

## Press release

### EMST in the World 3 Italy

#### **Botto&Bruno. The ballad of forgotten places**

A project winner of the 3rd edition of Italian Council (2018), a competition conceived by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Art and Architecture and Urban Peripheries (DGAAP) – an organism of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, to promote Italian contemporary art in the world.

#### EMST Temporary Exhibition Space (-1)

Opening: Wednesday, December 4, 2018 at 19.30

Duration: December 4, 2018 – January 20, 2019

The **National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST)** in collaboration with **Fondazione Merz** presents the work of **Botto&Bruno** *The ballad of forgotten places*, in the framework of the series **EMST in the World 3**. The project was realized with the support of the **Italian Council** and it is included in the program **Tempo Forte Italia – Grecia 2018**, an initiative launched by the **Embassy of Italy in Athens** together with Greek and Italian Institutional and non-Institutional actors, artists and experts in order to strengthen the cultural relationships between Italy and Greece. The aim is to cover all the various forms of “art”, from Classicism to Contemporary so as to have “more Italy in Greece and more Greece in Italy”.

The installation will start its journey from EMST in Athens and will continue to travel in Museums of other cities.

The presentation of the work along with the selection of the video artworks of the collection of **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea** compose the second part of the series **EMST in the World**, which started in 2016 and it includes collaborations of the Museum with international foundations and organizations, in a different country every time, aiming to the study of contemporary art, the dialogue, the cooperation, the exchange of knowledge, practices, and activities. This year's edition of the series is dedicated to Italy.

The **Fondazione Merz** is not new to the support of young Italian art internationally and has always worked on the construction of dialogues and relations between peoples and cultures. Among these, one of the most significant from a cultural and social point of view, concerns the countries of the Mediterranean basin which, not only because of geopolitical issues, have for some time been the protagonists of a vast cultural and artistic debate. The **Fondazione Merz** mentions about the work of Botto&Bruno: “The very differences, sometimes real divisions, between the countries of the Union, are an interesting area for reflection that some well-known artists are analysing and bringing into their work. Much of the media are, for obvious reasons, concentrated on the Middle Eastern countries. However, Fondazione Merz firmly believes that the care of places and communities must also start from the peripheries of Europe. It cannot in fact imagine a hospitable, capable and environmentalist Europe without considering the analysis of the inequalities that are increasingly fragmenting it. To this end, the Fondazione has identified artists **Botto&Bruno** as the ideal interlocutors for a new proposal.”

***The ballad of forgotten places*** has a real migrant nature. The work receives the traces and the signs of the time and of the cultures that have given shape and content.

With this short statement, the artists explain their idea:

“The project stems from a reflection on the need for certain marginal places to be protected and cared for and on the need to preserve their memory. The idea we want to develop is that of a work that must be hosted within an institutional space. Considering what Augè said "our time does not produce ruins because it doesn't have the time" we started to build a structure that reminds of a contemporary ruin: the external walls of the work will therefore be the ruins of a modernist architecture that are also the ruins of its own utopia. Within this architecture, people can enter and walk in this exterior/interior where they will be surrounded, both on the walls and on the floor, by a 360 degrees suburban landscape with oxidation and stains, as if time had worked on it and had almost transformed into a daguerreotype. At the center of the room there will be a basement with a book of about 300 pages, containing about 20 years of photos we have taken of places which have now disappeared, transformed, forgotten, either terrain vagues, industrial areas or urban gardens located on the edge of the city. Each photograph of the book will be photocopied and then pictorially worked with the same technique used for the images on the walls. It is a flow in which the location of places is not important but the fundamental thing is their being united by a common destiny: the fact of having been forgotten. The idea of a house that, although fragile, ruined, chooses to protect the memory of these lost places, seems to us the only way to build the foundations for a new and more constructive approach to tackling environmental issues. The institution that hosts this work must protect, as a sort of embrace, this ruin, which in turn tries to preserve the memory of these places but above all wants to cry out to the world that they are places that need respect and care; the whole thing looks almost like a sort of Chinese box, just like a memory machine in which a step dive is necessary to ensure that everything is activated in the visitor. The cure can only take place if one begins to understand that the landscape is fragile and must be loved and guarded before it is too late.”

**The Italian Council** is a project of the **Directorate-General for Contemporary Art and Architecture, and Urban Peripheries of the Ministry of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities (MiBAC)** with the aim to promote the production, awareness and circulation of contemporary Italian creativity in the visual arts.

The artists' project has the adhesion of the **MiBAC's** Regional Secretariat for Piedmont and of the **Italian Cultural Institutes** of the cities of **Athens, Madrid and Lisbon**. The work, at the end of the exhibitions tour in the mentioned cities, will be definitive installed at **Musei Reali of Turin**.

### **Information**

#### **National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST)**

Kallirrois Ave. & Amvr. Frantzi Street (former FIX factory)  
Athens, Greece, 117 43

Tel: + 30 211 1019000

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Entrance for visitors with disabilities: Syngrou Avenue

Opening hours

Tuesday – Sunday: 11.00 – 19.00

Monday closed

Tickets: full 5 € - reduced 3 €

#### **EMST Press and Communication Office**

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[www.emst.gr](http://www.emst.gr)

### EMST on social media

<https://www.facebook.com/EMST.NationalMuseumofContemporaryArt.Athens>

<https://www.instagram.com/emstathens/>

<https://twitter.com/EMSTathens>

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### Fondazione Merz on social media

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