

Press Release

Face Forward ...into my home

14 September – 14 October 2018

Makasi Gate, Heraklion

Opening: Friday, 14 September 2018 at 19:30

Opening hours: Monday- Saturday: 10.00 - 14.00 and 17.00 – 21.00 | Sunday closed

Free entrance

Exhibition curators / Idea-Implementation of the project

Marina Tsekou, Education Curator EMST

Ioannis Vastardis, Photographer

faceforward.gr

The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens (EMST) in collaboration with UNHCR and the support of the European Commission's department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), presented in winter 2017-2018 at the Museum in Athens, the interactive art project [*Face Forward ...into my home*](#). Following its warm reception in Athens, the project is now hosted in Crete, from 14 September to 14 October 2018, in the framework of the Municipality of Heraklion Festival “Crete, one history, 5+1 civilisations”, and is also expanded with the participation of refugees who reside on the island.

Face Forward ...into my home focuses on the stories of people who have been forced to leave their homelands and are rebuilding their life in Greece. It includes storytelling workshops inspired by a selection of contemporary artworks from the collection of the EMST, the photo shooting of portraits, and an exhibition with photo portraits and recorded personal stories of refugees and asylum-seekers, who are now living in Greece and benefitting from [ESTIA](#), the Emergency Support To Integration and Accommodation programme implemented by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and funded by ECHO.

ESTIA means Home

Face Forward ...into my home introduces the public to the faces behind the numbers and the refugee situation in Greece, and tells their stories - the family members, the woman, the man, the teenager. Getting to know these human stories, one realizes that even though they lost almost

everything when they were forced to flee their homes, they still share many of the same desires and dreams that we all do. They haven't lost their identity, their skills or their hope. They just long to resume a normal life.

The ESTIA programme helps them to realize exactly this: through accommodation in apartments and provision of monthly cash support, refugees and asylum-seekers are able to lead more secure and normal lives, regain the dignity of choice and gradually take back control of their life. At the same time, *Face Forward ...into my home* introduces these people as residents of a country that has embraced so many cultures, religions and ideas – a diversity that is defined through social solidarity and mutual respect, so that we can all feel “at Home”.

Face Forward ...into my home was designed and implemented by EMST's Education Department, in collaboration with UNHCR, and is funded by the European Commission's department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), in the framework of the ESTIA programme. ESTIA, which is implemented in collaboration with the Greek Government, local authorities and NGOs, provides urban accommodation and cash assistance to thousands of asylum seekers and refugees in Greece. On the island of Crete, ESTIA is implemented in collaboration with the Municipalities of Heraklion, Siteia and Chania, through the Development Agency of Heraklion.

Face Forward ...into my home consists of the following three phases:

Phase I: Storytelling Workshops

Beneficiaries of the ESTIA programme are invited to share feelings, memories, hopes and aspirations, inspired by artworks from the EMST collection. Using these as a starting point and as a stimulus to explore contemporary social issues, including forced migration, social integration, cultural exchange and social interaction, the participants create autobiographical stories that reveal moments from the past, build personal narratives about the present, and make plans for the future.

Phase II: Photographic Portraits

Based on the narratives that unfold during the workshops, photographic portraits depict the refugees and asylum-seekers in their daily life in Athens. Accompanied by the stories, the portraits shed light on each person's unique character. At the same time, both photographs and stories reveal the “human face” of the refugee plight and remind us of the things, emotions, feelings that connect us all – our common humanity.

Phase III: Exhibition of Photographic Portraits and Personal Narratives

The personal narratives and photographic portraits will be presented at Makasi Gate, Heraklion, from 14 September to 14 October 2018. The works from the EMST collection that prompted the narratives will be also presented in digital form in the exhibition space, in addition to a short documentary video of the whole project.

As part of the exhibition, educational programmes for students of all ages will be organized in cooperation with the Society of Cretan Historical Studies/Historical Museum of Crete, as well as

parallel events in cooperation with the Social Space, A. & M. Kalokerinos Foundation, and the Development Agency of Heraklion.

About EMST

The [National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens](#) (EMST) is a major contemporary art institution in Greece that from the beginning of its operation (2000) has developed a wide variety of programmes and activities addressing different audiences. The permanent home of the Museum is the former Fix brewery on Syngrou Ave., which was reconstructed to open its doors again in late 2016 with the first exhibition “Urgent Conversations: Athens – Antwerp” inaugurating the temporary exhibition spaces of EMST simultaneously with the series “EMST in the World” and attracting thousands of visitors.

From April to July 2017 EMST was the main venue of the acclaimed art exhibition documenta 14, which was organized for the first time in two cities, Athens and Kassel, and attracted global attention. From June to September 2017, the exhibition “ANTIDORON. The EMST Collection” occupied Fridericianum, the emblematic building of documenta in Kassel, where more than 220 works of the Museum’s collection were presented.

In the meantime, the Museum moved in 2017 with all necessary procedures that will lead to its full operation. In parallel, EMST designs and delivers a variety of social intervention projects, such as educational programmes designed for primary and secondary students.

About UNHCR

[UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency](#), was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. UNHCR safeguards the rights and well-being of refugees and stateless people around the world. In more than six decades, the agency has helped tens of millions of people restart their lives. UNHCR is on the front lines of the world's major humanitarian crises, including Syria, Iraq, Central African Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, and countless other emergencies.

Apart from its humanitarian assistance programmes, UNHCR is helping refugees rebuild their lives and trying to find solutions for their future. Learning languages, the recognition of their skills and knowledge and access to the labour market are valuable for easing their financial, social and cultural integration in the hosting communities.

About the European Commission's department for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

The European Union with its Member States is a leading global donor of humanitarian aid. Through the [European Commission’s Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid](#) department (ECHO), the EU helps over 120 million victims of conflicts and disasters every year. With headquarters in Brussels and a global network of field offices, ECHO provides assistance to the most vulnerable people solely on the basis of humanitarian needs, without discrimination of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

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