

Good evening.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all of us at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), I would like to say that today is a very special day. We are not here just for the opening of a museum. We are participating in a celebration. A celebration for the Museum's supporters, for the artists whose work is on display in the collection, and for their admirers. But most of all for the entire public, for all the art lovers who have been waiting anxiously for this moment for years, but also, for the younger generation, the children who will be getting to know the work of the artists for the first time today.

Many of us who work for SNF have visited the museum dozens of times to follow the evolution of the project. To make sure that one of the last pieces of the puzzle will be added and that the final picture will be completed. To make sure that the works of the collection of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (EMST) will find their place in the space. The collection has been installed, and the heart of the Museum has started beating.

Having also followed its course over the years, we have collaborated with various leadership teams from the Ministry of Culture, as well as with Ms. Kafetsi and Ms. Koskina, recognizing in them the dedication and vision to make the National Museum of Contemporary Art a reality in Greece. But today, we will leave the Museum more content than ever before, as if it were the first time we visited. And indeed it is—in the capacity of visitors. We'll leave owing a big thank you to the Museum staff who, for many years, have supported its activity each and every day, in spite of all the disappointments, as well as to the Museum's management and administration, the Ministry of Culture and the Minister, Ms. Mendoni who, from the beginning, put the opening of the Museum at the top of her agenda. Today we will leave the Museum emotional, and a little bit more "alive."

What is the artist's intent? EMST gives us many occasions to ask this question. There are dozens of works currently on display at the museum that will make us wonder. And today, perhaps more than ever, we need creative questions, even if there are no specific answers. We need stimuli and motivation, both individually and collectively. Because art acts as a binding agent, bringing out universal truths, common joys and difficulties, across borders, nationalities, and identities.

After many years, EMST is officially under its own roof. However, we hope that it retains its "nomadic soul" and its free spirit into its new era. Its special past is its strength. The fact that it is now housed in its own building does not prevent it from thinking beyond its walls. It is no coincidence that its first official visitors are elementary school students. We are very fortunate to share this experience with them. It is like seeing the Museum through their eyes.

I could go on talking for a lot longer. Everything here is inspiring. But, I think it would be better if we let the art do the talking.

It definitely has a lot to tell us. Thank you very much.