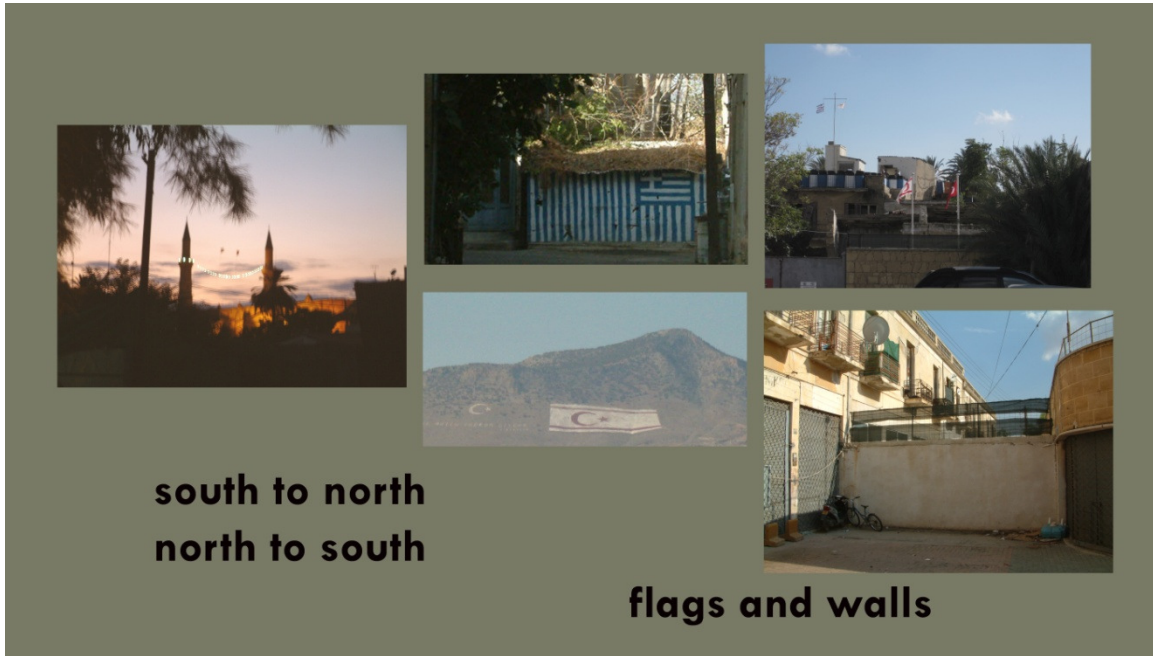


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(Own images)

The divided city of Lefkosia, Lefkoshia, Nicosia (Cyprus) is the European Union's most Eastern frontier and a former subject of the British Empire. It is largely known to the international world because of the ethnic and national strife between the Christian (Greek) and Muslim (Turkish) population of the island, a situation that can be mirrored by other locales in the Balkan area post the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The city is marketed to tourists as the 'only divided' capital within the European Union, a firm reality that began with the ethnic troubles that developed in the first half of the twentieth century and unfolded itself to the firm division that divided the urban and rural landscape for thirty years. The general interpretation of Cyprus is that this is an island exclusively inhabited by Greeks and Turks and it is these frictions that have led to the cold war that has been the 'Cyprus Problem'.

Cyprus throughout its history represented a mixture of cultures but due to its entangled narratives in the twentieth century, its multi cultural past had been denied. As it is now becoming the home for tens of thousands of refugees, economic migrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa and Turkish settlers (a term ascribed to migrants from Inner Turkey that move to Northern Cyprus), this former British colony is undergoing one of its most diverse experiences of cultural plurality.

This presentation aims to highlight the developments of these cultures of ethno nationalism that describe the divided landscape of the city. This will be achieved through the

examination of social, cultural and anthropological theory as it has been applied to readings of the divided communities of Cyprus and the ambiguous border situation with its gaps, its voids and its charged imaginaries. In this bi-polar centre the legacies of the 20th century and the transformations of the 21st are challenging this divided city to introspection, vis-a-vis its claims to an international vocabulary, however ignored, and its architectonic steps forward.

As the wider spectrum of my research is concentrating on how creative production can be utilized as a tool for much needed social contact, I will also mention in brief some debates over the use of the physical space of the no man's land, of this urban 'frozen in time' void. Through the umbrella of creation in the public space and social engagement through the arts, this project will aim to narrate visual voices of the inhabitants of a peripheral community in an environment where the divisions of the two ethnicities have been the driving force of political life on the island. Through efforts of bi communal, peace building events a loose frame work has existed in which art has functioned in a socially engaged manner on the island. However in a location where mono cultural agendas have been the framework of how a bi cultural existence could take form, multiculturalism has developed post 1974 indicating that new schemes and increased efforts for social contact are vital.

Interpretations of contemporary visual culture are presented with manifestations into the street and through action, site specific and participatory art. The production of socially engaged creative work becomes a move to challenge us to imagine how we would form, cast and shape local social relationships within the global infrastructure of our lives. In an expansionist Europe where identities are largely transforming and migration is reshaping the national landscape, cultural and creative contact amongst the different elements of society is urgent if smooth co existence and mutual respect is to ensue (particularly in a charged ethno landscape such as Cyprus).