have created. Ultimately, it reflects Aceti's personal views on the meaning of curating and being an artist in the early 21st century.

MoCC collaboration with EMST was to attempt to fulfill a fundamental element of the call and the role of the museum — showcasing works of art and projects that, due to the contemporary financial crisis, could not be realized. The project aimed to exhibit these works online as concepts, ideas, and propositions, much like the preparatory drawings and maquettes of an architectural project.

The project was announced in 2016 with an open call and with an international committee (Lanfranco Aceti, Bart De Baere, Lilian Haberer, Katerina Koskina, Barbara London, and Monika Szewczyk) for the selection of the artists, to ensure rigorous and impartial selection of the submissions. However, due to EMST's dismissal, MoCC announces that *Empty Pr(oe)mises* cannot fulfill its obligations to display the winning projects.

In a poetic turn, *Empty Pr(oe)mises* becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: an empty shell of a never-realized project. The publication, *Sine Titulo*, itself an artwork, analyzes contemporary art's 'bla bla' while inscribing the names of the artists who made the final roster for future commissions.

Whether MoCC will continue the project with these artists in a different form depends on future opportunities. This press release, beyond announcing an exhibition transformed into a conceptual artwork and documenting an empty promise, serves as an apology from MoCC to the artists who participated in the public call, investing time and resources in a series of empty promises.

It also stands as a testament to the ineptitude and lack of professionalism of institutions and curators who claim high standards but lack the basis for delivering minimum continuity within the institutions they govern. Their choices often rely on criteria favoring inner circles, revealing the contemporary conditions in which artists operate and the hierarchies they are asked to bend over for.

After a lengthy and rigorous selection process, these are the winners of the call. Unfortunately, EMST and the Greek Ministry of Culture have not deemed it appropriate to send an email announcing the project's cancellation, for which the artists deserve recognition. The certainty that they were selected based on their proposals rather than any other factors, I hope, is a consolation prize they can appreciate. To them, my respect and sincere apologies for what, in the end, amounted to a series of empty promises.

The selected artists are: Elena Ailes, Argh Team, Simon Banos, Simon Belleau, Tom Bogaert, Peter Broeren, Jon Burris, Josephine Callaghan, Ben Clement, Jay Critchley, Diogo da Cruz, Fernando Egido, Judy Freya Sibayan, Fanis Kafantaris, Anni Kaltsidou, Marina Kassianidou, Devon Knowles, Andreas Kopp, Misha Kuball, Thom Kubli, Makis Kyriakopoulos, Marion Inglessi, Maria Lalou, Paul Landon, Hoffman Lambertus, Lazar Lyutakov, Nikos Makaroumas, Tony Maslić, Anastatias Mastrakouli, Rehan Miskci, Sarah Mohr, Simonetta Moro, A-Dash Niederhauser, Kosmas Nikolaou, Spiros Panagirakis, Artemis Papachristou, Lambros Pigounis, Helene Lundbye Petersen, Caroline Pradal, Tianyu Qiu, Oliver Ressler, Willem Jan Smit, Candice Smith Corby, Matthew Spurdakos, Natascha Stellmach, Anastatias Stratakis, The Office of Ideal Discovery, Norbert Tóth, Thodoris Trampas, Peter Tuka, Shinji Turner-Yamamoto, Lydia Venieri, Anna Walker, Richard Whitlock, and Zoe Hatziyannaki.



Lanfranco Aceti, *Self-Portrait of the Artist as a Young Revolutionary as Performed by Francesco Sacco*, 2021. Digital photography and mixed media. Dimensions: 100 cm. x 67 cm. XVII Venice Architecture Biennale.

Lanfranco Aceti, Biography - Curator

Lanfranco Aceti works as an artist, curator, and academic. He curated *Monumental Elements* and *The Waters We Are In* for the XVIII Venice Architecture Biennale. He worked as the director of Kasa Gallery in Istanbul, where he exhibited a range of innovative artworks including *75 Watts* by Revital Cohen and Tuur Van Balen (acquired by MoMA) and Paolo Cirio's *Loophole4All* (awarded the 2014 Golden Nica at Ars Electronica). Recently he performed and curated *Hope Coming On* at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, as well as curated *The Small Infinite* at the John Hansard Gallery.

In 2011, he curated the exhibition *Uncontainable* as part of the 12th Istanbul Biennial and an exhibition of digital artworks on the media facade of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb. In 2017, Aceti curated a series of exhibitions and projects including a large public installation on the promenade of the city of Thessaloniki, coinciding with the Thessaloniki Biennial, and curated a public intervention at documenta14. In 2020/2021 he exhibited a large body of works of art at the Venice Architecture Biennale, challenging established notions of white cube and public space. As a result, he is now curating *ad infinitum*, together with Alessandro Melis, the Italian Pavilion 2021 for the Museum of Contemporary Cuts and completed *Empty Pr(oe)mises* for the EMST, Athens, in 2023.