

---

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION ART

---

1

---

PUBLIC  
WORKS  
NICOSIA  
2010

EVANTHIA TSELIKA

This booklet includes text and photographs and a video that have been produced from the documentation of the actions and happenings of the project in the old city of Nicosia, enclosed within the 16th century Venetian walls in July 2010.

Please watch the relevant video on the Conflict transformation art DVD before reading the rest of this booklet and refer to the blog of the project - [publicworks2010.blogspot.com](http://publicworks2010.blogspot.com)



Logo of 'Public Works'

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECTS
04	2. INTRODUCTION - OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC WORKS
10	3. PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME
13	4. AD HOC PLAYGROUND
16	5. DISCUSSION ON CYPRIOT PUBLIC ART
21	6. PUBLIC WORKS EXHIBITION AND STREET PARTY
27	7. TRADING PLACES PERFORMANCE
31	8. NICOSIA STREET ART TOUR
35	9. PUBLIC WORKS ROUNDTABLE
49	10. REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC WORKS

---

# 1

>>

---

**INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECTS**

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECTS

The series of these three Booklets documents the projects that have been carried out within my practice led PhD process that examines conflict transformation art, as a facet of socially engaged practice within segregated urban landscapes (2010-2012). The booklets present an overview of the projects that I have been involved in developing and act as the documentation of practice which is analyzed in the written thesis. The booklets demonstrate information on the project, describe what took place, provide visual evidence and an in depth presentation of the situations that were manifested through the practice. It is the practice that allowed the understanding of conflict transformation art to emerge and which also enabled a testing of different methods so as to negotiate and critically reflect on the function of social art practices within the context of socio-spatial divisions that exist within urban environments.

Conflict transformation art is thus presented as an interpretation of a practice that emerged through the examination of the role of socially engaged art within the context of urban segregation through the case study of the divided city of Nicosia, Cyprus. Through this process what was demonstrated are the ties of art to conflict resolution which are presented in Nicosia. This local narrative of social art practice was then used to develop a way of working that combines these two methodological frameworks and which creates new narratives as to how conflict is reshaping the way that we view our cities. Conflict transformation art focuses on the elements of conflict, dialogue, challenging dominant hegemony and bringing different social groups together through formats such as the exhibition, the workshop, the public dialogue and public performance.

These booklets map this practice led research that focuses on how conflict has shaped socially engaged

art production within divided cities and also explore the processes of development of the projects. Due to the collaborative element that all the projects portray in their development and the involvement of different social groups in their manifestation, a large emphasis is placed on reflecting all the different voices that have been heard through these projects.

The 'Public Works' booklet documents a project from 2010 that examined Nicosia as a divided city and which focused on the landscape of the old city that is characterized by ethno-national separation and which was at the time largely inhabited by migrant groups, and depicted the initial steps of a regeneration process. This project was carried out in public and semi public spaces and it tried to reflect on how different social groups interpret the conflicted landscape of the city. The 'Re Aphrodite meets Alice Wang' booklet focuses on the experience of a Chinese American in Cyprus and on informal social research that was carried out with female Asian migrants due to Alice's unique position of access, which demonstrated elements of abuse by Cypriot men to migrant women, the lack of civic representation of migrants in Cypriot society and the limited interaction between Cypriots and migrants. The 'Sinikismoi' (refugee neighbourhoods in Greek) booklet looks at two different projects that took place within the state social housing projects that exist in Nicosia and which were developed to rehouse Greek Cypriot displaced people after the 1974 conflict. The projects within the 'Sinikismoi' umbrella included a public performance, a residency, an exhibition, an intervention in the space of the displaced housing, workshops and a public dialogue in relation to how these social spaces have been utilized by politicians within their ethno-nationalist discourse and how they exist in the periphery of social and urban life in the city.

A DVD accompanies the booklets and this includes video documentation from all three projects. The booklets also act as documentation of the projects.

An overview of each project is provided, the people who were involved in each one are presented, the funders are mentioned, the locations are explained and what actually took place within each one. What these booklets demonstrate is how these projects were produced. Due to the collaborative nature that I had decided to use from the beginning of this research, each project was produced through collaboration with other people. Because of my focus on dialogical practice many voices can be heard through the documentation process. These are the voices of the collaborators, the contributors, the participants and of the members of chance audiences. This documentation process allowed for particular facets of the projects to rise to the surface and this in turn shaped the critical analysis of how art can be used to facilitate social change within the framework of segregated urban landscapes. The element of collectivity and the creation of contexts that bring together different social groups allowed for an understanding of how social art practices can provide contexts where radical forms of democracy can be demonstrated.

As stated above the projects have all been the result of collaborations with different individuals and in the booklets different voices can be heard of collaborators, participants and of audiences. However I have produced the content of these booklets and they are an integral part of this PhD research project, as they provide the evidence of practice through the documentation process. Even though these booklets present the voices, art work and research of collaborators and participants, they are still authored by me and thus demonstrate these projects through my own lens and interpretation.

I would like to thank everyone that made these projects possible: collaborators, participants and funders alike. Particularly I would like to thank Demetris Taliotis - 'Public Works', Chrystalleni Loizidou - 'Re Aphrodite meets Alice Wang', Natalie Heller and Orestis Lambrou - 'Sinikismoi' projects.



Painting of the divided old city of Nicosia, Evangelia Tselika

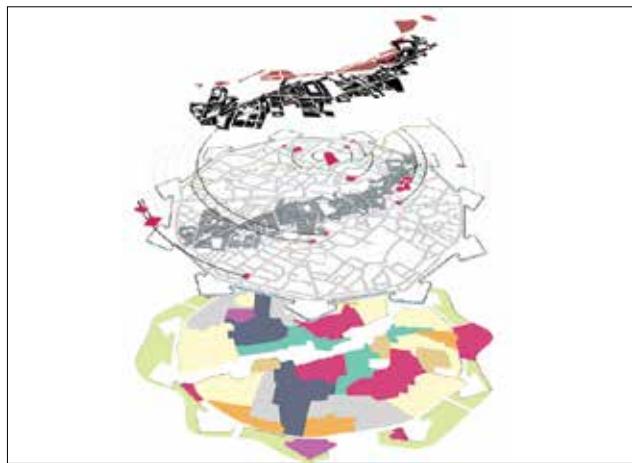
---

# 2

>>

**INTRODUCTION - OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC WORKS**

## 2. INTRODUCTION - OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC



Maps of the old city of Nicosia, the focus of Public Works, produced for the purposes for academic research purposes by architect Niovi Ketonis and which were exhibited at Public Works Exhibition.

'Public Works' was the first in a series of three artistic projects that demonstrate my creative process as I work towards the questioning of socially engaged art as it explores urban spaces of segregation through the city of Nicosia. Beginning from the search into how the practice of art as a social tool has been used in Nicosia the first reference point is the 'old city' that is enclosed by the monumental Venetian walls and which is divided by a demarcation 'buffer zone' in the middle of it. This interpretation has been built out of initial readings into the city environment of Nicosia, primarily using the work of anthropologists, linguists and historians to map out how this built environment has come to exist (Yashin, 2000; Sant Cassia, 2005; Papadakis et al, 2006) and by explorations into contemporary social art practice narratives (Lacy, 1995; Doherty, 2004; Kester, 2004; Bishop, 2006).

'Public Works' set out to explore the relation of the individual and the collective to the public environment and how critical and creative reflection on the public as space and the public as people can shape an understanding of the role of socially engaged art in Nicosia. The project wanted to create points of contacts that look at the city through artistic public statements and theoretical enquiries of the city. The different happenings and creative explorations are divided according to the following axes of investigation.

### **Nicosia as a space and place of conflicts**

Through Youth Workshops and bi-communal youth art programme exhibition, Roundtable, Discussion.

### **The public sphere and the subsequent and diverse uses of art in this specific locale**

Through Performance, Graffiti Walk, Putting up posters made by students throughout the old city.

### **The public(s) that inhabits Nicosia, the degrees of its representations, and how and if art can attribute a visual voice**

Through Youth workshop.

### **Historical and theoretical paradigms of social engagement through the arts and the importance of introducing such vocabulary into the Cypriot setting**

Through Discussion at Big Mac, PW Exhibition, Roundtable.

### **Art as a contact zone for conflict resolution**

Roundtable, bi-communal youth art programme exhibition.

## **SETTING UP THE PROJECT**

Mapping the city as a public 'built and social space' formed the initial approach with Demetris Taliotis (director of Apotheke Contemporary Arts) and the principal co-creator of 'Public Works' Nicosia. He curated the exhibition and he co-organized the project and assisted in the production. I initially proposed an

outline of what was to take place to Taliotis so as to secure his collaboration and by extension that of Apotheke Contemporary Arts<sup>1</sup> in late 2009. We met in London and for this initial proposal I was directly influenced by the contemporary art and cultural environment of the city. Through my research into the contemporary practice of socially engaged art (Doherty, 2004; Kester, 2004; Lacy, 1995, Pasternak, Peltason & Lippard, 2007) I wanted to test particular methodologies in the place of practice, Lefkosia. Post project reflection has demonstrated the importance of this initial research into socially engaged art and the influence of global contemporary art patterns for the setting up of 'Public Works'. By January 2010 we had agreed to organize the 'Public Works' explorations and happenings in April and secured funding from the Cypriot Cultural services and acquired permissions and arranged participations. This multi layered project was developed so as to create a mapping and an exploration of the ethnically charged, heavily militarized and increasingly regenerated public space of the old city of Nicosia. As Taliotis agreed with the idea of exploring what public art and socially engaged art mean in Nicosia, we proceeded to organize 'Public Works' which was to take place in April 2010. The first programme of the project that was to take place on the 23-24th of April is demonstrated here.

## FOOTNOTES

1. APOTHEKE Contemporary Arts is a small-scale industrial building that has acted as a hub of activity for the approximately 15 years. It started out more as a creative collective space but also acted as a commercial art gallery and a host of more socially based projects.

## PUBLIC WORKS AT THE PUBLIC SPACE OF NICOSIA, CYPRUS

23-24 APRIL 2010

### Apotheke:

<http://www.apothekecontemporaryarts.com/>

### Address:

23 Kleanthi Christofidi street, Nicosia (map can be seen on the website)

### Contact information Evanthia Tselika:

e\_tselika@hotmail.com

+447973906568/ 0035797611269

### Contact information Demetris Taliotis:

demetris\_taliotis@yahoo.com

+447788727571 / +35799764816

## ROUNDTABLE 23 APRIL @ CAFE BERLIN NO 2 (ON BORDER)

**3:00** **Introduction** Evanthia Tselika

**3:30** **Dr Gabriel Koureas** - Nicosia: Memory, Place, Trauma

**4:00** **Dr Anna Grichting** - Green Line Scapes. Nicosia's Dead Zone as a River of Memory.

**4:30** **Dr Cameron Cartiere** - Public Art and Social Engagement in Contemporary Art

**5:00** **Pafsanias Karathanasis** - Geographies of graffiti and street art in the 'old town' of Lefkosia/ Lefkosa

**5:30** **Dimitris Taliotis** - Analysis and presentation of artistic collaborative work in the Public space of Nicosia

**6:00** **Sumer Erek** - Presentation of the artist's work in the Public space and how he uses social engagement (via the internet)

**6:30** **Roundtable Discussion**

**7:30** **End**

**LOCATION 1**

## WORKSHOPS AND EVENTS ON THE 24TH:

24 hour:

Radio station experimentation by Antonis Antoniou

## THROUGHOUT THE DAY

A presentation by the autonomous left group of the history of their rich relationship with the city of Nicosia. Agrammata.

## LOCATION 2

**10:00 - 12:00 *Illegal parking lot turned to ad hoc playground.***

Drawings of young people using the theme of the old city that will have been turned to large stickers. Participants will transform through painting and drawing on other surfaces an empty plot that has been acting as a parking lot. This will act as an ad hoc playground and will remain as such for the rest of the day. Evangelia Tseliaka.

## LOCATION 3

**12:00 - 13:30 *Graffiti and stencil tour***

A tour of stencils and graffiti and their importance as a form of visual communication and social engagement in the walled part of Nicosia by Pafsanias Karathanassis. Meeting point @ Location 3

**13:30 - 14:00 *Physical Theatre Performance in the Municipal Market- trading places***

Performance will take place by Dance Theatre United (Natalie Heller).

## LOCATION 4

**14:00 - Onwards *Exhibition @ Apotheke.***

An exhibition of exploring the notions of the divided city, the use of the highly charged public space both as political statements and artistic endeavours and how the element of social/ spatial engagement has been presented by creative practitioners.

## LOCATION 5

**15:00- 16:30 *Talking of Public Art***

Talk on Public Art in the context of Cyprus by Christina Lambrou @ Location 6, outside the Archbishopry where the Big Mac used to reside.

**18:00 - Onwards *Street Party @ Apotheke***

A historically traceable mode of public engagement with the city that has attracted multiple reactions and has partly rekindled the public interest for the Old Town of Nicosia.

## LOCATION 5



Map: Niovi Ketonis, April 2010

## COMMUNICATION

The communication was mainly conducted via the internet and the blog ([publicworks2010.blogspot.com](http://publicworks2010.blogspot.com)) that was created. The blog has been an extremely useful tool for reference in the documentation and critical reflection process of the project. The importance of the rise of the theorization of socially

engaged art in the 1990s is seen in parallel with the launch of the World Wide Web. As the dynamics of a 'social practice' grew so did the use of social media for communication purposes. Social art practitioner and theorist Pablo Helguerra indicates "that recent forms of socially engaged art are both a response to the interconnectivity of today's world and the result of a desire to make those connections more direct and less dependent on a virtual interface" (2011, p. 18).

The importance of social networks for instigating social action was particularly demonstrated in the events of social unrest in 2011 in the Middle East (particularly facebook, twitter and blogging). Blogs are a particularly useful tool, as they are good free archival and communication online sources. I have regularly used the 'Public Works' blog as a source of information in the analysis of the process and the project.

On the 14th of April the Eyjafjallajokun Volcano started erupting and continued to do so until the 20th of April. This put a halt to a huge amount of flights in Northern Europe and on the 19th of April Taliotis and I decided the event had to be postponed. It was pushed forward to July 2010 and this further morphed the direction of the project. It allowed for more time, which meant that the urban landscape had already changed, for example the plot that we wanted to transform into a park through the Ad Hoc Playground, was turned into a park by the local anarchist group. It also meant that additions and changes were made to the events of the project. Cypriot London based artist Sumer Erek managed to come for the roundtable. Another performer was brought on board and another NGO was involved- Hope for Children. It also meant the cancellation of the archival exhibition. The themes of the mission statement remained the same, whilst the programme had a few changes. The programme took this shape as the project wanted to explore built and social 'public' urban narratives. The sequence of the events placed the young people actions first, then

the discussion, exhibition, performance, tour and finally the academic roundtable. This concept and realization owes much to the process of carrying out practice based research, where theoretical analysis on practical methods comes after the happening of the relevant actions.

Time	Destination
15:45	CANCELLED
15:50	CANCELLED
16:00	CANCELLED
16:00	CANCELLED
16:10	CANCELLED
16:10	CANCELLED
16:10	CANCELLED
16:15	CANCELLED
16:20	CANCELLED
16:30	CANCELLED
16:30	CANCELLED
16:30	CANCELLED
16:40	CANCELLED

Flights cancelled...

Each facet or action was related to previous methodological elements of socially engaged art actions that have been taking place since the 1960s. The initial research therefore into contemporary 'social practices' was fundamental in deciding to include these particular paths. Young people's visual thoughts were included to see how they experience the divided urban and social fabric of the city and their intervention and reflection on these aspects. The performance with its outside happening demonstrated the antagonistic understanding of art that takes place in the public space. The graffiti tour allowed for a spatial reading of the walls of Nicosia and their interpretation through urban

anthropology. The idea of walls is an important facet of the city, as is the idea of tours and alternative ways of looking at the city, demonstrating different historical and social layers. Street Art, whether it is murals, graffiti, stencils, and its interpretations as a statement of communication in the public space has been contextualized by contemporary urban theorists (Iveson, 2005). It is interesting to note the case of Belfast and the use of the murals as reminders of live conflict and peace efforts (Blevins, 2011).

The theoretical roundtable aimed to raise debates within the framework of Nicosia as a space of conflict, the local public sphere as it is debated through art, archival and historical paradigms of what socially engaged art means within the Cypriot context. The exhibition acted as a presentation of past works that dealt with the thematic of urban military division, art as a contact zone and social participation. It was the only activity that took place within the gallery space and it was accompanied by a street party. It was important that the project was carried out outside institutional spaces as it allowed for chance encounters to occur. The theoretical dialogue of the roundtable was set up to prompt further understanding of the element of urban segregation and socially engaged art in Nicosia. The roundtable provided valuable material and also paved the evolution of both the practice and the theoretical analysis.

The events of all three days were filmed by Vasia Markides with the donation of the equipment by the NGO CCMC (Cyprus Community Media Centre). This video was later edited by my-self and filmmaker Rozy Sarkis. The video which you have watched shows an overview of all the actions that took place as part of 'Public Works'. The photographs documenting the actions were taken by various participants.

The full programme of the July 'Public Works' follows. It took this shape as it aimed to address different audiences and it was spread over several

locations within the old city of Nicosia. Particularly interactive was the 'Trading Places' performance in the old municipal market and the exchange and dialogue that was facilitated through these was also driven by the relationship that the performers developed with the space and the market sellers, through their everyday interaction during the rehearsal process. What this booklet is presenting is a narration of these proceedings and what the participants and public said through this project. Their voices, presence and importance in this process are what the booklet tries to highlight through the photo story display and narrative. The inclusion of social collectivity and the presence and voice of a multiplicity of voices was one of the main reasons for embarking on this first project. The programme spread over three days and the happenings are shown in a chronological sequence. The postponing from April to July meant that it was much hotter for a public space exploration in Nicosia. Each event is presented here through the photographic images, demonstrating what took place over the three days and allowing the people's voices to come through the narrative.

---

# 3

>>

**PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME**

### 3. PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

THURSDAY, 1 JULY 2010

17:00 - 19:00

#### **Illegal parking lot turned to ad hoc playground**

Public Works met Hope for Peace, Office for Children's Rights. Young people's paintings using the theme of the old city were turned to large stickers and displayed throughout the city, but particularly at the location of the workshop. This was accompanied by exhibits from the bi-communal arts workshops led by the NGO HFC-OCR.

This acted as an ad hoc playground including a 3 meter canvas that was set up so that members of the public could spray paint messages to the city.

Young people joined and drew different pictures based upon emblematic images of the old city. Some of these images were to then be turned into T-shirts and given back to participants. This was held right behind Ermou bar at 261 Ermou Street.

Artist leading Workshop: Evanthia Tselika

**LOCATION 1**

FRIDAY, 2 JULY 2010

18:30

#### **Talking of Public Art**

Talk on Public Art in the context of Cyprus by Christina Lambrou outside the Archbishopry where the Big Mac used to reside.

**LOCATION 2**

20:00

#### **Exhibition of Public Works @ Apotheke Contemporary Arts, 23 Kleanthi Christofidi**

An exhibition exploring the notions of the divided city, the use of the highly charged public space both as political statements and artistic endeavours and how the element of social/ spatial engagement has been presented by creative practitioners.

**LOCATION 3**

21:00

#### **Street Party and Urban Guerilla Souvla @ street outside Apotheke**

A historically traceable mode of public engagement with the city that has attracted multiple reactions and has partly rekindled the public interest for the Old Town of Nicosia.

**LOCATION 3**

21:00

#### **24 hour Web radio experimentation** by Antonis Antoniou launched at the street party.

SATURDAY, 03 JULY 2010

10:00-11:00

#### **Trading Places Physical Theatre Performance in the Municipal Market**

Performance took place by Dance Theatre United (Natalie Heller) & with the contribution of Nikoleta Verykiou.

**LOCATION 4**

11:00- 12:30

**A tour of stencils and graffiti** and their importance as a form of visual communication and social engagement within the walled part of Lefkosia/Lefkoşa, which was conducted by researcher Pafsanias Karathanasis.

**LOCATION 5**

#### **ROUNDTABLE @ CAFE BERLIN NO 2(ON BORDER)**

17:00 Evanthia Tselika - Introduction

17:15 Dr Gabriel Kourreas - Nicosia: Memory, Place, Trauma

17:45 Dr Anna Grichting - Green Line Scapes. Nicosia's Dead Zone as a River of Memory.

18:15 Dr Cameron Cartiere - Public Art and Social Engagement in Contemporary Art

18:45 Pafsanias Karathanasis - Geographies of graffiti and street art in the old town of Lefkosia / Lefkoşa

19:15 Demetris Taliotis- Analysis and presentation of artistic collaborative work in the Public space of Nicosia.

19:45 Sumer Erek- Presentation of the artist's work in the Public space and how he uses social engagement

20:15 Roundtable Discussion

## **LOCATION 6**

### **ONLINE EXTENSION OF PUBLIC WORKS**

An IRC backchannel was running during the talks.

Chrystalleni Loizidou

### **MAP OF NICOSIA THAT INCLUDES THE LOCATIONS OF WHERE THE EVENTS TOOK PLACE, JULY 2010**



#### **LOCATION 1**

Young People's Ad-hoc Playground, workshop and exhibition @ area behind Ermou Bar, Ermou 261

#### **LOCATION 2**

Public Art Talk @ space outside Archbishopry

#### **LOCATION 3**

Apotheke @ 23 Kleanthi Christofidi Street

#### **LOCATION 4**

Physical Theatre Performance @ the Municipal Market at the Old Town Hall Square

#### **LOCATION 5**

Meeting point for Graffiti and Stencil Tour @ the Municipal Market at the Old Town Hall Square

#### **LOCATION 6**

Roundtable held @ Cafe Berlin No2 - Lefkonos Street

---

# 4

>>

AD HOC PLAYGROUND

## 4. AD-HOC PLAYGROUND

Due to the extended amount of time from April to July the Ad-Hoc Playground came to include 3 elements

- Exhibition of young peoples' images
- Exhibition of bi-communal youth art workshop
- Youth Workshop

Below I describe the involvement of young people in 'Public Works' Nicosia through the 3 different layers through which it was carried out.

### EXHIBITION OF IMAGES ON THE OLD CITY WALLS - STICKERS AND POSTERS OF DIFFERENT YOUNG PEOPLE

#### Participants

Phaneromeni High School - Cultural Identity Posters and photographic performance.

Kykkos Highschool - Drawings of the Old town architecture.

Highgate Primary School - Drawings of the Old Town of Nicosia.

#### Location

Different Locations in the old city

#### Time

Duration of the event. One of the posters was in the underground parking lot for approximately one year.



Phaneromeni High school art project, 2010, displayed on city walls. Photograph: Yiannos Ioannou

Images were gathered from young people aged 9 to 18 that showed different visual interpretations of the old city of Nicosia. These were turned into large stickers and placed throughout the old city's walls. This was a public display of how the young people of Nicosia see the architectural and social environment of the divided old city centre. The process of collecting the material was carried out from March 2010.

### EXHIBITION OF BI-COMMUNAL YOUTH ART WORKSHOP

#### Participants

Young people who took part in the bi-communal youth art workshops which were carried out by NGO Hope for Peace; Office for Children's Rights

#### Location

Parking lot and external area of Ermou Bar, on Ermou street

#### Time

Thursday afternoon, 02/07/2010



Photograph: Alexia Stavrinides

The parking lot and a section of the bar were transformed into an ad hoc playground including this exhibition that was a collaboration between 'Public

Works' and the NGO. The NGO exhibited the visual results of a series of bi-communal arts workshops that they had been organized throughout 2010.

## AD HOC PLAYGROUND WORKSHOP - DRAWING FOR NICOSIA

### Participants

14 Young people ages 7-16.

### Location

Parking lot and external area of Ermou Bar, on Ermou street

### Time

Thursday afternoon, 02/07/2010

Young people and eventually adults joined in and took part in a drawing and painting workshop that focused on the production of different pictures based upon emblematic images of the old city by young people. Images that characterize the city were to be drawn by youth and then turned into t-shirts. The budget did not allow for that to happen unfortunately, as there was no money left over to print them.

The workshop and exhibition was the first event that was held and it was assisted by the bar Ermou. Approximately 20 children participated and eventually 10/15 adults joined in. It took place over three hours and you can see some glimpses of the workshop as well as some images that were produced.



Adults joining in. Photograph: Alexia Stavrinides



This is one of the participants, Lilia Regginou, 12 years old. Photograph: Alexia Stavrinides

---

# 5

>>

DISCUSSION ON CYPRIOT PUBLIC ART

## 5. DISCUSSION ON CYPRIOT PUBLIC ART

### TALKING OF CYPRIOT PUBLIC ART IN FRONT OF THE GHOST OF BIG MAC

#### Participants

Demetris Taliotis (co-organizer)

Costantinos Taliotis (Artist exhibited)

Anna Grichting (Theoretical Participation)

Cameron Cartiere (Theoretical Participation)

Chrystalleni Loizidou (Nicosia Public Art researcher)

Vasia Markides (Video documentation, CCMC NGO)

The other participants in the discussion were people who came and whose names I do not know.

#### Location

Outside the Archbishop's palace in the old city

#### Time

Friday afternoon, 03/07/10

Initially there was meant to be a discussion led by Cypriot art researcher Christina Lambrou. Taliotis organized this as he knew her. However due to an emergency she did not come and the event transformed into a dialogue. Considering the lack of time for discussion at the roundtable the next day, this proved to be a valuable time of dialogical exchange.



Image: Research - Chrystalleni Loizidou

The location for the discussion on Cypriot public art, which took place in front of the ghost of Big Mac (explained below), was chosen due to its iconic nature as a space of commemorative public Cypriot art. As the mega sculpture is absent I include a press clipping from the period of July, August 1987 that dealt with the unveiling of the Colossus.



Photograph: Evangelia Tselika

Above we see an image from the discussion on public art and its local and international interpretations. This took place in front of the ghost of the mega sculpture of Ethnarch Makarios III, a.k.a. Big Mac and which is surrounded by three public monuments in the specified setting that narrate the transformative layers of how nation states go about identifying community through monumentality. Directly behind the participants there used to stand for 21 years the 9.7 metre tall mega sculpture of Ethnarch Makarios III, made by sculptor Nikolaos Kotzamanis. The statue was moved from this location in 2008. However the area is highly representative of what public art means for the city. The specific place has represented the official narratives of Greek Cypriot history and community since the Ottoman

period. One can find there the Archbishopry, the oldest Christian school in the city and 3 public art landmarks (The Bust of Archbishop Kyprianos, The Liberty Monument and the replacement of the mega sculpture of Archbishop Makarios III). During the discussion one of the participants (name unknown) indicated that what becomes obvious in this place is the way that different forms of local power structures (state, church) have used monuments to narrate their own version of history and transmit it to society.

As you can see a dozen or so people stood in front of the ghost of Big Mac and simply conversed. The below is a glimpse of the discussion that took place that day. It mainly involved dialogue on what is the practice of public art, how it is presented in that exact location in Nicosia and the international trends and interpretations.

## **CYPRIOT PUBLIC SPACE AND ART - A GLIMPSE OF THE DISCUSSION**

### **EXCERPT 1**

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

I would like to return to what I was asking at the beginning. Taking in to consideration all the monuments that exist in Nicosia we don't tend to classify it as public art, probably because it forces us to engage with it, and we don't classify it as monumental because it forces us to engage with what is not on TV. What are our expectations, what can they be from a city like Nicosia in terms of public art?

#### **Constantinos Taliotis**

I guess we have to define first of all what public art is, it is a simple question to state but not easy to answer.

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

So what is it?

#### **Constantinos Taliotis**

I don't know, you are the academics.

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

I was wondering if public art is not just art that forces

the public to engage with public space.

#### **Participant 1**

It's a matter of expectations. And what the expectations are. And the expectations might need egging along, or to start coming out of a reaction. Maybe we need more vulgarity perhaps...

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

Following that I would say public art in the way you defined it is the challenge to surpass the limitations of the public space, the codes of behaviours of the public space. In that way it is the expectation of how you use the public space. You have codes...

#### **Cameron Cartiere**

Is that public art or is that public architecture? I mean that is civic engagement.

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

Is there actually a real difference? Because the whole thing is about redefining that.

#### **Cameron Cartiere**

As you said it is about interpretation. It is how you utilize it. You asked the question earlier. Why do we need history? Why do we need monuments? They are two very separate questions...

#### **Constantinos Taliotis**

I am trying to merge them in one. Why do we need history through public monuments?

#### **Evanthia Tselika**

In Cyprus these two elements can seem to merge together, because you have strong elements of history and monumentalism intertwined...

#### **Cameron Cartiere**

Monumentalism is an interpretation of that history, which again is still a very separate question, of why we need history in general and if you muddy those waters (and yes all the fields are changing and boundaries getting redefined), but if you completely merge those two together in the same question you are denigrating

any value to history (and as they say those who forget history tend to repeat it). But the monumentalism and that presentation of a specific aspect of history is really quite a different and very interesting thing to wrestle with especially in relation to public art. And new public art as we move on to these iconic works that we can't seem to shake, then you are going onto a different conversation.

#### **Demetris Taliotis**

But looking at that- Monument to Liberty<sup>2</sup>, monumentality and history have a very close relationship. But do we really have to move on from that or can we just go on and just change the shape, the form and content, or do we embrace new forms of monumentality which probably look more like public architecture but are really art- because they deal with the division of the sensible- deal with exclusions, rebel against some kind of narratives..

#### **Cameron Cartiere**

It's interesting if you think of how that monument was even developed, who commissioned it? Who paid for it? You go to Trafalgar square and see those different plinths and how those were actually put through by public subscription not government subscription. Then you really have a different, interesting conversation. The reason why we have an empty fourth plinth is because no one can get any money to change it. Then the potential for this space can become really interesting in that way- the balance between the permanent (and we can have a conversation about now, 20 years from now and 100 years from now) and the memory of what happens in these spaces- through the archives. So I don't think it is mutually exclusive.

#### **Participant 1**

I don't think it is mutually exclusive but when something is susceptible to erosion, it becomes interesting from the minute that you at least suspect that a crack is about to appear. And your example of Trafalgar square

unfortunately to me does not apply here because it becomes for whatever reason (whether we like it or agree or disagree with it) it becomes a purely political conversation/argument...

#### **EXCERPT 2**

##### **Participant 2**

It started getting a bit tiring for me. All us artists placing all these questions and never answering them. And I think that obviously none of these people (pointing to the Archbishopry) will give us any money to create art and to create monuments. And do we want to create monuments? I don't know. To me public art is something that makes a boom and it disappears. It's there, it makes a presence, really strong, it maybe changes a corner or a junction for a few hours and then it disappears.

##### **Vasia Markides**

I would just like to add something following that. When I think of public art, I don't think of it attached to formal spaces, monuments which mark something. I think public art should be something that infiltrates into the town and into the people's front yards. And that it is transient, that it disappears and recreates itself again. It is about more. Not having a permanent spot, or a fixed place. It penetrates into society in a much more everyday manner and is more accessible to the everyday person.

#### **FOOTNOTES**

2. The Liberty Monument was constructed by Ioannis Notaras and it was meant to commemorate the Liberation struggle of EOKA (Anti-Colonial GC military organization). It was chosen by a committee at the orders of Archbishop Makarios III amongst others. It was meant to be unveiled in July 1974, but after the coup d'état and the events that followed this never happened.

This discussion provided an insight of how public art has functioned in Cyprus. It has been tied to structures of ethno-nationalism and cultural policies that have maintained structures of segregation. This could be juxtaposed with the need for change from such practices and a need to shift the focus to ephemeral art practice in the landscape that aims at breaking down patterns of segregation in the urban landscape rather than reinforcing them.

---

# 6

>>

---

**PUBLIC WORKS EXHIBITION AND STREET PARTY**

## 6. PUBLIC WORKS EXHIBITION AND STREET PARTY

### PUBLIC WORKS EXHIBITION AND STREET PARTY AT APOTHEKE CONTEMPORARY ARTS

#### Participants

Antonis Antoniou, Sumer Erek, Niovi Ketonis, Phanos Kyriacou, Orestis Lambrou, Demetris Neokleous, Yervant Der Parthogh, Efi Savvides, Costantinos Taliotis, Evanthia Tsiklika.

#### Location

APOTHEKE Contemporary Arts

#### Time

Night of Friday, 03/07/2010

The gallery with which the project was developed is found on a small street very close to the inner city buffer zone border. Standing outside of it you can see the Greek Cypriot soldiers and the Turkish flag on the mosque in the North. You can hear the hodja singing the prayers and feel the division of the city. This conflicted landscape became the backdrop for the exploration through an exhibition of the notions of the divided city. The exhibition handled concepts such as the use of the highly charged public space, both as political statement and artistic endeavour and how the element of social/ spatial engagement has been presented by creative practitioners. The exhibition included works by contemporary arts practitioners of different disciplines (film, architecture, sound, visual arts) and blended in archival material that challenged and questioned the use of art as it reflects on the concept of public space and public as people. The exhibition consisted of works of documenting everyday social life (Efi Savvides, Orestis Lambrou), questioning the space of the dividing line (Niovi Ketonis) remnants of participatory pieces (Sumer Erek, Phanos Kyriacou, Costantinos Taliotis), projects from previous exhibitions dealing with the urban space and the dividing line

(Demetris Neocleous work for Leaps of Faith, 2005 and one of the Cypriot case studies I focus on) and archival representations and interpretations (Evanthia Tsiklika). The works were decided by Taliotis and me but the exhibition was mostly curated by Taliotis.



Image from inside the gallery looking out

Video Still: Vasia Markides

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF WORKS WHICH WERE INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION

The next 4 pieces from the exhibition that are presented in this booklet relate directly to interpretations of 'public' social intervention. Erek's practice was exhibited in the form of photographic documentation and demonstrated how he uses different notions of social participation in his work. The artist also presented about his work at the roundtable. Posters were shown of Kyriacou's long term exploration of public architecture and the use of the urban landscape by the social body of the city. The architectural model of the green line by Niovi Ketonis that was exhibited outside the gallery and was destroyed during the course of 'Public Works' further illustrates the urban act of direct involvement and destruction. I also conducted archival photographic research of visual and performative acts of protest in Nicosia which were

included in the exhibition. They highlighted how public space is navigated through acts of resistance, social engagement and creative forms of protesting.

#### SUMER EREK



Photograph from exhibition: Eavantha Tselika

These images are photographic documentation from the un-veiling of Erek's Newspaper House project in March 2008 in London. Newspaper House was constructed both at Liverpool Biennial and in London in 2008. The original participatory project, which was the making of the Newspaper House at St. Barnabas' Hall ran from January to March 2008 in Dalston. The house was then installed at Gillet Square, Dalston. The artist created the elementary structure of the house which was then filled by rolled up pieces of newspaper. The public was invited to bring in old newspapers and to roll them or bundle them.

#### PHANOS KYRIACOU

Posters created within the Midget Factory project that were initially displayed in the public space of Nicosia.

The **Midget Factory** is an on-going project that was associated for a long time period with a shop front in the centre of the old part of Nicosia. The shop was torn down when the ground opened up inside one

of the adjacent shops in 2012. Kyriacou opened it in 2006 and it acted as an extension of his practice which demonstrates an on-going dialogue with the urban environment of Nicosia. These particular posters could also be found scattered throughout the city as well as in the shop itself. This series included posters that people could write on, responding to phrases written by Kyriacou.



Photograph: Barbara Szentmarjai

#### NIOVI KETONIS



Photograph: Eavantha Tselika

Architectural Model of the old city green line/ buffer zone area (2009). The image here is of the model in front of the actual border wall.

Nicosia's unique characteristic as both a centre and a periphery has shaped not only the discourses that describe it but also its arts practice. Artists, architects, sociologists, educators have tried to re-imagine how the inaccessible space of the green line could be re-appropriated. The model of the green line, the buffer zone, as seen on the previous page, was constructed by architect Niovi Ketonis as part of an academic research project in 2009. Taliotis, who curated the exhibition, thought it would be better to hang it on the outside wall of the gallery. When the exhibition and party finished we forgot to put the buffer zone model inside. It was left outside for the night. When we returned the next morning the model was missing from the wall and the gallery was tagged saying 'This ain't art yo'. The soldiers that were standing at the guard post not even 100 meters away said that they saw nothing. By walking around the area we found the scattered pieces of the now broken buffer zone model around the area. The broken model was subsequently exhibited again ('at Maroudia's exhibition 20123). This act of defiance further iterated the function of the project itself. That action in the public space allows for social intervention and interaction.

#### FOOTNOTES

3. Exhibition I curated with Chrystalleni Loizidou as Re Aphrodite. It was part of the Nicosia Municipal Art Centre's project 'In Crisis: Terra Mediterranea', organized as part of the Cyprus Presidency of the European Union (July 2012- July 2013). It was a thematic exhibition in the form of a museum intervention that involved 40 artists, academics and theorists and it mainly focused on the notions of unseen, forgotten layers of history and Cypriotness. The museum is the 'Mansion of Hadjigeorgakis Kornesios, ethnological museum', found in the old city of Nicosia. ([www.reaphrodite.org](http://www.reaphrodite.org))



Image of the gallery front tagged. Photograph: Evanthia Tselika

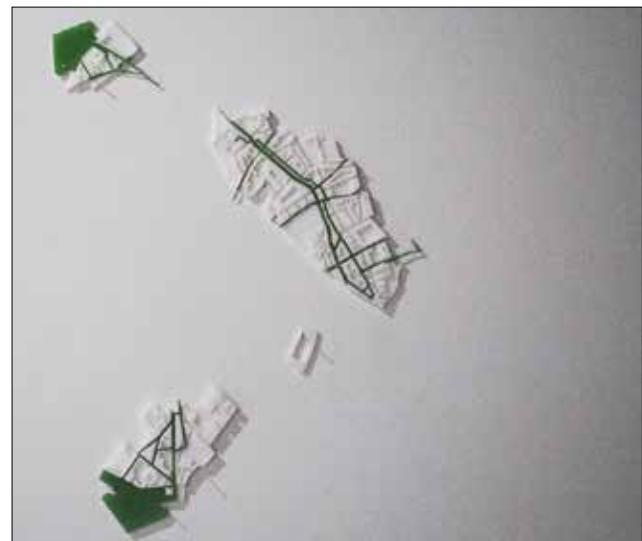


Image of the piece as exhibited 'At Maroudia's' exhibition, curated by Re Aphrodite 2012  
Photograph: Evanthia Tselika

## ARCHIVAL IMAGE RESEARCH, EVANTHIA TSELIKA



'My marshal I surrender' claims the donkey in response to General Harding's request to surrender during the colonial struggle (1955- 59). Photographer unknown



Andreas Coutas, Street performance of Kissinger's funeral, 1974. The coffin was subsequently burnt.

The exhibition also included images from archival research, which I conducted and that was related to performative social statements that were made in the public space of Nicosia from the 1950s to the 1990s. This archival research contributed to a more in depth understanding of how the gendered body exists in the divided city landscape. The photographic images were included in the exhibition and also used as part of the analysis of how the gendered body functions within the structures of urban segregation.

### THE STREET PARTY

Alongside the gallery and the exhibition a street party was organized. This mode of claiming the public space has been a tradition in Nicosia for the last few years. People have used the border and the open space within the buffer zone to party, eat and in 2011 as part of the Occupy the Bufferzone movement to live so as to reclaim a public space that they feel they have little authority over. This historically traceable mode of public engagement with the city has attracted multiple reactions. The street party was interrupted by the interference of the police as we were blocking the street and cars could not pass through. The street had been recently changed from a private to a public one and this meant that permits were required for blocking it off. No permits had been acquired as the party aimed to keep a guerrilla response. However it continued with the music lowered down and the street slightly cleared should anyone have wished to pass. The policemen left and the party continued. The party finished by about 2am and the people left helped to clean the street, gather all the music equipment and close up.

## IMAGERY FROM THE PARTY OUTSIDE



Photograph: Evanthia Tselika



Photograph: Barbara Szentmarjay



Photograph: Barbara Szentmarjay

---

# 7

>>

---

**TRADING PLACES PERFORMANCE**

## 7. TRADING PLACES PERFORMANCE

### PERFORMANCE TRADING PLACES

#### Location

Old Municipal Town of Nicosia

#### Performers

Natalie Heller and Nikoletta Verykiou

#### Participants

Market goers and sellers, Public Works participants

#### Time

Saturday morning, 04/07/2010



Photograph from the performance: Evanthia tselika

The physical theatre performance 'Trading Places' was developed and performed by Nikoletta Verykiou and Natalie Heller and it was held on an early Saturday morning when the Municipal Market of the Old Town Hall was in full swing. Since then the market has been transferred to another location in the city and the space lies mostly silent, a relic to commercial times past. The performance aimed to "trigger questions of ownership, personal establishment and identity of the self through movement, inspired by market goers and commercial stand owners" (performers' mission statement). It was

developed within the market and this meant that a relationship was built amongst performers and the market sellers. The relationship with the people of the market can be seen in the response and the comments that are provided in the dialogue that occurred towards the end and after the performance with members of the chance audience and some of the market sellers.



Photograph from the performance: Evanthia tselika

### RESPONSE OF THE AUDIENCE IN THE MARKET AFTER THE PERFORMANCE WAS OVER

**Elderly Lady 1:** Eh, it's nice! What can we do? We saw the girls. Very good.

To another elderly lady.

**Vassia Markides (filmmaker):** Did you like it madam? Can you tell me your thoughts? Did you like it?

**Elderly Lady 2:** Let me tell you. Everyone with his/her way must make his bread. Everyone struggles in their field. I struggle in my field. Maybe if you came here a little while ago you would have seen that I was sleeping, because I didn't sleep last night for example so as to finish my work and when I sat down to rest here I slept. And they (the performers) fought to earn their bread. I congratulate them!

## THE WATERMELON

**Elderly Gentleman:** I don't know what you want to show, you might even be right but because I don't know what it is concerning, when I saw the girl eating the watermelon like that, I thought it's not possible. Do you eat watermelon like that?

**Evanthia Tselika:** No, I don't eat watermelon like that. But sometimes...

**Elderly Gentleman:** Then why should she eat watermelon like that? And people will see this? **Will this be seen by Europeans? What will the European say? That Cypriot people are deprived?**

**Evanthia Tselika:** Is that what is important though? *What the Europeans will think?*

**Elderly Gentleman:** Like a person who doesn't have food to eat. And has found food and has fallen straight in and started consuming- tsoump, tsoump, tsoump eating the watermelon. Sorry this is my opinion.

**Evanthia Tselika:** That is why we asked you. *So you could tell us your opinion.*

**Elderly Gentleman:** I am a writer myself. And I am always careful to show good manners when I write, so that no situation is insulted by my work.

**Evanthia Tselika:** But do you find that this insulted you?

**Elderly Gentleman:** No I don't feel insulted. But whoever might see this will wonder, why did she eat the watermelon like that?

**Elderly Gentleman:** It's good to discuss. Results come out of it. Is this the girl who was eating the watermelon?

**Natalie Heller:** Yes.

**Elderly Gentleman:** Are you also the director?

**Natalie Heller:** We are both together (with Nikoletta)

**Elderly Gentleman:** Why did you decide to eat the watermelon in that manner? In a manner that is a bit degrading. Perhaps like you hadn't eaten watermelon

for years, you found watermelon and you grabbed it.

**Nikoletta Verykiou:** We pounced on it

**Old man:** You grabbed it in that way and started eating.

**Natalie Heller:** Exactly yes.

**Old man:** What did you want to show? What pushed you to do that? Tell me!

**Natalie Heller:** Basically it is consumerism.

**Nikoletta Verykiou:** The feeling like you want to consume more. I want! I want!

**Elderly Gentleman:** This isn't consumerism.

**Natalie Heller:** It was. It is violent. I need it, it doesn't exist. It's like my air. It's like my oxygen. I need it. That's why we gathered the plastic bags in that way.

**Elderly Gentleman:** That's ok. You are gathering, you are picking up the garbage, etc. But that disturbed me. You might be absolutely right but...

**Lady participant:** Did you understand what they mean though by Consumerism? We eat the watermelon like we are greedy and we want to have a bigger house, bigger car.

**Elderly Gentleman:** Is that what her thoughts behind this were?

**Lady participant:** That is exactly what they tried.

**Elderly Gentleman:** If this what you wanted to say, you are absolutely right.

**Natalie Heller:** Everyone had their space. I was eating the watermelon and she was gathering the bags and suddenly we thought 'I want the other person's life'. And we changed position and roles, and we were in another phase, in another life. And then we are not satisfied or happy and we want something else, something different. And it is 'I want', 'I want', 'I want'... I must, I must, I must.

**Elderly Gentleman:** Basically we always want to consume.

**Lady participant:** Like what is happening at the moment. A frenzied greediness to acquire more.

**Elderly Gentleman:** I agree completely.

**Elderly Gentleman:** You see, why do I for example have three bags of black eyed beans now? How many beans? Will I eat this many beans today? There is no way!

**Natalie Heller:** Tomorrow. The day after tomorrow...

**Elderly Gentleman:** It's simple. It's just consumerism

**Lady participant:** Exactly. Exactly!

**Elderly Gentleman:** And we are the spectators, let's say, the chance audience. Mpravo!

**Lady participant:** Uninvited guests but welcomed.

**Elderly Gentleman:** Eh, but look, the uninvited is better than the standardized. This came spontaneously...

**Natalie Heller:** We wanted it to be something personal.

**Elderly Gentleman:** Spontaneous...

The performance activated the most interesting exchange between performers, participants and chance audience. The direct contact with the market sellers and market goers resulted in dialogue. This highlights the importance of not only the performance itself but also the discussion that followed it. Going into the public space and placing the performance at a place of everyday occurrence is not enough without the exploration of what the chance audience received from this action. What is demonstrated is the antagonism that results when actions are performed in public, where the factor of the un-expected response can allow for more direct engagement.



Photograph: Evanthia Tselika

# 8

>>

NICOSIA STREET ART TOUR

## 8. NICOSIA STREET ART TOUR

### GRAFFITI TOUR OF THE OLD CITY

#### Conducted by Pafsanias Karathanasis

##### Tour route

Old Municipal Market, Phaneromeni Parking, Onasagorou street, Ledra street, Ledra Parking (shown on map)

##### Time

Saturday midday, 03/07/2010

This was a tour of the old city, a walk that focused on the graffiti and street art of Nicosia, as seen in 2010. It was meant to take place both in the North and South part of the city, however when the tour in the South finished, the participants found that it was too hot to continue. In actual fact the postponing of the event due to the eruption of the volcano had a major downfall due to the hot July temperatures in Cyprus. This tour was conducted by urban anthropologist Pafsanias Karathanasis and it focused on the importance of street art as a form of visual communication and social engagement within the walled part of the city. Here I portray a summary of some of the key issues that the tour touched upon.

The tour started out after the 'Trading Places' performance from the old Municipal Market and it navigated the streets around the area. It looked at the walls which are found directly on the green line and its transformation from an abandoned, uncontrolled area into a gentrified local. This phenomenon has been intensifying since 2010 and the old city has been increasingly converted into a large open air mall. The writing on the walls is very much dependent upon the place where it is found. For instance near a new construction, one can find writings against capitalism, or on a street on the green line one can find words such as 'Freedom' written. The tour looked at large scale graffiti, stencils, guerrilla marketing street art, legal graffiti (commis-

sioned by public bodies), tags, writing etc. One of the most interesting aspects in Nicosia is the visual writing war between radical right wing groups and anarchist and radical left groups. The old city is filled with this visual war and marking of territory, particularly as the areas in this peripheral centre were in 2010 perceived to be inhabited mostly by anarchists, artists and migrants. Due to the gentrification process evident in the area, the social landscape has been increasingly transforming and a lot more Cypriots now visit the old part of Nicosia. For years the old city lied silent, mostly inhabited by migrants and elderly Cypriots. The move of the street art scene to the old city was also a recent phenomenon. Prior to that it was found within a more modern, high rise urban culture (where graffiti is mostly found). However as the old city started to become trendy/ fashionable a lot of street art can now be found within its walls.



Video still: Vasia Markides

#### ZOOMING IN TO SOME OF THE STENCILS ΤΟ ΠΟΥΛΙΝ ΕΠΕΤΑΣΣΕΝ - THE BIRD FLEW AWAY

"This was probably the most popular stencil of 2010. It shows the symbol of the Cyprus republic; however the bird within the symbol is flying away. It writes underneath

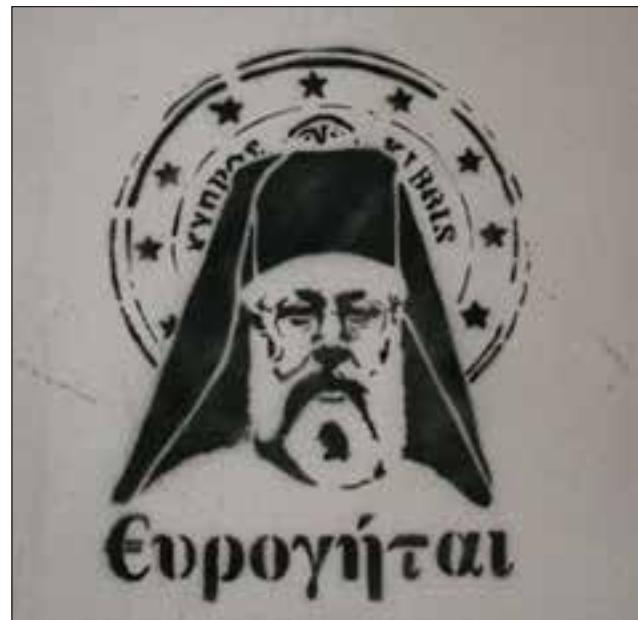
that 'the bird flew away'. In Greek this means that we lost the opportunity. The bird (the dove in this case) also symbolizes freedom and so by flying away it means that freedom is not here anymore. This has a two-fold meaning. One that the opportunity to solve the Cyprus political situation has gone and two that freedom is not found within the republic anymore. This is due to the fact that it appeared all over the old town right after a group of radical right wing individuals attacked some of this areas' regulars that are perceived to be of radical left ideology. What is very important however about this stencil is that it is found on sandstone (a particular characteristic of the old town's architecture).



Photograph: Pafsanias Karathanasis  
Το πουλλίν επέτασεν/ The bird flew away.

This changes one of the basic characteristics of graffiti, which is its ephemerality. One day it is there, the next it is altered or erased. But on the sandstone that is not possible, as for it to be removed you have to scratch the stone and by extension ruin it. So on the sandstone street art has more of a life span and it is unique factor of street art in Nicosia. This stencil is so popular that it has been reprinted on t-shirts; it was quoted in the theatre and on TV."

#### **ΕΥΡΩΓΕΙΤΑΙ - EUROBLESSED**



Photograph: Pafsanias Karathanasis

This is the Cypriot Archbishop with a kind of Euro halo. It creates a word play underneath. In Greek Orthodoxy Ευλογείται (Eulogite) means you are blessed. This writes Ευρωγείται (Eurogite) which means Euro blessed. This is a direct criticism on the extremely powerful position of the church on the island and of their monetary wealth.

The tour allowed instances of discussion and conversation to emerge and it revolved around issues of identity. Here is a glimpse of some of the dialogue.

**Lady 1:** There is definitely a problem of identity and it developed specifically after the war in 1974, even though of course it started much earlier. There were many people called neo-Cypriots. Now days when you ask people what they are, in terms of nationality you will get all sorts of answers. I am Greek, Greek Cypriot, Turkish, Turkish Cypriot, Cypriot. According to their answer you will also know what are their political stances and ideologies. For instance as soon as Pafsanias said the North, someone can place him in a certain category.

**Lady 2:** The picture that there is today is that we are in a confused state of mind because everything is mingled up. We haven't been able to sort it out yet. Ah, I am Greek or I am Greek Cypriot for instance. Yesterday as I crossed to go to the occupied area I had to write my nationality. I wrote Greek Cypriot. And then realized I shouldn't write that, I should write Cypriot. Our political situation is not clear. We have been in a confused state of mind for over 36 years and we haven't been able to clarify the picture.

**Lady 1:** I think it is important to understand why we are confused. And then you start to clarify things. And I think that is our biggest problem. We accept facts without trying to understand why.

# 9

>>

---

**PUBLIC WORKS ROUNDTABLE**

## 9. PUBLIC WORKS ROUNDTABLE

### PUBLIC WORKS THEORETICAL ROUNDTABLE CAFE BERLIN NO.2

#### Location

Cafe Berlin No.2



Photograph: Evangelia Tselika

#### Time

Saturday afternoon, 03/07/10

#### Participants/ presenters

Dr Cameron Cartiere, Sumer Erek, Dr Anna Grighting, Pafsanias Karathanasis, Dr Gabriel Koureas, Demetris Taliotis



Image from inside the cafe

Photograph: Evangelia Tselika

'Public Works' Nicosia culminated with a theoretical roundtable that took place in cafe Berlin opposite the square of Phaneromeni and on the first check point that opened in the city. It explored the notions of social engagement through the arts and the public space of Nicosia as that is shaped by its publics, social groups. In the suffocating heat and with the smells of the burning meat lingering in the air, the speakers' presentations triggered thoughts on how contemporary cultural practices in the fields of art, design, and public engagement play an affirmative role in representing feelings of community identity or in assisting in repairing a community damaged under social, political, or economic pressure. An insight into the notions of the use of public space by creative practitioners was outlined, providing a pathway for examining if this use can and does create a public consciousness and a public voice in regards to a large majority of the population who are not represented in a visual way.

The roundtable proceeded to happen despite the heat, inside Cafe Berlin No.2. Lots of water kept on being passed around. However many people did not stay for the entire time, perhaps due to the heat. The roundtable was meant to start at 16:00 but it did not start until 17:00. I acted as the chair and I allowed some speakers to run over the time allocated to them. This meant that some individuals spoke for an hour and some for twenty minutes. It also meant that there was no time for discussion and reflection; a major drawback of this roundtable. This was meant to be one of the main aims of this facet of the project and in the end there was no time for dialogue to take place and participants could only observe and listen. Everyone just about had time to finish their presentations and some discussion took place over dinner at the location, Cafe Berlin No.2. An interesting observation made by Dr Cartiere was the tendency of the male participants of the conference to walk in and out of the inner part of the cafe whilst the presentations were being carried

out. She also observed how none of the women acted in a similar fashion. It was unbearably hot in the location, as we did not want to hold the roundtable in an institutional location but in a semi-public place adjacent to the buffer zone. This is an iconic landmark of the old city and it can boast a very good souvlaki (Cypriot kebab). This meant that we had to sit inside, with temperatures reaching the late thirty degrees Celsius, with no air conditioning available and with many of the participants complaining.

The following part includes some experts from the presentations that took place during the roundtable. I choose some indicative parts of the presentations so as to give an overall picture of the roundtable. I summarized the content of each presentation and included extracts which I found to be the most relevant to the themes explored by the project. I have not kept the order in which the talks were presented but I created a sequence instead. The explorations of the city (Koureas, Karathanasis, Taliotis) lead into the presentations of methodology in relation to working around and within buffer zones and within a socially engaged framework (Grichting, Erek, Cartiere). Despite the fact that this roundtable failed to fulfil its mission to trigger dialogue on the notions of public space, art and social engagement; the presentations touched upon some very important and interesting issues. Some discussion took place over dinner at Cafe Berlin No.2. Some of the ideas were discussed but everyone was so tired from the long day and the heat that this was kept at a minimum. The filmmaker also stopped after such a full day and none of the conversation from the table was recorded. The food ordered was so excessive that most of it was left.

## DR GABRIEL KOUREAS - PRESENTATION OVERVIEW NICOSIA: MEMORY, PLACE, TRAUMA, 2010

Koureas presented the divided landscape of Nicosia through the notions of memory, place and trauma and how these are interpreted through artistic practice. The sensorial experience of navigating the conflicted urban space was paralleled to the sensorial experience of interacting with specific artworks. He brought to attention the border by which the roundtable was taking place where “space is kept unkempt, ruins of war are un-repaired, wrecked neo-classical buildings, representative of Cypriot architecture are left to decay, as though purposefully marking and re- marking memory”.



Image from a display on the crossing point Ledra/Locmaci-Gabriel Koureas Presentation

By examining the “visual and sensorial language” of the city, he focused on “issues of space, borders (both physical and psychological), memory and trauma<sup>4</sup>”. The city cannot be experienced only visually but through all our senses. The same applies for the works that Koureas chose to present. He argues that “encounters with these works, like encounters with the city, produce a ‘real time somatic experience no longer framed as representation”<sup>5</sup>. He related this to the work of contemporary Cypriot female visual artists Maria Loizidou and Klitsa Antoniou and the somatic and sensorial response that can be found in both their work. The more in depth analysis regarding the work of the visual artists that followed in the later part of the presentation in relation to the two artists’ (Loizidou and Antoniou) work brings to attention the impact of trauma and memory of artistic production in Cyprus. The red stained aprons, the carousel of tailored dresses going around, huge pillows and tents are all objects and images found in Loizidou’s work. These memorial objects bring into focus the “artist’s anguish” which “is transferred to the visitor and brings to the surface a sensual relation with the objects we encounter”.

Koureas interprets Antoniou’s work as the proposition of an “in-between space” due to her incorporation, juxtaposition and transformation of objects, textures and senses. In ‘Rose Wall’ a table of tortured and manipulated everyday household objects is revealed behind. Their harsh “tortured surfaces” are juxtaposed with the fragility of the roses and this is “disturbing, unsettling” to “the senses”.

Koureas concentrated on the walled city of Nicosia due to its iconic representation of being surrounded by the Venetian walls (16th century) and being divided in the middle by a demarcation wall and border. The need for incorporating a multi-sensory interaction with the city highlights the importance of the body in experiencing the traumatic urban landscape. He used examples of visual and written work from both sides

of the dividing line to depict the “embodied spatial memories” that “are evident in the work of Cypriot artists”. It is interesting to note that four of the five artists presented are female. From the visual to the written, the poetry of Neshe Yashin, Niki Marangou and Stephanos Stephanides is brought to attention. Their work further reinforces the imaginary of walls, divided environments and spaces of tension.



Klitsa Antoniou, Rose Wall - Gabriel Koureas Presentation

Particularly interesting is the representation of the garden as pointed out by Koureas in Marangou’s poetry and the smells that are contained within it. Again the rose is used as a metaphor. “Gardens provide a microcosm for the inhabitants of Nicosia. This is the space where one can escape from the dead ends of the city and the insistent summer heat. For Marangou the garden provides the best opportunity to enjoy the city especially in the evening when a west wind comes and ‘the burning city breaths out’. The inhabitants of Nicosia then go ‘out to their balconies and gardens’. It is within these protected spaces that one can sense the city through its smells”.

#### FOOTNOTES

4. Memory and trauma are also explored in this volume by Bradstreet, Bacci, and Carruthers.
5. J. Bennett, *Empathetic Vision: Affect, Trauma and Contemporary Art* (Stanford California: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 23.

"Marangou feels that the whole world has 'gathered in my garden'. In this garden memories of scents come together. Memories from the history of Cyprus and the divided city:

"I have planted roses in the garden this year  
instead of writing poems  
the centifolia from the house in mourning at Ayios  
Thomas  
the sixty-petaled rose Midas brought from Phrygia  
the Bankisan that came from China  
cuttings from the mouchette surviving  
in the old city,  
but especially Rosa Gallica, brought by the  
Crusaders  
With the exquisite perfume  
[...]  
we shall be sharing leaves, petals, sky,  
in this incredible garden,  
both they and I transitory"

The arts can provide the pathway of creating an "in-between space" as Koureas terms it. "This is a space without boundaries which receives its form from the abject space of the dead zone and whose form is the outside of the identity of the others that constitute the enemy or the friend, in order to provide possibilities, realignments and openness as opposed to cohesion and unity and the intentions and identities of individuals or groups. This space is where identities can be undone and the binaries and dualisms that dominate Cypriot culture can be re-thought and contested. Most importantly, this space allows the re-evaluation of what constitutes the other."

#### PAFSANIAS KARATHANASIS - PRESENTATION OVERVIEW - GEOGRAPHIES OF GRAFFITI AND STREET ART IN THE OLD TOWN OF LEFKOSIA/LEFKOSA, 2010

Karathanasis in his presentation provided more of "a description of what you can find on the walls around the area of the old town of Lefkosia, Lefkosa". He used these two local names of the city so as to be able to distinguish between the two parts of Nicosia, the North and the South. Karathanasis mapped the street art geographies of the city by using examples of different street art styles and types- tags, political and football slogans writing, graffiti, stencils, throw ups and murals. His focus was also the old city enclosed by the Venetian walls.

The reason for this is the particular double identity that this part has, as it acts both as a centre and an edge for both city sides and it is this fact that has allowed the development of "diverse social practices" within its walls. The walled city has experienced fewer changes in comparison to the urban landscape beyond the walls and it has maintained similar architectural character on both parts. The opening of the borders in 2003 and the opening of the Ledra/Locmaci crossing (the only one in the old city) was fundamental in rendering the whole of the old city as a space in between. The old town also attracts large amounts of people, both local and tourists and thus street artists use this space as it will disseminate their messages to more people in comparison with other city areas.

By using the term geographies he refers to the "geography of each different style of graffiti and street art that one can find in the walled city (inside the Venetian walls)". Through this anthropological reading of the use of the urban space for visual communication what was demonstrated is that different groups of people inhabiting the same area use and experience the city space differently and in this way create their own cities. Each group interprets and gives meaning differently to the urban space they inhabit.

"Though graffiti, street art and slogan art writing practice on the buildings' walls, the artists creators, writers, football fans and activists use and perceive the city in a different way than other users. Through their practice they deliberately alter the image of the landscape in different ways making the walls an open form of communication for their political and cultural ideas, their attitudes and preferences and their art. But most importantly through the practice they perform their social and political identities. And at the same time they actively create their own city."

Karathanasis provides a trajectory of the development of graffiti culture in Lefkosa and Lefkosa. He indicates that NY style graffiti can only be found in Lefkosa whereas stencils can be found in both the North and the South and interprets that this is because during the eighties and the nineties when graffiti came to Cyprus "the people in the North were in a different social and political phase. So there was and still is not any NY style graffiti in the North. In Lefkosa it is mainly done outside the old city and especially in underground passages, schools and other quite hidden places all around the city. There is also some in the old town but it is not anything very advanced or exceptional, or something. The things that you can find in the old town are mostly tags, stencils, writing and throw ups."



Drilling the Border, North Nicosia. Pafsanias Karathanasis Presentation

He continues by indicating that in the North it went straight to the street art movement and that through field research that he has carried out, he has found that the examples are mainly of an artistic nature and not political. This is in contrast to the South where there are a lot of political and social commentary stencils.

"The people that make this stuff in the North, when I have asked them, were actually saying that it is dangerous to write something political. "Only in the past few years can we write on the wall they say". 'Drilling the border' is the most political stencil in the North. It's like a comment on the action of consumerism, made possible right after the 2003 border opening. And the thing that they wanted to say through that is that consumerism is actually making holes through the border."



'I do not Forget' in Greek, South Nicosia. Pafsanias Karathanasis Presentation

It writes in Greek 'I do not forget' and it is the slogan of the official discourse in the South against the occupation of the refugees and the Turkish attack of 1974. However this stencil depicts a soldier smoking a joint, and uses the slogan 'I do not forget' ironically. The verbal context and content was not manipulated; it remained the same. But the artist by adding an image next to it created a completely different meaning.

The stencil is a relatively new form of street art and it has mostly been developed in the last 2 decades. It has however become an urban characteristic throughout the world. “The iconic characteristic of stencils facilitates their visualization of ideas and messages in almost the same way with famous corporate logos, for example. These are visual objects with sharp aesthetics and clear form, easy to understand and to be remembered. In fact the iconic characteristic of stencils present these images with what Alfred Jarr has called ‘agency’. And the agency of stencils, i.e. the socio-political mediated capacity for action affects the viewers and promotes the idea and messages of the creators. Stenciling has been a common practice especially for protests and for the communication of alternative social and political ideas. But also it has been widely used for propaganda, marketing (guerrilla marketing) or even advertising.”

## DEMETRIS TALIOTIS - PRESENTATION OVERVIEW ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF ARTISTIC COLLABORATIVE WORK IN THE PUBLIC SPACE OF NICOSIA, 2010

Taliotis presentation was the briefest of the day and it was not a formal presentation but as he termed it, more of “a proposition”. He presented in relation to contemporary Cypriot art practice within Nicosia’s public space that “points to an intricate relationship” of “politics and aesthetics”. He brought to attention the dependency of cultural production on state funding and what happens to production when funding is not available. Due to his involvement in the Cypriot art scene and market he provided an overview of practices in old Nicosia that challenge the notion of the public and are collaborative in approach. Great focus was placed on the rigidity with which each social or political group claim that their stance is ‘the truth’ or the correct pathway and on the position of old Nicosia as a hub for local artistic activity. The work of artist Phanos Kyriacou which Taliotis mentioned and which was displayed in the exhibition was one of the few examples of artists working within the old city which also interacted with the public of the area. Taliotis also mentioned the collective work of Stoa Aeschilou and Urban Guerrilla Souvla. Taliotis did not show any photographic images of any of the works as he thought that people could see these interventions through their interaction with the city through the events of ‘Public Works’.

The reliance on state subsidies was clearly highlighted in terms of cultural and artistic production and the decrease in these subsidies which causes disappointment but does not halt artistic production indicated. Of particular interest in this presentation was the demonstration of a “disenchantment with this kind of overbearing quest for truth. This insistence on some sort of undeniable truth. Be it that ‘we have got this massive problem’ that we have to deal with. Or you know ‘you are not an artist’, what are you doing here?

There are fragments of this everywhere. Around on walls, in artworks. The truth of the bi-communal, the truth of division. The kind of true value of the projections of the regeneration of Nicosia and it all comes down to it's not truths! It is a simple truth. It is 'a truth'."

This insistence of presenting an ideology, a movement or even an art work as the 'only way' or the truth demonstrates limited understanding and tolerance that within any given society there exist many 'truths' and multiple ways of being.

Taliotis went on to introduce the term *Chora*. Amongst the Greek speaking Nicosians the city is known as *chora* and this phraseology can be appropriated through its use in theoretical and artistic paradigms.

"Nicosia is very suited to its name as a *chora* and it incorporates all these futures and all these possibilities and everything, but all in their rigid form. *Chora* is described according to Derrida, as an innumerable and inexhaustible space. But it's not really a space, it's not really writing. It allows you to play. It allows you to be flexible. And it allows itself to take shape from what you put in, the receptor. Which is something that therefore always exists but always remains there to be desired for. It is a very strange thing. And this is what happens with Nicosia a lot. It happens within Nicosia and therefore Nicosia as a *chora* or through that becomes a city or another condition of possibilities." The reason for Nicosia getting attributed as a *chora* is due to the fact that it incorporates diverse social groups, diverse social practices and a concentration of the city's artistic practices.

Taliotis finished the presentation by probing into what participatory art might mean.

"Participation art is understood mostly (or to my understanding at least) as an extension of authorial power. Artists can do participatory works but when you work in a network or with the city, you kind of lose that. You are already immediately kind of losing

that authorial power. You are not the author anymore. And central to this the artist says 'I am no longer an isolated, elevated, or privileged kind of craftsman in a position to kind of follow or borrow that narrative of quest for truth, sensibility and 'that's what it is'. So the artist or the non-artist (it cannot be described any more) becomes an agent. An agent that acts in a very auxiliary position between the expert and the citizen. He acknowledges also the imbalance of this position and the exclusions that he produces and the inclusions that he produces. At the same time though he works with them and to help, maybe shift the audiences or the cities or the institutions or his own expectations of what can happen in the future. And as such the action itself diffuses creativity across boundaries and acts as a multiplicity of gestures".

## DR ANNA GRICHTING- PRESENTATION OVERVIEW GREEN LINE SCAPES. NICOSIA'S DEAD ZONE AS A RIVER OF MEMORY, 2010

Grichting presented in relation to her work that focuses on green lines and buffer zones around the world and more specifically for the Cyprus green line, which formed part of her architectural doctoral research. Basing her argument on the fact that Berlin residents indicate that the wall came down too quickly with no plans for the area, she has set up 'Green Line Scapes' that aims to map how the Cypriot buffer zone can be utilized should it stop acting as a military demarcation line. She indicates that "interstitial spaces of conflict offer opportunities to reweave coherent relationships between disrupted networks, fabrics, ecologies and societies. They call for imaginative and far-sighted projects that are compatible with the *genus loci* - the genetic code or spirit of the place. I propose a strategic exploration of the landscapes of the Green Line and seeking ways to reweave the distant and recent past into the future urban landscape and reveal the palimpsests of the Green Line rather than negate the recent past."

The presentation focused on the idea of spaces in-between, margins of cities, forests, along roads and rivers and borders as locations that can become sites of conflict resolution and relationship building. A particular focus was given to the bio-diversity that exists in these marginal areas as nature takes over due to the absence of human intervention. Weaving into her argument Quim Rosell's "archaeology of the conflict", Grichting emphasizes the need for laying "the foundations for a future Landscape of Memory through a collaborative research and design process which involves civil society on both sides and which participates in the reconciliation and healing of the territorial and social wounds". In order to liberate the green line and transform the boundary or buffer zone, it is important to recognize and register the recent past and find new paths and

approaches, not to restore an idealized past but to build a common future. The notion of the *scape* is particularly important in her work as is depicted below:

"Boundaryscapes Cyprus  
Geoscapes  
Ethnoscapes - From Cosmopolitanism to Bi-polarity  
Ideoscapes - Mindscapes and the Symbolic  
Landscape  
Mediascapes - Communicating and Constructing the Divide  
Financescape - Economic Development, Property Rights and Land Tenure  
Technoscapes - Disjointed Networks, Infrastructural Collaborations  
Datascape - Distortion, Falsification, Negation  
Soundscapes - The Boundary as Amplifier  
Cityscapes - The Intra-Urban Boundary  
Landscapes - The Green Line Buffer Zone  
Memoryscapes - Traces, Relics and Monuments along the Green Line"

Learning from the dismantling of the Berlin wall she highlighted that "the reconstructions of Berlin after the fall of the Wall sought, for the most part, to conceal the signs of its tragic history and to fill in the gaps created by the division, as the economic forces of real estate swept into the liberated No-Man's land. 20 years after the reunification of the city, some inhabitants feel that the Wall was dismantled too quickly and without vision, swallowing up a portion of the city's history." Grichting continued by providing different examples of how art and bio diversity can assist in processes of conflict resolution, using examples such as the work of Joseph Beuys, the Mauer park in Berlin or the Green Belt Movement Peace prize. Weaving together notions of local history, museological practices, public art statements, she proposes that creating links between bio diversity and cultural diversity could provide an avenue for preserving both the landscape and building inter cultural relationships.

Recreating the notion of the buffer zone as this river of memory, that allows for remembrance and at the same time forgiveness and interaction allows for the possibility of rebuilding cultural contact. For these purposes “time scale and historical contexts are of high importance, particularly when it comes to understanding the process of change and developing adequate adaptation and/or mitigation strategies”. Grichting thus identifies that the “loss of intra-cultural diversity and its effects on biodiversity and vice versa should be at the centre of studies at the local scale”.

Grichting proposed a series of pro-unification strategies that will directly affect the environment of the Green Line, as well as architectural and design projects that could be implemented in the urban and rural areas of the Cypriot buffer zone.

Pro-Unification strategies - some of Grichting's suggestions:

- Identify the major environmental challenges facing Cyprus and to evaluate the environmental initiatives that are currently being developed across the border.
- Identify the stakeholders concerned with the future planning of the Buffer Zone as well as the landholders.
- Document and map the biotopes of the Buffer Zone in relation to the surrounding landscapes and ecosystems.
- Develop scenarios for the Buffer Zone as a laboratory for sustainable planning and as a backbone for environmental and creative cooperation between both communities and different stakeholders.
- International Ideas Competition
- Post reunification strategies. Classify the Buffer Zone as a special planning area. Freeze Development for a period of time while a plan is being elaborated.”

#### GRICHTING'S DESIGN PROPOSALS



Green Line Art Gallery. Anna Grichting Presentation



Green Line Pool. Anna Grichting Presentation

## SUMER EREK- PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

### SOCIALLY ENGAGED AND PARTICIPATORY PRACTICE

Sumer Erek is a Cypriot artist that has been based in London since the seventies. He presented his artistic practice, which is carried out in public space and which is participatory. Erek presented the development of his socially engaged practice. The project Stich, 2003 in which he worked with young refugees in London was interpreted by the artist as the beginning of his large scale participatory, collaborative work.

A series of Erek's projects were highlighted with a particular focus on works that involved the participation of the public. His projects move in and out of the art institution, using public space as a site of public intervention and commentary. The projects presented were:

Upside Down House, Stoke Newington Festival, Clissold Park, 2001 (UK)  
Mirrors of Displacement, Liverpool Biennial 2002 (UK)  
The Bath, Liverpool Biennial 2002 (UK)  
Stich, London based youth project 2003 (UK)  
Raw Earth project, Pemptos Village 2005-2006 (CY)  
Newspaper House, London and Liverpool 2008(UK).  
His work is collaborative and large scale, thus for carrying out the project he must work closely with producers, curators, architects, technicians and the public. It is interesting to note how the artist reflects on the participation of the public and their role and that of local authorities in the manifestation of these projects.

"I am doing interventions, engaging with the public and I have no responsibility except respect to their labour, their good will and so on. But I am not bound financially; I am not bound by box ticking or many other things. I have my full freedom and my art is not used as a sort of instrumentalisation for the local authorities or the government."

Erek focused greatly in his presentation on Raw Earth, a project he carried out in Cyprus in 2005/2006. This was a project that was carried out through three facets. A large scale intervention in a house in Pemptos

village, a participatory performance in the Lefkosa parliament and a participatory performance in what used to be St. Catherine Cathedral in North Nicosia. The reason for this extended focus on Raw Earth in the presentation was the fact that this was a multifaceted socially engaged project carried out in Cyprus.



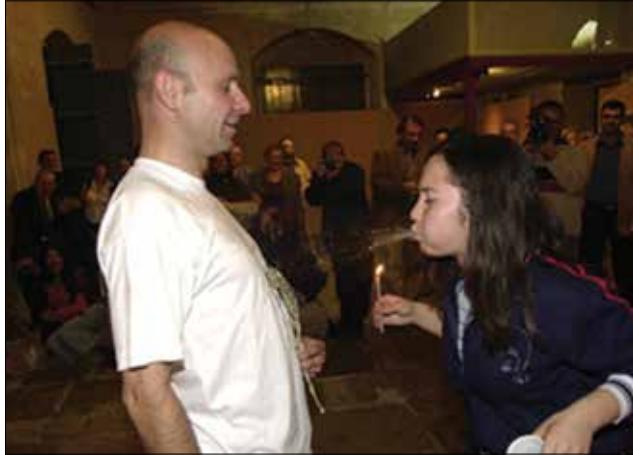
House in Pemptos Village. Sumer Erek Presentation

"This was a work which was part of a project that started in 2005 and went on till 2006. I was invited to take part in a festival in Pemptos Village and I decided to take over this derelict house. It is an old Turkish House and it was used until probably the early nineteen eighties. By that time it was abandoned. At the time for me it was really upsetting to see so much development taking place and so I decided to intervene and build a pool inside the house. From the exterior you wouldn't be able to see it but only from the stairs above as in the place of the living room there would be the pool. What happened was that during this process the landlady heard that I am doing something crazy although I had spoken to her and she was pleased with the fact that I was doing something artistic. However she had no idea what. And she refused to enter in. She didn't want to see it. Then I came to an agreement with her. I will block the entrance. No one will be able to enter from this part of the house. But she didn't know I would

bridge a bridge. That I would let everybody in anyway. It was a significant transformation in my work building this bridge. Although at the beginning the pool was an environmental statement; then as I intervened in her space despite the friction, it transformed into a strong socio political work."

It is interesting to see how Erek presented his interaction with the lady who owned this house. He acted against her wishes and carried the project out and it is this action that appears to be significant for him. Due to the structure of the house and the pool, very few people could enter at each time. The project was purposefully not advertised in the press and dissemination happened through word of mouth. The site became a gathering place particularly for youth and many events took place there.

The second phase of the Raw Earth dealt with religion and it used what used to be St Katherine's cathedral in the old city of North Nicosia. The Cathedral was turned to a mosque and subsequently to an arts centre. The space itself has layers of identity and it was used to "conduct a ritual, a non-religious ritual, which had a lot of elements. Fire water air soil."



Performance in what used to be St Katherine's cathedral,

"She is one of the visitors and I gave her a cup of water, a candle and I am holding a sort of olive branch that is covered in oil and I asked her to spit and give me her breath."



Image of the participatory performance from inside the parliament, North Nicosia. Sumer Erek Presentation

The third phase of the project took place in the parliament in North Nicosia, with the participation of some of the politicians. "So I started from the village, went to institutional belief and then I moved to the parliament. I made an announcement to the media saying that on such and such a date and time I will be at the parliament doing a performance. Nobody knew what I was going to do. The MPs knew who I was, therefore I was welcomed. I didn't think I would be able to enter into the parliament. I thought I would be doing something at the steps. At that time however the Republican Turkish Party was in power and they kind of welcomed me, which was pleasing. I had two assistants and I had surgical instruments and a bag of clay and also this paper that I punched a hole and stuck a piece of foil in it. And I asked members of the parliament and people working in the parliament to contribute to the project by giving part of their body, some of their hair. And I stuck it here. I also reproduced the official deeds format and I signed and gave them this piece of earth. It was interesting. A few weeks later a new debate

started taking place in the North about ownership. And it became quite controversial and shocking. But it backfired. Because I embarrassed some of 'my friends.' What Erek was referring to here, is that he was allowed in the space to do the action because he was friends with certain politicians in power at the time. His actions were not considered suitable and appropriate, thereby "embarrassing" some of his "friends".

It is important to note the fact that Erek has lived and worked in London for many years and this has shaped his practice greatly. This is important because he was the only artist at the time to use socially engaged methods in his work. The other examples found in Cyprus at the time, used the social in a much more subject like manner and did not actively involve different social groups in the practice itself. The contact with Erek was made in London where friends of mine worked on his Newspaper House project in 2008.

## DR CAMERON CARTIERE - PRESENTATION OVERVIEW BEYOND BORDERLANDS - PUBLIC ART WITHOUT A PASSPORT

Cartiere presented in relation to the practice of artists as they use the concept of the border, of the passport and of access. As she termed it she decided "to take this out of Cyprus for a little bit". This was very important as it was the only presentation that did not relate to Cyprus and Nicosia and it contextualized things that were being discussed within a wider contemporary art framework. She presented three categories of works. The first showed works that deal with border crossing, immigration politics and national borders, the second looked at "the border free zone of Antarctica and the potential for a global nation" and the third notions "of liminal spaces, in between spaces and the possibility of a nation of those liminal spaces". She presented on various projects that fall within public or social art practices. She used the example of her home town San Diego and the situation that exists along the US, Mexican border to relate the divided landscape of Nicosia to contemporary art practices of other settings. She presented the work of:

Judy Baca- The Great Wall of Los Angeles  
Francis Alys- When Faith moves mountains, The Green Line Jerusalem, InSite: The Loop  
Alfredo Jaar- InSite: Cloud  
Jorge and Lucy Orta- Antarctica project  
Leif Elggren & CM von Hausswolff- The Kingdom of Elgaland and Vargaland

Cartiere therefore showcased examples of different manifestations of socially engaged art practices and a glimpse of their multiple modes of manifestation.

Particularly interesting was her juxtaposition of two different art projects which were part of InSite that realizes bi-national collaborative arts partnerships in the San Diego- Tijuana region since 1992. One was realized by Francis Alys, 1997 and the other by Alfredo Jaar, 2000. Both were gestural actions. However Cartiere

points to the indulgent nature of Alys' globe-trotting facet of his project and to a detachment from the tense and conflicting nature of the reality of the border.

"Francis Alys for InSite 1997 (The Loop) decided to carry out a paseo (leisurely walk) between the two host cities, Tijuana and San Diego. But he chose a path such that the border dividing Mexico and the United States would never be crossed. Over the course of thirty-five days, he travelled from Tijuana to San Diego, with short layovers in Mexico City, Panama City, Santiago, Auckland, Sydney, Singapore, Bangkok, Rangoon, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Seoul, Anchorage, Vancouver, and Los Angeles. During his furious five-week itinerary, this alienated tourist stayed in touch with one of the show's curators via e-mail. Together with the documentation relating to the journey, this correspondence - itself a sort of harried, poetic diary - was presented as an archive open to the public at the CICUT library in Tijuana. Now conceptually I think it is interesting.

Ethically I have real problems with this project. I think in some ways it's incredibly indulgent. That along the way he got to see all these beautiful cities, I think his budget (I am not sure of the digits), was 7,000 dollars for the project. So that was all exhausted on air-fair, hotels and what not. As opposed to really dealing with the conflict and this notion of 'CAUTION', of crossing the border".



Image of the Tijuana- San Diego crossing. Cameron Cartiere Presentation

"What people give up, what they go through, what they pay the coyote to bring them across. The number of people who die. That to me means that the relationship to this conceptual work is problematic. It was a great idea. I can't fault the idea but I wrestle with it."



Alfredo Jaar, The Cloud, 2000. Cameron Cartiere Presentation

"As opposed to this project, which was done as part of 'InSite' but in 2000. This is Alfredo Jaar and this is a piece called Cloud. This was again a section of the border that has had big walls and so on the San Diego side of the border they created this cloud of balloons. And they commissioned a musical piece and played the piece and amplified it so it could go over the wall. And then they released the 'cloud', which then floated over the wall. And it was this really interesting notion, going back to yesterday, when we were talking about presence and absence, and absence and presence. And all that academic speech that we can get wrapped up in. But really it was a gesture where they stood on one side of the wall and sung 'we can't see you, we can't hear you but we know you are there'. And we are acknowledging your presence. And we acknowledge that gesture of hope and recognition. Of this wall and what it means and how it separates us. And the notion of the controlling of the space. "They make control everything but yet they don't control the wind or the sound".

>>

REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC WORKS

10

## 10. REFLECTIONS ON PUBLIC WORKS

### HOW DID ‘PUBLIC WORKS’ PERFORM IN RELATION TO THE GOALS THAT IT HAD ORIGINALLY SET? WHAT DID IT CLAIM THAT IT WAS GOING TO DO, WHAT DID IT DO AND WHAT ARE THE GAPS THAT IT DEMONSTRATED?

‘Public Works’ was the first project of this practice led research that engaged with the segregated space of Nicosia. And as the first it was also the one that dealt with the most evident element of segregation of the city; the ethno-national division of the urban space- the green Line, which is also indicated by the logo and image of the project. The aim of this project was to question and challenge what it means to work in a public, socially engaged manner in Cyprus, tying this in with international contemporary art patterns. Some of the goals that the project set were fulfilled, some were not. This project demonstrated the need to research further what socially engaged art means in ethno-nationally segregated cities.

\* ‘Nicosia as a space and place of conflicts’, was explored throughout the different actions of the project. Most of the happenings took place on land marks that have been marked by conflict, workshops included work that related to this feature of the city and this was explored in detail at the roundtable.

\* ‘The public sphere and the subsequent and diverse uses of art in this specific locale’. Discussion in relation to this took place outside the Archbishopry and the trends of public art locally and internationally. The economics of it, the use and the inter disciplinarity that describes current public art practices could be seen here. The ‘graffiti tour’ provided a glimpse of some diverse uses of art in the locale. However it only shed light to one part of the city- the South. ‘Trading places’ with its intrusion of the market demonstrated the interaction that can be triggered from action in the public sphere.

The element of public intervention was highlighted when by the disappearance and breaking of the architectural model the morning after the exhibition when the performance was taking place and ‘This ain’t art yo’ tagged on the shop front of APOTHEKE.

\* ‘The public(s) that inhabits Nicosia, the degrees of its representations, and how and if art can attribute a visual voice’. This was only briefly touched upon through the collaboration with the NGO and the bi-communal art exhibition. The participants of the different events included diverse publics of Nicosia. However the happenings them-selves were not shaped by interaction with the public, with their participation.

\* ‘Historical and theoretical paradigms of social engagement through the arts and the importance of introducing such vocabulary into the Cypriot setting’. The project brought into focus different efforts that have happened within the last 20 years in Cyprus that can be described as a socially engaged practice. ‘Public Works’ confirmed the importance of the conflict resolution mechanisms existent in Cyprus due to the political divide in the production of socially engaged art. Koureas mapped how the divide has shaped the aesthetic of artists, Grichting suggested what could happen to the green line in the future, Taliotis spoke of the funding mechanisms and local developments and disillusionments, Erek of how his participatory practice is conducted, Karathanasis about the visual geographies of the city. This created a framework upon which to build a further understanding about what methods of working with the visual arts and conflict resolution mean, the importance of the geo-political space of the city for this development and how it can shape practice that deals with other forms of segregation within the city.

\* ‘Art as a contact zone for conflict resolution’. ‘Public Works’ in its entirety wanted to explore what it meant to work in a bi-communal way and what art means in this context in Cyprus. Examples of work were provided by the NGO Hope for Peace and the ‘Public

Works' exhibition. It was spoken of extensively in the roundtable/ presentations. The experience created a lot of questions. A prominent question that was raised was what does art mean as a contact zone for conflict resolution? I preceded examining that and seeing how it reflects in other divided cities.

This project was a large one. It involved due to the initial cancellation an extended period of production, multiple facets and working from London. It created the context for being able to understand the theoretical landscapes of Nicosia and its function as a 'divided city' and how art practices have functioned as a point of contact within this conflicted setting. The contributions (provided by the majority of participants and collaborators for free), the discussions and the interaction, all aided in developing a framework of understanding what socially engaged art in relation to urban segregation and division has meant in Cyprus.



Photograph taken at the Cyprus British bases,  
Evanthia Tselika



Children drawings  
Photograph: Evangelia Tseliaka



Streets/sticker photograph  
Photograph: Barbara Szentmarjay

## **COLLABORATORS AND PARTICIPANTS**

Antonis Antoniou  
Cameron Cartiere  
Sotiris Christou  
Sumer Erek  
Anna Grichting  
Natalie Heller  
Hope for Children, Cypriot NGO  
Pafsanias Karathanasis  
Rebeca Katsaris  
Tony Kattashis  
Niovi Ketonis  
Gabriel Koureas  
Phanos Kyriacou  
Christina Lambrou  
Orestis Lambrou  
Chrystalleni Loizidou  
Vassia Makrides  
Chryso Marangou  
Giorgos Moleski  
Nona Moleski  
Demetris Neokleous  
Sofia Panayiotidou on behalf of Kykkos Highschool  
Despo Pasia  
Yervant Der Parthogh  
Pallouriotissa Highschool  
Phaneromeni High School  
Efi Savvides  
Alexia Stavriniades and Highgate School  
Costantinos Taliotis  
Nikoleta Verikiou  
Mehmet Yashin

## **FUNDERS AND SPONSORS**

Cafe Berlin No.2  
Cultural Services- Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture  
Ermou Cafe Bar  
Cyprus Community Media Centre (CCMC)  
Nicosia Municipal Market

## FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

Bishop, Claire ed. (2006). *Participation: Documents in Contemporary Art*. Whitechapel Gallery: London, MIT Press: Massachusetts

Blevins, D. (12, November, 2011). *Belfast's Murals Tell Conflicting Stories*. Retrieved from <http://news.sky.com/home>

Bradley, W. and Esche, C. eds. (2007) *Art and Social Change: A Critical Reader*, London: Tate Publishing

Doherty, C. Ed. (2004), *From Studio to Situation*, Black Dog Publishing: London

Helguera, P. (2011). *Education for Socially Engaged Art*. Jorge Pinto Books: USA

Iveson, Kurt (2007). *Publics and the city*. Blackwells Publishing: Australia, UK, USA

Kester, Grant (2004). *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. University of California Press: Berkeley and London

Lacy, S. ed. (1995) *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Seattle: Bay Press

Landry, C. Greenem L. Matarasso, F. & Bianchini, F. (1996). *The Art of Regeneration: Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity*. Comedia: UK

Michaelidou, Agni (1976). *Χώρα, η παλιά Λευκωσία - Chora, the Old city*. (Own Translation from Greek). Cultural Department of the Bank of Cyprus. 2nd edition. Nicosia 1985

Papadakis, Y. Peristianis, N. and Welz, G. eds (2006). *Divided Cyprus: Modernity, History and an island in conflict*, Indiana University Press: USA

Pasternak, A., Peltason, R. & Lippard, L. (2007). *Creative Time: The Book*. Princeton Architectural Press: USA

Public Works Website: [publicworks2010.blogspot.com](http://publicworks2010.blogspot.com)

Public Works Video Online: <http://youtu.be/uA3ryZZvHfE>

Sant Cassia, Paul (2005). *Bodies of evidence: Burial, Memory and the recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus*. New Directions in Anthropology. Bergham Books: UK, USA

Yashin, M. (ed.) (2000). *Step-Mother tongue: From Nationalism to Multiculturalism, Literatures of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey*. Middlesex University Press: London

## **BOOKLET 1**

Published by Evanthia Tselika/Conflict Transformation Art

Submitted as part of Evanthia Tselika's doctoral thesis in 2014

Birkbeck, University of London

Supervisors: Dr Gabriel Koureas & Dr Sophie Hope

For further information contact: [e\\_tselika@hotmail.com](mailto:e_tselika@hotmail.com)

[evanthiatselika.com](http://evanthiatselika.com)

Designed by Polis Demosthenous