

1st Cyprus Association of Social Anthropologists Conference

Our Common Grounds

Pasts, Presents, Futures of Anthropology in Cyprus

Conference Programme

4-5 September, Limassol



Cyprus
University of
Technology

1. The programme at a glance

Friday, September 4

TIME	VENUE	EVENT
9:00–9:30	Lobby	Registration
9:30-10:00	Room 2	Welcome by T. Kouros
10:00–11:30	Room 2	Panel 1: Language, (Im)mobility and Distance
	Room 3	Panel 2: Militarism, Refusal and Nonviolence
11:30-12:00	Lobby	Coffee break
12:00-13:30	Room 2	Panel 3: Conflict Landscapes, Third Spaces and the Material Afterlives of Division
	Room 3	Panel 4: Archives, Counter-Memories and Interdisciplinary Encounters
13:30-14:30	Room 2	Lifetime Contribution Award Ceremony
14:30-15:00	Lobby	Lunch break
15:00-16:30	Room 2	Panel 5: Subversive politics, liminality, counter-culture
	Room 3	Panel 6: Urban Space, Investment, Touristification and City as a Text
17:00-19:00	Xydadiko	Visual Anthropology Section
19:00-20:00	Xydadiko	CASA Launch Event: A Conversation on Pasts, Presents, Futures of Anthropology in Cyprus

Saturday, September 5

TIME	VENUE	EVENT
8:30 -9:30	Cafe Nero (Molos)	Rise, Shine and Swim (with Yiannis Papadakis). The beach has showers and changing rooms.
10:00 -11:00	Room 2	Keynote Lecture – Rebecca Bryant
11:00-11:30	Lobby	Coffee break
11:30-13:00	Room 2	Panel 7: Material Culture, Community, and Feminist Praxis
	Room 3	Panel 8: Ecologies, Care and Environmental Justice
13:00-13:30	Lobby	Lunch break
13:30-15:00	Room 2	Panel 9: Art, Culture and Performance
	Room 3	Panel 10: Borders, Activism, Belongings, and Re-Imaginations
15:00-15:30	Room 2	Closing Session. Facilitator: M. Kaptanoğlu
15:30-17:00	Room 2	CASA General Assembly

2. Detailed Programme

The Green Line Project

Available during breaks, lobby

Ioannis Bekiaris & Alexis Mavros

The Green Line is a VR short film documenting areas of the UN Buffer Zone in Cyprus, some unseen by the public since 1963. The Green Line immerses viewers into one of the most restricted places on the planet, in an effort to raise international awareness for the current political situation in Cyprus, a nation divided since 1974. The Green Line team was granted access into the Cyprus Buffer Zone in January 2016. Escorted by UN convoy, the team filmed what remains of the abandoned villages of Selemani, Varisheia, and the abandoned Nicosia International Airport.

Panel 1

Language, (Im)mobility and Distance

Friday, September 4, 10:00-11:30, Room 2

Chair: Yiannis Papadakis

1. **Spencer Cook (University of Michigan)**

Lingua Cypria: Archives, Ethnography, and Power in Multilingual Cyprus

Cyprus is a thoroughly multilingual island. Debates over privileged varieties of Turkish and Greek, and the colonial legacy of English, are now well established. But intersecting histories of conflict and migration have introduced a slew of other languages over time: Armenian, Danish, Arabic, Sinhala, Urdu, Russian, and many more. Knowledge produced in these minoritized or 'nonnative' languages (e.g., archival documents, social media content, oral testimonies) rarely figure into academic accounts of social life in Cyprus. Drawing from my own research on intercommunal economic activity since 1960, this paper asks how appreciating this complex linguistic landscape can help us to rethink what Cypriot history and anthropology might look—and sound—like. How can a critical analysis of language reveal the limitations of state archives? How can it elucidate connections between peacebuilding and ethnographic knowledge production? Or allow us to move beyond binary framings of the Cyprus Problem, and to explore its links to international migration and racial capitalism? Ultimately, I argue that understanding Cyprus in its vernaculars requires us to forge multilingual collaborations, both within and beyond the academy.

2. **Elena Vasiliou (University of Bath)**

Beyond the Pains of Imprisonment: Pleasure, Punishment, and the Cypriot Archive



*This paper presents the ongoing project of my book manuscript, *Beyond the Pains of Imprisonment: Pleasure and Punishment*, an argument that took shape in Cyprus, still marked by its colonial histories, and treats pleasure, rather than pain, as the constitutive element of punishment. Punishment theory has built its definitions on negation: punishment must be unpleasant, pain must be unpleasant, and pleasure, whether as a technique of power or a practice of resistance, has been left untheorized, treated as absent or as a scandal to be contained. The book traces this pattern from the chain gang and the Panopticon to the modern prison and the colonial archives in Cyprus, and argues that history has produced this exclusion of pleasure, and that it serves carceral power by making certain dimensions of imprisonment unthinkable. I explore what it means to think about punishment from Cyprus, a small place from which knowledge about prisons does not usually originate, rather than from the metropole, and from pleasure rather than pain.*

3. Alexis Karkotis (Cyprus University of Technology)

From Cyprus to Panama: The Ngäbe-Buglé Comarca and Reflections on the Ethnographic Method in a Digitalized World

Drawing on my long-term ethnographic fieldwork (2006–2013) among the Ngäbe of western Panama, I explore what ethnography conducted beyond Cyprus can contribute to the anthropology of Cyprus itself. Rather than treating the Ngäbe-Buglé Comarca, the semi-autonomous Indigenous territory of the Ngäbe and Buglé, as a distant fieldsite, I approach it as a parallel ethnographic reality through which to think about questions that are also central to Cyprus: territory, coexistence, state power, marginality, and uneven incorporation into global capital. The Comarca covers roughly 10,000 square kilometres, approximately the size of Cyprus and is inhabited by around 250,000 people. It is shared by two Indigenous peoples, the Ngäbe and the Buglé, in an approximate 85/15 demographic relation that invites comparison, without flattening important differences, with Cyprus's own bi-communal composition. Yet where Cyprus is often understood through partition, sovereignty, and property, Ngäbe-Buglé life is characterised by dispersed settlement, decentralised authority, mobility, and a long, uneven relationship with the state. Nearby Bocas del Toro, left outside the Comarca and increasingly transformed by tourism, expatriate investment, and land acquisition, offers a further echo of contemporary Cyprus, particularly in the reshaping of coastal space and property under tourism and foreign investment. The presentation combines ethnographic analysis with photographs and a short ethnographic video assembled from field documentation. It also reflects on the challenges of conducting fieldwork before social media and digital connectivity became central to ethnographic practice. I argue that this experience remains useful for anthropology in Cyprus today, not as nostalgia for “classical” fieldwork, but as a reminder that rigorous, comparative, materially grounded ethnography remains essential for understanding rapidly changing social worlds, including Cyprus itself.

4. Elena Ioannidou (University of Cyprus)

Negotiations, ruptures, and everyday alliances in multilingual communities in Karpasia: When “enemies” share the same language.

The current paper explores instances of contact between “invisible” multilingual communities at the northern part of Cyprus that share different varieties of Greek and Turkish in their repertoire. The linguistic ecology of the peninsula of Karpasia is in many aspects unique and at the same time invisible to the public discourse on both sides of the



divide. In particular, in the specific space, two of the main dialects of the Greek language, Cypriot Greek and Pontic Greek are used by different groups: a) Greek-speaking (Romeika) Turkish Cypriots, b) Turkish nationals who were transplanted from Trabzon to Cyprus and are Pontic (Rumca) speakers, c) local Greek Cypriots who remained enclave after the partition in 1974. The first two communities speak a variety of Greek (Cypriot Greek/Romeika, Pontic Greek/Rumca) as a home language although in terms of identity they define themselves as Turkish or Turkish Cypriot (Ioannidou, 2022). Due to the unresolved political conflict in Cyprus between Greek and Turkish Cypriots, speaking the language of the “other” has been a point of tension, suspicion, and immobility for these communities. In addition, each community has distinct stories in relation to space, displacement and stigma. The current paper explores instances of daily encounters, negotiations and alliances in the multilingual space of Karpasia peninsula, having as main theoretical grounding the notion of space, border and the concept of language ecology. It presents stories and narratives of language contact where two communities who speak a different variety of Greek meet in a Turkish-speaking heavily politicized context. In the post partition era at the northern part of Cyprus, different forms of negotiations and dialogue took place between the two communities, and in these negotiations, language played a central role. The presence of Greek in their repertoire functioned as a positive marker for communication and dialogue, but at the same time the strong differences between the two Greek varieties created tensions which reflected deeper conflicts related to identity and the “right for presence” in the area. The data presented constitute a part of a longitudinal ethnographic study, having as main data collection methods participant observations, audio and video recordings and interviews within and across the communities.

Panel 2

Militarism, Refusal and Nonviolence

Friday, September 4, 10:00-11:30, Room 3

Chair: Christakis Peristianis

1. Spyros Spyrou (European University Cyprus)

Reclaiming curiosity and wonder in research: Experimenting with slow, open-ended ethnographic practice

I am currently pursuing research on militarism, the militarization of everyday life and antimilitarist activism. In this presentation, I use this exploration as a situated example of how I decided to pursue an open-ended, multi-sited research project, which is curiosity-driven, does not follow a specific research design, is unfunded and has no expectations on outputs. This approach has allowed me to reengage with ethnographic work I have done with children over the years, to explore the spatial manifestation of militarism along the Green Line, to pursue a photographic exploration of abandoned mixed villages which suffered the effects of militarism, to come in contact with organized collectives of antimilitarists and to participate in their activities, to initiate conversations with antimilitarist activists and conscientious objectors, to participate in antimilitarist and antiwar protests and solidarity events, to explore antimilitarist art in the old part of Nicosia—and this is not an exhaustive list. In this presentation, I reflect on this experiment with slow research which seeks to bring together these loosely connected projects and to reclaim a sense of wonder about research which I lost over the years through the



pursuit of structured, well-designed and executed projects which often dried out my excitement for research and the pursuit of complexity, connectivity and relationality which I value as a scholar.

2. Yorgos Prodromou (University of Thessaly)

Who Names (Non)Violence? Critical Memory Practices in Contemporary Cyprus

Drawing on Judith Butler's "The Force of Nonviolence", this paper develops an anthropological approach to the political naming of violence in modern Cypriot history. It examines violence not only as physical force, but as a law-making act through which political subjects and collective actors claim, implicitly or explicitly, the power to transform the terms of legality, security, and belonging. The paper revisits the so-called "Turkish mutiny" of 1963 as part of a dominant Greek Cypriot narrative that framed the 1963-64 conflict and the Turkish invasion of 1974 as the result of Turkish Cypriot national action and identity. Rather than replacing one nationalist account with another, it asks how what is named as the violence of "the other side" may also be read in relation to prior or ongoing exclusion and militarization. Thinking from Cyprus, the paper explores how militarized citizenship shape the distinction between violence and nonviolence in postcolonial state formation and nationalisms. It then turns to contemporary practices of nonviolence in Cyprus - conscientious objection, refusal of reserve duty, abstention from military service, anti-militarist assemblies, memory, and testimony - as practices that contest which forms of security must be defended and what kinds of political appearance are named as threat or disorder. Nonviolence is approached not as passivity, but as a collective practice that challenges the power of violence to become law and common sense.

3. Leandros Fischer (American University of Beirut Mediterraneo)

Rethinking British military bases in Cyprus: The case of Akrotiri village after the drone strike

Research on the British bases in Cyprus has overwhelmingly focused on their legally ambiguous character as colonial remnants, often in conjunction with the other sovereignties found on the island (Constantinou 2008, Demetriou 2023 et al). Contrary to other cases of extreme militarization, such as Okinawa or Sardinia, much less has been written on the British presence within the framework of critical literature on foreign military bases (Lutz 2008, Holmes 2014, Vine 2015; 2019). This literature has particularly focused on the social and environmental disruption caused by bases, countering claims on their alleged beneficial character for local economies, as well as on the various forms that opposition to the presence of these bases has assumed. The March 2026 drone strike on RAF Akrotiri, which caused significant disruption in the daily lives of the residents of nearby Akrotiri village, exemplified the material entanglement of British bases in Cyprus with the current US/Israeli genocidal assault against Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Syria and Yemen. This paper is based on preliminary interviews with residents of Akrotiri (to be conducted July and August 2026). How do residents perceive of events in nearby Gaza and beyond? How do they situate themselves within those events? What are the motivations of opposition by the villagers of Akrotiri to the nearby base (nationalist, anti-war/internationalist, environmental, economic)? How do these forms of opposition intersect, and what are the ambiguities inherent in them? The paper proposes a new framework for thinking about military bases in Cyprus as multi-scalar nodes that bind local grievances with the imperial violence perpetrated by them.



4. Despina Psara

Conscientious objectors across the divide: An interactive workshop mapping political subjectivities and experiences

Conscientious objectors (COs) offer a striking vantage point on the Cyprus Problem, yet their experiences have largely remained in its shadows. What boils to the surface when we shift our attention to those who refuse one of its most enduring institutions: compulsory military service? Drawing on ongoing ethnographic research with COs across the divide, the proposed interactive workshop adapts the "Step Forward" method into an embodied ethnographic exercise. It plays with the unconventional way of presenting findings, while having a more active engagement of the attendees. Participants in a horizontal line are assigned positionalities drawn from fieldwork, for example, a CO in the north or south, and respond to statements based on ethnographic narratives by stepping forward when they believe these reflect their assigned positionality. As participants move across the room, different experiences of COs gradually emerge, prompting reflection on how legal, political, and social realities are visible across the divide. The workshop concludes with a facilitated discussion that contextualises these positionalities through ethnographic insights, clarifies common misconceptions, and connects participants' reflections to the lived experiences of COs. Essentially, what do spatial configurations reveal about the diverse experiences of COs, and how do participants' own assumptions literally shape the room?

Panel 3

Conflict Landscapes, Third Spaces and the Material Afterlives of Division

Friday, September 4, 12:00-13:30, Room 2

Chair: Melek Kaptanoğlu

1. Christakis Peristianis (University of Cyprus)

Of Dead Zones and Dying Crops: Farming and its Transformation(s) in the Cyprus Buffer Zone (1974-2026)

In the aftermath of the 1974 Turkish military intervention, the Republic of Cyprus experienced extensive territorial loss and rapid economic restructuring, with agriculture declining as state policies prioritised tourism and services. Yet within the Buffer Zone, farming persisted, particularly among displaced Greek Cypriots from the Morphou region, historically one of the island's most productive agricultural areas. This paper examines what the continuation of farming in the Buffer Zone means for those who still practice it, and why this presence is now in decline. Drawing on ethnographic and archival research, the paper argues that citrus cultivation cannot be understood through economic logic alone. For those who persist, farming functions as a material and embodied practice through which attachment to place is maintained and memories of Morphou are reproduced: orchards operate as mnemonic landscapes in which displacement continues to be negotiated. At the same time, generational mobility, urbanisation, shifting aspirations, and the rise of short-term market-oriented production have eroded the conditions that sustained this form of cultivation. As displaced farmers age and orchards disappear, so too do the cultural practices through which displaced identities were



reproduced. As such, persistence and decline, continuity and transition, are treated as two dimensions of the same process: the gradual loosening of ties between land, memory, and belonging.

2. Andriana Lagoudes (University of Cyprus)

Conflict Temporalities in Cyprus: A case study of Bunkers

Contextualising bunkers of Cyprus in local and global scholarship, this research traces the bunker in contemporary Cyprus and contests its neutrality as a military object. Tracing it back from EOKAs' hideouts and the narrative of their heritageisation, the study moves on to analyse the bunkers found across the Demilitarised Zone in Lefkosia. Methodologically, it combines a topographical analysis of four case studies across the geography of Lefkosia, from the city centre to Kaimakli, Anthoupoli and Deneia, with empirical insights from nonformal conversations with people living or working near the DMZ. This research argues that the bunker's idle existence turns it into a porous depository of affect, reflected in people's embodied experiences of reliving trauma, negotiating responsibility, reproducing unquestioned gendered roles and imagining future risk. It further suggests that these bunkers in question, even though they are neither fully maintained nor clearly heritageised, exist in a liminal space between their initial military function and a renewed post-function, making them prone to new interpretations. The unresolved status of the bunkers reflects the political idleness of resolving conflict between the Republic of Cyprus and the TRNC, indicating that political management of the conflict is inseparable from the everyday spaces of the DMZ.

3. Nilay Afet Seyranoğlu

The Hyphenated Body: Embodied Encounters, Identity and the Third Space of Cyprus

*This paper/workshop introduces a practice-based research project exploring the body as a site of anthropological enquiry into identity, conflict, belonging and hybridity. Drawing direct inspiration from Costas M. Constantinou's essay *Aporias of Identity: Bicomunalism, Hybridity and the 'Cyprus Problem'*, this project begins with the proposition that postcolonial Cypriot identity is "quintessentially and inescapably hyphenated". This research asks what possibilities might emerge if the hyphen is approached not only as a marker of division, but as an embodied space of encounter. Drawing on Homi Bhabha's concept of the "third space" of hybridity, I explore the spaces between fixed categories of identity: the uncertain, negotiated and relational spaces where belonging is continually lived and produced. The body is approached as an archive — a place where histories, memories, tensions and inherited narratives are carried, negotiated and transformed. Through my experience of open-floor movement practices, improvisation and embodied exploration, I investigate movement as a method of enquiry: a way of producing knowledge through sensation, relation and encounter. As part of this process, I invite workshop participants into a guided movement exploration. Together we will enter the body as a space of enquiry, considering how movement might reveal alternative perspectives on identity and conflict. Through embodied practice, we will explore the possibilities held within the "hyphenated" space: not only as a site of separation, but as a place of encounter, transformation and becoming. Rather than seeking to resolve, or even understand the complexities of the "Cyprus Problem" through representation, this project asks what becomes visible when conflict is approached through the body. How might embodied practices allow us to encounter identity not as a*



fixed position, but as an ongoing process shaped through relation, memory and experience.

4. Andreas Kleanthous

Of ghostly donkeys and [im]material divisions: Tracing the haunting presence of Cypriot identity through the UN controlled Buffer Zone

This research project investigates the affective qualities and psychogeography of the UN-controlled Buffer Zone in Cyprus, exploring how military checkpoints produce narratives of identity that either resist or normalize the island's de facto division. Moving beyond traditional readings of the Cyprus question as a static inter-ethnic conflict, this study applies Navaro's (2012) theory of Affective Geography to the physical materiality of the Green Line. It treats the "Cypriot subject" as a fragmented, situated category shaped by the post-2003 reality of checkpoint openings and internal communal contradictions. Using the feral donkeys of Karpasia as an ironic allegory of historical trauma and resilience (Haraway, 1991), the project employs a multimodal, collaborative ethnographic approach across two interconnected phases: Participatory Public Intervention: Co-creating a "donkey-machine" with cross-divide hackerspaces to collect spontaneous audiovisual interactions at checkpoints, serving as a situational détournement (Debord, 1955). Qualitative Fieldwork: Engaging crossers and non-crossers alike through qualitative interviews, participant observation, and collaborative filmmaking. Ultimately, this project aims to open a speculative space "beyond text" (Westmoreland, 2022) to reflect on historical memory, technological and non-human mediation, and the shifting reconfigurations of Cypriot identity and belonging within a liminal, extended ceasefire condition.

Panel 4

Archives, Counter-Memories and Interdisciplinary Encounters

Friday, September 4, 12:00-13:30, Room 3

Chair: Ellada Evangelou

1. Antonis Hadjikyriacou (Panteion University Athens)

Genealogies of ethnographic research on the linopambadji (linopambaci): The private papers of Roland Michell

Roland Lyons Nosworthy Michell (1847-1931) served as Commissioner of Limassol for thirty-two years (1879-1911), after spending several years in Egypt. His ethnographic work on the Linopambadji (Tk: Linobambaci) led to the 1909 publication of one of the earliest scholarly studies on the syncretic Muslim-Christian practice found in various regions of Cyprus. Revisiting this much-discussed and controversial topic, the paper examines Michell's private papers, research notes, and dairies. It attempts to reconstruct his intellectual and political profile that shaped his understanding of the linopambadji, which it contextualises within his years in Egypt, where he also studied different forms of popular and heterodox Islam. In doing so, it attempts to open a channel of communication between history and anthropology.

2. Ioulita Toumazi



The contested meanings of Don McCullin's Cyprus photographs: From the Newspaper to the Gallery

This paper examines Don McCullin's photographs of Cyprus, which document the fasaries ("troubles") between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in 1964. These photographs were originally published in the British "Observer" and were later included in McCullin's 2019 retrospective exhibition at Tate Britain. Their circulation across these distinct contexts demonstrates the multiplicity of photographic meaning, as each mode of presentation generates different narratives and connotations. Rather than treating the photographs as autonomous images, the paper analyses them within the contexts of the newspaper page and the gallery, exploring how these frameworks shape their interpretation. To account for these shifts in meaning, the paper draws on semiotic theories of photographic interpretation, the relationship between text and image, and the capacity of photography either to reinforce or to challenge dominant discourses and the status quo. This paper attempts to deconstruct the newspaper pages of the Observer, exposing the colonial gaze present in them. In the case of the exhibition, it posits that the way the photographs are framed as universalized depictions of suffering and war, encourages an ahistorical and apolitical reading of them. This framing is challenged, as it restricts the photographic potential for a meaningful and complex historical understanding of the conflict. Finally, the paper argues that an alternative reading of the photographs is possible when the viewer attend to their details, which preserve traces of narratives that challenge those promoted by the institutions. It concludes with a series of personal readings of selected photographs from McCullin's Cyprus photographs, suggesting that these images can be interpreted as conveying meanings that contradict and expose the discourses advanced by the newspaper and the gallery.

3. Cindy Chehab

The Afterlife of Fragmented Archives: Cultural Erasure, Speculative Archival Practice, and Counter-Memory

The essay examines the afterlives of fragmented archives through a Cyprus context, informed by a neighboring horizon of Lebanon. It argues that erasure is not an incidental by-product of violence, but a systemic harm strategy of domination targeting the material and epistemic infrastructures of collective life. Drawing on Archive and Heritage Studies, it situates cultural and audiovisual destruction within broader frameworks of culturecide and archival systematic, where the loss, segregation, displacement, or inaccessibility of records, domestic objects, and moving-image heritage functions as both instrument and symptom of war and political division. From this Lebanon-informed perspective, the essay follows how archival ruptures continue to shape life in Cyprus—through disrupted institutional custody, damaged or unreachable domestic archives, and the precarious survival of audiovisual memory. In conditions where archives are bombed, displaced, or rendered inaccessible, speculative archiving becomes methodological resistance and an ethics of care. Speculation operates as survival work: a way to reimagine what cannot be restored fully and to tend fragments that persist against the logic of disappearance. The essay proposes speculative care as a curatorial and visual practice that positions imagination and critical fabulation as forces of continuity amid cultural annihilation.

4. Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert (Cyprus University of Technology)

Tracing Angels' Men": Reactivating an anthropometric photographic archive

The art and research project "Tracing Angel's Men" takes as a starting point John Lawrence Angel's anthropometric archive of 88 men – 54 Greek and 34 Turkish Cypriots



– from the village of Episkopi, Cyprus created in 1949 and now kept at the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution, USA. Angel, one of the leading authorities in forensic anthropology, was trying to determine whether the inhabitants of modern Episkopi had similar traits with ancient human remains from the same area and to populations of Greeks and Turks in other parts of the world. For the purposes of this project, in 2025, the names and photographs from Angel's records were brought back to the Episkopi community as part of an effort to trace the men's descendants and explore how they are remembered today. The portraits were assembled into a "community album" that circulated among households in Episkopi and Zodia (where many Episkopi Turkish Cypriots moved in 1974). We asked the descendants to provide us with stories and everyday photographs depicting the men. This newly collected material inspired the creation of four artworks that explore practices of reactivation and reuse; speculate on the unrecorded processes through which bodies were measured; create fictional 'specimens'; and foreground the personal relationships that developed during Angel's time in Cyprus.

CASA Lifetime Contribution Award Ceremony

Friday, September 4, 13:30-14:30, Room 2

The CASA Lifetime Contribution Award recognises an anthropologist whose body of work has made a sustained and significant contribution to the discipline in and from Cyprus.

The recipient of the inaugural CASA Lifetime Contribution Award is Vassos Argyrou. From his early ethnographic work on modernity and magic in Cyprus to his later critiques of anthropological reason and the politics of environmentalism, Argyrou has consistently refused easy answers, producing a body of work that is theoretically rigorous, ambitious, and productively unsettling for the discipline as a whole.

The award will be presented by Evi Eftychiou, with a reflection on the work of Vassos Argyrou

Panel 5

Subversive politics, liminality, counter-culture

Friday, September 4, 15:00-16:30, Room 2

Chair: Georgina Christou

1. Pafsanias Karathanasis

The prolonged in-between state as a political condition: Applying the anthropological concept of liminality to the analysis and understanding of the persistent "Cyprus Problem"

In this presentation, I will focus on the benefits, as well as the challenges, of applying a classic anthropological concept—that of liminality (van Gennep 1909, Turner 1965), in addressing contemporary political issues in complex, large-scale societies. Drawing on my research into grassroots political activism in divided Nicosia, where liminality is employed as a tool for understanding the experience of living with the "Cyprus problem," I will discuss how a concept that emerged over 100 years ago can be applied to—and



what it has to offer in the analysis of—a contemporary and symbolically potent political problem. Using contemporary approaches to liminality (Thomassen 2014), and “permanent liminality” (Szakolczai 2017), which find interesting applications in the field of political crises, I approach the “Cyprus problem”—a political issue marked by remarkable persistence—as a paradoxical yet normalized political condition. In this way, I attempt to engage in a discussion of the political and social consequences of such a normalization of the political paradox, which is inherent in a protracted, liminal, and precarious state. At the same time, my analysis also draws on my own in-between status as a “halfie” (Abu Lukold 1999), highlighting the ways in which theoretical and methodological approaches intersect with reflective practices.

2. Gavriella Thoma

Street Art and Social Change, a perspective of Holloway’s theory of cracks, cases in Cyprus and Chile

The primary objective of this thesis is to open a broader dialogue regarding the concept of presence within public space, focusing specifically on its reclamation through art and aesthetic intervention. Central to this study is the critical distinction between “Street Art” as a performative practice and the conventional Anglo-Saxon understanding of “graffiti” a differentiation vital for contextualizing this work, which aims to enrich the existing literature on the performing arts. To comprehend the spatial and cultural ontology of street art, this paper utilizes John Holloway’s concept of “cracks” (2010), this study highlights the significance of street art as a subversive tool capable of widening the fractures within capitalism, thereby disrupting systemic everyday normalcy. Methodologically, this thesis presents a comparative analysis focused on two seemingly disparate geopolitical contexts that have nonetheless deployed shared means to contest and reclaim public space: Cyprus and Chile. Observation and semi-structured interviews conducted in both countries with individuals and collectives actively engaged in spatial reclamation through artistic mediums. The ultimate goal is to unravel the socio-political factors that have shaped these specific locales, and by extension their public spheres, while capturing the shared problematics and responses these actors articulate daily through the medium of street art.

3. Ernesta Karosaitė

Rethinking “Bicommunal”: Visions of Coexistence Among Youth Peace Activists in Cyprus

In this paper I explore the significance, meanings, and narratives that emerge in discussions around whether the term “bicommunal” should be used to describe youth peace activist groups, their events and initiatives. It grows out of a Social Anthropology Master’s thesis defended in 2023, entitled “Sustaining the belief in friendly coexistence: Youth peace activists negotiating Cypriot identity”. It is drawn from ethnographic fieldwork with youth participants from the North and South of Nicosia. My research methods include participant observation in social spaces, events, trainings and informal gatherings organised by youth peace activism groups. I also incorporate biographical interviews with the most active youth participants and organizers of the events and an analysis of social media representations of these initiatives. Rather than providing fixed definitions of the terms “bicommunal”, “intercommunal” or “multicommunal”, I seek to better understand how they are used and interpreted by youth peace activists as part of their ongoing and evolving practice. Through this grounded ethnography I examine how



the choice of terminology is related to understandings of Cyprus' historical narratives, the values on which youth activism is based, the actors considered to be involved in the pursuit of conflict resolution in Cyprus, as well as how these elements challenge existing power dynamics.

4. Melek Kaptanoğlu (Queen's University Belfast)

Peace anthropology or anthropology of peace? Reflections from an ethnographic perspective on peacebuilding

As a post-violent, divided island, Cyprus primarily requires attention to conflict and division in research. Although this demanding 'legacy' of conflict, very few researchers centralize peacebuilding, peace activism, and reconciliation among communities. On the one hand, conflicts and cultures are similar; on the other hand, they are unique and structured by their own dynamics. Throughout the fieldwork I conducted in Nicosia for my PhD thesis, I prioritized the peacebuilding and peace activism perspective. In this paper, I will discuss the role of anthropology in peacebuilding through my reflections on fieldwork and the literature. I will discuss 'how anthropology could facilitate peacebuilding processes and reconciliation in Cyprus'. Also, I will question the handicaps and limitations of researching as an ethnographer and with the identity of 'peace activist'.

5. Elena Agathokleous (MITOS Centre for Performing Arts)

Practices of Embodied Memory: Counter-mapping in the Tourkomahallas of Limassol

This proposal focuses on the practices of artistic ethnography, as developed through research that began in 2020 and continues to the present day in the Tourkomahallas of Limassol. It explores a highly charged, conflictual, and largely invisible space within the dominant urban narrative. Based on the documentation of oral histories of both past and present residents, the presentation discusses examples of participatory and performative practices. Specifically, narratives of Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots regarding social life, displacement, and relocation constitute a multifaceted archive, while simultaneously fueling a series of cross-disciplinary actions, digital walk, ebook, gatherings, sound walk, digital walks), sound documentary and more. Particular emphasis is placed on the experiential and sensory aspects of audience reception. The presence and participation of the audience constitute a multisensory experience, realized as a bodily experience. Perhaps memory is not a passive recollection but can be transformed into an active process of understanding and contestation, helping us reposition our gaze toward the city and its established narratives.

Panel 6

Urban Space, Investment, Touristification and City as a Text

Friday, September 4, 15:00-16:30, Room 3

Chair: Panos Achniotis

1. Marina Kokkinou (National Technical University of Athens)

Nicosia/6: six artifacts of the city



The city of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, possesses a rich urban history shaped by the political and cultural influences of the successive civilizations that passed by the island. Yet this layered past remains largely unknown to its inhabitants, as each new ruler imposed its own mark on the city's landscape, overshadowing its past. Following the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and the gradual abandonment of the historic centre, the city's urban history was once again repressed. This recurring process of erasure disrupted the continuity of collective memory, leading to social oblivion. This study seeks to bring Nicosia's forgotten history back into consciousness by reconstructing the layers of its urban past. Inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of archaeology, it proposes an "archeological" excavation in specific locations within the walled city, examining how political mechanisms have contributed to the formation of the city's present identity. The research also draws upon Maurice Halbwachs' theory of social memory and employs Aldo Rossi's concept of the urban artifact as a methodological tool. Through a systematic mapping of Nicosia's historical development, six urban artifacts—the River, the Palace, the Cathedral, the Serai, the Road, and the Walls—are identified as sites where the most historical layers accumulate. Approaching these artifacts as repositories of collective memory, the study proposes a critical framework for understanding Nicosia's contested past.

2. Loizos Kapsalis (AHDR)

Building Identity: Greek nationalism and the landscape of the Phaneromeni Square in Nicosia (1920-1931)

In the 1920s, the Phaneromeni Church Ecclesiastical Committee, comprising members of the urban Greek Cypriot elite, embarked on a project to develop the land around the Phaneromeni Church in the walled town of Nicosia. Constructed in an eclectic neoclassical style, the buildings and monuments of what became the Phaneromeni square stood in stark contrast to both the local vernacular, as well as contemporary British colonial architecture in Cyprus. The re-development took place during a particularly tumultuous period of Cypriot politics: persistent poverty among the mass of the population and rising Greek nationalist sentiments led to open confrontation between the Greek Cypriots and the island's British colonial administration in October 1931. The square became a primary site of Greek Cypriot nationalist public ritual and anti-colonial agitation.

In this paper, I will draw on the work of New Cultural Geographers, particularly Jim Duncan's work on the Kandian Kingdom in Sri Lanka (2004), to examine the landscape of the Phaneromeni square 'as text,' reading it in the context of wider discourses around collective identity and nation, as well as the social, cultural and political changes taking place in Cyprus following the transition to British rule. My interpretation will pay particular attention to the efforts of the Greek Cypriot elite to inscribe what they saw as the 'Greek national character' of the island on the landscape, reflecting demands for an end of colonial rule and political union with Greece. I will argue that the landscape of the Phaneromeni square played a central role in the re/production of Greek national identity and the contestation of British power on the island. I hope to contribute to broader discussions about the role of the urban landscape in the construction and development of national identity and Greek nationalism in Cyprus during the first half of the twentieth century.

3. Nandia Dedeletakis (Cyprus University of Technology)



From Drilled Potential to Exhausted Potential: Aphrodite, Luxury Real Estate and Limassol's Seafront

This paper examines Limassol's seafront as a cultural and spatial field through which contemporary Cyprus imagines recovery, prestige and future value. It argues that luxury-led redevelopment is not only a matter of planning, property or design, but also a process of cultural production: the coast is narrated, aestheticised and made desirable through myth, promotional language, architecture and literary form. To name this process, the paper develops the concept of "drilled potential": a postcolonial logic that imagines place as hidden value waiting to be opened, elevated and sold. Reading Limassol Del Mar alongside Danae Laou's I Hate Living in London, Cyprus and Alev Adil's Aphrodite's Gas Field, the paper traces how promise and pressure are produced together. Through "urban textwork," it reads built form, promotional discourse and cultural representation together. Del Mar materialises the prestige image of the coast; Laou captures the strain of living in a Cyprus shaped by rent pressure and displacement; Adil exposes a longer fantasy of Cyprus as a feminised surface of extractable value. The paper argues that Limassol's seafront is produced through a fantasy of sanitisation, where Cyprus is made consumable as clean, authentic, coastal and metropolitan, while dirt, stress, labour and historical violence are pushed out of view. In this process, potential becomes exhaustion for those trying to remain.

4. Evi Eftychiou (University of Nicosia)

Making Modernity: Tourism, Development and the Cultural Production of Landscapes in Postcolonial Cyprus

Following independence in 1960, the Republic of Cyprus embraced modernization and tourism-led economic development as the primary route towards prosperity and securing its imagined place within the 'modern West'. This paper examines how the postcolonial development discourse transformed the physical landscape of the island while embracing a modernist conception of nature, in which coastlines, beaches, water resources and landscapes were increasingly understood as productive assets to be engineered, managed and optimized for economic growth. Drawing on discourse analysis of state development plans, tourism policy documents, newspaper archives and historical archives, alongside ethnographic insights, the paper traces the emergence of a dominant rhetoric in which accelerated construction, coastal urbanization, marinas, hotel complexes and 'unhindered' tourist infrastructures came to embody the ideals of modernity. I argue that accelerated development became conceivable—and ultimately the only way forward—not because it represented an objectively rational economic strategy, but because the postcolonial discourse, shaped by the power of western hegemony, naturalized a modernist conception of nature and development among Cypriot elites. By examining the reproduction of a modernist paradigm in postcolonial Cyprus, the paper contributes to anthropological debates on development, built environments and human–environment relations. It illustrates how landscapes are not simply physically transformed but are culturally, politically and historically produced, revealing how hegemonic concepts of modernity continue to shape the ways environments are imagined, inhabited and governed.

Visual encounters - ethnography in motion

Friday, September 4, 17:00-19:00, Xydadiko



Curation: Andreas Anastasiades

1. Before the Waiting Room, **Yiannis Christidis**, 2020 (10')
2. Every Sunday, **Keti Papadima**, 2020 (24')
3. Crazy Old Ladies, **Christiana Pyrishi**, 2012 (21')
4. The Sweethearts and the Dragon, **Phanos Kyriakou**, 2011 (11')
5. A Breather on the Pavement of Strangers, **Cindy Chehab**, 2025 (17')
6. Edat, **Rahme Veziroglu**, 2018 (11')

CASA Launch Event: A Conversation on Pasts, Presents, Futures of Anthropology in Cyprus

Friday, September 4, 19:00-20:00, Xydadiko

The first evening of the conference marks the official launch of the Cyprus Association of Social Anthropologists with a public conversation bringing together anthropologists across generations to reflect on what anthropology in and from Cyprus has been, what it is today, and where it might go.

Panelists: **Yiannis Papadakis, Rebecca Bryant, Melek Kaptanoğlu & Panos Achniotis**

Moderator: **Theodoros Kouros**

Rise, Shine and Swim

Saturday, September 5, 8:30-9:30, Meeting place Cafe Nero at Molos

Yiannis Papadakis

Short talk (Limassol and the sea) followed by a relaxed swim. The beach has showers and changing rooms.

Keynote Lecture by Rebecca Bryant

“The eyes of the world are on us”: Geopolitical intensities and the anthropology of Cyprus

Saturday, September 5, 10:00-11:00, Room 2

Rebecca Bryant is Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University. Her work has focused on ethnic conflict and displacement, border practices, post-conflict reconciliation, and contested sovereignty on both sides of the Cyprus Green Line, as well as in Turkey, with temporality running as a thread throughout, from the politics of the past and historical reconciliation to the temporal condition of citizens of unrecognised states.

Panel 7

Material Culture, Community, and Feminist Praxis



Saturday, September 5, 11:30-13:00, Room 2

Chair: Nihal Soğancı

1. **Vanda Batista (University of Coimbra)**

Words that Travel, Fruits that Unite: The Sweet Orange as Shared Heritage
Across Cyprus's Communities

This paper explores the sweet orange as a transnational food heritage connecting Portugal and Cyprus, and — within Cyprus itself — as a point of shared memory across the island's communities. The fruit's name in both Greek (portokáli) and Turkish (portakal) preserves the same linguistic trace of Portugal's historical role in its diffusion — a small but striking marker of memory shared across the Green Line, independent of political division. Historically, citrus cultivation and trade linked Mediterranean shores through circuits of exchange that left lasting linguistic, culinary, and cultural traces still visible today. Drawing on ongoing doctoral research at the University of Coimbra (Food Heritages: Cultures and Identities), this contribution traces how the sweet orange travelled — as fruit, word, and practice — between regions and languages, becoming embedded in local gastronomies on both sides of Cyprus. Citrus groves, recipes, and place names tied to orange cultivation persist as living heritage across communities separated by the Green Line, offering a case study in what might be called gastronomic diplomacy: food as a vector for dialogue, memory-sharing, and reconciliation. The paper situates this research within engaged, public-facing anthropology, asking how food heritage research can contribute to reconnecting divided memories and building common ground — echoing the conference's own framing of anthropology's practices and possibilities in Cyprus today.

2. **Sophie Fetokaki**

φρούτα ονείρων · dream fruit: exploring the cultivation and preparation of louvi
(black eyed beans) through encounters between anthropology and artistic
research

"φρούτα ονείρων · dream fruit is an artistic research and participatory performance project initially developed with NGO Xarkis through fieldwork in Akaki. The project is currently being extended to a community in the north in collaboration with artist and researcher Rahme Veziroglu, the results of which will be shown at Buffer Fringe Festival in October 2026. Focusing on the cultivation and ritual preparation of louvi, the project engages the contested landscapes of Cyprus as sites where ecological processes intersect with land stewardship and memories of conflict. In the ethnographic fieldwork stages, a large quantity of produce is secured from local growers, which forms the centre piece of the subsequent performance. Through fieldwork visits, we conduct sustained conversations with the growers and community, opening a space for oral histories emerging from and rooted in the land. The participatory performance dimension of the project collectively reenacts the ritual of shelling louvi, a time-intensive domestic practice that historically provided opportunities for gathering, κουσκούς (gossip), the transmission of situated knowledge, and the reproduction of place-based identities. Building from the fieldwork research, the performance is a site of spontaneous exchange facilitated by an audiovisual installation and scripts that function as prompts for public interaction. In an ecofeminist mode, the project considers land-based acts of care – crop cultivation, domestic preparation, and microbial solidarities – as models for Cypriot



feminist praxis. For the first CASA conference, Our Common Grounds: Pasts, Presents, Futures of Anthropology in Cyprus, I propose to present this ongoing project, exploring the adaptation of anthropological methodologies and frameworks within an artistic research context, critically reflecting on researcher positionality, and examining the project's contribution to thinking about Cypriot identity and place beyond the conflict.

3. Katerina Sergidou (Panteion University Athens)

Decolonisations of Southern feminist communities “with an accent”, from Andalusia to Cyprus: Ethnograph-ing the Vecinas, Primas, Flamencas, Carnavaleras, Koumeres, Kores

This paper presents methodological and political aspects of the ethnographic research conducted by a Cypriot researcher in Andalusian feminist communities. As the researcher studies communities that decolonise the dominant Spanish language, reclaiming their accent in speech and festive-activist rituals, a new site is formed between Cyprus and Andalusia. Through the feminist process of translation between languages and dialects, the researcher reflectively visits her Cypriot identity, identifies Southern linguistic and cultural affinities, and discovers local modalities for decolonising Southern feminisms. Through her ethnography, locations such as the neighbourhood and the festival, emerge alongside Southern precarities and feminist potentialities of communities such as Vecinas (neighbours), Primas (cousins), Flamencas-activists, Carnavaleras, Koumeres (godmothers) and Kores (daughters and sisters).

4. Chara Constantinou (University of Edinburgh)

Thinking with Clay Beside the Conflict: Ceramic Encounters and Anthropological Method in Cyprus

How can anthropology in contested Cyprus remain attentive to conflict without allowing it to define in advance which practices, relations and possibilities become visible? This paper presents an emerging doctoral methodology and proposes “thinking with clay” as a material, sensory and spatial approach to ceramic encounters. Rather than treating ceramics as objects or symbols of shared heritage, it draws on Marcus’s multi-sited ethnography to follow making across bodies, studios, routes and bordering infrastructures. It combines life-history interviews, sensory participant observation, bounded apprenticeship and relational-spatial mapping with a participatory arts-based research strand of co-making and material reflection. Drawing on Levitas’s utopia as method, the design moves recursively from existing conditions and lived relations towards provisional futures, allowing later methods to be reshaped by access, trust, refusal and emergent field relations. The researcher’s shifting position—as a Greek Cypriot heritage practitioner, interviewer, novice learner and organiser—is treated reflexively as constitutive of knowledge production. Clay’s material and infrastructural demands reveal how co-presence, authority, care, hesitation and exclusion are organised in practice. The paper argues for an anthropology beside the conflict: a situated, reflexive and field-responsive practice attentive to how the field enables, resists and redirects inquiry.

Panel 8:

Ecologies, Care and Environmental Justice

Saturday, September 5, 11:30-13:00, Room 3



Chair: Selin Genc

1. Khalil Betz-Heinemann (University of Helsinki), Andreas Kleanthous and Antonis Pastellopoulos (University of Cyprus)

Making Sense of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Cyprus

Recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Cyprus (2025–26) have been met with mass culling, protests, blame, and threats of violence. Public debate has focused on contested questions of causality, responsibility, and appropriate responses. This paper examines these debates through media analysis, semi-structured interviews, ethnographic fieldwork, and literature review. Drawing on Green (2022), we argue that the causality of FMD has been scientifically contained apart from human and ecological health, while responsibility has been politically contained within reactive forms of governance. We critique both containment logics and explore how they have created theorisation of FMD in Cyprus, that drive outbreaks. We also propose an alternative theorisation. First, FMD is approached not simply as an animal disease but as simultaneously human, animal, ecological, infrastructural, and alimentary. Second, we identify the absence of a political narrative capable of making sense of FMD beyond the terms offered by either neoliberal management or far-right reactionism, and begin to articulate an alternative. Rather than treating outbreaks as isolated events requiring technical solutions, we suggest they reveal broader questions concerning causality, responsibility, and disease management. While complex, this framework is not complicated, remaining accessible for engagement by farmers, veterinarians, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

2. Penelope Vasquez Hadjilyra (Frederick University)

Institutionalizing care; Can schoolyards cool the city and its civic relations?

This paper presents a research programme investigating the transformation of schoolyards into "cool commons," shared infrastructures of climate adaptation, civic care, and participatory governance in Mediterranean cities facing converging crises of urban heat and social fragmentation. It takes Limassol, Cyprus as its primary context. The paper argues that the fenced, asphalted schoolyard is not merely a design failure but a governance paradox: a publicly owned space rendered functionally private through logics of control and protection that ultimately weaken the civic relationships they claim to defend. Drawing on urban commons theory, ethics of care, and social innovation frameworks, it proposes that reopening schoolyards materially and institutionally constitutes a climatic and a relational repair. The paper is explicitly positioned as a PhD research programme in formation. It reflects on what it means to pursue care-oriented, engaged research within a centralised institutional context where commons governance exists more in theory than in practice, where municipal competences are narrow, and where the researcher occupies an uncertain disciplinary position across architecture, planning, and the social sciences. A forthcoming policy transition, the decentralisation of school infrastructure management to municipalities in 2029, provides both an empirical opportunity and a theoretical provocation: can care be institutionalised, or does institutionalisation always dilute it?

3. Maria Hadjimichael (Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute) and Rena Filippou (Cyprus Marine and Maritime Institute)



Planning In Absentia: Readings of Blue Justice in the context of Displacement and Conflict

Whilst the concept of blue (and coastal) justice has gained increasing attention since 2018, discussions have rarely considered how justice is understood in coastal landscapes shaped by protracted displacement and unresolved conflict. This presentation examines these questions through the case of Cyprus, where the island's division since 1974 has left displaced communities in prolonged political limbo. Focusing on the former bicomunal settlement of Pentakomo, it reflects on a case study conducted within the Horizon Europe EmpowerUs project. Although the project sought to "leave no one behind," the displaced Turkish Cypriot community was absent from the participatory process. This case raises broader questions about how displacement shapes participation, legitimacy, and inclusion in coastal planning, and who is recognised as a stakeholder where conflict has disrupted relationships to place. While protecting coastal space as a common resource may acknowledge displaced communities' interests, it does not ensure their perspectives are represented. The presentation argues that socially just coastal governance in contested settings requires greater attention to the long-term consequences of displacement and exclusion. It concludes by outlining a research agenda, informed by social anthropology, exploring how displaced communities negotiate attachment, memory, belonging, and rights in relation to coastal places, and how these perspectives can inform more inclusive coastal futures.

4. Maria Ladommatou (University of Edinburgh)

A Political Ecology of Pentakomo in Cyprus: Ecological Justice Perspectives on Ecosystem Management

Ecosystem management is a political and social exercise, a quest that both questions and elucidates the relationship between human and nonhuman beings. The understanding of the drivers behind an anthropocentric environmental management is a fundamental praxis, as it explicates the underpinnings of exploitative practices. This paper examines how colonialism and capitalism, through narratives of infinite development, have positioned nature as an instrumental resource for anthropocentric ends. Taking Pentakomo's port construction as a case study, this paper critically argues that ecological justice is often not, in practice, present within Cyprus' implementation of the Natura 2000 scheme. Despite its formal commitments to conservation, the scheme's implementation reveals how capitalist logics of exponential growth take precedence over genuine ecological justice. Drawing on a political ecology lens, the research is grounded in open interviews with interdisciplinary academics, researchers and thinkers in Cyprus, tracing how colonial and capitalist narratives continue to shape the relationship between development, conservation and ecological justice. The paper necessitates collaborations between thinkers, local communities and policymakers to transform ecological justice into accessible, shared knowledge. As ecological justice remains an under-represented discourse in Cyprus, this paper aims to open discussions on the implementation gaps within conservation policy and beyond.

Panel 9

Art, Culture and Performance

Saturday, September 5, 13:30-15:00, Room 2



Chair: Alev Adil

1. Aliosha Bielenberg (UC Berkeley)

Thinking About Music and Tradition in Cyprus

In this paper, I grapple with the way in which we play music “thoughtfully and with feeling” (Talal Asad). I begin with an episode from my own experience playing clarinet in “traditional music” ensembles over several summers at the Fengaros Music Village in Cyprus. I follow the work of the “key” in its many appearances as a way through this scene, thinking in productive tension with Charles Hirschkind’s concept of the ‘fondo sonoro’: “an articulation of sounds and of time forged not with the resources of narrative but by rhythm, timbre, scale, and tone ... [which] creates the ground for a passionate relation to the past that allows it to be thought and lived otherwise.” Working with examples from the history and practice of music in Cyprus, I turn to Hirschkind and Asad to highlight the stakes of this music-making — staying with the troubled relations of tradition and politics, feeling and history, Orientalism and Europe, scientism and Romanticism. I thus explore how theoretical resources from outside Cyprus could help generate an anthropologically distinctive account of the island’s musical life that might escape the overdetermined frames of the Cyprus Problem or identity politics. Yet my broader aim is to stay with the ordinary experience of music in tradition as a way of grasping the extraordinary that lies in making music full of thought and feeling — and in thinking, and feeling, in ways deeply musical.

2. Ellada Evangelou (CYENS)

Comrades, Nationalists, and Refugees: exploring indigeneity of theatre in Cyprus, 1920-1950

The paper proposes a reflection of the relationship between theatre production, with identity within the Turkish Cypriot, Greek Cypriot, and Armenian and Cypriot Armenian communities in 1920-1950. Through the evolution of western theatre, we explore how communities in Cyprus had defined themselves in relation to regional political events: the Armenian genocide, the establishment of the Turkish republic (including the Asia Minor expedition), and the communist movement. The tensions that appear within and between communities in this cultural production, as well as in their relationship with the British colonial regime, shed light on the transition from the Ottoman transcultural of the late 19th and early 20th century that characterized the cosmopolitan port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. The new, post-World War 1 conditions, into a period of violent nationalism, regional policies towards population homogenization and the implementation of exploitative colonization, formulate a theatre production that meets with new self-definitions. The question which persists well into the 21st century and is associated with identity politics, is whether we can characterize the Greek language, Turkish language and Armenian language theatre of the 1920-1950 period, as also reflecting a certain indigeneity, as a repository of knowledge. Additionally, whether the rural (rather than elitist and urban) indigenous knowledge(s) maintain or even produce a certain volksgeist.

3. Selin Genc (Visual Voices), Andreas PASHIAS, Dr. Dimitris Venizelos, Rahme Veziroğlu and Melina Philippou

Of Monumental - Conversation with a Sculpture / Conversation with a Sculptor



Of Monumental is an interdisciplinary research study foregrounded in previous work of visual artist PASHIAS, exploring the public art landscape through performance art, photography, videography and multimodal ethnography. In its first edition, implemented by intercommunal organisation Visual Voices, the project explores the evolving role of public art monuments in Cyprus, across the divide, shaping collective memory and negotiating contested narratives. We approach them as relational entities within broader historical, social and political frameworks, shaping and being shaped by diverse subjectivities, discourses and imaginaries. We will present the publication's editorial essay, *Conversation with a Sculpture / Conversation with a Sculpture*, introducing its multimodal method, interdisciplinary framework and offering a broader discussion of eleven public art monuments across the island. The presentation will also address methodological concerns and innovations, exploring how artistic interventions and systemic research are brought together to generate new modes of inquiry and engagement.

4. Aigli Pittaka and Dance Group-22 International Women

Rhythms of Resilience or "Sex on the Beach" Weekly

This performance breaks away from the verbocentric dominance of traditional academic conferences by deploying dance presentation as a somato-ethnographic medium. Drawing from cultural and medical anthropology, we engage with a line-dancing group of international women resident in Limassol. This energetic group navigates the unpredictable landscape of aging through embodied joy, witty humor, and collective movement. These tenacious women possess rich histories of global mobility and bicultural marriages. They raised multicultural kids, negotiated diverse professional environments, spearheaded NGOs and provided cross-generational care. Now, they strategically utilize dance to subvert the structural isolation often characteristic of the "golden age" and promote fun social engagement by taking life into their own hands. We argue that social dancing functions as a grassroots, bottom-up health intervention that simultaneously optimizes physical mobility and cognitive elasticity, cultivating emotional, social, cultural and artistic flexibility. Beyond personal biomedical benefits, the synchronized steps foster deep intercultural friendships and alternative kinship structures. This presentation theorizes aging as a site of choreographed engagement, wise camaraderie, and mischievous joy. Attendees will engage with a live, spirited dance-in-progress that bridges performance ethnography with the daily politics of active wellness by everyday women.

Panel 10

Borders, Activism, Belongings, and Re-Imaginings

Saturday, September 5, 13:30-15:00, Room 3

Chair: Spyros Spyrou

1. Andreas Marcou (University of Cambridge)

Border Negotiations in an Urban No-Man's-Land: Imagining Freedom and Queer Possibility in the Cyprus Buffer Zone

This is an ethnographic study of the bicomunal organising inside and around the border that divides the island of Cyprus through its centre, known as the Buffer Zone. Since 1974,



Cyprus has been divided into the sovereign Republic of Cyprus, and the de facto state of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. 52 years later, division remains prominent in the capital, Nicosia, engraved in its materiality. Crucially, the border is internalised within Cypriots' affective lives, requiring equally affective forms of intervention to unsettle its persistence. Turning our attention to the island's queer, artistic, and activist communities which seem to diffuse binary definitions of their gender, ethnicity and national belonging, we see how a history of border reclamation culminates in the recent organisation of a pride parade inside a border checkpoint, exposing borders' performative nature. In tension with official negotiations for the Cyprus Problem, these Cypriots might engage with borders as sites of "queer possibility". Mobilising "queer" as an analytic to navigate otherwise rigid spatial and political categories, this study traces how affects of utopian desire for unification are channelled into situated interventions, persisting since the early 2000s. While possibility and hope emerge in flashes, this study concludes that failure and negativity remain, as bicomunal organising is persistently confronted by the institutional regulation that continues to structure the present.

2. Vasiliki Polykarpou (Panteion University Athens)

Borders of Belonging: Anti-Migration and Anti-Gender Politics in Contemporary Cyprus

Contemporary Cyprus has become a key site for examining how anti-migration and anti-gender politics are co-produced through shared logics of nationalism, securitisation, and crisis. The growing influence of ELAM, alongside the often controversial public positions of Direct Democracy, signals a broader normalisation of exclusionary imaginaries that frame both migration and gender as threats to social and national order. The paper's central argument is that these two fields are not parallel developments but mutually reinforcing regimes of bordering that produce hierarchies of belonging. Situating these dynamics within Cyprus' ongoing condition of partition and militarised bordering, the paper examines how migrants, refugees, and gendered/sexual minorities are differently positioned within overlapping regimes of suspicion and regulation. The Green Line operates not only as a territorial divide but as an affective and symbolic infrastructure through which belonging and illegitimacy are continuously produced and negotiated. Rather than treating these processes as totalising, the paper also considers practices of contestation and re-signification. Focusing on initiatives such as United by Pride and other forms of bi-communal activism, it traces how solidarities emerge that unsettle dominant bordering logics. Bringing together border studies, queer anthropology, and public anthropology, the paper reflects on how belonging is actively made and unmade in contemporary Cyprus.

1. Nihal Soğancı (Panteion University Athens)

Cezadayım [I am in penalty]: Fines, Time, and the Everyday Life of Migrant II/legality

When illness left Gül unable to keep up the work and payments that secured her stay, she found herself cezada: in penalty, her permission to remain having lapsed. For years afterward she kept one sentence ready, that her passport was ""being renewed,"" to offer in any encounter that might expose her status and lead toward deportation. This paper follows cezadayım, [I am in penalty] an expression used by some migrants in northern Cyprus who have fallen into ceza to describe living with the fine. Administratively, ceza is the monetary penalty that accrues daily when residence, work, student, or visitor permission lapses. Yet in my interlocutors' accounts it is not simply an amount owed but



a condition one falls into, carries, hides, fears, and tries to repair. It is felt as tightness before a police question, as exhaustion in waiting, and as shame at a counter. The paper explores how the fine is lived and felt as a temporal technology of deportability. It makes removal countable, payable, and inhabitable, converting days of presence into a charge that accrues with time and turning the body into a site of anticipation. Tracing ceza across housing insecurity, irregular work and the periodic amnesties through which accumulated penalty can briefly be settled, the paper considers legality as a fragile and uneven labour, sustained through documents, payments, employers, acquaintances and practical knowledge. Administered across overlapping and competing regimes of recognition, legality here appears less as a possession than as a relational achievement, granted in one register and withheld in another.

2. Claudia Mosca

Identitarian Flows

This photographic project investigates identity in the Cypriot context, with particular reference to Nicosia. Drawing on an anthropological understanding of fixity and stability, it explores how identity is constructed, represented, and naturalized through processes of defining the Self and the Other. Developed as a visual extension of an anthropological inquiry, the project approaches photography as a way of examining the relationship between identity and urban space. Rather than focusing on the city's most recognizable symbols of division—barbed wire, barricades, occupied and militarized zones—the photographs attend to everyday landscapes where identities, memories, and boundaries become entangled, often beyond immediate perception. The project introduces the hypothesis of flow as an alternative to static conceptions of identity, proposing fluidity and spatio-temporal interconnection as fundamental to social life. Within this perspective, Nicosia is approached through the anthropological notion of the “frontier” not as a fixed boundary, but as a dynamic space of relation and transformation, where identities and borders are continuously redefined. The photographic work invites viewers to reconsider how the familiar city is perceived, questioning what remains visible—and what becomes invisible—through the naturalization of its landscape.

Scientific Committee

Melek Kaptanoğlu

Ibrahim Latif Ince

Yiannis Papadakis

Selin Genc

Theodoros Kouros

Georgina Christou

Organizing Committee

Aigli Pittaka

Maria Ladommatou

Spyros Spyrou

Panos Achiotis

Andreas Anastasiades

Evi Eftychiou

Melek Kaptanoğlu

Theodoros Kouros



1st Cyprus Association of Social Anthropologists Conference

Our Common Grounds

Pasts, Presents, Futures of Anthropology in Cyprus

4-5 September, Limassol



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